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## Get the secrets of a Jewish mom

### 'Real' housewife Jill Zarin on making dating your 'second job'

*In "Secrets of a Jewish Mother: Real Advice, Real Stories, Real Love," Jill Zarin of "The Real Housewives of New York" teams up with her sister Lisa Wexler and mother Gloria Kamen to share advice on love, marriage, happiness and, of course, matchmaking. Read an entertaining excerpt on how to navigate modern love:*

**Chapter 2: Dating** *Just because he isn't perfect doesn't mean he won't be perfectly right for you.*

Our kids are growing into a generation of young adults that forgot how to date. What happened? Dating as a courtship ritual seems to have disappeared. Where did it go? More important, what replaced it? Random, anonymous conversations on social networking sites? Hook-ups? Or is that yesterday's word? We can't keep up. Even the word "partying" has morphed into a pejorative term, implying drug use rather than enjoying yourself at a party without drugs. Many of our young people are lonely. They don't have "socials" the way we used to or safe places to meet other young adults. For some reason their own friends don't "set them up" the way we did. If they are not in college and cannot afford an apartment of their own, their social world is tiny. So many kids today are content to sit home at their computers, watching life from a screen in their comfortable bedroom, rather than getting out there and participating in life. Joanna tells her mother, Lisa, all the time: The computer is both a blessing and a curse.

Despite the lack of what we used to call "dating," meeting people and seeking a life partner is still an important part of life. The rules may change daily, but that just makes socializing more confusing, not less essential. Twenty- and thirty-somethings are still out there looking for their perfect mate. We have also noticed that the issues of dating resurface frequently in middle age, because so many people are either divorced or widowed. There may be a lot more baggage at that stage, and many more complexities, but whether we are twenty-four or fifty-four, we still have the same feelings of anxiety and rejection: Is he or she out there? Why didn't this one work? Why didn't he like me? The key is to maintain hope: I'll check in tonight on JDate; maybe Mr. Right is waiting on my desktop.

In this chapter we explain how we found our Mr. Rights. More important, we tell you how to identify the definitely Mr. Wrongs.

What are the sexual expectations of today's youth? Of course, it depends on whom you ask. But there is no doubt that we have saturated this latest generation with an abundance of sexuality. Did you put a condom on a banana in ninth grade? Joanna did. Did you learn about the nuances of hetero and homosexual intercourse before you were sixteen? Our kids know more than we did then, or now. In our quest to ensure that our kids know every possible bad thing that could happen to them as a result of being sexually active, we have taken some of the mystery and romance out of life. We have created a jaded generation.

**The shiddoch** If you are serious about getting serious, then you have come to the right place. For casual dating, move to another book — the Jewish mother is not interested. Dating is serious business to the Jewish mother; she knows that few things in life are more important than finding the right mate. Did you know that all Jewish mothers are born



matchmakers? It is true. Lisa and Jill pride themselves on their matchmaking abilities. Plus it's a huge *mitz-vah*, and we need as many of those as we can get.

How do you find the right person for you? We think the *best* way to meet someone is through a match, the traditional *shid-doch*. Our parents, Sol and Gloria, met that way. Jill met her first husband, Steven, that way too. If you are single, get the word out. Tell your friends you are looking. You can't expect them to read your mind; everybody has his own life to worry about. If you do not know anyone who is willing to set you up, there are professional matchmaking services in every region and on every desktop. Do not expect your white knight to magically appear one day when you are waiting in line for coffee, on the elevator or at the airport terminal. If you want to [find love](#), you have to think of it as a second job (provided you have a first job). That means you have to be open to a shid-doch. Have a little trust — and carry pep-per spray, just in case.

**Lisa's matchmaking method** I do matchmaking all the time. If I find out that you are single, I begin the interrogation: What are you looking for — kids, no kids, city, country, age, religion, interests? Then I begin the match in my head. Whom do I know who might be suitable for you? I can't help it — I assume every-one wants to be in love. Everyone needs love, so I as-sume everyone also wants to meet that perfect match. If I know someone who might be right, I ask only one thing of each person in the match — they have to agree to go out on a second date. I read that someplace in a maga-zine and I thought it was a great rule; it takes all the pres-sure off the first date. I have at least one marriage I can take credit for, and right now two friends of mine whom I fixed up are dating steadily. Of course, my kids would never let me fix them up — they're still too young to be desperate enough to have their mother set them up on a blind date. But not to worry ... I'm out there looking any-way. Who said I needed their permission?

**Jill's philosophy on matchmaking** I take matchmaking very seriously. It is not a sport for me. I truly believe that God will give me credit for this one day, and I love to get credit! I matched up a nice Jewish girl and a widowed dentist, and they got married. I am keeping my fingers crossed on some other matches I have made. If I were dating today, I would definitely go on JDate.com, which is an Internet matchmaking site for Jews. There is no stigma attached to online dating today like there was just a few years ago. In fact, Bobby's son, David, met his wife, Jill, on JDate.com. So did our cousin Rebecca, Aunt Cooky's daughter, who married Mark. Simon and [Alex McCord](#), my costars on "Housewives," met on an international dating site. They say they were look-ing for a one-night stand and not a relationship but ended up falling in love instead. Cast the net as wide as you possibly can — listen to your friends, go on blind dates and go online. You have to work to find love.

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By the way, the savvy Jewish mother does not believe that there is only one perfect match for someone. She is way too practical for that. What happens if, God forbid, bite your tongue three times, something happens to that person? Does that mean you should be alone the rest of your life? Absolutely not. What about divorce? Maybe he was perfect for you for a while, but you weren't so perfect for him. What are you supposed to do — just sit there and feel sorry for yourself? Jewish mothers are not only resilient, they are flexible. Many shoes can fit the same feet. Now, will you please call the num-ber we gave you? We hear he is a nice boy from a very good family.

**On dating men you meet online** Look up your date on Google before you go out with him. If you really like him, but want to know more, you can even have an online search service check him out. You can never be too safe.

Ask yourself:

1. Are you looking for a serious relationship?
2. Have you told everyone you know that you are looking and asked them to set you up?
3. What are you waiting for? Perhaps more precisely, what are you afraid of?
4. Have you signed up on an Internet dating site yet? What did you like or dislike about it?



**The Jewish husband: Myth and reality** Let's face it: Everyone is looking for a good Jewish husband. Jewish girls for sure are looking, but so are Irish lasses and southern belles. They've heard that Jewish men make the best husbands too. We have a few things to say on that subject:

1. Not all Jewish men make the best husbands. Trust us on this one.
2. Why is a Jewish husband better than others? He has been trained, from birth, to respect women. He may not like his wife, he may not even love his wife, but he definitely respects his wife.
3. Jewish men usually are great fathers. Even if they are lousy husbands, they are usually devoted daddies.
4. Traditionally, Jewish men didn't drink and didn't fool around. But today, we wouldn't swear for either virtue...
5. If you do find a good Jewish man who makes a decent hus-band, give us Jewish mothers some credit for this. God knows we get the blame. And for the record, Jewish wives can be pretty terrific too, thank you very much.