

## PERSONAL AD

**I was complaining to a friend how hard it is to meet the sort of woman I wanted in this culture, and he looked at me kind of sideways and said something along these lines:**

I know what you mean about culture—or lack of it—but your real problem is you are living in a tiny town away from all the action. I know you do that on purpose, but since it is your choice, why don't you take responsibility for it and live with it?

*I do live with it, every day. I just have to complain it about it occasionally as well. I'm not a saint.*

Yeah, we know. But I just mean if you choose not to live in a big city, your possibilities are going to be more limited. Not only are you living in a very small town, you are living in a small town known for its lesbian community. Did you really think you were going to fit in here seamlessly?

*Well, I didn't move here for the society. I moved here for the fresh air and the clouds and the mountains. I just figured I could meet someone here as easily as anywhere else. After all, I lived in Austin for many years, and once the 90s rolled around I didn't find many easy matches there, either—despite the huge population of singles. The world had changed and I didn't want to change with it. I didn't want to be high-tech or a cool-cat or a porn-star or any of the other available categories, so all I had instead was a long series of bad dates.*

Look, I know how you feel. It is misery for everyone out there right now. I am so glad I am married I can't tell you. [Sigh] Even though “wife” is now a non-PC word, I am eternally grateful to have one who loves me. But anyway, if you are going to stay here, I only see two options. One, give up completely and trust that Fates will send someone to your door. Or two, get off your ass and do something about it yourself. Why don't you put an ad up at Match.com or one of those places?

*I tried that briefly about five years ago. It was too depressing. Just reading those ads and seeing what those women are looking for made me want to stick my head in the oven. Or their heads in the oven, one or the other.*

Yeah, OK, you aren't a great fit for New Mexico. Look here, you said you get tons of hits on your websites, with people swamping your inbox everyday. Surely some of these people must be women?

*Sure.*

Don't they ever hit on you?

*Not really. Or if they do, I guess I missed it.*

[Eyebrow raise] Do they know you are single?

*No. I don't know. It doesn't come up. We aren't talking about that stuff. They want to talk about the papers or the art or the science.*

I see. But, I mean, you have a natural filter right there. Any woman who is reading your stuff already knows what you are like. So she has already either run screaming or she hasn't. If she hasn't, she may actually be attracted to the whole truth idea. In other words, she might be your type: nerd or whatever.

*I wouldn't say nerd.*

OK, truth-geek or whatever. Some of these women must be attractive and single. They can't all be nutters.

*I don't know that any of them are nutters.*

One of these girls might be good fit for you, is all I am saying. What have you got to lose?

*Are you suggesting I post an ad on my own site? Wouldn't that be seen as sort of gauche?*

I thought you didn't care what anyone thinks.

*Well, I don't, but I judge myself. I don't know if it is something that would fit on my site. It just seems kind of unappealing, like pop-up ads or something.*

You really *are* old-fashioned.

*Hardly. A bit of a purist, maybe.*

Idealist.

*Maybe.*

Nerd.

*Maybe. [Pause] I do like women with glasses.*

Yah, and you hate nail polish and short hair and high heels and makeup and perfume and tattoos and smoking so on, which I know since you have told me fifty times. Every time we go out I try to set you up with someone and you beg off because her perfume is too strong or her hair is dyed a strange color or she has a tattoo or something. If you're not a nerd, what are you?

*Nature boy? I don't know, I just like the natural look. It isn't impossible. I found it in the past.*

Yes, Amishboy, but this isn't the past.

*I just like what I like, like anyone else. Besides, my last partner was recent, and she was a nature girl. It still happens.*

OK. So put it in your ad, quit telling me. While we are at it, would you be willing to move for the right woman? I mean, very few women are going to want to live here, unless they already do. Most women like beaches, not mountains. They like it warm.

*Sure, I'd move, there is nothing really holding me here. I like smaller towns, but it doesn't have to be*

*this town. I just need somewhere where the allergies aren't too bad and there is an organic market I can ride my bike to.*

God, what an Amishboy. Why don't you get a donkey and a cart with a little orange triangle on the back?

*I might. That would be fun.*

[Guffaw] Lord help us. What else? You'd have to take your two cats, I guess?

*Yep.*

Well, they *are* pretty. You could leave them with me.

*Nope.*

What else? You know what you need? A girl with some money.

*Yeah, [snort] that wouldn't be gauche to put in my ad.*

No, I mean it. You have a lot to offer, but let's face it, that ain't part of it. Unless Modern Art takes a nose dive and portraits make a big comeback, I don't see you making a lot of money.

*I do others things.*

Sure, but all those things are about equally marketable. I don't see a lot of want ads for "truthtellers" or fake-events specialists or hoax-spotters. And NASA probably won't hire you, after you have blown their cover to kingdom come. What you need is a woman with money of her own who thinks you are the cat's pajamas. What is it they call you on the internet now? "World's smartest unemployable person?"

*[Smile] Just the first part.*

[Roll eyes] Yeah, OK. But, I mean, there is bound to be someone like that out there. Somebody who wants an attractive guy with brains, but doesn't care so much that he isn't a stockbroker or lawyer or whatever. In fact, who would prefer he is *not* a stockbroker or lawyer, since she sees through all that stuff. And besides, she wants someone to hang out with and talk deep stuff to, not some stuffed shirt working 16 hour days so he can buy cars and yachts.

*Possibly.*

Sure, you just have to have some faith. Here's how I picture it: I see you with a woman, about 30-40, nice looking, thin, but tends to blend in. Dresses like a librarian maybe, and most guys just miss her. A little awkward, possibly. Late-bloomer, as they say, and she never even realized she'd bloomed. Held back by an overbearing father, maybe. But this chick's all potential. She gets with you and the duckling becomes a swan.

*[Smile] Yes, that would be nice to find again. My earlier relationships were kind of like that. Although I couldn't ever get the duckling all the way out of the shell. She would poke out for a while*

*and then go back into the egg.*

Well, that's better than nothing, dude. Maybe you were just impatient. You are older now. You're not in such a big hurry. And this time around she is 30-40 instead of 18-25. It makes a difference both ways.

*True.*

What about kids?

*I like kids.*

No, but I mean do you want your own?

*Sure. I always wanted kids, but I wasn't willing to give up everything else to have them. It seemed I was either going to have to quit art and take an office job to have kids, or at least agree to become a hack artist, painting stuff I didn't want to paint. I couldn't do it.*

Life is a compromise.

*And I am uncompromising, you mean? But life forces you to compromise. Or to at least choose. I have the art on the walls and the science papers and so on. And not the children. I wouldn't say I regret it. I wouldn't do it differently. But I wish it could have been otherwise. I doesn't seem right that I should have been put in the position of selling out in order to have children, but that is the way I see it. That is what it came down to, and that is simply a fact.*

This is a personal ad. You are supposed to be charming, not morose. Lie if you have to.

*Well, I think the people reading this already know I am not smiles all the time.*

Sure, but accentuate the positive. For instance, I assume most people would think you are a lot harder to get along with than you are. You come across as a hard-ass in your papers. Whereas, in my experience you are pretty calm and quiet and accommodating. Very thoughtful, I would add. Gentle, even. You can get a fire in your eye occasionally, especially when we talk about art or the fake events, but you aren't a scary person. In fact, if you weren't so damn picky, there are a lot of local women who would be happy to hang out with you.

*Yeah, I know, but what are you going to do? I either really want to be with a person or I don't want to be with them at all. There isn't much in between for me.*

Most people aren't like that.

*I know. But this is me we are talking about, not most people. The sort of woman I am looking for isn't looking for "most people".*

True. But let's stay on-point. What if this woman already had a kid, or kids?

*I guess it would depend on the kid. Some kids are lovely. Some are awful. I see some kids at the grocery store I would love to adopt. Others, not so much. If we were going to have kids, it would nice*

*if she were young enough to give me one of my own. But that isn't a sticking point either way. If she's a beautiful 40-something, past the age where she wants kids, that could be fine, too. I just need some pleasant experience at this point, and am not too keen on predefining what it may be.*

Anything else this hypothetical woman should know before she expends any energy contacting you? Any more subtle encouragement or discouragement you can give her?

*I don't know. My readers already know everything about me, except my mole patterns.*

Yes, but tell us again. What do you do day-to-day besides paint and write?

*I do yoga about twice a week at a studio nearby. I play volleyball, in the sand in the park when it is warm enough and in the gym in the winter. I play golf occasionally, when I can afford it. I ride my bicycle almost everyday, even in winter, though I usually just ride to the market. I also have a Vespa that I bought last summer. I have no car. I don't like cars much, for various reasons. I have ten bikes in the house right now, although that is not normal. I restored several classic bikes last winter, hoping to resell them on craigslist or ebay, but so far that hasn't happened. I also restore old books, and I have a fairly large collection in the house. I thought of opening a used bookstore, but there is no local market for that either. I sell a few on ebay.*

Yes, I can tell you folks that his house is quite full of interesting objects of all kinds. He will also play the piano for you if you ask him nicely. But enough about you. Anything else this match of yours can't or must have, beyond head-to-toe tattoos and piercings?

*Not really, I think you hit most of them above. Besides, I don't agree that I am so picky. It is not like all my lovers have been supermodels, or looked the same. I normally don't go for vavoom girls.*

No, but they have all been on the skinny side, from what I have seen. And if they aren't supermodels, they are certainly easy on the eyes.

*OK, guilty. I am an artist, and there is no way around that. I live through my eyes. Still, you have to admit, I do tend to pick the wallflowers—the ones the other guys miss.*

That's true. You seem to find the prettiest stragglers, the ones hiding behind the punchbowl. Those with an odd and airy beauty that gets lost in the glitter. But what about the rest? Does she have to be a brain? Does she need a MENSA card? Does she need to present SAT scores or something?

*No. Brains are great, but kindness and a concern for truth are more important to me. It doesn't take a giant IQ to tune into reality. It is more an innate sense of rightness, that some people have and some don't. I think that is what would draw her to me, since that is what I hope distinguishes my papers more than any intellectual wattage. Anyway, that is what would draw me to her.*

OK, that makes you sound a little less morose. Maybe that will fool someone into adopting you as their lost puppy. Any parting shots? Things you need to get off your chest? Erectile dysfunction, chronic hangnails, tiny dick, failed hair transplant, three buttocks, no front teeth, horribly ugly feet, insanity runs in the family?

*[Laughs] No, nothing to report in those categories. The big turn-off for some women has been the papers I have been writing. A lot of people don't find it interesting. It scares them. My need to know*

*the truth has destroyed my last two relationships, relationships that were otherwise very very good.*

Well maybe this will solve that. Speaking of, it may help if you explain why these previous relationships were “otherwise very good”. I have said that you seem to have a lot to offer, but it may not be clear what exactly that is. Very few women will give you points for the bicycles in the house, and others may have mixed feelings about the nude paintings as well. So why do you imagine even the nerdiest woman would be impressed by you?

*Well, I help frogs cross the street. Children and animals like me.*

That's a good start. So you don't smell bad and creatures of very little intelligence follow you around. I hope you've got more than that.

*Um, I am pretty good at the “long serious talk”. That's why you come over and vent.*

True. Those in the audience should know that this was a palpable hit. He is a master of the long serious talk. Better than any psychologist I have been to. And a good listener, though you might not think it. He has to be, since he says maybe one word to my ten.

*Very true.*

Nonetheless, he leads me into some very interesting hallways.

*I do what I can.*

What else?

*Well, I tend to prefer period pieces to Tarantino shoot-em-ups. Some women will see that as a plus.*

Yes, and others will worry it makes you a little limp. I guess you will just have to convince them otherwise in your own ways.

*Hopefully.*

What else? Oh, I know, they should like having someone to do yoga with. My lady is always trying to get me to go, but I rarely do. I am not made of rubber like you are.

*Yes, that would be great. We could do acro-yoga. I could make her fly through the air.*

Hmmm. Better than doing it with your Amish donkey, I guess. Isn't he kind of heavy?

*Shut up.*

What else?

*I could sing her a lullaby. Too-ra-loo-ra.*

What is that? I don't get it.

*Bing Crosby.*

How old are you, 112? Which reminds me, how old is this nerd-girl of yours supposed to be? Match.com would have you enter some limits, like age 10-140.

*Not so important. Although I have found that my dates don't like it when I look younger than them (even when I'm not—or especially when I'm not). I am told I look around 40, so I guess they can set their watches by that. Which means you were about right above. I don't mind dating younger women, but if they are younger, they at least need to be sort of old-fashioned. If they are into the new stuff big time, they won't be too impressed by me, it goes without saying. And they will just annoy me. But I don't think any of those women are visiting my site anyway.*

I wouldn't think. What about older women?

*Well, my last longterm partner was 48, so it isn't out of the question. But she wasn't your normal 48, to say the least. She did have long gray hair, though, which was fine with me. I don't mind that. Natural is always better. Or at least it was in her case. But, as I said before, I have found that beautiful women don't like it when you look younger than they do. She wanted all the attention—which I was perfectly willing to give her. It just didn't always work out that way.*

Sounds like an odd situation.

*Not really. It's perfectly understandable, but you have to be aware of these things. Then you know what is really going on. Plus, the good thing about older women is they know what you are talking about when you talk about 70s music, say. I mean, they were there. They know what the world was like before everyone went completely crazy.*

Yes, I can see how that would be a plus. Is it important to you to be able to talk about stuff like that?

*Not especially. It is nice to have that commonality, but for me it is more important to be supported in what I do. I have gotten so little emotional support over the years from those close to me. I have always been swimming against the tide, but I don't like to do that at home. I don't like to fight with those close to me. It would be nice to have a woman read what I write and see me as “virtuous” instead of “difficult” or “scary”. You don't want to have to **convince** your lover that you aren't a bad guy. You expect her to just know that, right? Like a cat, you expect she will just be able to sniff you and know whether or not you are a bad apple. I can do that with people, and women are supposed to be highly intuitive, but a lot of them seem to have trouble reading the signs. Their noses don't work anymore.*

So you want a woman with a working nose, is that what you are saying?

*I guess.*

Well, your take-no-prisoners style of writing can be hard for some people to come to terms with. They haven't been where you have been, so maybe they can't understand your anger. Especially with regard to art and science. Most people just don't have that experience.

*I understand that. I know that a lot of people don't know where I am coming from, simply because they haven't been there. They **literally** don't know where I am coming from, because they have never been*

*on that path. They haven't come to the closed doors I have come to. They haven't felt the pressure from above, squashing them down from above like a great weight. But I think most people **have** felt that reaction to some extent, when they have been told they can't do this or that, or shouldn't do this or that—even while they knew they were trying to do something good. Well, my life has been like that, but to the nth degree. Our society is a very peculiar one, in that just when you are doing your best work you find the most resistance. Logically, you would expect just the opposite. This bothers most people, but I guess it bothers me way more than average. While it just annoys most people, it turns me into a crusader, almost a fiend. The more I am told to turn down the music the more I turn it up.*

Yes, I hear that. My ears hurt already. So I guess we are to understand your woman needs a good nose. . . and earplugs.

*Maybe. Maybe. Figuratively speaking, maybe. I mean, I am not one of those guys who gets sloshed and screams at the world. I am really not an addictive personality. My life away from the keyboard is on an amazingly even keel, as you know. I cuddle my cats and listen to old cheesy music and take my vitamins and sit in the sun and generally run on well oiled tracks. My readers seem to think I am a workaholic who never sleeps, but just the opposite is true. If anything I sleep too much. I certainly don't drive myself too hard. I have nothing in common with the manic artist or scientist we have been sold via Hollywood and the journals. It is just that when I hit the keyboard, I have no desire to hold back. At that time, what I know and what I feel can come out, and I see no point to reining it in. I have made a study of the problem, and come to the quite conscious decision that now is the time to charge. The Muses have lit on the roof and told me that this is my destiny. Here is the place and now is the time and I am the one to do it.*

You know many will say that sounds a little crazy.

*Yes, and they are saying it. And I do listen to what they say and catalog it, along with everything else. But their arguments that it is crazy don't have much content, do they? I mean, when you boil it down, what they are saying is that they don't like what I am saying, it isn't convenient for them or their projects or their bottom lines, therefore I am crazy. But that isn't much of an argument, is it?*

No, it's not much of an argument, but I think you can see why a sane woman wouldn't wish to get in the middle of it. Crusaders may be fun to read about, but are they fun to live with?

*I think they can be. For myself, I have a blast. I laugh out loud and sometimes hop up and down when I make a discovery. I have more high points in a week than most people have in a year, and they are very high highs. They aren't drug-induced, either. They are real. Yes, I get gloomy, but who doesn't? I have no desire to flatten out any of it. The point, it seems to me, is to ride the ride, up as well as down, and to feel all the feelings to their fullest. You can't do that on drugs, and you can't do it avoiding things, either. You just have to go where you are called.*

Yes, well, you have convinced me. I'll be moving in next week.

*Great, I'll have the shed built.*

**A conversation like that really did occur recently, although I did not tape it or transcribe it word for word. I do have a good friend who really gave me this advice, and it is due to his pressure that I have finally posted this. He even helped me recreate it here. He thinks it is a great idea. I**



**am not so sure. But I guess it is worth a shot.**