

10 Reasons Love In Your 40s Is The BEST Kind Of Love



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LOVE

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When you've had time to find yourself, it makes everything that much better.

I married my soulmate two weeks before I turned 40, in part because I wanted to be married while still in my 30s. Little did I know that love in my 40s would become the full-blown greatest hits of loving. My midlife love came about because it took me a while to muster the courage to leave the wrong person in search of the right person (me).

When I divorced my first husband, part of me believed I'd be looking for love. What I didn't realize was that I had to stand alone and love myself before I could find the kind of love I'd always wanted — all-in, be-who-you-are, laugh-a-lot love.

I have friends who didn't find their Mr. Right until their 40s, and it wasn't because they left one that didn't work for a relationship that did. Friends who held out for the right relationship into their 40s found they were universally happier, because they'd had time to define who they are, they were more confident, and because they'd held out for all the right details.

Here's what I know about why love in your 40s is the best kind of love.

1. You aren't going to put up with bullsh*t — and you aren't going to dish it out, either.

By the time I met my husband, I knew that a romantic relationship was the icing on the cake of a great life. He isn't the cake. We're both whole, happy individuals with full lives. We're together because we want to be together. We're together because we make each other better.

And at our ages (I'm 44, he's 48), we don't have interest or patience in playing games. We've been there and done that. It's time for no-nonsense, utter-honesty, straight-on love and fun.

2. You're confident in your own skin.

It makes baring it to another easy and exciting. Recently, my husband and I had a conversation about how little it matters who we were with in years past. I remember in my 20s feeling the need to come clean about how many guys I'd slept with, and how many times I'd thought I was in love.

By the time you turn 40, none of that matters. It's ancient history. It's the precursor to who you are now. Your mastery in the sack is part midlife confidence, part years of hands-on research. No judging.

3. You've had time to develop your interests and talents, and build a career and an identity.

It's a relationship of equals. When we married, my husband had been at his job for 15 years. I'd written thousands of articles, had eight books published, and owned a successful company. We both brought children into the world.

We know what we like to do in our spare time, and we've traveled a fair amount of the globe. By your 40s, you've each had a deep bucket of life experiences, and now it's time to share those in the realest sense.

4. You've held out for the right relationship.

Why be with someone if it's not right? In your 20s, it's easy to be with someone because it's fun and flattering. A bar-night pickup doesn't have to turn into the love of your life. But that gets old. By your 40s, you know it's great to be alone, so if you're going to share your life with someone, they'd better be worth it.

5. You've given up the notion that there's one right person.

And you've made your peace with the notion that no relationship is going to offer you everything. Frankly, that's the best way. If you find someone you really love being with — with whom you can talk and play and explore the world — isn't that enough?

By your 40s, you know friends, sisters, colleagues and acquaintances each have their role to play. So Mr. Right doesn't have to be Mr. Everything, right?

6. You're in a stage to just have fun together.

The hard work of career-building is behind you, your kids are likely about to fly the coop, and it's almost your time. Enjoy it together. My husband and I talk about what we'll do when the kids go to college. Travel. Cook. Perhaps open a business together. Spend a month in Mexico. Who knows.

7. You don't NEED a partner; you just WANT one.

Let's face it: even when it comes to sex, by the time you're in your 40s, you can take care of that yourself, right?

8. You're ready to be honest — about everything.

But you don't need to be. Your 40s are the first decade when most people truly embrace the moment and relish being present. Which means all that exists is right now and everything else really doesn't matter.

9. You're ready to be nicer to yourself.

The trappings of our earlier years (worrying about how many people we've been with, whether some sex choices are weird, the fantasy of your ideal life) have dissipated, and you're ready to be nice to yourself. So you're nice to others.

It's a calmer, contented kind of love. You live fully. You know life doesn't last forever. You realize any day could be your last, so you just want to be happy. And a big part of that is shining a smile on everyone in your midst. Especially yourself.

10. You realize how short life really is.

You have to make the most of every minute, which means you don't have patience for sub-par connections. Why waste time with someone who drives you crazy? Why make due with Mr. Maybe? It's just not worth it. All of this makes sense in an intellectual way when you're younger, but you don't really get it until you hit the big 4-0. Trust me.