

# Accomplished 'nice Jewish girls' can find guys

BY RACHEL WEINGARTEN

**T**hough I attended a private all girls' school, I never wore a uniform in the purest sense of the word. As someone in the style industry raised with a religious background, however, I am still keenly aware of the external trappings that can subtly or brazenly declare a woman's social, cultural or even marital status.

Birkin bag and frozen forehead? Fashionista. Hemp wardrobe, pleather shoes? Vegan-ista.

Chic cloche or jaunty beret worn in synagogue on high holidays? Modern married woman.

It has precious little to do with bad-hair days, fashion trends or inclement weather, and every-

thing to do with modesty, tradition and the unsubtle demarcation between the smug Mrs. and the still-searching misses.

Though the burqa identifies a Muslim woman no matter her external surroundings, it's mostly within the confines of a house of worship that a modern Jewish woman's head covering, or lack thereof, reveals her single or attached status to the community.

During a break in the holiday services this fall, I caught up with a trio of married friends (beanie, cloche, lace chapel cap). We chatted about their offspring (solid foods, solid grades, solid black wardrobe) and my year (new book, great career, still single) and we collectively bemoaned the difficulty of finding

the right Jewish guy (single, straight, successful), though, thankfully, they'd each found their perfect match (smirk, swoon, sigh).

Don't get me wrong, they were incredibly supportive of my accomplishments, so much so that they regrettably assured me I was unlikely to find a man who could feel secure with my success and that I was likely doomed to end up alone or unhappy — probably both — since in their worlds you just have to settle.

No one has it all. Or at least not nice Jewish girls from traditional backgrounds. But what about Sarah Jessica Parker, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sherry Lansing, Susan Stamberg, Nadine Strossen and Judy Blume? Atypical

nice Jewish girls who each snagged their own Mr. Right(eous) while maintaining both family and career.

Recently, I begged off yet another wedding of yet another ultra-religious teenage cousin who probably had more input into the style of her wedding dress than the choice of her intended. I explained to my mother that I preferred going places where people recognized me for my abilities, or asked for my professional advice rather than pitied me for having still not achieved their gold (band) standard and sole measure of success.

If recent reports about Ivy League-educated women leaving the workplace to raise families are to be believed, feminism, if

not life-balance altogether, has hit a brick wall, making it nearly impossible for women to achieve both personal and professional goals.

I prefer to believe that some of us take a detour and explore our talents and follow our bliss, and along the way we become happier and more interesting human beings. Hats off to the men strong enough to find us, and to hopefully share our more modern interpretation of happily ever after.



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