

# Grandma encourages sandwich love



Lauren Miller

## sex and the 'ville

Come hell or high water ... My grandma constantly tries to set me up. It would be cute if it wasn't borderline obsessive. During break, she casually introduced me to her bridge partner's grandson at a dinner party. Imagine that moment in "Bridget Jones' Diary" when Bridget first meets Mr. Darcy in that awful reindeer sweater. Grandma thought he would be my Mr. Darcy. She thought he was a looker.

He was a junior at Mizzou who studied computer science, and this was our moment, our time. And there, over the artichoke dip, we met. He was wearing an old-man, blue, snowflake sweater.

A week later at church, I met Sally, my grandma's best friend. Sally promptly informed me that she had "a wonderful young lad who lives a door or two down."

Seriously, it was getting out of hand.

I let it pass with Grandma because I know she has the best of intentions. Grandma and The Ex were buddy-buddy. She used to call his cell to ask him to our family dinners, usually before she asked me. I worried our break-up would break her — that Grandma would be no more.

But really, Sally too?

Even my grandmother's best friend could not grasp the concept that I'm 22 and single.

During this moment at church, I decided to take some action. I informed both Grandma and Sally that, although their efforts were appreciated, I was doing fine finding someone on my own. I even explained that I had a boy who I was quasi-dating. But I was not sure about him, and I definitely was not ready to be in another serious relationship.

They looked at each other, and Grandma said, "Well, Lauren, then he's not a real boyfriend, and you should find someone you're serious about as soon as possible."

I think my grandma has given up on the thought of my older, male cousins settling down and reproducing anytime soon. Clearly, the job has been left to me.

I think Grandma saw my annoyance and frustration. Really, I was ready to start screaming obscenities at her and Sally in this holy place.

Just so you know, Grandma is always like this. And yes, I love her more than anything.

Either way, her advice was simply this: "Lauren, you just need to find someone you can be content sitting around with all day."

Mind you, Grandma and Grandpa both have these lovely armchairs they sit in for about six hours a day. They might get up and eat lunch and dinner together. They might run errands together. The bulk of their day is spent with Grandma knitting and Grandpa reading. Either way, they always are together. They are content.

At 22, should I really be looking for contentment?

Sometimes — actually, often — I feel that being content is parallel to walking the thin line between true happiness and true misery.

I look at those couples who seem content, and I just think of being trapped in a rut, bored, with absolutely no escape. Where's the passion? Where's the desire?

Yet, if I chose a couple to idolize it would be Grandma and Grandpa. They don't fight, they tease. They don't proclaim undying love, they just know. They have molded into a solid unit. One does not exist without the other.

I liken it to an old peanut butter and jelly sandwich, one that has sat for so many years that the peanut butter and jelly have formed into one condiment, each with a distinctive taste, yet absolutely impossible to separate.

When you have that, are you really settling?

We all look at old couples and say, "Aww, how cute." Yet, when we look at couples our age who act like that, we silently shake our heads and say they've settled.

And settled for what? For almost best.

It is easier to make happiness last than passionate desire.

A couple days later, Grandma and Grandpa came over to our house. Grandpa took up residence in our chair and Grandma helped mom in the kitchen. It wasn't until the end of the evening she mentioned that Sally's neighbor was quite attractive.

This was when I told her that she and Grandpa reminded me of an old peanut-butter and jelly sandwich. She looked at me and said, "As long as I get to be the jelly ... and grape, always grape. Right, Jack?"

He smiled and said, "I think you'd be more like a cherry jelly — kind of sour. But whatever you think, Mildred."

She smiled back.

And all in all, it made me hope that one day someone will make me want to be content. That someone will let me be the grape jelly and we can congeal into one of those cute, old couples together.

## Fatigue cuts down stamina

With more than one million American sufferers, chronic fatigue syndrome strikes more people than some of the most common cancers but is significantly harder to diagnose. Chronic fatigue syndrome is marked by unrelenting, pervasive mental and physical exhaustion. People with chronic fatigue syndrome often experience a drastic decline in levels of both activity and stamina.

Characterized by severe fatigue that lasts longer than two weeks and impairs normal activity, chronic fatigue syndrome often is accompanied by frequent urination, sleep problems, muscle pain and swelling of the glands in the neck or armpits. Because fatigue can be caused by a variety of conditions, there is no single test to diagnose chronic fatigue syndrome. Doctors instead must rule out other diseases with similar symptoms. After other possibilities are ruled out and doctors have determined that the fatigue

is persistent, they can diagnose the condition as chronic fatigue syndrome.

Frequent urination and exhaustion sometimes are symptoms of diabetes, so doctors will monitor blood sugar levels to rule it out as a cause of the symptoms. Immune system diseases, including HIV, thyroid diseases, Lyme disease and arthritis sometimes also cause fatigue, so a doctor often will test to rule them out as well.

In general, symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome are the worst at the beginning of the condition and might go away briefly and return. There is no cure for chronic fatigue syndrome. However, doctors have discovered that by treating the symptoms, the syndrome might lessen or go away entirely. The degree to which chronic fatigue syndrome affects different people varies. Although some people are able to go about their daily activities, many have to reduce their

activity levels to retain enough energy for high-priority tasks. People most strongly affected might even need help accomplishing basic tasks like getting out of bed or eating.

Although women are four times more likely than men to be diagnosed with the condition, there is no evidence to account for the difference. Some specialists think that the disorder simply is reported more often by women than men. Chronic fatigue syndrome is rare in children but occasionally occurs in teenagers, especially those who recently have had mononucleosis or the flu. The illness is most common in people between the ages of 25 and 45.

Doctors and specialists still are speculating as to the cause of chronic fatigue syndrome. Some theories point to a viral or bacterial infection as the cause. Other theories list problems in the immune system, the nervous system, the glandular



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system or the patient's family history as possible causes. No conclusive data supports any of these theories, but scientists continue to research what may cause or contribute to chronic fatigue syndrome. Although chronic fatigue syndrome sometimes is difficult to diagnose, studies have found that early detection and treatment result in quicker recovery.

Although this symptom is not directly linked to CFS, patients of chronic fatigue syndrome often experience depression during their illness. Between 50 percent and 66 percent of people with chronic fatigue syndrome develop depression as a result of the disease. Depression, combined with the already exhausting effects of the illness itself, often makes the

disease's effects much worse. Chronic fatigue syndrome sufferers who experience depression should seek treatment for their depression.

If you have experienced several of these symptoms recently, you may want to speak with your doctor about the possibility of chronic fatigue syndrome. Because chronic fatigue syndrome often takes time to diagnose, patients experiencing symptoms should contact their doctor to begin treatment as soon as possible. Early diagnosis and treatment can ease symptoms before they worsen.

For more information about chronic fatigue syndrome, contact your primary care provider or Dr. Early at Crown Family Medicine at 660-665-2844.



Julia Hansen

As I sit here writing in my chilly room, I resent going to college in Kirksville, where it currently is 18 degrees, icy and windy. What would I give right now for it to be a warm summer night sitting around a bonfire with my friends roasting s'mores? A lot! A couple of my friends often talk about how some of their best times are sitting around a bonfire with their buddies. Well, we may not be able to do that in the middle of January, but as creative adventurous people, let's improvise!

As this was my first week doing a recipe column for the Index, I thought, "Why not try something easy and fun?" I actually made these brownies last Friday, and instead of my friends sitting around a bonfire and roasting s'mores, they sat around my living room playing cards, watching TV and just hanging out (while eating the brownies, of course). My friends found them to be very tasty and sticky on your fingers, just like s'mores!

So if you're staying inside on Saturday night, throw these ingredients together and imagine you are sitting around a bonfire shootin' the breeze with your best buddies.

## Cooking with Julia

### winter s'mores

#### Ingredients:

**Crust:**  
10 tablespoons of unsalted butter, melted  
2 1/2 cups of crushed graham cracker crumbs  
3 tablespoons of sugar  
Pinch of salt

#### Brownies:

Box of brownie mix, including the ingredients on the back of the box

#### Topping:

5 cups of mini marshmallows

#### Instructions:

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 13x9 baking pan.

For the crust: Stir the butter together with the crumbs, sugar and salt. Press the crumb mixture evenly over the bottom of the pan. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, stir together the brownie mix and the other mix ingredients according to the box recipe.

When the crust is finished, pour the brownie batter over it and cook for 28-30 minutes.

When an inserted toothpick or fork comes out clean, remove the brownies from the oven. Position the oven rack about six inches from the broiler and turn the broiler on. Layer the marshmallows across the top and toast under the broiler until golden brown. Make sure you keep your eye on it unless you like burnt marshmallows! Let it cool for a while, then remove the brownies from the pan in any way possible. Make sure to lick your fingers and enjoy!

Found at foodnetwork.com, but the recipe was modified.

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