

The life lessons of a Cougar

One 'mature' woman shares the unexpected joys she has found by breaking down her self-imposed barriers ... in the bedroom. Her adventures with men half her age ultimately led her to experience a 'swoon-worthy life.'

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Patsy Mennuti shares the life lessons she has learned as a "cougar" — a woman of a certain age who seeks relationships, no matter how brief, with much younger men, called "cubbies." (Photo by Jason Leidy)



Written By

Patsy Mennuti *Chaser of Cubbies*

I have a theory: Say yes to enough things you love, and eventually, you weave together a life you love. But what if the thing you love more than anything else in life is absolutely absurd and completely improper — bedding college boys you met online when you're a "nice, mature, spiritual woman?" And what would happen if you gave into that desire with reckless abandon?

I knew I was in trouble when I found myself breezing through Abercrombie & Fitch stores when I was 38. (Mind you, I don't have kids.) I laughed it off at the time, chalking up my yearnings to being in an unfulfilling relationship. However, in my late 40s and finally single, there was no denying my attraction to guys half my age. In fact, 30 was even too old.

One day, my gay best friend of 25 years intervened. His name is Scott, but I call him Snoopy.

"Pats, I can't listen to this anymore. Ya gotta do something about it. Do that online dating thing," he said.

"But, Snoopy, I caaaaaan't go on Tinder. You know what that's for!!!!" I said.

"Yeh, that's why you're gettin' on it. And if you don't make a profile, I will make one for you," he said, sternly.

When he suggested a Grindr-like bio that described me as a meat-eating vegetarian, I knew I needed to take matters into my own hands. I created a Tinder account with my real age, my real photos, and my real name. However, signing up for this "service" and actually using it for its intended purpose were two different matters altogether.

I was raised in a fundamentalist Christian home and in an American culture that has very fixed ideas of how women should behave. Despite years of therapy and healing work, I found myself face-to-face with this idealized self-image of myself. As a yoga teacher and life coach, what would my clients and peers think of me if they found out I was on Tinder, sleeping with random, young strangers just because it was fun? I would never have gainful employment again! In addition, these pursuits weren't "spiritual" and didn't have a point to them. They didn't go along with a self-respecting woman successful in her career and life rounding the age of 50.

As I began to give myself permission to go on a few "dates" (let's be honest, they were more like quarter-night-stands if I was lucky), and I began to share with friends and clients bits and pieces of my adventures, peculiar and surprising things began to happen. My relationships began to deepen, I finally found my voice, I had greater access to spiritual insights, and my creativity flourished. I scratched my head over it all.

And then I realized what was going on.



Patsy Mennuti, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is a yoga teacher and transformational coach. (Photo by Jason Leidy)

When I stopped denying, lopping off, and hiding parts of my authentic self-expression, Life responded in turn, meeting me back with all of the things I had been longing for. Sexual expression and exploration were not the ends, I discovered, but the means to creating a swoon-worthy life. My pursuit wasn't about falling in love with some Gen-Zer named Declan. It was about honoring an energy pulling me in a certain direction that deepened my love for mySelf. What that required of me was undeterred faith and trust in mySelf to express all of me, as well as in the unseen, organizing energies of Life.

The desires of each individual heart are as unique as snowflakes or fingerprints. Our most sacred responsibility in life as a human is to be the bellows on the embers of our Life-given precious desires. Tend our desires and they will tend us in return.

For me, it was sex with young hotties that led to greater fulfillment. For my girlfriend, it was fanning her furniture-restoring ember (OK, maybe a bad analogy for woodworking.) For another friend, it was going back at age 50 to advance her nursing studies. For my baby sister, it was leaving a lifetime career in corporate America to fan the spark of opening a coastal Italian restaurant.

So back to my theory about creating a life you love by choosing things you love. Your heart's desires do not need to make sense. Furthermore, the only one your heart's desires should matter to is Y-O-U, which means that the sole responsibility for their tending resides within your power, and no one else's. What are your sparks? What do you long for? Those are your clues! Pursue what you love as if your life depends on it. Because it actually does.