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Finding Love Through Chocolate

How One Capitol Hill Woman Met Her Husband

BY PATTIE CINELLI

Erin Gorman has lived on Capitol Hill since 1999. She worked for a non-profit corporation that handled fair trade issues. Through her job, she met a British woman, Pauline Tiffin, who was on the board of a unique chocolate company – Divine Chocolate – a fair trade company owned by small cocoa farmers in Ghana.

“Divine’s mission is to improve the lives of small cocoa farmers,” said Erin. She was impressed with the concept and the function of the cooperative called Kuapa Kokoo, which means good cocoa growers. The cooperative has a mission to empower farmers in their efforts to gain a dignified livelihood, to increase women’s participation in all of Kuapa’s activities, and to develop environmentally friendly cultivation of cocoa.

Divine is the only fair trade chocolate company that is 45 percent owned by farmers. Fair trade ensures farmers receive a better deal for their cocoa and additional income – a share of the profits – is a benefit of company ownership.

“It is very unusual for farmers to have a say in the chocolate market. Most cocoa farmers will never have tasted chocolate in their lifetime.” According to Erin, 70 percent of the world’s cocoa comes from West Africa and 49 percent is from Uganda.

The uniqueness of the company and Divine’s commitment to improving the lives of small cocoa farmers was a natural fit for Erin. In 2005 she left her job and joined Pauline at Divine Chocolate Company.

About the same time Erin joined Divine Chocolate as its CEO, her colleague Pauline and her husband opened a new Turkish restaurant on Pennsyl-

vania Avenue called Meyhane. Pauline and her husband did not anticipate the popularity of the restaurant in the early months of its opening and solicited friends to help out. Erin was often in the restaurant serving as hostess or doing whatever was needed. At the same time, a friend of Pauline’s husband, Utku Aslanturk, also frequented Meyhane. He became smitten and asked Erin out. “It was not love at first sight,” joked Erin. “In fact, I turned him down. I thought he was too young.” (He’s a few years younger than Erin.) But Utku said her refusal just made him more interested. He asked again.

“I reluctantly accepted. I thought, what harm could it do going to dinner. After all, I’m not going to marry this guy!” Erin smiled. “I realized at dinner that this is the man I WAS going to marry. He was so level-headed, mature and honest. I don’t think I ever met anyone quite like him.” Utku said he also knew after that first dinner that this was going to be a serious relationship.

Erin and Utku dated for a few years. Both had strong commitments to their businesses. Erin had become CEO of Divine which involved travel to Uganda, and Utku and his brother own Dila Construction and Zeyno Cabinets and Countertops on Capitol Hill. Utku suggested they take a vacation to his home country of Turkey. They could relax, and he could show her around.

However, once Erin got there, she realized there was an underlying motive

for Utku’s insistence that they visit his home. “He tricked me. I realized after just a day there I was being interviewed by his mother, except I knew no Turkish and she understood no English.” Utku left Erin at home with his mother for several hours while he went out with



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his friends. His cousins who spoke English came to translate. “They asked me all sorts of questions.”

According to Utku, it is Turkish tradition for a son to have approval from his mother before he proposes to a woman. When they returned to Capitol Hill, Utku took Erin to a favorite Turkish restaurant in Adams Morgan. “He sat me down at a table and looked very serious,” said Erin. “I have something to tell you, he said. My mother said I can’t marry you. For a second my heart sank, but then the waiter came with champagne and roses and Utku proposed.”

The couple married in 2007 in Turkey. “Utku has a huge family and mine is small. We had around 200 people at the ceremony.” The couple lives in a recently renovated home that has a “mother-in-law suite.” Erin can now speak household Turkish and can converse with Utku’s parents when they visit.

Divine Chocolate, which first opened in the United Kingdom, is 15 years old. Erin remained CEO until her daughter Duru was born almost two years ago. She is now vice chairman of Divine’s board of directors. She continues to set strategy and help support senior management of the company.

Divine chocolate is not a super premium expensive chocolate, but falls somewhere in the middle of the market. “Divine believes everyone should have access to good chocolate. Divine can be found at Whole Foods

and seasonal items such as dark, milk and white chocolate hearts can be found at local stores like Yes. Its full line of dark, white and milk chocolate bars can be ordered on its website – www.divinechocolate.com.

Divine’s website also has videos of the cocoa farmers, information on the company and delicious-sounding recipes such as Heavenly White chocolate Brownies, Divine Velvet Cheesecake and Italian Fig and Chocolate Ice Cream that uses Divine chocolate as an ingredient.

In 2003 the Sanderson Hotel in London launched a unique range of chocolate cocktails made with Divine Chocolate. The following is one of the hotel’s cocktail recipes on Divine’s website.

Divine Chocolate Mojito

A delicious cocktail recipe by mixologist at the Virgin Clubhouse, Heathrow

Ingredients

3/4 lime diced, 2 tbs of brown fair-trade sugar, 8 mint leaves, 1 mint leaf for garnish, 1 tbs of melted Divine Dark Chocolate, 100ml Dark Rum, 10ml Creme de Cacao

Method Pour the creme de cacao in a tall drinking glass. Mix the lime, mint and sugar and mix into creme de cacao. Add the melted Divine Dark Chocolate. Fill glass with crushed ice. Pour the dark rum over the ice and mix with a long spoon. Taste and add more sugar or ice if needed. Garnish with a sprig of mint. ★



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Feeling Stuck?

Get off the Merry-Go-Round and Find Your Way Forward

BY RONDA BRESNICK HAUSS, LCSW

Going Round in Circles?

Do you ever feel that you are re-visiting the same Monday again and again -- like that movie *Ground Hog Day*? Going through your repeated schedule each week makes it easy enough to feel that life is stuck on repeat or that you are trapped in some endless loop.

That daily grind can leave us in a mind-numbing state, feeling that we will forever be slogging through some predictable schedule -- but is it true? Do our lives have to be a repetition of the same cycle, the same routine, the same argument or same route home? And if not - then what?

Looking Ahead

When we are feeling stuck in an endless cycle, perhaps it is because our focus is on the short term -- getting through the day, the week, the month. What if we lifted our gaze beyond the short term and thought more about where we want to be headed. What if we allowed ourselves to imagine what we would love to be doing with our lives.

What would you do if you were guaranteed you could not fail? So much of what keeps us stuck in the daily grind is the fear that we might not succeed if we took the risk to do what we love to do. So what would you do if you could not fail, and what small step could you take today that could put you on that road?

Another question to ask yourself is how much of your life are you willing to invest in that daily grind - you do not have an endless life - how many weeks, months or years are you willing to spend living your life stuck on repeat? Are you willing to look back on your life when it is coming to a close and say that you spent your days going through the motions, and if not, what could you begin to do about that now?

What if I Don't Know What I Love to Do?

It's all well and good to say follow your heart, to live your life with purpose, but what if you don't know what that is? If you are unsure, ask yourself what really matters to you in life, what is most important to you. If that evades you, then try asking yourself what you loved to do as a child. Could you incorporate some aspect of that into your life now?

Watch out for your self-limiting beliefs. We have many thousands of thoughts in a

day -- and most of us believe that these thoughts are true. Many of these thoughts, however, are either products of our upbringing or of our culture. They can be self-limiting and hold us back from living the life we want.

It's also easier when we are stuck to blame other people for our own circumstances - a bad boss, a relationship that is not working out. No one else is responsible for your life, however convenient it may be to think so. When you can realize that you are the person that can make the change in your own life, you begin to make a step forward in getting unstuck.

Practicing Acceptance

There are times when it is not possible to make a change, and yet you may find that you are resistant to the way things are. Maybe you have had the same conversation with a teenager or a spouse for the hundredth time, and find that it is making no difference. You may feel that you are stuck, hitting your head against a brick wall and getting nowhere but frustrated. Sometimes, the only way we to deal with the unchangeable is to accept the way that it is. With acceptance you may find some measure of calmness and emotional distance, and it is then you might find a different way to address the situation.

"You cannot step twice into the same river"

However it may seem that we are eternally repeating the same pattern, we might consider the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who said that everything is constantly changing or, "you cannot step twice into the same river." However it may seem that we are stuck in the same Monday morning, no Monday morning is ever the same. Each day is unique, one we have never seen before. If we can see our lives in this way, then there is no endlessly repeating schedule, no daily grind and no getting stuck.

Ronda Bresnick Hauss is a licensed clinical social worker and the founder of the Quiet Waters Center for Trauma, Stress and Resilience, on Capitol Hill. She uses an integrative & holistic approach to psychotherapy - addressing the connection between the mind, body and spirit through the use of traditional talk therapy, meditation, visualization, and creative, non-verbal techniques. She can be reached at: 202-544-5050 and is on the web at: HYPERLINK "http://www.quietwaterscenter.com" ★



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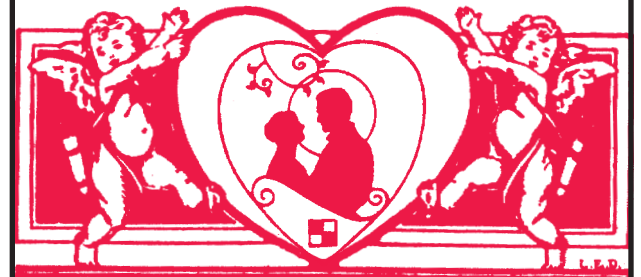
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Pet Projects:

New Year's Resolutions for the Pet Owner

BY DR. MATTHEW ANTKOWIAK AND DR. CHRISTOPHER MILLER



In the time honored tradition of making changes to your life for the New Year, we would like to humbly introduce the first annual New Year's resolutions for the Capitol Hill pet owner. There are always aspects of our relationships with our family pets that can always be improved upon. However, as with our own lists, if we can accomplish even one or two resolutions then this is a personal victory. The point of a list such as this is not to preach or point fingers, but to help improve quality of life by strengthening and prolonging the bond we have with our pets.

1. I resolve to keep my pet's weight under control. According to the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine, between 60 and 70 percent of the owners of obese pets don't think their dogs are heavy. Obesity, just as in humans, is a serious problem in pets and can lead to cardiac problems, diabetes, or can worsen pre-existing problems like osteoarthritis, a bad back or knee problems. You, the diligent owner, have fed your pet the same diet as you always have, you are going by the recommended amount on the back of the bag of food, yet your cat or dog continues to maintain or gain weight. What are you doing wrong? Here are the quick answers (Brace yourself):

- a. Feed less. I know, I know, sounds too simple to be true, but the honest fact is that as your pet gets older, their metabolism slows and you would be amazed at how little your sedentary cat or sleep-on-the-couch dog needs.
- b. Don't let your emotions rule feeding habits. When we,

the veterinarians, make a feeding recommendation we hear "But that can't possibly be enough food!" but it usually is. Rule of thumb – Get a starting weight, feed your pet 25% less and reweigh in 2 weeks. If the weight is the same, cut back another 25% and reweigh. If there is appropriate weight loss, maintain the diet.

c. Food does not equal love. Cut out the snacks. As much as we love the joy-in-the-eyes tap dance that extra treats often bring out in our pets, there are other healthier options than the equivalent of a calorie rich milk bone. Fresh or frozen carrots and green beans are great alternatives or break down that treat to one-quarter of its original size.

d. Get help. All weight loss programs should be accomplished under the direction of your veterinarian. There are some serious side effects, especially in cats, of losing weight too quickly. Also, your pet not eating for 2-3 days may have the desired effect of weight loss, but may also indicate a larger underlying problem that your veterinarian should address.

2. I resolve to get my pet more exercise. Going hand-in-hand with the above resolution is increasing your pet's activity. An active dog is a healthy dog and even your older Basset Hound could use an extra stroll down East Capitol. Get to Lincoln Park, Kingsman Dog Park, and Congressional Cemetery to get your dog the exercise he or she



deserves. Cat owners can replace that beat up scratching post, get a new ball to be batted about or just take a half hour out of your busy day to play with your cat via laser mouse or dangling string toy from Metro Mutts. This kind of activity is great for your pet and not too shabby for yourself either.

3. I resolve not to ignore changes in my pet. Increased thirst, increased urination, loss of appetite, inappropriate weight loss, hiding more often, less energetic on walks, and significant hair coat changes are often written off as "allergies", "change of season", or "age-related" and are often ignored. Many of these signs can be significant and an indication of underlying problems. If you notice ongoing changes in your pet, please schedule a visit with your veterinarian.

4. I resolve to get my pet spayed or neutered. A no-brainer, right? However, despite study after study showing spaying or neutering will prolong your pet's life, some pet lovers simply choose not to for emotional or convenience issues. Need a refresher course on the benefits? www.aspc.org/pet-care/spayneuter/spay-neuter-top-ten.aspx Also, if expense is an issue, the Washington Hu-

mane Society offers low cost and sometimes free spays and neuters at their SW location.

5. I resolve to be better about my pet's dental hygiene. Your pet's dental health is important and often overlooked. Like your dentist, we recommend daily brushing. However, for those of us that cannot make time for this in their everyday routine, annual anesthetized dental cleanings are advised. Obviously, there are exceptions to this rule and individual options should be discussed with your veterinarian.

The New Year is a chance to set in motion personal goals we may have previously discarded in the hope for a healthier and happier life. The same applies to our animals and the resolutions we can make on their behalf will allow you to continue your relationship with your pet for years to come.

We at AtlasVet hope you and yours have a safe, happy and healthy 2012!

See you 'round the Hill!

Both Dr. Antkowiak and Dr. Miller reside in Capitol Hill and are the owners of AtlasVet (the Atlas District Veterinary Hospital) at 1326 H St. NE which opened in January. (www.facebook.com/atlasvetdc)



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Winter Bicycle Commuting: Yes, you can!

BY CATHERINE PLUME



According to the 2010 census, 3.1 percent of DC's population regularly commutes to work by bicycle, and DC now ranks fifth among major US cities in bicycle commuting. I come from (far) south of the Mason-Dixon, so it's taken me a few years to get the hang of winter. I've learned that with just a few accoutrements, you can enjoy a safe and comfortable bicycle commute. While winter cycling requires some additional gear, you don't have to break into your 401K. February is a great time to invest in winter gear as stores begin to clear their inventory for spring stocks. Here's a list of essentials - and some low-end options that will make your winter commute enjoyable!

A helmet is a necessity no matter what the season, and, yes, you should use a helmet even when using Capital Bike Share! Low-end Option: None. Protect your head!

Illuminate and reflect: While DC streets are well lit and you may not need lights to see where you're going, once the sun even begins to set, your visibility as a cyclist -- to cars, other cyclists, and pedestrians -- catapults into near oblivion. Invest in lights whether you cycle on trails or roads, and put them on the front and back of your bike. Battery powered front (white) bike lights go through a lot of batteries. Rechargeable lights cost a bit, but after five years and daily use for six months of a year, mine is still as bright as a car headlight when charged (which takes about an hour). Red, flashing battery-powered lights should be on the back of your bike. An extra one or two on your backpack or helmet is a good idea, too. Reflector bike vests are also a wise investment. Low-end Option: While these don't replace lights, stick-on reflectors are inexpensive, or attach an old CD or two to your wheels with a zip-tie. Most of all - BE SEEN!!

Insulate thyself! For many Hill cyclists, a bicycle commute includes a brisk (read CHILLY) ride down Capitol Hill. But, eventually, you'll work up some heat, so you don't want to overdress. Here are a few tips for striking a comfortable balance.

- **Gloves:** On cold mornings, consider a thin glove with a heavier glove or mitten over them. They can't be too bulky, or you won't be able to brake. Low-end Option: Slip in charcoal hand warmers (you can buy them at Frager's). Tooooooasty!
- **Shoe covers:** The top of the foot where it meets ankle can get miserably cold on a bike. Shoe covers help your feet stay warm, and they can keep the rain out of your shoes year round. My shoe covers are fairly flimsy, but they keep my feet warm and dry. Buy a size that will fit over the shoe you wear as many are designed to fit only over clip-in bike shoes. Low-end Option: Plastic bags over your shoes and cinched at the ankle with a rubberband won't win you any fashion awards, but they will keep your toes warm!
- **Layering:** A pair of tights or long johns under your bike pants, slacks or skirt will help keep your legs warm. Low-



Capitol Hill Bikes has a section just for female cyclists!

end Option: On really cold and rainy days, a ski pants/tights or long john combo is great waterproof option.

- A thin skull cap or head band will protect your ears from the cold and still allow you to wear your helmet. A neck warmer/scarf allows you to turtle in from the wind. As winter sets in, a neoprene face mask is a great windbreaker for your face. Finally, eyewear – either sun- or clear glasses will protect your eyes from the wind. Yes, you will resemble a terrorist, but if you're on a bike, the Capitol Police will understand and let you pass!

If you're not ready to embrace a daily winter bike commute to work, consider a trial run on a "warmer" winter day. Capital Bike Share provides an easy bike commute option, (and Spotcycle is a great app that will give you real-time information on the number of bikes and docks available at any given station). Capitol Hill Bikes and City Bikes, both located in the 700 block of 8th St. SE, have a good selection of biking gear and knowledgeable staff who can help cyclists of any level. The Daily Rider (<http://thedailyriderdc.com>) will open soon at 1108 H Street NE. DC also has several online resources for bicycle commuting. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (www.waba.org) and The Wash Cycle (www.thewashcycle.com) are two of my favorites.

And the best part of biking to work in 30 degree weather? It makes biking to work on 40 degree days seem like a trip to the beach!

Catherine Plume blogs for the DC Recycler (dcrecycler.blogspot.com). ★



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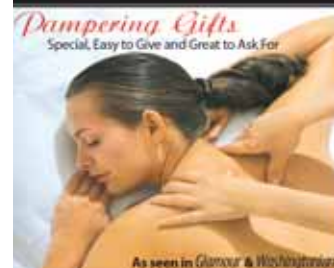
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When Divorce Is Collaborative Instead of Combative

By BARBARA A. BURR

As a longtime family law attorney in Washington, D.C., I recently met with a very unhappy couple who were looking for legal help to sort out their affairs as they struggled through the painful decision to separate and divorce.

Speaking of affairs, the marriage had ended in an instant. In a “snap,” as Martha might say in “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf,” Edward Albee’s bitterly painful peak into one married couple’s particularly painful dysfunction.

The husband who sat in my office had a one-night tryst with another woman while away on business. The wife, following a suspicion, snuck a peak at his blackberry and confronted her husband. The husband admitted the adultery. The wife felt her world go black. It was as if everything she had known, everything that she relied on -- for better or for worse -- was gone, in a snap.

The wife, feeling hurt and betrayed certainly, but also feeling humiliated and belittled beyond words, kicked her husband out of the house immediately. The husband, hating himself for his selfishness and stupidity and barely able to stand the pain he had inflicted on his wife, complied. Before he knew it, he found himself sitting alone in a rented apartment, with the family’s old couch and TV, and the couple’s bed (as the wife no longer wanted it in the home). Life as he knew it was over.

After 15 years of marriage and three children, the couple was now looking to me to help them disentangle the logistics of their very-intertwined day-to-day lives while simultaneously navigating the

emotional tidal waves that accompany divorce. They had some urgent questions:

- Could they afford the housing and living expenses of both the family home and the husband’s new apartment?
- What about the children, what about custody?
- Was it OK for the children to sleep at the husband’s new apartment?
- How would the children cope with becoming children of divorce?
- Should she hire a shark and seek a pound of flesh? Her friends were telling her to make him pay for his infidelity.
- Should he hire a shark to make sure that he did agree to a settlement that he could not afford because of his feeling of guilt?

As I watched the couple whirl through their questions reflecting all of their hurts, their fears, their uncertainties, I was struck by the very sad truth that at the end of the day, at the bottom of all that hurt and betrayal and distrust, both the husband and the wife really just wanted their old life back.

I do not know how any couple overcomes the breach of adultery. I especially did not know if this couple had whatever it takes to make such reconciliation possible. But I knew that this husband and this wife, notwithstanding the hostility and anger they felt at the moment, otherwise were decent, caring, honest people who were slogging their way through the worst patch of their lives.

If they could not save their marriage, they deserved to find a way to move beyond the anger and the

hurt to a place where they could treat each other (and be treated by the other) with civility and respect, and where they could find some peace in their new lives and their new identities as ex-spouses and co-parents.

A Better Way

So, is there a better way? Is there a way to divorce that not only promises, but delivers more civility and respect? And if so, what are the costs? Is it safe for the wife to trust her cheating husband to behave honorably in divorce negotiations? Can the husband engage in voluntary settlement negotiations without getting taken to the cleaners? Is it possible to negotiate the dissolution of the marriage without magnifying the most damaging and destructive aspects of the couple’s dynamic? Is it realistic, given the anger and hostility between the husband and wife, to expect them to treat each other with civility and respect?

Collaborative divorce is an alternative approach to the traditional combative divorce. Collaborative divorce engages divorcing couples outside of the courtroom in an open, supportive, lower-conflict environment. Collaborative divorce focuses on helping couples find shared solutions -- solutions that take into account what is important and acceptable to the wife and what is important and acceptable to the husband.

In the Collaborative Process, the husband and wife each have the support of their own lawyer in the room. Collaborative lawyers help the couple identify what is most important to them and then help

them advocate for those goals with civility and respect. The couple also has the option to call on trained financial professionals to help both the parties collect, organize and understand their financial circumstances. In this way, the wife can rely on facts and certainty about her actual budget when evaluating decisions about alimony and child support. And both parties can assess whether a particular settlement is affordable before agreeing to its terms.

The couple may also call upon mental health professionals who serve as Divorce Coaches who help the parties keep their settlement discussions safe and productive and also help the parties manage the emotions that accompany divorce negotiations. Divorce Coaches may help the wife understand how better managing her own anger in settlement meetings will help the meeting proceed (and thus end) more quickly. And the husband may learn how to speak up about what is important to him, notwithstanding how guilty he feels about his contribution to the breakdown in the marriage.

Mental health professionals also may serve as Child Specialists, who provide special insight and information about the needs and concerns of the parties’ children. Child Specialists may help the wife remember that notwithstanding how her husband betrayed her, the children still love and respect him as their dad and that the children have much to gain, and the wife has nothing to lose by allowing the children to feel free to love both parents unconditionally.

Collaborative divorce focuses on

helping the divorcing couple and their family move beyond the divorce and forward with their lives. In this way, getting through divorce can be a little less painful.

Moving Forward Safely and Productively

My secret hope for this couple is that with the support of a Collaborative Team, the husband might find the safety to tell his wife that in losing her he has already lost what mattered most to him in the world and that he is devastated because all the money in the world cannot buy that back. And that the wife might then find the nerve to admit that she does not know how to forgive him and maintain her dignity as a woman and as his wife. And that together, they might find the courage to explore whether they have what it takes to repair their marriage.

But even if they do not, I am confident that the Collaborative Process will give them the best possible opportunity to move through the divorce negotiations with grace, support and respect so that one day they will be able to fathom their future as ex-spouses and co-parents feeling a little more calm and settled about their past, feeling proud of how they handled this horrible moment in their lives, and in the end, feeling a little more hopeful about their future.

Barbara Burr can be reached at 202-347-9002 or at bburr@burr-lawfirm.com. For more information on the Collaborative Process go to <http://www.dcmetrocollaborative.org>. ★

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