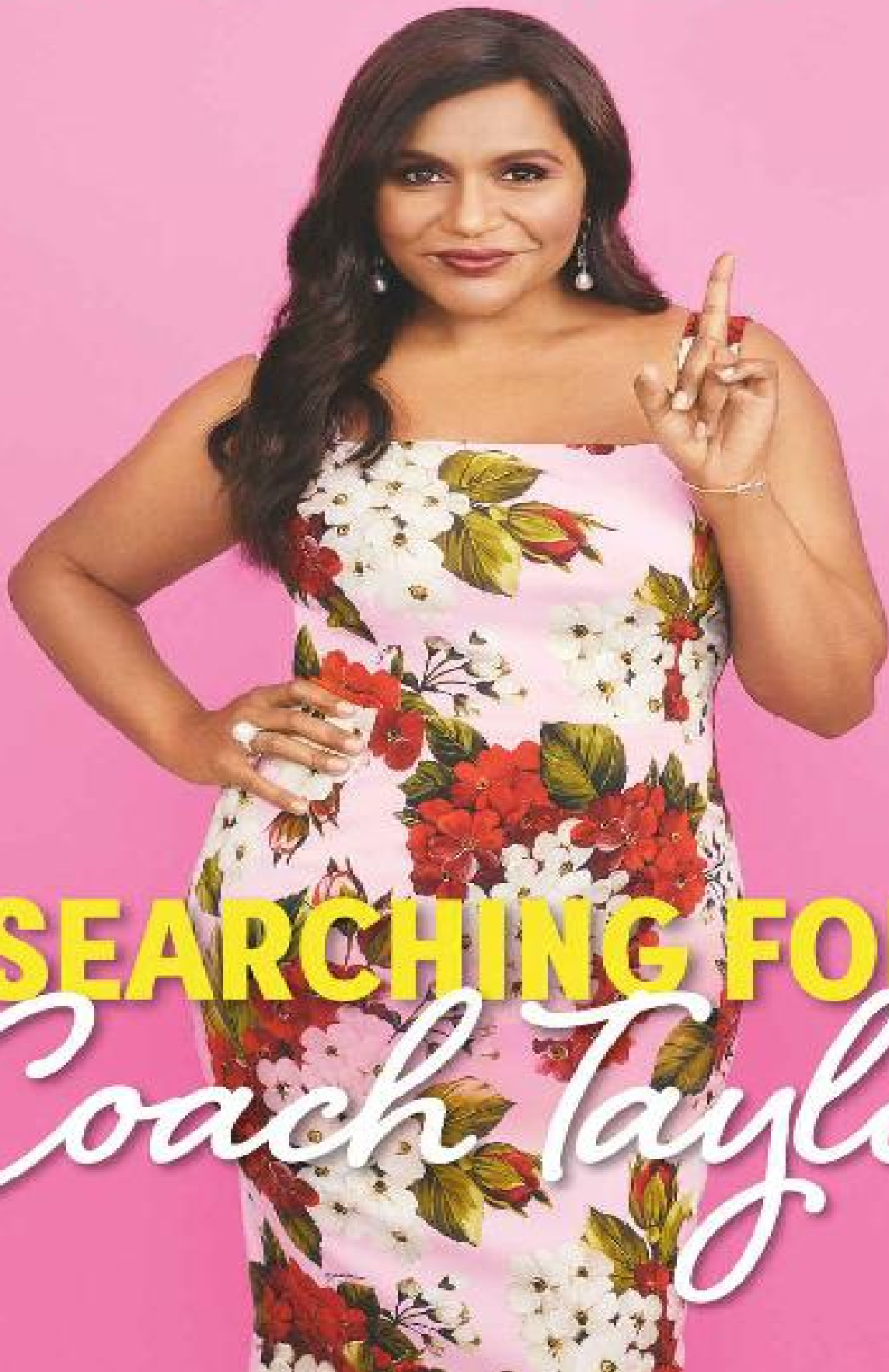


AMAZON ORIGINAL STORIES

MINDY KALING



**SEARCHING FOR**  
*Coach Taylor*

AMAZON ORIGINAL STORIES

MINDY KALING

**SEARCHING FOR**  
*Coach Taylor*

**NOTHING LIKE  
I IMAGINED**

*(Except for Sometimes)*

Text copyright © 2020 by Mindy Kaling

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher.

Published by Amazon Original Stories, Seattle  
[www.apub.com](http://www.apub.com)

Amazon, the Amazon logo, and Amazon Original Stories are trademarks of [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), Inc., or its affiliates.

eISBN: 9781542017220

Cover photo by Mike Rosenthal

Cover design by Liz Casal

Illustrations by Abbey Lossing



## A Little Bit Sweaty

The other day I was at a party in the Hollywood Hills. It was unlike most parties in the Hills in that it was for a two-year-old, but it was *just* like most parties in the Hills in that I was the only single mom present. Yes, this happens a lot, but it's not a big deal to me. It's like being Indian or a woman in comedy—I think about it way less than other people do, so I'm sometimes surprised to see that it's a big part of my “deal” to the outside world. What I do notice, more and more, is how my presence has an effect on some of the other nonsingle parents, and their compulsion to make me feel more comfortable.

The other moms started to engage in what I call “pity-patter”—small talk filled with little bits of pity sprinkled in, and delivered to me so as not to be overtly apparent but also be very clear: “I pity your single mom existence, so I’m going to make you feel better by complaining about my coupled lifestyle.”

I actually think that it's coming from a good place. I'll be the first to admit that single moms can be perplexing as hell. We're overextended, guilt ridden that we're not successfully embodying two perfect parents, and a little bit sweaty. These also happen to be the qualities that make us super effective. If you see a single mom without armpit stains, it probably means her kid is off at college. (Before my fellow single moms get mad at me, hear me out. Just because we are overextended and a little bit sweaty, doesn't mean we can't be sexy, loving, and total boss bitches. We just have to plan a little more, that's all.)

Anyway, back to pity-patter. It goes like this: “Mindy, you're so lucky—I swear my husband is more work than my kids . . . You're so lucky—if I have to thank or compliment my husband for wiping my kid's nose again, I'm going to lose my mind.”

This is a sophisticated psychological mind game, so let me break down how it works:

Married mom complains to the single mom about her husband, feigning desire to be single in an attempt to make the single mom feel better about being husband-less. Unfortunately, what comes across is the opposite and actually makes the single mom feel worse. Look, we know that you feel so superior being married that you can conversationally toss around the idea of detesting your husband and wishing he were dead because the opposite is so clearly true. You don't wish he were dead; you love him. If you really wished he were dead, you wouldn't go around saying it like some absolute psycho. It's like me joking around that I hate Dick Wolf procedural crime dramas when we all know I treasure them more than my family.

But with pity-patter, I always end up with that horrible feeling that the minute those couples get back into their Tesla SUVs, the wife says, "Oh, I feel so bad for Mindy. I'm so glad that I have you." And then the husband gets his pity hummer because they're so turned on by my loneliness. Pity is the absolute worst, and nobody wants to feel pitied. But sometimes I have to wonder if they really do pity me, or if something else is going on. Women are smart. Married women must know that when they trash their husbands, we interpret it as a sign of their love and deep companionship, making us feel worse about being single. And if they know this, then the only reason they would say anything is if for some reason they actually *wanted* us to feel worse about being single. And the only reason they'd want us to feel worse about being single is if they were secretly jealous. So maybe pity-patter isn't pity at all, but actually envy disguised as pity disguised as goodwill and kindness?

You can see I think about this stuff a lot. Maybe too much.

Being single, and being a single mom, is really complicated. Sometimes it's the most liberating and lucky feeling in the world. Sometimes I am just so grateful to be an independent woman doing what I want, when I want, that I could cry with gratitude. I can't believe the shit my married female friends have to put up with. But other times I could cry because I can't believe I'm not in the kind of stable and happy marriage that my parents had. Either way, there's a lot of crying.

It's fun to have a partner. It's why buddy comedies exist. Movies about solo journeys are scary and depressing. I would rather be in *Step Brothers* than *127 Hours*, wouldn't you? And a successful marriage is the ultimate buddy comedy.

For the record, I don't hate husbands. I actually love husbands in theory; I just don't have one. As a kid, my idea of a husband was informed primarily by sitcoms. On '80s and '90s sitcoms, there were two types of husbands. The first was a gruff and overweight man, whose sole goal upon returning home from work was to avoid his family and anesthetize his day away with beer and televised sports. The second was a skittish, smiley man, who tried to please his wife but shirked household chores. Both always wanted to have sex with their unwilling wives and somehow, at the end of the day, commanded respect from their families, although I'm not sure why. They were funny and entertaining, but neither was the kind of man I'd want to spend my life with.

Then, in my twenties, I watched *Friday Night Lights* and was introduced to Coach Taylor, played by national treasure Kyle Chandler. Now *that* was a husband I could get behind. Besides being objectively handsome to anyone with a pulse, Coach Taylor was a stoic provider with a moral center so solid a team full of messed-up high school football players, and probably the entire state of Texas, could rely on it. He would never pee on the toilet seat. He would never complain about having to make himself dinner because I was busy at work. He would never coax his tired wife into having nightly sex when she wasn't in the mood—she would *always* be in the mood; he's Coach Taylor for God's sake!

The problem with basing your dream husband on the men you see on TV is that no actual human resembles any of them. You go forth with this traditionally gorgeous, morally flawless ideal that you can't actually find out in the three-dimensional world. The men you meet can't live up to these unrealistic standards. They will be flawed—not in the charming way that TV characters are flawed (he tried to cook you dinner for your birthday and set fire to the kitchen), but in a really annoying way that is tedious to put up with (he sides with his mother over you constantly)—and they will disappoint you. Until you find the right one, I'm told. Then, yes, he'll be flawed and sometimes annoying and sometimes disappointing, but this will be outweighed by your love for him and the bond you share. Isn't that romantic?



## Times I Wish I Had a Husband

### When I'm Alone at a Party

A husband is a built-in, permanent plus-one. That is extremely valuable. I love going to parties with a buffer between myself and people I don't want to talk to. That's heaven.

When I go to a party alone, I'm so stressed about all the conversation I have to make, trying to find things I have in common with everyone. *OMG the new artisanal coffee place on Larchmont! OMG Fleabag! OMG the president!* Eventually I end up excusing myself to go to the bathroom, where I play *Donut County* on my phone to relax.

If I were at a party with my husband, we could choose to not socialize at all. We could stand in the corner ignoring everybody else. Our time could be spent constructing shopping lists or itemizing all of our familial tax exemptions. "Hey, don't judge us," we'd say. "At least we left the house." Then I would wrap my arm around my husband, who'd be wearing the outfit I chose for him, including the pocket square he found "unnecessary," and together we would sip from our shared glass of top-shelf red wine that some sad single person had brought. Heaven!

### When I Need to Reach Things

I am five feet, four inches and sometimes there's a bottle of wine on the top shelf of my cupboard. Or occasionally I'm in the grocery store and there's a bottle of wine on the top shelf, and I don't want to ask some judgmental kid who works there to help me. These are times it

would be extremely helpful to have a taller person around. To access bottles of wine just out of reach.

## When Kids' Books Mention Daddies

As any single mom knows, this one can really suck. When there's a dad character in a book, I want to explain it to Kit in a confident but economical way so our story time doesn't get derailed by a long conversation about personal choices. Once, Daniel Tiger's dad took him to the park with his new bicycle, and I started babbling like an obviously guilty criminal in the interrogation room at a police station. Daniel Tiger's dad was so cute and affectionate, shouldn't Kit have a cute and affectionate dad/tiger in her life? This would be undeniably easier to handle if I had a husband. I could just point to him and say, "That's *your* Daniel Tiger's dad."

## When I Want Dessert at a Restaurant

I happen to love dining alone at restaurants. I can read a book or be on my phone with impunity without annoying a significant other or signaling to the rest of the restaurant how dysfunctional we are. The only issue is, having more than a two-course meal when you're solo dining is a bit much for any person. *Of course* I want to see the dessert menu. But *should* I see the dessert menu? Do I *need* to order something from it? No. But if I had a husband, he'd happily split any dessert with me, thus absorbing half the calories and guilt. Or, I would make him.

## When My Kid Does Something Amazing

My daughter is in a phase where she pronounces the "bluh" sound from a "bl-" as "biz." So when she asks for her blue blanket, she says, "I want my bizzou bizzanket." This little habit is incredibly endearing to me but would be understandably stone-cold boring to anyone who was not related to her by blood. When I show my coworkers kid videos, they nod and smile, but I can tell they're thinking: *Yeah, everyone has kids who do quirky shit like that. Let me drink my coffee and look at Twitter in peace.* It would be nice to text someone besides my dad, stepmom, or Kit's godfather when things like that happen. Someone who finds it as charming as I do because they're half of her genetic material. And I know what you're thinking: *You just named three people you can text about it! Isn't that enough?* And the answer is no, it's never enough until the entire world knows how cute my daughter is.

## When I Think about Diamond Rings

Possibly the most appealing thing about landing a husband is the jewelry that comes with him. It's so cool that couples commemorate a lifetime together with some serious bling. I wish this tradition applied to nonromantic relationships too. For example, if friends move in together, they should buy each other a celebratory necklace, or when a mom has a baby, she should buy herself a tiara. Wait, that's actually a great idea—is it too late to buy myself a new-mom tiara?



Of course, in exchange for that rock + husband combo, you often have to give up other privileges, like the driver's seat of a car. Which leads me to the next part of this essay.



## **Times I'm Happy I Don't Have a Husband**

### **When It Comes to Making Parenting Decisions**

I save a truly staggering amount of time not having to run my parenting decisions by another person. Good or bad, I can just, like, quickly make a decision and move on with my day. This is so gratifying. I have a friend whose arguments with her husband over circumcising their baby son took over most of her life (and most of mine talking about it). I don't have to deal with that. If I decide Kit is going to have french toast for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, so be it. If I decide to let her wear pajamas all day, hey, that's the way it goes. It's a joy not having to debate with someone I love over the lifestyle of another person we love. There is never a heated argument over how many Elmo videos my daughter can watch before bath time. Because, let's be honest, the answer is one hundred. I have come to realize that so much of life's happiness is in not having to deal with inconsistent messaging about Elmo videos! And more importantly, I never have any resentment over uneven distribution of childcare. I just know it's always going to be me. Which is exhausting and terrifying. But also empowering.

### **When It Comes to Sex**

I think it's fun and liberating that I don't have to have sex with the same person for the rest of my life. I'm not saying I want to sleep around until the day I die; I'm just saying that I've never been in a monogamous relationship with a person for more than two years where the sex hasn't

become a little boring. I guess I'm at the point in life where if I had to choose between having boring sex with someone I love for fifteen minutes before going to sleep or being on Instagram, I choose Instagram every time.

## **When I Hear about Dealing with Parents Who Aren't Mine**

From what I've gathered, when you get married, you *have* to be nice to your spouse's parents. You have to do things like use your vacation days to visit them and spend time talking to them and hearing about their problems. To be fair, they in turn care for your children. But I just would rather pay a nanny. I'm not obligated to care about her parents.

## **Whenever I Drive**

Like I said before, after he puts a ring on it, you always end up riding in the passenger seat. I don't know what it is about husbands, but they just love to drive. Unfortunately for my hypothetical future husband (Kyle Chandler, call me!), so do I, so he's going to have to fight me for it.

## **When I Remember Both Nightstands Are Mine**

If you're someone with only one nightstand, you may not understand how incredibly cool this is. I don't have to *share* my nightstands with anyone. I can use both of them to store ChapSticks, hair ties, night creams, jewelry, Advil, antacids, antihistamines, old valet tickets, empty glasses cases, empty Advil bottles, dead batteries, reject jewelry, gum wrappers, candy wrappers, and lots of pennies. Living. The. Dream.

## **When My Married Friends Have to Watch Movies They Hate**

Have fun sitting through *Caddyshack*, but I think I'll skip it.

## **Whenever I Watch TV**

This is related to the movie one, but different enough that it deserves its own paragraph. I am so happy I don't have to watch TV shows that I don't want to watch. I can marathon *The Good Wife* or *any* Christine Baranski show without interruption whenever I want. How many married women can say that? And the best part is that I don't have to leverage hours of football for it. Did you know that women who don't even like football will watch it just to make their husbands happy? I don't know, you guys, that sounds insane.

---

There's so much about my husband-less life that I love, and I do feel confident that it's the best choice for me right now. But life is long and we're always changing. When I look back at all the times I felt certain about something, I see that I was often wrong or ended up changing my mind. So I'm open to the possibility that my Coach Taylor is out there somewhere, just waiting to steal my second nightstand and limit Kit's Elmo intake. And he's Coach Taylor, so you know he'll probably want me to watch football with him. Ugh. Whatever, it's fine, I'll get my revenge by making him sit in the passenger seat and watch *The Good Wife* as often as possible. And maybe the sacrifices will feel worth it, because having a partner that amazing to journey with is just that rewarding.

In the meantime, there's no need to pity me. My situation might be different from yours, but it's no better and no worse. I try to remember that whenever I'm feeling lonely, and I hope I remember it if/when I have a husband and his parents are sawing away at my very last nerve.

# About The Author



*Photo 2020 by Mike Rosenthal*

Mindy Kaling is an actor, writer, producer, director, and the author of two *New York Times* bestselling memoirs. She is the creator and executive producer of the Netflix original series *Never Have I Ever*, which is based partly on her teen years. She also created and starred in *The Mindy Project* and the Amazon Original film *Late Night*. Previously, she was a writer, producer, director, and costar of the Emmy Award–winning sitcom *The Office*.