





Taking the Pressure out of Finding an Eternal Companion

By Dominika Stoica

The Church is very small in Poland. Actually, it's small everywhere in Eastern Europe. We often don't have a lot of Church members our age in our whole country, let alone our ward or stake. Luckily there are conferences for young single adults held each year in many European countries.

These conferences are organized not necessarily to help you find your "perfect match," but mostly to help young adults make new friends who share their values and strengthen them in their faith by talking to others about their spiritual experiences.

Focusing on Friendship

During one conference in Poland in 2010, I met Radu. He was from Romania. We talked briefly, but he soon left on his mission and our paths didn't cross again until another YSA conference three years later. There we had the time to actually get to know each other a little bit, but I was leaving on my own mission a month later.

Radu wished me all the best and said, "Let's keep in touch." I didn't really think he would, but he did. He wrote me letters throughout my mission. There was nothing romantic in his letters, but he became one of my dear friends. And I loved the respect he had for me and for missionary work in general.

When I returned home, Radu and I were both very excited to properly get to know each other—we could finally make it happen after so many years! We picked an affordable place for both of us to meet (which was Belgium at the time) to spend some time together. We talked and talked and talked some more.

Life isn't about getting married but rather becoming the best version of ourselves and letting God work His plan in our lives.

We didn't put any pressure on our relationship. We focused on building a friendship and simply getting to know each other. We always had so much fun together, but we also had very meaningful and profound discussions about the things that matter most. Over the next while, our friendship grew stronger. We Skyped almost daily, and over time we started saying nightly prayers together. We eventually started visiting each other's country every few months.

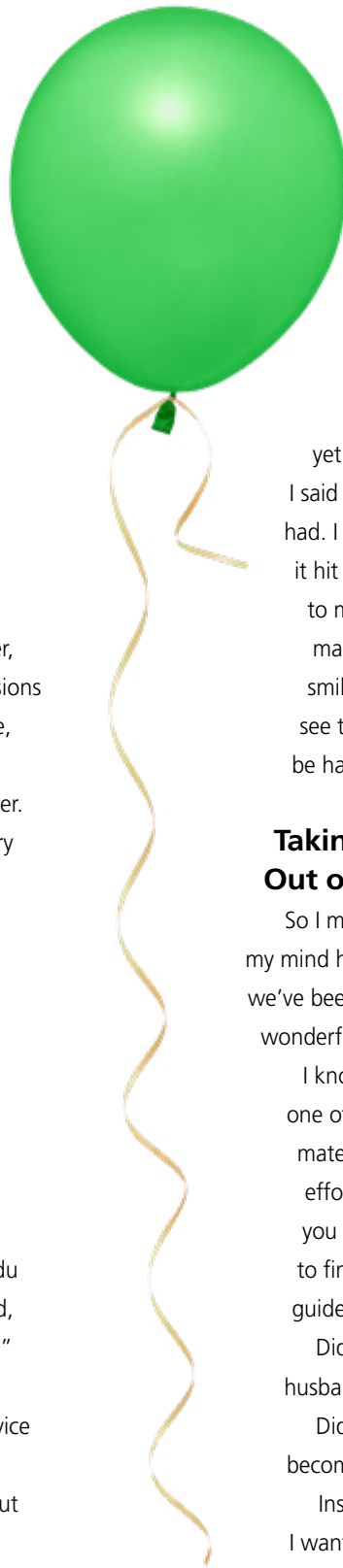
"Let's Pray about It"

After a while, I started feeling anxious because I felt like our friendship was developing into something more. But he was from Romania! I didn't want to get into a long-distance relationship because a relationship could lead to marriage, which meant one of us would have to move to another country. I didn't feel ready for that.

One day when I was feeling particularly anxious, Radu reminded me of a simple yet powerful principle. He said, "Let's pray about our relationship and see how we feel."

I didn't know why I hadn't thought about praying about our relationship earlier. But that was the best advice I received at the time. So I prayed for guidance.

I didn't expect any specific answer at that moment, but I decided to keep moving forward with getting to know Radu. I hoped Heavenly Father would give me a warning if our relationship wasn't something I should continue. But over time, the answer I had asked for *did* come. I had conversations about Radu with my family and friends, and in every conversation I was reassured I was going in the right direction.



Soon I had a funny realization. After having yet another great Skype call with Radu one night, I said to myself, "He really is the best friend I've ever had. I want to be his friend forever!" That's when it hit me. Immediately a voice in my head replied to my own comment, "Well, then you need to marry him!" I knew that Heavenly Father was smiling upon my relationship with Radu. I could see that he was my best friend and that we could be happy together.

Taking the Pressure Out of Finding a Spouse

So I moved to Romania and married Radu. Never in my mind had I thought I would end up in Romania. But we've been married for four years now, and we have a wonderful daughter, Amelia.

I know what you're thinking—I'm just another one of those young single adults who met my "soul mate" at a YSA conference and things worked out effortlessly. But that's not true. The reason I tell you this story is for you to stop pressuring yourself to find your eternal companion and instead let God guide you.

Did I go to those YSA conferences to find a husband? No.

Did I think that one of the guys I met there would become my husband? Not really.

Instead I took the pressure off finding whom I wanted to marry and I simply went to these conferences to connect with others and build friendships—which was exactly what Radu and I did in the beginning.

The pressure to find our eternal companion as soon as possible can be so real sometimes. But there

is no time limit on eternal relationships. There's no need to stress over it. Life isn't about getting married but rather becoming the best version of ourselves and letting God work His plan in our lives. Yes, we should all go out there, show up, meet people, make new friends, and get out of our comfort zones. But we should do so with the thought, "I'm going to have fun and meet some great friends" rather than "I have to keep my eyes open to find 'the one' or I'm going to mess up my entire life plan!"

One thing Radu told me when we were engaged was that although he usually felt a bit stressed around girls he liked, he didn't feel that way with me. He said because of our friendship, he always felt relaxed and like he could always be himself.

So look for good people to surround yourself with and enjoy where you are now. Because honestly, when you stop stressing out and just choose to build friendships and learn to love who and where you are, that's when life becomes much more enjoyable.

Trusting in God's Plan for Our Future

Radu and I aren't perfect. We weren't really looking for the "perfect" person—we were just being ourselves. What I've observed is that who you truly are and how you live is what is most attractive to others. When you strive to follow Jesus Christ, you will attract others who are doing their best to follow Him as well.

I've also learned that as we become better and have full faith that God is in charge, we will invite His hand into our lives—and when we recognize His hand, there is no need to fear for the future. Remember what the Lord taught Nephi: "And I will

also be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; and ye shall know that it is by me that ye are led" (1 Nephi 17:13).

We weren't meant to put constant pressure on ourselves for not meeting certain expectations or milestones in our own time frame. Truly, Heavenly Father's time is different than ours—it's eternal. He has a plan for us to fulfill every blessing we seek. And when we do our best to trust His plan and find fulfillment in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, *that's* when we will find true happiness. His plan will always be better than the one we have for ourselves. ■



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