

Barbara Miller/2018

He was sweet, handsome, strong and fifteen. We loved being together and he was such a good kisser. His energy and presence was magical. I felt safe and comforted in his presence.

My mother disapproved of him. She didn't even know him. She knew Charlie Piaquinta had an Italian last name so he wasn't the same religion. I sensed his father wasn't thrilled either. I was a distraction and Charlie couldn't keep his focus on football. His dad once found us on the beach in the dark yelled out Charlie and hustled him home.

In the summer we lived in Winthrop, a local beachside community. There were so many kids that hung out at the beach. This is where I wanted to be but my time wasn't my own. I had to spend a month at girl scout overnight camp. We had to wear a green uniform on Sunday and clean the outhouse.

My frustrations with my mom were mounting. Mom was task oriented. I couldn't take a walk with friends till my ironing was completed. Things that gave you joy were on her to do list maybe on Sundays. I felt family pressure to date only Jewish boys. There were so many cute boys that weren't Jewish. I still dated Charlie when I could.

My teen years caused me deep angst. I was embarrassed and afraid to communicate my frustrations. Luckily for my family around the age of 16 I met an ambitious, passionate and hard-working Jewish boy who put himself thru college. Noel pursued me and this was intoxicating.

Although this was an imperfect relationship and my heart still danced for Charlie I succumbed to Noel. He was very personable and my family loved him. By the time I was nineteen or twenty Noel was pressuring me to marry.

I was overwhelmed. I was getting old, who else would marry me? So, a few months after turning twenty-one, I walked down the aisle in a synagogue and married Noel. Now, i could make my own decisions and life would be better, right?