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Becoming a Lesbian After 40

By ASHLEY NEGLIA

At 40, comedian and author Carol Leifer decided to spice up her life by having a fling with a woman. But the 10-year divorce first lesbian venture would evolve into a 13-year partnership. Now, she shares a home and has a child with her partner, Lori. You Lie About Your Age, The Terrorists Win," Leifer talks about life after 40, the moment she discovered she might be gay changed for the better.

AOL Health: When you were younger, were there any indications that you might be gay?

Carol Leifer: I entitled the chapter "Surprise" because it was like my life threw me a surprise party. I really didn't have any good physical relationships with men. It was around when I turned 40 that I had this really intense desire to have an affair which overtook me, kind of like when you feel like you're on a mission.

When [Lori and I] first got together, I really thought this would be a nice fling. It was a surprise to me that I was falling in love many years later that the first woman I would have a relationship with would wind up being my long-term partner who I'm celebrating an anniversary with.

AOL Health: You write about being immediately enamored with Lori the first time you met her. Was confronting that difficult?

Leifer: It was very exciting when we first met because it did feel a little illicit since I'd never had a gay relationship before. I was very exciting about that. I think it did take a very different turn when I found myself and she found herself falling in love because it was a serious matter to deal with. This [was] supposed to be my fun fling, not the thing that redefined my sexuality and redefined me. So I think that was a tough transition and took some work, too. For my partner, Lori, she had come out after college. I know

Leifer: In my relationships with men, whenever a woman says we have to sit down and talk the walls come up and the guy it's like, "Hey, let's pop the champagne." We could go all night talking. Talking is never a problem. In fact, it can get to be to verbal people.

The challenges are those typical things around the house. When the satellite dish falls off the house or that kind of thing it's great if there's a rent a man to come by for that kind of stuff." But you work it out like any other relationship what each person calendar and send out holiday cards, and she normally drives when we go out together. It's really, in the end, the stuff of relationship much difference other than I do miss handing the mayonnaise jar to a guy. But other than that it really comes down to the same

A friend of mine was advising me with my book to get a certain kind of Web site: "You need to be unique and find a niche." And I said to him, "That's such an interesting idea but ultimately, in the end, a gay mom site just comes down to being a mom part really has nothing to do with it. It's the same thing of, how do I get my kid to finish his meal? How do you potty train him window, so it really just comes down to the nuts and bolts of the relationship and life.

AOL Health: It seems you had a relatively easier transition than most people. Is there anything you could say to them

Leifer: I think it's a little difficult because my circumstances were so different. I wasn't involved in my marriage at the time. Those things are big, real issues that can make this a difficult transition, and I didn't have that.

It's hard to redefine yourself and everything that goes along with it. That's a process. There are a lot of bumps in the road with hung in there with me when she worked that out 15 years ago. But it's part of the bigger theme of my book, which is the best since I'm 40. If someone told me that when I was 28, I would be intrigued because I know at 28 I thought, "Oh God, the day It's the end." I wrote the book because I want people -- not just women, but I think it affects women more -- [to know] that changing and becoming even better and all these wonderful things are still out there after 40. It's so way beyond not over it

Meeting my partner -- I didn't know she was going to be a woman -- but that's the person I want to spend my life with. I didn't children, but we changed that decision. [When] we adopted our child, I was 50. I rediscovered my faith. We both got Bat M an animal person as a result of being with my partner. We have seven rescue dogs, and we're super into animals [as animal encourage other woman who this is happening to just follow your true self. Just be your authentic self because there's nothing than that. You can be younger and a fake, and I much prefer talking with [or] being friends with the person who's older and

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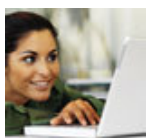


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