

Transitions on the prairie

As my youngest heads off to college, I am preparing to transition from “Mom on the Prairie” to “Single on the Prairie.” It’s not that I haven’t been single for years – I have. But without the abundant and wonderful activities of being a mother in Eden Prairie, my everyday role of mother is shifting to this. Ensuring that the college bills are paid, quietly yet actively listening on the phone, being able to text at all hours of the day and night, and gazing at two rooms that have rarely been so tidy. I am not rueful or worried about this transition. It is just a shift into a different part of my identity.

I walk the dog one particular sunny morning on Valley View Road with the vehicles driving past; I ponder my options. I don’t think I like the status of “single” all that much and wonder what kind of guy I will find in Eden Prairie. I watch for some possibilities.

The Ford F-150, its silver stripes breaking up the fire truck red color of this heavy truck. It is strong, basic, sturdy and can be a little loud, though not because of any fault of the truck, but just because of the size of its engine. Maybe this is the kind of guy I’m looking for – he’s willing to work hard around the house, he’s patriotic, reliable and a good guy, though he may snore a bit too much.

I see a small red convertible, its top down, flying well over the speed limit past me. It looks fun and fast. And although I can be fun and fast as well, I’m more practical than that and wonder if a car which can’t haul a kayak, canoe or skis on the roof would work for me.

I hear the engine of a Harley. I’ve always enjoyed the sound of motorcycles, but I am instinctively terrible as a passenger. I lean the wrong way, I nervously grab onto the driver, and in general, I don’t like riding behind someone else. And frankly, although my image of Easy Rider traveling out west on the open plains is romantic, I prefer a less hair-tangled experience on my dates.

At that moment, a burgundy mini-van passes me. It might have bells and whistles – doors that open with a button, big doors that slide and lots of room for passengers. Seriously – no. I don’t need those particular bells and whistles. Besides, a minivan driver is probably still in the throes of raising children, and I wish him well. And if he’s



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not, I don’t know what good reason there is to drive a minivan. I just don’t. Call me judgmental.

A gold Toyota Camry drives by, a car so ordinary in its appearance that I hardly notice it. And while it’s not a “head turner” of a car, it gets good gas mileage, it is dependable and it can carry a load. Of course, anyone who drives a Toyota likely has to be a bit of a risk taker as well, and be able to handle unexpected emergencies. Not a bad choice for me, I think.

The Subaru station wagon that comes by looks interesting. It has racks on the roof, the kind that are ready to carry a boat or skis. It has a trailer hitch. It’s an older model, has dings on the side, as if it’s seen better days. It will be on the road a long time to come. The car is grimy, as if it has earned its dirt having fun. It’s the kind of car you will lean against despite its dust because you know how fun it was to get that dirty. And you will want to lean into it again because it’s trustworthy, reliable and you’ve been around the block and further with it. It’s the kind of car that speaks not of fast times or fancy nights, though it’s willing to do so on occasion. It’s there for the long haul. And it’s ready to go on any adventure.

And then I laugh. I too drive a Subaru. And I’m ready to go on any adventure, get dirty and even with the miles, none the worse for wear.



JODY
RUSSELL

prairie
rustlings

Jody Russell is an Eden Prairie Web designer, photographer and writer. Her columns appear regularly in the *Eden Prairie News*.