



KELLY AND MATTHEW

Hello!

Thank you for taking the time to look through our book. We hope this book helps you understand who we are as a couple, who we are as individuals, and what we offer as a family living in Beaverton, Oregon. We can't wait to become parents!

With love and gratitude,
Kelly and Matthew



Our Relationship



We like to connect over our love of music and dance, mindfulness and psychology, the great outdoors, and our adventurous spirits. We went on our first date in September of 2017; Matthew brought Kelly kale from his garden. The very next day, we went out dancing and here we are today; married with our 3 pets. Included on this page are pictures from our wedding day, travels to New York City and Portugal, and a snowy hike with Luna.



Our relationship is based on trust, supporting each other, having adventures together, and being silly together. We value expressing our feelings and needs, and really listening to one another. We really try to "own our stuff" by taking responsibility for our self-growth. Some activities we enjoy doing together are dancing, playing music and going to concerts, stand up paddle boarding, hiking, camping, traveling, playing board games, watching movies and television, visiting with family and friends, and snuggling with our animals. On this page we are at the beach, sailing with Matthew's dad, enjoying a Phish concert in New York City, and being silly in the woods.



Kelly...

Interests and Hobbies:

- health and wellness
- gardening and plant caretaking
- being creative through making jewelry, painting and macrame
- learning about the stars and Astrology
- traveling and connecting with new people
- practicing yoga and pilates
- practicing and teaching mindfulness
- reading fantasy or watching fantasy based shows
- playing and being silly with my nieces and nephews

Occupation:

I work as a Licensed Professional Counselor in the greater Portland area, where I focus on mindfulness, the mind-body connection, emotional expression, stress reduction, and overall well-being. I have been working in the healing arts for over 15 years, and in the past worked as a massage therapist and health coach. I find a lot of gratification in being of service in the mental health field, and supporting others through life's ups and downs.



Fun Facts:

- I eat lots of dark chocolate
- I love animals and sea creatures
- I believe we are all walking art
- I love to belt out singing
- I lived in Yellowstone National Park for a Summer
- I taught myself how to sew and sold my clothing at festivals
- I love rainbows, seeing them in the sky and water
- I hosted many basement dance contests as a tween
- I spent my late teens and early 20s following bands and dancing with friends
- I lived in a tree-house for a month and I hope to build one for the child we adopt





Kelly's Story



I was born in Peoria, Illinois and grew up in the same cute blue house, until I left for college. I have an older sister and a younger brother, and we were raised in a neighborhood filled with lots of other families with children. We spent our evenings and summers running around outside, catching lightning bugs and playing games.

We lived near extended family and spent lots of time seeing our family for birthdays and holidays. Some of my favorite memories involve water: swimming at my grandmother's pool with friends, going with my family to a lake they called "the pit", and going tubing and playing in the water with family friends.

I was a pretty good student; I loved to read and do art. In high school I was a cheerleader for a few years and ran cross country.

After high school, I traveled around exploring our country and going to music festivals with friends. I went to college at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, where I completed my Bachelor's in Food and Nutrition.



We didn't travel a lot as I was growing up, yet when I was in high school, I took a trip to Oregon. I went to visit my uncle and his family, and this is when I fell in love with the veggie burgers, gardening, street festivals, and overall vibe. I was drawn to the Oregon way of life, and knew one day I would be back. I moved to Oregon in 2008, where I eventually attended graduate school for Counseling Psychology.



I love recharging through reading, crafting, connecting with friends and family socially, and being active out in the world.

I find meaning and a greater sense of purpose through connecting to close friends and family, as well as in nature. Mindfulness meditation has deeply impacted me; I have attended retreats and workshops, and I am trained in this professionally as well. I consider this to be my on-going practice in life.

I would say my greatest life lesson is around self-compassion. I believe we are all human, living this life the best we can, and I believe, most of the time, we all deserve more kindness and compassion, especially from ourselves.

If there is one thing I know now, that I wish I knew when I was younger is to be true to myself, and not try to fit into some mold around who I "should" be or what I "should" want in life. I am happiest when being authentic and true to myself.



Matthew....



Fun facts about Matthew:

- I'm left handed
- I'm very silly
- I play the Tabla drums and Djembe
- My favorite color is blue
- I spent a month in a Zen Buddhist monastery in upstate New York
- I enjoy the feeling of completing a video game
- I love seeing rainbows in the sky
- I love cats and dogs (and the many cute things they do)
- I love the mountains and reaching mountain summits



Interests and Hobbies

- Spending time in nature (hiking, camping, and stand-up paddle boarding)
- Self-growth/spiritual work
- Playing my drums
- Playing video games
- Watching movies and TV shows
- Learning about and doing my part to contribute to environmental sustainability
- Going to the gym
- Learning about safety awareness
- Spending time with friends and family
- Spending time with the kids in my life (friends' kids and nieces/nephews)



Occupation

I knew I wanted to be in the field of psychology when I was a junior in high school. When I was in college, I considered different areas of psychology and ended up choosing research psychology. I wanted to help make the world a better place through research on social justice issues. Since I finished graduate school, I have been a psychology professor and Experimental Social Psychologist at several universities. My job includes teaching classes, helping students with their research, conducting my own research, and providing service to the university. Since I arrived in Oregon, I have also been providing social bias training to various groups in the community.

Matthew's Story



I was born in northern NJ and moved to a small southern NJ town, Medford, when I was 5. I grew up with my sister Rachel in a small development with woods and two lakes. Rachel and I have a half-sister, Diana, who we just found out about last year! I have so many positive memories of my childhood. My friends and I played games outside, sports, and video games together. I spent lots of time at the Jersey shore with my family and sailed with my dad on his sailboat. We were fortunate to be able to take regular family vacations, the most notable being to Germany and the Netherlands. My mom's side of the family lived just a few hours away in PA, so major holidays were spent surrounded by aunts, uncles, and cousins. My dad's parents lived just 35 minutes away, so I was able to have a close relationship with my grandparents growing up and into adulthood.



I stayed in the same house in Medford, NJ until I left for college in VA. After finishing college, I worked in mental health for two years before spending 7 years in graduate school earning master's and doctoral degrees in psychology. I worked at two universities (first in VA and then in upstate NY) before applying for my current job in Oregon. The job interview for my current job was the first time I stepped foot in OR; by the time I boarded the plane to fly back to NY, I knew I wanted to be in OR. I've been at my current university for 10 years and really enjoy my work.



I identify as a social introvert; I like being around friends and family, but I re-charge by myself or doing something low key with Kelly. I'm also very ambitious and organized, which are required for my job.

I've been influenced by many people in my life, including my mom and dad. My mom taught me how to be caring and my dad taught me how to be analytical (he also gave me my interest in new technology).

I would say my greatest life lesson came from experiencing a very distressing event at a job and working with a therapist to heal from that event. That taught me that in the midst of difficulty lies opportunity for growth.

What I wish I knew when I was younger was how important it is to be true to who I am versus doing what is cool or what I thought would please my friends.

I identify as spiritual. I do not put my faith in any particular book or text; instead I seek guidance from and connection to the Divine through spending time in nature and meditation. I also consider working with the community to be part of my spiritual practice, using my professional skills to support others.



Our Family



Our family is very important to us. We try to visit them as often as we are able, or host them in Oregon. We have family in Oregon, Washington, Illinois, and New Jersey.

Here are some photos of what we like to do with Matthew's side of the family, including going to waterfalls, sailing on his dad's boat, and spending time with grandparents.



We also enjoy our time with Kelly's side of the family, including going to local parks, going on hikes, attending family events, going to art museums, and going to local farmer's markets.





Nieces and Nephews



We love to spend time with our nieces and nephews. Here are some pictures of us spending time with them, doing fun things like creating Christmas crowns, spending time at the Seattle Aquarium, and spending time together at a family gathering.



These are photos of some of the fun times we have had with Kellys side of the family, including going to a pumpkin patch, watching a soccer game, and dancing at our wedding



Dear Friends

We love hanging out with our friends.

- sharing meals
- playing music
- playing games
- wedding and birthday celebrations
- visiting our cabin
- exploring the outdoors
- going to concerts



Our Beloved Pets!

Meet our furry friends, Maya on the top left, Shanti on the bottom left and Luna on the right. We loved having them as kittens and a puppy, then watching them grow. Maya is 6, Shanti is 4, and Luna is 1. They each have their own personalities, and get along well. We love our down time when we all get to cuddle together on the couch watching a TV show or when going to bed (really at any time).



Holidays and Traditions



We enjoy celebrating all of the traditional holidays and our birthdays, although we do have a few favorites like Halloween and Christmas. One of our favorite Halloween events is a witches paddle on a river that goes through Portland, OR in which about 100 people dress up like witches and paddle down the Willamette river. During the Halloween season, we also like growing pumpkins and attending costume events.



We try to visit family over the holidays. We are lucky to have some family living locally and we have family visit us on the West coast. If we can't visit family, we celebrate with our local friends in various ways.

We enjoy the change in seasons, so we also celebrate the solstice and equinox, and like to track the moon cycles - watching the night sky for the full moon.

One of our traditions is to take a trip somewhere warm in the rainy and cold season here, to catch some sunshine. We have traveled to Mexico, Hawaii, Portugal, Spain and France in the last few years during the Spring.





Our House and Neighborhood...



Welcome to our neighborhood! On this page, we have the beautiful Portland skyline and view of Mt. Hood, the front of our house, our backyard, and the park with a playground we can access through our backyard. At that park, we meet with other families and let our dogs play.

Within walking and biking distance there are a bike trail into Portland, paved walking trails, a frisbee golf course, basketball courts, tennis courts, multiple playgrounds, and a recreation center with classes for kids. There is a good public grade school just a few blocks away.



Here is our home! Pictured are our family room area, back deck, dining room, and kitchen. In 2022, we became co-owners of a cabin on a lake (the bottom right picture). We share this cabin with 3 other families and visit regularly. Our cabin is part of a larger cabin community with other families, where there are many activities for kids, like a beach, a volleyball court, a fire pit perfect for s'mores, access to water, and hiking trails.





Dreams for the child we adopt



We envision creating an environment for the child we adopt that feels warm, safe, connective, playful, and supportive of their development. Our hope is that this child has meaningful connections with friends, family members, teachers/mentors and animals/pets. We want the child we adopt to have a fun childhood, as we both did. We want this child to learn about the world not only through school and traditional education, but also through life experiences and engaging with the diversity and complexity of the world.

Open Adoption Aspirations



We want the child we adopt to know that they and their birth parents are such a valuable part of our family. We also want the child we adopt to understand their story; to be proud of having a larger immediate family, and to know that this is important to us as well. We envision having a lifelong connection with their birth family. We hope to have an authentic relationship with the birth family filled with trust, mutual care, respect, and a common goal around what is best for the child we adopt.