DAVID & RAPHI

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mouse,
DUH!

BEYONCÉ
WASN'T
BUILT
IN A DAY

WELCOME!

Thank you for taking the time to learn about us and our aspirations to become parents. We are so excited to begin our parenthood journey!

OUR 'ROMANTICAL' LOVE STORY

SUMMER 2010
WE MEET!

We met in NYC. Raphi was working there between his first and second year of graduate school in Boston. He failed to mention to David that he didn't live in NYC until the third date, but by that point, we both realized this was something special. So after only 4 weeks of courtship, we began a long distance relationship while Raphi finished school.

2010 - 2011
NYC <--> BOS

We spent a year traveling back and forth by bus between Boston and New York. We got to know one another over the phone which set a great foundation for our relationship. By the time Raphi graduated, we knew all the drivers by name. It was all worth it when Raphi moved back to NYC in the fall of 2011.

2011 - 2014
LIVING IN NYC

We spent 3 years together in NYC, enjoying everything the city offered. We loved going to comedy shows, eating at brunch places that took reservations, and playing tourist on 5th Avenue during the winter holidays.

JUNE 2014
GETTING ENGAGED

Raphi planned an elaborate scavenger hunt across Manhattan. Each clue David received was held on a sign by one of our friends or family members. The hunt ultimately led him to our favorite garden, where Raphi was waiting. We partied late into the night at a surprise party planned by Raphi. We were happy to be joined by friends and family who flew in from around the country to celebrate with us.

THE MAGIC CONTINUES!

FALL 2014 MOVE TO CHICAGO

We moved to Chicago so David could attend business school. While we didn't love the frigid Chicago winters, we enjoyed walks along the beautiful lake and made some incredible friends!

JUNE 2016 WE GET MARRIED!

We got married on a sunny day in David's hometown of Cleveland, OH. While things got toasty (the AC broke and Raphi's brother/best-man fainted during the ceremony), we loved celebrating with family and friends from around the world! We danced to a playlist of one name pop divas (Whitney, Rihanna, Beyonce, etc) and ate delicious sorbet/macaron sandwiches.

FALL 2016 MOVE TO PORTLAND

We moved to Portland so David could start a new job, and fell right into West Coast living. Raphi loves being surrounded by high quality coffee and biscuits, and David loves having so many gluten-dairy free dessert options. We enjoy the proximity to mountains and the ocean, and the easy lifestyle. Most weekends you can find us trying out an event we read about in the weekly alternative newspapers.

SOME OF OUR FAVORITE ACTIVITIES

1."Urban hiking", aka getting food and exploring the city.

2. Brainstorming our next international adventure.

3. Enjoying quality television (Game of Thrones + Broad City) and not-so-quality television (sorry, BRAVO).

4. Making the other person laugh.

5. Reading (David loves thrillers; Raphi loves fantasy), preferably on our patio.

6. Picking fresh berries during the summer season.

7. Portland's Soap Box Derby.

MEET DAVID!

OCCUPATION: Operations for global sportswear company.

HOBBIES: NBA basketball (Go CAVS!), collecting sneakers, miniature golf, singing lessons, paint your own pottery, reading the Sunday NY Times, and walks with Raphi.

FUN FACTS ABOUT DAVID:

1. High school state champion (ok, it was for a history competition, but it still counts!)

2. He was a "child model" for local Cleveland businesses. (Raphi contests this but David has proof).

3. Has lived in Africa, Europe, and North America.

4. Loves to eat frozen grapes.

5. Quotes "Mean Girls" and "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" on a daily basis.

6. Spotify and Podcasts are his most used apps.

7. Unapologetic lover of boy-bands (#BackstreetBoys #*NSYNC #NewEdition), Motown, and 90s R&B.

MORE ABOUT DAVID

Hi! I was born in 1986 in Cleveland, Ohio. I joined an older sister (Sarah) and my Mom (Amy) and Dad (Marc). My first press appearance was at three months when our neighbor's python crawled through the pipes and out of our toilet!

I grew up on a street with 65 kids. My childhood was spent outside playing football, hide-and-go-seek, and snowball fights. I'm still close with my neighbors even though we have moved across the globe.

I also spent lots of time with my grandparents. Every Saturday, they took my cousins, my sister, and me to lunch - even when that meant 4 car seats! Those Saturday meals, "Munchkin Lunchkin", are some of my happiest and most valuable memories.

Growing up in a very diverse neighborhood sparked my interest in exploring other cultures. I led our school's race relations group, played sports all three seasons (soccer, basketball, tennis), and was in student government. I loved criminology and dreamed of working in the C.I.A.

College brought me to North Carolina at Duke University after I received an academic scholarship. During college, I lived in Spain, South Africa, and Mississippi - all very new places for me! These experiences reminded me that we are all far more similar than different, and I carry that with me today.

After college, I moved to New York City. By day, I worked in the financial services industry. At night, I explored the city for the best dollar pizza, block parties, and music. I played in basketball and softball leagues and volunteered on a suicide prevention hotline for LGBTQ youth.

When I met Raphi, I learned what it meant to both be a partner and to support one. Early in our relationship, I dealt with a serious family medical issue Raphi never left my side. His love and compassion confirmed he was "the one".

I loved NYC, but I knew I didn't want to live there forever. We decided to move to Chicago so I could attend business school at Northwestern.

Two years in school flew by, and after I graduated, we moved to Portland for my work. We love welcoming friends and family to explore the Pacific Northwest. Even after living here for three years, we still don't hike in the mountains, but Raphi is learning to ski!

Raphi and I discussed kids early on in our relationship and it was clear we both wanted to be parents. We will bring our children into a house and family full of love, music, and Cleveland sports fandom!

DAVID'S FAMILY

Mom is a classically trained opera singer who started her own business serving non-profits. She taught me the importance of resilience and supporting our local community.

Dad was a classic rock 'n' roll keyboard player who now runs his own business. He taught me the importance of starting and ending each day with laughter.

I was lucky to grow up near my dad's dad, "Boppi". He was, and is, my inspiration. He was the best-man at our wedding and we Facetime daily (he is 95!) He taught me to never stop being curious about the world and the value of integrity.

Sarah is three years older than me and lives on the east coast. She loves pb&j sandwiches, the CAVS, and politics. She and Raphi vacation together - without me! She taught me to believe in myself.

10 THINGS RAPHI LOVES ABOUT DAVID

1. He is the funniest person I know (but don't tell him I said that).
2. He pushes me to try new things and take new risks.
3. He is an incredible friend and is the person people turn to for guidance and support.
4. He has a deep moral conscience and a clear sense of social justice.
5. He is not afraid to tell me when I am wrong (as rare as that may be).
6. He is smart and good looking -- that never hurts!
7. Loves music and is constantly introducing me to new bands and genres.
8. He has wonderful family and models empathy and love.
9. Loves to hear about my day and what I learned or accomplished.
10. Is a great partner for adventuring and exploring the world.

MEET RAPHI!

NAME: Raphi (short for Raphael)
OCCUPATION: Works for a national education non-profit that helps move young people into high quality jobs.
HOBBIES: Cooking, reading, playing video games on his iPad, learning new hobbies and skills (currently learning how to ski).

FUN FACTS ABOUT RAPHI:

1. He hates ice cream (and has since he was a kid.)

2. Earned a black-belt in Karate when he was 17.

3. Was in a college improv group (and still thinks he's hilarious).

4. Had a pet snake growing up named "Frisky".

5. Google Maps is his most-used app (mostly because he gets lost a lot).

6. Loves to study math and science (for fun! Really!)

7. Studied French for 9 years in school (and minored in French Lit in college), but visited France for the first time when he was 35.

8. Listens to all his podcasts at 2x speed.

MORE ABOUT RAPHI

I grew up in Gainesville, FL, a small city in north-central Florida. My household was always full of learning and laughter. My favorite memories from my childhood include going to the library with my parents, hunting for sharks' teeth in the creeks near our home, and riding my bike to my best friend Stephen's house.

Growing up, I was encouraged to pursue a variety of hobbies, including speech and debate, theater, music, and martial arts. My parents helped both my brother and me find our respective passions and put our all into whatever we were doing. Our parents always modeled for us the importance of hard work and pushing ourselves to excel, while also remembering that life is short and that it's important to enjoy the experiences as we go. That balance between a drive to achieve and remembering what is most important in life is something I work to live every day.

I was raised in a deeply Jewish household, and though my observance levels have shifted over time, being Jewish is still an important part of my identity today. I continue to keep kosher (we have two sets of dishes, utensils, and cookware). I go to synagogue every week and am an active member of our local synagogue. And most importantly, I see the values, practices, and history of the Jewish people as critical inputs to the way I live my life. Many of the core values that make up my identity -- things like a love of learning, a pursuit of justice, and a respect for tradition -- are all things I can easily trace back to my Jewish upbringing.

I left Gainesville to go to college at Brandeis University, just outside of Boston. I was fortunate to earn a full scholarship to college, and thus benefited from the opportunity to learn without worrying about cost. This freed me to start my post-college career as a high school math teacher. While I had never planned to teach full-time, I have always loved math, and I was excited by the opportunity to teach high school in the Bronx.

After 3 years of working in the classroom, it was clear to me that I needed to learn more about the larger challenges that are holding back the American education system. I was accepted to Harvard's public policy program and began a 2-years masters in education policy.

Those two years were a life-changing experience. Not only did I get to learn alongside some of the most incredible people I've ever met, but my eyes were opened to the many opportunities that are out there to impact the world.

It was during my time in graduate school that I first met David. Though we only had a few short weeks together while I was working for the summer in New York City, it was clear to me from the third date that he was a person worth traveling the world to be with.

And travel together we have! After school, I moved back to NYC to begin working with an amazing non-profit that helps young adults start high quality careers in the IT and finance sectors. I've continued to work with the same organization as we've moved from NYC, to Chicago, to Portland. I love what I do and the ability to help thousands of young people tap into their full potential.

RAPHI'S FAMILY

I am very close with my family. Although my parents still live in Gainesville, Florida (where I grew up), we talk regularly and see each other in person multiple times each year. My father is a lawyer who helps people with their wills; my mother is a romance writer who writes novels about pirates. Both taught me what it means to love one another deeply and work hard to make the world a better place.

My younger brother and I could not have been more different growing up: he was a competitive weight lifter and I was in theater. And yet, we are now as close as two brothers can be. I feel so fortunate to have such an incredibly kind and generous person in my life. He is an industrial design artist and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

I benefited from having many close cousins growing up, but none closer than my cousin Leslie. Even while living in opposite parts of the country, we knew we would become best friends. From going to school together in Boston, to living in NYC, to officiating her wedding, we remain more like siblings than cousins.

10 THINGS DAVID LOVES ABOUT RAPHI

1. Dedicated his life to championing education for all.
2. He stays through the movie credits to respect everyone's contributions to the film.
3. He fixes all of the family technology. Oh, and dinner, too.

4. He is a dance floor diva and my favorite dance partner.
5. Makes the best soups I've ever had. My favorite is his Thai curry soup.

6. While helpful with the math and science categories at trivia night, he is useless when it comes to sports or pop-culture.
7. Thinks he is the funny one in the relationship...but I love him anyway.
8. He puts up with my sneaker collection (partly because we wear the same size and he can borrow them!)
9. He has become a sports fan since we met, even if he won't admit it :)
10. Values family and community above all.

OUR HOME

We love our home and the space that it provides to read in the sun, play in the basement, and cook in Raphi's dream kitchen. We've covered our walls with pictures and photos from our favorite travel destinations, our close-knit families, and friends.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

We live on a quiet, tree lined street filled with families and children. We are a 3 minute walk to our local elementary school and several parks with playgrounds and room to explore.

OUR FAVORITE TRADITIONS

THANKSGIVING IN CLEVELAND

We spend Thanksgiving in Cleveland with David's family. Raphi knew he was officially "in" with the family when David's mom asked him to begin cooking the Turkey. Raphi handles the turkey, David's grandfather does the carving, and David's aunt makes the pies. Beyond the food, we always go to a CAVS game and root for Ohio State against Michigan in football. But our most important Thanksgiving tradition is saying every year that we will go see a new movie. Thus far, we've managed to see....0 movies.

PASSOVER IN FLORIDA

We travel to Raphi's family in Florida every spring for the Passover holiday. David loves the trip because Gainesville is home to the world's best dairy/gluten free pizza (he is allergic to both) and he happily eats a whole pizza by himself. Raphi and his mom sing songs while cooking two big Seder dinners (one year they had to improvise when a storm knocked out the power for 24 hours!) The family comes together to celebrate, and welcomes friends and neighbors to join them for the holiday meal.

WINTER HOLIDAYS

Our two families vacation together in Florida during the winter holidays. We spend our days walking up and down the beach, stopping to observe amazing sand castles, and soaking in the sunshine. The only "to do" each day is wine on the beach at sunset! Raphi and David's mom grill fish for dinner, and we walk into the small town for ice cream and sorbet each night. We stay through New Year's, and must admit that we are all usually asleep by 11 PM on New Year's Eve.

BEND SKI WEEKEND

Our newest tradition is one we've made since moving to Portland. Each January we go with friends to Bend, OR for a ski weekend. The trick is that only half of the group (Raphi included) ski, so the others (including David) spend the days eating and lounging! Nights end with card games, Settlers of Catan and other board games, and great meals. We can't wait for our child to join - and to learn to ski earlier than we did!

ADVENTURES AROUND THE WORLD

There is a big, wide world out there and we want to experience it! We recently lived in Europe while David worked in Amsterdam and visited 10+ new countries! Our favorite way to learn new cities is through local art and food. We love going on street art tours and hunting down out of the way local cuisines. We can't wait to get our kid a passport and begin new adventures as a family.

OUR CHOSEN FAMILY

We feel fortunate to both have strong friendships, including many that have lasted for decades. We are excited for our child to grow up alongside our friends' children and to get to know their extended families around the world.

DREAMS FOR OUR CHILD

We aim to provide our child a life of love, laughter, and learning. We are excited for trips to the public library, providing them with new experiences like summer camp and music lessons, going to professional sporting events (David is more excited about this than Raphi), and time with our extended families.

One of the things we both valued about our respective experiences growing up was the emphasis our parents placed on internalizing key values and exploring the world with those as a guide. We are excited to provide our child with the same kinds of guidance, support, and independence, and can't wait for all the things we will discover together as a family.

OPEN ADOPTIONS ASPIRATIONS

We chose open adoption for many reasons. It is important to us that our child understands the journey that brought our families together. We hope this will allow our child to not only know and appreciate their history, but to feel surrounded and supported by a broader extended family. It's important for us to establish an honest, transparent, and welcoming relationship with the birth family.

As our child grows and becomes the amazing person they will be (we can't wait!), we know our relationship with the birth parents will grow as well. A close, extended family will provide our child with the greatest opportunity for happiness in life.

We appreciate you taking the time to learn more about us and our hopes for our future family.