

# I Heart Ricky Gervais

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I have a crush on an older, slightly overweight, British man, and my husband's okay with that.

His name is Ricky Gervais, and if you don't know about him, you should. Not only is Gervais hilarious, charming and brilliant, but he sets a model example of how to live with integrity while also being successful.

You see, Gervais has taken a non-traditional route through life, a path I'm quite familiar with. As I hear students around me talking about grad school and temp jobs, desperate to make decisions regarding their post-college futures, I find it all the more important to advocate following your bliss rather than settling for a paycheck. Trust me, you don't want a j-o-b.

But back to Gervais, and I'll try to temper my schoolgirl zeal for the darling Brit with sound advice for your futures. Even Madonna couldn't contain her glee upon meeting him. She jumped at any chance to work with him, even offering to mop his floors. So you'll have to pardon me if I come across as giddy.

After graduating from college with a degree in philosophy, Gervais sort of piddled around. He worked odd jobs, was in a band, managed the group Suede (before they got famous) and ended up hosting a radio program on XFM. There, he met Stephen Merchant and the two developed *The Office*. One of the most brilliant, spot-on television shows in the history of broadcasting, the BBC series produced quotable lines reminiscent of Spinal Tap and of

the caliber of *The Simpsons* -- lines that are repeated by fans just as often.

Two seasons, an *Office* Christmas special, two Golden Globes, six BAFTAs and a soapy proposition from Madonna later, Gervais could do anything he wanted. He was offered projects left and right, but turned almost all of them down. Why? Because he wasn't interested.

Here is a man whose career didn't really blossom until his late-30s, money is being thrown at him and he's turning it down. He is the antithesis of Hollywood; he says money bores him. More interested in quality than quantity, Gervais' integrity and passion enable him to do anything he wants.

Do you see where I'm going with this?

As a woman soon to graduate -- a woman in her 30s, mind you -- I have recently gone through one of life's many "what's-it-all-about?" and "whatever-am-I-going-to-do-next?" crises. But watching the latest Gervais-Merchant project, a BBC/HBO series called *Extras*, I'm inspired by how beautifully Gervais has reconciled his passions with his values -- and made the world notice.

Like Gervais -- who loathes desperate seekers of fame -- some of the most famous faces in the world have stumbled into success and/or celebrity based on timing and a unique idea. Rachel Ray had managed pubs, restaurants and gourmet markets until her great idea catapulted her career. In order to increase grocery sales at the market she managed, Ray -- who never took cooking classes herself -- started teaching courses called, "30 Minute Meals." Recognize the name? That's because it's the name of one of Ray's two shows on the Food Network. She also has a series of cookbooks.

Then there's the little story of Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, two guys who weren't getting the roles they wanted. So they wrote a script and won an Oscar. But, unlike my man Gervais, those guys

seem less perturbed about accepting unremarkable roles in mediocre scripts.

We'll all be tempted at some point to compromise our beliefs in order to make money, and sometimes we'll have to. But never forget your dreams and remember what Ricky Gervais told Time Out Magazine, "I've never regretted saying no."