

Love Your 20s
30s
40s

REDBOOK

Alicia Silverstone

Interviews by Margot Dougherty

“I’m **carving out** the life I want to live.”

Who'd-a thunk that the movie world's most iconic, and endearing, superficialite would grow up to be a one-woman vegan ambassador for the planet? What started out as a passion for animals has led Alicia Silverstone, the teenage *Clueless* superstar, to spend the last several years remaking herself into a champion of the reduce-reuse-recycle lifestyle. Both Alicia and her husband of four years, musician Christopher Jarecki, are big believers that simple green choices can have significant personal and environmental impacts. She's a cheerleader rather than a taskmaster, hoping to guide people to, in her words, "their deepest, bestest selves." This month, as Alicia turns 33, she amps up the effort with publication of *The Kind Diet: A Simple Guide to Feeling Great, Losing Weight, and Saving the Planet*, coauthored by Neal Barnard, M.D. The book offers up vegan recipes, medical info about the pros and cons of different foods, and handy tips for eco-conscious living. She's also introducing a line of environmentally friendly cosmetic bags and makeup brushes in December called ecoTools by Alicia Silverstone; they'll be available at Walgreens and Target stores. "I'm always looking for inspiration," says Alicia over a plate of vegan nachos at Los Angeles café Real Food Daily. "Like, *Can I learn from you? Can you teach me stuff about this life?* I always want to be inspired by people and keep growing. I feel more vibrant today than when I was 19!"

Looking back over your life so far, which birthdays have felt biggest?

When I was little, every birthday was big—you just couldn't wait to get older. But a lot of great things happened around 30. From 28 to now has been a time of incredible change and growth, deepening and ripening, good stuff. It's been hard, too, because

Alicia Silverstone

when you're going through that stuff you have to go down into the mud. They've been really interesting years.

What was the worst part of your 20s?

Anxiety. I had a lot of anxiety. I remember saying, "I want to get rid of this anxiety." Just feeling uncomfortable. And now it's all gone. It's like, *What?* I don't know what anxiety is like anymore.

The huge success of *Clueless* must also have been overwhelming.

It *was* overwhelming. And I was really isolated. From 19 to 28 there was a lot of turmoil in my life, but in a stuck way. Then, around 28, my life started to get shaken up. I realized I wanted to grow more and that anything that wasn't working in my life, I could fix it. I feel like I came into my womanhood. And that was when I got married. I wasn't attached to the idea of marriage, but something about Christopher and me—when we got married, things got more clear. My life and my decisions.

Maybe knowing you'd found "the guy" gave you the time and confidence to do what you really wanted to do.

Maybe. I think what Christopher did for me was to free up my head. Sometimes I think being single is fantastic. How exciting! But I can underestimate how being so happy in my relationship frees me to grow as a woman. When I hear my girlfriends stressing out about guys, I think, *Wow, I'm so lucky, because I don't even think about those things.*

Plus, you share the same passions.

He's an amazing guy, my best friend. One of the things about him that inspires me continuously is how willing he is to grow. When people aren't willing to do that, it's really hard. When you see the potential and joy that comes from growth... and yeah, it's hard when you have to step into the fire. But if you can get through it, it's beautiful. Christopher and I, we encourage each other to grow. He might nudge me: "Hey lady, you're slacking." And I can nudge back: "Hey, dude, what's up?"

What else do you love about your 30s?

I have these tools that allow me to feel so good. Most people are getting older and older because they're just doing more damage. But when you're not doing damage, your body is healing and nourishing itself. I don't take any of the medications I took when I was younger: antibiotics, antacids, aspirin, asthma inhalers, ulcer medication, allergy shots.



Above: Alicia and her best friend, husband Christopher Jarecki; Right: Alicia's book hits stores this month.

That inspired your book?

I want people to realize that you don't have to be sick. A lot of girls can't poo! That is really bad. You can fix that.

A lot of people have cholesterol or heart issues. I believe none of it's necessary if you just eat well. Every step of the book has been heart-opening. It's so great to get my thoughts into one organized space. It's really how I want to say it.

What's less than great about the 30s?

This thing on my head's growing [*points to the mole on her forehead*]. It's got a life of its own. It's like a wart I've had my whole life, a beauty mark turning into a full-blown witch wart. A doctor's looked at it, and it's

nothing. And I don't want to have it removed because—like, if my leg falls off, I'll go to a doctor. But until then, I'm okay.

Do you have any role models? Women you especially admire?

So many. I love Leslie Mann. And Susan Sarandon. She's such a sexy, sassy, sophisticated woman—and playful. She's such a great example of what a hot woman is.

Someone else you admire, your friend and cover mate Connie Britton, told me a funny story about how you met.

Oh, that I pulled over the car and attacked her? I just love her. She is so amazing. [*Here's how Connie remembers it: "I was walking down the street in L.A., and suddenly this hybrid—Alicia would want me to clarify that it was a hybrid—swerves over to the side of the road. The window rolls down and out pops Alicia's head. She was with her husband, and they said, 'We love your show!' It was such a hilarious and flattering moment."*]

Can you see yourself at 80?

I hope I'm dancing a lot and doing yoga and taking long walks. I hope I live on the beach and have beautiful children and beautiful grandchildren and a really deep loving family.

And you want to have kids? This decade?

Yeah. This decade.

Do you think there's a sexiest decade?

I would think that every day that you're carving out the life you want to live, nourishing your body, and limiting the damage, that you keep getting sexier and sexier.

What's an ideal age in your mind?

Right now. And whatever "now" is until forever.

Love Your 20s
30s
40s

CONNIE BRITTON

“I **don't have to** get everything so right.”

Connie Britton bumps into one friend after another on the patio of a café in Silver Lake, CA. Her sleeveless red and white print dress and patent leather flats look a notch more sophisticated than anything Tami Taylor, Connie's so-real-you're-sure-you-know-her high school principal on *Friday Night Lights*, would wear. But the friendly ease, the traces of slow Southern vowels (Connie grew up in Virginia), the steady eye contact, and the deliberate thoughtfulness are Tami through and through.

Connie's big break came in the mid-'90s when she was part of the cast of Ed Burns's film directing debut, *The Brothers McMullen*. A starring role opposite Michael J. Fox on ABC's *Spin City* followed. These days, on *FNL*, Connie, 42, and costar Kyle Chandler, who plays her husband, Coach Taylor, bring to life one of TV's most enviable marriages. Connie herself isn't married but happily dating—and very comfortable with whatever her journey has in store for her next.

“I look back at my 30s, and I've realized, that was a very self-involved time,” Connie says thoughtfully. “Since I've turned 40, somehow it's chilled out quite a bit. Especially the way my career has gone, I feel like I've grown into myself. And I definitely feel like I have more to offer.”

You're in the early stages of your 40s. Other than feeling like your life has chilled out, do you notice any other significant differences?

I don't know, I think mostly it just doesn't feel like 40; I'm still getting used to the idea. When REDBOOK first asked me to do this article, I was really excited about it. And then I was like, “But wait, I'm the 40-year-old?!” To be honest, I still really feel 18, it's

Connie Britton

pretty crazy. But that being said, when I do really think about it, there's a calmness now, a relief even.

Which wasn't the emotional theme of your 30s?

There's something wonderful and tumultuous about the 30s. We're trying to establish ourselves, discover who we are in relationships and careers. I have many friends in their 30s, and I think, *I remember struggling with that*. That doesn't mean that I have everything figured out, but somehow the pressure has eased. There isn't this mania to get everything so right. Now what I really want to do is just enjoy my life and fill the moments with living, with people I love, things I enjoy, and work that inspires me.



Connie's main men: boyfriend Jason Mantzoukas (above) and *FNL*'s Kyle Chandler.

On *Friday Night Lights*, you're a school principal and mom—the grown-up. Did that take getting used to?

In the past I'd always felt like “the girl” in the show or the movie. On *Friday Night Lights* there were a bunch of girls, and I was the woman. Initially there was a little struggle with my identity around that. But now there's a sense of ease. I know it sounds so clichéd, but I really feel younger than ever. People always ask Kyle and me, “Are you guys mentors to the kids?” *Kids* in air quotes. I look at them as peers.

Talk about the highlights of your 20s.

I was married at 24. When I look back, it seems young. I grew and changed a lot. A definite highlight was doing *The Brothers McMullen*. Shooting that movie was such a joy—and then we wound up winning the Sundance Film Festival. That big break moment is visceral. It happens once in a decade, maybe once in a lifetime.

Were there downsides to your 20s?

Divorce is hard. I was about 29 when my husband and I split up. I think we probably



reason, I've never looked at myself as, *Oh my gosh, I have to be the most beautiful*. I've always worked from the inside out, not the outside in.

Do you see yourself getting married again someday?

I do. That's another thing about my 30s. I spent them exploring what I want marriage to be. A lot of times we take the idea from whatever romantic views we have or what we saw with our parents, and that might or might not be the greatest way to look at it. I really wanted to discover what marriage meant to me. So I do feel like I would get married again and I still want to have kids.

What does marriage mean for you today? Have your ideas about it changed?

It's been fun playing this role on *Friday Night Lights*. Kyle's a great TV husband. We have so many conversations about partnership and what that means to us, what our values are. We have the same perspective on conflicts and where we need to make sure we are grounded and have solidarity. Choosing to be in a monogamous lifelong partnership is one of the greatest challenges of being a human being. I have a much less conventional view about it now. It's about the partnership and the choice to make a commitment.

If you had to pick one of the best things that's happened to you since you turned 40, what would it be?

I don't know... I have a great man in my life—he's a comedy writer [Jason Mantzoukas], but I probably shouldn't say much more than that!—but that's awesome. And that happened after I turned 40.

What are you hoping for your 50s?

I can't even imagine! I can barely think that I'm in my 40s yet, come on! When you're in your 30s and moving into your 40s, there's a dread; you think it's all going to be over. But when you get past that, you think, *Oh I survived. Fantastic!* So far, so good. So far, really good!

fared better than most because we were young and didn't have kids—but divorce is hard.

So you started your 30s off solo.

Right after *Brothers McMullen*, I came out to L.A., and I got the role in *Spin City*. That was a really incredible time; the cast was so closely knit, and we just adore each other like family. But my parents' being ill was also a big part of my 30s, unfortunately. I lost my mom, who had breast cancer, and I lost my dad last year to a rare blood disease. It was a really difficult time. I went through a lot of grief and now am coming out the other side. I'm not sure if the ease and the calm I feel comes from that. There was so much that was not calm, so much dis-ease and disease.

Is it hard to get older with the cameras zooming in for close ups?

You know what? I almost feel lucky about it. I'm in an environment where I have a lot of information about how to stay healthy and live a good life. I love vegan and raw food, I love to exercise. If I weren't in this business, I think I would be aging differently. I'm fortunate because, for whatever

Love Your **20s**
30s
40s

Ashlee Simpson

“I have a lot of
room to grow
and learn.”

There's no pigeonholing Ashlee Simpson. Introduced to the world as big sister Jessica's younger counterpart, Ashlee, who turns 25 this month, has done a lot of growing up since her early pop starlet days. She starred in her own MTV reality show, got raves for her role as Roxie Hart in a London production of *Chicago*, and has experienced life, by turns, as a blonde, a brunette, and a redhead. She has also established herself as a jazzy-pop-rock singer in her own right, with a hat trick of albums (two multi-platinum) to call her own. Last May, she married Fall Out Boy bassist Pete Wentz and in November gave birth to their first child, son Bronx Mowgli. We caught up with Ashlee in her trailer on the Los Angeles set of *Melrose Place*. In the new CW series, a remake of the wildly popular '90s prime time soap, Ashlee (a redhead these days) plays Violet, a newcomer to L.A. whose innocence is counterbalanced by, as Ashlee describes it, “a stalker creepy side.” Ashlee herself, on the other hand, in a tiny jean skirt, a sheer blouse over a black camisole, and sandals, seems mostly like a besotted mom. Laughing and in constant motion, even while sitting, she regularly brings the conversation back to her very favorite subject, her baby boy, Bronx.

What are you enjoying about this time in your life?

I don't sit there and say, “Oh! I'm 24!” But as far as career goes, it's kind of fun because I have had a child and I'm at a place where I get to reboot and do something new. In that way I have a lot of room to grow and learn. I love that about my age. It's such a great place of coming into yourself—this is who I'm going to be. What I do now defines who I am as a woman and how people see me; they don't see me as a little girl. Your

Ashlee Simpson

20s are a great time to explore and a great time to have a baby. I get to jump into jobs, and Bronx gets to come with me.

How has having Bronx changed you?

I've grown up so much. The great thing about being pregnant is that you have nine months and it really does prepare you. Your body is changing, and it's such an amazing time to feel that connection. I did prenatal yoga, which was a nice way to mellow down and focus on me and Bronx. Being pregnant was the healthiest I've ever been in my life. Except for the cupcakes.

Did you enjoy your rounder body?

I didn't mind at all. I think being pregnant is so beautiful. Maybe I was just lucky, but I had the *best* pregnancy, and I loved giving birth. It was just the most amazing thing, so surreal but so real.

Is Pete a good dad?

A great dad. So sweet and loving. I knew he would be, but it's so cool when it actually happens. When you see the dad with your son, it's a whole new side of them. Just beautiful.

How did you two meet?

He asked my dad for my email. I thought, *Oh sure, why not?* And there was a long friendship before our relationship, which was nice because it was so comfortable when we did start to date.

Has your relationship with your mom changed since Bronx?

We were always close, but as you get older, and when you go through something like a pregnancy, you think, *Oh, my parents are wonderful!* You see a lot of ways that you are like them. I'd say my sister is more like my dad and I'm more like my mom. My mom's more... she's straight up, and I love that. She does it in a very sweet way. She's also really laid-back. She's always been such a great mom, and now she's a great grandmother! Bronx loves her.

Being a mom is maturing, but does Bronx remind you of being a child, too?

Yes! I still have a childlike spirit. But you can't be too free-spirited!

Any parts of your life you've given up?

Sometimes I watch people who don't live a lot when they're younger, and then later they're like, "I want to go out!" I say, "No,



At top: Bronx's future's so bright, his parents, Ashlee and rocker Pete Wentz, gotta wear shades. Above: Ashlee on CW's *Melrose Place*.

no, you should have done that before!" But it's always good for a woman to have a good time. There is nothing wrong with that!

What's the best part about your 20s?

My son. He's the best part of everything.

Does your relationship with Jessica change as the years go by?

Definitely. When I was 14, we started to have a closer bond. But when I hit my 20s,

we got even closer. We're really, really close. She's close with my very best friends, and I'm friends with hers. I'll be at home with my son, and my friends will be staying at Jessica's house—which is funny because growing up we were just "the little sisters." Now she says, "Wow, your friends give me better advice than anyone."

You stood up for her earlier this year when she was getting flack for her weight gain.

That was ridiculous. Jessica is such a beautiful person. People are way too harsh on women's bodies. Hers is gorgeous.

Do you ever think, *Oh, Jessica's completely free, and I have so much responsibility?*

I really don't. She's always saying, "Oh, I want a baby!" Being a mom's so empowering and incredible. I'm one of those people who believes that life brings things to you at a certain time for a certain reason, and if you just go with it, that's where the best moments come from.

Is there anyone 10 or 20 years older who you think, *I want to be like that?*

Julia Roberts does an amazing job at being a mom and staying out of the limelight. She just seems like she's really got it together. And look at Madonna. She's amazing, still going at it. She can put on a sick show—like an amazing show, that would be my 20-year-old language—and you would never know [her age].

What would you like to be known for at 40?

I'd like to be an awesome mom. I'd like to have a big old family.

Do you think there's an ideal age?

I don't know. It's always, "Thirties is the ideal age." Then, "No, it's 40s!" I guess I don't have an ideal age. I like to live in the moment. I'm looking forward to being 25, same with 26. You can only hope with each year and each decade you continue to grow and learn and live life to the fullest. **R**