



awkwardness of face-to-face conversation between love interests. Essentially, the setting of bars or clubs as an entry point to interaction is entirely avoided, and with it, the act of mingling and drinking together. To further segregate the presence of alcohol from the dating scene, “there are also sober-only services like sobersocial.com, recoveringmates.com, and soberkiss.com” (Barcella). These websites not only ensure the removal of meeting boozy men in-person by introducing the process of initial interaction through a screen, but also guarantee their users a community of docile drinkers. On the off chance on landing a first or second date, *Cosmopolitan* suggests to “never be the one drinking the most” (Kobola). This contrasts my previous relationship, as my ex-boyfriend often displayed an aggressive drive to out-drink everyone, and rightfully was shamed for it. This is extraordinarily different when compared to the dating tendencies and patterns of generations before mine. My mother met my brother’s father at the bar. Ten years earlier, I was conceived after a Valentine’s date between my mother and my biological father at the bar. Furthermore, many of my mother’s peers frequently sought out bars simply to meet men. She, and her friends, represent a few of the many members of previous generations who actively used the bar as a mingling pool during the 1990’s and 2000’s. Today, the integration of alcohol consumption and dating has been skewered by the stereotypes and prejudices often found on social media. Additionally, the common ground of mingling has been displaced to the intangible, ultimately eliminating crowds of young singles, like many of my friends, from bars. In combination, the presence of stereotypes and the introduction of introverted dating methods, entirely remove the presence of alcohol from the mingling process.

While in a relationship with an alcoholic, I feared recklessness. His need for recklessness made me truly value the importance of having security within a partner. Along with the inclusion of introverted mingling through social media, today’s young adults do not find pleasure or exhilaration from reckless behavior. Recklessness is no longer romanticized; it does not “soften the edges of evenings spent looking for love in all the wrong places” (Bainbridge). With the rising popularity, and dependency, of social media among my peers also comes the process of educating youth of the risks associated with reckless behavior – predominantly drinking and driving, and date rape. Focusing on my hometown community of Prince George, it was just this past August that officials collected “more than one report from

women who believed they may have been drugged while socializing at a local licensed establishment in our community” (Citizen Staff). While youth have become afraid to interact with strangers with physical conversation, drinking has evolved into a life-threatening decision; if they choose to abstain, there is no pressing threat. Alternatively, the extremely displayed risks associated with drinking and driving further hammers the fear of reckless behavior caused by intoxication. With the involvement of inhibition, comes the question of tolerance. Frankly, incidents of accidents caused by drunk driving illuminate how “unreliable our self assessments of our own sobriety can be” (finitelitebrite). If something as simple as driving can become life threatening when altered by alcohol, it can be assumed there are risks associated with the complexities of relationships: rejection, denial, and regret to name a few. Ms. Avila, my best friend and a usual tequila drinker, said when it comes to hitting a night on the town, that alcohol aids to “just take that edge off” (Avila). But perhaps it is the “edge” that we should be cautionary of, rather than challenged to overcome. Reckless behavior is not sought after by today’s youth; we have become afraid to drink from our cup, and have adopted a suspicion of strangers at bars. It has been drilled into young people that alcohol’s nature conjures recklessness, a risk far too heavy for anyone to take when trying to find something as delicate as love. Love is something I hold tenderly. Rightfully so, something so soft and delicate should not be stained or tainted through reckless, ignorant action. In my experiences with dating an alcoholic, there were many nights where he “must’ve dreamed I [he] was a nail, because I [he] woke beside you [me] still hammered” (Dougherty). In retrospection, I would not impose the challenge of wrangling his unruliness onto anyone. Alcohol proved to be a catalyst to his reckless behavior. It poses as a danger for my peers looking for love, and in turn, society is forming to reject the reckless behavior of careless romantics.

Having dated an alcoholic, I do not miss is the feeling of disconnect that wormed between us each time he decided to drink excessively. I would volunteer to drop him off at parties. I would reluctantly pick him up. I would even hold my tongue when random women would pile into my car, begging him for a ride home, and thanking him for such a great evening – to which I was not invited to, because he would not be able to “let loose” if I was around. Mr. Zhang, a previous bartender at Mr. Mikes Steakhouse Casual, argues that alcohol allows us a “more honest portrayal of a