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## At Last, My Love Has Come Along?

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The inevitable finally caught up with us. In hindsight we were lucky – it could have happened anywhere. It just happened to be on the short ride home from Costco. The needle advanced to its usual place on the thermometer. Then a little further. Then into the red. After 209,349 miles, my trusty, sporty, fun-to-be-with Altima finally had enough. Sure, it was just the water pump, but it's never JUST the water pump. It was a new set of tires earlier this summer. Now this. Next up would be the head gasket? Ce la vie, mi amor...we had fun while it lasted.

I've been down this road before a few times in my life, and the story is always the same. I do the research, consider my preferences based on past experience, then embark on a long-term commitment where we both give of ourselves and tend to each others' needs, until we reach that eventual impasse where the head gasket goes – always the irreconcilable difference. This time I wasn't waiting around for that kind of betrayal.

I saw this coming, so I planned ahead. A year ago I signed up with a popular on-line service to find my match. I didn't know what was out there, but I knew what my likes and dislikes were. So I filled out the profile, selected every model of interest, and waited for the prospective matches to show up in my in-box. At this stage in life, I knew we wouldn't be each others' first. I was fine with that. I just wanted something that still had a lot of life left and would be along with me for the ride.

Out of brand loyalty, I've always considered the representative Toyota and Nissan. They've been there for me before. But I was now open to change. I *craved* change. It needed to feel different this time. I'm at a point where my sons will be out on their own during the life of this choice, so my priorities are more selfish. I want something that's fun to be with, full of life, and hopefully low maintenance. I want a loyal companion who's ready and willing to hit the trails on bike rides, pack up for extended weekends at vistas along the coast, and simply help me lug materials for the next DIY project at home. And although this choice is all about me, it would be nice if it's also a good fit for my family.

I listened to what they all had to say – most were too in-your-face. I imagined myself with Jeep, but the models that had the right stuff were out of my league. The ones I thought could work just didn't feel right. All had a sexy exterior, but most of the first encounters ended in disappointment. At first sight, Subaru felt like it could be right, but I wasn't rushing into anything. However, after kicking the tires and seeing all there was to see, it was time for a second night out with Subaru.

Subaru had never been on my radar in the past. I told myself we weren't right for each other. I assumed they were overly expensive, and never even took one out. I liked the commercials – I felt they said a lot in a quieter way than most brands, and the human connection really came through in an authentic way. As I said in my Fiat post after the Super Bowl, lathering an ad with sentimentality does not guarantee an emotional connection with your brand. But the Subaru spots nailed it. I didn't think the message worked as well in the radio spots – seemed a little too forced and only achieved *describing* the connection. It's a challenge of the medium, and hey, no one is perfect!

After customary haggling with the matchmaker, where I said I wanted "love" at the "like" price, I brought Subaru home. We have really hit it off. I also have the thumbs-up from my kids! It's only been a few weeks – I'm well aware we are in the early stages. But yes, this fool is ready to believe it IS love that makes a Subaru a Subaru.



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Rob has built brands and generated awareness for A&E, AT&T, BellSouth, Benjamin Moore, Broadbeam, Coldwell Banker, DuPont, FoodTown, Johnson & Johnson, Maxim Group, Mercedes-Benz, Multimedia Entertainment, Newsweek International, Roma Foods, Spirits Unlimited and more. He helped revitalize the global ETS brand and sub-brands for over 10 years, establishing new graphic standards and messaging hierarchy. Most recently, Rob has held a senior role on the leadership team charged with standing up Ortho Clinical Diagnostics as a fully independent brand after the carve-out from Johnson & Johnson.

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**Rob Adams** is a dynamic, results-driven Creative Director and Brand Champion driving change through solid management experience, award-winning creative, and strategic leadership.

