

**Movie discussion resource**                      **Rosa's Wedding**  
*Engage with culture without disengaging your faith.*

**Genre:** Comedy/romance

**Rating:** M

**Length:** 97 minutes

**Starring** Candela Peña, Sergi López, Nathalie Poza, Ramón Barea, Paula Usero

**Director:** Icíar Bollaín

**Website:** [rosaswedding.com.au](http://rosaswedding.com.au)

**Australian release:** July 2021



**Brief synopsis**

Seamstress Rosa is in her mid 40's. She works in the wardrobe department of a film production company in Valencia, putting in long hours and receiving minimal pay. She comes to realize that her whole life has been devoted to pleasing and accommodating others, putting others ahead of her own needs. In addition to the pressure of her job, she's also besieged by the demands of family members: her widowed dad, Antonio (Ramón Barea); her divorced brother Armando (a scene-stealing Sergi López); her possibly-alcoholic sister Violeta (Nathalie Poza); and her grown-up daughter Lidia (Paula Usero). Plus, there's the constant favours for friends and neighbours. She decides to shake things up and take charge of her life. She retreats to her childhood home in the coastal town of Benicàssim – much to the dismay of her family. She plans to set up a business of her own in her seamstress mother's shop, long since closed. She also plans to get married - to herself. Rosa will soon discover that her siblings have other plans, and life is going to be anything but easy if it's not in the family script. *Rosa's Wedding* is a warm hearted film, and a life-affirming call to self-empowerment and independence.

**Questions for discussion**

*The film may be a catalyst for conversation leading into deep sharing and mutual support. Some general questions might provide enough framework for you to discuss the movie, such as:*

- ❖ What stood out as the main points/highlights in the movie?
- ❖ What themes are explored?
- ❖ What assumptions were embedded in the story?
- ❖ What challenged you? What questions did it raise for you?
- ❖ Are there aspects of the story that resonated with your own experience?
- ❖ Are there biblical or theological themes or characters that come to mind?

**Putting others first - shaking off gendered and cultural expectations**

Rosa has an endless number of people who expect her to jump to their demands - watering their plants, caring for their animals, looking after their kids. At the same time, she is underappreciated, and abused by her own goodwill. The film begins with a sequence of Rosa running a race until she collapses, in an attempt to escape her endless obligations. Rosa is a hard-working woman whose selflessness extends to the point of exhaustion and burn out. Some of us may have lived this kind of life, putting the needs of others ahead of our own. Gender and culture also play a role, as well as our 'need to be needed'. => Discuss how you have seen or experienced this yourself.

**'I've never been to me'**

This song dates back a few decades. The singer recognises that she's actually missed out on a lot. While she may have had adventure, romance and excitement she's never discovered herself, as in who she truly is on the inside. *Rosa's Wedding* has a similar focus - Rosa has been so busy with everyone else's needs that she hasn't been attentive to her own. She has overlooked paying attention to her health and well-being. Rosa decides she wants to marry herself. She vows to respect and love herself, and to put her own wants and desires above others for once. This is less about feminism, or the romance and self-

discovery, of *Eat Pray Love*, and more about simply being able to love and respect oneself and put your own needs and well-being first.

Interestingly, in Japan women can have a solo wedding - be pampered as a bride and have a beautiful photoshoot. One 'bride' said she wanted to perform a public declaration of her love - for her single self. "I wanted to figure out how to live on my own. I want to rely on my own strength." Japanese women who remained unmarried after the age of 25 have been referred to as "Christmas cake," a slur comparing them to old holiday pastries that cannot be sold after Dec. 25. Today, a growing number of Japanese women are postponing or forgoing marriage, rejecting the traditional path that leads to what many now regard as a life of domestic drudgery and a relentless tide of domestic burdens. Cultural norms have not caught up with working women in Japan: wives and mothers are still typically expected to bear the brunt of the housework, child care and help for their ageing relatives. More and more Japanese women, who have traditionally been circumscribed by their relationships with men, children and other family members, now find singlehood represents a form of liberation.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/world/asia/japan-single-women-marriage.html>)

=> Discuss the tension between societal expectations and personal needs.

### **The rescuer personality**

The rescuer personality is driven to help others. When someone has the need for help, the rescuer is there, just like a superhero, ready to save the day. They combine a flood of cortisol, the stress hormone, with a flood of connective emotions, to create a role for themselves in this world. Some people think that the rescuer personality is driven by guilt. That is incorrect. Rescuers are driven by a need to be needed. When they can help other people, they feel like they are helping themselves. It would also be fair to say that the rescuer role needs rescuing, probably moreso than the rescued needs rescuing.

(<https://futureofworking.com/explanation-of-the-rescuer-personality-type-and-disorder/>)

=> Discuss the dynamics of this personality type.

### **The ones you love**

While Rosa is prepared to sacrifice her own needs to help others, she also inadvertently overlooks the very real needs of her adult daughter, Lidia, struggling with the care of her young twins and a dysfunctional relationship. Rosa wants to tell Lidia how to live her life, and Lidia seeks a different kind of relationship with her mother. It is Lidia who helps Rosa navigate the pathway for the wedding Rosa had been planning all along.

=> Discuss the family dynamics of helping others at the expense of your own family.

### **Hineini**

In the parlance of the Hebrew Bible, there's a special way of signalling readiness to meet expectations: *Hineini*. *Here I am*. When God calls to Abraham, and speaks to Moses from the burning bush, they answer *hineini*. It is the verbal equivalent of jumping up and snapping to attention. At your service. *Hineini* carries a sense of obligation. Your presence is needed; please show up.

There is another way to understand *hineini*: *I am here*. Right here, right now. Wherever I am, I'm already here. Or, to quote the title of a book by the scientist and meditation teacher Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever You Go, There You Are*. *Hineini* is not always a response to an external call, an external need. We also need to answer *hineini* to ourselves, calling ourselves present right here, right now. When the body says "rest," *hineini*. When fear, sadness, anger poke and pierce us, *hineini*: these are my feelings, they hurt, and they need my attention and acknowledgement. As I am called to pay attention to other people's needs, so I am also called present to my own. I need to show up for myself.

(Carole Bass, <https://maryoliverchallenge.com/2020/05/13/hineini-here-i-am/>)

=> Discuss the idea of *hineini* - *I am here*.