

movies WHAT'S NEW, WHAT'S HOT & NOT, WHAT'S PLAYING

Weighing in on 'Eat'

Experts affirm post-divorce tale

By **Larry Muhammad**
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The Courier-Journal

"Eat Pray Love" isn't just the title of a best-selling book that's now a movie starring Julia Roberts.

It's good advice. Starting over after divorce really can be an odyssey of self-discovery, much as Elizabeth Gilbert depicted in "Eat Pray Love," according to some local experts.

"It's common for people to think of putting distance between themselves and a past relationship, and they do that through travel and surrounding themselves with passions that don't remind them of that relationship," said Eli Karam, assistant professor at the University of Louisville's Marriage and Family Therapy Program in the Kent School of Social Work. "They re-evaluate who they are, what they're about, and what they want the next part of their life to be. They do things that they haven't allowed themselves to do."

Based on Gilbert's memoir "Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia," the film finds Roberts getting it on with Javier Bardem's businessman character in Indonesia, satisfying gastronomic desires in Rome and doing psychic healing

through yoga in India.

Those three elements — eat, pray, love — in fact satisfy specific needs of the newly independent.

"Yoga is all about self-reliance, learning to have faith in yourself and your own abilities," said Sarah Ayers, owner and trainer at Inner Strength Fitness in Louisville. "There's a huge cognitive restructuring when you learn to get control of your body. There is lots of scientific research indicating that the more physically fit you become, the happier you will be."

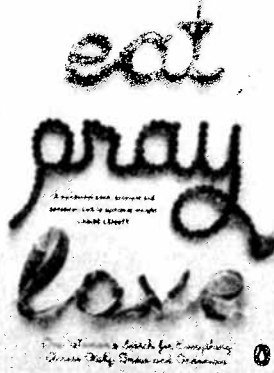
Mae Pike, owner of Home Cuisine, which prepares and delivers healthy gourmet meals in Louisville, said, "It's no surprise in the movie that a true love of food is discovered in Italy, as the region is known for wonderful pasta, pizza, desserts and wine. And the difference between enjoying a nice meal and really opening yourself to a gastronomic experience is having an open mind, trying new things. Food is a simple luxury. Have fun with it."

It's also no surprise that a mammoth merchandising campaign is tied to the release of the anticipated film.

The "Eat Pray Love" shop at Cost Plus World Market, a general store selling anything from food to furniture at locations nationwide including in Louisville, has pasta bowls and bistro furniture from Italy, among other items connected to the movie.

Of course, the escapist fantasy of a female writer on

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
ELIZABETH GILBERT



a post-divorce adventure in exotic locales isn't new. The 2003 Diane Lane movie "Under the Tuscan Sun", based on the 1996 memoir by Frances Mayes, covered the same territory.

Indeed, not everyone has the opportunity to spend the post-divorce period in fantasyland — not with bills to pay and kids to raise.

"With a lot of families, especially when there are children, the women can't just restart their lives, because child-rearing generally falls to them," said Karam, also president-elect of the Kentucky Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. "But the point of the book and the movie, I think, is to show a woman who didn't know what it was like to be alone and independent, going away to re-evaluate things — and finding some answers and a new relationship."

Reporter Larry Muhammad can be reached at (502) 582-7091.

JULIA | Actress enjoys a bit of nerves

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"I was really nervous before I met her because I have been a fan too. I have seen all of her movies," he said. "Nothing surprises me about her because what you see is what you get with

... is the elephant that Phinnaeus and I had ridden in January in Jaunpur. When I walked across the ashram and saw that elephant I said, 'I know that elephant.'"

Since her box-office breakthrough in 1990's

are extraordinary, and we wanted to make a show about it. Oprah made it happen for us."

One TV gig she won't be taking is a role in Murphy's hit TV series, "Glee."

Explained Roberts: "Billy Crudup and I were in a theater. Allen musical a

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