

Justin Baldoni



When Justin Baldoni was in seventh grade, he and his dad did something on Christmas Day that transformed Justin's life. They went out and helped feed homeless people. That kind act inspired him, and over the years, his passion for service grew. At 23, he started celebrating his birthday by serving food to those in need in Los Angeles, California. This evolved into an annual Skid Row Carnival of Love, which provides about 4,000 people with food, clothing, health services, and fellowship.

Justin also serves humanity with TV and online shows. He produced the series *My Last Days* about young people living positively with terminal illness. The show helps raise money for charity. Justin's audience has grown along with his popularity—he's costarred in the Golden Globe-nominated TV comedy *Jane the Virgin* since 2014. He recently launched the online series *Man Enough* about gender equality. Justin and his wife, Emily, live in California with their daughter, Maiya, and son, Maxwell.

Q: What's your favorite childhood memory?

A: Spending time with my *nonna*, my dad's mom . . . just being with her after school . . . Every time I would walk into her house, it would smell so good. She would always be baking something or cooking something.

Q: What was the most challenging experience for you as a kid?

A: I didn't really know how to make friends . . . I was always trying to fit in instead of being who God made me . . . I had a problem with . . . being okay with who I [was] and knowing that people would want to be friends with me for *me* . . .



Left: Justin, age 8, cuddles Dobie Dog, who was rescued by Justin's dad.

Right: At about age 16, Justin worked as a DJ at a radio station in Oregon, U.S.

Q: How did you get interested in acting and directing?

A: I was always interested in acting and directing . . . but I never had the confidence . . . In middle school, I did my first play . . . In high school, I started making music videos . . . I moved to [California] . . . and a guy who was a manager asked me if I was an actor or if I wanted to be. And that's how my acting career started . . . I had a lot of success, and then the success was all taken away . . . [Then] I went to Haifa and I re-fell in love with Bahá'u'lláh, and that's when I asked Him to use me and to allow me to be of service . . . That really changed my life and led me to . . . everything that I do.

Questions and
Answers with an
Inspirational Bahá'í



Above: After the 2018 Skid Row Carnival of Love, Justin and his family celebrate his birthday. He's with (left to right) his mom, Sharon, with Maxwell; his sister, Sara; his wife, Emily, with Maiya; and his dad, Sam.



Justin with *Jane the Virgin* costars (left to right): Jaime Camil, Ivonne Coll, Andrea Navedo, Yael Grobglas, and Gina Rodriguez.

Q: Tell us about your *Man Enough* online series. Why is it important for men to discuss gender equality?

A: I've always wrestled with what the idea of masculinity even is . . . *Man Enough* was born . . . to create conversation around what it means to be a man . . . And also to let men know that it's *okay* to talk, that it's okay to share your feelings, it's okay to talk about being insecure. It doesn't make you less of a man. In fact, it makes you more of a man. It makes you brave and . . . vulnerable and compassionate and powerful.

Q: If you had one wish for *Brilliant Star's* readers, what would it be?

A: To wake up every day and ask yourself what you can do to make someone else happy that day . . . I think . . . that's the beginning of how we change the world. Be kind. Make people happy.

Q: What's the mission of your media company, Wayfarer, and what's the concept of *chocoli* [chocolate-covered broccoli]?

A: Wayfarer's mission is to ignite the spark in hearts all over the world and inspire people to see life develop . . . *Chocoli* is basically this idea of, you know, you have to create something good inherently for the world, and dip it in chocolate so that it tastes good as well.

Q: What's your advice for kids who want a career in entertainment?

A: To make sure that they want to do it out of service, and not just for themselves . . . The more you want something for yourself, the harder it is, and the less likely it is to happen. The more you want something for the world, then I believe the greater the chances of that dream coming true are, because it's not an easy business . . .

Q: What are three things kids can do to make the world a better place?

A: One is to listen . . . The first step to compassion is understanding and listening. The second thing . . . is to try. The world can seem really, really big, and there's so many problems happening everywhere, but you can try . . . Maybe there's a kid in school who is . . . sick and has to go to the hospital. Send that person a note . . . Third . . . step outside of your comfort zone and get to know people . . . Reach out and make friends that are a . . . different skin color than you . . .