

A Professional Matchmaker Gives Us Her Tips for Finding True Love

Nicole Briese • Mon Sep 05 2016



With the passing of National Matchmaker Day back at the end of August, we got to thinking: What with [dating apps](#) like Tinder (and Bumble and OKCupid and eHarmony and Match, to name a few), are people still using matchmakers? And if so, what is the process even like? The picture of Mulan's matchmaker with her angry, running makeup and surly disposition was fresh in our minds, and yet, it didn't seem quite right.



As it turns out, modern-day matchmaking isn't quiteeee the strict, outdated model we had envisioned.

In fact, thanks to the growing trend that sees [people getting married later in life](#) and also [living at home longer](#), matchmaker Stef Safran of [Stef and the City](#) says the use of matchmakers is actually on the rise.



"When [people] go out after college if they've lived a few years at home, they feel very lost in dating and social life in general," she says. "The same goes for a divorced 40-45 year old."

What's more, even with a bevy of eligible bachelors or bachelorettes at their fingertips, thanks to the World Wide Web, singles often still find themselves in need of assistance. "People are seeking out matchmakers [because], even with the ability to do it yourself, you realize how hard it is," she says.

She isn't kidding.

While some may be experiencing missed connections due to something as simple as being on two totally different matchmaking sites ("One might do eHarmony, one might do Match"), others may simply be throwing in the towel too soon after one too many bad Tinder dates. "I think people quit too easily," Stef says, an action she attributes to misunderstanding and an inability to deal with rejection. After all, as she points out, much like a job hunt, there's a lot of rejection to be had in the world of dating, and the ones that make it to the other side — true love — are those that are persistent. "[If you] apply for a lot of positions and [are] not getting any response, that's where people get frustrated."



Stef says that she's in a unique position to help people navigate those difficulties. "I think what people like about working with a matchmaker is [that they get to] find out more information about what works or doesn't work. I will definitely talk to men and women and hear both sides."

From there, she can begin to explain what's going on (which could really be as simple as a busy week) or offer constructive feedback to clients who are unconsciously self-sabotaging. Stef recalls one former client of hers who was scheduling dates after work only to find out he needed time to unwind and came off as much more relaxed and appealing when he took dates out on the weekends.

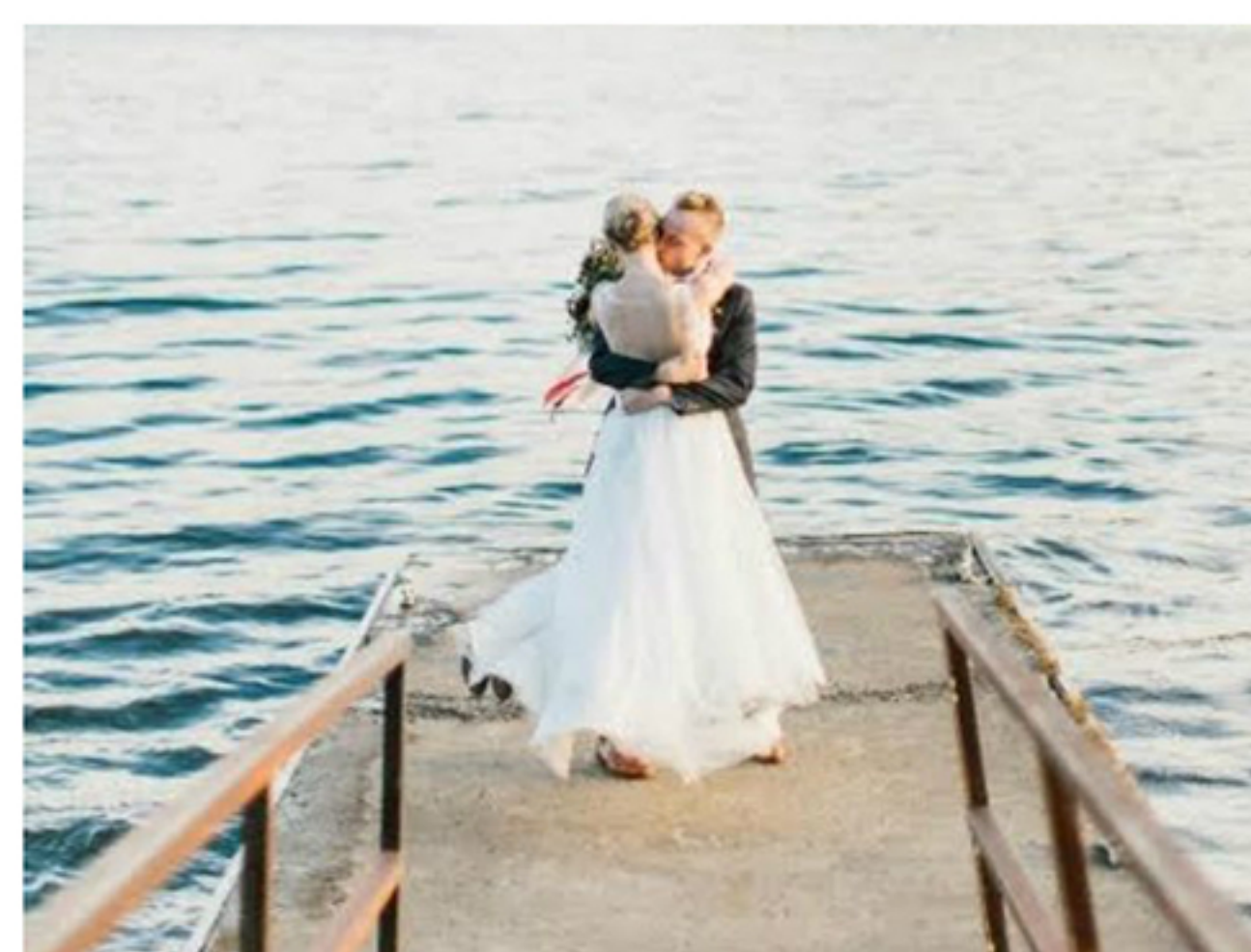
And, while Stef does vet someone's qualifications to ensure that people are represented accurately in their photos or that their height matches what they claim it does, she also gets the chance to steer her clients in the right direction when it comes to expectations.



"People have an ideal, usually put in place by their parents, [and relationships today are] not the traditional model of what they think marriage looks like," she says. It doesn't mean they can't work just as well, however — a fact which Stef can help open their eyes to, with the right partner.

So where does she find these wondrous matches? She recruits them. Offering 12-month-contracts to clients which provide a certain amount of matches per year (roughly one match every 4-6 weeks), Stef is constantly seeking "fresh meat" to fill her quotas, much like a recruiter might seek job candidates.

But, as she's quick to point out, matchmaking isn't simply about pairing two like-minded people together, at least not for Stef. Dubbing herself an "introductionista," she says that matchmaking can be as simple as giving people the tools they need to interact with others in their everyday lives. "[They] start meeting people naturally," she tells us.



It's this type of mentality that sees couples like Branden and Sammi Harvey getting married. The two met on Twitter in 2012, and even though he lived in Portland and she in Nashville, Skype technology allowed these two to virtually date for *three years* (with visits in between) before Branden eventually proposed!

Stef, for one, would approve — she encourages online dating, which she says makes for great practice. "I think if you've tried more on your own, you understand what's out there [better] than if you choose to avoid it completely," she reasons. "You have to go on bad dates to know what a good date is."

Amen, sister.

Would you ever try a matchmaker? Tell us over [@BritandCo!](#)

(Photos via [Branden and Sammi Harvey](#), [Stef Safran + Getty](#))

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Nicole is a weekend editor for Brit + Co who loves bringing you all the latest buzz. When she's not busy typing away into the wee hours, you can usually find her canoodling with her two cats, reading an autobiography, attempting ("attempt" being the key word here) to make some neufangled vegetarian dish she found on Pinterest or rocking out at a concert of some sort (she's partial to the band Sushi Roll; her boyfriend just so happens to be the guitarist).