

PRESS RELEASE

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On behalf of:



Don't "Arrange Me a Marriage"

Anne Stringer, owner and chief matchmaker of introduction agency RSVP, takes issue with the concept of arranged marriage, as practised by self-styled amateur 'marriage guru' Aneela Rahman on BBC2.

Says Anne: "I am concerned that the mass airing for the concept of arranged marriage with a twist somehow validates the approach in the minds of the general public, when most people consider personal choice to be the one thing that they would not forfeit when making the most important decisions they will ever make. Not only that, but if people are going to look for help in finding a partner, they are going to look for expertise and experience rather than family and friends"

"I'm also really disappointed that the BBC has spent all this time and money so pointlessly and I get the impression that there is a thread in there that sees single people trying to find love as **amusing populist entertainment.**"

"How much more useful would it have been to show the matchmaking job being done properly by experts who know what they're doing and have a good success rate behind them? Then every viewer could have learned something really useful about what makes for a great partnership."

Concerns

In a recent article, Anne goes on to expand:

"Whilst I'm sure it's just designed to be entertainment, I have 5 principle concerns about the concept practised by Ms Rahman:

- It ignores all the established evidence that top of a man's list of what to look for in a partner and second on a woman's list is '**attractiveness**'. Whilst I don't necessarily agree that that's the recipe for a great marriage, it is, nonetheless, an indisputable fact which Ms Rahman expediently parks or leaves to the family. I wouldn't trust my family to choose me a Christmas present, let alone someone to spend my life with!
- The focus seems to be mostly on the **material** aspects of compatibility (class, education, family background, life goals and earnings) almost as if life is a series of successes to be chalked up and counted. Most people we meet in our agency do not rate these characteristics especially highly and will generally place personality traits at the top of their list of wants: honesty, trust, sharing. Concentrating on the visible trappings of success makes this look like some kind of elitist game of one upmanship worthy of an Ealing Comedy.
- The most valuable characteristic of a democracy is **choice**. We have so much of it that we almost take it for granted. People join agencies like RSVP because it offers them **choice**; they compare agencies based on **how much** choice they will have. Having the pick of 1,000 members is so much better than having the pick of 100. With Ms Rahman's approach, the hapless victim gets a choice of 1.

Continued

■ What happened to **chance**? We know better than anyone that the more **chances** you create for a person to meet others, the more they are to find a partner. That's why we offer events where people can get together in a relaxed environment. Single people often come to us with a long list of requirements for their perfect partner, meet someone gorgeous by **chance** at an event, and that carefully crafted list of demands goes out of the window. It's all about probabilities: put a person in a room with one stranger and the probability of their being attraction is, let's say, 10%. Put the same person in a room with 50 people and the probability of their being attraction is 50 x 10%, ie there will be 5 people they fancy."

■ Ms Rahman's stated aim is to improve on the success rate in British marriages and believes that arranged marriages have a better record. I just don't think we're comparing like with like here. There are many cultural reasons why arranged marriages have a better record, not all of them good, including less libertarian attitudes to divorce, family pressure on couples to stay together and sharply distinct roles and accepted norms of men and women in most such relationships. If Briton's want a better track record in marriage, they need to marry later, live together for at least two years before marrying and refuse to 'settle'.

Call the Experts

Anne concludes: "If I was looking to buy my perfect home, I wouldn't call up my friends and family and ask them if they knew of any decent houses for sale. I would go along to the best agency in town, talk to them about my requirements and see what they had to offer. Not just that day but next week and next month. Maybe my perfect home isn't on the market yet.

I can't see why you would do anything different to find your perfect partner.

My advice to singles whose hopes have been raised is: don't call Ms Rahman; don't call your friends; definitely don't call your mother. Call an expert."

RSVP was established in 1992, has seen over 15,000 members since then and, almost uniquely for a dating agency, offers both one-to-one introductions and hosted events. They have an impressive track record and a thick file of success stories.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

RSVP Introductions was established in 1992 and is owned today by husband and wife team Anne and Roland Stringer. They aim to provide single, professional people with everything they need to find themselves a happy, loving relationship. As well as introductions, RSVP also provide other tools to increase their members' chances: social events, personal development workshops, life coaching and more. RSVP Introductions currently operate in the following counties:

Bedfordshire	London
Buckinghamshire	Northamptonshire
Cambridgeshire	Nottinghamshire
Derbyshire	Oxfordshire
Essex	Staffordshire
Hertfordshire	Warwickshire
Leicestershire	West Midlands
Lincolnshire	Worcestershire

For more information about RSVP Introductions, visit their website at www.rsvpintroductions.co.uk.

Please contact Jayna Makwana on the contact details below for press enquires, case studies, interviews etc.