

Professional Matchmaking is on the Rise. Why?

The other day, Pew Research compiled a [bunch of statistics](#) on various life aspects and used them to compare recent generations to each other. Not surprisingly, millennials are vastly different than those in their parents' or grandparents' generations.

This is particularly true in the marriage category. As Pew explains, "When members of the Silent Generation were the same age as millennials are now, just 17% had never been married." By comparison, Pew finds that 57 percent of those in the millennial age category have never been married.

Despite this huge gap, Pew finds that many millennials still hope for marriage, with roughly a quarter of them saying they just haven't found the right person yet.

Perhaps it is this difficulty in finding a mate that is causing many young and middle-age individuals to embrace an old – and often ridiculed – approach to dating known as matchmaking.

According to *The Boston Globe*, [matchmaking](#) is enjoying a bit of a resurgence in the age of online dating and one-night stands. *The Globe* chalks this resurgence up to the modern desire for convenience.

Unfortunately, this same convenience often spawns multiple options, which present the individual with an abundance of choices. Too many choices and too little time have led many to seek out professional matchmakers, who help streamline the dating experience.

Reading between the lines, however, it would appear that there are other issues driving the popularity of the modern

matchmaker. One is a lack of honesty. As one woman shares with *The Globe*, previous dating attempts landed her with a man much older than was implied in his dating profile. Using the matchmaker minimizes such surprises.

Perhaps a greater issue, though, is the decline of family. In the past, many marriages were launched through family introductions. As such, family members behaved like today's matchmakers – connecting suitable interests and personalities, doing background checks, and providing feedback about first impressions.

But as the [chart below](#) shows, familial influence has experienced a rapid decline in the dating world, undoubtedly aided and abetted by growing [prevalence of broken families](#).



While we may scoff at such a notion, this decline of family involvement in dating introductions may be driving some of the unhappiness we see in today's relationships.

Author J.R.R. Tolkien once addressed this issue in [a letter](#) to his son Michael. Discussing the issue of “soul-mate” marriage, Tolkien explained that such a mentality often leads one to continually look for the next best thing, leading to ever greater disappointment. He goes on to note:

*“You really do very little choosing [in marriage]: life and circumstance do most of it (though if there is a God these must be His instruments, or His appearances). **It is notorious that in fact happy marriages are more common where the ‘choosing’ by the young persons is even more limited, by parental or family authority...**”*

Given this observation, it would seem that the revival of matchmakers is a good development. We may even see fewer divorces and more happy marriages if young people trusted the

instinct and research of others – including family and friends – with regard to their love lives.

But unfortunately, there is one condition to this allegedly happy scenario. As Tolkien goes on to say, familial involvement in the marriage process only works where “there is a social ethic of plain unromantic responsibility and conjugal fidelity.”

The question is, do we have this social ethic? And if not, do we need to rebuild it before we can expect a revival of happy, committed relationships amongst our young people?

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