

For Success in Marriage, Treat It Like a Business

Written by Ginny Grimsley

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Counselor Offers Tips for Committing One's Life to the Right Person

As an immigrant from India who feels blessed to be an American citizen, Sukhjiwan Singh remains puzzled by the divorce rate here, estimated by PolitiFact.com in 2012 to be 40 to 50 percent.

"I come from a time and place in which arranged marriages were common practice – and there was no dating allowed. It seems to me that our society today should have more successful marriages since singles *can* date here and get to know their future spouse before taking the plunge," says Singh, CEO of a real estate firm, a mother of two and a happily married wife to her husband of 35 years.

Singh has extensive experience as a counselor to victims of domestic violence, which has piqued her fascination for what works, and what doesn't work, when searching for a lifelong partner.

"If you truly want to commit your life to a future husband or wife, but haven't found him or her yet, there are many things you can do to ensure a successful marriage while testing the waters via dating," say Singh, author of "Marriage and the Love Myth," (www.authorsukhsingh.com), who offers tips for committing one's life to the right person.

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• **Don't ignore the parallels between business and dating/marriage.** Just like marriages, businesses fail all the time. Both demand your best effort and resources, including an inexhaustible amount of time, dedication and, usually, as much money as you can spare. As the fate of your business or romantic relationship goes, so goes your fate. While the experiences of both are often different, both require self-awareness, sound decision-making, and the willingness to give if they are to be successful. Of course, this means finding the right niche in business, or the right person for love...

• **Follow the 80-percent rule in terms of compatibility for the "big stuff."** No two people are exactly alike, so where should a single person start measuring compatibility with another? Define the "big stuff," which may mean religion, culture and ethnicity for some. Another take on big stuff could be personality traits, physical characteristics, social skills and more. Still another take could mean where two people are in life, such as profession and education. Define the big stuff; if you're compatible on about 80 percent of the list, you should strongly consider purchasing a warranty for a great relationship. In other words, getting married.

• **Communication skill – the glue of a lasting relationship.** While establishing a relationship, take note of the conversation. Does it flow and is it enjoyable, or do you find yourself bickering frequently? As with a business, you can have the ideal partner or employee who may look stellar on paper, but if you do not work well together, it's not good for business. The same follows for a sweetheart who may seem perfect in every other way. Make sure communication is a two-way street, and watch out for frequent sarcasm toward you, which is a sign of disrespect. You should be able to talk and listen with care, respect and proper appreciation.

About Sukhjiwan Singh: Sukhjiwan Singh is the founder and CEO of New Dimensions Realty, a real estate brokerage. Through her extensive experience as a volunteer counselor for victims of domestic violence, she has become deeply aware of the causes of divorce and its devastating impact on families. Born and raised in Punjab, India, she received a master's degree in English from Punjab University and immigrated to the United States in 1979. Since then, she has lived a happy lifestyle with her two sons and the love of her life – her husband of 35 years, Malkiat.