

Your Personal Coach

Kathleen Brehony, Ph.D.

Dear Kathleen,

My good friend Amanda was divorced two years ago. I've tried time and again to fix her up with some interesting single men at my workplace, but none of them seem to interest her. My husband and I have set up dinners, theatre dates, and golf outings with her and these prospective suitors. Amanda has had a nice time on these occasions, but nothing ever seems to click between any of these guys and her. She's told me that she's dying to meet a nice man to date but I'm batting zero as a matchmaker. Any suggestions?

-- Rebecca

Dear Rebecca,

My first suggestion to you as a matchmaker is to STOP! This is an impossible task. There is no way to calculate the chemistry that is necessary for two people to become romantically interested in each other. In order for love to bloom, a certain chemistry – a “click” to use your word – must be present. Unfortunately for you and other well-intentioned matchmakers, this is impossible to foretell. Often the most unpredictable couples find true love, while those who seem perfectly matched fizzle or never ignite to begin with. I'm afraid that Amanda has to be on her own in finding a new man in her life.

You might be convinced that Amanda and one of your prospects will be fabulous together because they both love golf, collect Pez dispensers, and have a penchant for Ethiopian food. But in spite of all these shared interests, they may not click as romantic partners. On the other hand, she might meet a guy who seems to have nothing in common with her, yet all of a sudden the strains of the theme from “A Love Story” are wafting through the air. Go figure.

The fact that Amanda is “dying” to meet a man sounds a bit ravenous, and may send these nice bachelors running for the hills before they even have a chance to get to know her. She would be wise to fill her life with other interests. That doesn't mean to give up on love, but simply to cease obsessively pursuing it.

Amanda is most likely to discover the man of her dreams when she is not looking for him. I realize that sounds like a contradiction, but it's the truth. Why don't you suggest that she put finding a new man on hold, while she pursues other interests and activities that fill her life with great experiences? Taking classes, volunteering, community involvement, hobbies, and sports are terrific ways of expanding horizons and meeting new people. In the course of living fully, Amanda is very likely to meet interesting single men.

Continue to include Amanda in your social events, but take the pressure off everyone by framing it as an opportunity to play golf (or attend the theatre or gather for a meal) and not as a setup for a first “date.” When you have parties, include Amanda and lots of other friends, including some of the eligible bachelors. These changed expectations may change everything. When the expectations are changed, no one is put

on the spot and, instead, they can get a chance to know each other and let the slow dance of relationship flow naturally, or not at all.

If Amanda insists on continuing to find Mr. Right as she is presently doing, then I suggest she contact one of the many dating services available online and elsewhere. As for you, Rebecca, I'd leave matchmaking to the professionals.

Send your personal coaching questions to kathleen@fullpotentialliving.com or call 473-4004. Kathleen is a personal and executive coach, clinical psychologist, and writer. (©2003 Kathleen Brehony. All Rights Reserved.) Columns are archived at www.fullpotentialliving.com.