



16 SUNDAY SPOTLIGHT

# Where is Mr Right?

**B**EAUTIFUL and successful career women are realising later than sooner that their biological clock is ticking, and they may have missed the love boat.

By the time they get to 30, many already have a three-bedroom apartment, spanning new car and Europe vacation. The only missing piece to the puzzle is "a really good man."

Caught in a moment of panic and desperation, lots of women turn to professional matchmakers to help them get that man.

Dating service agency Lunch Actually director Violet Lim sees a 20 per cent decrease annually in women seeking help to find their soulmates.

"It's an obvious trend — women who've not found The One while in college, have major problems finding him later. Many women in their 30s have everything going for them except a partner.

"They are ready for love but can't seem to find the right time, place or moment. To make matters worse, most men in their age group are either married or in serious relationships."

Violet says, to a certain extent, older Malaysian women have it much more difficult than their male counterparts.

"There is an education squeeze: women want men who are of the same education level or higher, whereas men prefer women who are of the same education level or lower.

"In the end, we're left with the top 20 per cent of women and the lower 20 per cent of men.

"Men have little to worry about, as they can go to other countries in search of women who are looking for a better life. But the top 20 per cent of women have it tough."

Lim believes the high expectations of single women in their 30s and 40s make the quest for love almost impossible.

"Most of these women are very successful and tend to apply their work habits to personal life — adopting board meeting demeanour to date.

"Many are also reluctant to compromise, some are very adamant on finding a guy who is at least 1.75cm tall. They are very specific with their demands and do not want to budge."

"Women are also fixating on tangible things, like education and height, when they should be concentrating on intangible things, like values and chemistry."

Lim believes Hollywood notions are partly to blame.

"Many women are blinded by television romances. Small things, like does he pull the chair for you or you open the car door, become more important than loyalty and integrity love."

"Crossing a man off because of a single error is a huge mistake. Some men don't do so well in the beginning as they are nervous. But deep down, they could be the ideal marriage partner."

"Women should not have to con-

The birth rate is on the decline. Experts say women who put off marriage to focus on their careers are partly to be blamed. Some women are saying, however, that they are not putting off marriage on purpose. They just can't seem to find The One. They have even paid a small fortune in search of a fairytale romance, and to avoid interrogation by nosy relatives and friends on their marital status. **AUDREY VIJANDREN** tries to find out what's the problem



Lunch Actually director Violet Lim sees a yearly 20 per cent increase in women seeking help to find their soulmates

promise a lot, but it's important to prioritise. Many women are too concerned about whether the guy is tall or rich enough, but that is not an indication of whether he will be a suitable mate."

Some women, she says, make the mistake of overlooking submission, independence and femininity. Many feel they've got far in their career because of certain characteristics, which they try to apply to their relationships.

"For a man, attraction on a first date lies in the femininity of a woman. Every woman should showcase this."

"She may want to portray the 'tough' image at work, but at home, it might be better to play the 'small woman' role — indulging in her femininity."

Lunch Actually organises dates for single, working professionals over lunch. It has a database of managers, executives, directors, administrators, lawyers, accountants, doctors and entrepreneurs.

Dating agency Click-together manager, Yvonne Gerards, has made it her aim to reduce Malaysia's singles population.

"Of late, our singles population has been increasing twofold and soon it

will reach an alarming stage if more and more singles are not taking action on their love lives.

"Modern Malaysian women have placed their careers as their first priority. Their job gives them the social and financial status they need to enjoy a comfortable and stable lifestyle."

"They know what they want out of life and are on their way to achieving it. Some have had previous relationships that never lasted long enough for them to settle down.

"As a single person, they are learning how difficult it is to find a man who can complement their lifestyle. Many who have high qualifications and are successful in their profession will not trade it for something less."

"I have asked several career women to describe their ideal mate. Most of them gave me answers such as: emotionally secure, financially stable, intellectually stimulating, a good sense of humour, ready to commit and responsible."

"Remember, men who meet these requirements, may also have their list of 'must-haves' in a mate. And maybe, just maybe, these women may not meet those requirements."

Gerards says many women get desperate when most of their peers have tied the knot.

"If she is 30-something and still single, the joy of being a woman doesn't stay there. She is in a race against time, to meet all her personal and career goals.

**"MANY MALAYSIAN MEN ARE INTIMIDATED BY INTELLIGENT, SUCCESSFUL AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN."**

desperate when most of their peers have tied the knot.

"With no sight of a man on the horizon, she feels pressured by herself, parents and those around her. This is when most women seek our help."

"Are Malaysian women too choosy?"

"The most many successful, talented and beautiful Malaysian women and very few are choosy. In fact, the majority are just afraid to settle down after previous failed relationships."

"They have not yet recovered from the fall and are not prepared to meet more men. They just feel comfortable being single and living rich lifestyles."

Many Malaysian men, she says, are evidently intimidated by intelligent, successful and beautiful women.

"I wish they could just learn to relax. We aren't intimidated by successful men — we admire them."

"Maybe men should realise that many successful and beautiful women live in isolation, by giving her a break and treating her like any other girl, he'll learn that she is not very different from everyone else."

Her advice to single women looking for The One?

"Maintain an open and honest line of communication so that you know where he stands on key issues and goals. Finding a friend is easy, but finding The One is tough. It involves a lot of hard work, discipline, time and effort."

"Be frank, sincere and respectful. Show concern, care, love, be more responsible and committed."

However, give up searching for The One, as there is always hope and opportunity out there."

What do you think? Send your views to [msn@nt.com.my](mailto:msn@nt.com.my)

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# What these beauties have to say...



- "I realise that a lot of people go into relationships thinking of what they'll get out of it. 'There's this belief' that you need another person to 'complete you' and to tell or show you that you're lovable, which is why many relationships fall apart whether you're 20, 30 or 40-years-old. 'If you don't already feel complete and lovable, nobody can really make you feel that way,' says Hannah Lo, 26, model and actress.
- "Women in their 30s are generally more settled in life. They are at the peak of their careers and tend to be more specific with their requirements when it comes to men. 'I dare say that as they grow into that age group, women become more intellectual and sophisticated, and thus would need more mental stimulation than anything else from a potential life partner.' 'Not many men can keep up with all of that,' says Hannah Tan, 29, singer, songwriter and entertainer.
- "The older I get, the more aware I am of how I want and deserve to be treated. I can also truly differentiate what I want from what I need. 'The closest I've come to meeting someone I would contemplate a life with came only recently, and I recognised that it was because I'm sure whole as a person now. 'I'm glad that I'm going at a pace my heart and mind is happy with,' says Jay Memon, 29, TV host and radio announcer.

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## DATING PERCEPTIONS IN MALAYSIANS

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Dating a younger man	42	41
Dating an older woman	39	43
Dating a man who earns less	19	57
Dating a woman who earns more	70	12
Dating a man with lower education level	38	40
Dating a woman with higher education level	78	6
Dating a shorter man	11	73
Dating a taller woman	51	30
Dating a divorcee	48.6	31.1
Is sex acceptable on the first date	15.7	63.2

(March Actually 2009 survey polled 100 people)

In a recent Lunch Actually survey which polled about 300 people, this is what Malaysians had to say:

- Top three reasons for being single:**
- Haven't met anyone I want to be involved with
  - Find it hard to meet someone who shares my values or interests
  - People I'm interested in are already involved or not interested in me

**What is the most important criteria when choosing the right one?**

- Ability to communicate on the same wavelength
- Similar values and outlook
- Attractive outer appearance

# Gorgeous and looking for love



Kyannay says the assumption that beautiful and successful women have men flocking around them is completely wrong

**S**HE is a full-time model and Miss World Malaysia 2009 finalist, but Malaysian men shy away from Kyannay.

The beauty acknowledges that she gets a lot of attention from foreigners, however. "I don't have many requirements and avoid falling into the 'check-list syndrome', but still can't seem to find a man who is suitable for me," says the 25-year-old.

"I hate guys who are sloppy and I'd prefer someone who is a professional, but I'm not fussy about who I'm with."

"Unfortunately many of the guys I dated admitted that they feel like a shadow when they walk next to me. I'm not sure whether it's because of my height or my looks."

Kyannay says the assumption that beautiful and successful women have men flocking to them is completely wrong.

"People assume that I have many boyfriends and guys approach me all the time, but it's not true at all. A lot of guys are intimidated and readily assume that I'm already attached to someone. I usually get approached by 'Max Saliba', but local guys are too afraid to come up to me."

Blessed with a friendly and outgoing personality, Kyannay enjoys meeting new people. But even her confidence, bubbly and versatile personality can't hold her right man.

After years of dating it on her own, Kyannay is trying out the services of dating agency Lunch Actually.

In the hopes of meeting someone successful and honest to spend time with, she agreed to be part of a "Dream Date"



Ummal Khairiyah says guys are afraid of a successful woman

is questionable. You wonder whether they are mama's boys or geeks.

"But I suppose when you're in your 30s yourself, there needs to be certain cut-backs on requirements."

Senior IT consultant, Tracy Ng, 36, says women over 30 don't have enough safe channels to mingle.

"Malaysian women in the city are pretty conservative, they have to be extra cautious of the person they are mingling with since there are a lot of guys out there who are just looking for a good time."

Based on her dating experience, Ng says Malaysian men are not intimidated by success and beauty.

"They are attracted to these two things, it is always the women who have high expectations."

Sales coordinator from Penang, Ong Chin Nee, 29, says she found her true love through Click-together.

"I could never find the time to socialise as work was priority. I've had some serious relationships before, but none of them ever lasted. Most of my previous relationships ended because of communication problems. Some of my girlfriends have problems finding a man because of their expectations."

Entrepreneur, Ummal Khairiyah, 23, got married six months ago after her own struggle to find Mr Right.

"It's really very difficult to find the right person. I was always very active in social activities and people thought I had many admirers, but honestly, guys are afraid of a successful woman. They assume that because I'm passionate about my work, I'll practise queen central all hours."