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DR PRIYA SHAH: THREE CHEERS FOR 30 YEARS OF MATCHMAKING!

MARRIAGES MAY BE MADE IN HEAVEN BUT THEY ARE BEAUTIFULLY SHAPED ON EARTH BY HER BUREAU, WHICH ENABLES PEOPLE TO FIND THEIR PERFECT MATCH SINCE THE PAST THREE DECADES

2021 means many things to many people but it has a very special significance for Dr Priya Shah as the year marks a significant milestone of her career - 30 Years of being a Matchmaking professional. This spirited entrepreneur has been steadily receiving congratulations from one and all ever since the New Year commenced. It has been an unexpected but eventful journey, which began with Dr Priya Shah identifying one of the critical factors that shape people's entire lives. They say it is more difficult to find the right spouse than the right house and this is where her marriage bureau, 'Priya Shah: The Match Maker' facilitates the process.

A fashion designer by training, Dr Priya Shah opted to make this field her vocation because she genuinely wanted to make a difference to people's lives. Her own marriage experience had given her insights into one of life's biggest problems faced by people the world over, multiple flaws in the process normally followed for matching prospective life partners.

On getting married when just 18 years old, she encountered a situation that was far removed from her expectations when it came to interactions with her in-laws. She was caught unawares by the myriad differences that arose between them after the wedding. After a while, it became clear to Dr Priya Shah that she was contending with irreconcilable differences.

While it was certainly was not the experience she had looked forward to, there was still a positive outcome, an understanding and supportive life partner. Dr Priya Shah's husband stood by her side and that made all the difference.



Realising the predicament they were in, the young couple eventually decided to move out. With neither set of parents being supportive in any way, they had to fend for themselves.

As they racked their brains to come up with a solution, Dr Priya Shah reflected on what had happened with her marriage. Realization dawned that if Dr Priya Shah's parents would have followed a systematic and specific approach while identifying a match, the possibility of her going through the trials and tribulations

as a young bride could have been either minimized or perhaps, even avoided.

Making it her life mission to guide families so that they could avoid a recurrence of what had happened with her marriage, she founded her marriage bureau, 'Priya Shah: The Match Maker.' Starting on a hitherto unplanned, uncharted career path and that too with a newborn baby was not an easy assignment. Stepping into an intensely competitive market was an even greater challenge. But Dr Priya Shah proved equal to the task.

RENDEZVOUS WITH DR PRIYA SHAH

Recognising the scope for the support group and numbers-driven approach, Dr Priya Shah gradually organised get-togethers where prospective brides and grooms could interface in an informal setting along with their parents. The facility of exploring a variety of eligible candidates under a single roof at a safe and secure venue made it a win-win proposition and Dr Priya Shah has hosted up to a 100 people during some of these 'meet and greet' events. With many requests for Indian brides even from persons of Indian origin residing across the globe, Dr Priya Shah extended her horizons beyond borders. The United States of America witnessed her overseas debut and the success story continued there as well.

When Dr Priya Shah ventured into this profession in 1991, her primary focus was making people cognizant of that fact that matchmaking confers a responsibility and the implications can be life-changing. She exhorted people to adhere to an ideal path during the quest for their child's life partner, conveying that the problems faced by newly-wed couples, especially brides, can be greatly reduced. As each day passed, she gained in confidence and overcame all sorts of obstacles ranging from those faced by entrepreneurs to those posed by competitors.

Crediting her husband for his unconditional support all through and their deep love for each other that sustained them during the testing times of her career, Dr Priya Shah is emphatic that one has to be extremely focused and strongly motivated from within to be a successful entrepreneur in the matchmaking field.



Identifying problem areas based on experience and conceptualising pragmatic solutions that can be applied in real-life scenarios was time-consuming and seemingly endless, like being on a treadmill day in and day out for years on end. Describing matchmaking as a business which takes up all of one's time, mental focus and energy,' Dr Priya Shah affirms that one has to be prepared for absolutely no holidays or time off.

Working weekends and extended workdays were all part and parcel of this endeavour but she never gave up. Balancing multiple roles including that of being a counsellor when emotions run high, Dr Priya Shah has the distinction of saving many marriages, which were going through turbulent phases and would have ended up in divorce without her timely intervention.

Underlining this success are the plaudits conferred on her such as the Priyadarshini Indira Gandhi Award for 'scoring a string of outstanding achievements in a chosen field of activity' by the International Integrity, Peace & Friendship Society; Bharat Ratna Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Excellence Award 2018, by Association for Rising and Talented Personalities; Century



AT THE TOP OF HER PROFESSION

Over the past three decades, Dr Priya Shah has cemented her position as the preferred matchmaker of the upper class and the elite families. It is not uncommon to find couples whom she had once united approaching her when it is time to find a spouse for their children. One also comes across family units where more than one match has been arranged by Dr Priya Shah, a compilation of happy couples within a single group of relatives.

A compendium of her experiences in this field titled Marriages of India was unveiled none other than the 'Dream Girl of Bollywood' actor Hema Malini. It was appreciated by reviewers from the media and proved to be the readers' choice as well. With nearly 9000 marriages from all over the world including India's top 1000 Indians in her portfolio, Dr Priya Shah has no plans to retire, terming matchmaking as a 'lifelong commitment.'

Best Match Maker Award 2015, by Global Achievers Foundation, Dubai; Ashok Stambh Award, 2014, by Lions Club of Bombay (Khernagar), Mumbai; Nari Ratna Award, 2011, by Shri Jinendra Vaibhav Sanstha; Mother Teresa Excellence Award, for 'Outstanding services, achievements and contributions' by the International Integrity, Peace & Friendship Society and Dr Priya Shah The Youngest Match Maker Award from The Times of India.