

The Love Guru

As a child, the sight of two people walking hand-in-hand down the street always elicited a smile on Naomi Kooritzky's face, and you can say she was a romantic at a very young age.

"The dating world has become a free-for-all and it's all about instant gratification, and that's not us," she says. "We're not here for affairs or for those not serious; I look for those relationship-oriented or marriage-minded."

"I always got a jolt, and that feeling has always followed me," she says. "I never liked to hear that someone was getting divorced or was never married. I always felt that everyone should be in a fulfilling relationship."

It's no surprise to anyone who has ever known her that today Naomi is one of the most successful matchmakers in the business, having helped tens of thousands of people find that special someone over the past 30 years.

"There are very few things in life that are more rewarding than bringing a couple together," she says. "When I bring love into two people's world, I am changing the lives of everyone around them so my impact is on more than just the two people. This always feels wonderful and it's a feeling that never goes away."

Naomi began matching people by organizing romantic singles cruises on the Potomac aboard a yacht named "Finished Business," but quickly realized that there was a larger need for her matchmaking services. Therefore, in 1994 she opened a dating service called Options (optionsdate.com).

"I was always matching people up in high school and telling my friends, 'you should be with so and so,' and I had this great intuition of who belongs with who," Naomi says. "I never really thought about it as a business until later when I was unhappy in law school."

Born in Seoul, Korea, Naomi moved to the Tysons area when she was 12, went to Marshall High School, American University and then George Mason Law for a bit.

"I was a criminal justice major and I thought I would join the CIA or go into law, but neither possibility really felt right to me after a while," she says. "But now I am doing something I absolutely adore."

Not that it's easy. Sure, lots of people today jump on the Internet and go "shopping" for a date on one of the ever-increasing online or mobile sites, but Naomi feels those connections aren't anywhere as strong and could even be risky.

"The lure of online dating has generated a sort of shopping mentality and people treat it as if they are on Amazon," she says. "Most people look at pictures, could care less about

someone's likes and dislikes and completely ignore the red flags. What we do is make sure there is a strong foundation of compatibility."

Options does this by utilizing a test that Naomi has been giving clients for 21 years, delving into important issues like sexual attitude, religion and numerous topics ranging from pets to fitness to children.

"We make sure the two look good together and complement each other," she says. "It's a sophisticated time-proven service with a staff of professional matchmakers that do all the legwork and make one-on-one introductions of substance that have generated proven results."

Options is not for everyone. If you're someone just looking to "hook up" or want to play the field for a while with different dates, Naomi won't accept you as a client. She also won't accept those who have just gotten out of a relationship and are not emotionally ready to move on, or those going through a divorce.

"The dating world has become a free-for-all and it's all about instant gratification, and that's not us," she says. "We're not here for affairs or for those not entirely serious; I look instead for those who are relationship-oriented or marriage-minded."

In addition to those who sign up as clients, Naomi is always on the prowl for single men and women who she feels will make good matches. She's not at all shy approaching people at the bank, post office or most anywhere, and asking if they are single and determining if they would make a good candidate for her service.

Every member is personally screened, all information is checked for accuracy and then Naomi and her team of matchmaking experts gets down to work. A thorough profile is then developed for each member, and every match is based on compatibility and physical qualities. Once a match is made, the two will meet and chemistry often takes over.

"I always look forward to the feedback after a match," she says. "Of course, matchmaking is labor intensive, and it's not going to just happen tomorrow; it could take several introductions to weed out what someone is looking for. But it's a proven method and there's nothing better than helping two people find love. It's what I live for."