

Love Right Venessa 1

Speakers: Venessa and Michelle

Venessa Today, on this week's version *Love Right Unplugged*, we're talking to Michelle Jacoby, co-founder of The Matchmaker's Alliance and founder of DC Matchmakers. Hey Michelle, Welcome!

Michelle Thank you, I'm so excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

Venessa Oh, we're excited to have you, too. This is the *Love Right Unplugged Podcast* where we talk about everything dating, love, and relationships. And so, today, we're talking to Michelle Jacoby, and she is the founder of DC Matchmaking and a co-founder of The Matchmaking Alliance, so, Michelle, why don't you tell us a little bit about The Matchmaking Alliance and DC Matchmaking.

Michelle Sure, I'd be happy to. I started my career about nine years ago, I opened DC Matchmaking in Washington, D.C., and it's a small, boutique matchmaking company for commitment-minded singles here in the DC Metropolitan area. I work with about 20 clients at a time.

I also am a dating coach for women here in DC and then, about five or six years ago, myself and two other matchmakers – one in Charlotte, North Carolina and one in New York City, decided that our industry needed something that didn't exist and that was a non profit where matchmakers could come together to learn from one another, share and become friends, and also collaborate. So, we have an organization called The Matchmaker's Alliance, and I think this year we're having our fifth or sixth conference. We get together, and last year we had 60 matchmakers on a cruise ship for five days; it was hysterical and super fun. I learned so much, and I've actually matched my clients with other matchmakers' clients successfully in the past couple of years, so, it's been really wonderful.

Venessa Wow! That's incredible!

Michelle Yeah, it's fun to know other matchmakers all over the world and to compare what they're doing and what's working for them. Being able to match my clients not only in DC but all over the country and the world is excellent. So, it's been a really wonderful thing for us and for the matchmaking industry, as a whole.

Venessa I thought that it was interesting that you said that you were a non profit organization. Tell me a little bit about the difference between The Matchmaker's Alliance and The International Dating and Coaching Association.

Michelle Sure, I'm not familiar with that Association. There are different associations that teach matchmakers, they do matchmaker training, and they are for profit. We exist only to help each other and to better serve our clients. So, when we run these conferences, we're not making any money; we just break even, and we're just doing it because we love matchmaking, and we want to create an industry where there's a lot of good, hard-working people who are being very ethical and doing an excellent job for their clients. That was our goal. We've been really successful, and we have, now, hundreds of matchmakers who are in our group and who come to our events.

Venessa Wow, okay! Very exciting. So, I've heard that, historically, matchmaking is primarily male-focused, is that correct?

Michelle You know, there is a trend. Some matchmaking companies only work with men. But no, there are plenty of matchmaking companies that work with women. In fact, a lot of matchmaking companies have more female clients than male clients. You just have to shop for the matchmaking service that works for you. DC Matchmaking, about 75% of my matchmaking clients are men. And the reason I do that is that working with women and finding

the right men takes a little bit more time and effort than finding single female potential matches. That's typically because men don't sign up through our database, we have to go do events and really find them and source them.

I limit the amount of women that we take so that we can do an excellent job for our female clients. But, I love working with women, and, in fact, all of my coaching clients are women, so I think if women are listening to this and want to find a great matchmaker to work with them, there are plenty in almost every city. While there are some that just work with men, you can definitely find someone that wants to work with you.

Venessa Ok, that's good to know because I was very surprised when I heard that. I talked to a couple of other matchmakers, and they just talked about the trend of matchmakers was that they met with women, and I said, "Well, there's so many more single women out here, rather than men, so how does that work out?"

Michelle That's one of the reasons that I started coaching because I think that coaching is a really powerful thing for single women. And what coaching is, is that you work with someone who can teach you how to date really effectively with a smart strategy and keep you motivated and keep you putting yourself out there.

I think that there is a trend that a lot of matchmaking companies are starting to offer coaching, and what I love about coaching is that when you work with a matchmaker, you're being matched, on average, once a month or every six weeks, and someone's vetting and interviewing matches for you. It's very focused on quality.

But when you're working with a coach you might be dating online, and you can go out three or four times a week. You're doing the work, not the matchmaker, but you're being exposed to more people as a single woman. So, both are good.

Matchmaking is good for people who are really busy and who want someone else to do the matching for them to find the

potential matches, interview them, use their best judgment to pick the right person, but sometimes the cost is high so if someone wants to work with a dating coach and maybe date online, that's sometimes more affordable, and you get to meet more people that way.

Venessa Right. Talk to me about what you consider success. You've got a dating coaching, and then you've got matchmaking. In terms of success, when people are deciding whether or not to come with DC Matchmaking or Michelle Jacoby, what do you tell them that they can expect from you?

Michelle Well, success, to me, is a happy client, right? Somebody who is going to spread the word and say that DC Matchmaking or Michelle did a great job for me. But, the ultimate success is when my clients fall in love.

And, I just went to a beautiful engagement party this Friday night. I took my husband, and we went, and one of my coaching clients, I got to meet her fiancé. She met him using a dating app, and I showed her how to do that. She met lots and lots of people while we worked together and fell in love.

This past year I took my husband to a couple of weddings for my matchmaking clients. Really, that's the ultimate success. But, as a businessperson, my successes come when people are very happy with the job that we did for them, and they spread the word.

Venessa Right. Absolutely. And so, talk to me a little bit about the date coaching. You're looking at primarily women. Who are your target demographic? Age, background, etc.

Michelle Sure. I'll quickly tell you that, as a matchmaker right now, I have clients from 26 to 66, so, I have a really big age range. And as a dating coach, right now I'm working with clients in their early 30s all the way up to their 60s. We cover every aspect of dating from

figuring out who is the right fit for you to learning how to use all of the resources where you live, to really figuring out how to be a great date, how to flirt, when should you be physical, when do you become exclusive, what do you do when you're anxious – all of these wonderful things that people get confused about, I have answers for them. I really love working with my coaching clients. I adore both matchmaking and coaching, and anyone who is listening, you have a lot of options so, really explore them all.

Venessa

Yeah, I think that you're completely right about that. I mean, from date coaching to matchmaking, to online, there are really lots of opportunities to meet people out there, and the funny thing is that yesterday was Valentine's Day, so we're coming off of that. For a lot of people who are single, they didn't have anybody to be with on Valentine's Day, and so I've got a bunch of people that follow me, and I sent them out a note and said, "Hey, your situation is temporary". But, I had a woman email me and say, "Well, I don't know where to meet people, and I don't know how to meet people" and the first thing that I asked her was, "Well, do you go out?" and she said, "Well, no". Well, that's why you're still single.

Michelle

She's sitting at home hoping that someone's going to knock on her door. That's not going to happen.

Last night, for Valentine's Day, I threw an event and had 120 people show up. All single. And lots of people ended up with phone numbers and dates, and it was through the organization called Meetup, which you can find at meetup.com. I highly recommend that.

What you're saying is right, you've got to start with meeting new people, and Meetup is free, so you can go to meetup.com in your town or city. I think that it's all over the world, not just in the US, actually. There are so many fun things to do. There are lots of groups of singles getting together. The first step is getting off your couch and going out into the world and meeting new people consistently.

Venessa Exactly. And, not only just going out, but I am a firm believer in that you will meet people doing the things that you enjoy doing. So, dress up, smell good, talk, be engaging, laugh, live your life, and you just never know who you may attract.

Michelle That is so true. I teach all of my coaching clients and all of my clients to smile like crazy,, and make eye contact and treat strangers like they're already their friends.

I'm married now but when I was single, I dated someone that I met at the grocery store and someone that I met at the bookstore and someone that I met just literally walking down the street and chatting. I think most people don't talk to strangers, but if you make it a habit and start being courageous and start chatting people up, you'll find that there are a lot of opportunities everywhere. Every day. You don't have to just go to a singles happy hour.

Venessa Absolutely, I completely agree with that. I do think that it's probably a little bit easier in DC. I lived in DC for over 25 years and recently relocated to New York and so, I think that the people are probably more friendly in DC than they are in New York. What would you tell someone in New York City who is in a place where they want to meet new people, and it's not necessarily warm and fuzzy all the time?

Michelle You know what, it's interesting because I've spent a lot of time in New York City, and I am a native Washingtonian, and I actually think that New Yorkers are actually pretty darn friendly. I went up to New York a couple of years ago to go to a matchmaking conference, and I decided to walk the entire stretch of the city because I was in the mood. So I walked around. I was feeling so happy, I had this huge smile on my face and three different men stopped me to chat.

I think that it has to do with what you're putting out. I really am a big smiler. I say hi to people, and I think that it doesn't matter where you are, if you are sending out the message that "I'm approachable. I'm a nice person. I'm friendly". People will approach you and they will be friendly so, I don't know, I don't think that it's really the culture here in DC to chat with strangers, either, really, but I don't care I do it anyways, and I teach my clients to do that. And it changes everything.

Your listeners should try it, just decide to be a little bit more, I don't know, kooky, and smiley, and approachable, and just chat with people for the heck of it, and just see what happens. It's amazing how it can change your life.

Venessa Absolutely. I completely agree with you. You would be surprised, the people that you meet when you're just open. And I think that that is just another piece of it, is being open and being receptive to the person in the grocery store, the person in the Starbucks and really allowing them to see who you are, because I firmly believe that we attract what we are.

Michelle Yeah, you know, energy is so important, and I can't even stress enough how important smiling is. It's really interesting, at this party last night, this Valentine's Day party, one of my coaching clients came, and she was smiling, and she was bubbly, and a bunch of different guys came up to me and asked me to introduce them to her. One even emailed me this morning and asked me, and I think it's really because she just had such positive energy emanating out of her that she was irresistible. You don't have to be the most beautiful woman in the room or the most attractive man to be irresistible, it's really about the energy that you put out. It's a thing, people, it really is. I've seen it work over and over again.

Venessa I completely agree with you. And I think that a part of that is being comfortable with yourself and knowing yourself. So, what do you tell those individuals that come to you, and they lack a little

confidence and aren't as self-actualized and sure of themselves. How do you help them overcome that?

Michelle It's really easy to say, "Fake it til you make it". But it's hard to do, especially if you're an introvert or you're shy or not as confident.

So, I'm a spiritual person, and I have my own way of encouraging people to do that. What I say is – I love this Oprah quote – Oprah once said, "You're responsible for the energy that you bring into every relationship that you enter". I love that.

What I tell my clients is, "Why don't you look at it this way, spread a little warmth and kindness wherever you go. Make people smile". So, you're at the grocery store and someone is helping you with your groceries, pay him or her a compliment. Somebody opens the door for you? Tell them that you love their shirt. You're in the elevator – chat with people. I always freak people out in elevators when I chat with them, but I think that the goal is that every person who interacts with you or who is in your presence should be happier and have a smile on their face when they move on.

That's really about sharing your warmth and kindness, and you can practice in small ways, with other women, even at the office. I had one client who I told to just share her warmth and kindness with everyone and to start at the office, and it actually changed her entire work experience, ultimately, the culture in her office as it spread. So, I think that you can do great things with little, small steps and being courageous but you can start in a way that is not intimidating.

Venessa Yeah, I completely agree with you. Shifting gears for two seconds, one of the things that you said earlier when we were talking about success was, obviously, healthy, long-term relationships, marriage – do you talk at all about dating with a purpose? Because I think that that is another piece that's missing. You have a lot of people

say, “Oh, I’m single ...” and one of the things that I talk to a lot with my clients is, “Well, what is it that you want?”

Michelle

Dating with a purpose, I would say that I only work with people who are looking for a long-term, committed relationship, which could be marriage but it might not be marriage. But when you have decided that that’s what you want, you really need to stop wasting your time with people who are not your future partner.

I think that one of the biggest mistakes that people make is that they invest too much time and stay in relationships with people who are not their future partner. On some level, they know it. They really do know it, but they’re hoping that things will change. They see potential. They see the best in others, and they think that if they just hang in there ...

But really, the most important thing to do when you’ve decided that you’re looking for future husband or your future wife is that you decide not to invest any more time the moment that you realize that this is not my future partner. That’s about having really strong boundaries about how people treat you. About the deal breakers that you have. What matters to you. You really have to know yourself in that way, and I think that sometimes that takes time to be able to advocate for yourself and to have strong boundaries. But, once you get to the place where you have the confidence to do that and stop wasting time on the wrong person, the right people really do start to show up. Then you’ll end up in a relationship with the person who will be “the one” and I’ve seen it happen over and over again.

Venessa

Yeah. Absolutely. That’s a really good point. Are there specific things that you tell either your matchmaking clients or coaching clients – questions to ask individuals on first dates? The reason that I bring this up is that I am a firm believer that everybody should have their “can’t stands” and their “must haves”, and if you’re dating purposefully, and you know you want to be either in a marriage or a long-term relationship, in that first date there are a

number of things that you can talk about and questions that you can ask to kind of get to the heart of the matter. So, do you have specific questions that you coach people on or what's your philosophy on that?

Michelle This is such a good question and I think that you and I may differ here a little bit, because I think that it's important to know what you want 100%, I agree with you there. But, I think that first dates are about having fun. I don't think that you should be qualifying the buyer on the first date. Meaning that, I don't think that you should be asking questions about "What are your life goals?", "Do you plan on staying in the city?", "Do you want to have kids?", "When do you want to have kids?", "What are your religious beliefs?", "What are you politics like?".

I don't think that you should be figuring out if someone is your husband on the first date, I think that you should be having fun, and I think that you should be talking about positive subjects and just chatting and really getting to know each other, but also just being playful and enjoying the experience. I think that, over time, you can investigate who someone is and what they want, but laying it all on the table when you first meet somebody, it's not a good way to date, I don't think. It's not fun, there's a lot of pressure, you scare people away, and it's just not natural. I don't know if that's what you meant, but I don't think that you should ask those kinds of questions on a first date.

Venessa When I'm thinking about questions, I'm definitely not thinking about the heavy questions like, "Oh, do you want to get married?", "Do you want kids?", "How many kids do you want?". But, other things. "What are the things that you enjoy doing?", and I will give you a prime example of one question that I actually think is pretty important and, as a psychologist, it's "What moves you, and what makes you happy?"

Michelle That's such a nice thing to talk about, yeah, because people tend to talk about their past relationships and their failures ...

Venessa Exactly.

Michelle So many negative topics come up. I had one client who spent half the time talking about his ex and the other half was talking about a sick relative. I coached him and eventually was successful and was thinking "Who are you going to attract talking about that kind of stuff?" I think it's very important to talk about what moves you and what you enjoy,, what you're passionate about and here in DC one of the first questions everybody asks you is, "What do you do?". My response is always, "Oh, for fun?" Then I start talking about how I love tennis and how I love to read, and so I don't let them take me down that road of talking about work, because we all work plenty but connection happens through fun and natural interaction, and you're not going to get that if you're asking a bunch of questions that are trying to figure out "am I going to marry you three years from now?" Just have fun. And yes, ask what you're passionate about, that can lead to such good conversation.

Venessa Absolutely. I completely agree with you there. I wanted to bring that up to you because there is a school of thought that says, "Ask these questions", and, like I said, I'm not of the mindset of "Let's ask these heavy questions", but "What moves you?" "What do you like to do?" "What are you passionate about?" I think that those things are important from the standpoint of trying to determine if there's compatibility, mutual interest, values, goals, things like that.

Michelle Yeah, I agree with that, for sure. I just think that there is a balance between asking a list of questions and really having a natural back-and-forth conversation that just flows. I think it takes some skill to find that middle place, but I definitely think that dating answers a lot of questions while you're having fun.

Venessa Indeed. Are there specific trends that you're seeing out here in the dating world with the clients that you're working with? For example, it seems like everyone is online these days, and you have some people who say you should be online because one in three people are meeting their partner online. You have other people that are saying, "No, I'm not going to be online". Specific trends, and what do you think about the whole online dating thing?

Michelle Yeah, online dating is a wonderful tool but a lot of people misuse it and are getting completely frustrated and aggravated with a lot of flakiness and misrepresentation. That's why, when I teach online dating, I give you a real strategy so that you don't go down that frustrating road.

But, I will say that the access to other singles through apps and online sites has lead to what I call online dating ADD where your behavior is not so good and people are not treating each other the way that they should. I think that because so many people are getting frustrated, a lot of people are moving to matchmakers like me because they want to have more of a special experience when they go on a date.

Something that is – when I say special I mean that you're not meeting on a hamster wheel of dating, you know that this is one, specific person who is selected for you so I am seeing a trend in a lot of the new matchmaking companies are opening up all over the world, they're usually small, boutique matchmaking firms and I think that matchmaking is getting more popular than it's ever been and maybe that's in response to the online stuff and how impersonal it can be.

Venessa Yeah, I think that that's a really good point. There's just this proliferation of things out there – apps and sites and you hit the nail right on the head with dating app ADD and a lot of people are very turned off by it and are going to matchmakers. I refer a

number of people to matchmakers because they're not comfortable online or they've just had these really negative experiences online, so that's a really good point.

Michelle Another option, in addition to matchmaking, that might be a little more affordable might be working with a dating coach who can teach you a strategy and a way to use the online sites that's much more successful and less time consuming and less frustrating. And, if you can't afford that, you can get books and read blogs, and there are books specifically on how to date online but I think that it's really important to educate yourself, and just be really smart about it.

Venessa Absolutely. If there was one specific tip that you would give to individuals out here that are looking to meet "the one", what would it be?

Michelle Wow! The first thing that came to my brain was just be open-hearted. I know that that doesn't sound like the answer that you would expect, but, being open-hearted means that you're connecting with people in real life, and even when you connect with them online you're not being so judgmental and making assumptions about people, you're more curious. Open-hearted, that's the best way to find love is to really put yourself out there as authentically yourself when you're meeting with people, look at the best in who they are and stop looking for what's wrong and you might meet someone who, upon first glance, isn't exactly what you're looking for but spend time with them and really investigate what's super cool about you. What are you into? What makes you different? And stop judging, and just be open-hearted, just have fun with that person and just be open to the possibility. You don't have to decide right now if they're your future anything. You might make a good friend, but just have fun with it. I think that people aren't having fun anymore when they're dating and maybe they never did. But, I did and I think that dating should be a blast.

Venessa I completely agree with you on that, and I think that being open is very key to finding the right relationship. A lot of times people come into a situation, and they've got all this criteria, and they've shut the person down because they don't mean 5 out of 10 criteria. I think that a lot of people are making huge mistakes as it relates to that in terms of meeting a potential partner.

Michelle You're absolutely right, and I think that the criteria that people are using to decide who they want to meet often doesn't impact their future happiness. Deciding you want to date someone of a certain race or someone of a certain height or someone in a certain location, those aren't qualities that are going to make them a wonderful partner, so getting clear on what are the criteria I should even have? It should be more value-based and more relationship-based, it shouldn't be about the superficial things that don't impact your future happiness at all that so many people get cut/eliminated based on those things.

Venessa That's so true, I hear so many people. "I want him to be six feet tall and be a professional and have a six figure salary", and I think "really?"

Michelle None of that makes them a great partner. How many happily married women do you talk to, and you ask, "why is your husband so amazing?" And they say, "Well, because he's six feet tall and he has really great arms", I mean, come on. I had this event last night for 120 people and my husband was there with me at the event, cheering me on and supporting me and that's – these are the qualities that you need to look for, someone who's there for you, somewhere who is honest and kind and good and fun. It doesn't matter what they look like or where they live. There are so many things that people are focused on that don't matter.

Venessa I completely agree with you on that one. So, Michelle, is there something else that you wanted to tell our listeners? I mean, you are a matchmaker and dating coach extraordinaire in 2017 and

2016 finalists for dating expert and iDate awards. So, we know that you definitely have the qualifications and folks in DC or other places should come and check you out. Any parting words for them?

Michelle Thanks for that opportunity. Yes, so, if you want to – I have a blog with some great articles and great dating advice and that's MichelleJacoby.com. Then I have a free gift for your listeners today that I am excited to share. I have a free ebook that will tell you the biggest mistakes that you're making when you're dating online, and I've been watching people date online for many, many years. I know what the mistakes are, and you're probably making them if you're dating online. You can go to 12datingmistakes.com and put in your email address and your name, and I will send you the free ebook. Then you'll be on my list to get emails that I send out from time-to-time, but I promise that I won't send you tons. They're always helpful, and you can always unsubscribe if it's not for you. But I think that you will absolutely love this free ebook. It will be really helpful and it could really change the outcome if you're dating online. You might meet somebody awesome.

Venessa And that's at michellejacoby.com?

Michelle No, it's 12datingmistakes.com. The number one, the number two and then datingmistakes.com. It's right there and it's really easy to download.

Venessa So, 12datingmistakes.com if you're dating online and you want some tips, Michelle's got a free ebook at 12datingmistakes.com and check it out. Where can they find you if they want to come and talk to you or have a consultation or decide that matchmaking is what they need.

Michelle Thank you, so DC Matchmaking here in DC, I work with anyone who wants to date in DC, you don't have to be from this area, I've

actually worked with people outside of the area. Our website is dcmatchmaking.com and you can join our free database or you can get in touch to potentially become a client right through that website. So, it's dcmatchmaking.com and then, also, there's michellejacoby.com, which is a place to look at these great posts that I put up about dating and relationships that are really helpful and thank you for letting me share that.

Venessa Thank you, Michelle, this has been great. You've given us lots of insight and lots of tips for our listeners and I am sure that once they get your ebook on how to date right they're going to be calling you up, for sure.

Michelle They're going to see all of the mistakes that they're making. They're right there.

Venessa You know, I'm going to download it so that I can share it with some of my clients because I have tons of clients that are online and they're always asking ...

Michelle Let me know what you think, I can't wait to talk to you about it.

Venessa I'm definitely going to download it as soon as we get off today, so thanks again, this has been great and I am looking forward to hopefully seeing you soon. I'm in DC pretty much once a week. I hope to see you soon.

Michelle Actually, you know what I think? I think that there's a martini in order here. I think that we should go out into the world and have some fun!

Venessa Absolutely! The next time I'm in DC, I'm definitely going to hit you up so that we can get together.

Michelle It's a date!

Venessa Sounds like a plan.

Michelle Sounds good to me, and thank you for having me, this has been fun, and I really appreciate the opportunity to talk to everyone who is listening and to be as helpful as I can. I wish everyone so much love, really, in every part of your life but especially when it comes to finding "The One". He is out there and do not give up.

Venessa Excellent, great parting advice from Michelle Jacoby. Thanks, guys.

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