

## Matchmakers Know Superstars Need Love, Too

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### LOS ANGELES

AS any casual glance at the tabloids will tell you, the romantic life of an unmarried celebrity can be hell.

There's the tyranny of the paparazzi, always pushing. The scrutiny of the fan base, ever-needy. And sometimes the choices seem stultifyingly narrow: [Vince Vaughn](#), [Jennifer Aniston](#), [Reese Witherspoon](#), Kevin Federline, [Jessica Simpson](#), [Paris Hilton](#). They pair off, break up, then go in search of another boldface name. At times they seem caught in some endless celebrity relationship round-robin.

But it turns out that not all celebrities crave that kind of familiarity. Perhaps in reaction to Hollywood's love-life-in-a-fishbowl, a small number of movie stars are turning to high-end professional matchmakers to introduce them to civilians with no connection to the entertainment world, then spreading the word among their friends.

"If they wanted to meet someone in Hollywood, they would have done that. They've gone down that path, and it hasn't been successful," said -----, a Chicago-based matchmaker who has built a small but steady business of setting up celebrities, along with her other well-heeled clients. "I've had clients say to me, 'My publicist fixed me

setting up celebrities, along with her other well-heeled clients. "I've had clients say to me, 'My publicist fixed me up, I just met him in the limo, I had to pose for pictures and spend all night with him and he was a dud.' "

-----, a matchmaker based in New York, opened a Los Angeles office to meet her rising celebrity demand. She said none of her celebrity clients want to be paired with another celebrity. "They don't say it as an absolute," she said. "But they'd prefer to meet someone, if they're an actress, who's not an actor. If they're hiring me, it's to expand their possibilities."

These celebrities rely on ----- and a few others — all of whom sign confidentiality agreements — to discreetly introduce them to someone who is attractive, sane, duly impressed yet not star-struck.

And who are their clients? They include major household names: two tabloid regulars, an A-list female star, a movie star of a previous era and a leading actor on an HBO series, according to information independently verified. Representatives for each of the clients denied that they had hired a matchmaker. The matchmakers themselves said their lips were sealed.

Frank W. Smith, a 57-year-old Boston businessman has been dating one of those stars, an Academy Award-winning actress several years older than him, for eight months. At first, he was intrigued about the notion of dating an iconic figure. But "what's thrilling falls away really quickly," he said. "What's interesting is that she's a great person, interesting." (He declined to give her name.)

Mr. Smith's business, developing electrical plants, leaves him low-profile and with long stretches of idle time followed by frantic deal-making. "My life is chaotic, and her life is chaotic," he said. But, he added: "In my world, I'm the anti-celebrity. I don't go to a cocktail party and say, 'I build power plants.' If I had set out to be a public person, I'd be in a different place."

Still, he doesn't mind being ignored on the red carpet, or when strangers approach them in public. "The only thing I worry is, 'How is she going to deal with that one?' " he said. "But celebrities know how to handle it."

On the other hand, Sandy Frank, a television producer and distributor who declined to give his age but was working for Paramount in the 1950s (he made his fortune syndicating Japanese films and American game shows). is looking for someone other than

give me age but was working for Paramount in the 1950s (he made his fortune syndicating Japanese films and American game shows), is looking for someone other than a celebrity to date. He said he commonly uses the services of successful matchmaker Kelleher & Associates, on the West Coast.

“Having spent a lot of time in California, the caliber of women you get in the Hollywood community — these are models, actresses — they’re airheads, essentially,” he said. “If you’re in the mode for a serious relationship, you have to go beyond the airhead.”

But it is tough on celebrities, he said, because they never know why others are attracted to them: “Is it the person? Or is it the celebrity? What is there? That’s why a lot of men end up with their secretary.”

Female celebrities often want a man who is successful in his own right, especially an entrepreneur or “someone of power,” ----- said. Men “are looking for someone who’s not a diva.”

“Someone down to earth, sweet, warm,” she added. “Someone to make babies with.”

And, in both cases, celebrities often want someone who is willing to take a supporting role, and not step into their limelight. Tamara Rawitt, a producer of “In Living Color” and other shows, has watched many of her celebrity couple friends break up: “Two alphas do not equal a functional relationship in any field, and these stars all have the ‘egola’ virus. It’s very hard when you’re in the radar of the egola virus.”

In recent years numerous celebrities have said publicly that they have had enough of entertainment inbreeding, and yearn to escape the nonstop attention inside the Hollywood bubble. After watching his longtime friend [Ben Affleck](#) become weekly fodder for the tabloids, [Matt Damon](#) swore a few years ago he’d never date an actress again. He is now wed to Luciana Barroso, an Argentine former bartender.

[Nicolas Cage](#), who previously married actress [Patricia Arquette](#) and entertainment royalty Lisa Marie Presley, has more recently married Alice Kim, a former waitress. [Chris O’Donnell](#), a tabloid presence when he was single, has a peaceful life below the radar since marrying a schoolteacher, Caroline Fentress, in 1997.

The desire for more privacy, and for some semblance of normalcy, is widespread. [Sharon Stone](#), for one, divorced from the San Francisco newspaper editor Phil Bronstein and living

[Stone](#), for one, divorced from the San Francisco newspaper editor Phil Bronstein and living back in Los Angeles, has told close friends that she wants to find a partner outside of entertainment.