

Meet Patti Stanger, reality TV's *yenta* extraordinaire

'The Millionaire Matchmaker' may spout obnoxious, traditional advice to an endless supply of wealthy, desperate losers. But she also may be on to something.

By Amy Klein | Mar.14, 2013 | 12:27 PM

“What the f--- is wrong with you?” Patti Stanger shrilly screams at another one of her disobedient clients on “The Millionaire Matchmaker,” Bravo's hit reality TV show, now in its sixth season. Each week, two millionaires go to the *yenta* extraordinaire in hopes of being fixed up with their *bashert*, or soul mate, usually humiliating someone in the process.

In the most recent episode, Patti is sitting behind the desk in her L.A. office, frowning her frosted pink lips at Bradley Kramer, a 37-year-old Jewish doctor *and* lawyer (as he liked to mention a few hundred times on the show) and self-described narcissist.

The 5'8" skinny nerd (“You’re not even hot!” Patti tells him) didn’t buy his date the \$500 gift Patti had advised to prove he’s not cheap. Instead, Kramer presented his date with a letter that he made a donation to Hadassah women’s organization.

“You’re a loser! That’s why you’re still single!” Patti screams, tossing her long, shiny black hair with manicured red talons as she kicks yet another client out of her millionaire’s club.

Yes, I know Patti’s a cheesy, brash New Jersey Jew – her mother and *bubbe* were also matchmakers -- who wears clothes that are too tight and heels that are too high. I know that no reality show can create love matches, least of all when gold-diggers are hunting

millionaires. And I know that it makes no sense to get dating advice from a newly engaged 51-year-old woman who has never been married. But I can't help it. I love Patti.

My husband hates her. "She's brash and she's crude, and her advice is so last-century," he rants if he catches me watching my secret vice of a show. "The message is that all men want girls to look like Barbies and all women want men to treat them like helpless princesses in some fairytale."

What my husband and other Patti-haters don't get is that the very qualities he disdains are the same ones that I love, the ones that make her so appealing to viewers. Viewers like her traditional rules – no sex before monogamy, let a man plan and pay for a date, have women dress more feminine – because gender roles today are confusing.

And I love how she diagnoses people in a moment, calling them "commitment-phobes," "ageists" and "Women with Penises" (which is how she diagnosis her few female control-freak millionairesses). I love the idea that if you can fix just *one* flaw -- Patti often sends her clients for a fashion/personality/psychology makeover – if you can get out of your own way, just maybe you'll find true love (or at least a second date).

Look, I know "The Millionaire Matchmaker" – or any other show in the genre -- isn't *real* as in "factual." But I spent eight years dating in Los Angeles, and let me tell you these people are less caricatures than you might think. Could the producers have scripted the plastic surgeon whose porn-star chef baked his date a cake in the shape of buttocks? Could they have told Dr. Kramer to write a check to Hadassah, or to tell his date he's been on over 400 dates? I have been on many, many dates with Jewish mama's boys just like Bradley.

But it's Patti I relate to the most. As an amateur matchmaker – I've got four marriages to my credit (and two broken engagements, but who's counting?) – I have countless friends here in New York's Upper West Side and my former L.A. hometown that I'd love to fix up.

That's why I wish I could *be* Patti. I wish *I* could point out the one way that people get in their own ways and then help them find that special someone they profess to want. I wish I could have told all the guys in L.A. that I dated, "Look, you're a short, Jewish guy who is holding out for the blond bombshell rocket-scientist. She doesn't exist, and if she does, she's not Jewish *and* she wouldn't go out with you."

I wish I could shake up every man on the Upper West Side, watch the last strands of his hair fall out, and yell at him in a Patti-like fashion, saying: "This is a great woman! You are a fool to pass her up!" I wish I could give the women Patti-like advice, saying: "Don't be so tough! Be vulnerable – and you will meet someone."

After all, I did, at the late age of 39. I left L.A. three years ago to be with him in New York.

Maybe that's why I love Patti, and that's why I want to be more like her. I wish I'd known someone like her then – someone who would have pointed out all my missteps along the way: that I wasn't ready to date, that I was dating the wrong type of guys, that I wasn't open to available guys, that I was too independent, too controlling... that I wore too many pants suits.

But I can't be her, not if I want friends. And I can't tell my husband about all the lessons I've learned along the way, the same ones that Patti tries to impart which, while traditional, are also spot-on.

Jeez, I can't let him catch me watching, "The Millionaire Matchmaker." It may be deceitful, but like Patti always says when it comes to men, "A little mystery goes a long way."

Amy Klein website is www.KleinsLines.com