

## Meet Your Neighbor, Sheila Delaney

Craig Wilson interviews Sheila Delaney about her savvy for matchmaking couples, passion for political and community organizing, and intellectual curiosities.



**What is a “matchmaker”?**

I think many of us are inclined to be “matchmakers” among the people we interact with in our daily life.

Whenever we have that moment of realization of, “...you should really meet so and so...” we are matchmaking. Most of us think of matchmaking in a romantic sense. However, whenever one of us brings two other people together for a purpose: romantic, professional, or for shared interests—we are matchmaking!

**What is the process for matchmaking couples?**

A professional matchmaker focused on romantic relationships intuitively assimilates two kinds of information about individuals. We look at quantitative information such as appearance, compatibility assessments that identify our core character traits, lifestyle, and interests. This “data” is relevant but a great matchmaker assesses these facts and figures in the context of less tangible elements that make us who we are. Our emotional history, our energy, our presence are the things that really comprise our individuality.

In addition to being able to ‘read’ individuals, a skilled matchmaker knows that in order to create a fulfilling relationship both individuals must share the same intention. When we are trying to be our own matchmaker and meeting people on our own, assessing intention is very tricky. This is because when we date and like someone, we are naturally inclined to try to please him or her in order to get what we are seeking in the moment. Conversely, we are

naturally inclined to “see” what we want to see in the object of our affection.

An effectively intuitive matchmaker can sense when two people have the same relationship goals for the long-term. When all of these factors align, the matchmaker brings the two together. This is a set up for success because they are able to meet each other knowing that someone else has done all of the background checking, in depth interviewing i.e. “investigation” so that they no longer have to be detectives. They can just go into the first meeting relaxed and focused on how they actually feel about being with each other. The other critical role a great matchmaker plays is recruiter. There are so many quality, single people who are simply too busy to conduct a “search” on their own.

In summary, a matchmaker is a coach. We provide support and insight to help individuals be their best self as they seek their life partner.

**What’s the makeup of your clientele?**

The most delightful part of being a matchmaker is that we all share a desire to form a bond. Therefore, my clientele represents all walks of life. I have met with 80-year-old widowers, 40-year-old widows, CEO’s of global organizations, 25-year-old software engineers, professors, a stuntman ... you name it!

**It seems like so many people prioritize “physical ideals” over interests and values when looking for a partner. Is this true?**

We live in a consumer society. Many of us approach the search for our partners as a shopping expedition. If I am faced with a potential client who is extremely focused on the physical, I ask them to think of a loss or a crisis in their life. Then, I ask them to imagine going through that with a partner who truly loves and accepts them for who they really are. Of course, attraction is important but to lead with it leaves many of us in empty, unfulfilling relationship or alone.

**You have a career of working with people—from at-risk youth to community organizing to political campaigns. Are you a people person?**

I am passionate and curious about our collective humanity and all of the comedy and pathos that comes with it.

**You always appear to be volunteering for a particular cause. What’s occupying your time currently?**

Right now, I am very actively volunteering for Mark Andrew’s campaign for mayor. Mark has been a great friend for a very long time. At the risk of sounding really cheesy, I believe Mark is the match for what Minneapolis needs right now. He has a proven track record of course, as a small business guy since he was 19, to being the chair of the Hennepin County Board. However, for me, it’s his almost magical ability to excite and bring people together around common goals that convinced me to support him. Also, as a lucky owner of two Australian Shepherds, I know how much our pets mean to us. I have just begun to get involved in an organization that aims to keep pets with their families during economic hardship, [www.thepetprojectmn.org](http://www.thepetprojectmn.org).

**While you are a natural “people person” who gets along with anyone, you also have quite a bit of critical theory that has equipped you to read the world through an intellectual lens. What is “Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature” and how did it shape your worldview?**

Cultural Studies views all of cultural production (everything: reality T.V., Wagner, dating web sites, literature, blogs, architecture, landscapes, all that we create) in context with everything around it. Whether we are aware or not, all of us look at our world with the filter of our collective and individual experiences and references. I think being able to analyze relationships among elements not obviously related helps me navigate and influence my world.

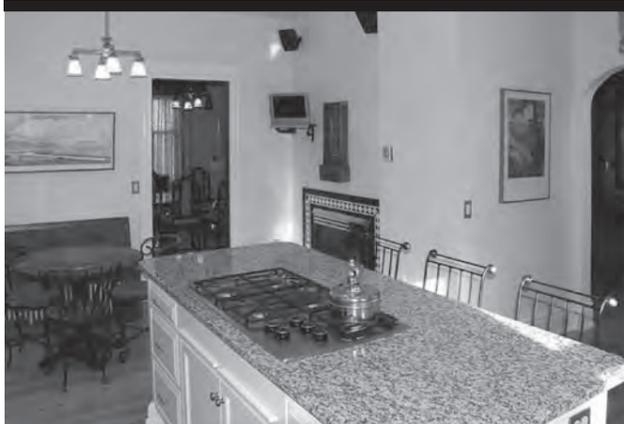
**Rumor also has it that as a 100% Irish-American lass, you have the “gift of the gab”. Is it true?**

My good friends tell me so!

**To contact Sheila Delaney to find your match, you can reach her at [sheila@sheiladelaney.net](mailto:sheila@sheiladelaney.net).**



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