**A suitable proposal**

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Getting married and more importantly at the right age and even more importantly to a ‘suitable boy or girl’ is the top most priority of all parents across all classes of our society. I believe parents in our culture place marriage at a higher priority than the professional or personal development of their children. In many cases parents start identifying suitable matches sometimes in families for their children like a ‘khala’ or ‘phupo ka larki ya larka’ at a very early age in the form of bonding conversations over family meet ups. And the poor child in question at a tender age might overhear that conversation. Either he or she is fascinated and might define that cousin as a first crush or feel repulsed and start disliking the poor cousin until he does get married to the same cousin hiding those feelings of resentment for the rest of married life.

In most cases as soon as the girl or boy crosses into their 20s, the discussion takes a more serious turn. More so for the girl’s parents than for the boy’s but this huge milestone becomes a reason for parents to start ‘rishta’ hunting and losing some sleep over it.

[Azerbaijan: Traces of war disappearing in Tartar city](https://nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2020/azerbaijan-traces-of-war-disappearing-in-tartar-city)

I support the importance of finding a good life partner and arranged marriage is still the go to for most families. I think the only good difference now is that families are more open for the girl and boy to meet and get to know each other a little bit and have a significant say in decision-making. I think parents are also more open to their children recommending partners of their own liking. All of this is fair and valid but what I want to highlight is the obsession we have about our children’s marriage, how early that obsession starts, how wrong decisions are made due to the obsessional attitude towards this entire thing and the lack of empathy or understanding of the negative impact this has on the girl and boy in question.

I have some young male and female cousins who are all in their mid 20s and for a few years now their parents are discussing proposals for them. Yet none of them have gotten hitched as yet. What parents need to know is that obsessing and starting this marathon early doesn’t mean success at the end of the race. Many factors come into play. Also such discussions not only distract the young adults from educational and professional pursuits, it also turns them off from settling down with a person. It is damaging for their self-concept too as one proposal after another doesn’t go through and they believe it to be a rejection of them. Whereas it’s not rejection but a simple fact of not being the right time and the right person.

[6 migrants die in Mediterranean](https://nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2020/6-migrants-die-in-mediterranean)

But can a 26-year-old girl whose mother started inviting people over since she was 20 see it as that? For her all those ‘Nos’ mean a ‘NO’ to her! Do the parents even realise what it does for her self-esteem?

Recently I heard a dialogue in a local Pakistani drama dealing with this same issue that ‘not all the birds soaring in the sky are married.’ I found this so powerful and I hope that our parents can look into changing their attitude towards this entire marriage business.

No I am not suggesting that they don’t get involved. No one is saying that this is a not a serious life altering decision that requires due diligence. But I definitely would invite parents to look into their obsessing over this matter. To ask themselves if this obsession has achieved what they are setting out to. This obsession stems from their own anxiety of wanting their children settled down but do they realise that this anxiety creates urgency in them internally leading to a state of emergency they declare for their children since many years have long lasting effects. Functionally their offspring do ‘settle down’ but do they really settle down in their new lives? When their parents place marriage at such a high pedestal claiming it to be the most important thing in their lives, a key to ultimate happiness, what impact it has when they realise a marriage doesn’t hold the key to all-encompassing happiness.

[Spain plans to extend Military Agreement with US](https://nation.com.pk/11-Nov-2020/spain-plans-to-extend-military-agreement-with-us)

It’s a wrong expectation from the get go because no one thing can make us truly happy. There are various building blocks to a happy fulfilling life and even that is not a constant state and that’s what the reality of life is.

So dear parents take a deep breath when your kids cross their teenage years. Let them study and focus on their professional and personal development and let marriage be one of the stops on the journey of life but don’t make it as the ultimate destination.