



Auntyji Ko Pucho

By: Auntyji



Auntyji had the chance to see and hear her favorite singer, Asha Bhonsle, during her recent concert tour in America and was impressed. Even at the age of seventy-five, she looked great and had the energy to entertain for two hours. And when she started singing "Jhumka gira ra – Barealli ke bazaar mein", the crowd went crazy. She even had the right "lachak" in her movements. It is commendable to see her still being so active. Asha has always been in the forefront of her career, as well as, breaking new ground and setting trends in Indian society.

Which brings Auntyji to a double standard that exists in our society, and upsets her a lot. It is OK for a man to have a younger woman but when the woman has a younger man, society has a difficult time. This is true in Bollywood with Dev Anand having younger starlets all the time ... but Asha having Rahul was a scandal. Here in America and Hollywood it's the same. Donald can get his pick of young women, but it was a sensation when Demi married Ashton. It's time this double standard stopped, as young men can clearly see the virtue of having an older, more mature woman.

*Now this bias exists not for age but also in society's perception of women. If a woman is alone and single, she is called an old maid, while the man is an eligible bachelor. If she is assertive, she is usually referred to as a "b****", where as an aggressive man might be called "dynamic". Women are expected to be submissive and meek, men stronger and outgoing. Men are rewarded more by our society while for women, trying to break these perceptions and barriers is not easy.*

Putting the blame on society might be the easy way out but we women make up more than half of this society. We fall in this trap because we want to be taken care of, and at the same time, we want to assert our freedom. We try to play the helpless victim to our advantage, but it backfires when we try to break away from the norms of society that we have helped create and perpetuate. We come from a land that has given us great strong women leaders like Sirimavo Bhandaranaike, Indira Gandhi, and Benazir Bhutto. We need to learn from them, improve our self esteem and change society's perception of our roles. It is not going to be an easy road ... as can be witnessed by the struggles of Hillary over here, but it is something we need to do for ourselves and our kind.

*even go out with my woman friends. I am very out going and like to have my friends and family around. I don't know about getting married again, but I don't mind the thought of having someone special in my life again. What would be the safest way to do this? Please don't tell me about the internet and friends. I have gone that route and it has brought nothing but failure. Is there any other way?
Vidya*

Q: Dear Auntyji I have a very dark mark on my face which is a birthmark. I have had it looked at by various doctors in India and the US and no one has been able to do anything about it. It has become a little lighter but not enough for it to disappear. I have even learned how to put make-up in a certain way to down play it as much as possible and over all, it doesn't show as much as it would without make-up. My parents have recently become very active on shaadi.com to get me married and have found one guy for me whom they approve of. We have been in touch for the last six weeks or so and he will be coming down to see me soon. I am very nervous about my scar - it covers almost half of my face. I am confident about myself but am scared that he will reject me based on the scar. We speak to each other on the phone for hours and I like him very much. What should I do?
Indira

A: My dear Indira, do not define yourself by the scar - there is more to you than that. For starters, it is something that is part of you, like your height, skin color or nose. You accept it because all the individual things make a total you. Then there are good dermatologists and plastic surgeons who might be able to reduce the appearance of it, if not make it disappear. And lastly, the person who will live with you takes all of you, not just some of you.

So the first thing you need to do is tell him about this scar, do not avoid or hide it. Hopefully you will have time to get to know each other better through your phone conversations and find enough commonalities before you meet, so that the birth mark is not an issue. He has obviously seen a picture of you, so there is something in

your appearance that he likes. And sometimes things that may appear to be a problem to you may be a non-issue for others.

The other thing that you also need to remember is that you really do not want to be spending your life with someone shallow who will be judging the entire you by something as small as a birthmark. You get married to have a happy life together forever ... in sickness and in health. A person that is not committed to this is not the right person. What will such a person do if you got scarred in an accident after you get married walk away from you? The right person, whether it is this guy, or someone else, will accept you with or without your birthmark. So do not fret too much over it, tell him about it, and give him credit to see what lies beyond it.

Q: Hello Auntyji, I lost my husband about three years ago in a car accident. I am almost 42 years old and have two children who are 15 & 12. Life was extremely hard in the beginning but somehow I have managed. My children are happy and so am I. My parents who are in India believe I should get married again and my 15 year old daughter believes that I should at least date. My 'in-laws, on the other hand, who also did absolutely nothing after my husband passed away, believe that I should live like a hermit and not

A: Vidya, thy name is knowledge and you do seem like a wise woman. You know the answer to this already, all you are looking for is some affirmation. This is your life, not your in-laws' that we are talking about. It is also not about what your daughter or your parents want for you ... it is about what you want for yourself. And you have already told Auntyji what you want, so you should go and get it.

You are happy, yet not totally content with what you have in life. You need that special one with a touch of intimacy. Your in-laws can disapprove, but unless they are doing something to help your situation, they should not influence what you do. You can leave them out of the loop and they do not need to know all the intimate details of your life.

Now how to go about getting him - sometimes the best way is not to look - he will find you. Just keep doing the things you like to do, but let it be known that you are open to companionship. You like having friends and family around - expand the circle. Get involved with groups and charities and your work. Prince charming is out there ... and he will find you.

Don't forget, life is short - live it to the fullest with attitude! Auntyji@citymasala.com.