Love and arranged marriage is a topic that will always have controversial perspectives and point of views. This audio documentary aims to show the different perspectives of both types of marriages from women and parent’s point of views.

For all women out there, what kind of marriage do you prefer, love or arranged marriage?

Well, I know that some women know what type of marriage they want, while others will take some time to think about it.

But first let’s go back and visit the history of Egyptian marriage. Long ago, during the 1960s, the Egyptians only way of marriage was the arranged marriage. It’s a type of marital union, where the bride and groom are selected by a third party such as family members, relatives or friends, rather than by each other.

My grandmother told me that once a young man was well into adolescence, it was appropriate for him to seek a partner and begin his own family. The marrying age of males was probably a little older, perhaps 16 to 20 years of age, because they had to become established and be able to support a family while girls or should I say at that time the age when women married was 11 to 15 years of age.

Marwa Mohamed is a housewife who got married through arranged marriage.

Marwa Mohamed: ”My friend’s aunt was my Mother in Law best friend so she told her about me and arranged to see me without telling me so they arranged a meeting at my friend’s grandmother house." (11)
Marwa knew her husband from her friend’s aunt, she arranged the very first meeting between them with her husband’s mom.

However, like any other girl Marwa wished to have a love marriage.

*MUSIC: FADE OUT- Nashed El Zefaf (1:00)*

She did not imagine that she would get married by some arrangements between family members and friends.

*MM:” No I did not imagine that my marriage will be arranged marriage, neither did my husband.” (:06)*

Marwa did not go all by herself to the first arranged meeting; neither did her husband. The first meeting gave her some hints here and there, but it did not leave her with the impression that she wants to marry him from the first time she saw him.

*MUSIC: FADE IN- There’s No Feeling Like This (0:00)*

*MM:” Our meeting was fine, he came with his mother and I went with my mother and sister. We sat for two hours and left. We did not set alone in our first meeting so I couldn’t say I want to marry him from the first moment I saw him but I liked his smile very much so I felt I want to see him again.” (:19)*

In an arranged marriage, you would get little time to get to know your partner before marriage. It's only after marriage that you would get to know their true characters. That’s what most of the young women would say nowadays. Marwa believes that there are many pros to arranged marriage. She looks at the situation from a different angle.

*MM:” In my opinion the pros are you know the person does not have the intention to play. He is serious about being with you, you get to know his family and how he is raised and how he deals or how he behaves with his family, after all they will be your kid’s family too in the future ” (:23)*

*MUSIC: FADE OUT- There’s No Feeling Like This (1:00)*

*MUSIC: FADE IN- There’s No Feeling Like This (0:00)*
Men always try hard to show their best qualities to their future wives. However, that’s not something that would make their future wives happy or proud because all that matters is knowing the real personality of the person you are going to marry. Marwa described the cons she sees in most of the arranged marriages.

MM: “cons in arranged marriage in my opinion are he tries to be nice all the time, he brings all the best in him so you can’t know his real personality until you get married. Also, both families are involved in the arranged marriage so you can’t know how he behaves naturally because he tries to be perfect.” (19sec)

But now in the 21st century, things started to change and some women did not see themselves in people arranging for them their marriages. They wanted to marry someone whom they knew and love, they wanted their marriage to be based on love.

That’s the story of Eman Mohamed. Seven years ago she married the love of her life.

Eman started to meet her husband in several occasions such as weddings and friend’s outings. After, several meetings Eman started to feel that she loves him.

EM: “We grew closer and closer and then just so happened that we fell in love.” (:04)

Most of the parents refuse for their daughters love marriage because they believe that this is against our traditions and norms. They do not see that falling in love and getting married is the right thing to do; instead, they believe that getting married through arranged marriage is
much better and more respectful. They also avoid the idea of their daughters deciding whom they will get married to because parents like to choose the grooms by themselves. Similarly, this is how Eman’s parents reacted when they knew that she wanted to marry him.

*MUSIC: FADE OUT- Nashed El Zefaf (3:14)*

*MUSIC: FADE IN- Nashed El Zefaf (2:49)*

**EM:** “When I told them about him, they were actually very suspicious of my judgment because they thought that I was under the effect of love. Even before they met him they thought that if I say that I am in love then I wouldn’t have a clear evaluation of his personality.” (:23)

Eman faced many arguments with her parents and she tried to convince them about him.

*MUSIC: FADE OUT- Nashed El Zefaf (3:14)*

*MUSIC: FADE IN- Nashed El Zefaf (2:49)*

*SFX: (CARTOON BELLS)*

**EM:** “My parent’s first impression was that he is too young you know every mother and every father have this fairytale idea of the prince who should be worthy of their daughters so they thought that he was too young, not established yet and we had to go though a long process and actually convince them that he’s going to be better and that he has a good personality that’s the ground you should be building on.” (:37)

When I asked Mr. Mahmoud Alam El-Din, who is Eman and Marwa’s uncle about the requirements that parents want or see in their daughter’s future husband, it was mainly to be a good and trusted man.

*MUSIC: FADE OUT- Nashed El Zefaf (3:14)*

*MUSIC: FADE IN- Nashed El Zefaf (2:49)*

Many young women and even some of my friends were forced to get engaged, or married to someone whom their parents chose.

*MUSIC: FADE OUT- Nashed El Zefaf (3:14)*

*MUSIC: FADE IN- Nashed El Zefaf (2:49)*
Many young women until now still do not have the right to choose the men of their dreams.

Mr.Mahmoud was against forcing girls to get married by this way but he believes that parents do so because they have experience and they want to let their daughters choose good men whom they can rely on till the rest of their lives.

MAE: “No, not forcing but to arrange his daughter to think with the right way to select his husband” (:08)

MUSIC: FADE OUT- Nashed El Zefaf (3:14)

MUSIC: FADE IN- There’s No Feeling Like This (0:00)

After listening to many women’s marriage stories, some would say that because parents do have experience does not mean that they force their daughters to get married. Mr.Mahmoud explained further that forcing is not what parents mean to do; instead, they are just helping their daughters to think the right way in order to select a good husband.

MAE: “They have more experience in life and they can choose the suitable person who can be suitable for their daughter also and if he can you know be a trusted man, they have more experience about this selection.” (:20)

People cannot tell what type of marriage can be successful because both arranged and love marriage can be successful but sometimes they can be unsuccessful also. Women in the 20’s would think that love marriage is the ideal type of marriage; on the other hand, parents think that arranged marriage is the ideal type of marriage.

MUSIC: FADE OUT- There’s No Feeling Like This (1:00)

MUSIC: FADE IN- There’s No Feeling Like This (0:00)
Mr. Mahmoud believes that love marriage can be successful if the man the woman chooses to get married to, is a good man after all. So, it all goes back to the personality of the man a woman is going to marry if he’s a trusted and good man.

*MAE:* “I believe it can be successful and also sometimes it could be unsuccessful. It depends on the man who married my daughter. If he’s a trusted one if he says the truth from the beginning if he’s from a good family.” (.21)

Love and arranged marriage is a topic that will always have different and controversial opinions. However, the only thing that parents and daughters agree on when talking about both type of marriages is that men have to have good personalities, families and be well raised after that any type of marriage can be successful.

*MUSIC: FADE OUT- There’s No Feeling Like This (0:40)*

This Audio documentary was produced by Heba Alam El-Din for the audio production course at The American University in Cairo taught by Professor Kim Fox in spring 2015.

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