

25/11/2000

(TV news)

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TELEVISION series 3R, catering specifically to the needs and wants of the young Malaysian woman, airs on TV3 every Sunday at 7pm and on Astro Ria every Friday at 9pm.

The series is the brainchild of Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir and Lina Tan, executive producer and producer of the show respectively.

"It was about time we had a programme where young women could get practical advice as well as knowledge and awareness about everyday issues," explained Marina.

"I was discussing this with some women producers and those in the media industry and we decided that if women want to see programmes for women, they have to do it themselves! I talked to Lina - she was enthusiastic and that's how 3R came about."

3R stands for Respect, Relax and Respond. `Respect' refers to building a healthy respect for yourself and others by developing self-confidence and cultivating a positive self-image. `Relax' means taking time off to rejuvenate, perhaps by getting involved in sports while `respond' means responding to challenges and taking the initiative to fight for a cause or to improve a situation one is unhappy about.

Surveys showed that "girls didn't want presenters who were unreal," said Tan. "They didn't want girls who looked like models, dressed in fancy clothes and talked about problems they didn't face themselves."

Enter Azah, Rafidah and Yuen, the three feisty young women who helm the show. Articulate, warm and funny, it is little wonder that they were selected from more than 50 girls who auditioned for the show earlier this year.

"The producers were looking for character and personality - each girl had to be different, yet able to work together," explained Tan.

What you see on TV is exactly how the girls are in real life - Azah is sporty and outgoing, Yuen is bubbly and funny while Rafidah is independent and analytical.

All three are graduates although none of them majored in anything related to the TV industry! Azah and Rafidah both have law degrees while Yuen has a degree in biochemistry but none of them regret doing what they are doing now.

The series is shot entirely on location and not in a studio. Each episode comprises three segments - one on a main issue, one on information technology and another on an activity.

The hosts of 3R find it inspiring that the show reaches out to so many people all over Malaysia, especially girls from rural areas who often feel that they are "not good enough". Azah explains that the show is done mostly in Bahasa Malaysia as they hope that, through the show, girls from the kampungs will realise that girls everywhere face the same problems. Feedback has been encouraging, coming through the show's website.

However, the girls are not feminist male-bashers. Explains Azah, "We are just trying to create awareness among women about the issues they face in real life so that they are better able to deal with them. It's not about putting men down."

The screening of 3R will be stopped after tomorrow but will resume on Dec 31. Meantime, you can visit the programme's website at [www.3r.com.my](http://www.3r.com.my) where you can catch past episodes, get useful information and give feedback.

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