

The Matchmaker

Part 2: The Dating Process—Decision to Date and/or

Thank you all for your wonderful feedback on last month's column. We are brimming over with tips and suggestions, but feel we can convey our thoughts best if we break them into categories. Here are some various dating tips we think you will find useful. Not all advice applies or holds true to everyone.

This month is part one of three consecutive topics we call "The Dating process."

1. The Decision to Date and/or Seek Help in Finding a Match
2. During the Date
3. After the Date

The Decision to Date and/or Seek Help to Find a Match

1. The stigma of asking for assistance has almost become obsolete. *Everyone* is doing it these days. You can't possibly know everyone and you just never know! The next generation is already thinking it's par for the course. It's not a



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'desperate' act by any means—it is a respectable, private and successful way for singles to meet and network. Put yourself out there, and don't be upset if relatives or others try to set you up. They mean well, and it's good to have your name out there. Out of sight is out of mind, so its good to stay in sight!

2. Don't sign up for a website or contact a matchmaker or rabbi to set you up unless you feel you are ready for the possibility of a relationship. 'Playing the field' and 'having fun' is different than 'Okay, Im ready to meet someone'. It's not fair to others who are serious about it if you aren't.

3. If there is someone helping to set you up, it's okay to call and remind him or her from time to time that you are still available. You are never a bother. Just because he doesn't call you doesn't mean he forgot you—the searching part is up to him but the finding part is in G-d's hands. He may call in one day with a match or he may never call you, but it doesn't mean he isn't trying. And a reminder from you never hurts!

4. There is a misconception about matchmakers and websites—they are not a dating service there to provide dates because you don't have plans every Saturday night. If they are doing their jobs properly, they are not sending you what you *want* in a match, but rather what you *need*. So many people come with an unrealistic wish list as if they were shopping in a store (unrealistic expectations is a whole future topic unto itself). People fool themselves

into thinking they have to have a certain age, type, family, look, etc. and they let many opportunities slip away because of this. Be open-minded as you never know from where and in what form your *naseeb* will come. Never say never—don't rule anything or anyone out. Happiness may creep up on you from a place you'd least expect it to.

5. Do not confide too much in your single friends. Keep your own business your own. So many singles today say no to a suggestion "because my friend went out with him and didn't like him." What's good for you is not necessarily good for them. (If married couples today looked around at their married friends, most of them would never have matched with their friends spouse!) If you need someone to talk to and confide in, you can speak to a relative, a rabbi, a married friend or your matchmaker. Use them as much or as little as you want. It's great to have a guardian angel to turn to who has your best interest in mind!

6. Never trust a matchmaker alone—always do your own research when presented with a match. Call someone you trust and who cares about you. On the flip side, if you, as an outsider, get questioned by a single inquiring about a potential date, if it's someone you don't know, don't say a word—not any *lashon hara* you heard or anything. Just tell your friend to research it further from someone else. People don't realize that the slightest hesitation in their voice can ruin a match, so unless you know the person you must guard your tongue.

Chronicles

Seek Help to Find a Match

7. Sometimes you have to rearrange your plans to make a date—don't cancel or put off a date because of something else. Try to keep your plans to go out with a potential match before almost anything else. Start off on the right foot!

8. The biggest excuse we hear is, "I can't go out with her. I know her—she's my friend." But a one-on-one dating experience is different than hanging out as 'friends.' Give it a chance. Many people found the love of their life in their best friend that they never even guessed could turn into more. Many of today's most happily married couples were best friends for years, even went to school together or discussed other relationships together, only to realize they were overlooking the one they got along with best, who was right in front of them. If you like someone so much as a friend, don't you think that person possesses some of the important qualities you need in a mate? When a couple is lucky enough to have love and friendship, they can have the greatest life together.

9. Don't pre-judge anyone. When you are single you look at others one way and when you are married, and more experienced, your angle is completely different. Married people often look and say, "Wow, he turned out to be such a good husband—who knew?" or "If I knew she would turn out to be such a good mother and caring wife, I would have definitely taken her out." Remember, what is attractive to you today may not translate later into a good spouse and vice versa.

10. Parents, be careful what you say to your child when they are dating—parents should not be more particular than their kids are. Don't put unneeded pressure on them; the singles scene is pressure enough! Make sure you are telling them about the proper qualities they should look for on a date. If people look more at the inside of a potential match rather than concentrate on the exterior and what others expect of them, then their dating experience will prove much more worthwhile. Don't be blinded by the wrong things. And make sure when they are teenagers, to review with them the social graces and chivalry of dating.

11. Religious or not, it's a good idea to pray for the right one. Pray for clarity so that you will know the right one when you see them.

12. Take care of your appearance, and remember even when you don't expect it you can meet someone, so always look put together. Even if you go somewhere where no members of the opposite sex will be, a relative of a potential match may see you, so it's best to always take care of yourself. And always remember—*smile!* There is nothing you can wear that is more important than a smile!

13. Don't despair if you are not finding the right one right away. You have to believe that G-d has a master plan. Maybe you think you are ready, but in essence you may need a few more years or months of growing and learning. Maybe by waiting a little longer it will teach you to better appreciate that person when they finally come into your life. Maybe

you were meant to grow and learn more about yourself first. Your match is out there, you just have to have faith. Be patient and happy, and have confidence in yourself—because what you feel inside is obvious to everyone on the outside!

The previous column is a culmination of the knowledge, feedback and advice that we, the Administration and 'Agents' of Sephardic Link, have acquired thus far. We thank everyone who has guided us along the way and have included much of their advice in our columns as well. Due to our strict discretion policy, we would never divulge anything personal, but rather make constructive suggestions based on the learning experience of others. Our past Image Magazine columns can be viewed on the "Advice Tab" of Sephardiclink.com.

Remember, anything you see here in this column should not replace the advice of rabbis, parents, or experts in the field. It is just an opinion.

For comments, feedback or suggestions for future topics please email Kelly@sephardiclink.com.□

New, By Popular Demand
We are beginning a new column "Ask the Agents"
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