



SHIDDUCH CHECKLIST

This checklist is imperative to avoid two situations:

1. Not speaking when you should.
2. Speaking when you should not.

A. RULES FOR THE INQUIRER (SINGLE PERSON OR HIS/HER PARENT):

1. Do not ask about a number of candidates if you are really only interested in one of them.

2. Prior to your inquiry, recite the following formula:

"The reason I am asking for this information is because someone is considering a Shidduch with this person. I will treat this information as confidential, and will not relay it to others, even in another Shidduch context. There are times one would be permitted to pass it on (even though it is now second hand)."

This formula will put the provider of information (and you) in the proper frame of mind.

3. You may listen to information but not believe it as absolutely true. You may act on the basis that it MAY BE true.

4. Never ask a person for information who is known to have had a disagreement either with the party you are asking about or his/her family, or a competitor.

B. RULES FOR THE MATCHMAKER:

1. Do not suggest a Shidduch if, objectively speaking, it is not in the best interests of each of the parties involved. Put yourself into their respective positions. You are doing a great chessed, not playing games of chance.

2. Generally, do not be guided by what you believe is best for a person but by what that person feels is important to him/her.

3. Do not overly "investigate" the two and their families before proposing the

match. This is the responsibility of the parties and/or their parents.

4. Do not suggest a Shidduch unless:
 - (a) You believe, based upon your current knowledge, the two could be a good match, and you are unaware of any reason the relationship could cause pain to either one or could result in one party being a negative influence on the other.
 - (b) There is reason to believe their meeting will ultimately result in engagement.
 - (c) You are unaware of any medical, emotional or character deficiency that would render one party unfit for marriage at the present time.
 - (d) You are unaware that one party lacks something subjective that the other is insistent upon, or has something subjective to which the other has explicitly expressed strong objection.

C. RULES FOR INQUIREE (ONE WHO IS ASKED FOR INFORMATION):

1. Do not respond to a question like "Tell me about him/her". Explain that you don't feel these questions are meaningful, and that you will happily respond to specific inquiries.

2. If it is unlikely that your advice will be heeded, do not relay it under any circumstances.

3. If the information you possess was obtained confidentially (secret or through professional relationship) - ASK A SHAILA.

4. There are three (3) categories of questions - which you can be asked.

Category 1. Essential Information. Questions requesting information which objectively relate to a happy Jewish home or marriage.

Category 2. Subjectively Essential Information. Questions relating to subjective information involving personal preferences which appear reasonable.

Category 3. Unique Personal Preferences. Questions relating to subjective information involving personal preferences which appear to be minor, unimportant or unreasonable.

Category 1 - Essential Information:

The Inquirer asks about a "major" item - an item detrimental to establishing a home, happy marriage or spousal relationship.

- Examples:
- Bad character traits (violent temper)
 - Immodesty or immorality

- Lack of religious commitment
- Medical or emotional problems

Conditions which must be satisfied prior to responding:

1. BE ACCURATE - Think through your response carefully

- Is your information fact or opinion?
- Is information based on long-term acquaintance or first impression?
- Is information based upon event of 5 years ago or yesterday?
- If information is second hand, and impossible to verify, you must state that "this is hearsay and I don't know personally if this is true".

2. DON'T EXAGGERATE OR EMBELLISH

- Leave out extraneous details
- Imagine you were the subject of the inquiry and your future was at stake.

3. EXAMINE YOUR MOTIVATIONS FOR RELAYING INFORMATION

- Must be 100% L'Toeles (constructive)
- Rid yourself of personal negative feelings or animosity (The Chofetz Chaim says you can!)

4. TRANSMIT THE INFORMATION IN THE LEAST HARMFUL MANNER POSSIBLE

- "I don't think this particular Shidduch is for you" may be enough.
- Hold back as many details as possible to accomplish results.

5. WEIGH HARM VS. BENEFIT

- Are you relaying information to an indiscrete person - if so, do not relay the information at all. Similarly, if one party will take revenge or cause undue harm to the other, do not relay the information.

Category 2 - Subjectively Essential Information:

The Inquirer asks about items which he/she perceives are of material importance to him/her.

Examples: Intelligence, Family, Money, Age

1. Do not volunteer any such information, unless asked, even if you know it is important to him/her.

2. Try to refer the question to an expert who should know the answer.

3. Do not lie.
4. When age is an issue, always ask a SHAILA.
5. If possible, say "I don't know."
6. If you must respond, follow the criteria set forth in Category 1 above, but try to ask a SHAILA first.

NOTE: If you are aware that one party may not satisfy the subjective needs and tastes of the other, but you otherwise believe the Shidduch is appropriate, ASK A SHAILA. The shidduch may still be possible.

Category 3 - Unique Personal Preferences:

The Inquirer asks about specific personal preferences which are unique to his/her personality or mind.

Examples: "She must have an ear for music."
"He must be at least 3 years older than me."
"She must have straight hair."
"He must have been valedictorian."

1. Do not volunteer "negative" information.
2. Say "I don't know", but don't suggest that the relationship be pursued.

D. RULES FOR ONE WHO IS NOT ASKED BUT HAS IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO SHARE:

One is required to VOLUNTEER information if he/she is aware of CATEGORY 1 information (page 3), which is clearly being concealed if:

1. You can not, after using best efforts, convince the party concealing the information to reveal it.
2. You do not believe the information will be ignored.
3. There is no realistic alternative to conveyance of the information.
4. Follow the conditions (1-5) set forth in Category 1, prior to revealing the information.