



Seeing Beyond the Picture: Representing True Beauty in Shidduchim When a Camera Can't Capture a Neshama

לעילוי נשמת
מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

Hadas asks: I have a friend who is truly one of the best people in the world, kind, good-hearted, and genuine. But she's not very photogenic, and even when she agrees to take pictures, they don't do her justice. I feel like this makes it harder for me to find matches for her, because her inner beauty and warmth don't shine through in photos. How can I best support her?

Aleeza answers: You're right, pictures carry a lot of weight in the dating world, sometimes more than they should. But we both know that photos never tell the whole story. A camera can't capture a neshama. And sometimes the most radiant people in real life simply don't translate well in a photo. While true beauty is not skin deep, if you can't

get a yes and get her on a date she doesn't have a shot at a real connection. The Torah teaches us that "Sheker ha'chein v'hevel hayofi, grace is false and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who has awe of Hashem, she shall be praised." Of course attraction matters, and especially before two people meet it seems to matter most.

So how do you help your friend? First, a great photographer with a keen eye can take better than average photos. Sometimes a different angle makes all the difference. For example, I've learned my right side is the photogenic side and the left...well I avoid that whenever possible. Taking a photo when she's relaxed and simply happy is great but hard to capture. So maybe bring a friend to make her laugh or smile genuinely. And take a photo in one of her favorite places. That will make all the difference. True smiles happen when people are in their happy place.

Sometimes even a short video clip, where her warmth and voice come through, conveys more than a still image.

You can also advocate for her by sharing a few words alongside her picture: "Her photo doesn't capture how warm and funny she is," or "You'll see her real sparkle when you meet her." That little framing helps people look past the photo and be curious. And finally, keep reminding yourself and her

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that Hashem is the true Shadchan. The right person for her will not pass her by because of one less-than-perfect picture. The person meant for her will be drawn to her whole self, including her image. Just because others can't see past the photo doesn't mean her bashert will overlook her.

May Hashem bless you with the wisdom to represent her in the most authentic way.

Aleeza ■

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