



Are Preferences Meant to Be Tested?

לעילוי נשמת
מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

Judy asks:

If a candidate says, "I don't want to meet anyone who doesn't want to make aliyah" should a shadchan indeed only suggest aliyah-minded people?

Aleeza answers:

When someone tells you, "I don't want to meet anyone who doesn't want to make aliyah," I believe we should take that seriously.

One of the fastest ways to build trust as a shadchan is to show people that you're actually listening. If someone has clearly identified aliyah as an important part of the future they envision, then your first suggestions should absolutely reflect that preference. It communicates, "I hear you. I respect what's important to you."

That trust matters.

In the beginning, I would focus on introducing them only to people who also want to make aliyah. Give that preference a real

opportunity. If after five or more strong, aliyah-minded suggestions they still haven't found the right person, then you have earned the credibility to broaden the conversation.

At that point, if someone exceptional comes along who doesn't currently plan to make aliyah, you can ask if they would be open to someone who isn't planning on Aliyah.

You might say, "I know you've been clear that aliyah is important to you. I also know what you're sincerely looking someone and (name) came to mind who aligns with you in so many meaningful ways although he's not committed to Aliyah. Would you be open to hearing more about him?"

Notice that you're asking permission, not trying to convince them.

As matchmakers, we constantly balance two responsibilities: honoring what people ask for and using our own experience to recognize compatibility they may not immediately see. I always look for both. What does the person say they want? And who do I genuinely believe has the potential to become someone's spouse?

That also means asking yourself an honest question: Would someone who doesn't want to make aliyah actually work for this person?

If the answer is no, don't force it. Not every preference is flexible. For some people, aliyah isn't simply a location - it's a life mission,

Shabbat afternoon
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Given by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres
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a value, or part of their spiritual vision for the future. If that's the case, trying to persuade them otherwise may only create frustration for everyone involved.

On the other hand, if you believe the difference is one of timing, uncertainty, or limited exposure rather than a deeply held conviction, then after you've built trust and respected their preferences, it may be worth opening the conversation.

Good matchmaking isn't about ignoring people's criteria. It's about knowing when to honor them exactly as stated and when you've earned the opportunity to gently explore what else might be possible.

May you be blessed with the wisdom to listen carefully, the insight to recognize true compatibility, and the privilege of helping many couples build a shared future together.

Blessings, Aleeza ■

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