לעילוי נשמת **מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל**

You Don't Have to Love Everything About Him

Hannah asks:

Hi Ayelet, I really could use your advice. I often go into dates feeling excited, but once I'm actually sitting across from someone, I find myself focusing on all the little things that aren't quite right. I end up losing interest, even when he seemed like someone I could really like. Am I being too critical, or am I just not meeting the right person?

Ayelet answers:

There is something worth looking at here, because sometimes the way we approach a date can actually get in the way of discovering whether there's something there.

A lot of us spend so much time thinking about what we're looking for in a spouse. We have our lists of qualities, values, personality traits and expectations, and of course, knowing what matters to us is important. But somewhere along the way, the focus can become so much about evaluating the person in front of us that we forget to pay attention to something equally important: the relationship that might develop between us.

Think about your friendships. You probably have friends whose every opinion you don't agree with, whose jokes you don't always find funny, and whose habits might occasionally drive you crazy. You wouldn't necessarily choose every single one of their traits if you were designing a person from scratch, and yet you love spending time with them. Why? Because you enjoy their company, feel comfortable around them, laugh together and genuinely want to spend time with them.

The same is true of marriage. Every happily married couple you know has, at some point during those first few dates, noticed things they didn't particularly love about each other. They didn't necessarily agree on everything or tick every box on each other's lists. But they discovered that they were happy together - and that's what you're ultimately looking for.

When you sit across from someone with the constant question of "Is he right for me?", every little thing can suddenly become significant. He says something that isn't quite how you would have phrased it, doesn't respond exactly as you expected, or has a quality that wasn't on your list, and before you've even had a chance to get to know him, you've already started building a case against him. No one in the world, not even your best friend, would be able to get 100 on a test like this.

Instead, I would suggest shifting your

attention. Rather than spending the date evaluating whether he's the person you've been looking for, ask yourself how you feel when you're with him. Are you enjoying the conversation? Are you curious to hear more? Is there something about him that you find interesting or that you appreciate?

And perhaps most importantly, if you find that the way you're dating now isn't working for you, why not try a change? Instead of an interview-like date, go somewhere fun, do something together, create an opportunity to actually experience each other's company rather than sitting opposite one another, taking turns answering questions.

You don't have to decide after every date whether this is your future husband, you just have to decide whether you'd like to spend a little more time getting to know him. And who knows? Maybe the person whose little quirks and imperfections you're busy noticing today could become the person you can't imagine your life without, your husband and your best friend. ■

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