



Rifka Schonfeld **STRATEGIES**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

Cheat Sheet for Shidduchim

Dear Readers,

This week's newsletter will discuss the topic shidduchim and will include tips and strategies on how to navigate through this delicate stage of life.

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QUESTION:

What are some things my daughter should look for in a shidduch? What are some things that everyone should look for in a shidduch?

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Rifka Schonfeld
DIRECTOR S.O.S.

718.382.5437 | rifkaschonfeld@gmail.com | www.rifkaschonfeldsos.com

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ANSWER:

There are three essential elements that every person should have in order to have a successful marriage and relationship.

Derech Eretz

There truly is no English equivalent of the term *derech erez*, rather *derech erez* encompasses a whole set of traits that are essential in both sides of a relationship. So, how do you know if someone has *derech erez*? Below are some things to look out for when going on a shidduch:

- **The ability to control temper.** If you are stuck in a traffic jam, how does your date respond to the frustration of being late? Does he blame all the other cars, the weather, or the terrible roads in your neighborhood? Or, does he manage to hold it together and choose to use the opportunity to get to know you better, asking pertinent questions and listening thoughtfully?
- **The ability to compromise.** On the first date, it is hard to notice the characteristic of compromise; however, if you look closely, you might notice that when presented with an alternative that is not 100% pleasing, your shidduch is able to examine both sides and come to a happy medium. This ability to compromise is an indispensable part of a successful relationship. Without compromise, marriages could never work: resolving conflicts over simple issues such as household chores, child care, and grocery bills could get completely out of hand.

Social Intelligence

Another area of social skills that is important to look out for when looking for the suitable shidduch is social intelligence. But, what specifically is social intelligence and how can you recognize it in others?

- **The capability to make friends and sustain friendships.** People who have strong social networks of friends and family clearly are able to have long-term relationships. Listen to the way your date speaks about their friends. Does he have friendships that have lasted more than a few months or years? This indicates the ability to engage in positive

relationships.

- **The power to conduct conversation with strangers or acquaintances.** People who have social anxiety will often freeze up in the face of new and different people. Social anxiety can inhibit even the kindest and most interesting person; however, learning to overcome this phobia can be learned.
- **An understanding of non-verbal communication.** Non-verbal communication consists of eye contact and body language. Through appropriate use of eye contact and body language, it is easy to understand your shidduch's feelings and intentions. In addition, one can learn how to conduct himself through non-verbal communication in order to put himself in the best light.

Self-Esteem

It might seem counter-intuitive, but in order for a person to establish a positive relationship with someone else, they must first have a positive relationship with themselves. In other words, they should have a healthy dose of self-esteem.

- **Self-awareness.** People who have positive self-esteem are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, but are comfortable with those strengths and weaknesses. They attempt to place themselves in situations that bring out their best qualities.
- **A healthy balance.** There is a fine line between self-esteem and ego. It is important for the person who you will develop a long-term relationship with to feel comfortable in his or her own skin and to refrain from putting other people down in order to make themselves feel better. However, too much "self esteem" can lead to an inflated sense of worth that often makes others feel undeserving or unwanted.
- **Give and take.** Positive self-esteem allows a person to more easily compromise. After all, if they do not always feel threatened by other people, they are more willing and able to see the other side of the story.

Derech erez, social intelligence, and self-esteem are important qualities to look for in a potential mate. Chances are – if you are looking for those traits in another person – other people are looking for those characteristics in you. If you don't already portray them, is it possible to cultivate them? The answer is: yes. I have worked with dozens of young men and women who are entering the parsha of shidduchim to help them bring out these key qualities.

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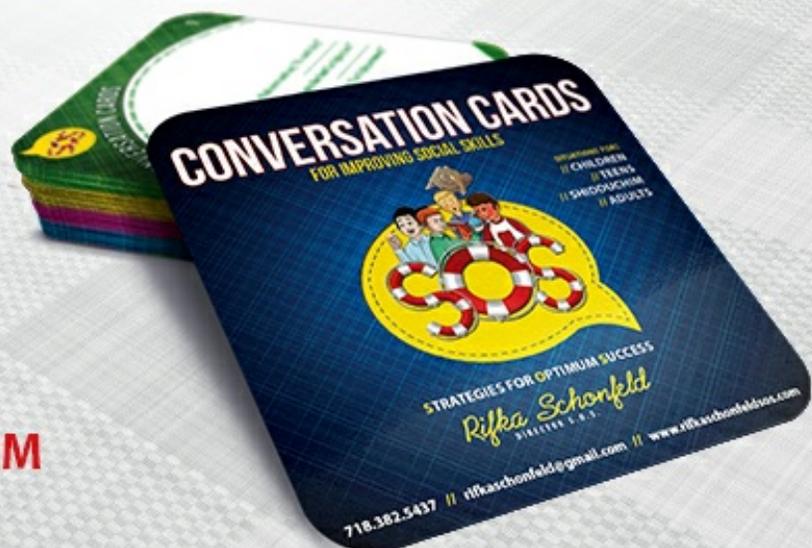
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