



PARENT'S GUIDE TO
**PREVENT AN
INTERMARRIAGE**





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ACTION PLAN



MAYBE I HAVE NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE?

- You have a right to interfere even if you did not attend synagogue regularly, provide strong Jewish home/education, or lead a religious life personally
- Do not feel guilty
- Do not rationalize or make excuses
- Determination to stop the relationship with a careful and clear plan will succeed

MAYBE IT'S BEST TO DO NOTHING?

- The one common factor in preventing intermarriage is the parent's consistent and continuous objection
- Keep the lines of communication open
- Do not rationalize with "as long as they are happy"

HOW DO I FORMULATE A PLAN?

- Be prepared that this might be hard work, perhaps emotionally grinding and

possibly even make your child temporarily angry at you

- Aim your words and plan action at both the emotions and intellect of your child

Step 1: *Formulate your reasons for opposing the marriage*

Step 2: *Enumerate your possible intermediate goals in preventing the marriage. What do I want my child to appreciate?*

Step 3: *Ask yourself: How do I get my child to realize that this is a mistake?*

Step 4: *Resolve within yourself how much you are willing to endure for your goal*

Step 5: *Itemize the means you can employ and your resources*

Step 6: *Know your obstacles*

Step 7: *Seriously undertake to learn from others*

Step 8: *Be consistent*

WHAT WORKS BEST?

Attitude

- Emphasize your unswerving love for your child and his or her ultimate happiness
- Make the distinction that you do not reject your child, only their actions
- To be most successful establish in advance and adhere to the following consequences:
 - Neither support nor attend the wedding or reception
 - Urge their friends and relatives not to attend
 - The couple alone or together will not be invited or welcome in your home

Means

- A trial separation, to ensure their happiness by testing their relationship
- Jewish Study. Provide the intelligent mind with an intellectual understanding of Judaism

APPROACH



HOW SHOULD I INTERACT?

- Be clear about what you believe
- Set a goal before each discussion
- Be consistent
- Sincerely care about your child. Make it clear that they are your primary concern. Condemning your child through verbal attack will only hinder communication
- Always reinforce your child's good points and ignore the bad points. Do not use negative labels or insults. Being selfish vs. acting selfish
- Be non-argumentative. Soft speech which expresses respect works best
- Get your child to make the points. Verbalize the conclusion
- Reap the fruit. Do not go from one topic to another without getting recognition of an agreed upon point. Utilize your conclusions in planning the next conversation
- Take your child's statements with a grain of salt
- Be calm and not over-emotional

HOW DO I BEGIN TO COMMUNICATE?

- Start by discussing neutral topics to open the lines of communication
- Ask them to define marriage, wife, husband, love, and forces leading to marriage and divorce
- Keep the conversation objective. Discuss, don't preach!
- Discuss the questions which address specific potential problems of intermarriage in the questionnaire section

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

- If you feel your child's objections are valid, you must learn more about your heritage yourself
- 12 Categories of justifications and rationales for intermarriage:
 1. Romantic Love : "But we love each other"
 - a) The Jilt
 - b) Romantic Infatuation vs. Real Love : Love is the emotion of pleasure one has in seeing the virtue in another person. A person's feeling that an intended spouse has no faults indicates romantic infatuation.
 - c) Meaning of Love

- Love means responsibility, commitment, loyalty.
 - Selfishness. Romantic love based on selfishness will not last
 - Love is not the only significant factor in marriage. But with commonality of purpose and a sharing of goals and ideals.
2. Children: " We're not going to have children"
 - a) Sterilization
 - b) Meaning of life. Children make life real, make life worthwhile. Most couples eventually decide they want children
 3. Children: "Let them choose a religion"
 - a) No vacuum. There is no such thing as raising children in a vacuum. There is no neutral ground. That is a totally confusing existence
 - b) Confusion. They never had anything to accept or reject-only contradictory input.
 - c) What will such religious children think of you?

4. Statistics: "But we're different". 70% divorce rate between intermarried couples
5. Mistake: "I've got to run my own life"
6. Eternity: "It doesn't make a difference!" Intermarriage is an extremely serious violation of the Torah
7. Morality: "But I don't see anything wrong with it"
 - a) First approach: fairness demands a hearing
 - b) Second approach: endangered species
 - c) Third approach: wrong to get involved
8. Treasure: "I know what I'm doing." "I don't care about the Jewish People"
9. Pride: "But I'm not religious"
10. Marriage: "A secular marriage is just fine"
11. Conversion: "But he/she will convert." Sincere conversion. Insincere conversion
12. Religion- "Religion doesn't matter"
 - a) Holidays
 - b) Ask your fiancée the following four questions:
 - Do you believe in Jesus?

- Do you believe that one must believe in Jesus to go to heaven?
- Do you love me?
- Do you want me to go to heaven?

WHAT SHOULD I SAY TO A NON-JEW Who Wants to Marry My Child?

- Clarify the motivation, philosophy, and psychology of the relationship by asking about:
 - Chances of survival
 - Unreliable
 - Hell
 - Holidays
 - Anti-Semitism
- Do your parents accept this?
- How does your minister view this?

WHAT SHOULD I SAY IF HE/SHE CALLS ME A RACIST?

- Four ways of replying to this false accusation
- 1. Definition. "Racism is the belief in the inherent superiority and inferiority of races and the policy or practice of persecution or deprivation of rights based on race. This has nothing to do with Judaism. We have black Jews, yellow Jews,

and white Jews. Feeling your values are superior does not make you racist

2. Preserving Judaism
3. Higher than Angels
4. Our country first

WHAT CAN MY CHILD SAY TO BREAK OFF THE ENGAGEMENT?

- Factors pushing child to go through with marriage that he/she otherwise would gladly break off:
 - Honor
 - Fear of embarrassment
 - Pride
 - Concern for the Fiancée
- Reasons your child can express when breaking off the engagement
 - Cannot do this to my parents
 - Ignorance about Judaism
 - Love v. infatuation. 3 month separation
 - Judaism meaningful to me
 - Small odds of having a successful marriage

CONVERSION



TO CONVERT OR NOT TO CONVERT?

- Conditions for admission to Judaism:
 1. Properly qualified rabbinical court satisfied that candidate is genuinely willing and able to accept the religious discipline of Jewish life
 2. More than a declaration of intent
 3. Criterion is the love of Judaism, not the applicant's love for a Jewish person he or she seeks to marry

WHAT MAKES A UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED CONVERSION?

- Orthodox conversion: Agreed by the Reform, Conservative movements, and the State of Israel
- A transformation of belief and lifestyle. If the non-Jew expresses an interest in conversion, direct them to an Orthodox rabbi
- Some Problems regarding conversion:
 1. For the sake of marriage
 2. Fraud on the part of the Rabbi
 3. Fraud on the part of the convert
 4. Effect on children

CONVERSION BOARDS

LOS ANGELES

Beth Din
331N. Alta Vista Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel: (323)939-0298
Fax : (323)933-3686
info@beth-din.org

Rabbinical Council of California
617 S. Olive St. Suite 515
Los Angeles, CA 90014
Tel : (213)489-8080
Fax : (213)489-8077
info@rccvaad.org

NEW YORK

Rabbinical Council of America
305 Seventh Avenue
New York, 10001
Tel: (212)807-7888
Fax : (212)727-8452

Rabbinical Alliance of America
3 W.16th St.
New York, NY 10011
Tel : (212)242-6420

Orthodox Union
11 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
Tel : (212)563-4000
Fax : (212)564-9058
info@ou.org
www.ou.org

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

STEMMING INTERMARRIAGE- WHY AND HOW?

The battle against intermarriage doesn't begin at the age of sixteen or seventeen. Seventy percent of all children born of mixed marriages are not raised as Jews

To contain intermarriage need:

- An intense love and understanding of Judaism
- A deterrent of public disgrace
- A social climate generally unfavorable to mixed marriages

WHAT CAN THE FAMILY DO?

- Positive Jewish identity in childhood
- Strong Jewish upbringing:

1. Jewish day school
2. Jewish home life: Torah is the secret to survival
3. Jewish dating: parental opposition to inter-dating. Take a stand before the children are ready to date. Forbidding inter-dating is not an act of hatred towards non-Jews; it's an act of love towards Jews

WHAT CAN THE COMMUNITY DO?

- Jewish media
- Community lectures
- Love, dating and marriage programs
- Encourage policy of a three month trial separation

- Do not attend the wedding ceremony or the reception of any mixed marriages. Be polite but firm in refusing to attend
- Locate Jews who have divorced their non-Jewish spouses and who are willing to talk about the problems they faced
- Jewish Computer Dating Service
- Jewish Clubs

JEWISH CEREMONIES FOR MIXED MARRIAGES?

- Mixed marriages have no validity according to the Torah
- Do not participate in the ceremony. A responsibility to family and community



QUESTIONNAIRES



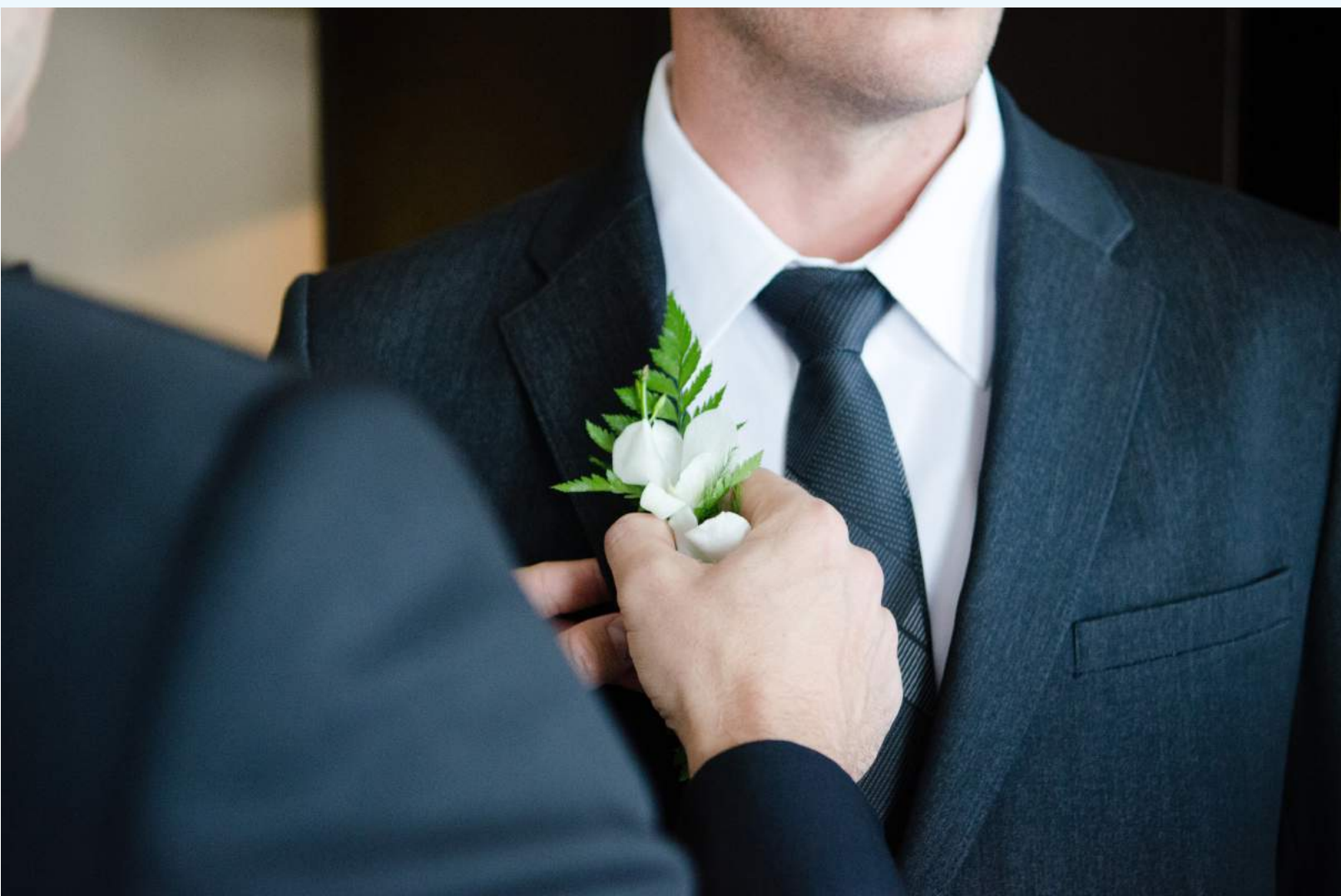
Below are some questions which address the specific potential problems of intermarriage. The following questionnaires are an effective manner to get the couple to think about their relationship and the potential problems. They also provide a good basis to begin discussions.

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN MOTIVATION IN MARRYING THIS PARTICULAR PERSON?

1. What is your main reason or reasons for marrying this particular person?
2. Are you afraid that if you do not marry this person that you will have a hard time finding someone else to marry?
3. Is your main motivation in marrying this person because of a strong feeling of attraction?
4. How can you be certain that your strong feelings are really love and not merely infatuation?
5. Do you have any ulterior motives for marrying this person (such as money or status)? Are these a basis for a good marriage?
6. Does your potential spouse have any ulterior motives? How can you find out for sure?
7. Are you or your potential spouse trying to get married to escape from an unhappy home life? In reality, will this marriage increase or decrease your problems?
8. Are you getting married to solve your own personal problems?
9. If yes, how certain are you that this marriage will solve those problems?
10. What role does the marriage of your friends have on your wanting to get married right now?
11. If you weren't marrying this particular person, would you prefer to marry someone Jewish?
12. What are you gaining by marrying this particular person?
13. What are you losing out by marrying this person?
14. Do you think that your potential spouse might be painting an unrealistic picture of him or herself and that you might be marrying an illusion? In what ways might you be mistaken about the real personality and attitudes of this person?
15. Is it possible that your intended marriage might be a rebellion against your parents? If it is, is that a good basis for a marriage?
16. Does your physical attraction for your potential spouse prevent you from being aware of problems which may cause you difficulties later?
17. Do you love your potential spouse? What do you mean by love?
18. Does your potential spouse love you? Have you asked your potential spouse if he or she has a definition of love? If he/she doesn't have one, how do you feel about marrying someone who, when he/she says that he loves you, doesn't know what he/she means?

ARE YOU COMPATIBLE?

1. What are your five strongest traits?
2. What are your five worst faults?
3. What are your potential spouse's five strongest traits and five worst faults?
4. How can you be certain that you will be able to tolerate your potential spouse's faults?
5. How can you be certain that your potential spouse will be able to tolerate your faults?
6. Is there anything about you that annoys your potential spouse?
7. Is there anything about your potential spouse that annoys you?
8. Are there any traits or behaviors of your potential spouse that you hope to change?
9. What will you do if there will be no change?
10. What are your major goals in life?
11. What are your potential spouse's major goals in life? How do they differ from yours? Are they compatible with your goals?
12. Describe the atmosphere of your childhood home. How does this differ from the atmosphere in your potential spouse's childhood home?
13. What are some of the differences between your parents and your potential spouse's parents?
14. What are the intellectual differences between you and your potential spouse?
15. What are the emotional differences between you and your potential spouse?
16. What are the differences between your interests and the interests of your potential spouse?





FINANCIAL COMPATIBILITY

1. Have you spoken with your potential spouse about your ideas of how much money you both would like to earn and how much money you would like to spend on a regular basis?
2. What are the major differences between the financial situations of your family of origin and that of the family of your potential spouse?
3. How will you react if your spouse spends more money than you think is appropriate?
4. How will you react if your spouse does not earn as much money as you wish?
5. What is the barest minimum you would be able to live on?
6. Would your spouse be able to live on that amount?
7. In what ways do you financially indulge yourself right now?
8. In what ways does your potential spouse indulge in excessive spending?
9. How will you react if your spouse turns out to be excessively stingy?
10. Do you think that you and your spouse would agree on how much to spend on a house?
11. Do you plan to spend any money on hobbies?
12. Do you plan to spend large sums of money on furthering your education?
13. Do you plan to spend a large sum of money on vacations?
14. Do you enjoy spending large sums of money on clothing?
15. How much of your income do you plan to give to charitable organizations?
16. What arguments have you already had with your potential spouse about monetary matters?
17. What type of neighborhood did you grow up in and how does this differ from the type of neighborhood that your potential spouse grew up in?
18. Do you feel that both a husband and wife should work?
19. Who do you think should make the decisions about spending money? Who does your potential spouse think should make the decisions?
20. Did your parents ever argue about financial matters and how did you react, if they did?
21. How many days a week do you plan to work?
22. How do you feel about working overtime? How does your potential spouse feel about it?
23. If your family is wealthier than your potential spouse's family, do you think that your fiancé might be interested in you because of your money?
24. Consider in what ways your potential spouse might differ with your opinions and habits concerning financial matters.

RELIGIOUS COMPATIBILITY

1. Do you believe in God? What is your definition of God?
2. Does your potential spouse believe in God? What is his or her definition of God?
3. What will you do if your potential spouse becomes more involved in his or her religion?
4. How will your potential spouse react if you become more involved in your religion?
5. Is it important for you to observe any Jewish holidays? How does your potential spouse feel about this?
6. Does your potential spouse wish to observe any of his or her non-Jewish holidays? How do you feel about this?
7. Do you want a religious ceremony for your wedding?
8. Would your potential spouse wish to have any symbols of his or her religion in your home? If yes, how do you feel about this?
9. Do you plan to attend synagogue after you are married? How does your potential spouse feel about this?
10. Does your potential spouse plan to attend church or mosque after you are married? How do you feel about this?
11. Are there any religious practices of your potential spouse that presently bother you?
12. Do you have any religious practices that bother your potential spouse?
13. If you have a boy, would you want him to be circumcised? How does your potential spouse feel about this?
14. If your potential spouse is a religious Christian, will he or she insist on baptism? How do you feel about this?
15. If your potential spouse is a religious Christian, how does he or she respond to the fact that the Almighty forbids intermarriage in the Five Books of Moses (Deuteronomy 7:3,4) "Do not intermarry ... they will lead your children away from Me...") which both Jews and Christians revere as the Word of God? How do you feel about this?
16. Do you or your potential spouse think it is wrong to aid in the destruction of an endangered species? How do you feel about aiding in the destruction of the Jewish people?



Guide to Prevent an Intermarriage

IS CONVERSION AN OPTION?

1. Is your potential spouse seriously considering conversion?
2. How does he or she feel about his or her own religion?
3. How knowledgeable is he or she about Judaism?
4. Are you both familiar with the traditional Jewish requirements for conversion?
5. Are you both aware that Jews who are committed to traditional Jewish law do not recognize Conservative and Reform conversions?
6. Are both of you willing to accept upon yourselves observance of traditional Jewish laws?
7. Are both of you aware that failure to sincerely accept mitzvah observance invalidates a universally accepted Jewish conversion? If it were not for the marriage, would your potential spouse consider conversion?
8. If your marriage dissolves or you were to die, would your potential spouse want to remain Jewish? Would he/she continue to raise your children as Jewish or take them to church?
9. If your spouse converts to Judaism, what would be his or her main motivation?
10. Are you aware that conversion for the sake of marriage is an unacceptable motivation for conversion?
11. What would be the reaction of your potential spouse's family if he or she were to convert? Would their reaction have a detrimental effect on your potential spouse's decision to convert?
12. If there were to be another holocaust, would your potential spouse still consider himself or herself Jewish?
13. If your potential spouse were to sincerely convert, would there be a problem if he or she wanted to be more observant than you - to keep Shabbat, Kashrut, etc.?
14. Would you consider converting to your potential spouse's religion? If not, why not? Would you respect yourself if you converted?
15. If you are not willing to convert to your potential spouse's religion, how can you ask him or her to convert to your religion?
16. Could you respect the intellectual and moral integrity of your potential spouse if he or she would convert in order to marry you, rather than because they truly wanted to be Jewish?
17. Would you have respect for someone who opted for a quick, non-universally accepted conversion?



WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN?

1. Are you planning to have children?
2. If not, are you concerned with the possibility of having unplanned children?
3. If you are planning to have children, what will you consider their religion to be?
4. Will they be considered Jewish to the whole Jewish people?
5. What will your spouse's religion consider to be their religion?
6. Are you aware that children of mixed-religious parentage often have an identity crisis? How do you plan to deal with your children's identity crisis?
7. What will you do if your non-Jewish spouse surprises you by deciding to raise the children according to his or her religion?
8. Do you think it is fair to create confusion in your children in an area so vital as their basic identity?
9. Would you want your son to have a Brit Mila?
10. Would you want your son to have Bar Mitzvah?
11. Would you want your daughter to have a Bat Mitzvah?
12. What will your spouse do if you decide to raise your children as Jews?
13. Are you aware that frequently, Jews look at children of an intermarriage as non-Jews and non-Jews look at them as Jews?
14. If you knew there would be a tremendous identity problem for your future children, would you reconsider intermarriage?
15. How would you feel if your child would want to marry a non-Jew?



Guide to Prevent an Intermarriage

POTENTIAL IN-LAW PROBLEMS

1. How do your potential in-laws feel about you and your parents?
2. How do your parents feel about your potential in-laws?
3. What is the present reaction of your potential in-laws?
4. If your potential in-laws are against the marriage, do you feel that it is right for you to cause them suffering?
5. If your in-laws are vehemently against the marriage, what type of problems do you think they might cause for you and your marriage?
6. In what subtle ways do you think your in-laws could harm your marriage?
7. Are there any personality qualities of your in-laws which bother you and which might create problems in the future?
8. Do you think that it is possible that your in-laws will make negative comments about you that will eventually cause major difficulties between you and your spouse?
9. Do you think that in the event of minor difficulties between you and your spouse, your in-laws will try to pressure your spouse into getting a divorce?



WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD OF DIVORCE?

1. What in your opinion are valid grounds for divorce?
2. What is the opinion of your potential spouse as to valid grounds for divorce?
3. How many divorces are there in your family?
4. How many divorces are there in the family of your potential spouse?
5. Are there members of your family that are against your marriage who might try to influence you to get a divorce if the going gets rough?
6. Are there members of your potential spouse's family who are against the marriage who might try to influence your spouse to get a divorce if the going gets rough?
7. Are you aware of the higher rate of divorce amongst intermarried couples? What, in your opinion, accounts for this higher rate?
8. What differences in personality between you and your potential spouse might be a cause for divorce in the future?
9. What are the five main reasons people get divorced? How do those reasons apply to you?
10. What are the five main reasons that couples stay together even though they have disagreements? Which of those reasons will apply to you and which will not?. If you knew that there was a strong likelihood that you might get divorced if you married the person you are planning to marry, would you still marry him or her?
12. Did you carry out a careful investigation about your potential spouse's past history, medical situation, emotional stability, and personality traits to see if there are any factors that might make divorce likely?
13. If you feel that because you love each other, the factors mentioned in question #12 do not apply to you, whom can you consult to find out how many couples who eventually did get divorced thought that because they loved each other they would never get divorced either?



Guide to **Prevent an Intermarriage**

HOW MUCH DO YOU VALUE BEING A PART OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

1. Do you consider your Jewishness an important part of your identity?
2. What would your reaction be if you personally were safe, but the rest of the Jewish people were in danger of perishing?
3. If someone tried to force you to convert to another religion, how would you react?
4. Do you feel proud when you hear about the achievements of other Jews?
5. Did your parents value being Jewish?
6. Did your grandparents value being Jewish?
7. If you are marrying a non-Jewish woman, does it bother you that your children will not be considered Jewish by the vast majority of Jews?
8. What concepts and ideals are important to you in considering yourself a good person? Which of those are of Jewish origin?
9. Have you ever visited Israel? If so, did you feel any special connection?
10. If a non-Jew makes a derogatory remark or ethnic joke putting down Jews, do you feel angry or hurt?
11. Do you have an emotional reaction when you hear the words "Hitler" or "Nazi"?
12. If someone offered you \$10,000 to remove all traces of Jewishness from your life, would you consent to the deal?
13. If you meet a stranger and he tells you that he is Jewish, do you feel closer to him because of your mutual Jewishness?
14. If there is a major tragedy such as an airplane crash, do you read the list of victims to pick out the Jewish names?
15. Do you want to be buried in a Jewish cemetery?
16. Do you realize that marrying a non-Jewish person essentially cuts you off from the Jewish people? Does that bother you? If you find that these questions ring true, then you care about being a part of the Jewish people more than you think!

WHAT ABOUT LATENT ANTI-SEMITISM?

1. Does your potential spouse dislike Jews in general, but feel that you are different than most Jews?
2. Do any close relatives or friends of the person you wish to marry dislike Jews? What do they say?
3. Have you ever heard your potential spouse make disparaging remarks about Jews?
4. Does your potential spouse ever tell any ethnic jokes making fun of Jews?
5. Does your potential spouse ever tell any ethnic jokes about other minority groups and refrain from anti-Jewish jokes just because you are around?
6. If your potential spouse becomes angry at a Jew, does he or she make negative comments about Jews in general?
7. Do you think your potential spouse would give a positive or a negative response if you asked him or her to complete the sentence beginning..."Jews are...?"
8. What would happen if you spilled soup or a drink on your potential spouse? What would the reaction be?
9. What is your potential spouse's opinion about the reasons for so much anti-Semitism throughout Jewish history?
10. What are your potential spouse's views about the Holocaust and those who deny it?
11. If you get married, how would you feel if you found out that your spouse harbored strong anti-Jewish feelings that he or she had hidden from you?
12. If your potential spouse becomes furious at you for some reason, do you think that he or she might curse out the Jewish people as a whole?
13. What would be your response if your potential spouse called you a "kike", "dirty Jew" or some other disparaging epithet?
14. Have you heard your potential spouse talk about Jews while under the affect of alcohol?
15. Do any family members harbor anti-Semitic feelings?

With much Gratitude to Rabbi Kalman Packouz for his generosity and contribution to create this booklet. For more information please see www.preventintermarriage.com



www.edJewcate.com