**Love vs. Infatuation**

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**#1**

Yaakov agrees to work a full seven years for Lavan before earning the right to marry his daughter Rachel.

**Torah Bereshis 29:20**

*So Yaakov worked for Rachel seven years, but they appeared to him like a few days because of his love for her.*

**Question: When we wait for a greatly anticipated event (vacation, marriage), time usually passes slowly. How did 7 years seem a few short days for Yaakov?**

**#2**

**1992 Gallup Poll**

47% of divorces were attributed to ‘incompatibility’

16% of divorces to alcohol or drug abuse

17% to infidelity

10% to arguments over money, family, or children

5% to physical abuse

**Questions:**

* **How many times do you want to get married?**
* **Why have so many people given up?**
* **Is there anything one can do to ensure a couple gets and stays married on their first attempt?**

**#3**

**Ten Dumb Mistakes Very Smart Couples Make, by Ben Tzion Shafier**

Almost every couple has that moment of revelation. It may be two weeks after the wedding or two months after, but one morning either he or she wakes up and thinks, “Oh my gosh! I don’t believe it. I made the biggest mistake in my life. I married the wrong one!”

And it’s true that they made a mistake - but not the one they think they made. They made a far more fundamental mistake - mistaking infatuation for love.

**Question: What's the difference between infatuation and love?**

**#4**

**Rabbi Noah Weinberg**

Judaism defines love as: the emotional pleasure a human being experiences when he understands and focuses on the virtues of another human being. The emotion of love, therefore, is overwhelmingly dependent upon how one views another person. If we choose to focus on a person's virtues, we will love them. If we choose to focus on their deficiencies, we will dislike them.

**Question: Do you relate to this definition of love?**

**#5**

**Based on “Growth Through Torah” by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin**

The Torah teaches an important lesson about choosing a spouse in this week's portion. Regarding a non-Jewish woman captured during war that a soldier wishes to marry, the Torah places all sorts of restrictions in the way of marriage over a period of thirty days -- so that his passion will cool. The Torah states regarding the soldier's ultimate decision:

*"And it will be if you did not want her"* (Torah Devarim 21:14).

Why does the Torah speak in the past tense ("*did* not want her") when referring to the decision the soldier makes at the end of thirty days? The Torah "should" have spoken in the future tense -- "and ... if you *will* not want her."

The answer is that there is a difference between the terms "passion" and "lust", and the term "wanting" because of a rational decision that something is good for you. The Torah is telling us that a person who wants to marry someone only because of infatuation and a passion that is based on good looks never really wanted the person from the very beginning (therefore the past tense is used). It was just a desire, not an honest love for the other person.

**Questions:**

* **What are the dangers of infatuation?**
* **Does infatuation or romance play no role in starting and building a strong long-term relationship?**

**#6**

**The Infatuation Trap, Chana Levitan**

Infatuation is always temporary. No matter how strong the chemistry is, it will eventually start to fade. And when it does, if there isn’t something real and solid serving as the basis of our relationship, we will crash and burn (never recommended).

 The relationship between love and infatuation is like making a campfire. You need a couple of logs, some twigs, paper, and matches. Try kindling the logs directly – you'll be waiting all night. But if you just light the twigs and paper without the logs, the fire will burn bright, but only for a short time. You need both the twigs and the logs.

 Infatuation is the twigs that play an important role in igniting the logs of love. Make sure infatuation isn't the foundation of your relationship. When you get carried away with the chemistry and forget about the substance of the relationship (the logs), chances are you'll end up brokenhearted. It's only a short matter of time before the fire will burn out.

**Questions:**

* **How do you know that you are in a loving relationship and not blinded by infatuation?**
* **How do you transition smoothly from romance to real love?**

**#7**

**The Infatuation Trap, Chana Levitan**

One essential way to keep infatuation in check is to verify that we are seeing more to the person than his or her image…

Infatuation thrives on image; love thrives on knowledge.

**Questions:**

* **How do you understand this statement?**
* **What qualities that comprise a person's image can one become infatuated with?**
* **How can you get past the external things and know who the person you’re dating really is?**
* **How do you trust yourself – how do you know if it is real love and not infatuation?**
* **There is a tendency to become fixated on a person’s image and ignore who the person really is underneath the image. What are some ways to ensure you don't get blinded by "love" and see who the person really is?**

**#8**

**The Infatuation Trap, Chana Levitan**

Another crucial way to protect yourself from the infatuation trap is to make sure that you have common values and goals ...

Values are essential to who you are. They are the foundations upon which your goals and dreams are built, the bedrock of your moral compass. Before getting married, it's imperative to take time out of your busy schedule to clarify what your real values are – the handful you really live by. Those are the ones you can't compromise on. Doing so would be a negation of self.

**Questions:**

* **Which values do you identify with and can't see the long term relationship without them?**
* **How important are common interests for you?**
* **What are some general and specific issues to talk about before you are married?**

**#9**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**