**The Seven Habits of**

**Highly Effective Daters**



Based on Rabbi L. Hajioff’s presentation on relationships:

HABIT ONE: Find common goals (so that you can become partners in fulfilling your life’s mission.)

HABIT TWO: Work on yourself, not on your partner.

HABIT THREE: Realize that no one marries someone perfect.

HABIT FOUR: Watch out for an abusive person.

# HABIT FIVE: Don’t let your love be dependent on ‘things.’

HABIT SIX: Make a list of realistic qualities you are looking for in a partner.

HABIT SEVEN: Appoint someone as your mentor.

**#1**

**Ramban on Torah Bereishis 2:24**

*Through the sanctification of marriage, a husband and wife become the closest of relatives.*

**Midrash: Genesis Rabbah (11:6)**

*G-d intentionally left Creation incomplete; in so doing He bestowed upon His creatures the ability to continue the G-dly role of Creation through marriage.*

**Question: How do you know if you are ready for marriage?**

**#2 HABIT ONE:** Find common goals (Become partners in fulfilling your life’s mission.)

**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

# **Talmud Berachos 61a**

*Man and woman were originally created as a single, androgynous unit. G-d then separated the two, making man and woman into independent persons. Thus man and woman began as a single unity, and togetherness is their natural state.*

**Malbim on Torah Bereishis (2:18)**

*It is significant to note that, alone of all the species, man and woman began as a single unity. All other animals were originally created male and female. An animal does not feel like one with its mate. But in the case of humans, the two were created as a single unity.*

**Questions:**

* **How do you know if you are compatible/ incompatible with someone?**
* **Is the prospect’s family a factor one needs to consider?**
* **How does your parents' marriage affect yours?**

**#3**

**Notarius and Markman: We Can Work it Out (1993)**

A ten-year study of married couples showed that marital happiness has little to do with who people marry, and everything to do with how they cope with conflict.

Personality traits, compatibility and similarity do not predict marital happiness or success. How couples handle their differences is what’s important.

**Questions:**

* **Do you agree with this article?**
* **How different can you be to have a happy marriage? Which differences will create problems in our marriage and which ones won’t?**

**#4 HABIT TWO:** Work on yourself, not on your partner.

**Harville Hendrix: Getting the Love You Want**

Whether or not you realize the full potential of an intimate, joyful, lifelong union, depends not on your ability to attract the perfect mate, but on your willingness to acquire knowledge about hidden parts of yourself.

**Question: How do you understand this statement?**

**#5 HABIT THREE:** No one marries someone perfect.

**Rutgers University National 2001 Marriage Project Survey**

94 percent of the 1003 participants they interviewed responded "yes" to the question, "When you marry, you want your spouse to be your soulmate, first and foremost." 88 percent of the 20-29 year-olds who answered the survey agreed that there is a "special person, a soulmate, waiting for you."

**Question: What are the implications of waiting for a perfect soulmate?**

**#6 HABIT FOUR:** Watch out for an abusive person.

**5 Steps to a Great Marriage #2: Be a Team, by Rabbi Dov Heller, M.A.**

A colleague of mine defines an abusive relationship as one in which one person is afraid to express his feelings and opinions. Any degree of dysfunction in a couple's communication style affects their ability to work together as a team.

**Question: What are some signs of an abusive person?**

**#7  HABIT FIVE:** Don’t let your love be dependent on ‘things.’

**Pirkei Avos 5:19**

*When love depends on a specific cause, then when that cause is gone, the love is gone; but if it does not depend on a specific cause, it will never cease.*

**Rambam commentary on Pirkei Avot (5:19)**

*Superficial motivations create only temporary results. The desire for food, for example, disappears as soon as one is satisfied. Likewise, the emotion of love, if based only on a temporary need, will dissolve. Only that which is based on eternal and deep-rooted foundations can endure.*

**Notarius and Markman: We Can Work it Out (1993)**

Infatuation, chemistry, romance, and having a good time are nice, but they are much more important in dating than in marriage.

**Question: How do you transition from love that ‘depends on a specific cause’ to real and lasting love?**

**#8 HABIT SIX:** Make a list of realistic qualities you are looking for in a partner.

Here is one example list:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Must Have** | **Important to Have** | **Bonus** |
| Below a certain age  Ability to control anger  College degree  Ability to be good father/mother  Desire to have children  Respect for parents  Spiritual side  Clean fingernails | Love of the outdoors  Control of TV intake  Tolerance of my mother  Control of bad language  Control of eating  Desire to visit Israel  Good job with prospects  Good sense of humor | Loves my parents  From the east coast like me  Sings very well  Similar background  Love of horses  Enjoys skiing  Great wealth  Is a lawyer |

**Question: What is one thing that is an absolute must for you?**

**Start filling in your own chart below. You can continue on your own.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Must Have** | **Important to Have** | **Bonus** |
|  |  |  |

**#9 HABIT SEVEN:** Appoint someone as your mentor.

**Question: Why do you need an outsider to get involved in your relationship? Can’t you make your own decisions?**

**#10**

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