

SHIDDUCHIM

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My child will only get their perfect and amazing intended one, if they go to a good school, dress right, have the right friends?!?

You know what really concerns me? The fact that quite a few parents seem to think it's normal to put their child in a school that is wrong for them, make them dress according to a standard they're not up for, or force them to sever a friendship with someone who "makes them look bad", to name just a few examples, all in the name of "SHIDDUCHIM". In other words, my child will only get their perfect and amazing intended one, if they go to a good school, dress right, have the right friends, etc.

Um, what happened to Hashem makes shidduchim? What happened to

heavenly judgements being made according to one's character, inner intention, heart, trials, and tribulations? It's sad that some children and teenagers must bear the burden of heartache, low self-esteem and feeling lost and betrayed because of things their parents decide for them in the name of their future shidduch. I know, I used to be one of those parents.

Let me tell you the story of who my daughter married. It illustrates this point quite well. Trust me, the Heavenly Court was laughing out loud about this one.

About 15 years ago I became friendly with one of my sister-in-law's best friends. We both lived in Jerusalem but in different neighborhoods and ran in different circles. I really liked her and felt very comfortable sharing with her concerns that I wasn't comfortable sharing with most other friends. We both had daughters the same age and lots of boys.

Our friendship consisted of meeting for lunch once or twice a year, and me sharing, or rather stressing to her, about my daughter. "Her first year of high school turned out to be a disaster. How am I going to find her a different school for next year? What am I going to do?" "She started wearing makeup; she's wearing too much makeup; how much makeup does your daughter wear?" "One of her friends started wearing jeans skirts. She's still friends with her and the school is complaining about it. This is so stressful!" On and on I went.

What happened to Hashem makes shidduchim? What happened to heavenly judgements being made according to one's character, inner intention, heart, trials, and tribulations?

One Pesach chol hamoed, after having been to our annual Pesach music festival, we went to dinner by my in laws Pesach hotel. My sister-in-law and her family were also there for dinner. My daughter had gotten a butterfly face painting at the festival, just as she had done every year and she kept it on for dinner

at the hotel. Except this year she was 18. 18 is two years away from SHIDDUCHIM!!!

Of course, I had to complain to my sister in law about this under my breath. "I cannot believe she's 18 and still doing the face paint thing. And now were at this hotel full of people and who knows who is going to see her here? She looks so inappropriate. This is so embarrassing."

My sister in law responded saying, "What are you talking about? She looks so cute and she's such a good girl. She'll get a guy who couldn't care less that she got face paint when she was 18, you'll see." Later that week, she happened to mention to our mutual friend how cute my daughter looked with her butterfly face paint and that she thought it was so funny that I was actually stressing out about it.

Two years later, my sister in law suggested my daughter to our mutual friend's son. Yes, the exact friend who I used as a sounding board for all my fears and anxiety about my daughter. You know how people check out a potential shidduch suggestion by calling friends, neighbors, and teachers for possible hidden dirty laundry? No need to do that in this case – the girl's mother, yours truly, had already told the mother everything she needed to know. Well, not everything actually, mostly the negative.



"She'll get a guy who couldn't care less that she got face paint when she was 18, you'll see"...

However, this friend mainly remembered the butterfly face paint story and thought, "This is exactly the type of girl my son would love! Someone who's got it together, is her own person, and does fun things without worrying about what other people will say."

They went out and lo and behold, they hit it off and ended up getting married. And it's a great shidduch! And he's a very serious Torah learner and a highly conscientious person. I literally could not have picked a better guy for my daughter!

Shidduchim has nothing to do with external historical stories about where the child went to school, how they dressed and who they hung out with. Yes, I know it looks like it has everything to do with this. It doesn't. It's about what is inside the person's heart, what their true beliefs, feelings and actions are about themselves, God, the world, and everything in between.

You know that picture of the perfect person you have in mind for your child? I think one of the most positive and effective

ways in which we can help our children with shidduchim is to daven that they become as wonderful as that picture we have of their intended one.

Wishing al of us much success and may the power of true emuna be with you!