

Thursday, December 31, 2009

As an Orthodox single who has been dating for over four years, I have been subject to the unique difficulties and challenges inherent in the *shidduch* system. Unfortunately, modern *shidduchim* tries to be a little bit of everything. It borrows from the "arranged marriages" of old with the use of a complex, unwritten set of rules involving when boys and girls may meet, how often and for how long, and through what channels they communicate. On the other hand, we want the boy and girl to be happy with one another and to feel a physical, emotional, and spiritual connection.

Even in large Jewish enclaves such as Toronto and New York, it is difficult to connect with a mate who is from a background and lifestyle one feels comfortable with, let alone a person around whom one feels comfortable and happy. Because of this, Jewish singles, probably more than any other ethnic community, find themselves traveling for hours just to go on a single "blind date".

(I once was stopped at the border, and the official asked why I was going into the States. When I said it was for a date, he said I must have a really good relationship with someone to travel all the way there for it! When I honestly said I'd never met the girl before, he was completely floored.)

I have experienced the disappointment of taking time out of my work schedule, often requiring the use of precious vacation days, the expense of hundreds of dollars to purchase plane tickets (it's either that or 12 hours of driving), only to find out that the girl who sounded so good on paper simply did not have the personality or chemistry I was looking for.

As soon as I heard of Jeff Cohn's **ShidduchVision**, I thought it was an amazing idea. This simple endeavor utilizes existing technology to allow singles to meet quickly, painlessly, and privately, and to immediately discern whether their date is in the ballpark or not. The effort and money saved through this should not be under-emphasized.

This has far-reaching potential. Currently, a date which may have sparked interest for an in-town date may not be worth an out-of-town date. The expense and inconvenience is a serious turn-off. With **ShidduchVision**, singles would be more likely to see if the idea has merit, and try to meet people whom they may have overlooked.

I am looking forward to having a **ShidduchVision** studio set up in my city, and urge communities across North America to support **ShidduchVision** in their home towns as well. The wider the network, the better the chances to find one's *bashert*.

Tizku l'mitzvot.

--Daniel