

Questions to Ask a Reference About a Young Lady

Your research should provide enough information to determine if the shiduch has some potential. The young people date to really find out about each other.

Make up your own questions.

- What is important for you that you want to find out? (What about that is important to you?) Form questions to that end.
 - Family - Yichus, siblings off the derecho, stringencies, politics
 - Personality/ Character – what are traits he really would like in a spouse/ what are some things that he really doesn't want

Opening the Conversation

- Introduce yourself, using your name.
- “Is now a good time to talk about X?” “When would be a good time to talk for about 7 minutes about X?” Respect their time, stick to 7 minutes; you do not have to ask every reference all these questions.
- “I am looking into this shiduch for my son (or whomever). Can I tell you a little about him, so we can make this conversation as productive as possible?” This is an opportunity for networking; even if this shiduch idea doesn't pan out, s/he may have another idea. Additionally, it makes her feel more comfortable to share. Lastly, s/he can help you determine if this shiduch idea is compatible.

Context in which the reference knows the person

“How do you know her?”

- If s/he last knew her more than 2 years ago, look for a more recent reference; young people change during these years.
- Only ask questions that are relevant to the context in which they know each other (ex: do not ask a boss about social life or family).

Values/ Hashkafa

- “Please describe her values and hashkafa.” Depending on the bochur for whom you are doing research, you might ask specific questions.
 - “What does she do on Shabbos?” “Level of kosher?”
 - Davening, learning, farbrengens, going to Ohel, mitzvaim.
 - Attitude to Yiddishkeit and Chasidus.

Middos

- Ask for examples, not hypothetical. “Tell me about a time when ...”
- Ask for slash words. “When you say ‘independent’, what does that look like? Please give me some other words so I can really get a sense of what you are describing.”
- “When it comes to middos, which 3 middos highlight who she is? Some examples might be: generosity, integrity, kindness, respect, always growing, responsible, reliable, dependable.” Ask for examples.

Family

“Tell me a little about the family.”

- “What was their family life like when she was growing up?” Ask for examples.
- Shalom Bayis, reasonable expectations from the children, involvement in the community, trauma that might have impacted her.
- “What is their Shabbos table like?” This can give you some indication of religiosity and community mindedness.
- “What role did/does her mother have in the family?”

- “What might it be like for a new daughter-in-law to join the family?”
- “Are they are close family?” “Do they do things together? What type of things?”
- “Do the new in-laws already in the family feel close to the family?”
- **Be realistic about your own family.**

How she hold herself?

“Tell me about how she holds herself. What does she look like?”

- “What is her style? Classy, chilled, funky, artsy, what would you say is her style?”
- “Please describe her level of tznius on an average day.” **Be sure you are clear on what is described to you.**

Goals/ Visions for Life

- “What are her plans for life?” “Does she see herself on shlichus? Working? Pursuing a career?”
- “What is she doing toward that?”
- “Where does she hope to live?”

Medical/Health

- “Does she have any medical conditions?” “How does she maintain it?” “If relevant, can we speak to her doctor?”
- *Do not dismiss a viable shiduch because she has a medical condition. Learn more about it first.*

What makes her ‘her’?

- “What drives her?” **Ask for examples.**
- “If you had to choose 3 words to describe her, what words might you say?” **Ask for examples.**
- “What does she like to when/if she had free time?”
- “Who is she similar to? Who in the community does she remind you of?”

Human flaws.

- “Everyone is human. What might be something that her husband would have to ‘live with’?” “What does it look/ feel like?” **Ask for examples.**
- “How might her roommate describe her?”

For a shiduch

- “What kind of man do you think best suits her?”
- “What are absolute deal breakers for her?”
- “In your opinion, do you think she [would respect his excitement for learning in his free time]?” **You can ask about something that is important to him.**
- “Similarly, is there anything that is important to her that she would really want her husband to accept or respect?”

Sum up

- “Who else might know her?”
- “So what I heard is that X,Y,Z. Did I get that right?”
- “Is there anything else I should be asking about?”
- “Thank you for your time.”

Other words you might use throughout the conversation

- “Should I be reading between the lines here?”
- “What do you mean by that?”
- “Tell me more.”
- “What does that look/feel like?” “How does that play out?”

The information uncovered during research should never be relied on 100%. Everything must be confirmed during the dating process.