

ALEEZA BEN SHALOM

Get Real **GET MARRIED**



Get *Over* Your Hurdles and *Under* the Chuppah

*Dedicated to **Dr. Herb Caskey**, for your generous support over the years. You have been more than a good friend; you have been a pillar of strength for our family as well as the greater community. Your continued commitment to helping others is truly inspirational. This book is a result of that inspiration.*

May you go from strength to strength.



*This work is also dedicated in loving memory of **Shoshie Stern**, Shoshana Rochel bas Elimelech, z"l.*

May her memory be for a blessing.

Gratitude

To my patient and loving husband, Gershon, my gratitude is eternal. Your support, patience and help with our family is immeasurable. I am complete because of you. It is because of our ten years together that I had the experience and insight to complete this book. For all that you are and all you will be, I am loving you.

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Mom, you have been my greatest teacher. It's said that an apple doesn't fall far from the tree; I am proud to be the fruit of your labor. I hear your wisdom coming through in my words. You empower me to reach my potential. Thank you for encouraging me to follow my dreams, for believing in my ability to reach them and especially for guiding me on life's journey.

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And to the One Above, thank You for all of my experiences. As my mother says, You provide "all good all the time." I understand that some of my greatest challenges have also led to my greatest rewards, for without the challenges I couldn't have become who I needed to be. And, of course, thank You for all the sweetness in my life. It keeps me going.

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Introduction

This is not a book on how to date. You've probably read that one already. This is a book on how to get real and get married. Or, more specifically, how to get ready, get set up, get married and stay married forever. If this book has found its way to you, then I know you've been dreaming of meeting your spouse and having a family. I want you to know that I have the same dream for you, and I am writing and working for your success. *Get Real, Get Married* is a guide for self-actualization and success in dating for marriage... and beyond.

When I meet with prospective new clients, I specifically look for singles who are itching to be married. If that sounds familiar, you have picked the right book. If you are thinking about marriage but not sure, this book may help you to clarify your goals. If you are a parent, relative or friend of someone who is looking for their soulmate, use this book to help guide them (keeping in mind to also be good to them and support them with loads of love). I've included both personal growth action plans and success strategies for the marriage-minded. I offer tools to help you date consciously and put your best self forward. I teach you to understand yourself, prime you to be marriageable and help you to find satisfaction in the process.

How did I become the expert? That's a long story, but here's a piece of it. I always knew that I wanted to be a wife and a mother, but my career aspirations were hazy at best. As Lewis Carroll so cleverly put it, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there." After graduating college I bounced around through a variety of education, volunteer and work paths but without finding my niche. This was when I began to ponder the meaning of life. What was my purpose and how was I going to achieve it? I had to be here for a reason. What was it?

I found my answer in traditional Jewish values. But that was only part of the answer; a general solution to a specific question. What was my part? At that point in my life I might not have known what I wanted to do, but I did know I really wanted a family. Yet I couldn't imagine it. And then, in the fall of 2001, I went to a friend's wedding.

During the dancing, my friend the bride got on the microphone and said, "Anybody who wants to get married, come get a rose and a blessing." (While giving blessings in general is very much a Jewish custom, this combination of flowers and blessings was just something my friend chose to do.) I remember sitting at my table, surrounded by the other singles, bewildered. It was the first time I had asked myself "Do I really want to be married now?" Right then and there I made the decision. I wanted to be married. I went up and got a rose and a new mission. My mission was to be engaged within a year. No more half-measures for me.

In May of 2002, eight months after I made that decision, I started dating the man who would become my husband. We got engaged a month later and married in October of 2002. Pretty crazy, right? If you're thinking, "Well, I picked the wrong person to take dating advice from. I don't want my life to look anything like

hers," allow me to explain. I call myself thoughtfully impulsive. If I don't know what I want, I don't do anything; but when I know, watch out! I move mountains in a matter of moments. Who I am and how I do things in the world is not for you. It's my way, and I don't recommend it for anyone other than *me*. What I want you to do is find *your* way and achieve *your* life's purpose.

That is where this book comes in. I have spent a lifetime learning to understand myself and how I connect and relate to the world. I have built a successful business where I help others to rediscover themselves, and, in the process, find their soul-mates. I began as a matchmaker, but developed into a mentor who empowers my clients. I am more than just a matchmaker or dating coach; as my now-married clients can tell you, I am a soul-tuner who will help you harmonize the signals you are sending out so that you attract your other half sooner rather than later. I have exerted enormous effort to make my hopes and dreams a reality. And now that my hopes and dreams have arrived, I'm ready to focus on yours!

This is where we get to the real work. There will be concepts and ideas presented, followed by action steps to get you going and solidify those ideas in your life. The right frame of mind is important, but it's the practical steps that will get you where you want to be. I recommend reading through the book once, then going back and doing the action steps week by week. Take the time to think through the ideas and don't skip the exercises. I know there's a temptation to assume that just thinking about your answers for a minute is enough. It isn't. If you want to see real change, you need to take real action. As it says in *Ethics of the Fathers*, "According to the effort is the reward." Reading is the first part of the effort; actually doing the action steps is the sec-

ond part. It's like reading an article on healthy eating habits. You could just keep reading, but if you don't change your habits and you keep eating donuts every day then you won't see or feel the physical benefits of the information you've learned.

So grab a pen and let's get working!

Part I: Are You Really Ready?

Chapter 1: Your Soulmate's Other Half

Look into a mirror. Take a deep breath and smile. You have now met your soulmate's other half. Did you catch that? Your soulmate's other half is YOU. You already have half of the puzzle in your hands. Unfortunately, the part of the puzzle we most often overlook is ourselves. Recognizing your other half is the *second* step to getting real and getting married. It's not always a popular idea, but you find the right person in the right time. Right now is the time to continue to become the right person. I want to help you learn to trust yourself, your intuition and the wisdom that the One Above gave you and continues to give you on a daily basis. The key to success begins with you. People often tell me that they think there is nothing they can do about their situation or that they have done everything they can and now they are waiting. But you can do something about your situation and "waiting" will not lead you to your other half. Though you have

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made real efforts in the past, you have a new opportunity now and an obligation to continue to grow. Trust me when I say that this growth is going to tip the scales in your favor and bring you one step closer to getting real and getting married.

Before we get started, I want to share one more thing. Jewish wisdom teaches us that forty days before a soul is conceived, a heavenly voice announces, "This woman and this man will marry." That means there is someone out there destined for you before you even were you. Although your spouse was created and designated for you, finding him or her is another task altogether. But keep in mind that $1+1=1$. This is Jewish math; you and your spouse are two bodies that share one soul. We are not looking for perfect. Rather we are looking for ideal, for the person who is right just for you. You will love their good side and be able to manage their "other" side (more on this in Chapter 3). Your soulmate will help you to actualize your greatest potential in this world. They won't be perfect. What they will be is a perfect fit for you.

Chapter 2: All Beginnings Are Hard

We learn from Rashi, a famous Torah commentator, that "All beginnings are difficult." This is not a negative thought; it is a Universal principle that Judaism teaches us. And I think it is important that you are aware of this principle right from the start so that when things are difficult you can understand that this is normal and not become discouraged. For example, have you ever skipped the beginning of a book, opened up to a random page and started reading from there just because? Do you sometimes read magazines backwards, flipping from the back to the front? Why do you do

this? I believe it is because you intuitively or instinctively know that “All beginnings are difficult.”

How can you motivate yourself to get started when you know it will be a challenge? If you don’t understand that beginnings are difficult, you may end up going from enthusiastic to disillusioned, which eventually leads to giving up. Instead, let’s prepare your mind, heart and soul for the journey you are about to embark on. If you expect challenges when you start something new, you won’t be discouraged when you face them. Know that challenges are a part of the process. It’s supposed to be this way.

If you think you are at the beginning and you don’t see any challenges, maybe it’s not really the beginning. And if you have been dating for the past ten years and don’t think you are at the beginning, think again! You are now trying a new approach to dating, which means this is another beginning, and I expect that it will come with some difficulty. I am not saying this to discourage you. If you have not found your soulmate yet and have been searching, even for a long time, I believe that you are close to the end of your journey.

Here’s one last little secret to keep you going. While all beginnings are difficult, the difficulty is often brief. Things will become easier over time. Yes, really, it will get easier.

Action Plan

Make a list of things that were hard for you at first but that you found became easier over time. Take time to reflect, internalize and accept that all beginnings are hard.

Chapter 3: Thoughts and Attitudes: Good vs. Other

Thoughts have power. The thoughts that run through your mind are what lead to the things you say, which in turn bring about your actions. This means that what you think will impact every aspect of your life. *That* you think is not within your control. Thinking is from the One Above. But what you choose to hold on to is within your power.

Be conscious of your thoughts. There's a gift in this consciousness: when you tap into your awareness you can choose to let go of a thought you have been holding on to and allow space for a new thought to enter your mind. This technique takes daily work and a recognition of what's happening moment to moment in your mind. But it's worth the effort; being present in the moment will benefit you in all areas of your life.

Now that we've discussed thoughts, let's talk about attitudes. Because who wants to date someone with a bad attitude? Have you ever been out on a date with someone who is bitter, angry or depressed? Not so much fun. Dating can be a pleasant experience even when the person you're dating isn't the one for you. The key to that is in your attitude.

Have you ever heard the phrase *good vs. bad*? I want to introduce you to my revision of this phrase. I call it *good vs. other*. The first aspect of attitude to examine is how you approach life. For a moment, I want you to focus on how you see the world. I'm not asking whether you see the glass as half empty or half full; I want to know whether you even see the glass. And if you see it, what do you call it? Your attitude – your disposition, approach, feeling and state of mind – is affected both by what you see in the world and the way you express what you are seeing.

Have you ever made a list of the *good* and the *bad* in a relationship? Have you ever tried to weigh both sides so you would know how to proceed? It gets a bit confusing, right? Let's add some clarity to that list before you even start weighing sides. I want to start by re-titling your categories. In every relationship there are at least two sides of the picture. The traits, qualities and characteristics that you like and value are filed under *good*. For example, if your date is ready and waiting for you when you come to pick her up, you may notice that she is considerate. Or if your date holds the door open for you, you might notice that he is kind. Many of us value the traits of consideration and kindness and would list these traits under *good*.

Now what about the other side? Can you recall a time when you listed all the complaints you had about a special someone? When the *other* was weighed in with the *good*, the scales didn't always tip in favor of continuing the relationship. But still you felt conflicted. Your decision to continue or break up was still a toss-up. Why is that? It's because the *other* is not a list of bad traits. Rather, it is a list of those things that you don't prefer. For example, what happens when someone runs late or forgets to hold the door open? Thoughts start to race. "She doesn't respect me and my time," you might think. Or, "He doesn't value me." But what really happened? What actually happened was probably that she has a bad habit of running late. Or that he was careless this time and forgot about the door.

Other is not the same as bad. *Other* things are simply those qualities that you don't prefer. So here is the bottom line, the question you really have to answer: if this trait clearly falls under *other*, will I choose to live with it? What I mean by live with it is: can I patiently wait for my spouse to possibly change, or even

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patiently wait a lifetime and not let it drive me crazy and pull us apart? If the answer is, "No, I don't want to patiently wait it out or never see a change," then this trait is not an *other* trait, it is actually a deal-breaker for you. And a deal-breaker breaks the deal, period.

It is hard to imagine living with something that you know will bother you day in and day out, right? Right! I hear you. Think for a moment about your family members. I'm sure there are things that bother you about them. I'm sure there are things that bother you about roommates, friends and co-workers too. It's just the way of the world. Because you are not identical to any other person, there will be things that bother you about others. If you have a high tolerance for difference, you will find it easier to be around people in general. If you have a low tolerance for difference, you can expect others to bother you more often. Figure yourself out. Marriage will be easier or harder for you depending on your tolerance threshold. For now, don't try to change or judge yourself. Instead, identify who you are and accept it.

Action Plan

Pick one time throughout the day to recognize what's going through your head. Understand what thoughts you're holding on to. Acknowledge those thoughts and set them aside for the moment. See what else comes to mind.

Make a list of things that bother you about a loved one. Figure out and write down how you've managed to live peacefully with those traits that you don't prefer.

Think about a time when you had a friend or acquaintance with a trait you couldn't handle, and describe for yourself how and why you steered clear of that person.

Chapter 4: Laws of Attraction

Continuing on the theme of thought, remember, the thoughts that enter your mind are from the One Above; however, the thoughts you choose to hold on to are in your hands. The Law of Attraction, a philosophical idea dating back to the early 20th century, states that like attracts like. Whether your thoughts are good or bad, positive or negative – whatever you focus on is what you will draw to yourself.

There are two approaches to this law that can help you improve your dating experience: you can change your approach to the negative, and you can open your mind to the positive. Let's begin with the negative.

Do you feel like you always get the negative, boring or weird dates? I'm not saying you are any of those things. (*Are you?*) Seriously though, what are you? Why are you attracting those individuals into your life? Evaluate yourself. What are the things that you are focusing on and projecting out into the world? Taking the time to really examine your patterns will empower you to make a change from within.

Now on to the positive! You've heard of the placebo effect. This is a great example of attracting positivity. We know from countless medical studies that when a person believes that a medication will help them, even if the medication turns out to

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be only a sugar pill, they will fare better than those who don't believe. Let's apply this knowledge to dating. When you believe that you will be getting engaged in a year, even if that thought is not based on anything solid, is it possible that you will fare better than those who don't believe? Yes! Based on this principle, it's likely that you will. Your belief in your ability to achieve engagement and marriage is a fundamental part of the process. You've probably already noticed that my belief in your ability to get real and get married is positive and strong. What's your belief? Still need a sugar pill? Go buy a candy. You can enjoy the sweetness knowing that the cure is in your thoughts!

But there is one more aspect of this law to keep in mind. Ever heard of the nocebo effect? The nocebo effect is the opposite of the placebo effect. If you take a medicine believing that not only will it not work, but that it will do you harm, you can injure yourself physically, mentally and emotionally just from the thought. It is still only a sugar pill. But because your thoughts were different, so was the end result.

Notice your thinking. Are you more positive or more negative about dates, dating and the opposite gender in general? Are you neutral? Negative thoughts can harm you and positive thoughts can help you. Neutral thoughts don't count toward the positive, and they are not as benign as they seem. Anything other than positivity is negative when you are trying to accomplish your goal of getting real and getting married.

Stretch beyond your limits, expand your mind. Slowly transform your thoughts and draw your soulmate closer to you one thought at a time.

Action Plan

Sit down and examine your thoughts. Are you more positive or negative? What are you drawing to you that you want to change? What are you drawing to you that you want to increase?

Pick one thing you can focus on that will draw what you want to you. Take note of what changes over the next few weeks.

Start a positive list of your favorite aspects of dating and the opposite gender. If you find yourself thinking negatively about either, add another item to the list.

Chapter 5: Develop an Attitude of Gratitude

Now that you've identified your emotional state and understand the importance of thought and attitude, the next step is to work on some practical tools for developing and improving your attitude. These steps will change your physical, mental and emotional tune.

You know that voice in your head that sometimes convinces you to do something you know is wrong? "Don't even bother; what's the point? You're never going to get married, " it tells you. That negative, but oh-so-convincing, voice that pounces on your hopes and dreams and tells you that you're silly for even believing in them? That voice's greatest resource is depression

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and sadness, two things that don't look pretty on anyone ever (let alone on a date). After months or years of dating, one is more susceptible to this voice. But now you're going to work on crushing it. The following exercise will help you develop an attitude of gratitude, chasing away any negative or defeatist feelings. You can start to live happily ever after... right now! And as I discussed in Chapter 4, as if you need more incentive, positive feelings and energy have a way of attracting soulmates.

Take out a piece of paper, a journal or your favorite electronic device.

Think about all the reasons you are grateful that you were given this time to be single. You may need to take a deep breath, close your eyes and dig deep to see some of the gifts that the One Above has provided for you. The goal is to leave any bitter, sad or angry feelings aside and to focus on gratitude.

At the top of your page write: "I am grateful for being single because..." Now it's time to get writing. Keep writing until you can't come up with anything else. If your list is less than 20 items, please close your eyes again and dig deeper. Your list should include 35–100 things you are grateful for. If I asked you for a list of your top 100 complaints about being single, I am sure you could write it with ease. So I have total faith you can write about gratitude too!

Carry this list with you every day for one week. Read it a minimum of once in the morning and once in the evening. On top of this, add at least one item to the list per day (adding more would be even better).

If you start to feel down, sad, sorry for yourself or hopeless during the day, take out the list, read it and then add a minimum of five things you are feeling grateful for. When you can't list

anything else about your gratitude for being single, then start on generic gratitude. For example, you can be grateful for the ability to think, sing or see. You can be grateful for the sun or the rain. If you are really stuck and can't come up with anything to add, stop, take a minute and remember that there is always another way of looking at things. You have the ability to shift your thoughts and to allow yourself new ways of thinking. Also, keep in mind that gratitude doesn't have to be deep to be real. Simple gratitude for your most basic functions and needs is a great place to start.

Here's a sample list which you can use as inspiration should you get stuck.

- I got to travel to Colorado, Boston, Philly and Israel more times than I can count.
- I get to live on my own.
- I know that I can do anything I want to.
- I had time to get a master's.
- I know how to cook.
- I had time to learn to play piano.
- I know how to add oil to my car.
- I know how to advocate for myself.
- I can stay in the shower as long as I like.
- I can spend a whole evening on self-development without neglecting anyone.

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- I learned what my taste in music really is.
- I made all sorts of friendships that I wouldn't have made otherwise.
- I can walk out the door at a moment's notice.
- In theory, I can go on a road trip to Maine with only a backpack.
- I can take three bags without anyone kvetching about my luggage.
- I can talk on the phone for an hour uninterrupted. I can do this repeatedly in a single night.
- My money is both mine to earn and mine to spend.
- I can go to evening classes or the gym after work.
- I can always go to my parents when I want to.
- No mother-in-law!
- I eat according to my tastes without having to accommodate someone else.
- I have a one-gender kitchen.

Set yourself up for success. I want you to be mentally, physically and emotionally healthy. Expressing gratitude will help you to gain perspective. When you are thankful for what you already have, you will be less likely to focus on what you don't have and instead be grateful for all the new things that come your way.

Action Plan

Compile a gratitude list.

Read it twice daily.

Add one or more things to your list daily.

Make gratitude your attitude!

Chapter 6: The ASK

So what do you want? Do you know? If you do, give yourself some credit because you're already ahead of many people. (And if you don't know, don't worry! The action steps over the next several chapters will help those who don't know to figure it out and those who do to clarify further.) But it's not enough to know what you want. You also have to ask for it. Like a child who has to ask a parent for all their wants and needs, you too must ask for what your heart desires. We'll start with the basic Ask and get more specific as we go.

I want to be engaged and married. The thing you are generically asking for is to be married. So be honest: do you want to be married? Really? Are you willing to put this desire front and center? Yes or no? If no, put the book down and pick it back up when the answer is yes.

Still holding the book? Great! You want to be married. Your desire to be married now is probably stronger than it has ever been. You can't imagine waiting another year or two or three or five or ten... are you feeling anxious yet? Good. We're on the

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same page. You want to take steps towards getting real and getting married. So ask for it. Really ask for it. Through your words, your tears and your actions, ask. There is One Infinite Source and Power in the world that can answer your prayers. I can't. I have a job to do here, but I don't run the world. You can't. You have your own job, and you don't run the world either. So the only thing you can do is pour your heart out and ask for what you want.

Now let's get in to the specifics. What are you doing? Asking for what you want. Who are you asking? The One Above. How are you going to ask? You are going to be specific. Perhaps you've heard the Rolling Stones song "You Can't Always Get What You Want." If not, here's the chorus:

*You can't always get what you want
You can't always get what you want
You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes, you just might find
You get what you need*

There's a lesson here, even if it wasn't the one Mick Jagger intended. Notice that the line "*You can't always get what you want*" is repeated three times. Not once, not twice – three times. "*But if you try*" – if you are specific, if you ask for what you want, if you are clear about who you are, well, "*You just might find you get what you need.*"

OK, you get it: be specific. But I'm not just asking you to think about being specific. I'm asking you to take a little practical step in order to bring the message home. I want you to write a letter asking for what you want. There's a sample letter below if you want some help getting started.

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Lastly, this letter is not the end of the asking process. You can't write a letter once and forget about it. You should continue to ask for what you want every day and revise your letter about once every other month. Over the course of time you may notice that what you ask for will change. That's OK too! Ask today for what you believe you want and need today, and ask again tomorrow for what you want then. The basic rule is just to keep asking the One for everything you want. You don't have to say it in the perfect way, just as long as you ask.

Here is the sample letter. You can write your own or you can elaborate on this one. You can add your personal preferences and what you are specifically looking for. You may or may not get what you ask for but that doesn't, and shouldn't, stop you from asking.

To the One who runs the world,

I want to be engaged, and I want to be married. Please help me. I want to date those people who are appropriate to be my spouse. I don't want to suffer through this process. Help me accept what You give me. I want others to stop asking when I am getting married and what's wrong with me. I want to build a future with my spouse. I want to live, love, learn and grow. I want to feel happy and complete. I can't do it on my own. I need this other person in my life to take me to the next level. Please send him/her. I eagerly await my wedding day. Please grant me clarity and a good support network.

Your patient and persistent,

Bride to be/Groom to be _____

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Now it's your turn. Here are some suggestions for beginning your letter:

I want...

I don't want...

I need...

Please help me...

I can't...

I feel...

I hope...

Action Plan

Take the time to gain clarity on what you really want.

Write a letter asking for your specific wants and needs.

Continue to ask the One daily to give you what you need.

Review your letter once a month and revise if necessary.

Chapter 7: Push What? Pushka

Pushka. It's Yiddish for charity box. What's the connection between your Ask and charity? Consider the following analogy from Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in his book *The Tzedakah Treasury*:

"The relationship of tzedakah [charity] to prayer [the Ask] is comparable to the relationship between seasoning and food. Just as spices and seasonings bring out the real flavor locked inside the food, so does charity bring out the tremendous power locked up inside words of prayer. Therefore, it is most effective to give

some money to charity before praying.”

You don't have to be religious to ask the One Above for something. When are you most likely to reach out and ask spontaneously? Most likely you hope, ask and pray for something when you are desperate to get what you want. Whether it's health, money or a husband or wife, when you really want it, you know how to ask for what you want. But it's important to recognize that there is an additional component to asking: giving. They go hand in hand. If marriage is something you want, then you should pursue it with all your heart, all your soul and all your resources. So your practical step for this week is to set aside money for charity every day. Choose a charity or fund to donate to, designate a certain amount each day and make your contribution after one week. It is important to develop the habit of giving once every day with intention because soon you will be giving to another for the rest of your life.

Action Plan

Begin each day by setting aside money for charity. Do this either with a note or physical bills. (At the end of the week you can tally the total and send a check.)

Share what you are doing this week with someone close to you. If you want to, invite them to join you in giving charity as there is power in numbers.

In the merit of finding your soulmate, choose a fund that supports a needy bride and groom.

Donate the money after one week.

Chapter 8: “Green” Speech – Words Matter

Pulling money from our pockets is much easier than pulling the right words out at the right time. To accomplish this, it’s important that we are able first to listen to the words that come out of our mouths as well as paying attention to how others speak.

We all know that words matter. This concept is even clearer during the dating process. What someone said or didn’t say, or even how they said it, can determine the outcome of a date. The intentions behind our words can make or break relationships. And what we intend to say is only half the battle; the actual words we say matter even more. We all have those phrases and words in our vocabulary that we know we need to clean up. Maybe it’s something you’ve been thinking about. Or perhaps a friend pointed out a word or phrase you often use that is doing you more harm than good. Take some time to think about what’s on your speaking to-do list. Make a commitment to pay attention to your words for one week. Pledge to guard your speech. We are often careful and picky about what goes into our mouths. Let’s be equally careful about what comes out.

Rabbi Michael Stern created the 10 Habits of “Green” Speech and the pledge at the end of this chapter. Before we get to that, let me tell you a little about Rabbi Mike. He is one of my mentors. He officiated at our wedding and has been guiding us ever since with marriage advice and Jewish wisdom. He is known as the Rabbi Without Walls and one of the programs that he created focuses on going verbally green, or, as he calls it, “Green” Speech – The Ethical Principles of Speech. He explains it this way: “We have begun to go “Green” in taking ethical responsibility to rid our environment of the toxins, pollutants and carbon footprints and have adopted

an eco-filter as to the food we eat, products we buy, cars we drive so let's extend those ideals to the words we say and take responsibility to adopt "Green" to our speech. We must get rid of the poisonous and toxic words that often come out of our mouths and the vocal imprints we often leave on one another. We won't accomplish this overnight but the first step is to try."

Whether dating or just in everyday life, the 10 Habits of "Green" Speech will be a guide for you to achieve success in all areas. Focus on one habit each day for 10 days. In general, you are likely to be more pleasant, attractive and likeable after you adopt these behaviors. Common sense tells us to behave this way but daily life proves that it is sometimes easier to be sarcastic and critical. Try these habits on for size and see how your dating life improves. You have nothing to lose but your negative attitude!

10 Habits of "Green" Speech

1. Make only positive statements and refrain from making derogatory ones – even if they're true.
2. Promote people's well-being. Don't make any statement that could cause someone physical, financial or emotional harm.
3. Humor is great, but make sure jokes aren't at someone else's expense.
4. Avoid speaking badly – even about yourself.
5. Communicating derogatory or harmful statements by writing, verbal hints, or body language is just as bad as saying them.

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6. It takes two to gossip. Don't listen. Change the topic or walk away if necessary.
7. Give others the benefit of the doubt.
8. Refrain from conveying negative stereotypes or information about a group of people or organization.
9. Communicate with your spouse [or the person you're dating] and family with kind and supportive words.
10. Warn a person about potential harm; for example – from a prospective business or marriage partner. But make sure your information is accurate.

"Green" Speech – Words Matter Pledge

Please take a minute to think about each of the following principles:

- I will try to take ethical responsibility for the words that I use and speak "Green."
- I will try to see how negative, harmful and derogatory words and gossip hurt people, including myself.
- I will try to replace hurtful words with words that are positive, healing and encouraging.
- I will try to choose words that make people feel accepted, empowered, respected and loved.
- I will try to use words that cultivate harmony, peace and unity in our homes, schools and organizations by

choosing words that foster cooperation, teamwork and productivity.

Signature: _____

Action Plan

Sign the “Green” Speech – Words Matter Pledge.

Read the “Green” Speech – Words Matter Pledge once daily.

Reflect about your day. Journal your successes and your challenges (list a minimum of one success or challenge each day).

Chapter 9: The Quickest Way to Get Married: STOP DATING

This is one of my favorite phrases. Does it bother you? Before you skip this part, give me a chance to finish my thought. I think you’ll see where I’m coming from.

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. But what if there are things blocking that nice straight path? You can try to hike your way around them and risk getting lost in the process, or you can take the time to clear the path before you start walking down it. Often the quickest path to marriage is to stop dating and organize your health, living situation, job and personal life.

...and Start Dating Yourself

I know you know yourself, and I also know that you are always changing. It’s always valuable to look in the mirror to see if

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who you think you are is aligned with who you actually are today. Often when I tap into the present moment and take the time to think, I realize that I have an outdated view of myself. That view of me can be as old as yesterday, last year or last decade. Take time to be alone with yourself and work on yourself. It is important to consistently do self-evaluations and check in daily, weekly or at least monthly to see who you are becoming.

What if you feel like you haven't changed? That too is an important piece of information. Consistency in actions and behaviors may be an indicator that you are being held back by fear. Then again, it could mean something else altogether. You won't know what it means until you give yourself some time to think about you. How do you go about checking in with yourself? Try asking the following questions:

Who am I today and how am I different from who I was last month?

How does this current way of being benefit me?

Do I feel a need to change any character traits or my direction in life?

Am I feeling grounded right now, today, in this moment?

What new goals do I want to set for the next 30 days?

...and Get Your Health in Order

From doctors' appointments to dental surgery, we all have things that come up from time to time. I am talking about all those little appointments and things on your to-do list that are getting in the way of looking, feeling and being your best.

And what about the major things, like going on a diet, committing to a workout program, seeing a therapist or changing your drinking or smoking habits? If you feel that you have a major health issue that you want and need to get in order, prioritize your schedule and get it taken care of. I know this is not as simple as I make it sound. Some of my clients join gyms, attend Overeaters Anonymous meetings, get personal trainers or see therapists weekly. These things are not simple for them either, but it's an important part of the process.

Here are a few clarifying questions to help you figure out what health issues are a priority.

How has your health changed in the last 3 years?

Are there any appointments you've been avoiding or putting off? Why?

Are finances holding you back from taking care of your health?

What do others nag you about that you also feel is important?

Who do you trust to help advise you or support you in achieving your health goals?

List 5 health items to get in order over the next 6 months to a year.

When you feel confident that your health is in order you exude an energy that is attractive to others. Which is why it is often important to place your health goals above dating for a period of time. How long? That depends on your goal and your circumstances. I wish I could tell you exactly how long you need,

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but you will have to determine that with your mentor. When you get your health in order, from the inside out, you will feel more confident when dating.

...and Move to a New City, State or Country

If you are thinking about making a move in the next three to four months, here's some advice: don't date through the transition. Make the move and then date. Or maybe you don't need to move at all. When you are planning a move, or even thinking about the idea of moving, you go from a physically and emotionally stable place to a place of instability. From the moment you have a strong urge to make a change you become distracted.

Let's speak for a moment about the idea of not moving. What about the idea of putting your big move on hold? Is your move imminent? Think about whether it's really necessary. You may want to move out and live on your own. Or maybe you want to get out of your apartment and buy a house. Stop for a minute and think about your situation. What if you tabled the idea of moving for three months? Could you handle that? Is that a reasonable request? As I mentioned above, the moment you start to focus on moving you remove your focus from dating. If you don't mind putting dating on hold or on the back burner, then moving may be an option. But if you are marriage-minded and do not want to delay your engagement and marriage, consider waiting to move unless absolutely necessary.

A client of mine used to live in a home that had all sorts of problems. Mold, no heat, bug infestation... the list goes on. This is an example of someone who needed to move. He made the move immediately. However, because of the stress of the move, he was then sick for several weeks. It delayed the soulmate search for

about two months, and even then things weren't 100% back to normal. Even a necessary move is likely to cause major upheaval in your life. Moving, along with starting a new job and getting married, is among the top three stressors in life. So think about your desire to move, evaluate and act accordingly.

On this note, I had a client who told me that she wanted to move out of her parents' home. Everything there was fine; she just needed a change. She thought a move would do the trick. I suggested tabling the idea for three months if the move wasn't an emergency. After three months, if nothing was happening in the dating world, she could reconsider moving. She agreed that the idea of the move was consuming and distracting her. So she held off. Within a month she started dating someone seriously. As you may have guessed, they got married, and she did move... in with her husband, not out on her own!

But what if you are marriage-minded and you want to make a big move, what should you do? You want to get married already! The thought of not dating for even a week makes your skin crawl. What if I told you that you could meet your soulmate faster if you did not date through the move? What if you were happier, healthier and more balanced because you did not date through transition? I know this concept is going to be hard for some of you to swallow, so here's a story to encourage you to re-think your moving and dating strategy. Rosie* and I spoke years ago. She was ready to be married. She was balanced physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. So what was the problem? She was planning to move overseas in two months. She wanted to take one last look and try to find her husband before she left the U.S. So I asked her a question. "Imagine you meet your husband in the U.S. in the next two months. Would you be willing

** All names have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.*

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to give up your big move? Would you be OK with living in the States instead of overseas?" After a little thought she told me, "No." Rosie felt strongly about moving, and she did not want to stay even for the prospect of meeting her soulmate. "But maybe he will come with me," she said. I told her, "This is my personal opinion, but I believe if you do not want to live here, then you need to focus your energy, make this move and say your good-byes. Your soulmate will be waiting for your overseas." How does the story end? Rosie stopped dating, enjoyed her last few months in the U.S. with a clear head and a peaceful heart. She moved overseas and started a language immersion class. On the first day of class she met a man in the hallway. Today, three years and two kids later, they are happily married. When I reminded her of this recently, she told me that not only had she gone to class that day not thinking about or expecting to find someone to date, but her future husband was actually taking a break from dating. She added that she thought this helped both of them to just be themselves – leading to a very happy ending. I can't tell you that all endings will be as sweet as this one, but what I can tell you is that the quickest way to get married is to STOP DATING... and take care of yourself and your needs.

Action Plan

What is on your plate right now other than dating and getting married?

Clear your plate – accomplish your bucket list.

Stop dating and take care of yourself and your needs.

Chapter 10: Blood, Sweat and Tears

I'm not going to sugarcoat it: sometimes blood, sweat and tears are necessary to get from here to soulmate. Allow me to explain.

Blood

In the world of Jewish dating, it is known that Tay-Sachs disease is a Jewish genetic disorder. Many of you may know to get tested to see if you are a carrier. What you may not know is that Tay-Sachs is not the only gene to be concerned about. There is actually a whole list of Jewish genetic diseases. Both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews have their own lists. And what if you aren't genetically Jewish – should you still get tested? Great question.

As with all Jewish genetic diseases, Tay-Sachs is only an issue when both partners are carriers. If one side of the couple is a carrier and the other is not, then there is no concern. If you are not genetically Jewish, it is less likely that you would be a carrier for a Jewish genetic disease, but screening is often still recommended.

Dor Yeshorim is a great support to those in the Jewish community. They conduct anonymous genetic screenings before engagement which help to reduce the number of children born with a genetic disease. Other options include going to your local doctor and asking where to get screened or contacting the Victor Center for the Prevention of Jewish Genetic Diseases. Knowing if you are genetically compatible will save you heartache in the future. It is worth the small amount of blood that you have to give to get the information you need.

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So what's the bottom line? Research what all of this means. I have certainly not given you enough information to make an informed decision. I have merely brought this subject to your attention so you can investigate and make a decision on how you want to proceed. Please not that this is primarily an issue for those of you in the childbearing years.

Sweat

Dating should be enjoyable and pleasant. However, just like a good workout, you should sweat a bit to get the best results. What do I mean by sweat a bit? If you are in the honeymoon phase of the relationship, where everything is so great and you can't imagine ever not liking or not getting along with the other person, then I suggest you get suited up for a workout. The honeymoon phase lasts only so long. And you need to see all sides of your soulmate. A good workout will let you see how your intended handles stress. When the body begins to be taxed, it sweats to cool itself. It is a self-regulating mechanism that preserves the body and helps it to maintain optimal health.

Sweating happens during both physical and emotional times of stress. But everyone handles emotional stress differently. Some people sweat more, some less; some maintain their cool temper while others heat up and become argumentative. It is important for you to know how you handle stress and how your soulmate handles stress.

Sweating is a healthy activity. While you should not nudge just to nudge and create a problem where there isn't any, you can certainly watch for your potential soulmate's reaction to stressful situations. Is this a person you can envision staying married to

forever? Be confident in moving ahead, or be clear about your concerns.

Tears

Searching for your soulmate is an emotionally demanding process. As you move through it, you will probably have moments of frustration and sadness. You might feel like sitting down and crying. Maybe you should! Crying doesn't have to be a negative thing; it can be helpful.

Tears are a valuable part of the process. It's easy to get caught up in the sadness and miss the value of the tears. But tears don't have to only be about sadness or frustration. They can also be an outlet for relief, a validation of your own feelings and a deeply-felt prayer. In fact, there is a long history of using tears in prayer.

Did you ever wonder why the Western Wall is also referred to as the Wailing Wall? It is because of all the tears that have been shed there over the centuries. It has been our tradition to whisper our prayers at the wall, to stuff our notes in its cracks and to leave our tears. But you don't have to jump on the first plane to Israel to deposit your tears at the wall. Wherever you are, your tears will be, and have been, collected and accounted for.

Not only are your tears collected by the One Above, those tears are also heard by your soul. Your inner yearnings and deepest desires are validated by your tears. You will most likely feel a sense of relief when you finally sit down and have a good cry. Can you remember the last time you did this? How did you feel after? Did you feel a sense of relief? Were you quiet and calm after the experience?

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If you haven't had a good cry in a while you might want to think about opening up to it. If you cry almost every day you might want to think about how you can have a healthy release without overwhelming yourself. No matter which end of the spectrum you're on, coming to the middle ground will help you feel more balanced.

Action Plan

Do your research about genetic testing and decide how you want to proceed. If testing is what you want to do, make the appointment.

Keep an eye on stressful situations. Learn how the one you're dating handles stress so that you can avoid potential problems.

Evaluate where you are on the crying spectrum. Make sure you are feeling balanced and that you value the tears you shed.

Chapter 11: Take Your Emotional Temperature

Take your emotional temperature right now. What does it read? Are you happy, sad, confused, hopeful, relaxed, anxious? What's going on inside of you today? I am not looking for you to change this state of being, just to acknowledge it. Accept it. Record it and take your temperature daily or (if that is too much to handle) weekly. I want you to see clearly in your own life that, as King Solomon so wisely put it, "This too shall pass." After taking your emotional temperature for several weeks, you will start

to see that you aren't always getting the same reading. Some days you will be up, other days you will be down. This is normal and healthy as long as the emotional swing isn't too wide. An extreme emotion, whether positive or negative, will throw you off balance. One of my goals is to help you to maintain stable and balanced emotional levels. Your first step is to identify the state you are in. Only then will you be able to attempt to make a change. Keeping in mind this lesson of King Solomon, you are more likely to see the larger picture and not get stuck in any moment or emotional state.

Action Plan

Today my emotional temperature reads _____

Make a list or chart of positive and negative states. Take note of your trends.

Decide what you need to work on in changing your emotional state. Make an effort this week to shift your temperature so that you feel more grounded and balanced.