

# Questions to Ask a Reference About a Young Man

**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 she really would like in a spouse/ what are some things that she really doesn't want

## Opening the Conversation

- Introduce yourself, using your name. (You might text in advance.)
- “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 daughter (or whomever). Can I tell you a little about her, 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 him?”

- 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 his values and hashkafa.” Depending on the young lady for whom you are doing research, you might ask specific questions.
  - “What does he do on Shabbos?” “Level of kosher?”
  - Davening with a minyan, learning, farbrengens, going to Ohel, mitzvaim. Semicha, mikvah
  - 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 he 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 he was growing up?” Ask for examples.
- Shalom Bayis, reasonable expectations from the children, involvement in the community, trauma that might have impacted him.
- “What is their Shabbos table like?” This can give you some indication of religiosity and community mindedness.
- “What role did/does his father have in the family?”
- “How close is he to his family?”

- “What might it be like for a new daughter-in-law to join the family?”
- “Are they a 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 he holds himself?

**“Tell me about how he holds himself. What does he look like?”**

- “What is his beard like?”
- “Please describe his levush/ style of dress.” Be sure you are clear on what is described to you.
- “Does he smoke? In what context?”
- “Does he drink? In what context?”

### Goals/ Visions for Life

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

### Medical/Health

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

### What makes him ‘him’?

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

### Human flaws.

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

### For a shiduch

- “What kind of woman do you think best suits him?”
- “What are absolute deal breakers for him?”
- “In your opinion, do you think he [would respect her excitement for taking care of special needs children in her free time]?” You can ask about something that is important to her.
- “Similarly, is there anything that is important to him that he would really want his wife to accept or respect?”

### Sum up

- “Who else might know him?”
- “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.**