# If it Weren’t Hard Enough

What really makes the notion that a young woman is capable of choosing “Mr. Right” absurd is that it denies a fundamental reality.

Hashem created men and women to serve distinct roles, and therefore, He made men and women different. Not different marginally or incidentally. Different in almost every imaginable way. They are different in their natures, outlooks, and values. They are different in the ways they approach life, objects, and relationships. They are different in the ways that they behave, relate to each other, and communicate. Men and women are so different that you would almost think that they belong to different cultures or come from different planets.

And it’s not that they are socialized or brought up differently; these distinctions are inborn.

## Mixed Gender Best Friends

Studies show that when three-year-olds are asked, “Who is your best friend?” they are as likely to name a girl as a boy, regardless of their own gender. At that age, mixed gender friendships are the norm. Kids that young play the same games, have the same interests, and are fully compatible. Yet by the time the same group of children is five years old, only 20% of the boys will name a girl as his best friend, and the same for the girls. By then, the two groups are no longer so similar. The boys are off running around, playing rough and tumble games, and if they do sit down, it’s to play with “boy toys”—trucks, action figures, and guns—things that have little appeal to the girls. By the time the same group is seven, it is almost unheard of for a boy to have a best friend who is girl, or for a girl to have a best friend who is a boy. By then, the two groups have almost nothing in common.

And these differences don’t go away with age—they increase dramatically. Watch children at play during recess at the local public school. The girls will be off on one side of the yard playing jump rope or hopscotch while the boys will be off to the other side playing tag or touch football. Even though the classes are mixed, it is rare to find boys and girls together in play. The two groups have moved off into their own worlds.

So let’s even assume that a young woman has enough life’s wisdom to truly know herself and what type of person she needs to marry. How much does she know about the opposite gender? Is she so wise that she can *translate* her needs into the emotional language of another gender? She doesn’t understand the emotional operating system of that gender. For a woman to know whether a man fits the parameters of the type she *needs*, she would have to decode a complex individual operating with a different set of feelings, needs, and desires, recognize his core strengths and attributes, and then translate that information back into her own emotional operating system. How many people have the sheer intellect to do that?

## Listen at the Kollel Table

If you’re not sure if this is true, try visiting any *kollel*. Just listen into the conversation at the breakfast table when the newly married men talk amongst themselves. It seems that every one of them comes in with a glazed look in his eyes, mouthing the words, “I just don’t understand her. When she says this, she means that. And when she says that, she means this. I just can’t figure her out!”

It isn’t that his wife is difficult, or that he is thick. It’s simply that in the first stages of a marriage, it isn’t easy to read your spouse’s emotional needs. And there is a real learning curve that a husband and wife must go through to understand what is really going on in the other person’s world.

## The Odds of Success Aren’t Great

So, the plot thickens. For a person to know what it is that he *needs* in a spouse, he first has to fundamentally know himself. For most people, that self-knowledge doesn’t develop till they are much older. Next, he has to find the corresponding jigsaw puzzle piece from amongst a gender that he doesn’t understand, and then compute the differences within the context of a relationship he can’t yet relate to. He will then have to make sure that this person will be suitable not just now, but also in twenty years. Finally, he has to sift through the tens of thousands of potential matches and find that one needle in the haystack.

What do you think the odds of success are?

Not good at all. In fact, for a young person to go out there and expect to find the “right one” is beyond absurd. It’s preposterous.

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