

Jewish Values, Text and Quotes for Starting Conversations About Relationships

Rachamim: Compassion

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”
(Leviticus 19:18)

“Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rather, you should correct his behavior, even as many times and do not bear a sin because of him.” (Leviticus, 19:17)

T’shuvah: Saying Your Sorry and Promising to Do Better

“Say out loud the things you have done wrong.”
(Mishneh Torah, Sefer Mitzvot 73)

Emet: Honesty & Truth

“What issues from your lips, you shall keep and you shall do.”
(Deuteronomy 23:34)

“To avoid insulting someone, you are allowed to tell a white lie.”
(Sefer Hasidim)

Lo L’vayeish & Kavod Habriut: Not Embarrassing Someone & Preserving Dignity

“Your friend’s dignity should be as precious to you as your own.”
(Pirkei Avot 2:10)

“Anyone who embarrasses another person publicly is like a murderer.”
(Tamud Baba Metzia 58b)

“The sin of wounding with words is as bad as all the other sins combined.”
(Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1:1)

Someone told Rabbi Nahman: “If a person puts a neighbor to shame in public- it is just like killing someone. Rabbi Nahman added, “That is why when people are embarrassed their face turns first red- drawing blood- and then white as that blood is spilled.”
(Bava Mezia 58b)

“When your enemy falls, do not rejoice.”
(Proverbs 24:17)

“May God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceitfully.” (Prayer at the end of Amidah)

“You are not to go about as a tale-bearer among your people.”
(Leviticus 19:16)

Eemunah: Trust

“See that you have a good friend, someone who can be dependent upon and who is able to keep a secret. You should talk with the friend half an hour every day about everything in your heart and innermost thoughts...”
(Rabbi Asher of Stolin, Hanhagot Tzaddikim)

Seiver Panim Yafot: Putting on a Happy Face

“Rabbi Hanokh of Alexandrow said: People are always enjoying themselves- some days it’s one person and other days it’s another. No person is happy all the time.”
(Cited from Eugene Borowitz and Frances Wienman Schwartz, Jewish Moral Virtues)

Sheevyion: Equality

“I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.”

(Song of Songs, 6:3)

“The woman came out of of a man’s rib: not from his feet to be walked on. Not from his head to be superior, but from the side to be equal.”

Marc Gellman- Newsweek

Ohev / Mechabayd Zeh et Zeh: Honor and Care About the Other’s Dignity

“This is what the Holy One said to Israel: My children, what do I seek from you? I seek no more than that you love one another and honor one another; and that you have awe and reverence for one another.”

(Tanna de Bei Eliyahu Rabbah 26:6)

Tzeniyut: Modesty

“The Holy One did not create anything that is not beautiful and potentially good. The human body itself is never to be considered an object of shame or embarrassment. It is the manner and context in which the body is utilized, the ends to which it is used, which determine condemnation or praise. Dress, language, and behavior should reflect a sensitivity to the Jewish respect for modesty and privacy.”

(The Holy Letter - Igeret Ha-Kadosh)

Koach Ishi: Personal Strength

Rabbi Hillel said: “I am not for myself, who will be for me? I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

(Pirkei Avot 1:14)

“Nothing in the human organs is created flawed or ugly, Everything is created with divine wisdom and is therefore complete, exalted, good, and pleasant. But when one sins, ugliness becomes attached to these matters.”

(Attributed to Nachmanides, The Holy Letter, p.45, 48)

“Lack of consent transforms [what might have been a permitted sexual relationship into] a forbidden sex act. It is forbidden for a man to force his wife to have intercourse (Eruvin 100). Even if she is not forced but is not agreeable, he may not have relations with her.”

(Magen Avraham, Orakh Hayyim 240, no 7).

“Who is considered strong? A person who can overcome his inclinations...being slow to anger is better than physical power.” (Proverbs 16:32)

“Do not stand idly by when another person is in danger; I am God.”
(Leviticus 19:16)

“Happy is the person who doesn’t follow the advice of evil people, stand in the path of the sinful or sit in the company of troublemakers.”
(Psalms 1:1)