# Jewish References Guide

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances*</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality*</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Friends*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Beliefs*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage*</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving your Partner</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting*</td>
<td>12-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health*</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality*</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise each other</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Control</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Relationship Categories in the PREPARE/ENRICH assessment.
Communication

In Judaism, few forces are as efficacious as words. God creates the world through speaking, and so do we create the world of a relationship by what we say and what we choose not to say. Gossip and hurtful speech has traditionally been shunned by the sages, and when we speak to our loved ones, we use a holy tool that God has given us. We strive for the freedom to speak from the heart, and to listen with an open heart as well. Consider choosing from the following to begin and/or conclude the PREPARE/ENRICH exercises on Communication.

Psalm 19:15
May the words of my mouth and the prayer of my heart be acceptable to You, Eternal One, my rock and my redeemer.

Proverbs 17:27
The one who controls one’s words knows something, and the one who is dispassionate is a person of understanding.

Proverbs 12:18
Gossip is like the piercing of a sword, but there is healing in the language of the wise.

Talmud, Arakhin 15b
A wicked tongue slays three: the person speaking, the person spoken to, and the person spoken of.

Proverbs 20:19
The one who goes about telling tales will reveal secrets, so don’t get involved with a blabbermouth.

Pirke Avot 1:15
Say little, but do much, and greet every person cheerfully.

Proverbs 18:13
Answering before hearing is foolish and shameful.

Pirke Avot 3:16
Silence is a fence around wisdom.
Conflict Resolution

The sages of Judaism took the power of anger seriously. They recognized the right of everyone to be outraged given the correct time and circumstance. How we handle anger, both within ourselves and responding to others, is a test of our spirit. Can we use our anger appropriately? Can we create a safe place for another to be angry? Can we validate another’s feelings, fight fairly, work toward a solution, and always maintain respect? Consider choosing from the following to begin and/or conclude the PREPARE/ENRICH exercise for Conflict Resolution.

Pirke Avot 5:17
Any controversy that is for the sake of Heaven shall in the end be resolved. A controversy that is not for the sake of Heaven shall not be resolved.

Pirke Avot 4:23
When your friend becomes angry, don’t try to calm him [at the height of his anger]. When he is recently bereaved, don’t try to comfort him. When he is about to make an oath; don’t ask him questions. Just after he has been disgraced, don’t try to see him.

Sifra Kedoshim 4:12
If one were to say, “Since I am despised, let my neighbor also be despised,” Rabbi Tanchuma said: If you do so, know whom you despise, for “God made Adam in the likeness of God” (Genesis 5:1).

Pirke Avot 4:3
Treat no one lightly and think nothing is useless, for everyone has one’s moment and everything has its place.

Pirke Avot 4:1
Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone.

Proverbs 15:1
A soft answer removes rage, while a hurtful word increases ire.

Talmud, Bava Metzia 59b
Do not taunt your neighbor with a blemish you yourself have.
Finances

In addition to sharing a bedroom, a couple also often shares a bank account. In doing so, the Jewish values of generosity and the ultimate possession of all things by God should be kept in mind, especially as a couple takes on the task of setting a budget and creating financial goals. Consider choosing from the following to begin and/or conclude the PREPARE/ENRICH exercise for creating Financial Management.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 34:1
Bear in mind that there is a revolving wheel in the world, in the end a person, or one’s child or one’s grandchild, might come to receive charity... Know that wealth does not really belong to you, but it was simply given to you as a trust with which to execute the will of the One who gave it to you.

Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 10-11
If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kin in any of your settlements in the land that the Eternal your God is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kin. Rather, you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient to meet the need... Give readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return the Eternal your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kin in your land.

Maimonides, Hilchot Matnot Aniyim 10:7
The greatest level of giving, higher than all the rest, is to fortify another with a gift, a loan, a partnership, or work, until the recipient is strong enough so as to have no need to ask others.

Psalm 109:31
God stands at the right hand of the needy.

Proverbs 3:9
Honor the Eternal with your wealth and with the first and best part of your harvest.

Pirke Avot 5:26
According to the difficulty is the reward.

Ecclesiastes 5:9-10
One who loves money will never have enough. One who loves wealth will never get enough. This also is useless. The more you possess, the more there is to consume, so what advantage is there in possessing other than enjoying what you see?
Sexuality

Judaism’s attitude towards sexual intercourse is remarkably positive, provided that the values of covenantal relationship, honesty, health, modesty, joy, love, commitment, dignity, and the boundaries of marriage are respected. In fact, Jewish mystics considered the sexual symbolic of divine unity. It was also considered to be a partner’s right to have sexual relations on a regular basis as an inherent part of marriage. Consider the following when referring to Sexual Expectations/Relationship.

Iggeret Hakodesh 2
Know that the sexual intercourse of man with his wife is holy and pure when done properly, in the proper time and with the proper intention. No one should think that sexual intercourse is ugly and loathsome, God forbid!

Iggeret Hakodesh 2
In the mystery of man and woman, there is God.

Iggeret Hakodesh 6
When engaging in the sexual act, begin by speaking in a manner that will draw the other to you, calm the other’s spirits, and bring joy. Thus your minds will be bound with one another, and your intentions will unite.

Talmud, Yevamot 62b
Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: “If a husband knows his wife desires him and he refuses her, this is a sin.”

Maimonides, Hilchot Ishut 14:1
It is the practice of the disciples of the wise to have conjugal relations each Friday night.

Maimonides, Hilchot Ishut 14:2
A wife may restrict her husband in his business journeys to nearby places only, so that he would not otherwise deprive her of her conjugal rights. Hence he may not set out without her permission.

Maimonides, Hilchot Ishut 15:17-18
[A man] should not carry his jealousy of [his wife] beyond reason, nor should he compel her to have intercourse with him against her will. Rather, she should do it only with her consent, accompanied by pleasant discourse and enjoyment. [Likewise,] she should not deny herself to her husband merely in order to torment him.
Family and Friends

We are defined by the choices we make, and those include the choices of the people with whom we maintain relationships. Judaism sees inherent worth in each person, yet we are to aspire to choose relationships that will challenge us as well as support us and make us grow. While a popular saying is that we cannot choose our family, we can choose the people with whom we cultivate our lives. Often we have to choose what we want to emulate and what we want to leave behind. Consider choosing from the following to begin and/or conclude the PREPARE/ENRICH exercise for the Overview of the Couple and Family Map and in reference to Family and Friends.

Pirke Avot 3:14
Human beings are loved because they were made in God’s image. That they were created in God’s image was made known by special love, as it is said, “For God made human beings in the divine image” (Genesis 9:6).

Proverbs 27:9
Oil and incense may make the heart glad, but genuine advice is sweetness for a friend.

Proverbs 13:20
The one who walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will be harmed.

Proverbs 14:7
Get far away from a fool, for lips of knowledge you are not going to know.

Proverbs 27:6
Dependable are the wounds of a friend, but deceptive are the kisses of an enemy.

Pirke Avot 1:6
Get yourself a teacher and acquire for yourself a friend. When you judge people, give them the benefit of the doubt.

Pirkei Avot 2:9
Rabbi Yochanan said to [his disciples]: “Go see which way one should follow.” Rabbi Eliezer said, “[One should have] a good eye. Rabbi Yehoshua said, “[One should be] a good friend.” Rabbi Yose said, “[One should be] a good neighbor. “Rabbi Shimon said, “[One should] anticipate the future.” Rabbi Elazar said, “[One should have] a good heart.” Rabbi Yochanan responded, “I prefer Rabbi Elazar’s answer to all the other answers because it contains the others.”
Spiritual Beliefs

One’s spirituality ought to be something that one shares with another. The following quotations refer to sharing one’s spirituality within a covenant with another, appreciating the blessings one’s partner brings each day, not being discouraged, and always having spiritual growth of the other at heart. Consider choosing from the following to begin and/or conclude the PREPARE/ENRICH exercise when asking each member of a couple to Create Positive Change in Your Life.

Deuteronomy Rabbah 2:31
Hear O Israel: the Eternal our God, the Eternal is one (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Holy Blessed One said to Israel: My children, know that all I created, I created in pairs. Heaven and earth are a pair. The sun and the moon are a pair. Adam and Eve are a pair...But My glory is one.

Genesis 33:10
To see your face is like seeing the face of God.

Numbers Rabbah 12:4
God’s Presence is not absent from any place on earth.

Exodus Rabbah 24:1
How many miracles God has performed for you of which you are not even aware!

Isaiah 54:10
Though the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, My love shall never depart from you, and My covenant of peace shall not be removed.

Jeremiah 2:2
Thus says the Eternal: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride.

Deuteronomy 31:8
And it is indeed the Eternal who will go before you. [God] will be with you; [God] will not fail you or forsake you. Fear not and be not dismayed!

Pirke Avot 2:12
Let all that you do be for the sake of Heaven.
Marriage

Rabbinic Judaism has always seen marriage as not only desirable but the “normal” state to which people aspire. Yet, managing realistic expectations is a constant challenge. Consider the following references when facilitating the sections of Marriage Expectations, Marital Satisfaction, Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Life Transitions.

Talmud, Sotah 17a
When a husband and wife are worthy, God’s Presence lives between them.

Genesis 2:18
The God Eternal considered, “It is not good that the man be alone – I will make him a help to match him.”

Rashi on Genesis 2:18
“A help to match him.” At times she shall be a help to him; at other times she shall be a match to confront him.

Maimonides, Hilchot Ishut 15:19-20
The Sages have likewise ordained that a man should honor his wife more than his own self, and love her as himself...They have likewise ordained that the wife should honor her husband exceedingly and hold him in awe.

Talmud, Yevamot 62b
One who loves his wife as himself, and who respects her even more than himself and teaches his children the right way, will have peace in his home.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-11
Two are better than one, for they shall have a good reward for their toil. If one falls, the other can help him [or her] get up. If he [or she] had been alone when falling, the other would not be able to help him [or her] get up. If two lie together, they shall be warm, but how can one alone be warm?
Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav

A group of people who have been to a wedding are on their way home. One says, “It was a beautiful wedding. I liked the food.” Another says, “It was a great wedding. The music was marvelous.” Still another says, “It was the best wedding I ever went to. I saw all my good friends there, and we had a terrific time.” Reb Nachman, who overhead them, says, “Those people weren’t really at a wedding.” Then another wedding guest joins this group and says, “Blessed be the Name! Thank God those two got together!” At that Reb Nachman says, “Now, that person was at a wedding!”

Hosea 2:21-22

I will betroth you to me forever: I will betroth you to me in righteousness, justice, devotion, and compassion, and I will betroth you to me in faithfulness.

Sheva Berachot

We praise You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of joy and gladness, bride and groom, love and kinship, peace and friendship. O God, may there always be heard in the cities of Israel and in the streets of Jerusalem: the sounds of joy and happiness, the voices of the groom and the bride, the shouts of young people celebrating, and the songs of children at play. We praise You, our God, who causes the bride and the groom to rejoice together.
Loving Your Partner

At the center of Jewish thought is a loving God who covenants with us, and so we share our love with another and make a covenant with him or her in imitation of the divine. Consider referring to the following when addressing issues around Marital Satisfaction, Personality Issues, Communication, Sexual Expectations/Relationship, and Leisure Activities.

**Leviticus 19:18**
Love the other as yourself: I am the Eternal.

**Song of Songs 1:2**
Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, for your caresses are better than wine.

**Song of Songs 6:3**
I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine, the one who grazes in the lilies.

**Song of Songs 8:6-7**
Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death...Its flashes are flashes of fire, an enormous flame. Streams of water can’t extinguish love, nor can rivers sweep it away.

**Baal Shem Tov**
From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls that are destined for each other find one another, their streams of light flow together, and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being.
Divorce

Whenever confronted with a couple entering into or reexamining a relationship, one sometimes has to deal with failed relationships of the past. Judaism considers divorce a tragedy, and as a loss it must be mourned and occasionally revisited in order to move forward. The sages offer sober insights into the limits of the human relationship and the compassion that God has for us all.

Sifri on Numbers 27:1
God’s compassion extends equally to both men and women. Talmud, Gittin 90b
When one divorces another, even the very altar sheds tears. Talmud, Yevamot 112b
No one can be expected to live with a serpent.

Avot D’Rabbi Natan 26:4
One who marries someone who is incompatible with them shall come to violate five biblical commandments: You shall not bear a grudge (Leviticus 19:18), You shall not take revenge (Leviticus 19:18), You shall not hate your kin in your heart (Leviticus 19:17), You shall love the other as yourself (Leviticus 19:18), Your kin shall dwell with you (Leviticus 25:36).
Parenting

The idea to have and raise children is considered by Rabbinic Judaism to be a commandment. In addition to asking the other if they want children and how many, we might also discuss the patience and humility that parenting ought to bring into our lives. Consider making reference to one of the following in discussing Children and Parenting, Life Transitions, Intergenerational Issues, and Relationship Roles:

Deuteronomy 6:6-9
Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Proverbs 22:6
Teach your children to choose the right path, and when they are older, they will remain upon it.

Proverbs 13:24
If you refuse to discipline your children, it proves you do not love them; if you love your children, you will be prompt to discipline them.

Talmud, Kiddushin 29b-30a
We thus learned what our Rabbis taught: The father is bound in respect of his son, to circumcise, redeem, teach him Torah, take a wife for him, and teach him a craft. Some say, to teach him to swim too.

Exodus 20:12
Honor your father and mother.

Leviticus 19:3
You shall each revere your mother and your father.

Leviticus 19:32
You shall rise before the aged and show deference to the old; you shall fear your God: I am the Eternal.
Talmud, Sanhedrin 71a
There never has been a “stubborn and rebellious son [worthy of death],” (Deuteronomy 21:18) and there never will be.

Derech Eretz Zuta 3
Humble yourself before others, but humble yourself even more before your [spouse] and your children than anyone else.

Talmud, Sotah 47a
In dealing with one’s own nature, one’s child, and one’s [spouse]: one pushes with the left hand and pulls with the right.
Health

Judaism understands that one can only have a healthy spirit if first one has a healthy body and emotional life. Consider this philosophy, presented by Moses Maimonides (1135-1204 CE), stressing the ideas of balance and humility, when facilitating Health Issues and Making Your Goals a Reality.

Maimonides, Hilchot De’ot 4:1
When one keeps the body healthy and whole, one walks in the ways of God, since it is impossible during sickness to have any understanding or knowledge of the Creator.

Maimonides, Shemoneh Perakim 3:1-3
The ancients said that just as health and sickness applied to the body, so health and sickness applied to the soul... Because of their illness, those who are physically sick may taste what is sweet as bitter and what is bitter as sweet. They may look at what is beautiful and see it as ugly. They may want things that no healthy person would want... The same is true with the sicknesses of the soul, in other words, with evils. Those who possess evil traits imagine that evil is good and good is evil. Constantly craving evil, they keep doing evil things, which – due to their sick souls – they imagine to be good.

Maimonides, Shemoneh Perakim 5:3
The purpose of healing the body is the soul’s acquisition of wisdom.
Personality

Loving another person also brings the challenge of living with them. Just as we try to accept another for who they are and to be open to who they will become, so must we realize that they are also tolerating us and our idiosyncrasies. Consider some of the following observations while facilitating Communication and Conflict Resolution exercises.

Maimonides, Shemoneh Perakim 8:1
No one is ever born perfected in every virtue or corrupted by every vice.

Proverbs 11:12
One who lacks sense would have contempt for one’s neighbor, while a discerning person would be silent.

Proverbs 11:13
The talebearer reveals a secret, but the trustworthy person conceals a matter.

Proverbs 12:22
Lying lips are an abomination to God, but those who deal faithfully are God’s delight.

Proverbs 25:19
As a broken tooth, as a foot out of joint, so is trusting an untrustworthy person in time of trouble.

Proverbs 12:25
Worry weighs the mind down, while a nice word makes it happy.

Proverbs 17:22
A happy heart is beneficial for healing, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.
Praise Each Other

Part of communication is remembering to compliment the other. The sages teach that we ought to say one hundred blessings a day. Perhaps at least one of them should be directed toward one’s partner. The idea of praising a loved one is an ancient one in Judaism. Whether towards a spouse, a child, or a parent, the sages ask for us to not only remember to praise but also to be sensitive with our words.

**Proverbs 25:11**
Like apples of God in filigrees of silver so is a word well spoken.

**Proverbs 31:10**
A worthy woman who can find? Her value is far beyond that of pearls of coral.

**Proverbs 31:28**
Her children arise and make her happy, and her husband praises her.

**Talmud, Bava Metzia 59a**
Be ever so careful not to hurt the feelings of your [spouse], for their tears are brought on easier [than others], and they are more vulnerable to hurtful gestures from you.

**Talmud, Yevamot 62b**
One who loves one’s [spouse] as one’s own person, honors the other as one’s own person... “You will know that all is well in your tent” (Job 5:24).
Self-Control

The sages put a high premium on self-control, even as we are encouraged to share our feelings. Each of us is born with urges, including an impulse for good and an impulse for bad. The sages ask us to not fear feeling, but they also ask us to not indulge our destructive side. Letting loose our feelings is not supposed to be at the expense of others. Consider the following texts in reference to the exercises on Communication and Conflict Resolution.

Proverbs 25:28
Like a ravaged city without a wall, so is the person who cannot exert self-control.

Pirke Avot 4:1
Who is mighty? One who controls one’s urges.

Maimonides, Shemoneh Perakim 4:1-2
Good acts are those midway between two extremes that are bad, namely, excess and absence. Prudence, for example, is midway between excessive desire and its absence... Generosity is midway between miserliness and extravagance. Courage is midway between recklessness and cowardice. Self-confidence is midway between arrogance and debasement. Dignity is midway between being overbearing and obsequious... Humility is midway between pride and shame.

Maimonides, Commentary on Pirke Avot 4:3
It was said earlier that humility is midway between pride and shame and that one should strive for the middle path. In truth, concerning this virtue alone, one should incline a little away from pride towards meekness of spirit, for that is the way of the pious.

Maimonides, Shemoneh Perakim 4:4-5
Anyone who has made oneself suffer by keeping away from any [permitted] pleasure requires atonement... “Was it not enough for you that the Torah prohibited what it did that you had to add other prohibitions?” (Jerusalem Talmud Nedarim 9)

Maimonides, Shemoneh Perakim 4:5
Both Aaron and Moses had sinned; one moved too much to the extreme of patience, and the other moved too much to the extreme of anger.

Pirke Avot 2:5
The brute will not fear sin. The ignoramus will not be saintly. The inhibited will not learn. The irate cannot teach. Nor can one given over to business grow wise. In a place where there are no human beings, try to be one.