“Ten Commandments for Choosing a Spouse.”

Published by the Reich Committee for Public Health[[1]](#footnote-1)

*This document is part of the Deadly Medicine exhibition, and the USHMM provided this translation. Many organizations in Nazi Germany disseminated these commandments, including the National Socialist Women’s League.*

While in earlier times the emphasis of instruction on choosing a spouse was essentially placed on the health of the individual future spouse and warned against marriages with those afflicted with sexually transmitted diseases or with other contagious diseases, the National Socialist State must fundamentally place in the foreground the question of hereditary health, and not only physical but also intellectual-emotional health.

In addition it is necessary to take the considerations of selection for choosing a spouse into account in order to achieve really well-selected, racially worthy, hereditarily healthy, children-rich families. For the National Socialist State it is self evident that in this process certain improbable factors have to be considered because the Last Things cannot be measured, weighed, or counted.

The Reich Committee for the National Health Service together with the Reich Ministry of the Interior, the Reich Office of Health, and the NSDAP Office for Racial Policy has published Ten Commandments for choosing a spouse. They are:

1. Remember that you are a German.

Everything that you are is not of your own merit but rather through your nation. Whether you want or not, you are a part of it because you are a product of it. Therefore for everything that you do, think whether it is beneficial to your nation. The common good comes before self-interest.

2. If you are hereditarily healthy, you should not remain unmarried.

Everything that you are, all the characteristics of your body and mind are transitory. They are an inheritance, a gift from your ancestors. They live on in you in an unbroken chain. Whoever without a compelling reason remains unmarried, breaks this chain of the race. — Your life is only a transient occurrence; family and nation will continue to exist. Mental and physical genetic make-up will celebrate its resurrection in your children.

Genetic make-up, blood inheritance is all of the physical, intellectual, and mental aptitudes that through procreation are transferred to man by his ancestors. Among the great quantities of these aptitudes only a part of them can manifest themselves in an individual during his lifetime. Since this genetic make-up manifests itself again in the descendants, it is eternal. It is the genotype, with which the manifestation of the individual is faced.

3. Keep your body pure!

Maintain the health that has been given to you by pure parents in order to be able serve your nation. Take care not to play with it needlessly and lightly. A moment’s pleasure can permanently destroy your health and genetic make-up, a curse for you, your children, and grandchildren. What you would demand of your future partner you must also demand of yourself. Remember that you are a German progenitor [ancestor].

4. You should keep your mind and spirit pure!

Maintain the aptitudes that you have; become what you can be according to your aptitudes. Preserve your talents and us them to your best ability. Keep from your intellect and mind everything that is inwardly foreign to you, that is contrary to your kind, that your conscious forbids you. Prospects of money and property, prospects of more quickly getting ahead, prospects of pleasure often tempt us to forget this.

Be therefore true to yourself and especially to your future life companion. Happiness built on lies quickly falls to ruin. What you demand of your life companion you must also fulfill yourself.

5. As a German choose only a spouse of same or Nordic blood.

Where aptitude matches aptitude, harmony will reign. Where dissimilar races mix, there will be discord. The mixing of races that do not match each other (bastardization) frequently leads in the life of people and nations to degeneration and downfall, all the faster the less the races match each other. Beware of decline; keep away from those of foreign races of non-European origin. Happiness is only possible with those of your same kind.

History teaches that our Germanic ancestors fit the ideal of the Nordic people to a high degree. The Nordic race is according to all research the most valuable race for the German nation and its fellow nations of Germanic language and their developments. All German tribes have an element of the Nordic race in common, even if they differ from other elements of non-Nordic races. — The Nordic element of blood binds the entire German nation. Every German has more or less part of it. It is a holy duty to maintain and expand your part of it. Whoever mixes his blood with foreign races of non-European origin is working against the racial improvement[[2]](#footnote-2) of his nation.

6. In choosing your spouse, ask about his ancestors.

You are not marrying your spouse alone but in a way his ancestors, too. Worthy decedents can only be expected from worthy ancestors. Gifts of reason and mind are an inherited trait just as eye and hair color. Bad aptitudes are passed on just as good ones. A good person can carry in himself germs (genetic make-up) that will turn into misfortune for his children. Therefore, never marry the one good person from a bad family.

Whoever looks at his parents and relatives with an open mind will recognize many dangers. If you are unsure, request a genetic-biological family chart, ask a trusted doctor familiar with questions of hereditary health, or contact the Reich Committee for Public Health, Berlin W 62, Einemstrasse 11.

There is nothing more valuable in the world than the seeds of noble blood. No medical art can change rotten genetic material.

7. Health is a requirement also for physical beauty.

Health offers the best protection for lasting happiness for it is the prerequisite for beauty and mental stability. Ask your future partner to undergo a medical examination for worthiness of marriage, as you yourself should do.

8. Marry only for love.

Money is a transient possession and does not bring lasting happiness. Where the divine spark of love is missing, happiness cannot thrive. The riches of the heart and mind are the best safeguard for lasting happiness.

9. Seek a companion in marriage and not a playmate.

Marriage is not a temporary game between two people but rather a lasting bind that is of great importance for the life of the individual as well as the entire nation. The purpose of marriage is the child and raising descendants.

Only among mentally, physically, and racially homogenous people can this ultimate goal be achieved to the benefit out yourself and your nation for every race has its own soul. Only similar souls will be compatible.

An all-too great age difference between spouses easily endangers the equilibrium in the marriage.

10. You should wish for as many children as possible.

Only with three or four children is the continuance of the nation ensured. Only with a large number of children will the existing aptitudes of the group [*Sippe*][[3]](#footnote-3) manifest themselves in the greatest possible number and diversity. No two children are exactly alike. Each child inherits different aptitudes from its ancestors. Many worthy children raise the value of the nation and are the best safeguard for its continuation. You will pass; what you give to your decedents will remain; in them you will celebrate resurrection. Your Nation will live forever!

1. USHMMl: Weindling uses this translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. USHMM: Langenscheidt translates *Aufartung* this way, stating that it is a Nazi term. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. While not really used in modern German, Sippe was frequently used during this time. It means family in the larger extended sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)