

FOOD  
FOR  
THOUGHT  
TO SPARK  
CONVERSATION

# SHABBOS MENU



PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS SHOFTIM 5783 • ISSUE 354

## TAKE MY WORD FOR IT

*A man everyone respects and considers trustworthy tells you that someone is saying unflattering things about you. Given his stature, can you believe him?*

### THE DILEMMA

**R**abbi Rosen, a *talmid chacham* and head of a small but prestigious yeshivah, is interviewing Reuven for a spot in his *beis medrash*.

"I have to be honest," says Rabbi Rosen to Reuven. "I happened to see your high school principal recently and he had some troubling things to say about you. It seems that you had a number of run-ins with him and a few of the *rabbeim*. I know that was already three years ago, but still..."

Reuven could not imagine why his former principal would offer such information when he had gone on from high school to do very well in a lower-level *beis medrash* and was now looking to take a step up. But if Rabbi Rosen said this was the information he was given, then there was no doubt in Reuven's mind that he was speaking the truth. After all, this was *the* Rabbi Rosen!

Is that enough of a basis for Reuven to believe that his former principal spoke poorly of him?



### THE HALACHAH

**E**ven if Reuven is told something by a person considered as trustworthy as two witnesses, he cannot fully believe what he hears. That applies even if he cannot find any possible favorable explanation for the words.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,  
Hilchos Rechilus 6:5*

Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy. For discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a *rav* or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.

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[Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org](mailto:Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org)

"From

*patience*  
will come forth  
*peace."*

— Orchos Tzadikim, Shaar HaAnavah

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MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

**A** Jew from Yerushalayim needed a stem-cell transplant that was available in America. He and his wife made the journey in the hope of saving the man's life.

Before the procedure, the hospital staff and the couple realized a translator was needed. A call was put out to find someone who could do the job, but no one came. Finally, the man was taken to the operating room and put under anesthesia.

Just then, two Israeli men appeared on the scene. "We're here to translate," they told the nurse.

"I'm sorry, but you're too late to speak to the patient," she said. "They just put him under. But you could still be of help. I talk with every patient before the procedure to explain what he should expect. Basically, he will be out for about 48 hours, and then he will wake up and be fine. At least you can tell this to his wife, so she won't be frightened."

The men spoke to the wife and waited with her for the procedure to be finished. When it was over, they went to the ICU and saw the patient through the glass window, lying in his bed. But then he opened his eyes, walked to the sink, washed his hands, said some *brachos*, and went back to sleep.

The nurse shrieked. "In all the years I've been doing this, I've never seen anyone wake up right after the procedure!" she exclaimed. "It's always two days. I don't understand it!"

The translators offered her two explanations: "Maybe it's a miracle. Or maybe it's because, in all the other cases, you told the patient that he wouldn't wake up for 48 hours. Since you didn't have the chance to tell this man, he didn't know. So he got up!"

Rabbi Ari Bensoussan tells this story to



לע"נ  
שמואל חיים בן אברהם יוסף ז"ל  
דבורה בת ישראל ע"ה  
Dedicated by Uri & Riki Sklar

## sage advice

# WHERE'S YOUR WILLPOWER?

If we were purely logical people, we'd never do anything that we would later regret. But anyone who has ever slipped in a bit of *loshon hora*, even while part of his brain is warning, "Don't say this!" knows the truth: Logic doesn't always rule over us.

The ability to call on our better nature, even when temptation strikes, is called willpower. It's a mysterious force that seems to slither away just when we need it most. But a study in Israel helped to unravel the mystery, and in doing so gives us a powerful strategy for being the people we really want to be.

*A study kept track of parole hearings, looking for some factor that predicted whether a prisoner would be granted parole. The answer, as it turned out, had little to do with the merit of the prisoner. Rather, it had to do with the timing of the hearing. If the case came up in the early morning or right after lunch, the chances of parole being granted were far greater than if the case was heard right before lunch or late in the afternoon.*

*The authors of the study concluded that members of the parole board, when hungry for lunch or tired from a long day, lacked the willpower to do the more complicated task of granting parole. It's always easier to say no, and when they were not at their peak, that's what they did.*

With this in mind, we can try to pinpoint the situations that sap our willpower so that we can fortify our defenses. Once we recognize them, we can avoid conversations that might go in the wrong direction, saving us from words we'll regret. We can be our best selves, even when we're not at our best.

### TALK ABOUT IT

What times and situations are your willpower weak points?  
When are you strongest?

# NO ONE TOLD HIM HE CAN'T

make us aware of the power of our words. When we tell others what we think they can't do, what their limitations are, we have to wonder, what achievements might we be preventing?

**How much potential is stopped in its tracks by roadblocks we impose with our words?**

**And how much potential could be unleashed if we used our words to empower people to leap over their roadblocks?**

### TALK ABOUT IT

Is there anything someone told you that enabled you to do something you thought you couldn't? Why do we find it hard at times to encourage people? What is the difference between empty praise and true encouragement?

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