



SHABBOS MENU

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • SHABBOS PARSHAS KI SAVO 5783 • ISSUE 356

NO OFFENSE MEANT

People often make casual comments without realizing their impact; these comments often ring true. May we believe what we hear in such circumstances?

THE

DILEMMA

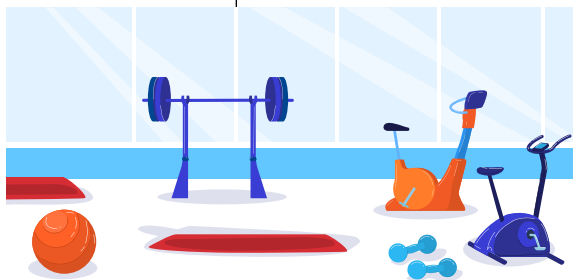
Chana and Devorah, two older women living in a senior development, are walking partners. They do a vigorous five-mile route three mornings a week, and despite a fair amount of huffing and puffing, they manage to do a fair amount of talking as well. Their topics roam from family to work to spirituality to the latest health and diet trends.

"I finally decided to see a physical therapist about my sore hip," Chana tells Devorah as they hike along and she feels a familiar twinge.

"Who are you seeing?" Devorah asks.

"Elisheva Berman," Chana replies. "She has this fantastic little gym and she taught me a few exercises that I can already feel are working. It's funny how she got into this profession. She used to be a science teacher but her principal was so critical and abusive that she quit and went back to school. Just goes to show you how there's good in everything."

Chana doesn't know that Devorah, a retired high school principal, was Elisheva's dreaded boss. May Devorah believe that her former employee is smearing her 15 years after she left, since Chana is speaking in complete innocence?



THE

HALACHAH

Even if the comment is made innocently, as part of casual conversation, it cannot be assumed to be completely true.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Rechilus 6:8*

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.

NO REGRETS

When people look at the calendar this week, they might be alarmed. Elul is more than half gone! It's alarming because often, we realize that we haven't gotten anywhere near the half-way mark on what we hope to achieve before we stand before Hashem on Rosh Hashanah.

In fact, when you spell Elul backwards (lamed-vav-lamed-alef) it spells the word lulei—if only. But by grabbing the golden opportunity to take part in the Shabbos Table Machsom L'fi, you don't have to feel that regret. You're taking a giant step forward and bringing others along with you, and in that merit, may the new year bring you only good health, parnassah and nachas!

— Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

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"At the moment he

speaks
evil of his fellow
—he is
punished
middah k'neged middah—they
speak ill of him in Heaven."

— Sefer Shmiras Haloshon,
part II ch. 4

THE WEDDING THIEF

#2 in a series on judging favorably

Dov Fuchs [Hamodia columnist] tells this personal story:

His sister was getting married. In the midst of a long family photo session, Dov's nephew ran into the room to report that someone had stolen money from his wallet. He suspected a worker, who had been standing near the room where the wallet had been left.

The suspicion seemed well-grounded to Dov, because the worker had told the nephew, "I didn't take the money." Dov was ready to confront the worker when someone suggested that he first ask the manager to let him see the security video.

The manager gladly agreed to help. Dov sat down in the manager's office while the manager worked on bringing the image up to the computer screen. Just then, someone ran into his office gasping, "The *kallah's* purse has been stolen from her room!"

Now the manager turned his attention to the video of the *kallah's* room. Dov and the manager saw right before their eyes the image of the *kallah's* friend, Chaya, taking the purse and putting it inside her own. Unbelievably, they watched the footage several more times. There was no doubt about it. Chaya was a petty thief.

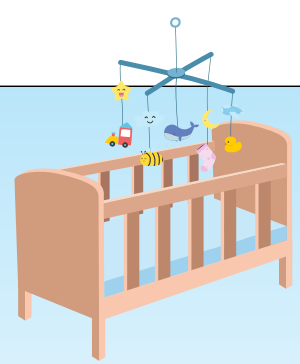
Before the matter went any further, Dov's mother came into the manager's office brimming with praise for Chaya. "When she heard there was a thief in the hall, she ran into the *kallah's* room and hid your sister's purse!"



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

sage advice

A BABY KNOWS HIS MOTHER



The infant is screaming in his crib. His big sister comes and picks him up. She pats him and rocks him and tries to get the pacifier in his mouth, but the baby doesn't calm down. Then the mother walks into the room. From the moment the baby hears his mother's voice, his screams turn into soft whimpers. When she takes him from her daughter and holds him in her arms, his tense little body relaxes and he becomes quiet.

To an infant, what is the difference between the arms of a 15-year-old girl and the arms of his mother? Rabbi Ari Bensoussan says that the response comes from an instinct Hashem puts into a baby; it detects that his mother feels his pain. He can relax, because he knows that he is not alone.

This quality of empathy is at the heart of every meaningful relationship, and especially those in which we are called upon to guide or comfort another person. "People want to know that they have a piece of you," says Rabbi Bensoussan. In other words, that their pain, concerns, and struggles occupy a place in our heart.

There are many stories of *gedolim* who go to a *shivah* house to comfort someone who has experienced a terrible loss—for example a child, a young parent, or a spouse. People come and try to find the right words to give comfort, but the *gadol* just sits by the mourner's side and cries with him or her. This gives the most comfort of all because it lets them know that they're not alone in their pain.

We can't always supply solutions. Our advice might not always be wanted or heeded. But when we show someone that he has "a piece of us," we give him the strength to find the way.

TALK ABOUT IT

Would you rather have good advice from someone who doesn't relate to your struggles—maybe even tells you that it's your own fault—or no advice but real compassion from someone who cares about you?

she told Dov. "What a gem! What a friend!"

As Dov Fuchs learned, even video footage can lie. Before we reach a verdict, we have to hear the facts—not only hear them, but be ready, with an open mind, to find out that all is not as it seems. Most often, good people don't do terrible things. If we start with that premise, we can avoid doing a terrible thing ourselves—believing the worst about an innocent person.

TALK ABOUT IT

How can patience and curiosity help us to avoid judging someone negatively?

לע"נ חיים יחיאל מיכל בן
רפאל פייוועל שניאור ז"ל
גלב"ע ערב שבת קודש י' אלול תשע"ז
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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