

# Let My People Shmooz

Interactive Questions to Spark Your Shabbos Table Discussions



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SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'EIRA 5785

We'd love to hear your feedback, stories, and ideas. Email us at [aderaba@cchfglobal.org](mailto:aderaba@cchfglobal.org)

## I Can't Work With Her

In the summer, I am a day camp counselor and I work with a junior counselor. This year, my cousin Devorah applied to be a junior counselor in my camp. I heard that the head counselor is planning to have us work together since we're cousins. But the truth is, I don't want to work with her because I know she always ducks out of responsibilities; even when someone

calls her out on it, she just laughs and says, "So what? I'm lazy!" I can predict she won't be much help, and I'll probably end up being very frustrated by her.

**Can I tell the head counselor that I'd prefer not to work with my cousin?**

— Rachel



## What's the Psak?

Can you guess the halachah?

- A **Yes**, Rachel is entitled to work in a pleasant environment.
- B **No**, Rachel is causing her cousin to lose out on a job.
- C **No**, Rachel must first tell her cousin what the issue is and give her a chance to try.

## When the Direct Route is Closed

One of the conditions of speaking *loshon hora l'to'eles* is that we must first speak to the subject about the issue.<sup>[1]</sup> If that's not possible, or the subject will not accept the rebuke, we can skip this step. That's the case here, because Rachel feels uncomfortable giving Devorah constructive criticism (and, we can assume it probably won't help). Also, Rachel might not be able to give her utmost to her campers if she has to deal with a junior counselor with whom she doesn't work well.

Reviewed by Rav Moshe Mordechai Lowy.

Rav Avraham Yaakov Pam zt"l advised great caution when presenting halachic scenarios to the public, as each situation is unique. This *she'eilah* is for discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a rav or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.

The Shmiras Haloshon Shailah Hotline: 718-951-3696 2-3PM / 9-10:30 PM

## What to Do If It Happens to You

It's always better to prevent a problem from arising in the first place. In this case, Rachel should have approached the head counselor as soon as she heard Devorah was applying and explained what type of junior counselor she'd prefer. She could also have said that she prefers not mixing work and family.



## The Halachah

The answer is A.

Yes, Rachel may ask that the head counselor give her a different junior counselor. However, she should try to explain that she would prefer a different type of girl to work with, without saying anything negative about Devorah.

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the **heart**  
of a **Yid**

שגרה מעלת חברים

## What's My Part?

The news was out. America had a baby formula shortage! Store shelves were being wiped out of the product as people scrambled to stock up. But one mother of a daughter with Down's Syndrome wasn't too worried. Her daughter's formula — the only brand the child liked — came to her each month through Amazon's auto-delivery service.

Then came the day that she opened her last bottle. The shortage became a sudden, scary reality. She searched the stores and suppliers and found that there really was no formula to be had.

But as her anxiety began to shoot upward, her *emunah* kicked in. Maybe Amazon and Walmart were out of formula, but Hashem didn't have shortages. If her daughter

really needed it, Hashem would find a way. And that way turned out to be through a warm Jewish heart.

Meanwhile, the mother decided to ration her remaining formula. When her daughter's occupational therapist noticed that the little girl was unusually cranky, the mother explained, "She wants her bottle but I'm trying to spread it out until I can find some more formula."

"Call my brother-in-law in Lakewood," the therapist told her. "He has a formula *gemach*."

The mother made the call and discovered that the *gemach* had six large bottles of her daughter's "favorite"

formula. The brother-in-law explained that he had been shopping one day when he noticed a woman loading her cart with formula. When he asked why, she explained that a shortage was expected.

The man decided, "I'll buy up a lot of formula (just a few of each type from each store in a wide radius and keep doing that weekly) so people won't run short." And the *gemach* was born. A few hours later, six bottles of the coveted formula were delivered for free to the mother's door in Brooklyn — all because someone saw in a nationwide crisis a fabulous opportunity to help his fellow Jews.



## Take It to the Table

Can you think of **needs** in your community that would be a good project for a **gemach** or a new organization?

**Word  
Power**

## What You Don't Say

You know that words have massive power. But did you know that the words you *don't* say can be just as powerful? And that doesn't only mean holding back unkind words. In some situations, if we're sensitive to other people as we should be, it can even mean holding

back the enthusiastic, kind words that are ready to pop out of your mouth.

A story about Rav Yitzchak Hutner teaches us just how aware we need to be when we're sharing good, happy news.

Rav Hutner was the Rosh Yeshivah of Chaim Berlin, and he was his students' biggest booster. He loved them with all his heart, just like a father. So, whenever something good happened to them, he was the first one they

wanted to tell.

One day, Rav Hutner was sitting in his office when a former student called. "Rebbi!" the student said, "mazel tov!"



"I'm a father!"

Rav Hutner was silent. So of course, the student thought he simply hadn't heard the great news. He repeated it.

"Very good. Nice," Rav Hutner said. "We'll be in touch."

The student hung up, totally deflated. But he later found out why his *rebbi* had responded so

blandly. Sitting in Rav Hutner's office at the time was another former student who had been married for ten years and had yet to have a child.

Rav Hutner knew that just hearing him give a hearty "Mazel tov!" to the new father would cause this childless young man a sharp twinge of pain.

The way to avoid hurting others, either with unkind words or with misplaced kind words, is to always stop and

look around before we speak. Who's there? What will our words do to them? With that moment of restraint, we can make life better for ourselves and everyone around us.

## Take It to the Table

How can we **avoid** hurting someone while **helping** someone else?

Heard from  
Rabbi Yechiel  
Spero on CCHF  
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video series