

Not a Mother's Job — A Parent's Job

MatchQuest / Issue 686

I read the recent MatchQuest about a father who needs to take charge of his daughters' shidduchim but feels uncomfortable and ill-equipped to step into what he called the ladies' world of shidduchim.

I couldn't disagree with his assessment more. As a mother of a girl in shidduchim, it's so hard to get a yes from boys, and it's so hard to immerse myself in their world when doing the research and trying to find connections. Talking to their roshei yeshivah and friends can be awkward and uncomfortable. I think this father is projecting his own anxieties as a father being in charge of what he views as a woman's job. But there's no such thing as shidduchim being a woman's job or a man's job; it's a parent's job. And as parents, it's our goal — and responsibility — to do all that we can to enable our children to get married and have happy and healthy marriages.

J.G.

We Have the Tools We Need

Therapy Toolbox / Issue 686

Abby Delouya's most recent installment of Therapy Toolbox could not have come at a better time. It can be stressful to spend extended periods of time in close quarters with family under the best of circumstances; being quarantined when the world is in such turmoil is seemingly impossible. Abby's explanations of Structural Family Therapy were so helpful and a real eye-opener. It was so empowering to learn that we already have the tools we need to keep ourselves and our relationships healthy.

Chaya Frishman
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When a Therapist Labels

When Connection Frays / Issue 685

After reading your article about how parents can reach out to their children who are pulling away, I had to share my story.

One day, my daughter called me to tell me

she was separating. I'd known nothing. All I had seen was the sweetness on the surface of their marriage; I hadn't been privy to the sickness that lay beneath my son-in-law's kind exterior. The rest of the details aren't important, but when my daughter went to therapy and the therapist learned that she had a divorced sister, she suggested that our family was unhealthy. The words came straight from the therapist. Suddenly all her siblings weren't healthy either. She wouldn't sleep in our house. She began to pull away from us. Her siblings were told not to visit. It took her a long time to come back, to be able to interact with the family normally.

Do I blame the therapist? Yes. The ideas and words that my daughter began to throw around and label us with were new to her. I know it sounds unlikely for calamity to strike twice, but it did. At a time when family support is so important, no one should suggest an unhealthy family upbringing as the cause for a child marrying someone unwell.

I'm not the only one who's experienced this. Some therapists hear the client, then seek to validate and empower the client by placing blame for the current situation on the family. But this isn't only taking place in the therapist/client relationship. When the *frum* world accepts the psychological model of parenting, it becomes a societal trend that permeates everywhere — especially in our children's expectations and feeling of rights. We have lost the shame factor. For the first time, *frum* young children believe they can belittle their parents. Where has our innate sense of *kibbud av v'eim* gone? We need to reconnect to our Torah values.

Chaya S.
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Who's to Pity?

Words Unspoken / Issue 685

I am writing in response to the recent Words Unspoken written by a woman who does not yet have children. Though my challenge as an older single is different, I related to her sentiments.

I often giggle at how often I am the one to have to offer reassurance to the many in my community who greet me with pity and a sense of *nebachness*. I'm often the one to tell them, "It's all okay! I'm happy, fulfilled, and doing what Hashem wants me to be doing right now."

I can't deny that these past seven years have been challenging. But with Hashem's constant love, I've continued living my life and am content. The pitying looks and "nebach" comments are a source of greater frustration than the challenge of being single itself. I wish people would look past the externals of my circumstances and see all that I have to offer and all the good Hashem has bestowed upon me. This period of my-life isn't just marking time; it's a goal in and of itself.

I'm left wondering who should be pitied. Is it me and the writer of the Words Unspoken, who feel fulfilled and happy? Or is it the people who sigh and look meaningfully at other people's uncovered hair or stomachs?

May Hashem shower all of us with an authentic sense of fulfillment and growth always.

Name Withheld