

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
TO SPARK
CONVERSATION

SHABBOS MENU



PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM • PARSHAS CHAYEI SARA 5782 • ISSUE 264

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

When someone tells an unflattering story about himself and another person, it would seem to have the stamp of truth on it, since the speaker himself is one of the parties. Is that enough of a basis to believe the story is true?

T H E

DILEMMA

Your friend comes back from a year in yeshiva in Israel. He traveled with another mutual friend from the yeshiva you all attended. It's your first time seeing him since his return, and he's bursting with stories to tell.

"Let me tell you first of all that Akiva and I learned one thing very well this year – don't mess with Israeli airport security," your friend says. "We thought it would be funny to pull *shtick* on one of those guys that stops you and asks a million questions. Boy, did it backfire.

"We ended up spending an hour in a little room being interrogated by a dozen different people. I think they knew we were just a couple of dumb kids, but they wanted to scare us. And they scared us plenty! I thought we were going to jail instead of home. Akiva started crying!"

It's quite the adventure, spoken from one who was part of it. May you believe it's true?



T H E

HALACHAH

You can believe the part your friend says about himself. However, you are not permitted to take as fact anything he said about Akiva.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim,
Hilchos Loshon Hora 7:6*

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

I am tremendously grateful to CCHF for always being a forerunner in the area of Torah chinuch! Thank you for these invaluable [Impressions]! My teachers, and I, look forward to each and every edition.

Mrs. Z. Leichtag,
Principal,
Bais Rochel High School
Monroe, NY

Ed.: To bring this bi-weekly newsletter to the educators in your school, email: impressions@cchfglobal.org



FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"One who *finds* merit for the Jewish people becomes *improved* with an awesome spiritual light."

– Sefer Shmiras Haloshon,
Shaar HaTevunah, ch.7

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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HE COLLARED HIM...

And changed his life

Harav Benzion Fellman *zt"l*, a *gaon* and *tzaddik* from Bnei Brak, related an incident that happened to "someone," probably himself, when he was in the Ponovez Kollel. (The story appears in *L'lo Shem*, the Hebrew-language biography of Harav Fellman):

In Yeshivas Ponovez one day, a *bachur* handed an *avreich* an invitation to his wedding. The *avreich* was obviously surprised; he didn't know the young man and couldn't understand why he was inviting him to his wedding.

"I owe everything to you," the *bachur* said.

"When I came to learn in Ponovez a few years ago, my first days were rough. I wasn't happy with my *chavrusos* and I didn't have friends. I felt very alone. I decided that I would stay just for Shabbos and then leave the yeshivah, maybe go to work.

"Friday night, after *Maariv*, as we lined up to say 'gut Shabbos' to the *Roshei Yeshivah*, I felt a hand behind me straightening out my collar.

I turned around and you said to me with a smile, 'A *chashuve bachur* like you should have his collar straight.'

"I can't explain how good those words made me feel. I told myself that if I'm a '*chashuve bachur*,' I shouldn't give up my learning so fast. I found

TALK ABOUT IT

Has something someone said to you had a positive, life-changing impact?

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sage advice

THINK SMALLER

In Elul, Jewish hearts awaken. We take the time to think about something we may not think about all year long: "Am I on the right track in my life?" We may embark on some area of self-improvement, heeding the advice of our *gedolim* to make our commitment modest and doable.

Then, in Cheshvan, when the *Yamim Tovim* are over and life shifts into a different gear, we may find that we have already fallen off the track. Is anything "modest and doable" enough for us to achieve?

Rabbi Tzvi Sytner offers a fresh insight on how to approach our goals. The paradigm is the British cycling team, which was once among the worst in the world. So resounding was their failure that bike manufacturers refused to supply them, fearing a stain on their reputations.

Then, in 2011, the team began winning. In 10 years it won 178 world championships, including the Olympics and the Tour de France. What changed? The team got a new coach, and that coach perceived that if he could analyze each small component of biking and make a slight improvement in each, the team could start winning.

None of these changes, however, required harder work – practicing longer, biking faster or climbing steeper hills. No. What he did was maximize their performance by upgrading their comfort and the functionality of their equipment. He tilted the bike seats slightly to improve comfort. He rubbed alcohol on the tires to increase traction. He even upgraded their bedding to improve their sleep.

What does this mean to us? Let's say the goal is to deal calmly with a difficult child. How can we upgrade our functionality and comfort? Should we go to bed earlier, or take 10 minutes to rest during the day? Should we give the child extra attention by doing something with him that we, too, enjoy – perhaps taking him out for breakfast or ice cream? Should we try to reduce the friction in some of his daily routines? If we make our own situation better while improving his situation, we have a plan that will make those modest, doable goals desirable as well.

TALK ABOUT IT

How can you apply this lesson to a change you want to make?

new *chavrusos* and began to learn with a new will. I progressed fast in my learning, and now I'm engaged to a wonderful girl from a fine family.

"Do you see why I say that I owe everything to you?"

The power of words! Let's activate it.

Excerpted from an article by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, Hamodia, Inyan magazine

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