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SHABBOS MENU

FOOD FOR
 THOUGHT
 TO SPARK
 CONVERSATION

PART OF THE CCHF SHABBOS TABLE MACHSOM L'FI PROGRAM · SHABBOS PARSHAS BO 5780 · ISSUE 176

I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP!

You might want to prevent harm by speaking negatively about someone, and you might meet all the conditions for doing so. But what if the fallout from your words spells disaster for the subject?

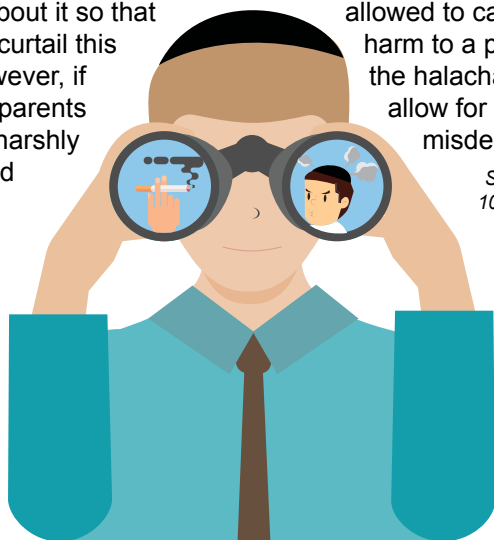
THE DILEMMA

You see your neighbor's 15-year-old son standing with a group of friends outside a local pizza shop and smoking a cigarette. On one hand, you want his parents to know about it so that they can perhaps curtail this harmful habit. However, if you know that his parents are likely to react harshly to the news, should you still speak?

THE HALACHAH

If the consequence of your speaking will cause undue harm, then the constructive aspect of your words is nullified. Certainly we are not allowed to cause more harm to a person than the halachah would allow for that specific misdeed.

*Sefer Chofetz Chaim
 10:2; Hil. Rechilus 9:2*



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.

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

FAR ROCKAWAY

We use the Shabbos Menu newsletters and find they provoke much thought and conversation. The whole program is great. I put the card out on the table, print out the newsletter, and share it with people you might not think would be interested in it. Surprisingly, they like it a lot.

Far Rockaway, NY

FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, EMAIL

Shabbosmenu@cchfglobal.org

"As water reflects a
face
 back to a face, so one's
heart
 is reflected
 back to him by another."

- Mishlei 27:19

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 MALKA BREINDEL A"H BAS SHMUEL FISHEL YLCH"Y

No one knew how it started, but one thing was clear: Chaim and Yosef, two roommates in yeshivah, just didn't get along. Painful comments, stinging insults, even yelling in public became routine. Try as they might, neither the *rebbeim* nor the students managed to restore peace between the two boys.

One day Chaim got engaged to a girl from overseas. Soon he was married and living on the other side of the world.

As time passed, most of the boys in the grade moved on in life. They got married, had children, and before long none of them remained in yeshivah. Except Yosef.

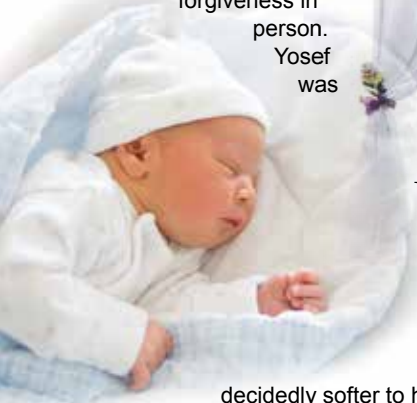
One year followed another and Yosef was still learning in yeshivah, sharing the bench with boys five and ten years his junior. Despite countless dates and untold numbers of *tefillos* and *segulos* performed on his behalf, Yosef had not found his *zivug*.

The mammoth efforts of *tefillos* and *segulos* were mirrored across the ocean for, sadly, Chaim had not yet been granted the gift of a child.

Then Pinchas, another classmate, had a *simchah* to attend in the city where Chaim lived. Having been buddies in yeshivah, the two arranged to meet. It was hard for Pinchas, the father of a growing family, to see his friend Chaim in such pain. During their conversation, Pinchas commented that Yosef was still single. Then he took a deep breath. "Do you think there might be a connection here?" he asked tentatively.

Chaim wasted no time. He immediately placed an international call to Yosef. But when Yosef recognized the caller on the other end of the line he called out angrily, "I don't want to hear your voice!" and banged down the phone. The dial tone in his ear confirmed Chaim's fears.

The very next day Chaim was on a plane, flying back home to beg forgiveness in person. Yosef was



WELL WORTH THE PRICE OF REPAIR

BY TZIPORA GESTETNER

decidedly softer to his surprise visitor and after a few moments, both men were in tears. They parted after exchanging forgiveness and wishes for *besoros tovos*.

Just under a year later, on the day that Yosef finally had his turn to stand under the *chuppah*, Chaim was celebrating the birth of his firstborn child.

sage advice

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Listening seems to be a simple, one-way street. Words leave the speaker's mouth and enter our ears; they've been spoken, and we have heard them.

But the Navi (*Shmuel I, 15:4*) teaches us that it's not so simple after all. Where the *passuk* says "**Vayishama** Shaul es ha'am" — and Shaul **summoned** (lit. caused them to hear) the nation — The Metzudas Zion explains that a person who makes others feel heard and understood creates a connection with those who are speaking, "gathering" them in around him.

Here are some ways to evaluate your listening style and find out if the people in your life walk away from a conversation with you feeling that they've been heard.

Are You a Competitive Listener?

1. You ready your response while the speaker is speaking.
2. You love to debate and disprove others' points.
3. You don't tend to see the matter from the other person's point of view.
4. The speaker doesn't usually feel heard or understood.

Are You a Passive Listener?

1. You really want to hear what the other person has to say.
2. You don't feel the need to respond or probe further.
3. You're satisfied even if you don't fully understand what the speaker meant.
4. The speaker might not feel that you're really interested.

Are You an Active, Reflective Listener?

1. You listen attentively without formulating your response or judging.
2. You engage with the speaker, asking questions and reflecting back his comments to make sure you really understand.
3. You listen with full attention, making sure to have quiet surroundings and a clear mind.
4. Both the speaker and the listener end the conversation feeling they have a greater understanding of one another.

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TALK ABOUT IT

Why did both boys suffer the impact of their hostile relationship? Would you have done what Pinchas did? Why?

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