



L.I.T.N.
LONG ISLAND TORAH NETWORK

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Relationships 101

Torah Insights for Successful Relationships

Part 1 summary

A) Introduction

- 1) Even the smallest change or improvement makes a big difference and is well worth the effort.
- 2) Even ideas and concepts that we already know on an intellectual level require constant review and focus to make them a part of our being and regular everyday attitudes.
(Rabbi Yisrael Salanter - "The greatest distance is the distance from the human mind to the heart.")

B) Mankind is created in the image of G-d

- 1) Our sages teach us that there is a Divine essence implanted in each and every human being.
 - a) Focusing on this concept will change the way we view the people around us and lead us to conduct ourselves better as we appreciate the Divine greatness and potential in everyone we encounter.
 - b) Improving the way we view and treat Mankind as a whole will translate into improved conduct and relationships with those closest to us.
- 2) This G-dly essence gives us our ability - unique among all creations - to make moral decisions and do the right thing even when it might run counter to our physical instincts and desires.
- 3) By making moral decisions and striving to do the right thing, we live up to the divine potential within us and emulate G-d Himself. This is the ultimate achievement in life.
 - a) Our relationships –especially our closest ones -provide us with the greatest opportunities to grow and develop our G-dly traits of kindness, giving and sensitivity. Our relationships are thus key to enabling us to fulfill our ultimate potential in life.

C) Intellectual honesty – a foundation for healthy relationships

- 1) A person may have multiple simultaneous motivations for doing something. Some of these motivations we may be consciously aware of, while some may be driving us subconsciously. (Spouse running late to a wedding; Story of Esther)
- 2) Introspecting and pushing ourselves to be honest and uncover our underlying motivations is key to helping us grow personally and improve our relationships. By doing so, we truly discover ourselves with all our unique strengths and weaknesses - and can better understand when -and how – to make necessary adjustments in our conduct.
- 3) Understanding what is really motivating us will in turn allow us to effectively share our true feelings and concerns and will create much more healthy and positive communication.