



Relationships 101 - Torah Insights for Successful Relationships

Part III Summary

A) High- Pressure Situations and High Expectations

The very situations which we expect to create the best settings to enhance and grow our relationships often lead to the greatest challenges.

Special occasions (family Simchas, holidays, anniversaries, vacations etc.) come with high expectations for happiness and bonding. This can lead to tension and stress when the expectations are not being met, especially if we feel that it's someone's fault.

- 1) We can lower the expectations we place on ourselves and our families to make sure we have the "perfect" experience. The occasion can be wonderful even if it's not perfect.
- 2) If we are aware of this tendency to place undue pressure upon ourselves and others, when a "failing" does occur, we will realize that our frustration or hurt may be merely the result of unmet expectations, and not be an indication of someone else's wrongdoing or lack of sensitivity.

B) Timing

"Do not appease your friend at the time of his anger"

(Ethics of our Fathers 4:18)

Due to the unpleasantness of conflict, there is a tendency to try to resolve it prematurely. Often one party is ready to apologize and move on before the other, and efforts to make peace –genuine as they might be – can very easily be rejected and fail. Furthermore, the pain and hurt of the rejection of our overtures may even lead to an escalation rather than the intended resolution. **It is better to be patient and wait until we are more confident that the other party will respond positively.**

C) Power of Speech

a) The words and expressions that we use in our day-to-day encounters become a part of who we are (Story of Jacob and Esau). If we want to ensure proper and positive communication with those we love, we must make the effort to condition ourselves to speak appropriately to everyone at all times.

b) It is of utmost importance to verbally express our love, respect and support, even if we are certain that those feelings are obvious and understood. (Rebecca and her son Jacob at the time of the blessings)

D) Parent and Child

A relationship like no other – The natural bond between parent and child can create a level of connection and trust that cannot be matched by any other relationship (Moses' description of his relationship with the Jewish people). Parents are given a sacred responsibility to use that trust in a healthy and positive way to guide and help their children grow and reach their potential.