



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Speech Therapy
2. Yiddle Riddle



Dedicated to the memory of Mr. Jack Annis whose life was the embodiment of devotion, concern and love for others.

May his good deeds be an inspiration to all his family.

The Israel Print Edition is dedicated by Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Farb, Los Angeles, California

JK <@ujafedny.org> wrote:

I was wondering about the laws of Lashon Harah (negative speech) and Clinical Therapy. Are there parameters governing what may and may not be said during therapy? For instance, what if I am having

trouble with my dad or my sister, and there are issues about them that I need to talk about. From a clinical point of view, the more honest I am the more likely it is for therapy to be helpful. Also, from the clinician's point of view, are there parameters governing their validation of feelings and issues?

Dear JK,

Your question is a good one and often asked. You wrote about 'Clinical Therapy,' but your question applies equally whether you speak to a 'professional' therapist or an 'amateur' -- e.g., your best friend, your spouse, your barber...

Speaking 'bad' about others is forbidden. In general, however, you're allowed to say negative things about a person for a beneficial purpose. For example, to help your relationship with that person.

However, certain conditions must be met. Among these conditions:

- You must know what you say is true. *"My sister makes fun of me."* If you heard the information from someone else, you must mention that it's not first-hand. *"My cousin says she makes fun of him too."* If what you are saying is just your opinion, it should be stated that way.
- Don't exaggerate. *"She never misses a chance to be mean."* If appropriate, say some positive things so the listener won't form a totally negative picture of the person.
- Say only as much as necessary. The fact that she makes fun of your cousin is probably irrelevant, and should not be said.
- Most of all, your intention when you relate the negative information must be to improve the situation, and not to speak out of animosity.

When speaking about parents extra care must be taken, since it's a Torah commandment to honor them. Nevertheless, if all the conditions are met, it's allowed.

The listener has to walk a tight-rope: He has to take the information seriously, but he must not accept it as the absolute truth. If possible, he should help the speaker see the person in a more positive light.

Our Sages say that prior to the coming of the *mashiach*, family discord will be rampant; this description fits our generation all too well. Through careful speech, judging people favorably, love and understanding, may we merit the fulfillment of the verse "And he will return the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the hearts of the sons to their fathers."

Speaking of clinical therapy: A psychiatrist's receptionist alerted the doctor: "There's a man in the waiting room who says he is invisible!"
"Tell him I can't see him right now," said the doctor.

Sources:

- Sefer Chafetz Chaim
- Tractate Sota 49b
- Malachi 3:24

Yiddle Riddle

Which Mitzvah is performed on Wednesday or Thursday only?

Thanks to Joel Eisenman <Joel@telaviv.ddddf.com>

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi" and send it to ohr@jer1.co.il. We can't include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.

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