

# Women in the Workforce ... *V'taas B'chefetz Kapehah* Advice for Advisers

SHAINDY BABAD

Like parenting, many people have the gut feeling that we innately or naturally know how to give advice. That there is no wrong or right way to parent, no wrong or right way to give advice, no wrong or right way to sleep or cook or breathe.

It is clear, both from our Torah sources and from (*l'havdil*) professional literature, that there is a wrong and right way to do all of these things. Certainly there are rules and guides that make one way of doing better, more effective, more impactful, more streamlined than another. While cooking, sleeping and breathing are essential and we would do well to learn the ins and outs of doing those most effectively, I will leave those to the other sections and columnists in Hamodia, and focus on the dos and don'ts for effectively giving and receiving advice.

Many people feel that receiving advice is a passive act — and that giving advice is an innate ability. But the truth is that these are skills one can acquire and practice. When done well, both sides gain.

People seeking guidance (as opposed to validation alone) develop more mature and nuanced thinking and solutions. They overcome biases, flaws and “blind spots” in their thinking — thus performing better. Those who give effective advice wield soft power — influencing processes while empowering others. And, of course, providing excellent advice will engender a desire to return or pay forward the favor.

However, in order to be successful they must overcome the deeply ingrained desire to stick with their opinions regardless of merit, something that requires restraint, self-awareness and patience.

Here are some tips to help you stay on

target, whether advice receiver or giver, and avoid the typical pitfalls of misunderstanding, frayed relationships and decision gridlock.

Advice comes in many flavors, and while some overlap, it is important to identify which exact tool you need: one-time advice, counsel, coaching, or mentoring.

Advice for the asker:

In order to get good advice you need to do some prep work. It is harder than it looks because we often think it is automatic or “gut” feeling based.

Know what you don't know: Often people ask for advice when they feel they really know the answer. They simply want to (or need to) “check the box” of asking for advice. If you strongly believe that you've solved the problem or know what to do, it is hard to remain open to hearing objective, and sometimes very different, perspectives.

Choose the right advisers: It is important to seek advice from someone with the requisite skills, knowledge and experience to answer your query properly. Simply finding someone to be your yes-man will not give you the value of real advice. Often you need to push to think creatively about which expertise you really need for your answer, which field of knowledge will give you valuable insight, who has solved a similar problem before. Often wisdom is found in unlikely packages. Your grandmother may know nothing of high-tech and the technical practices of the modern workplace, but if she worked with people from all walks of life for 50 years, she probably has valuable insight for a human resource issue.

Define the problem clearly: Once you've chosen your adviser, it is critical that they understand the key issues, dilemmas and your perspective properly. Talking too much isn't more effective.

Rather, sit down and define the problem — the core question you are asking. Then add the key pieces of information necessary for your listener to get a clear picture of the situation and factors influencing your decision.

*Kabel es ha'emes mimi she'amrah.* Often we make the mistake of undervaluing or dismissing advice coming from unexpected quarters.

However, the opposite is just as dangerous: Valuing advice just because it came from a VIP is unwise, unless you really had time for a conversation and understanding.

It's OK to get a second or third opinion, as long as you can manage the process and do not get confused.

Advice for the giver:

Don't overstep your boundaries: Giving advice and taking over are different things. Don't get confused. Stay in the position of adviser but do not assume the role of boss or actually do the work for the person requesting your advice.

Avoid hasty judgements: To be a valuable resource requires hard work and humility. You may need to conduct research. Understand that the situation facing the person asking you may be vastly different than your own experience or her needs different than yours.

Communicate clearly: Make sure your advice is understood. If nuanced, make sure the details or caveats are clearly explained.

Getting started:

Check to see that you are both a good fit: Do you have similar expectation regarding the amount of time and the consistency of the adviser/advice relationship? Are yours skills a good fit? Are you impartial and not too closely aligned with the subject of the advice or the parties to the activities they are asking about?

Develop a shared understanding:

Your primary goal is to establish a grasp of the situation, framework where it is taking place and the goals for the query.

Look for alternatives: Often advice seekers will phrase their question as a “Should I do this or that” type of query. Your job is to examine the situation to see if there are alternatives or avenues not yet considered. Make sure you having a dialogue — not a monologue from either side. The conversation should be thoughtful and take considering.

Converging on a decision: Toward the end of the advice session, it is important to narrow down the choices for a course of action. Play devil's advocate and help the person seeking advice think about how others will react to each course of action, how it will impact them, perhaps unexpectedly.

The responsibility for making the final decision and implementing the advice must always be that of the seeker.

*Ein simchah k'hataras sfeikos.* The joy of making a decision and knowing how to act is great.

Watching someone grow and succeed after following your advice is sweet.

May we join forces, playing both roles with each other.



*Temech is a nonprofit organization that promotes employment, entrepreneurship and professional development for women in Israel. Shaindy Babad is the CEO of Temech. Shaindy joined Temech in 2008 after working in high-tech and as a serial social entrepreneur.*

*We want to hear from you! This discourse is for and about you, me, all of us. Please send your comments and thoughts to hamodia@temech.org*

## Hagaon Harav Chaim Shlomo Leibowitz, zt"l

Continued from page 16

Torah and his *middos*; he excelled in the forty-eight *maalos* of the Torah in all his ways,” said Harav Edelstein. “In this, he emulated the Vilna Gaon.”

The next *maspid* was Hagaon Harav Baruch Dov Povarsky, *Rosh Yeshivah*, Yeshivas Ponevezh, who noted that not only was Reb Chaim Shlomo the grandson of Reb Baruch Ber, but he also was unique in that he instilled the famed *derech halimud* of his grandfather in today's generation. He also transmitted the *derech halimud* of Brisk, since he was a close *talmid* of the Brisker Rav, Harav Velvel, zt"l. Reb Chaim Shlomo was one of the first three *talmidim* of the Brisker yeshivah in Yerushalayim, founded by Harav Yosef Dov (Reb Berel), zt"l. (It is known — until today — that there is never a *shiur* given in Brisk on Wednesdays, since that was the day Reb Chaim Shlomo would go to his father's *shiur*, in Yeshivas Kamenitz, and Reb Berel would say, if Reb Chaim Shlomo isn't present at the *shiur*, I have no one to say the *shiur* to...) “Reb Chaim Shlomo's entire *guf* became *neshamah*, and thus the *neshamah* had no reason to leave the *guf*, until, due to our *aveiros*,” bemoaned Harav Povarsky, “the *Rosh Yeshivah* was *niftar*.”

Hagaon Harav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, *Rosh Yeshivah*, Yeshivas Ateres Yisrael, and a *chavrusa* of Reb Chaim Shlo-

mo from their years in Yeshivas Chevron, spoke next. He related that already as a young *bachur*, Reb Chaim Shlomo would help his father, Reb Yaakov Moshe, prepare the *shiur klali*. From youth, he devoted himself entirely to *limud haTorah*.

The last *maspid* at Yeshivas Ponevezh was the son of Reb Chaim Shlomo, Harav Yaakov Moshe Leibowitz, who serves as *Ram* in Yeshivas Be'er HaTorah in Yerushalayim.

Many *Gedolei Yisrael* participated in the *levayah* in Bnei Brak; notable among them: Hagaon Harav Aharon Leib Steinman, Hagaon Harav Chaim Kanievsky, as well as many Rabbanim, Rebbes and *Roshei Yeshivah*.

After that, the *mittah* was taken to Yerushalayim, where thousands awaited the *levayah* in front of the Kamenitz Yeshivah building.

At Kamenitz, Hagaon Harav Yitzchak Sheiner, *shlita*, *Rosh Yeshivah*, Yeshivas Kamenitz, and a cousin of the *niftar*, was *maspid*.

Hagaon Harav Avraham Erlanger, *shlita*, *Rosh Yeshivah*, Yeshivas Kol Torah, spoke at the *levayah*, as well as the son of the *niftar*, Harav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, *Ram* in Yeshivas Mir, Yerushalayim.

From there, the *levayah* continued to Har Hamenuchos, where the *Rosh Yeshivah* was brought to *kevurah*.



Rav Chaim Shlomo suffered great loss in his life, with two of his children predeceasing him. His son Harav Chizkiyahu Yosef, z"l, was *niftar* several years ago, while his daughter, Rebbetzin Keila Rivkah Schwartzman, a"n, was *niftar* just a few months ago.

Despite all his personal hardships, Rav

Chaim Shlomo always strengthened himself in Torah.

Rav Chaim Shlomo is survived by his Rebbetzin, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and many *talmidim* the world over.

*Zecher tzaddik livrachah.*