

An American in Yerushalayim

By Dov Fuchs

Dov Fuchs, a kollel student and rebbi in Yerushalayim, shares the joys and challenges of his young family as it adjusts to a culture that is different from what they grew up with.

The Makolet – A Personal Shopping Experience

I once had occasion to check out one of the new kosher mega superstores in America. I felt like I needed a GPS to make my way around! It was ginormous. Definitely not what I was used to.

In days gone by, the only thing compelling you to visit the supermarket was an empty cupboard, while your main concern was that you not be left with an empty pocket. But times have changed. Shopping is no longer a convenience or a requirement. It is an “experience.”

If once, you took along a shopping list consisting of your needs and necessities, nowadays, you leave your list at home and allow your imagination to soar. You will learn to desire that which you never knew you needed. This is not merely a store; you are entering a new dimension. Psychologists — PSYCHOLOGISTS! — have been consulted to present a display that will tempt every one of your senses.

The color scheme, the ambiance, the lighting and even the background music have all been adapted to lure you into a hypnotic state that will have you filling your wagon with gusto. Your palate is enticed with mouthwatering displays of gourmet, freshly cooked and baked food

items whose aroma arouses even one who has just eaten to feel like he is starving.

Showcased before you are an array of delicacies made from recipes from every continent and nationality. Mexican, Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Middle Eastern and, oh yes, Jewish too! Perhaps you have never actually visited the most exotic places in the world, but should you choose to, your stomach will feel right at home. Though I do not have a stamp in my passport as proof of my foray into the “Republic of Food Consumers,” I cannot express how happy I am to have returned home.

Here in Israel many people shop in the local *makolet*. Almost everything you need you can find there; you just need to know where, and how, to look. There is one solitary (yellow) lightbulb that offers its dim illumination. The shelves are stuffed with many staples and food items, some new and some, well, quite old. There is not necessarily a specific order or method to the madness. The only one who can direct you is the owner himself. He knows every single piece of dust in his little enclave and can tell you precisely where you can find what you need.

He is also personally acquainted with you and each of your family members. Little children are sent, daily, with a “*petek*,” a shopping list of sorts, that they hand over to him; often, they are too young to read it themselves. He will know which family eats which brands and *hashgachos* as well as their price range.

Children who come on their own, to buy treats or candies, are all under his constant scrutiny. He knows how much each one can spend and will only allow those whose parents will consent to make the purchase. He realizes which children need to be reminded to keep the change in their pockets until they get home. And for those who put things on the bill, he recognizes each child by their family name.

Someone related that a child, not a familiar face, entered with a *petek* and dutifully handed it over to the owner of the store. He read it, gathered together a few items, placed them in a bag and waved the child off. After the little girl exited, he showed the *petek* to a woman standing nearby. It read: “We have no money for Shabbos and no food in the house. Please send us something so we, too, can have



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oneg Shabbos.” And without hesitating, he did!

Maybe the jumbo supermarkets serve the gamut of delicacies while they’re piping hot, but there’s nothing like a *makolet* to warm your heart!

Women in the Workforce ... V'taas B'chefetz Kapehah Take-Aways

SHAINDY BABAD

We often spend months, lots of energy and sometimes every tool in our arsenal (including calling in every favor we may have coming) to arrange a meeting with someone we consider important for our business or job. We save up for months to attend an event that is important for our industry, jumping through hoops to arrange child care, transportation and time away from the office.

Sadly, often, despite having the opportunity to meet the person, company or group that could be a catalyst of significant growth for us, it somehow disintegrates into nothingness with no real achievement achieved.

What goes wrong?

Meetings, events, conferences, networking platforms and any kind of venue that brings you together with people that you could potentially work with, work for or do business with is just a starting point. Of course, without this starting point, there would be nothing to launch off of! But without take-aways — those steps we take at the end of meetings and immediately following them, most talk turns to hubris.

Six take-aways from this article for your next meeting, conference or event:

- **Summarize:** This step must take place at the meeting itself. Whether an elevator conversation or multi-party meeting, take the last few minutes of your conversation to wrap up the next steps, who will be executing them, and a basic timeline for getting them done. If it is not possible to do this in the forum with everyone, at the very least summarize this for yourself.
- **Jot it down:** Too often we rely on our



“What did you take away from the meeting?”

memory, assuming that all the details are too important to forget. But as today slips into tomorrow and 1,000 things vie for our attention we are liable to forget the key components for taking the next step. Therefore, take a moment, as soon as possible after meeting someone, to write down who you met (perhaps on their business card or brochure), reminding yourself what you discussed and the next steps you thought to take.

- **Act quickly and do something:** Using the information above, schedule time to sit down and follow through on

those action items, reaching out to each and every valuable contact to follow up on what you discussed. The sooner the better after your meeting, while the event is still fresh in everyone’s mind.

- **Follow up:** Sometimes once is enough, but often that is not the case, and you will need perseverance and creativity to continue to maintain relevant contact with those you wish to build relationships with. Don’t give up after trying once. Rome and relationships aren’t built in a day.
- **Offer Value:** To effectively follow item No. 4, consider ways you can offer value,

service or help to the other party. Do not only send your standard sales pitches or self-promotions or requests. Offer them value based on what you learned in your conversation. Giving is the path toward building valuable relationships.

- **Prepare for your next meeting or conference:** The first time we attend an event or meeting we may miss many opportunities. That’s how one learns. After an event, sit down and consider what you could have done better before the event, during the event or in your follow up that would have maximized the value. An event is a platform, but it is up to you to use it wisely.

So don’t walk out of your next meeting or conference with a chair or the coffee urn — the hosts may just call the police! But I do hope these tips help you take away valuables from every event, meeting and conference you attend.



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