

July 31, 2019

P.A.S.S. Meeting #3

Strategies that have worked for some of us:

- Keep busy: shiurim, taharos, working F/T, going back to grad school, taking courses in yoga and/or nutrition, etc.
- Keep conversations pareve, don't bring up any negative stories from the past
- Be concerned directly for your child; she might see that as real caring.
- You just have to live long enough...
- Send weekly cards with money. (A year later, he showed appreciation and asked if he'd get more.)
- Keep a box of written notes, printed emails you wanted to send, and greeting cards. Put them in the box to show your child when she shows up one day and asks, "Where were you all these years?"
- Let it go. We can only control so much. Actually, we can't control anything.
- Don't be a shmatta!
- Remember to think about the alienator: "You're a loser if the only way you feel like you won is by controlling our child."
- Ask yourself: Is this typical teenage behavior or is this alienation?
- Compartmentalize: one part of me is my emotional life and there is another part of my life that has good parts.
- My child has his own tikkun and path he needs to go through. Our children have their own journey to travel. Our children also signed up for this.
- We need to be hopeful.
- Talking to Hashem in English (or any other language) is davening.
- Focus on what is positive in your life. Ex. I have a wonderful second husband. I have lovely grandkids from my stepkids whom I adore. Thank you for the stepkids.
- Every day is a new day.
- Use humor.
- Do chizuk calls. Have a friend you can call for chizuk at any time. Listen to her when she needs your chizuk.
- Sometimes one's husband or one's friend cannot be the only supportive person we have in our lives. Create a whole network of people who can support you. Create a new group of friends. Reach out to the people in our support group.
- Self-care: swimming, walking, eating good salad and chocolate, music, reading a book, buying jewelry at TJ Maxx for \$5-10, yoga, manicures...
- Yes, sometimes we do walk on egg-shells.
- Be your own best person.
- Sanity is over-rated.
- Build a new circle of friends.
- Remember: "It gets better" (with time).
- Call/Text your child every day, once a week, etc... whatever works for you and your child, and doesn't make you feel worse.

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- Make foods that your child likes and give it to him/her.
- The healthier we get, the more our children will have someone to respect.
- We need to do things to make ourselves happy. We can find things to be appreciative for.
- “My daughter texted once, well, that’s once more than she had in 5 years. That’s a step in the right direction.” Hold on to the glimmer!
- What makes adults resilient? Do they have someone they can call at 3am? Be that parent for them, someone they can call in emergency situations.
- We need to remember that we were the best, most amazing parents we could have ever been. It is not that we did something horrible to deserve this.
- Keep planting seeds. Drop a comment and know that your child heard it even if he didn’t respond. “Your relationship with your mom is the template for your future relationship with your wife.”
- At some point, we’ll have to put Humpty Dumpty together again. Oh well.
- Put pictures of your kids around your room and tell the picture, “I love you.” They will feel the metaphysical bond.
- When our children come back, the relationship might never be the same. But we all change, so our relationships evolve as well.
- After 40 years of research, all kids come back at some point.
- We can be a “hopeless optimist.”
- If a child knows that one parent (you) will always be there for him, he can reject you because he feels safe that you’ll still be there when he comes around.
- We’ve done a good job at parenting such that our kids are able to be independent without us.
- Child: “I had to go to the other parent in order to have 2 parents. Otherwise, I would have had only one parent, you.”
- Movie: “The Last Word” re: parental alienation
- If you had the strength, wherewithal, and you don’t feel like a shmatta, do more for your child. If you can’t, you can’t. Do it for yourself, not for your child.
- Go with the flow. When you finally meet your child, continue the relationship as if nothing happened before. Don’t bring up bad feelings from the past so that they don’t get pulled back to the past.
- Remember: It helps kids to survive by believing that you are the horrible parent.
- They’re in a cult. Alienation is a cult.
- Some firefighters set fires.
- Tell your child “I think about you every day.”