



When Therapists Take Away Your Child

The response to the discussion about therapy and alienation has been significant and sustained. Below is a sampling.

THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES

LIFE ON THE BORDER

› R. K.

I am not a therapist, nor a communal leader, just someone people come to for a listening ear.

Therefore, what I have to say is nothing more than an observation, though it is something that I have observed repeatedly; in fact, can think of four instances off the top of my head.

In all four cases a husband was convinced by his wife to cut off ties from his (and sometimes, even her) parents. I imagine there are reverse cases as well where the husband convinces his wife to cut off ties.

Borderline personality disorder seems to be the most overused term in psychobabble...but one application that I believe *is* valid is where someone is convinced by his or her spouse to sever ties from his parents.

Inevitably, the one doing the convincing is suffering from borderline personality disorder. The healthy spouse should be aware of it and find ways to maintain some degree of relationship with his parents.

One good starting point is the book *Stop Walking on Eggshells*, which teaches how to negotiate with a borderline family member.

Remember, it is *almost always* possible to maintain some degree of connection with one's parents, even if they are difficult. If your spouse insists otherwise, then there is something very wrong.

I DON'T BUY IT

› A concerned rebbi

You recently published a letter from a mother claiming a therapist took her children away from her. Although the article was discussing things that have changed in the past decade, there are some things that have not changed and those are the ability to deflect and the power of denial. I am a rebbi who deals constantly with conflicts between parents and teenagers and I've noticed the common and easy escape of blaming therapists, mentors, and rebbeim for parents' own failings in connecting to their children. If I may be so bold, when I read a letter saying that a therapist took away a child from their mother and

subsequently the rest of her children are also distancing themselves all because of that first child, excuse me for saying it so bluntly, but I don't buy it.

Under healthy circumstances, children long to be connected to their parents. Yes, there are exceptions, and yes, there are children who are more challenging to connect with. But to point a finger at anyone else as a reason that *all* your children are questioning your parenting is highly unlikely and quite frankly, delusional.

When a full house of children are saying something, that carries weight. Maybe, just maybe, your "uncomplimentary remarks" were a little more than just that. And maybe, just maybe, there were more than a few moments of self-admitted "huge stress," which should not be a "normal everyday interaction." For children to move to the point where they are walking off and taking the grandchildren with them, and the rest of the children seem to feel the same, I think it's safe to assume that this wasn't just bad advice from a therapist.

Painful as it may be, this is the time to look in the mirror and ask yourself:

Was everything as perfect as I perceived it? Maybe your denial and lack of understanding of your children's pain are what led to the situation in the first place.

The intention of this letter is not to be cruel. The intention is to implore these parents to please stop burying their heads and do what needs to be done to restore the relationships with their children at home and avoid the mistakes that were made in the past. Facing our flaws is extremely difficult but so vital to understanding others and ourselves. Maybe if you can find it within yourself to understand their pain, your married children will one day see the change and reconnect with you as well. We should all be *zocheh* to have the *siyata d'Shmaya* to raise children in beautiful loving and Torahdig homes.

TEN LOST YEARS
 › A Reunited Child

"Tatty, don't call me again! Ever!"

I've been saying that to my father since I was 12 years old. I'm 22 now. Nevertheless my father would call for every Yom Tov and birthday. He would regularly send me gifts and love packages. Yet any time he tried to make contact with me I would scream for him to get away.

Back then I had no idea why I was doing this. Today I believe it was the constant rumors that my father was a loser that stuck in my mind. Disregarding my father gave me a stoical boost and helped me deal with a stressful family situation. When I told my therapist how good this made me feel, he told me the main thing was that I felt happy.

At one point I joined a support group for alienated young adults. About ten minutes into the session something in

me suddenly snapped. For the first time in my life I faced the question from my very own perspective: Why did *you* reject your father? What was in it for *you*? My heart sank. I was afraid I would crumble. The emotions were overpowering. Could I have actually thrown away a loving father? Me?! I remembered all those phone calls, gifts, and the endless effort my father made to build a relationship with me that I continuously rejected. Oh! How it hurt!

Now I was really angry. Why didn't my therapist open my eyes to that very same question? Why did he encourage the sensation of feeling on an "emotionally drugged high" for breaking away. He was the professional and should have been there to guide me in ways conducive for my growth. I lost ten precious years!

I have now been reunited with my father for over a year. A true sense of contentment has replaced my false sense of superiority.

If you are rejecting, disrespecting, or avoiding your parent/s because you had a feeling or an experience or were told so by someone you trusted, please reconsider and give them another chance. The life you end up healing may well be your own.

SUPPORT FOR ALIENATED PARENTS
 › Broken Ties Director

We wish to thank you for publishing the letter of "Epidemic of Alienation" and the responses that you received to it. We'd like your readers to know that a support group for Alienated Parents is available. Please email brokenties3@gmail.com or call (518) 941-6316. You cannot imagine the influx of calls and e-mails we have been receiving as a result of this letter. May Hashem reward you for bringing awareness of this important issue to our community.

PROJECT INSPIRE.
 A PROGRAM OF **ish HaTorah**

A NEW DECADE OF INSPIRATION

Project Inspire Convention 2020

FEBRUARY 21-23 2020

Shifreidesign@gmail

Rabbi Shmuel **DISHON**
 Rabbi Nissin **KAPLAN**
 Rabbi Moshe **WEINBERGER**
 Rav Shmuel **SILBER**
 Rav Gav **FRIEDMAN**
 Rabbi Yitzchak **FELDHEIM**
 Rabbi Dovid **GREENBLATT**
NEW! Rabbi Yussie **ZAKUTINSKY**
+ THE PROJECT INSPIRE STAFF
 Rebbitzin Tziporah **HELLER**
 Mrs. Jackie **BITTON**
 Rebbitzin Myrna **WEINBERGER**
 Mrs. Debbie **GREENBLATT**

RUACH & DAVENING WITH SHLOMO SIMCHA AND אגודת אשכנז

AN "INSPIRED" REUNION!

THE ORIGINAL DIASPORA YESHIVA BAND

Featuring: THE REUNION

AVRAHAM ROSENBLUM
 MENACHEM HERMAN
 MOSHE SHUR
 RUBY HARRIS

TANTALIZING CUISINE CATERED BY **Chap'nosh of Cedarhurst** and **CROWNE PLAZA STAMFORD**

CONVENTION@projectinspire.com
 (718) 874-8875
projectinspire.com/CONVENTION