

Estrangement, not Alienation

[Inbox / Issue 825]

Reading through the Inbox in last week's *Mishpacha*, I spotted the word "alienation" in a letter from "A son-in-law in pain." As the director of a group for alienated parents, my ears instantly perked up.

After rereading both your Lifelines story "Crushed Apple" and its response, I was concerned that your readership will now associate alienated children with harsh and aggressive parenting. This is not necessarily the truth. Contrary to what the letter writer implies, alienation is not about the fallout of a parent-child

relationship. Rather it is the culmination of a ploy by a third party known as "the Alienator."

The goal of the alienator is to impress on the child that his mother or father was unloving and failed to protect him. Sadly, utilizing manipulative tactics, which are often deceptive or take things out of context, it is possible to do so.

Your Lifelines story "Crushed Apple" more closely reflects a term known as "estrangement." In this phenomenon, children will reject parents who actually hurt them.

Unfortunately many people tend to confuse these two terms. I thought it significant to clarify this so that grieving parents who are experiencing true alienation can receive the love and support from family and friends that is so crucial to their survival.

It may interest your readership to know that there is a support group for alienated parents with over 200 members, all from the *frum* heimishe community. For many of our members, our group is the first place they found true understanding for their plight. We have also developed many projects to bring awareness to our community at large in the hope of reuniting families.

May all Hashem's children find healing and be reunited with their loved ones,

G.W.

Director, Broken Ties

Mishpacha

thanks all of our readers for their letters and comments. Due to printing deadlines, most letters can only be published two weeks after they are received. The editor reserves the right to edit and shorten letters. All letters will be considered for publication unless otherwise indicated. We urge our readers to keep their letters as brief and to the point as possible. Letters not meant for publication may be any length.

To contact Mishpacha's Rabbinic Advisory Board, write to rabbis@mishpacha.com or fax 718-686-0404 or 972 (0)77-202-0501.

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