

LETTERS

Go to Therapy Together

Both sides need to participate
In reference to "Perspective,"
Issue 494

Dear Editor:

Tzodek Katz brought up a very important point about the need to go to therapy *with* the other person, especially if the issue is a relationship. This is true not only for a husband and wife. Think about all the alienation stories that have recently been publicized.

In all the stories I've read, an outsider—usually a therapist or well-meaning adviser—is described as pushing for the "emergency exit" of no contact with the parents, siblings or both. You will even hear that sometimes another person gets involved to try to mediate, but you never hear that the two parties came together and tried to work it out.

As Reb Tzodek points out, the "abuse excuse" is overused. "Abuse" may even be defined as parents taking a child out to eat in a restaurant and not allowing the child to choose the place, an example I have heard myself.

In cases where there really is a problem, if a therapist is involved, the person can get the help needed. Such help can be effective if the therapist considers having the other party—a parent, spouse or child—involved in the therapy process. This would

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give the professional a chance to see if a) the parent is really narcissistic, b) the child is selfish and unreasonably demanding, c) a combination, or d) there was a complete misunderstanding. This approach would reduce the alienation rate and increase the opportunity for emotional health in our families.

A.M.

When a Spouse Is a Psychopath

Some marriages are traumatic
In reference to "Perspective,"
Issue 494

Dear Editor:

Tzodek Katz is correct when he argues that the term "abuse" is often used too easily.

The miseducation of the public regarding pathology has created unhelpful and generic views of victims and abusers. Those are the cracks through which victims risk falling.

These misunderstandings run the gamut from ascribing paranoia to the victim to assessing the abuser as rational, devoted and caring, because a high-functioning covert abuser presents one face in public and another in private.

Tzodek Katz correctly states that divorce is not the easy way out. If there is one thing more difficult than living in an abusive marriage, it is divorcing the abuser; it takes heroic effort to find the courage to stand up for one's truth.

Although many people experience acute traumatic events in life, prolonged experiences of distress actually cause the most harm. Living in a chronic state of overstress wears down the nervous system, and it can take quite some time to recover from the trauma.

In order for survivors to retain confidence in a system that backs them and offers them necessary emotional support, it is essential that we change the conversation and shine a new light on this rarely understood issue.

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