

your letters

AMI MAGAZINE

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Help for a Sick Baby A family's plea

Dear Editor:

I am sending this letter on behalf of my friend. We would really appreciate it if you could please print this.

Dear Readers:

I hope someone will read this letter and help us with some desperately needed advice or leads.

My six-month-old son was born with intracranial calcification, an abnormality that causes widespread calcium deposits all over his brain. The doctors are still searching for a course of treatment.

He also has a serious heart defect known as tetralogy of Fallot, which requires surgery. The doctors are pushing off the surgery, because they are suggesting that since he has a severely degenerative disease in his brain, it is in the best interests of the baby not to operate on him at all.

We are obviously shattered and heartbroken. We don't know where to turn.

We live in the UK, and we are reaching out to anyone who has had experience with these illnesses and may be able to offer us some guidance or advice.

Please contact us at helpourson11@gmail.com. Thank you.

Helping Bubby ...is not for everyone

In reference to "Navigating Life," issue 487

Dear Editor:

I read with great interest the letter, as well as the response, to the mother trying to figure out if she should force her daughter to sleep at her grandmother's house. It brought back memories from over two

decades ago, when I would sleep at my grandmother weekly.

The answer I would give this mother is unequivocally: No. Your daughter should not be forced to sleep at her grandmother's house if she does not want to.

There are many ways to forge a loving and respectful relationship with one's grandmother including acts of *chesed*; but sleeping at an elderly grandmother's home does not work for everyone. For some it is not a big deal, however, for others it is a very emotional and overwhelming ordeal. At the age of 14, a child should not be forced into a situation that she's not emotionally ready for.

Perhaps your daughter isn't emotionally mature enough yet to understand her own thoughts, let alone express them, as to why she doesn't want to sleep there. If she is resentful or resisting, that alone speaks volumes. This is not a situation of a lack of *derech eretz* or laziness; this a situation that requires a mother to be there for her child and listen to what she's saying. Listen not just with your ears, but also with your heart.

It is not fair to burden her with this responsibility, and turn it into a *middos* issue. I agree it is good for one to be pushed out of his or her comfort zone, but that has to be age appropriate and this particular issue does not fit into an age-appropriate category for a 14-year-old. This is not the same as pushing a child to get over her fears such as taking exams or sleeping alone.

I can speak for myself; I loved my grandmother very much and we had a great and close relationship, yet I did not want to sleep at her house in her later years, but I did not have a choice.

It caused me such inner conflict and

angst, feeling guilty for the anguish I was causing my parents for not being happy to go there. Each week I dreaded the day of the week that I would have to sleep there. Looking back, I don't know if I could have clearly articulated why, and even now I wonder, but ultimately I was not comfortable, and perhaps terrified, with the responsibility of going there and being the one in charge should something happen. Emotionally, it was frighteningly overwhelming. I did not sleep well that night each week.

My parents never verbally forced me to go, but I did not want to disappoint them so I held back as much as I could from commenting on how much I disliked it. I knew that they understood that this was not something I wanted to do and disliked it very much, but they didn't know what else to do. I do not blame or judge my parents because they were put into a difficult circumstance. Perhaps had I been a more difficult or stubborn child I would have gotten my way.

To the letter writer, I encourage you to do everything in your power not to force a grandchild to sleep over if she is not

ready to. You are not helping build a relationship with her grandmother; on the contrary you're helping destroy it. To the mother who is conflicted, your husband's siblings might be fuming in the short run, emotionally charged by the whole situation of dealing with an aging parent, but you are providing for your daughter the safety and the security she needs to mature in an emotionally healthy way, not just in the short run, but for the rest of her life.

Anonymous

Navigating Life

This Week's PARENTING
with SHARIS KUMAR-WALL

Torn between her child and her mother

Dear Sherie:

Last month, my dear father passed away after a long illness. My mother is 75 years old, but she is not in the best of health. She is dependent on her health care workers, and my father's passing has put her in a very depressed state. I imagine your dilemma is not unique, but for me it has been haunting in its anguish and its loss to my family.

I have decided against my siblings, and I agree with the decision, that we cannot all my mother always, and we all of us do not have the time and energy to do so. I have decided to leave her in the care of the health care workers, and I have decided to leave her in the care of the health care workers. I have decided to leave her in the care of the health care workers.

My daughter who is 26, is struggling to get along. She has a job, but she is struggling to get along. She has a job, but she is struggling to get along. She has a job, but she is struggling to get along.

Dear Reader:

What should we tell my siblings? How should we tell my mother? What should we tell my daughter? What should we tell my mother? What should we tell my daughter? What should we tell my mother? What should we tell my daughter?

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It would like to see your words of wisdom for your loss. No one can get through a loss as difficult. Coping with the loss of your mother during such a time when you are obviously in a hard time is a very difficult situation. There is pain, loss, and grief. It is a very difficult situation. There is pain, loss, and grief. It is a very difficult situation.

There is no one so easy as to your grandmother. Perhaps your resolution will not be so easy. But the main thing is that, when looking back at the time of your life, you feel that you did the right thing. Regret runs away at the pace of no one's words.

You ask the question: Should you face your daughter? What do you tell your daughter? And, as you write, "Most importantly, what should we tell our daughter?" I believe that you are correct that communicating well with your daughter is the most important issue here. The next will follow and will be in place once you have gained clarity.

Let me begin by understanding your goal here. The goal is to understand and clarify the situation and to help your daughter in the best way possible. The next will follow and will be in place once you have gained clarity.

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The goal is chinuch (education), which refers to the breaking in of a person into the role or task each is destined to perform.

I suggest 3 steps:

First, make space for your child to be heard. She needs to see that you want to listen to her concerns and understand her needs. Allow your daughter to voice her feelings and her needs. Tell her that you will listen to her and that you will do your best to understand her in a practical way.

It's important that you speak with your daughter in a way that is not accusatory. Use the words "I understand" and "I hear" rather than "I see" or "I know". This will not be the only time in the future that you will have to deal with her. It's important that you speak with your daughter in a way that is not accusatory. Use the words "I understand" and "I hear" rather than "I see" or "I know". This will not be the only time in the future that you will have to deal with her.

Second, listen to her concerns. It's okay to be uncomfortable, to be sad, to be angry, to be frustrated. It's okay to be uncomfortable, to be sad, to be angry, to be frustrated. It's okay to be uncomfortable, to be sad, to be angry, to be frustrated.

Third, make a plan. Once you have listened to her concerns and understood her needs, it's time to make a plan. This plan should be based on her needs and your own. It should be a plan that you can both live with and that you can both agree on.

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heart, so that it wasn't simply turning away from the situation.

While not a child's responsibility, aging grandparents are a family's *zechus*. Perspective weighs heavily here, too. If you are able to teach a child that Bubby is not a "burden" for us, but together we will figure out a way to build a relationship that works as well as being solution oriented, then everyone is a winner.

My cousin, Mrs. Chayala Jungreis Isbee, was also given the experience of sleeping in our grandmother's home, as a teenager after Zayda was *niftar*. There were many reasons why this was difficult. I asked about her thoughts on this topic and this is what she relayed:

"These nightly experiences only enriched my life. I learned the meaning of patience, tolerance and perseverance. As I spent time with my grandmother, I learned from her ways. We developed a very deep relationship. My grandmother passed away 20 years ago and I have a treasure trove of stories from her life because of time spent with her. "Hard" does not always mean bad and "easy" does not always mean good. I am truly grateful that I had the opportunity to

spend quality time with her."

You write about feeling guilty for causing your parents anguish and not wanting to go. Exactly why a good solution is required so that down the road an adult would never have to say "I feel guilty because I did not go to my Bubby. I wish I would've been able to have done that. And now there is no going back."

Wishing you and all *klal Yisrael brachah* and *nachas*.

Slovie Jungreis Wolff

Incredible Women ...featured in AmiLiving

In reference to Issue 487

Dear Editor:

The Sukkos *AmiLiving* introduced me to the incredible women who took life's challenges and truly overcame them. Shterni Wolff, Chavie Bruck, and Devorah Kreiman bring such perspective to challenging situations. Hashem should *bentch* them with only open and revealed good.

N.N.

Author! Author! Sukkos stories

In reference to Issue 487

Dear Editor:

With a mouthful of potato kugel and a screwdriver, thank you, Dina Neuman, Roizy Baum and all the other talented writers. I'd like to applaud you all for an awesome Sukkos issue!

Thank you and keep it up!

A.N.

Shout Out ...to a great Sukkos Magazine

In reference to Issue 487

Dear Editor:

I wanted to thank you for the fabulous Sukkos edition. There were so many interesting articles that I am just now finally up to the last few pages. I loved the detailed and informative article about Chaim Medical. Pessy Shlafbrig is a brilliant woman and she helped someone close to me with a very complex issue. Chaim and Chavy Bruk are two amazing



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