



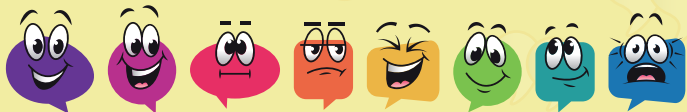
THE CLEAN SPEECH PROJECT

promoting constructive speech

SPEECH DILEMMAS

The Clean Speech Project is all about making decisions to utilise positive speech and avoid negative speech.

Read the dilemma scenarios together with your child. Take the time to discuss each scenario and what you both think you should do – and why. Then turn over the card to study together the Torah wisdom on the situation in question and see if you can discuss the underlying Torah logic for each case.



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ADVICE BIAS

Your friend asks you for advice...

They are trying out for the lead role in the school play and they want some acting tips.

You have a dilemma here as you also want that role.

Should you advise them wrongly by giving them bad tips to purposely make them fail?

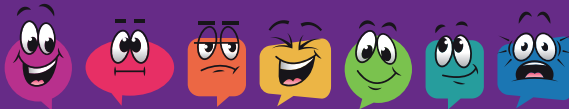
1

Question



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Though this may be difficult, the Torah cautions against giving bad advice. It warns against placing 'a stumbling block in front of a blind person' – giving bad advice is considered like tripping a person up, as their reliance on you is being manipulated to their detriment.

You have to put aside your personal bias and give them the advice that's best for them, as you would very much like to receive were you in their shoes.

1

Answer


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HOME TRUTHS

Your child, Eli, senses that you are not happy with your daughter Esther.

She has done something wrong and you, as a parent, are upset with her.

Eli doesn't know what Esther did and is curious to find out.

As a parent, from an educational point of view, you feel it's your duty to tell him what she did, especially as you don't want him to feel that you are hiding something from him.

On the other hand, is it really Eli's business what his sister did wrong?

2

Question



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The concept of Lashon Hara requires us not to badmouth others – we may not repeat something another person has done wrong, unless it is for a constructive purpose. (conditions apply)

If nothing is gained by repeating Esther's wrongdoing to Eli, then don't tell him – Esther feels bad enough and doesn't need to be further humiliated.

If you think that Eli might repeat Esther's behaviour, then maybe it is worth warning him about it.

Perhaps there could be another way for Eli to learn the lesson rather than telling him what Esther did?

2

Answer

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SCHOOL SENSITIVITY

Your child Alex has returned home from school having learnt about a new concept called 'Lashon Hara'. The teacher explained that we must be sensitive with our speech and not badmouth others.

Yet you can tell that something happened in school today, and when you press Alex, he tells you that a child wasn't nice to him in the playground.

You ask him who it was - but doesn't want to tell you his name "because of lashon hara".

Is he right not to tell?

3

Question



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Lashon Hara does not mean that one can never say anything bad about anyone – actually constructive Lashon Hara 'lashon hara le'toelet' commands you to disclose important negative information for a constructive purpose (conditions apply).

So, in our case it depends...

If Alex has told the teacher, and the situation is dealt with, then there may be no need to tell the parents.

If, however, Alex has received no support, he can ask his parents for help. Even so, one may not publicise the wrongdoer nor shame him (except in rare circumstances).

3

Answer


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ONLINE ACTION

You have rented a car from a company, but the car breaks down soon after you begin driving it.

The company, however, refuse to admit fault or give you a refund.

You want to post a poor review online to expose their poor service.

Can you post a poor review online?

4

Question



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The Torah cautions against stealing and misrepresentation – but also against ruining another’s reputation or business.

So, on the one hand, a dishonest company deserves to be outed. On the other, this may just have been a one-off misunderstanding and you could ruin their business by posting a negative feedback online.

Therefore, it all depends on your motive: if your motive is revenge, refrain from posting.

But if your motivation is out of concern for other future customers, then it is constructive and purposeful and should be done.

Similarly, it is better not to share someone else’s negative social media post, except in rare necessary circumstances.

4

Answer

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FOOTBALL TEASING

It's the North London derby football match and you are nervous!

As a Spurs fan in a school class of majority Arsenal fans, you know that if Spurs lose, you will be receiving messages teasing you about the result.

Thankfully Spurs win and you are excited to be the one sending the messages as opposed to receiving them!

But then you stop and pause and remember how bad you felt when Spurs lost last time...

Should you post the message?

5

Question



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Jewish wisdom teaches that you are right to pause.

Hurtful words (known as 'Ona'at Devarim') are a problem – even just for laughs, if the person is hurt by what you said, that's not right.

For the same reason, Jewish law says that you can't call someone by a negative nickname, even if you think it's funny.

5

Answer

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Honoring the traditions
of a great family

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SHOPPING-ISH

You want a new phone, which you have decided to buy online.

You have your eye on a specific model but there is nobody online to answer all your questions.

So before purchasing, you walk into a local mobile phone shop, pick up the model you are seeking and ask the vendor.

Is it OK to waste their time, knowing that you will buy it online and not in the shop?



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The Jewish concept of 'Geneivat Da'at' means that a person may not create a misleading impression.

Even though shops know that some people who walk in won't end up buying from them, you are still creating a misleading impression of 'intention to buy' when it's not the case.

*(Looking at window displays is different
– shops love it when people look up their window display.)*

6

Answer

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Spiritual Life

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REPORTS

It's end of term time and your son Daniel comes home with his report.

You snuggle up on the couch next to each other, eager to read the report together.

However, your daughter Emma is curious to see his report so she

can compare his with hers.

Should you let her see it?

7

Answer



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Part of the concept of Rechilut is not to reveal others' secrets or information they don't want others to know.

Therefore, we do not open others' letters, read their emails or share their news – unless they are OK with it!

In our case, there is no real need for Emma to see Daniel's report. In fact, it is probably unfair on Daniel, who doesn't necessarily want his teachers' comments and suggestions for improvement shared.

As for Emma, she should not base her sense of achievement on comparisons to others.

7

Answer


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Supporting the Jewish
Community in
Northampton

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JOB APPLICATIONS

Your worker has told you that she is leaving the company and asks for you to write her a reference for her future company.

You know that she was not actually such a good worker – she often came late and was generally unreliable.

What do you write on the reference?

8

Question



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Jewish law would say that if an employer needs to know something important about a future worker, then you should make them aware of it.

Please note, that there are English laws that govern these situations – and the position is generally one of reluctance to give bad references.

8

Answer

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THE BARMITZVAH SPEECH

You have been asked to prepare 'the best friend's' speech for your friend's barmitzvah.

There are lots of juicy things to say about the barmitzvah boy and people will find these jokes funny. But what about those past experiences that he can find embarrassing?

Will he appreciate it that they be revealed in public?

You can't check with him beforehand without ruining your special effect.

What would you do?

Deliver the funny speech or ditch it?



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Judaism has a concept called 'Ona'at Devarim' which means that hurtful words should be avoided at all cost.

Though a joke may get a few people laughing, if they will hurt, shame or embarrass your friend, they're just not worth it.

Only use the speech to speak about all the good qualities the barmitzvah boy has.

9

Answer


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