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I am shouting out to all rabbanim, community leaders and anyone with congregational influence to prioritize speaking about the effects of hearing loss, while their community still has the ability to hear your words. Simchat and fun occasions do not require loud music to be enjoyable. Emphasize that everyone take care of their own as well as their attendants' hearing health and safety by lowering the volume in their personal smartphones, digital devices, conferences, shul / yeshiva dinners, weddings and other simchat. Camp directors should also practice similar procedures to protect campers' hearing health. There is no excuse for apathy or neglect.

Let's be safe and smart during the summer so that by the time the *Yamim Nora'im* arrive when we say, "*Lishmo'a el harina v'el hatefilla*," it will be more than just a request to G-d, but a benefit to ourselves and our community.

Daniel Feldman

Dear Editor,

That feeling when...you can let out a breath of fresh air, allow the tears to flow, share your pain with others. That feeling when you can sit in silence, and the silence is enough. No more hiding, no more pretending. It's OK to not be OK. The power of connection is the key to healing when struggling with your mental health.

I am a part of this community. I am a part of YOUR community. I drive car-pool, go grocery shopping, join committees, exercise in the same gym. I am a mom, a wife, a teacher and friend to many. And most people don't know the internal pain I deal with on a daily basis. Functional anxiety and depression are very often invisible to those around us

and that leaves the sufferer feeling alone, isolated and often very, very hopeless.

CATCH has created support groups for those like me. Women who need a safe space to simply connect. To sit with others who understand similar challenges. No judgement. No shame. Acceptance, support and togetherness.

Connection takes away the deadly loneliness and pain of mental health challenges. Connection has saved me. Connection has given me freedom. Connection has allowed me to see what healing is truly all about.

If you are a woman suffering with anxiety and or depression, please reach out. You are not alone. You can do this. WE can do this – TOGETHER.

CATCH: Creating A Team of Courage and Hope. www.catchsupport.org; info@catchsupport.org; text: 347-433-4742

Jessica Tsur

Dear Editor,

I recently visited my mother and left with three trinkets: a spiritual book, a package of Raisin Bran, and a N95 mask. I felt compelled to find the symbolism and meaning behind this episode.

The symbols came rather easy. The spiritual book was for spirituality, the Raisin Bran was for physicality, and the mask was for safety. The meaning would then follow that one must guard their spirituality from the outside world, which makes little sense anymore, and one must guard their physical body from harmful substances and enforce it with good foods.

I tried to probe deeper, but this was the only core message I was able to extract. Perhaps a message that conveys the importance of guarding the soul and body is sufficient enough.

Steven Genack



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