



Meet The Kvetch Klub

They were all together for another unofficial session. The neighborhood Kvetching Klub. The opener that day was Bat Sheva. She was kvetching about the challenges of having her mother-in-law so close to their home and how she just needed some space. Bat Tzion was next, still on about how everyone else in the family wanted the dog but *she* was the one stuck taking care of it. Bat El had a continuation to last week's kvetch about her overbearing neighbors and their insistence that no one in her house may breathe from 2-4. And Bat Shir had just finished her kvetch about handling 5 kids while her husband was away on a lengthy business trip.

Batya was up next. She was really struggling with her oldest and had thought of a lot of things to kvetch about this week. She was definitely feeling overwhelmed but somehow her heart wasn't into it. Another week, another kvetch. Does it always have to be this way?

Batya loved her friends. She felt a tremendous sense of camaraderie and support when they all sat around and kvetched to one another. But despite all that, it sometimes made her feel lonely. She would wonder, "Am I the only one who finds this a little bit...pointless? I need to do something with my powerful feelings inside, but is this the best way? After a good kvetch, I feel better for a little bit. Heard. Cared about. But then what? How long does that feeling last until a new kvetch or the same kvetch next week? It all feels disturbingly empty."

Batya may be right, but what choice does she have? Most of us rely on our family or friends to hear us through our kvetches. And there are times that we need that. But is being heard the same as being understood? Does it give us the tools to actually make change in our life?

Our brave Batya, tired of being nodded at, begins asking for advice. She asserts, "I appreciate your commiseration, but what can I do to make it better? How can I change this?" The result is that people begin to pour out rivers of advice. "You should read this book" "Subscribe to this blog" "Meditate" "Do Yoga" "Change your thoughts" "Shift your perspective" "Try stating your needs" "Take a chinuch course".

Wow. Lots of people equals lots of opinions. There are times when we are drifting and need to be told what to do. To find a lifeline and give ourselves some direction or at least a starting point. Batya realized that the more she received advice she actually felt even lonelier. And way more frustrated. The deluge of opinions brought her to the verge of tears. But isn't this what she needs? Some tools to help her change?

Now she had tools. But were they the right tools for her. Did she believe in them? Did they make sense? Was it coming from a place of understanding her needs and values? And would these tools work all the time, or would they just help here and there? And could she succeed in integrating them?

Once again Batya was lost. Angry. Confused. What else can she do? Go to some sort of guided group session? Would it be any better? And definitely worse, the thought of airing out her dirty laundry in front of strangers sounds absolutely mortifying.

I think a lot of women in this community can relate to Batya. I certainly can. I don't want to just kvetch. I don't want someone pummeling me over the head with their ideas for what I need to do differently. I want to be heard. Understood. To be guided to change from within in a way that felt good and felt like it was coming from me. And I DO NOT like to share my private life publicly. And so I have felt lonely many times.

What I have learned over the last few years is that successful coaching is not successful kvetching. I have learned I can coach powerfully by tuning into two truths. One - THE ROOTS OF CHANGE CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND WITHIN. Two - ALL CHALLENGES STEM FROM SOMEWHERE UNIVERSAL.

When I coach women, my job is not to give them the advice they need to hear to fix their lives. I am not smarter or better or more geshikt than any woman who comes to work with me. I have learned tools that help me guide women to unlocking their inner wisdom. Hashem gave every one of you tools for every challenge you face. I want to help you access those tools. Sometimes you need a piece of information or a skill to unlock the tool, but only you know what will work to help you change.

Here's an example of what I mean (and a proof that I am not more geshikt than the women I work with). I have always dreamed of being ready for Shabbos early. For whatever reason, we can never seem to never accomplish this. We were always rushing like maniacs to the last minute. What would it take to have a calm erev shabbos?

Once upon a time I had heard a piece of advice for Shabbos preparation that made a lot of sense. Find one chore that you normally do on Friday and work on it throughout the week. We went through the list of chores that seem to consume a large chunk of our Fridays and at different points in our marriage tried different ones.

We sponjad throughout the week, but by Friday, after a lot of cooking and foot traffic, the floor was just as messy. We tried cooking small things for Shabbos throughout the week, but most of the menu was food we wanted fresh and preferred to cook on Thursday or Friday anyway. We worked on keeping books and toys and tables organized and cleared away, which did keep the house feeling more manageable, but didn't seem to make a big dent on Fridays.

Now, as a background note, you should know that I don't love doing dishes. You work and work in one spot, monotonously copying the same repetitions, only to have all of your work undone by the end of the day. I do because it needs to happen, but if a day or two goes by without dishes being done, it doesn't bother me deeply. As the dishes would begin to pile up on Thursday, and then Friday, I would just wait until all of the dishes we would be using for Shabbos prep were done being used. Then, I would do it in one annoying shot.

Eventually, I was able to notice that it was the endless kitchen cleanup that was eating up our Fridays. Not the cooking. Not the house. But there was also a cascade effect. I always assumed that as long as dishes remained confined to the sink, they were out of sight out of mind. In truth, The greater the "dish mountain" grew, the less motivated I was to jump into action. Even once I did, dishes had to be washed in batches because of the space they took up on the counter, in the sink, and on the drying rack. I couldn't clean the counters until the dishes were away. It made every other part of preparation more cumbersome. And my husband couldn't sponja the floor because he was waiting for everyone to leave the kitchen/living room area.

It took me a long time until this notion could sink in. Finally I was motivated to try something hard for me. I resigned myself to doing every dish in the sink at the end of every day (I know, I know. It took me way too long to get into this habit). Amazingly, this helped immensely with Shabbos preparation. It turned what was a monumental hour long chore, into a quick 15 minute washup, and it was saving time on other tasks as well.

The idea to work on one task every day of the week was shared with me long before I realized how to use it effectively in my own life. I had so much resistance to doing dishes that I couldn't see something that was right before my eyes. It wasn't until I had allowed myself to look deeper at where I could improve did I see that this was the obstacle which was stopping me. But no one could have told me that my problem was the dishes. Every person in every household has challenges unique to them, and only they have the ability to tune in to what that is.

If you think about your inner knowing like a radio, this might make the idea clearer. If you want to know what's playing on your local radio station, it won't help if I hand you an mp3 filled with popular music. The only way to find out is to tune the dial until you can hear what those invisible frequencies are conveying. So too, we can't be told what we need for change, we need help tuning the dials until we can hear it ourselves.

The second truth we mentioned above is that all challenges stem from a universal root. That means, that when I am coaching you, I don't need to hear what happened between you and your mother-in-law. If you need a gentle, listening ear, I am happy to provide that for you. You may kvetch if you choose to. But powerful coaching goes past the specific event, down to the root of your challenges. Perhaps you are holding on to a deeply rooted belief that you are not enough. Maybe you believe you're unlovable. Or you are struggling to fit in but really just want to be accepted for who you are.

There is an endless list of areas in our lives that need improvement. Our work, our family, our marriage, money, food. If we try to improve our lives by chasing down every challenge that comes up, we will end up running wild in 10 different directions. What generally happens is that we just do a lukewarm job on all of these things. This approach to change is inconsistent.

If, however, we can whittle it down to one root...your lack of belief in your intrinsic value has us working on your compassion, for example, you will notice that change in all areas of your life will happen as an extension of work on this one area. By having more compassion for yourself and others, you will notice a change in your relationships with your coworkers or possibly clients, your family, your spouse, and even you and food. The roots affect the whole tree.

Think of a giant, majestic oak tree, towering over the forest. No matter what obstacles it may face, fires, hurricanes, or chainsaws, as long as the roots are healthy, it will sprout back up countless times. No obstacle can stop it. But even in the most perfect environment, if the tree has a problem at the root level, the tree will slowly lose vitality and eventually cease to grow. We work the same way. When we are healthy in our roots, feeling whole and loved and accepted, nothing can stop us. When we aren't, even a neutral environment will eventually see us challenged and stunted.

Batya sure has a lot she can learn about how to grow and change without having to be a member of the kvetch klub. Hopefully someday she'll find me.

--

If you want more articles like this straight to your inbox, and to download my free "Tune In Journal" and accompanying guided meditation, click [here](#).

For more information about my 1:1 coaching and group programs, check out renareiser.com.