

SHALOM OHALECHA

creating peace one home at a time



With a heartfelt Tefilla for Siyata Di'shmaya, we present the first issue of our newsletter אור הבית – sharing Torah-based ideas to inspire giving, and unity, the ultimate will of Hashem in marriage.

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A LETTER FROM OUR RABBINICAL LEADERSHIP

RABBI YISROEL APELBAUM - ROSH YESHIVA, YESHIVA TIFERES CHAIM

The Gemara in Bava Metzia 59a teaches: Rava told the people of Mechoza—Honor your wives so that you will become wealthy. This is not just a nice idea—it's a promise from Chazal. Why? Because when a person honors his wife, it creates true Shalom Bayis, and where there is Shalom Bayis, the Shechinah dwells. When the Shechinah is in your home, blessing flows in every area—health, wealth, and protection.

Chazal further say: "Ish v'Isha zachu—Shechinah beineihem" (Sotah 17a). And the Midrash teaches: "Ein ha'bracha metzuyah ela bishvil ishto"—Blessing comes to a person only because of his wife (Bereishis Rabbah 17:2). The Rambam even rules: "A person must honor his wife more than himself" (Hilchos Ishus 15:19). This is not optional—it's the foundation of a Jewish home.

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By joining the movement to strengthen your own Shalom Bayis and help others do the same, you are not only building peace—you are bringing the Shechinah into countless homes and securing blessings for yourself and Klal Yisrael. May we all merit wealth, health, and protection from harm, and may this effort hasten the coming of Moshiach, b'karov!

THE CONNECTION THAT MAKES US ONE

A Torah and Psychological Lens on Connection Codes

There's a well-known letter from the Steipler Gaon, zt"l, in which he describes the connection that ought to exist between a husband and wife. He explains that while there is a natural, built-in pull—a kind of *teva*—that draws a husband and wife toward each other, it's not this instinctual connection that brings *shalom ba'ohel*, true peace in the home. That kind of peace stems from a much deeper kind of connection: one rooted in appreciation and gratitude.

As Rav Chaim Friedlander expands on this, anything that holds deep significance in a person's life has a natural drive attached to it. Marriage is no different. But instinctual attraction isn't enough. Real peace—real connection—comes when one partner consciously appreciates the other, and that appreciation is received.

Gratitude That Connects

There are two layers to appreciation:

1. *Internal growth*—Gratitude makes me into a more refined person. 2. *Relational impact*—Gratitude becomes connection only when the other person feels it. This leads us to an important principle: connection must be expressed in a way that is felt by the other. Appreciation that isn't received doesn't connect—it confuses. That's why Gary Chapman's Five Relationship Languages can be such a useful tool—it gives us language for this truth.

The Ramchal's Reminder: Nothing New, Everything Deep

As the Ramchal writes in the introduction to *Mesilas Yesharim*, "I'm not telling you anything you don't already know." But when you really think about these seemingly obvious truths, you uncover mountains of depth. Likewise, many people have heard of the 5 ways to feel cared for: 1) *Words of affirmation* 2) *Acts of service* 3) *Quality time* 4) *Physical touch* 5) *Receiving gifts*. But very few actually use them intentionally, and fewer still know their spouse's connection code clearly—and even fewer know exactly how their spouse wants that code expressed. Even fewer realize, however, the enormous potential for connection—or *chas v'shalom*, disconnection—that so critically depends on this pivotal concept being properly applied.

Ahava = Echad: The Deep Goal of Connection

The word *אהבה* (*ahava*, love/connection) has the same numerical value as *אחד* (*echad*, one). Connection is about oneness. It's about bridging two separate people into one emotional, spiritual, and physical unit. Modern science echoes this: when we connect meaningfully with another person, our brains release oxytocin, the bonding hormone. This biological process strengthens our feelings of unity, attachment, and peace. As neuroscience puts it: "What fires together, wires together." Connection creates brain pathways. Repeated, intentional connection rewires the brain for lasting attachment.

You Can't Spend Shekels in America

Imagine that each person has their own connection currency. If someone's connection code is quality time, and their spouse gives them constant gifts or compliments but never sits down to just be with them, the recipient may still feel alone. You can't spend shekels in America.

And you can't pay someone in a connection code they don't recognize.

This is how someone can be: *Helpful, Kind, Effusive in praise, Working two jobs, Doing everything for the family*—yet their spouse still says: "I don't feel connected." Why? Because they're not depositing the connection into that person's account.

The Connection Bank, Bucket, or Tank

Imagine your relationship as a connection tank—a container inside each person that holds their emotional sense of connection, security, and belonging.

Every connecting act is a deposit: *A kind word, A thoughtful act, A warm hug, Time spent together*

Each one has the potential to fill your partner's tank—but only if it's in their currency. And this is critical to understand and implement!

Life also makes constant withdrawals: *Stress at work, Kids' meltdowns, Physical exhaustion, Emotional misattunement, Everyday frustrations, miscommunications, and unspoken hurts*

Even if one partner feels like they're working so hard, the other may still feel empty. And when the tank hits zero—or below—it can feel like emotional foreclosure. The relationship may become cold, distant, or even hostile.

Sometimes, people don't realize how empty their own tank is. For example, I've worked with individuals who were acting out in inappropriate ways and thought their problems were from other sources—executive dysfunction (ADHD), or that their spouse wasn't affectionate enough—when in fact, their spouse was showing connection, just not in the right code. They were depleted without realizing it. We may even misinterpret our own needs: craving chocolate, for example, can sometimes be a disguised craving for physical touch or comfort. When a spouse's connection code goes unmet for too long, it's also possible they'll seek it elsewhere. It might "fill" the tank temporarily—like putting kerosene into a gasoline engine—but it damages the relationship and can cause an explosive outcome later.

Learning to Ask for Your Connection Code

A crucial skill in marriage is learning to ask directly for your own connection code. Your spouse will not necessarily know it automatically, nor will they always know exactly how to execute it in the way you need. For example: Saying "I need more affection" may be too vague. Instead: "When you do (name the particular type of affection you would like very clearly), I feel connected." Saying "I want quality time" could be clarified as: "Can we set aside 20 minutes after dinner to just sit together without phones?" Identifying and clearly asking for what you need is a sign of self-awareness, not selfishness. **Becoming a Connection Detective** To figure out your spouse's code: Observe: What lights them up? What calms them down? Ask those close to them. Experiment: Try each connection code and watch their reactions. Listen to what they complain about or long for.

And remember: their connection code is likely not yours. We tend to give what we want to receive, which can create a mismatch. The "easy-connected paradox" is that the thing that connects your spouse most, may feel unnatural to you—but giving it builds trust and connection. When both partners speak each other's code, you create a positive feedback loop of mutual giving.

Not All Connection Feels Like Connection

What makes you feel connected may do nothing for someone else. A hug may soothe one person and smother another. Words may uplift one spouse and sound hollow to the other.

I've seen couples on the brink of giving up—not because there wasn't connection, but because they couldn't feel it.

This concept is crucial for everyone, even though some may feel it more intensely than others. For instance, Moshe is a devoted and thoughtful person, always ready to help his wife, Rachel. However, he feels overwhelmed by physical touch and, subconsciously, pulls away when Rachel reaches out, which creates a sense of disconnect for her.

On the other hand, Esther, who is industrious and creative, doesn't prioritize touch as her connection code, leaving her husband, Menachem, feeling uncared for. This dynamic isn't limited to touch alone; it applies to all five connection codes, showing how the absence of any code can create a sense of distance in a relationship.

The paradox is, that true intimacy often requires stretching into behaviors that don't come "easy" for you—because those are the very things that meet your partner's core needs. That is core to the Avodah of marriage and our primary crucible for working on stretching our *middos tovot*.

Learning your spouse's connection receptors—the exact ways they experience being cherished—can transform a marriage at any stage, and elevate your character tremendously.

Final Thought: The Ache to Connect

Everyone wants to be connected, seen, cherished, and chosen. But if connection is given in the wrong currency, it doesn't land.

When we discover and speak our partner's connection code—and also learn to ask for our own—we move toward the Torah's deepest truth about marriage: These two can become one. And ideally, the best way to do this work is together. Each of you can write down 5 things that you would appreciate under each category of the connection codes and then swap the lists. Mix and enjoy.



ADDENDUM WORKSHEET: FILLING THE CONNECTION TANK



Section 1: Identify Your Connection Code

Step 1: Rank the Connection Codes (1 = Most important, 5 = Least)

Connection Code	My Ranking	My Partner's Ranking (Guess)
Words of Affirmation		
Acts of Service		
Quality Time		
Physical Touch		
Receiving Gifts		

Reflection:

- When do I feel most connected to my spouse?
- What do I wish my spouse did more often?
- What does my spouse do that makes me feel most connected?
- What specific examples would make my connection code feel real to me?

Section 2: Become a Connection Detective

Clues to Look For:

- What does your spouse complain is missing?
- What lights them up?
- What do they do for you (often a reflection of their own code)?

Note down your observations:

Three things that seem to make my spouse feel appreciated:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways I've been showing connection that might not land with them:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Section 3: Track Deposits and Withdrawals

Day **Connecting Acts I Did (Deposits)**. What Was Their Likely Connection Code? Did It Land? (Y/N)

Withdrawals That Happened Today

Mon _____
 Tue _____
 Wed _____
 Thu _____
 Fri _____

Section 4: How Full Is Your Connection Tank?

Day **My Tank Level (0-10)** **My Spouse's Tank (Estimated)**

Mon _____
 Tue _____
 Wed _____
 Thu _____
 Fri _____

Section 5: Plan to Fill the Tank

Three specific actions I'll try this week in my spouse's connection code:

- _____
- _____
- _____

How I'll reward them when they speak my connection code:



F E E D B A C K



"Thank you so much for helping me towards therapy. If not for your help I don't know where I would be today. My marriage was rocky and I've only been married for a year. Baruch Hashem, my marriage is really getting better. I'm so grateful for your help, wow!" -Anonymous

I am a yungerman learning in kollel. We were advised to start using a marriage counselor. Bh we are making great progress in building our bais ne'eman b'yisrael. As a kollel family the costs were a big strain on our budget. This is where Shalom Ohalecha stepped in. Thank you very much! -Anonymous

"Shalom Ohalecha is an amazing organization that has helped me and my wife pay for therapy that we desperately needed and were unable to shoulder the financial strain on our own. Thanks to Shalom Ohalecha, we were able to go to therapy and it's been an unbelievable journey. We are Baruch Hashem very happily married and invigorated to keep evolving as better and better people thank you very much!" -Anonymous



M A R R I A G E P O W E R P H R A S E S

"A great marriage is not when the 'perfect couple' comes together. It is when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their differences."

"Connection in marriage is the art of listening beyond words— hearing the soul's quiet language."

👍 For newsletter feedback: Please email shalomohalecha@gmail.com

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Shalom Ohalecha verifies couples seeking assistance with an involved Rav.

We ensure that their therapist comes highly recommended from Relief or another trustworthy source.

After verification, we subsidize a portion of the session costs and pay the therapist directly.

We follow up with the couple to gather feedback on their progress and their experience with the therapist.