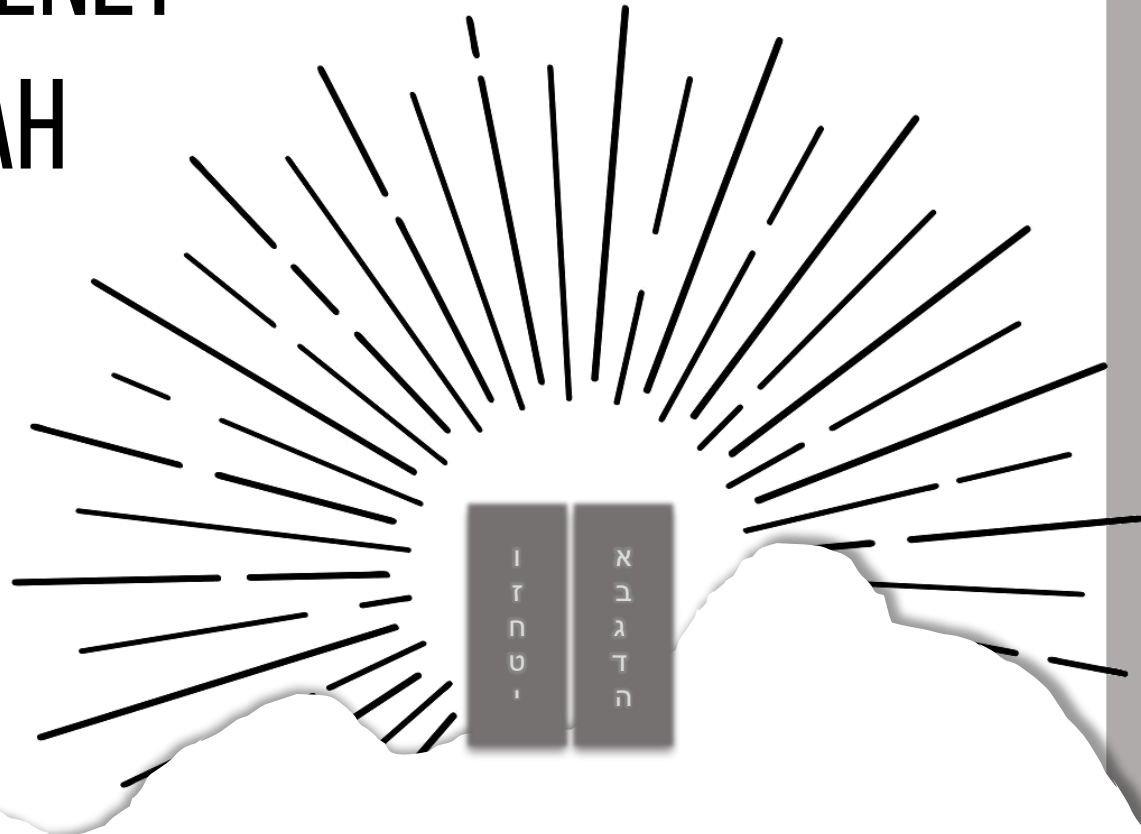


shalom bayis:

A KEY TENET OF TORAH



Shavuot is the culmination of 7 weeks of personal growth via the sefiros. Here we present a summary of the sefiros from the lens of relationship, particularly of marriage.

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Many of the practical marriage tips in this publication are culled from Adai Ad's JOT (Just One Thing) series of daily marriage and relationship tips.

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Shavuos.

Anniversary of our marriage to Hashem.

The holiday of Shavuos is compared to the marriage of Hashem and the Jewish people. The Jewish people, being the bride, received the Torah, our Kesubah, from Hashem on that day. Har Sinai was our Chupah. Our relationship with Hashem, then, is like that of wife and husband. It behooves us to look at that marriage for lessons about our own human marriages.

Acceptance.

The midrash relates that before God gave the Torah to the Jewish people, He said: "Accept Me ... and then accept My decrees." In a marriage relationship, it is essential to accept and embrace your partner as they are in essence - unconditionally - before addressing individual needs.

With conditional love, we see our partners as an extension of ourselves and feel that it is our responsibility to correct or change them. Although we constantly learn from each other, the role of a spouse is not that of an authority or a teacher, but that of an equal. The Torah tells us that marriage begins with unconditional love and acceptance of the entire person – first "accept Me" and the details will follow from there.

www.meaningfullife.com/unconditional-love/

Doing for your spouse.

Listening to your spouse.

On Shavuos, the anniversary of our 'marriage to Hashem', we renew and reenergize our relationship with Hashem and the Torah. When we first received the Torah, we declared "We will do and we will listen (to understand)." We committed ourselves to the relationship. Unconditionally.

The same concept applies to our marriage with our spouse: We will do and we will listen (to understand). We commit to DO for each other. And to LISTEN to each other. A relationship needs both - doing and listening - for real connection to develop from anniversary to anniversary.

Doing - so things get done. Doing things together. Doing things that your spouse may never even know about. Doing – just so your spouse feels cared for.

Listening to understand. Listening to empathize. Listening to learn. Listening to gain perspective. Listening to grow. Listening – just so your spouse feels heard.

Doing. And Listening.

This booklet is part of a series of workshops and education organized by the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council under a grant by the New York City Council Domestic Violence Initiative awarded by Council Member Matthieu Eugene.

The Torah was given in the third month - Sivan. It contains three sections: Torah, Nivi'im, and Kesuvim. It was received by the Jewish people, a three fold nation (Kohanim, Levi'im, and Yisroelim).

About the number 3 in Torah numerology:

One represents a state of wholeness, a level that stands totally above all possibility for separation.

Two represents the formation of opposites.

Three represents the introduction of a new element that can resolve the discord introduced by the number two and reveal an inner union between the first two states - Achdus.

Achdus of a Marriage. He. She. We.

Matan Torah is associated with the number three.

There's a He and a She in every marriage. Two separate entities creating a third entity – the We - the unity, the marriage.

What truly makes them a unit is not renouncing one's self or losing one's identity into the marriage. Rather, it is a mindset and way of being where each proactively contributes to that third and deeper entity. That is, each brings their whole self into the unity. It is not that either is giving in to the other. Rather, it is giving to strengthen and invigorate the marriage. The small actions, the larger decisions – all for the 'adai ad' of the marriage.

He and She. Each bolstering the We.

Acceptance and Faith. Key for marriage. Successful marriages have two qualities in common even though the marriages themselves are as diverse as the couples in them: acceptance and faith. The honeymoon ends when the spouse in question (always the other spouse) does something thoroughly inexplicable and totally at odds with the logic of the judging spouse. Something that (try as they sincerely might) they cannot put themselves in that somebody else's shoes and come up with any justification for what they did. At this point they simply say, "I don't understand what s/he did, but who says I have to understand everything to live with it?"

It was at Sinai that the Jews agreed to a relationship regardless of how much they agreed with G-d. "How could G-d..." does not have to be a prelude to ending a relationship: it can be a deepening of a relationship. "You may not be a perfect G-d in my mind, but you're still mine. So now if I'm not so perfect, I'm still Yours."

... After so many years, and so many disappointments, and things we simply can't understand, we still love this marriage and love this G-d of ours and His Torah.

Maybe we don't say I love you often enough, maybe we don't say I'm sorry, maybe we forget a thank you, but we never forget each other.

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/384525/jewish/What-Makes-a-Marriage-Tick.htm

Shavuos. Recommitment to the Torah, to Hashem. It is not as is our relationship has grown stale over the course of the past year. Quite to the contrary, over the past year the relationship has hopefully grown and matured; our appreciation for each other has blossomed and flourished. And it is therefore time to recommit to each other, this time with more feeling, with more profound devotion—it is time to actively reevaluate and resolve to take the relationship to the next level.

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2152/jewish/Renewing-Wedding-Vows.htm

Literal Definition

Kindness
(Loving Kindness)

In Other Words

Nurturing.
Warmth.
Providing someone's
needs. Love.

Chassidus explains

that "Ahavah love" is from
the word Ovoh. Which is
Netiyas Hanefesh, wanting
to connect. Gravitating to
another on a soul level.
Not the shallow 'love' of
the common secular
vernacular.

💡Even More

Chesed [kindness] is
rooted in Ahavah
[love]. Ahavah [love] is
rooted in Ta'nug [pleasure/
delight]. When you bring
pleasure to another, you
generate their love which
fires up their kindness.
And you know how
wonderful that will be for
you and your family.

EXPRESSIONS of Chesed

Chesed is loving kindness, doing and giving to others - your time, talents, possessions, anything and everything that another might need or ask from you - from a true place of love. True soul love allows us to reach above and beyond ourselves, to care and experience another person and to allow that person to experience us.

Loving kindness is about giving freely, graciously and unconditionally – with a generous heart. In a way that leaves the other with their dignity and self-esteem. Giving to another on their terms not our terms.

REFLECTIONS about Chesed in your marriage

Do you give to your spouse – unconditionally ... just to make your spouse feel good ... on their terms ... without expecting anything in return?

Do you give happily – with full soul love? Even when things are not quite so 'perfect'? Or is it somewhat grudgingly?

Do you give and love only when you are in the mood? Or do you give simply because you care and you made a soul commitment to your spouse?

What is your spouse's preferred way of receiving your love and kindness? Is that the way you actually express it?

Does your spouse sense sincerity in your giving? Does your way of giving uplift your spouse's dignity (or at least leaves them with their dignity)?

Do you express appreciation and give compliments - often and freely? The kind that they appreciate, not only the type that you feel comfortable giving?

Does your spouse know that you truly feel fortunate that you are married to them; how do you know that?

Do you dedicate time and energy just for your spouse? Do you give the gift of listening? Of your smile? Every day? What do you do every day to make your spouse feel special?

Integrating Chesed in your marriage

→ **LOOK FOR WAYS TO MAKE YOUR SPOUSE HAPPY.** Ask yourself: "What can I do today to make my partner happy?" And do it.

→ **SHARE "I'M SO HAPPY I MARRIED YOU BECAUSE..."** Say it aloud. And mean it. Go beyond the typical "you light up my life". Share something true and unique to your marriage and spouse. Be specific. Add examples and memories. And in private; no need to splash it on social media.

→ **MAKE GIFT WISH LISTS FOR EACH OTHER.** Surprise gifts are nice. But buying a surprise can be stressful: will my spouse like it and use it?

Make a gift wish list – from all different price points. In this way, your spouse can be assured that whatever gift they buy you will like. You will be surprised that they bought you a gift. And you will like it. Caveat: This only works well if you appreciate whichever gift your spouse chooses from the list.

BTW, Many people have found that their spouse buys more gifts because the stress is removed and they know that it will be appreciated and used.

**Remember to update the list as your taste or needs (or size) changes.

→ **DO SOMETHING THAT YOUR SPOUSE WILL NEVER KNOW ABOUT.** Do it because you love and care about your spouse. Not for reciprocation or out of guilt or obligation. Just because you want to make a tiny part of their life easier or better.

- Choose your clothing the night before so you don't wake your spouse in the morning with opening and closing doors and drawers and lights.
- Change the lightbulb as soon as you notice it has burned out.
- Entertain the kids so your spouse can wake up just a bit later.

→ **OUT OF NOWHERE.** Surprise your spouse with something unexpected. Out of nowhere.

"I was thinking of you today – like everyday – and I remembered that when we just got married you used to like to [walk along the water's edge/ go to the bookstore/whatever]. Let's plan for that sometime this week."

"I know you like to put sprinkles on your cake, so I bought you some."

Make sure the surprise is about your spouse and not about you.

→ **DO SOMETHING NICE FOR YOUR SPOUSE.**

It doesn't have to be big. Prepare a snack for your spouse. Brew a cup of coffee. It can take less than a minute.

Of course, your spouse benefits from the action; they get the snack or coffee. More importantly, your relationship benefits from your giving or doing for your spouse.

LOVE AND
KINDNESS
GO VERY FAR.



Literal definition

Strength

In other words

Restraint.

Channeling.

Focus.

Discernment.

Respect for boundaries.

Discipline

💡Even More

Gevurah is also a positive mode. For example: Using Gevurah and strength to continue giving kindness even when it's not easy. Giving with extra strength, with extra fervor, excitement and passion. Doing for your marriage and family above and beyond your duty. Forcing yourself to give and do even when you are not in the mood.

EXPRESSIONS of Gevurah

Gevurah is about setting up boundaries and standards so that our kindness, love, giving and all activities in our lives have focus and direction; this is what yields success. Through Gevurah, we give the correct healthy amount; we restrain and withhold as appropriate for the circumstance.

Beyond discipline in interpersonal relationships, Gevurah should also be expressed in our own life: self-discipline, refining our own character, calculating our own time, resources and efforts. Thereby maximizing our achievements and success.

REFLECTIONS about Gevurah in your marriage

What are the healthy boundaries in your marriage? In what ways do you respect your spouse's space, boundary and privacy - - morally, psychologically or emotionally? Are you consistent? Are there areas in which you can improve; has your spouse mentioned or hinted at anything? Did you ask them outright about what they wish you would change about your behavior; how did you receive that?

Is your amount of Gevurah appropriate for a married person? Are you overbearing? Is your demeanor too strong and silencing your spouse? Do you act in controlling ways? Do you speak with harsh words of insult, blame, demands?

How do you express to your spouse your disagreements? Do you choose your words wisely with sensitivity; do you show respect and concern for your spouse's dignity?

In what ways do you have personal restraint and sacrifice for the sake of your marriage and your spouse's happiness and dignity? In what ways do you filter out other interests in order to focus on your spouse?

Integrating Gevurah in your marriage

→ LEAVE SOME WORDS UNSPOKEN.

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right place, but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

Not every truth must be shared.

→ THE YES-NO BALANCE. Every choice you make is like a seesaw; when you say 'yes' to one thing, you are saying 'no' to another.

For example, if you are saying 'yes' to helping someone, you are saying 'no' to using that time for yourself. If you are saying 'yes' to working more hours, you are saying 'no' to spending that time at home with your family.

Try saying 'no' to work, social invitations, community engagements, friends, even your children. And channel that time and energy into your marriage and with your spouse.

SOMETIMES
'NO' IS THE
BEST WAY
TO GO.



→ DON'T LET OTHERS INTERFERE IN YOUR MARRIAGE.

Keep your boundaries. Your spouse and the family you created together are your first priorities. Don't let anyone or anything interfere with that. Not your parents, not your friends, not your work. Especially not your parents.

Parents usually mean well when they give advice or ask questions. Or they sincerely need your help or time. At the same time, your priority should be to your spouse.

על-כן יעזב-איש את-אביו ואת-אמו וידבק
“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.” - Beraishis 2:24

It would be wrong to pick your parents over your spouse. Your spouse can become resentful of both you and them. Understandably so. And that is never good for any relationship.

-

Your parents might be putting you in a tough spot – to choose them or your spouse. It can be stressful to navigate that; but don't let that out on your spouse. Instead, talk it through with your spouse, work out realistic parameters and then convey it all to your parents - in a way that respects your spouse.

→ “My parents need my time. And I want to be here with you and the kids. How can we make that all work?”

→ “My dear parents. I know you need [something] from me. I have to balance that with the needs of my spouse and family. I can come over twice a month, not twice a week.”

Literal Definition

Beauty.

In Other Words

Rachmonus
(merciful compassion).

Empathy.

Truth.

Harmony.

Balance of Chesed &

Gevurah

.

💡 Even More

In Tanya chapter 32,
the Alter Rebbe says:

וְהַרְחֵמְנוּ מִבְּטָלִת

הַשִּׂנְאָה וּמַעֲוֶרֶת

,הַרַחֲמֻנוּ Rachmonus

(merciful compassion)
cancels the hatred and
arouses the love.

Sometimes, you just
may not be feeling all
that loving. Try to look
at the situation from a
place of merciful
compassion, and act
from there. The love
will usually follow.

EXPRESSIONS of Tiferes

Beauty is typically produced through the juxtaposition, contrast and balance of colors and textures. Similarly, the emotion of Tiferes is a balance of the two opposing qualities – Chesed and Gevurah, which results in a new quality – merciful compassion.

Empathy is about withholding our judgments and attentively tuning in to what is happening for the other, listening to their perspective and how they perceive the situation.

Merciful compassion is about withholding judgment that the other may not really deserve it, but giving anyway with full heart of love and kindness.

Tiferes is a harmony of Kindness and Discipline, expressed with compassion, empathy and mercy.

REFLECTIONS about Tiferes in your marriage

Do you generally act with Tiferes – giving beautifully, the perfect balance of Chesed and Gevurah? Are there certain circumstances in which you do express yourself with Tiferes, empathy, and others you do not; why is that?

How compassionate is your giving, even when you feel that your giving is not ‘deserved’? How might your spouse describe your giving? Why is that? What can you do differently?

When acting with Tiferes, you are truly invested in the right balance for the situation. Are you truly invested and committed to your marriage and your spouse? What are some examples of that? How might your spouse describe your commitment? Why is that? What can you do differently?

Feedback and respectful disagreement are gifts we share to help one another grow. But so much of it depends on the intent and delivery. How do you express negative feedback such as disappointment? How do you react to negative feedback from your spouse? Are those conversations respectful so that each feels heard and even empowered? Would your spouse agree; how do you know?

Integrating Tiferes in your marriage

→ FEEDBACK IS A GIFT TO HELP YOU GROW.

Feedback is actually a compassionate gift we share to help one another grow.

The key is your intent. If you really are coming from a place of compassion, your words and tone should reflect that. That is, once you know the best way to share your insights.

Start off by asking for permission to share.
"Can I share something?"

Then, be future focused, rather than dwell on the past ineffectiveness or issue. It's easier for others to listen about what hasn't happened yet - future behavior. "In the future, you might consider adding a story into your Dvar Torah to make it even more interesting." Compare that to: "Your last Dvar Torah was missing something; it didn't really capture my attention."

Lastly, if the other person is not willing to receive your feedback, drop it. You don't need to ram it down their throat.

→ ACCEPT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK WITH INTEREST AND RESPECT. When your spouse shares negative feedback, a complaint, listen fully. No matter how hard it is to hear it.

Even if your spouse is sharing complaints about something you have or haven't done, try to remain focused on what they are sharing and not on preparing a response or retort to what they have shared.

Even if they aren't sharing it in the easiest way for you to hear it, respect their emotions and requests.

→ DON'T AVOID TALKING ABOUT IT.

Ignoring an obvious problem is a type of conflict avoidance - people fear the stress and negativity that could result, especially from pointing out what feels like an "obvious" problem. In reality, you can't predict what will happen when an issue is brought up until it is discussed. And the issue doesn't resolve itself - even if you ignore it.

You do have to work through it. It's not easy, but it needs to be done. For your relationship. For your peace of mind. Take a deep breath and get started communicating about it. With compassion and empathy.

(You may find it helpful to plan how to bring up the issue in a productive and respectful way. Speak with a good friend, mashpia or coach before bringing it up with your spouse.)

EMPATHY:
CARING TO
FIND OUT
WHAT IS GOING ON
FOR THE OTHER PERSON



Literal Definition

Victory

In Other Words

Endurance.
Fortitude.
Consistency.
Determination.
Tenacity.
Reliability.
Commitment.
Dedication.
Persistence.
Willpower.

💡 Even More

Endurance needs commitment which comes from loving and caring for the cause. On the flip, sometimes we can be persistent and stubborn for the wrong causes. It is always important to reflect on our intent and what is driving us.

EXPRESSIONS of Netzach

Netzach means victory. It is about doing whatever – anything and everything – to attain that victory, including going beyond our comfort zone, not being stuck in our bias perspective, overcoming obstacles, using setbacks as a springboard to propel ourselves further. No matter what it takes.

In other words, fortitude, persistence, determination, enthusiastic commitment to the goal and focusing on the prize. Not being sidetracked by naysayers and pettiness.

Marching triumphantly to the goal, with courage, ambition and even guts.

REFLECTIONS about Netzach in your marriage

In what ways do you demonstrate your unwavering commitment to make your marriage a success? Does your spouse feel that from you? What else can you do to further act on this commitment to the success of your marriage?

How does your determination to be successful in other parts of your life (work, etc.) impact your family? Does it strengthen your marriage? Do your personal desires come at the expense of your marriage and family?

What is your practical proactive plan to ensure the health and eternity of your marriage?

Are you stubborn or determined in areas that are not to the best benefit of your marriage and family? Are you digging in your heels and resisting being flexible and adaptable?

Are you gracious in your victory? Do you give credit where it is due? Do you gloat when someone is proven to be incorrect? Do you say things like “I told you so”?

Do you seek support and guidance in your pursuit of successful marriage and family? Do you take the time to reflect about the progress and small accomplishments along the journey?

Integrating Netzach in your marriage

- **GET CURIOUS, NOT DEFENSIVE.** Defending yourself, whether by vehemently protesting your innocence or rightness or by turning the tables and attacking, escalates the fight.

When you feel defensive (ie: righteous indignation or hostility), this becomes a cue for your curiosity to kick in. There is usually some basis for the other person's complaint. At least from their perspective. Ask for more information, details, and examples.

→ "What about what just happened brought this reaction?"

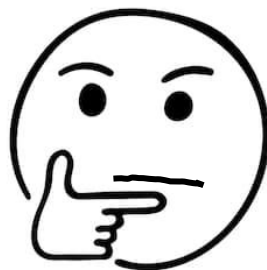
→ "This seems important to you, probably more than I understood. Please help me understand it better."

→ "I'd like the opportunity to explain what happened from my perspective. But first I want to understand more about what is going on for you."

When you meet a complaint with curiosity, you make room for understanding. With curiosity, you can enter into their reality and get further into their world.

Firstly, you will get more clarity into what is important to them and you will better understand them. Secondly, you send the message that you really care about the other person.

WHAT ELSE
CAN I BE DOING
TO ENSURE THE
SUCCESS OF MY
MARRIAGE?



- **PUT YOUR MARRIAGE FIRST. ADJUST & ACCOMMODATE.** It is about seeing that the other person has just as much right to be happy with the result as you do.

Accommodating is not an act of weakness; it demonstrates that you care for someone - beyond yourself.

Accommodating doesn't mean that you are wrong and someone is right. It only means that you value your relationship more than your ego.

- **ADMIRE MORE. JUDGE LESS.** No one is happy when they are judged more than admired.

It's inevitable; your spouse will do something that annoys you sometimes. When you begin to feel irritated at your spouse, instead of reviewing everything you don't like, turn your thoughts to all the good things about him or her. "Yeah, this thing is annoying. But s/he is so good at this, that, the other and the other."

Even better, say it aloud. "Yeah, I feel irritated when I see the dishes piling in the sink. But I still love you for being [the best]."

Hey you never know, your spouse will feel good about you and the relationship and those dishes just might get washed.

Literal Definition

Majesty.
Thanksgiving.

In Other Words

Humility.
Acknowledgement.
Gratitude.
Admitting.
Modesty.
Comprising.
Appreciative.
Consulting
Flexibility.
Open mindedness.

💡Even More

Hod is about recognizing how small you are which allows you to realize how large you can become. It is about acknowledging your potential and being humble enough to work toward it.

EXPRESSIONS of Hod

With humility, we can make space for others. We can listen to and appreciate the opinion and perspective of others. We can all learn something from anyone and everyone. It is about asking for advice, guidance and input.

Humility is about not being arrogant or stubborn.

Hod is expressing gratitude, including thanking Hashem for what you do have.

With humility, we are able to acknowledge others. To apologize when we are wrong. To accept responsibility for our mistakes. Not to be selfish, self-centered and narcissistic. To give others the benefit of the doubt.

REFLECTIONS about Hod in your marriage

Hod is about putting aside our ego and pride for the sake of relationships and the family unit. Being devoted to the marriage.

How is your humility expressed in your marriage? Are you open to influence from your spouse? Are you genuinely open to your spouse's opinion? Do you make space for your spouse or are you dominating?

Are there circumstances in which your ego determines your action and words; why is that?

Is your humility perceived by your spouse as authentic? Is it condescending? Do you sufficiently acknowledge and compliment your spouse? Do you thank and express gratitude to your spouse?

What are examples where you acted with humility and apologized? Do you acknowledge that you need your spouse?

Integrating Hod in your marriage

→ **ASK YOURSELF "WHERE AM I WRONG?"**
(AS APPLICABLE). If you are feeling stuck or in a conflict, ask yourself "Where am I wrong?".

You will gain so much more by asking this question than by insisting you are right, or even asking "Am I wrong?"

You are essentially asking:

- What information am I missing?
- What might I be inferring or misunderstanding?
- Where might my ego be getting in the way?
- How might this be a difference of perspectives?

→ **IF YOU FEEL ANGRY, FIRST SELF-REFLECT.**
Have you slept enough? Have you eaten properly? If the answer is no, then save your arguing for the morning. Too often, you will find that once you have slept and eaten you see things from a different perspective and you no longer feel angry.

HUMILITY
IS THE
EAGERNESS
TO LEARN
& ADJUST.



→ **FORGIVE TO MOVE ON** Not forgiving is like trying to punish the other - by harming yourself. The unforgiveness may be aimed at the other, but in reality you are only wounding yourself.

Forgiveness is giving up the idea that the past could have had different results. It is about letting go of a hurtful situation and moving on with your own happiness.

Tell your spouse that you forgive them. This will be cathartic for both of you. You will be able to give up some of your resentment and begin healing your wound. They will be able to begin letting go of the guilt they feel for hurting you.

You don't have to forget the incident, just trust that it will never reoccur. Try to put it out of your mind completely and focus on the positive aspects of your relationship.

→ **OPEN UP. BE VULNERABLE.** Vulnerability is the courage to be yourself. Pull down your guard and allow your spouse in. Let them see your human and imperfect self. The more times you're vulnerable, the stronger the bond. There is a certain intimacy of vulnerability that can become precious between you.

Being vulnerable can be risky and thus scary; there is a chance that you can be hurt. But for all its risks, there's much to be gained by being vulnerable. And its risky nature is the very reason it creates such intimacy.

Share a dream, a fear, a difficult memory, a failure, an unusual interest.

(And if your vulnerability is not met with the response you had hoped, don't give up on vulnerability. Talk about it.)

Literal Definition

Foundation.

In Other Words

Bonding.
Connecting.
Communicating.
Influencing.

💡 Even More

Yesod is translated as “foundation,” It is about the importance of having a firm, inner foundation in relationships with others.

Just as the sefira of Tiferes harmonizes and balances Chesed and Gevurah, so too, Yesod harmonizes and balances Netzach and Hod.

EXPRESSIONS of Yesod

Yesod is bonding and giving of yourself thus it is the foundation of life.

Yesod is about emotional intimacy – truly connecting with another in a deep and authentic way. Being attached, with total devotion and dedication. It is about sharing what is really going on for you – in a way that the recipient can fully absorb and connect. And creating a situation where the other feels comfortable to share with you

Bonding means not just emotionally feeling for another, but also translating all those feelings into practical communication and connection – fully connected with total focus and dedication, avoiding anything that interferes with the bond. Each grows and flourishes in this bonding relationship.

In this strong connection, the receiver feels a sense of belonging and deep connection. A sense that “I matter; I am valued”; it builds confidence and trust.

REFLECTIONS about Yesod in your marriage

Are you a good communicator? Do you sincerely share your inner self? Are you selfish in your relationship or genuinely invested and connected exclusively with your spouse? Do you keep anything bottled up inside?

Do you know if your spouse feels connected in your marriage? Respected? Loved? Valued? Smothered? Taken for granted? Does your spouse feel connected to you or do they feel lonely and isolated?

Are you expressing yourself with love and concern, or with hurtful insults and putdowns?

What is holding you back from fully bonding? Are you too critical? Perfectionist? Uncomfortable with vulnerability? Has your trust been abused?

Integrating Yesod in your marriage

→ **LET YOUR SPOUSE KNOW YOU FEEL ENRICHED BY THEM.** There are words of compliments, appreciation and gratitude. And then there is showing the other person how much your own life is enriched by having them in your life. This really makes the other person feel good to be doing for you.

"Thank you for taking care of dinner. Just knowing that I have warm food waiting for me when I come home made this long day seem so much more bearable." This shares your gratitude and reveals what is going on for you.

→ "I so appreciate your time and your insights. I feel much more hopeful now."

→ "I love watching how you interact with the kids. Just knowing that they are with you when I'm out makes me feel relaxed that they are in good hands."

→ "I know you really didn't want to do it, and you did it anyway. So firstly, thank you for taking care of that. And more importantly, I feel loved that you did it just because I requested."

Take the time to really think how that action makes you feel. And share that with them. Some emotions that you might be feeling: Relaxed. Happy. Taken care of. Secure. Moved. Energized. Uplifted my mood. Made things easier. You really 'get who I am'. Cared for. 'I really matter to you'.

I AM SO HAPPY
TO BE
MARRIED
TO YOU.



→ **EXPRESS YOUR POSITIVE FEELINGS FOR YOUR SPOUSE. OFTEN.** Compliments, appreciation, awe, approval, encouragement, pride, acknowledgements.

Why you would want to share your positive feelings:

1. Your spouse will want to spend time with you (not from a place of neediness). A person naturally seeks the company of those who think well of them. The more someone senses appreciation from another, the closer they feel.

2. Your spouse will criticize you less. It's harder to criticize someone who thinks so highly of you. When someone feels appreciated, they feel less of a need to put the other down.

3. Your spouse will be more willing to listen to your ideas and perspectives. When someone feels comfortable in the relationship, they are looking less to assert themselves, and more to working as a team.

4. Your spouse will make an effort for you. When someone feels valued for who they are, they will make an effort not to spoil that image, and will try to prove that image by acting accordingly.

5. Verbalizing the compliments and appreciation make them even more real. You have to come up with right words to say, so you are thinking more about those positive aspects.

6. When you compliment others, you view yourself as a generous and big-hearted person. So, you increase your own self-esteem.

Literal Definition

Kingship.

In Other Words

Leadership.

Nobility.

Aristocracy.

Dignity.

Authority,

Power.

Royalty.

Speech.

💡 Even More

Hashem created the world with the sefira of Malchus – through 10 statements. Through the power of speech.

Words have power.

Speech reveals your thoughts.

Rambam teaches us to emulate Hashem. When we live our life ensuring that our speech and conduct are a reflection of Hashem then we know we are living in the image of Hashem.

EXPRESSIONS of Malchus

Malchus is about being a leader – in words, behavior and attitude – in your personal life and in everything you do.

Living a life of actualizing goals and plans. Keeping the best interest of others as a guiding post in everything you do. Striving to bring out the best in each person. Appreciating each person's unique abilities. Treating others with dignity and respect.

To be a respected and effective leader, your leadership must reflect the sum total of all the other six emotions/ sefiros. In other words, before acting, make sure that your actions reflect your lovingkindness, discipline, compassion, persistence, humility and bonding (which should come as an outcome of a careful intellectual, objective decision process using your Chochma, Bina and Daas).

A good leader has a healthy balance of self-dignity, kindness, graciousness, confidence and aristocracy.

REFLECTIONS about Malchus in your marriage

In your marriage, what is your style of leadership? Does it come with honor, respect and best interest for the marriage and family? Are your priorities healthy for your marriage?

In your marriage, do you impose your authority? Do you make room for your spouse? Do you help your spouse flourish? What are situations where you defer to your spouse? How often do you allow your spouse to lead? Does your spouse feel you have their best interest in mind?

Are you a leader or a dictator? Do you treat your spouse as an equal partner? Do you consult with your spouse in the decision-making process and coordinate with harmony and unity? Do you speak respectfully?

Are your goals, plans and dreams of success healthy for your marriage and family?

Does your spouse sense your leadership is based on kindness, love and humility? Do you exhibit any selfish or narcissistic tendencies? Does your spouse and family follow you because they want to or out of fear? Do others respect your authority? Why is that? What can you do to enhance your leadership style in your family life?

Integrating Malchus in your marriage

→ THE "HOW MIGHT WE..." POWER QUESTION.

Reframe the problem with a more positive thought-provoking statement: "How might we...?" This encourages us to think creatively about generating solutions.

—'How' assumes there are solutions out there — it provides creative confidence.

—'Might' says we can put ideas out there that might work or might not — either way, it's OK. When we hear words like 'can' and 'should', there is some level of judging, and defenses go up. Thoughts like 'can we really do it?', 'should we really do it?' hinder the thinking and possibilities.

By using the word 'might', we defer judgment and this can help ourselves and others to create options more freely, and thus opens up more possibilities. It states to all that we believe that some ideas might work and others won't and it's all OK. It creates the emotional safety to think and try things out.

—'We' says we're going to do it together and build on each other's ideas. It is us against the problem together.

LEADERSHIP
IS NOT A TITLE.
IT IS ACTION
AND EXAMPLE.



→ STICK UP FOR YOUR SPOUSE. Your spouse wants to feel that you have their back. That you'd stick up for them in front of your parents and family. And their family. Anyone.

As a married couple, you should put up a united front to hold each other's dignity to the utmost.

Defend your spouse. Call out the offender - respectfully, of course. Even when you don't completely agree with your spouse.

Even if you do not take sides with those who are disrespecting your spouse, your inaction will make them feel alone and abandoned.

Think: what is more important - my marriage or the issue that is being discussed? Your marriage relationship trumps (almost) everything.

→ "This is what we decided together. Please respect our decision."

→ "I will not have anyone disrespect my spouse. Not even my family."

→ "Dear family, you may not appreciate or understand my spouse's decision or opinion, but you still have to talk to her/him respectfully."

→ "I understand you see this issue differently from my spouse. At the same time, his/her perspective is a perfectly valid one too. It makes sense too."