



REVISED &  
EXPANDED!

# **Sameiach Tesamach**

SAMPLE

A Comprehensive Guide for the Jewish Husband

# SAMPLE

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**TRIGGER WARNING:** This sample only includes  
excerpt pages only from Part One (and the  
addendums) which discusses the general  
marriage relationship. Part Two, as you can  
see from the table of contents, discusses  
intimacy **which could be triggering for some  
individuals.**

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## Foreword: Nesivoseha Shalom

**T**he Rambam<sup>1</sup> writes that the purpose of the entire Torah is *shalom*:

היה לפניו נר ביתו ונר חנוכה או נר ביתו וקדוש היום  
נר ביתו קודם משום שלום ביתו שהרי השם נמחק לעשות  
שלום בין איש לאשתו, גדול השלום שכל התורה ניתנה  
לעשות שלום בעולם שנאמר דרכיה דרכי נעם וכל  
נתיבותיה שלום.

*“If one has to choose between purchasing Shabbos candles or Chanukah candles, or Shabbos candles and wine for kiddush, Shabbos candles take precedence because of the overarching value of shalom bayis. For, behold, even the name of Hashem is erased in order to make peace between husband and wife. Shalom is of supreme importance, for the entire Torah was given in order to make peace in the world, as it says in the pasuk, ‘Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace’.”*

It goes without saying, then, that cultivating and maintaining a harmonious relationship between husband and wife should always stand as the very uppermost priority in life. Furthermore, a man’s primary sense of success, happiness, and satisfaction in life is completely tied up with the peaceful

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<sup>1</sup> הל' מגילה וחנוכה ד:יד



and harmonious functioning of his home<sup>2</sup>. Investing in your marriage, then, is both a fulfillment of your greatest responsibility as well as that which will ensure your personal happiness in life<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> כמו שכתוב מצא אשה מצא טוב (משלי יח:יב) וכמו שאמרו כל אדם שאין לו אשה שרוי בלא שמחה בלא ברכה בלא טובה וכו' (יבמות סב:), ועוד אמרו לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבוד אשתו שאין ברכה מצויה בתוך ביתו של אדם אלא בשביל אשתו (ב"מ נט.), ואמר רבי יוסי מימי לא קריתי לאשתו אשתי...אלא...ביתי (שבת קיח:), ופירש רש"י שם שהיא עיקר של בית. וכן אמרו איש ואשה זכו שכונה ביניהן לא זכו אש אוכלתן (סוטה ז.).

<sup>3</sup> Although the words of Chazal obviously need no proof, some may find it interesting that there is a good deal of contemporary research that supports this assertion. See, for example, "The Socio Political Demography of Happiness" (Peltzman 2023) which states, "Being married is the most important differentiator with a 30-percentage point happy-unhappy gap over the unmarried... and that number has hardly changed since the 1970s. It is the same for men and women. Mean happiness for the non-married hovers near zero (as many Sad as Happy) throughout the sample period. So the happiness landslide comes entirely from the married. Low happiness characterizes all types of nonmarried. No subsequent population categorization will yield so large a difference in happiness across so many people... The recent decline in the married share of adults can explain (statistically) most of the recent decline in overall happiness."

See also "Marital Happiness and Psychological Well-Being Across the Life Course" (Dush et al 2008) which found that psychological well-being is correlated with marital happiness, albeit averring that there was insufficient data to determine if "respondents with the lowest levels of well-being may have self-selected into the most unhappy of marriages or unhappy marriages may have led to low levels of well-being."

See further "How's Life at Home? New Evidence on Marriage and the Set Point for Happiness" (Grover & Helliwell 2019) which states, "Using data from the British Household Panel Survey, we control individual pre-marital well-being levels and find that the married are still more satisfied, suggesting a causal effect at all stages of the marriage...and [we have found] that well-being

Writing a work on *shalom bayis* carries with it a certain degree of danger. As Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky is quoted as saying, there are no two marriages that are exactly alike. Just as people are infinitely varied, so too are the precise recipes for how to deal with subjective situations infinitely varied.

Clearly, then, one cannot make a hard-and-fast, recipe-style rulebook on how to deal with any given situation in married life.

There is no question that every married couple is unique and needs to find a particular system and rhythm that works for them, both in general and in any given specific situation.

Nevertheless, there are certain basic *yesodos* that can serve as a *moreh derech*, a general outline and guideline that is helpful for most marriages. One can learn these principles, understand them well, and discover how precisely they may apply in his particular situation.

That is the way to study a work such as this; not as a strict, step-by-step instruction manual, but as a compilation of underlying principles and general guidelines which can help you determine how to calibrate your particular direction and course of action.

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effects of marriage are about twice as large for those whose spouse is also their best friend.” See similarly “Marital Happiness, Marital Status, Health, and Longevity” (Lawrence et al 2019) that states, “Compared to individuals who were ‘very happily’ married, those who were ‘not too happy’ in marriage were over twice as likely to report worse health and almost 40% more likely to die over the follow-up period.” For more on this topic see “Does Getting Married Really Make You Happier?” (Stone 2022).

While invested with great effort to be comprehensive, this guide was written with an overarching primary goal to address topics that often go overlooked.

I make no claim that this guide is meant to be taken as an exhaustive treatise on the topic of *shalom bayis*.

There are many other works on the topic, and you should definitely avail yourself of them so as to acquire a well-rounded education.

In particular, in no way shape or form is this guide meant to supplant live *chassan* classes.

If you, dear reader, are a *chassan*, do make sure to get *chassan* classes from a competent *chassan rebbi*, and you can use this guide as a comprehensive supplement to those classes.

In the spirit of trying to make this guide as comprehensive as possible, I invested a good deal of effort in perusing the academic research literature where I felt that the “*chachma b’umos taamin*” could be helpful. Indeed, I make extensive reference to research literature throughout, especially in part two.

Accordingly, I feel it is important to mention in this foreword that the *Igros Moshe* writes (*Even Ha’Ezer* 1:102) that availing oneself of the secular literature in a way that could be helpful towards fostering *shalom bayis* is perfectly legitimate.

In this vein, we find that *Rav Yaakov Emden* (also known as *Yaavetz*) quotes researchers of his time period.....

**PART ONE**

*Shalom*

*B'Ohalecha*

## Found or Finding

In *Maseches Brachos*<sup>4</sup> it says that in *Eretz Yisrael* when someone would get married they would pose the following question to the *chassan*: is it מצא or מוצא? The reference being to two *pesukim* that describe extremely divergent outlooks on a woman. One *pasuk*<sup>5</sup> says:

מצא אשה מצא טוב ויפק רצון מה'

Whereas the other<sup>6</sup> *pasuk* says:

ומוצא אני מר ממות את האשה

Quite a stark difference isn't it? Basically, it would seem, they were asking the *chassan* if his wife is good, or more bitter than death.

Sounds like an awfully strange thing to be asking a *chassan* immediately following his *chuppah*, doesn't it?!

It's hard to imagine that if the *chassan* was himself wondering what the answer to that question is that it would be good for his *shalom bayis* for someone else to verbalize the question for him! Let's not forget that the *Gemara* in *Kesubos*<sup>7</sup> says that one should dance in front of the *kallah*

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<sup>4</sup>.ח.

<sup>5</sup> משלי יח:כב

<sup>6</sup> קהלת ז:כו

<sup>7</sup>.פ.

and call her a *naah v'chasudah* even if she doesn't really look so beautiful to most people.

Clearly, *Chazal* were very concerned that we should say things that will endear a *kallah* to her *chassan*. How much more so would it be a terrible sin to say something to the *chassan* that may make him think poorly of his *kallah*!

So what could possibly be the *pshat* in this *Gemara* about asking the *chassan* if it's *אצח* or *אוח*?

*Rabi Yaakov Mi'Lisa* (“the *Nesivos*”), in his *Emes L'Yaakov*, explains that they were **not** asking the *chassan* to tell them what he thinks about his wife. Rather, they were indicating to him that there are two approaches a man can take towards his wife. One approach is the approach that leads to *אצח* and the other approach is the approach that leads to *אוח*.

Now, as is the case regarding every word in the Torah, nothing is happenstance. If the positive approach is dubbed *אצח* in the past tense, and the negative approach is dubbed *אוח* in the present tense, there must be a reason for that.

*אצח* means he found. He was looking for a wife, and he found one. The search is over.

“Being in the *parsha*” can mean that a *bachur* is practically drowning in an ocean of research, considerations, investigations, inquiries, deliberations, hesitations, clarifications, weighing relative options, and the list goes on and on (for some *bachurim*, quite literally!). And even many who were only ankle deep in it still had the same experience, at least qualitatively.

But now that *parsha* is over.

Done. Finished. Never to be revisited ever again.

He has found his girl. No ifs ands or buts about it. The search is over. For good! From this point on, the intensive clarification and deliberation work that went into the *shidduchim* process matters no more.

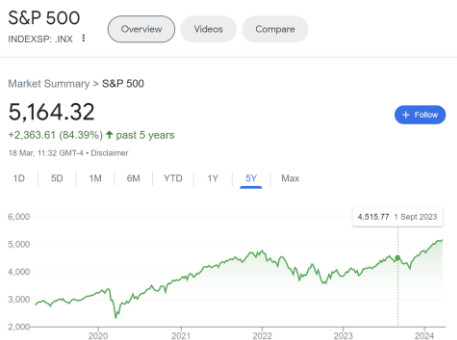
Not even one iota.

Once he has found and married her, that's it. This is his wife. No second guessing, no niggling doubts, no wondering if he really made the right decision or if he perhaps could have done better. This woman is the one that he found and that's all there is too it. End of story.  $\aleph\omega\aleph$ , he found her; it's done.

$\aleph\omega\aleph$ , on the other hand, means.....

.....  
.....

A good analogy for this is investing in the stock market. The stock market has lots of ups and downs, but over the long term it gains. All you have to do is Google “S&P 500” and put the chart at the maximum number of years. You’ll see that, although there are many points at which there is terrible market volatility and awful nose-dives, all in all, over the long term the stock market gains.



That’s why a mature, intelligent investor will get in on the market for the long term.

What often happens, though, is that investors lose their nerve when the stock market gets rattled and experiences sharp declines. Just look at the image on this page and imagine someone who invested for the first time in 2019. Around February of 2020, the market experienced the terrible Covid crash. What so often happens? Investors get freaked out that they’re going to lose all their money, so they sell all their shares even if it’s at a significant loss.

And it’s such a terrible mistake, because, as you can see clearly from the chart.....



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.....  
You know, there are people who do not learn the lesson the first time around. They wind up getting divorced two times,



three times, maybe even more if there are any women desperate and foolish enough to give them a try. There is a saying, “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.” Because someone who doesn’t learn from his mistakes is acting like a complete fool.

Wouldn’t it be nice, though, if a man would not have to make such a gargantuan mistake as allowing his family unit to crumble and fall apart in order to acquire the wisdom that he needs to get it right?

So let’s try to dissect this a bit and see if we can perhaps learn from Mr. I’ve-got-no-patience-for-my-first-wife-but-plenty-for-my-second so that we don’t fall into the same trap he did.

What drives a guy to want to divorce his wife? Has he given up on the whole idea of married life? Probably not. Few people are prepared to live alone for the rest of their lives. I think it’s safe to say that the overwhelming majority of *frum* men who get divorced are going to look to get remarried

asap. So, no, it is not that he has given up on the whole idea of marriage. So, what is it?

Well, it's pretty simple, isn't it?

He thinks he can.....

## Making it work

**N**ow, we are up to the next step: ok, so how do I make it work? Before we answer that question at length by elucidating the various, major facets that lead to *shalom bayis*, we need to clearly reiterate a crucial point.

Marriage is a people grower.

However much you mentally prepare yourself, and however many tools you learn about, marriage is, by necessity, going to stretch you. It is going to force you



to mature and grow beyond the constricting boundaries of the self-persona that you now know.

Just as in physical growth, when one develops his muscles, there will necessarily be a certain amount of feeling discomfort and burn, so too when it comes to true character growth is there necessarily going to be a certain amount of feeling discomfort and burn. The good news is, that just as a body builder doesn't suffer from the burn – on the contrary, he revels in it because he knows it means his muscles are getting bigger, he is getting stronger, and his endurance and

power levels are increasing by leaps and bounds – so too, if you are aware that this is what it's all about, will you feel a tremendous *simcha* and satisfaction in feeling the burn of the character development and growth that takes place within you as you traverse the beautiful road of marriage.

And it truly can be something exquisitely beautiful and breathtaking, if we but approach it in the right way.

Ok, so here we go. What better place to begin than the *Rambam*, right? In *Hilchos Ishus* (15:19) the *Rambam* writes:

צו חכמים שיהיה אדם מכבד את אשתו יתר  
מגופו ואוהבה כגופו ואם יש לו ממון מרבה  
בטובתה כפי הממון ולא יטיל עליה אימה יתירה  
ויהיה דיבורו עמה בנחת ולא יהיה עצב ולא רוגז.

In this amazingly concise statement, the *Rambam* has summed up for us the rules of how to treat and relate to a wife. This statement is truly the *kol ha'Torah kula* of *shalom bayis*, and the rest is its *pirush* which we need to learn. We need to brand this statement into the deepest level of our consciousness. It goes without saying that every single *chassan* should start off by memorizing this statement and accepting it deep within himself as the creed by which he is going to live his entire married life.

Let's take this *maamar* and break it down into its component parts, and try to build at least a rudimentary understanding of each facet that will serve as a solid foundation upon which to build throughout our lives. The first one is:

שיהיה האדם מכבד את אשתו יתר מגופו  
ואוהבה כגופו

A free translation of these words would read something like,  
“A man should honor<sup>8</sup> his wife more than himself and love  
her as much as he loves himself.”

However, the seasoned *lamdan* will notice that the Rambam  
did not write *שהאדם יכבד*, rather he wrote *מכבד אדם*.  
The translation of that is, “a man should be honoring”.

What is that supposed to mean?.....

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<sup>8</sup> Please note, unless indicated otherwise, the words honor and respect will be used interchangeably.

## Parles-vous français?

**M**en have constipation of the mouth. That is an observation that Rav Noach Orlowek often shares with women to help them understand that their husbands may not find communication as natural and easy as they do.

Of course, this is not to say that men do not know how to *schmooze*. Plenty of men can shoot the breeze for hours on



end. With their friends. When it comes to their wives, though, they get constipated (an astute observer may notice that this can also happen with one's mother, great aunt, and so on).

She wants to know how your day went. You manage a barely audible grunt. "Great". It's *Shabbos Rosh Chodesh*. She asks you if the davening was nice. Just responding "yeah" can feel like such an effort. She wants to know if your boss was happy to hear that you had a baby girl. With great difficulty, you barely get out an, "I don't know; I think so."

Yes, when it comes to their wives, men can suffer from severe constipation of the mouth. Even a man who has no problem shooting the breeze with his *chavrusa* for hours on end (when he is supposed to be learning) may find that with his wife he gets all clammed up!

What is going on here? It's actually pretty simple. There is a *Gemara* in *Maseches Shabbos* 62a that clears up this confusion. It is a really fundamental point that bears huge relevance, so please pay close attention. It is one of the most basic pieces of information a man.....

## Part of you, and her

**L**esson number one that we can cull from the aforementioned story of Rav Yechezkel Abramsky (see, we did get back to it!) is precisely this point. Rav Abramsky emphasized that it may have appeared to his guest that he was discussing trivialities with his rebbetzin. Indeed, many of us would probably not expect to hear a *gadol b'Torah* speaking about such seemingly unimportant details.

However, Rav Abramsky told his visitor that he should thank Hashem that he merited to see how a man is meant to converse with his wife. Rav Abramsky displayed phenomenal understanding of the feminine nature and character. Therefore he was able to really honor his wife and express his love for her in a way that she would feel it.

The way *Chazal* express the obligation to love your wife is *ohavah k'gufo*, he loves her like himself. But why did they say *k'gufo* instead of *k'atzmo*? Perhaps this particular wording is alluding to an important idea. Just like your love of yourself.....



.....  
.....

There is a story about Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky that makes almost the identical point, albeit it with a slight, additional twist.

*Nothing better expressed Reb Yaakov's extreme modesty than his abhorrence of having people stand for him when he entered a room.*

*But there was a time he made an exception even in this. Reb Yaakov and Reb Shneur Kotler were once preparing to enter the main hall during the annual convention of Agudath Israel. Reb Shneur suggested that they enter from the side in order to avoid anyone standing for them. But Reb Yaakov shocked him by rejecting the suggestion.*

*"Our wives are present, and it will give them pleasure to see everyone honoring us. It makes it easier for them to put up with the constant intrusions on our time throughout the year<sup>9</sup>."*

Despite Reb Yaakov's severe aversion to.....

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<sup>9</sup> Reb Yaakov (Artscroll) page 321.

# Respectful, Respectable

**A** big part of acting respectfully is acting respectably. Think for a moment, if the *rav* of your *shul* was visiting your home, would you walk around the living room in your undershirt and boxer shorts?

And why not? Because that would be an extreme sign of disrespect (perhaps mental illness as well).

Although the familiarity of marriage does not demand the same formality of respectful expression as a *rebbe-talmid* dynamic or a business-meeting, the point is nonetheless clear: acting in a respectable manner is an intrinsic part of being respectful.

I recall that when I was in yeshiva, I had a friend who once lamented his state of showering. "I've gotten to a point that I take a shower only in preparation for Shabbos... I never thought it would get to this." Some *bachurim* may think that the reason why they shower only once a week is that they are simply too busy learning to be bothered to take a daily shower. Perhaps that is true for certain, exceedingly unique individuals.

But for the majority of young men, there is simply something about bachelorhood which tends toward.....

.....  
.....  
Take a shower every day, no matter what. If you are a *mikveh*-goer, make sure to shower again *after* you immerse<sup>10</sup>. There is nothing attractive about the smell of chlorine mixed with the body odor of a hundred other men.

Brush your teeth morning and evening, and floss too. Use deodorant as necessary (but don't overdo it which can also be gross).



Don't scratch under your clothes in front of other people, and when you do so (in private), wash your hands after you're done. Don't walk around.....

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<sup>10</sup> עיין שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ז סי' ל"ג דבזמננו שכל טבילת גברי אינו אלא משום חומרא או תוספת קדושה אין שום איסור להתרחץ לאחר הטבילה, ואיברא דכתב שם דמ"מ נכון להזהר פשיטא כביעתא בכותחא דזה מיירי באופן שזה לא ישפיע לרעה על שלום ביתו ולא יפריע לאשתו, דאם זה כן יפריע לאשתו וממילא ישפיע לרעה על שלום ביתו פשיטא דאין לך חסיד שוטה גדול מזה.  
ועד דאתי לידן ענין חסיד שוטה לגבי טבילה לגברי בזמננו נימא ביה מילתא פורתא, והוא דשוחחתי פעם עם אחד מגדולי הרבנים בירושלים שידין רב לו בהענשת עברייני מין והרב הנ"ל אמר לי ח"ל, "המקוואות (של גברים) הם חממה לכל עברייני המין שבעולם" (וכדי שלא יחשוב הקורא שמדובר בעניינים יחסית קטנים כגון הסתכלות והרהורים, אענה ואומר דאני אישית מכיר מקרים של משכב זכור ממש, חלקם באופן של פגיעה בבחורים צעירים, שקרו או התפתחו במקוואות). שאלתי את הרב הנ"ל, "אם כן, הרי מאחר וענין טבילת גברי בזמננו אינו מעיקר שורת הדין ואין בו חובה גמורה אלא נוהגין בה משום חומרא ותוספת קדושה, והרי אמרו חז"ל הוי מחשב שכר מצוה כנגד הפסדה ואין לך יצא שכרו בהפסדו גדול מזה!" הרב ענה לי, "אין שום אפשרות לעשות כן. אצל חלק מן הציבור הם מתייחסים לטבילה כאילו היא מעיקרי הדת."

## Learning the language

**N**ow, you may be wondering to yourself, “I can understand approaching my marriage as a deep, complex *sugya* that needs to be learned up very well; that I need to work hard to understand my wife in terms of her unique needs and character as a woman and in her own, individual way. I can also understand the need to accustom myself to demonstrating honor and love to her to the point where it becomes so ingrained in me that it is second nature. I can understand **how** I am to go about doing this.

“But you spoke before about marriage being akin to moving to a foreign country where I’ll have to learn a completely new language and mode of behavior. Well, I have no idea where I am supposed to even start! It is not as if there is a dictionary that will translate male language into female phrases. How am I supposed to learn a completely new way of thinking, processing, and communicating?!”

That’s a really good question. The truth is, though, that it is not nearly as hard as it may sound. All you have to do is.....

Let's describe a true-to-life example that will help us understand this a bit better.

*Baruch had a hard time concentrating on his learning today. Life has been really busy these past few months, and they had pushed off filing for their property tax discount until today.*

*And today was the deadline.*

*Penina made sure to clear her schedule so that she could go to the appropriate government office to submit the forms.*

*When Baruch arrives home, he finds a distraught-looking wife. "What is it Penina," he asks with deep concern and worry, "did you manage to get the discount?"*

*"I c-a-n-n-o-t even **begin** to describe to you what my day was like," Penina responds. "As soon as you left for kollel, Ruchy threw a tantrum and absolutely refused to go to gan-"*

*Baruch quickly cuts her off, "Penina," his tone now slightly exasperated in addition to the worry, "did you get the discount?"*

*"Well, because of Ruchy's tantrum, which I haven't even told you about yet, and the baby coming down with a fever – it took me two **hours** to finally get him into the doctor, I'll have you know..."*

*By this point, Baruch's head is spinning  
and.....*

## Urgent vs Important

Some tempering words are now in order. I think it is safe to say that most men do not care about money so much more than they care about their wives. In fact, it seems plainly obvious that men care about their wives far more than they care about their money.

After all, if a woman was in grave danger, what man would not risk, or even sacrifice his own life to save his wife?! If a woman was critically ill, what man would not empty his pockets to pay for his wife's medical treatments?!

Of course men care about their wives more than their money. Far more. So what is going on over here? Why do men seem to often behave, in the nitty gritty day-to-day of life, as though things like money matter so much more?

It would seem that what is going on was captured quite nicely in a statement made by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in a 1954 address at Northwestern University of Evanston, Illinois<sup>11</sup>.

*“I have two kinds of problems, the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent.”*

While it does not seem reasonable.....

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<sup>11</sup> [quoteinvestigator.com/2014/05/09/urgent/](http://quoteinvestigator.com/2014/05/09/urgent/)

## *Listen friend*

**I**n addition to giving us a window into the differences between how men and women communicate, the above exposition also shines a spotlight on an additional skill that is extremely.....



Of course, that does not mean that if a husband and wife each cultivate and maintain a healthy range and degree of connectivity with family and friends that their connectivity with each other will automatically fall into perfect lockstep. It is not at all uncommon that spouses need to have direct, open conversations about the quantity and quality of their together time, especially as the years pass and their own family unit grows.

In fact, the need to engage in deliberate interaction calibration should not be viewed as an aberration or an exception to the rule. On the contrary, it is something that



every couple should expect that they will need to do.

In addition to the “foreign nation” factor that can exist between men and women, different people can have very different needs in respect to the delicate balance between togetherness and autonomy, as well as in relation to the nature and character of their preferred way of spending time together.

To give a highly banal, yet eminently real-to-life example, he may want to play scrabble for thirty minutes, while she may want to go for a two hour walk in the park. She may want to go out for a quick coffee while he.....

# Money

**I**n addition to the expressions manifest in words, honoring one's wife must also express itself in action. The Rambam leaves no room for ambiguity regarding this point:

ואם יש לו ממון מרבה בטובתה כפי הממון

In addition to spending money on her comfort and convenience in accordance with what you are able to afford, there is also the point that she.....

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Rav Fishel Schachter once related a cute joke that expresses this point quite well. Yankel waltzes into his next-door neighbor’s house one day in the middle of a big renovation. Yankel notices that his neighbor is looking through some designs and colors for kitchen counters together with the interior designer.

“Oh, Yankel,” the renovating neighbor says, surprised to suddenly see him there amidst all the mess and racket, “what brings you here?” Yankel wastes no time and gets right to the point. “Well,” he said, “I couldn’t help but notice that you are up to the point of selecting new kitchen counters and I wanted to let you know that I prefer the sea-green model.”

The neighbor was flabbergasted. “Excuse me?! What on earth does that have to do with you?!”

Once again, Yankel took the direct route. “Well, you are only doing this whole renovation to make my eyes pop out of their sockets, so you may as well choose the color that I like best!”



One does need to strike a healthy balance.

The main thing, though, is.....

A concrete example of this principle could find expression in a scenario where you want to take a vacation and your wife wants to buy a new *sheitel*.....

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However, with a wife, that is obviously impossible. *Chazal's* statements, as so clearly and succinctly codified by the Rambam, make it abundantly clear that such behavior within the marriage context is verboten<sup>12</sup>.

What we see from this is that you do not have to do anything at all (and you are not allowed to either) to prod your wife to respect you. It comes naturally to her. The only thing you need to worry about is:

- To not do anything that would undermine that respect, which means.....

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<sup>12</sup> ואע"ג דאינו צריך לראייה כי מוכח מיניה וביה כמש"כ בפנים, מ"מ הצריך לעוד ראייה לזה יעיין בשו"ע או"ח סי' ר"ס סע' ב' דאיתא התם דהא דצריך לומר עשרתם ערבתם הדליקו את הנר צריך לאומרו בלשון רכה כדאיתא בגמ' שבת לד., וכתב שם המ"א בס"ק ב' (וכל האחרונים אחריו) דהיינו טעמא משום דאסור לאדם להטיל אימה יתירה בתוך ביתו. הרי לפניך שלומר אפילו דברים כאלו (שהם רק הזכרות נורמליות ושגרתיות לחלוטין, וגם מחוייבים ע"פ דין מחז"ל) באופן יותר חזק מלשון רכה כבר הוי בגדר הטלת אימה יתירה! ועל אחת כמה וכמה דסתם ביקורת אם לא ייזהר במשנה הזהירות למצוא את הדרך לומר אותה בלשון רכה ובאופן שהיא לא תיפגע מזה, פשוט שעובר על ענין זה של הטלת אימה יתירה. והטעם נראה פשוט כמו שכתבנו בפנים דמטבעה האשה יראה מבעלה, ולכן כל דבר אשר יעשה שעלול להטיל אימה ולו בזז כל שהו כבר הוי בגדר אימה יתירה.

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.....

A story about Rav Shimshon Pinkus zt”l illustrates this point quite well.

*One Simchas Torah, one of the men dancing accidentally stomped on Rav Pinkus’ foot. The latter did not say a word about it and simply forgave the infraction. The next year, the same man stomped on Rav Pinkus’ foot again. The thought that automatically arose in Rav Pinkus’ mind was, “I cannot believe it, the same klutz stomped on my foot again?!” Just as quickly, though, Rav Pinkus caught himself and realized, “Aha! Evidently, last year I wasn’t really mochel him. For if I had truly forgiven him for last year’s stomp, I would not have remembered it!”*

Now, whether or not completely forgetting the misdeed is a basic prerequisite for *mechilah*, feel free to go learn the *sugya* or ask your LOR. But the point is salient and significant regardless.

Suppressed irritation is likely to.....

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You'll come across as "holier than thou" and, again, it will have the opposite effect of what you want. Instead, in a natural way, share with her *divrei Torah* and stories of *tzaddikim* that demonstrate this concept in a way that will sit well with her. Sing *zemiros* with feeling and passion, have a solid learning-*seder* or attend shiurim, and, in general, create a highly enjoyable and energized atmosphere on Shabbos (as well as in general), and you will see that your family's appreciation for the *kedusha* of *Shabbos* will greatly increase.

This heightened appreciation for the beauty, *geshmak*, and *kedusha* of Shabbos will organically lead to a cessation of activities that are not in the spirit of Shabbos.

Teaching by example is your most effective tool, so long as it is done in a manner that makes people feel enjoyment and inspiration.

The same thing goes for something that is already a real issue of *assur* vs. *mutar* but is not definitively prohibited. Take for example removing bones from fish while preparing it in the kitchen on



Shabbos.....

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.....

- Number three, you want to achieve your goal, right? And what is your goal? That the forbidden behavior should stop, right? Well, when you come at it in a confrontational manner, the chances you'll succeed at attaining that goal are not high at all, to say the least<sup>13</sup>.

A brusque approach along the lines of, "Sweetie, you should know that one is not allowed to speak negatively of other people" will often simply not work, no matter how sweetly you say it.

A more effective approach could be something as follows. In the moment, adroitly change the topic. You'll discuss it with her, but not in that moment of transgression. Later that day, or at some point over the next couple of days, schedule a special date with your wife<sup>14</sup>. Go out and have a really enjoyable time. When both of you are in a really positive, loving mood, say to her something to the following effect: *"Sweetie, there's something I would like to talk to you about....."*

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<sup>13</sup> כמו שאמרו בשבת לד. "אמר רבה בר רב הונא אף על גב דאמור רבנן שלשה דברים צריך אדם לומר וכו' צריך למימרינהו בניחותא כי היכי דליקבלינהו מיניה."

<sup>14</sup> Regular dates ought to be a fixture, at least on a weekly basis, preferably two or three times a week, even if it's just a brisk ten-minute walk together.



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.....  
The *Steipler Gaon* writes<sup>15</sup>:

***“The primary hope a woman has in her whole world is that she should have a husband who loves her, and if she sees that this is not so, it is practically a situation of pikuach nefesh because of her intense pain and sorrow over her lonely state as if she were a widow during her husband’s lifetime<sup>16</sup>.”***

Furthermore, the *Chazon Ish*<sup>17</sup> writes, “The nature of a woman is to take pleasure in the favor that she finds in her husband’s eyes.”

I personally heard a telling comment from a very *chashuveh* rebbetzin who was widowed from her husband (who happened to be an *adam gadol* in every sense of the term). This woman is an exceedingly accomplished personage in the world of *chinuch*. Meaning, she always had an entire life that was apparently independent of her relationship with her husband. And here is the comment that she made.

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<sup>15</sup> במכתב, מובא בספר אורחות רבינו ח"ה בפרק "קדושה" אות ס"ז.  
<sup>16</sup> שמעתי מגדול אחד שהוא ראה בספר מסוים שאחד מגדולי הדור בדורו של החפץ חיים פעם דיבר עם אשתו אודות האפשרות שיתגרשו זה מזו מאחר ולא נתפקדו בזרעא של קיימא. היא אמרה לו, "אם אתה חושב על כך, למה לא להשליך אותי עכשיו לנהר."  
<sup>17</sup> באגרת, מובא בקונטרס מאמרי הדרכה לחתנים להרב שלמה וולבה זצ"ל בשיחה ראשונה אות ב'.

*“I was surprised at how.....*

## What's in a wardrobe

What a woman wears is something that can come up a lot in many marriages. So, let's say your wife just bought something new. As many women tend to be, she is quite excited about her purchase. She tries it on for you and proffers the inevitable, "Well, how do you like it?"

Hopefully, you'll love it and can honestly answer, "It's absolutely fantastic! It looks gorgeous on you. How lucky is that piece that *you* decided to buy it!"

But what if you *don't* care for it? A positive contribution to your *shalom bayis* is not a likely outcome of your wife wearing things that you don't fancy. So, you *are* going to have to tell her when you don't like something.

The only question is, how.

Before we get to that, though, let's do a quick reality check. You are not going to love every single garment your wife ever buys. There are only a certain number of styles out there at any given time, and the notion that she'd be able to hit the nail right on the head with every single piece is just not realistic.

At all.

So if the piece doesn't arouse your *disfavor*, then in many instances the most prudent policy is.....

.....  
.....she is behaving does not at all reflect her true feelings about you.

On the contrary, it is precisely *because* she loves and adores you so much that she is acting that way. She so badly wants and needs to be convinced of that fact, so she tests you to see if it's true. Furthermore, it's entirely possible that her testy behavior is not a fully conscious act. She may not be making a conscious decision to act unpleasantly, but it is her powerful, emotional undercurrent that is pushing her to it.

*Chazal* make it clear that some women may even act in this manner on a consistent basis.

*Maseches Yevamos*<sup>18</sup> recounts how both *Rav* and his uncle *Rabi Chiya* had cantankerous wives. Whatever *Rav* would request for supper, his wife would do her best to give him something completely different! Nevertheless, *Rav* learned from *Rabi Chiya* the secret of how to deal with such a situation: "It is enough for us that our wives raise our children and save us from sin."

In other words, you needn't take your wife's cantankerous behaviors so seriously. She does so much for you, don't you see?

The *Gemara*<sup>19</sup> proceeds to relate another fascinating account.....

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סג<sup>18</sup>

שם ע"ב<sup>19</sup>

.....  
.....maintaining *shalom bayis* as primarily your responsibility. I believe that this attitude is reflected in the words of *Chazal*<sup>20</sup>, “If **he** acts meritoriously she will be an *eizer*, a supportive force for him; and if **he** does not act meritoriously, she will be *k’negdo*, a warring opposing force.”

Once again, though, I feel that it is important to reiterate that this entire discussion is referring to relationships that are overall healthy. There definitely is such a thing as abuse, though, and there is no reason why anyone should have to suffer abuse, whether man or woman. Any individual that feels that he or she may be suffering from an abusive situation should absolutely reach out for help.

And even if it is not an abusive situation by objective parameters, if you feel that it is simply too much for you – and the two of you are not able to resolve the issue on your own – definitely do reach out for help. After all, there is no dearth of sensitive men who simply may not be equipped to weather such storms on their own. There is no shame in reaching out for help. On the contrary, it is an expression of courage.

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<sup>20</sup> יבמות סג, ועיין רש"י בראשית ב:יח

## *Hormones at home*

**A**bsolutely essential for every man to be aware of, particularly in the context of this discussion, is that women have major things going on inside of them that greatly impact their mood and state of mind.

One witty individual put it pithily like this: You are not marrying one woman, but three. One during the time when she is permitted to you, one during the time when she is forbidden to you, and one when she is pregnant.

In truth, that statement is only partially accurate. It could be broken down into many more distinctions. Pre-menstrual, menstrual, post-menstrual, post-mikveh, first trimester, second trimester, third trimester, during labor, post-birth, nursing, and so on.

This can seem absolutely mind-boggling to a man.

The fact of the matter is, though, that because of the cycle of major physical and chemical upheavals going on inside a woman, there could be any number of.....

# *We all make mistakes*

**D**on't let mistakes derail you. Even big ones. Many couples get into fights from time to time. Particularly early on in the marriage when experience and wisdom is at a premium. No, this is not an excuse to fight; but it is simply the reality.

If you frame marriage as a lifetime undertaking towards employing maturity and wisdom to go about it the right way, then hopefully such occurrences will be few and far between and relatively mild, and over time they will cease to occur at all<sup>21</sup>. Also, the more you prepare beforehand by studying these matters and thinking about them a lot, the more likely you are to avoid such pitfalls.

Make no mistake, though, there will always be differences of opinion.

The goal is to ever improve the way you handle those differences of opinion. To engage in mature, mutually respectful discussion about the issues instead of such differences becoming a battle of wills or worse. Nevertheless, despite your best efforts, you are going to make mistakes from.....

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<sup>21</sup> By the way, disagreements are not fights. As Rav Yisroel Reisman put it, there is no reason why two intelligent, thinking people cannot view a given issue each one in their own way. A fight occurs when lack of agreement devolves into a fractious confrontation. It is learning how to successfully negotiate disagreements and adopting the art of mutual respect and compromise that prevents disagreements from turning into fights.

## Addendum 2: Stress relief

Get proper sleep! Yes, I know that I already wrote that in the body of this guide, but it is so important that I am going to repeat it again. Because if you don't get proper sleep, there is not much else that can help you. Think about it. Many people can go for a full 24 hours without any food or water and be basically ok. But there are very few people who can go for a full 24 hours without sleep and not feel like a complete wreck!

Sleep deprivation is associated with so many health problems including elevated risk of heart disease, mood dysregulation, low sex drive, and weakened immunity, to name just a few <sup>22</sup>. So, absolutely, as I've already emphatically stated, if there is only one thing that you will take out of this entire guide, make it this: get proper sleep!

In the context of this particular discussion, it should be patently, glaringly obvious that lack of proper sleep makes people edgy, nervous, and agitated. In a word: stressed! Proper sleep is probably by far the single most important factor in avoiding undue stress. And, if you're stressed out, getting better sleep is probably the single most important factor in fixing the problem.

Ok, with that intro firmly in place, here are some more pieces of information that could be useful in stress alleviation.....

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<sup>22</sup> [healthline.com/health/sleep-deprivation/effects-on-body](http://healthline.com/health/sleep-deprivation/effects-on-body)



## Addendum 4: Marriage of mutuality

### מהות הנישואים

#### חיוב מזונות

ראשית כל יש להעיר לגבי הא דחייב הבעל לזון את אשתו שהוא או חיוב דאורייתא למ"ד "שארה... לא יגרע" היינו מזונות או חיוב דרבנן שתקנו מזונות תחת מעשה ידיה כדאיתא בכתובות מז; ופשוט הוא מכל הסוגיות בש"ס בעניין זה דחיוב מזונות הוא חיוב גמור והוא מובא להלכה בשו"ע אבה"ע סי' ס"ט סע' ב'. רק באומרת איני ניזונית ואיני עושה הבעל פטור. בכל זאת הא מעשים בכל יום הוא דהאשה גם היא עובדת כדי לפרנס את הבית, ואצל משפחות רבות האשה היא זאת שמביאה את עיקר הפרנסה, ולא שמענו ולא ראינו שיצריכו את האשה לומר לשון מחילה להדיא.

אלא נראה דמאחר שכן נהגו נחשב מחילה מן הסתם, וכדרך מש"כ הרמ"א בחו"מ סי' תי"ז סע' א' לענין עשיית ביבין ומרתפות תחת חלל רה"ר "וכולן מוחלין על כך מאחר שכן נהגו".

#### מלאכות הבית

עוד יש להעיר מהא דאיתא במתני' בכתובות נט: "ואלו מלאכות שהאשה עושה לבעלה טוחנת ואופה ומכבסת מבשלת ומניקה את בנה מצעת לו המטה ועושה בצמר".

וכל זה מובא להלכה בשו"ע אבה"ע סי' פ'.

הרי היום יש הרבה גברים שעוזרים בענייני בישול וכביסה וכו' ולא שמענו על מקרים של בעל שאינו מוחל לאשתו ותובע אותה לדין תורה שתבשל לו או תציע את מטתו או תניק את בנו וכו'.

#### כפייה לעשות בצמר