

HEAL



Hope and Encouragement After Loss

Issue 7 - Fall, 2023

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לעילוי נשמת חי' חוה בת חיים זאב הלוי

Please note: Some women find that reading about loss brings up pain. If you are not comforted by the read, please be in touch with us to be removed from our mailing list.

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From Our Hearts

Dear Friends,

Beginnings are sweet: they bring the excitement and anticipation of new opportunities for starting fresh. Beginnings are hard as well: the unknown future is a canvas yet to be painted on just as our fates are yet to be sealed.

The month of Tishrei is a powerful time filled with prayers and tears, as we somehow feel that this month is The One that will 'do the job'. There is so much anticipation and hope for what this new year will bring, and we trust that this coming year will *b'ezras Hashem* be The One. We *daven* it will be the year that our prayers will be heard, our dreams met, and our hopes fulfilled.

Hosha Na. We ask, we pray - Help us, please! Our requests reverberate all through the days of Succos, and at greater length on Hoshana Rabba. *Hosha Na! Na* has a double meaning. *Na*, as in please, also means right now. We pray: Hashem, help us at this moment, right now. We feel like we can't continue this way anymore and we beg for a *yeshuah*, for comfort, and for joy.

While sitting in the *succah* this year, let us take the time to gaze upward and note the twinkling stars winking through the *schach*. Let's remember Who created all those stars and gave each one a designated spot in the vast expanse. *הַשֵּׁם יוֹדֵעַ אֶת שְׁמוֹת כָּל הַכּוֹכָבִים* (הַשֵּׁם יוֹדֵעַ אֶת שְׁמוֹת כָּל הַכּוֹכָבִים): Hashem has a name for every individual star, and He takes count of each one. The same Creator who calls each star by name knows my name as well, and He will be calling me by my name with affection and care. With this awareness, deeply inhale the night air and let that magical moment wash over you. Perhaps it will allow you to feel somewhat less alone.

May we all be blessed with a sweet new beginning and a *gut gebentcht yuhr*.

Kesivah v'chasimah tovah!



The HEAL Team

Chaya, Gitty, Ettie



Editors:

Chaya K.

Gitty R.

Proofreader:

Shana S.

Design:



Contact Us:

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From Your Heart

Hi, I got the magazine and it was amazing! Thank you so much!

Sarah

T'was great to have the companionship of such deep connection, validation, and understanding over *yom tov*!

Frady

Thank you for supporting the healing of broken hearts.

Esther

Keep up your amazing work! It should be a continued *zchus* for you!

R. K.

Thanks again for your support!

Esty

Once again, the HEAL mag is amazing! Inspiring! Healing, *be"H*! Thank you very much!

Rechy

Thank you for this wonderful publication. Reading through the pages gave me much needed *chizuk*, and most important- permission to grieve. Being blessed with a family *B"H*, I didn't give myself the okay to grieve. So thanks for the permission and thanks for the beautiful read. *Ze! Gebentched*,

Perry

Miracles touched my heart deeply!! Looking forward to more songs!! :-)

F. Levi

Your magazine is truly incredible. There's a lot of *chizuk* and inspiration, and just having a community of women who've been through something similar provides a lot of support. I really wish there had been something like this when I was going through all my pregnancy losses!

T. F.

Shabbat Shalom and thank you! The magazine is a true *chizuk*, especially when our Shabbat is so quiet. *Kol tuv*,

Sharon

Reading through the magazine from cover to cover, I was thinking about which one is my favorite piece, and I came to the conclusion that I've got no favorite. Every single one is a masterpiece of its own. I found the read so, so validating. I especially liked "Dear Diary..." The idea of allowing my feelings to sit with me as they arise and not fighting them really hit home for me... I would mention that I find reading "To My Dear" too hard for me so I skip that one.

C. Gold

Editor's note: "Chessed begins at home," as we say... It's great that you're being kind to yourself and skipping that piece!

Behind every
siddur that's
falling apart,
there is a
person that isn't.

Connecting Through Prayer

Anyone out there also struggles with *davening* at times? This month of Tishrei is one that definitely lends itself to *tefillah*. I guess it's not called '*avodah she'balev*' for nothing. *Tefillah* is work, and if we are to feel some level of success with our *davening*, then we need to know that we will have to put in the effort and work for it.

Perhaps if we are honest, we will realize that *davening* can be hard. The struggle is real. Nevertheless, it is assumed to be such a basic of a frum lifestyle. All the children in schools do it daily, there's a myriad of different charts encouraging young children to *daven* at home when school is closed - so how is it that some of us adults grapple with it? However, we have to realize we are not alone, (this is a comfort!), And it is ok to find it hard. Multiply that thought (by a million!) if we are always beseeching Hashem for the same thing yet we feel as though nothing at all has changed.

I may not be the only one who

wants to *daven* out of habit so it will remain unthinkable for me not to. I guess I think of it as being on autopilot. Not a morning in my home should pass without me *davening* Shemonei Esrei. However, therein lies a challenge. Our *tefillos* should ideally come from the heart, with *Kavana*, intention. If each day our *davening* is the same as the day before, then we can wonder if this is a real relationship. In real life there are ok days and better days. When we have the 'ok' days, what if we don't feel like *davening* - then what? How should we approach the situation?

I think it's ok to feel upset and frustrated at Hashem for the pain that can be so intense in our lives. We can't see the bigger picture and we may never see it in this lifetime. Sometimes all we see and feel is the heartbreak. However, we know the source of it all is Hashem and that is wonderful! That is proof that we have a connection to Hashem, so even in the times that it's hard (ok, very hard) we know

that we will not fall below because we are connected above.

Forcing something that is not felt just does not sit well with me; I don't believe in it. (It's a given to write that guilt is not invited here!) We all know that as women, we are not required to *daven* with a *minyan* so our *tefillos* are more personal, nonetheless, I am writing about *davening* the set *tefillos*. Believe me, I have been there when opening the Machzor is hard. I have been there when I didn't partake in the formal *davening* because it was just way too hard. However, if I am truly honest with myself I will let you know that not *davening* did not make me feel any better. I felt even worse as I did not do what I feel in my deepest heart I should be doing as a frum Jew. In truth, *davening* solidifies our relationship with Hashem whether we feel it or not. I think of *davening* now as exercise for our *Neshama*; even a short easy one is better than none. We can just stick to the basics - that's ok, but we will not stop; we will keep

up the momentum. If today we did not feel it, we will keep trying. Tomorrow will hopefully be a better day.

There are some tips that help me when *davening* is a little challenging that I would love to share. Firstly, let's know what the words mean. I remember many, many years ago when I looked into the translation of the Shemonei Esrei and I was so stunned to learn of the translation of *Modim*. It really made me stop and think of all the good I had in my life. We are so used to saying the Hebrew words that we sometimes need to take the time to learn what the words actually mean, as well.

Remaining focused with our *davening*, being mindful will surely help our *kavana*, so this is important. Remember that *kavana* is not a one-time acquisition we have for life. Instead, it's something that we all know has to be constantly renewed. Singing the *tefillos* helps us be in the moment.

Alone for a while at home? Take advantage of it - sing to your hearts content.

It's wondrous

what a difference singing can make. No matter if we're on key or not. Take advantage of it. At times, when I sing alone at home I am transported back to my school days (ahhhh, how much simpler life was then). Not every tefilla has a known tune, so reciting the words loud and clear also brings our mind to the present and helps us be attentive and enjoy the moments that we are actively connecting to Hashem.

Some of us feel more connected in Shul, so if we have the opportunity to go, that may be an option. I do feel more connected in Shul, so if I can I try to go. Once again, we've arrived at the Yamim Noraim when we are all taking stock of our last year. If around us we see others whose circumstances have changed but ours hasn't that can be an extremely painful reminder. I try to protect myself whilst gaining the benefit of being in Shul. I have mastered the art (yes, I see it as a creative art!) of going for a little while and then returning home. Small enough to make it work from all sides. See what works for you.

Truthfully, we all need *chizuk* in *davening*. We need to

think about it and therefore enter the month of Tishrei with some sort of plan to make the best of the situation. I guess we all want to *daven* out of joy with a happy and grateful heart but at this point in time we may still be *davening* out of pain (no matter how hard we work on gratitude). We are all human. We may be too old to make ourselves a sticker chart (or perhaps not!) to motivate us to *daven*. Therefore, instead, we may want to reward ourselves in some other way if we've done it well this Yomim Noraim. It will surely help to continue to propel us forward. Lastly, in the words of Tehillim (20:8) it says '*eleh varechev, vealeh vasoosim, va'anachnu beshem Hashem Elokeinu nazkir*'. We know and believe that everything is the hands of Hashem, and more specifically when we call out to Him, which of course is the gift of *Tefillah*. This reminds us that *Davening* is something we should really prioritize, and there is no time better than the present.

Hoping this article inspires you to open your Machzor and connect!

A Gut Gebenched Yohr. 

Back to Myself

Everyone
Wants to know
When I'm getting
Back
To Myself.

But I wonder...
What Self?

The Self
Of mere weeks ago-
Glowing, radiant
The setting of a brilliant jewel
Just waiting
To share its sparkle with the world?

Perhaps one day.
I hope.
But that's not what they mean.

So which Self?
The Self of the Years
Before these Months
The self that was half agony
And half hope

So pained, yet so optimistic
Living in a world within a world
To which no one was privy...

Well, sometime I'll probably have to go
Back
There too.
But that's not quite the Self
They're waiting for me
To go
Back
To, either.

So perhaps it is the Self
From even...
Before
Then?

I stretch my brain
To try to remember
To reconnect with
That Self.
Was that really...
Me?

So innocent
So trusting
So sure
That Life
Would be all Roses
And that its Thorns
Would never touch me.
How it would be lovely to inhale the scent
Of that untainted existence again.

But I don't think I can ever really get
Back
To that
Self-
now that I'm here,
Nor would I really want to-

I have traversed
So many mountains
and Valleys
Since then,
Discovering
So much
Of the world
And of the worlds
Inside me.

Sorry, Everyone.
I guess I'll never really
Get back
To Myself.
But, then,
Is the purpose of this journey
To go...
Back?

But don't worry, Everyone.
I won't be staying
Here
In this gray haziness
Forever, either.

I'll emerge again soon,
Everyone.
And then, I'll be
Back
With you again-
And a little closer
To truly being
Myself. 



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In Focus

Chaya Hott

As humans, we have a natural tendency to compare various aspects of our lives including clothing, food, talents, and achievements. Those are just a few examples, and it definitely doesn't stop there.

Sometimes we might unintentionally compare one person's loss to another's, but this can be harmful for both ourselves and others. When we highlight someone else's loss or struggle as more significant than our own, it might be a way of dealing with our own pain. However, in doing so, we could also be bypassing and minimizing our own feelings instead of allowing ourselves the necessary time and space to properly process our own emotions.

In addition, when we give more importance to someone else's loss because it is seemingly "more severe," it can be invalidating and dismissive to others who have experienced what may seem like "smaller" losses in comparison. They might feel like they aren't entitled to their pain because their loss wasn't as far along or as devastating as the other person's experience. When people feel invalidated it may even deepen the pain caused by the original event.

For example, consider one person with a broken foot who needs

surgery, versus another person who lost a leg in a car accident, *lo aleinu*. Can you even begin to compare the two? Although these scenarios are different, they each hold tremendous pain. Both individuals deserve support and validation without trying to determine whose suffering is "worse."

This message is a reminder of the famous principle "*V'ahavta Lereacha Kamocha*," which means loving others unconditionally: acceptance regardless of our differences. Let us support each other with empathy and love by recognizing that pain and healing is a personal process that cannot be measured or ranked based on external details.

No one was ever awarded a gold trophy for experiencing the worst tragedy. Grief is not a competition, and there is no hierarchy of pain.

Pain is pain is pain. 🌟

Chaya Hott is a certified grief and trauma specialist. She guides women through the process of healing after experiencing profound loss by creating a safe space to be seen, heard, and validated in the fullness of their own unique encounter with grief.

Pain is Pain is Pain



My AHA Moment

Chaya K.



"Being bothered by the lack of connection to Hashem proves that I am connected!"

Along my journey, Hashem in His kindness has sent a handful of exceptional people along my path; several fine men and women, those affiliated with organizations and others not, and some very caring friends opened their hearts to me, allowing me the space to vent and feel held and listened to. Sometimes they did the listening and at times they did the talking - when I was ready to listen! Tenderly and lovingly guiding me, yet giving me the space to grow into my new persona at my own pace.

During a phone conversation with one very selfless man affiliated with ATIME that gave me much of his time, I raised my self doubts about not having a connection with Hashem. He gently answered me, "You do. You most definitely do." "I do??" I asked incredulously. "Oh yes, of course you do. The lack of connection that is bothering you shows that you have a connection with Hashem. If there honestly wouldn't have been any connection, then it wouldn't have been bothering you at all."

Sometimes we don't realize how powerful words can be. With his kind words, the stale air was knocked out of my lungs, and fresh oxygen started circulating within me. I was able to start breathing again.

Throughout the school year, I was teaching about *emunah* and *hashkafa* in my classroom on auto-pilot mode. I was accustomed to my style of teaching with a zeal and a passion, practicing what I was saying and believing in it. And now... not so much so. I felt as if I was preaching empty words, making me feel two-faced... until Malkie Klaristenfeld from Knafayim validated my reservations, "I have seen that along my journey too. (While teaching *emunah*) sometimes I speak to the girls and sometimes I speak to myself."

I found solace in singing Yanky Daskal's song, "*Ich bayt dir Totteh, helf mir Totteh, ich vill zein nunt tzee Dir*" (loosely translated: I beg of you Hashem, I want a relationship with you). Living a life of connection is so important, otherwise we feel troubled and unsettled. And still we need to remember that being bothered by my lack of connection proves that you are connected!"

Many thanks to all those special people that gave of their valuable time to me. Hashem should bless them with continued success and a sweet new year. ✨

Been There

Rachel Shifra Tal, as told to Chana Weisberg

It may come as a surprise to some readers to hear that I was attending births as a certified labor coach at the age of 20. It was at the young age of 11 when I first mentioned to my mother that I wanted to be a midwife when I grew up. By age 16, I was in a midwifery study group learning sterile technique, and at the age of 20 I was a certified labor coach...

I moved to Israel, married my husband, and became pregnant at the age of 21. I was certain that pregnancy, birth, and motherhood were going to be beautiful and fulfilling. Why shouldn't they be?

I had attended 27 births and had read every book I could lay my hands on about pregnancy, birth, and beyond. Nothing could go wrong, right? I was an expert.

My doctor assured me at my regular checkups that I was one of the lucky ones. I had been blessed with a very healthy pregnancy, *baruch Hashem*. My husband and I spent countless hours playing guitar, singing, and bonding with our daughter-to-be. We affectionately called her "Little One."

I took it as a personal insult when

my blood pressure sky-rocketed in the last trimester. Wasn't I eating the healthiest possible food? Wasn't I resting, exercising, and taking my vitamins? What was I doing wrong?!

For the first time in my life, I felt that I was not in control. I was doing everything right, but everything was still going wrong. As my due date approached, I was relieved that soon the nightmare would be over...or so I thought.

The nightmare was just beginning.

One morning, I woke up and



The Day I Was
REBORN

I did not feel any fetal movement. I rushed to the hospital terrified that my baby was in distress. They took an ultrasound, and the doctor could not find a heartbeat. My Little One, it turned out, returned her soul to The Maker before taking her first breath.

Like one in approximately 2,000 pregnant women, I had been stricken with Toxemia. This deadly illness had killed our unborn daughter, and, we later found out, had nearly killed me as well.

When my husband held our lifeless baby in the delivery room, I saw him cry for the first time in my life. She had my husband's ears and feet. She had my nose and dark curly hair. She was the most beautiful baby I ever saw... We buried her near our home in the Golan in the cemetery of Tveria, which is one of the four holy cities of Eretz Yisroel.

As I began the long haul to recuperate from the birth and the Toxemia, I also began looking for someone to blame. I started with myself. I would call my husband or my mother almost every day with a new reason why Little One had died. Before long, my husband would begin conversations with me by saying, "No, Rachel. You didn't kill our kid."

Acquaintances would ask me, "What happened? How did your baby die?" but all I could hear was the accusation, "Why didn't you save your daughter? Didn't you love her?" One lady asked me why I hadn't done an emergency C-section to save the baby. As if I could have.

When I started getting my health back and all the help and meals stopped coming a few weeks after the birth, the true sadness set in. The sadness enveloped us like a black cloud that came to live over our home. I was supposed to be up to my ears in diapers, dealing with a baby, and complaining about sleepless nights. Instead, I felt like there was a gaping

As I began the long haul to recuperate from the birth and the Toxemia, I also began looking for someone to blame.

chasm of emptiness in my heart that needed to be filled.

During that period, I kept on hearing from others that I looked good and seemed happy. I let them keep their illusions. These people only saw me after three hours of talking myself into getting out of bed.

I tried to distract myself from my grief by burying myself in work. The problem was that by profession I am a labor coach. I went to a few births and I would come home so depressed that my husband begged me to stop punishing myself by going to births when I was far from ready to be doing so.

A few months after the birth came a point that I could function better and felt healthier. That was when I started to get angry. Very angry. I was angry at Hashem and at just about everything He created. I was angry at the injustice; how could Hashem do this to me? Why had He let me carry my daughter for so long just in order for me to lose her at the last moment?

After one really hard day, I sat down and screamed out my frustration at Hashem. I told Him exactly how furious I was at Him.

What came out of that was something incredible - something I didn't expect. That dark day, with tears streaming down my face, I finally let go.

I realized that I am not in control. And that's okay. I realized that I'm just not going to be able to understand everything that Hashem does in this world. And that's okay, too. I know they sound like simple concepts, but accepting them was one of the hardest things I have ever done.

It was around that time that I read the beautiful poem "Footprints in the Sand" by Mary Stevenson, and it helped me a lot over the following months. In the poem, a man dreams that he is walking along a beach with Hashem. Across the sky he sees the scenes of his life, and there are two sets of footprints in the sand accompanying each scene: one set belonging to him and one set belonging to Hashem. When the man sees the last scene of his life, he looks back and sees that during the lowest, saddest

points of his life, there was only one set of footprints in the sand.

In anger and disappointment, the man challenges Hashem, "... During the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?" The Lord replied, "The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, My child, is when I carried you. The footprints you see are Mine."

During those difficult months of recovery, I kept this poem in my mind. Even on the days when I didn't believe it. And slowly it started seeping in, and I began believing it. It changed my mindset; even when life is difficult, I am never alone. Even though I might not feel it, Hashem is carrying me.

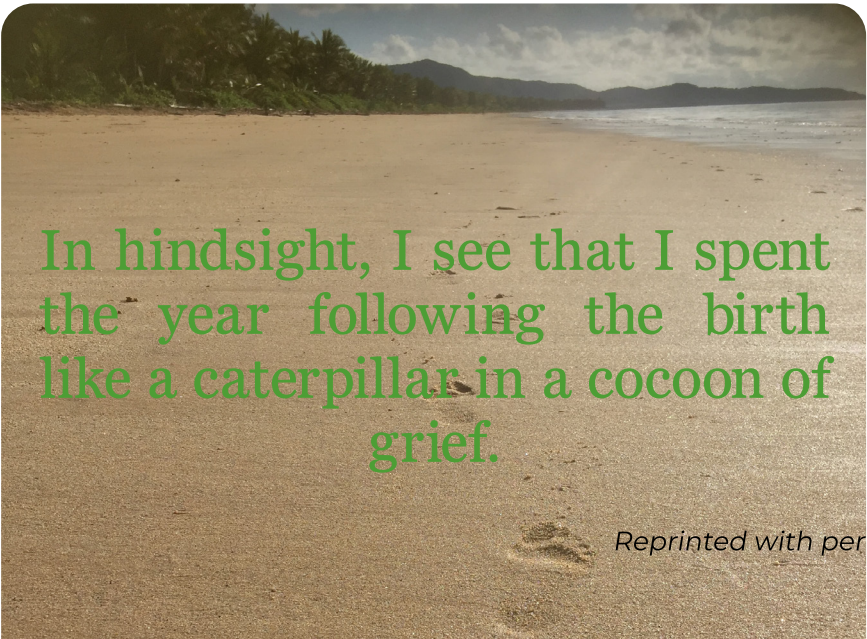
Over the 15 months since the

birth, my husband and I have changed so much. Our faith has grown. Our humility has grown. Our sensitivity to the suffering of others has grown.

As part of our own healing process, my husband and I decided to start an organization called HUG (Holistic Understanding of Grief) so that other couples would have a place to turn to for their physical and emotional needs following the loss of a pregnancy or baby. My husband and I both feel that Little One was one of HUG's co-founders.

In hindsight, I see that I spent the year following the birth like a caterpillar in a cocoon of grief. Nobody could see what was happening inside that cocoon. I couldn't either see until I flew out of that cocoon, and from darkness to the light of day -- I was transformed.

Looking back, I realize that our baby was never born. But through the process of it all, I was reborn. ✨



In hindsight, I see that I spent the year following the birth like a caterpillar in a cocoon of grief.

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Reflections

Peshie Needleman

Spring Eternal

*We watch as
The Hope Diamond –
The world's largest deep-blue diamond
A whopping 45.52 carats
Revolves in a bulletproof case
In the Smithsonian Museum.
It sure is precious, that Hope Diamond.
"I think it will turn out just fine."
"I believe in you."
"This is highly treatable."
"Hold on just a bit longer, that's all it will take."
"He never let go of you and He never will."
Yup, it sure is precious, that diamond called Hope. ✨*

Reprinted with permission from the Binah magazine

The Stark White Shirts

Baila was the perfect balabusta; everyone in town knew that there was no home more immaculate than hers. Out of all household chores, though, Baila's favorite one was laundry. She would tend each garment as if it were a one and only. Each would get individualized care from the moment it stepped into the laundry room until it was ready to return to its designated place.

Baila would determinately walk into her laundry room, roll up her sleeves, and laundering would

begin. She started by sorting each article of clothing into its appropriate pile. The dark pile lay towards the far end of the room, the medium colors in the center, and appropriate lights at the right-hand corner. The shirts, though, she always swung over her shoulder, close to her heart. She knew they needed special attention and would devote many hours until they were just so. First, she would affectionately take them to the bathtub. There, the collars and cuffs would get a good, gracious scrubbing. Then she would get the strong detergent from the shelf, place the shirts into a basin, and fill it with boiling hot water. Baila would let them soak until the shirts felt like they were passing

out. The shirts could not understand why they had to go through such a rigorous procedure before finally being deemed ready to be swooshed into the machine. "Why?" they would complain. "Why were the socks, towels and other items just tucked into the machine, while we go through such struggles until we finally land in the washing machine?"

Baila would tenderly soothe the shirts by constantly reminding them that they were yet to shine and shimmer like the glistening sun. "My dear shirts, your pain will pay off! Just wait and see." True to her word, there was no one prouder and prettier than the shirts when their owners donned them and reveled in their pure whiteness.

Indeed, we all come down here to be cleansed.



“Life is like a washing machine. It twists, turns, and knocks us around, but in the end we come out cleaner, brighter, and better than before.”

Some of us are socks, some of us are towels, while a select few are part of the saintly group of shirts. While all enter the washing machine of life, there are those who, like the socks and towels, get washed and rinsed with a warm and quick cycle. The shirts, on the other hand, the individuals who are part of the elite group, go through a rigorous cleansing process.

At times, like the shirts, they may ponder and question, "Why is it that I have to be scrubbed so much? Why is it that I was given a longer and more difficult route?"

Just like Baila, the Master launderer - Hashem - knows exactly what each of us needs for the *tikkun* of our *neshamos*, and just like Baila carries the shirts close to her heart, let us not forget that the soap called *nisayon* is an opportunity to lovingly be cleansed in the very hands of Hashem. When the morning comes and all will don their true essence, there will be no one happier and purer than the stark white shirts! 

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Emunah Insights

The word for stress is לחץ.

The letter 'ה' represents Hashem's name.

When we remember Hashem, we place the letter 'ה' into the word לחץ and it becomes הצלחה. We go from stressed to blessed with success the moment we remember that Hashem is in charge!

-Rabbi Elimelech Biderman 

Answers on the Mark

Chumi Friedman

I am a happy person by nature and it's so hard for me, feeling sad so much of the time. I'm wishing I'd just be happy again...

Signed,

In Pain

Dear In Pain,

Sadness is an overwhelming feeling and one that can make us feel uncomfortable, especially if we aren't used to feeling that way.

That being said, the first thing we need to do is acknowledge that we have a right to feel sad. Sadness helps us honor our loss and gives us a way to express our sorrow and incredible pain that our pregnancy was not a healthy one and that it didn't end with a healthy baby.

Once we have honored feeling sad, we can try to find a way to keep it from overwhelming us. We do that to a certain extent by thinking positively and focusing on the good things we have. That refocusing can help us feel lighter, allow us to smile, and maybe even feel happy.

It's not a fast-moving process and may come with many ups and downs, and that's okay. The important thing is to try to find at least one thing every day that makes us happy, that gives us the opportunity to crack a smile.

Tracht gut, the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch taught, *vet zein gut*. If you think good, it will be good. The more you do it, the easier it will be, and pretty soon you will find you are not feeling sad all the time. Scientific research points to the fact that our thoughts define our realities, as stated in numerous studies: neurons get wired by the way they are fired. Repeatedly thinking about something in a particular way actually (re)wires our minds to follow that thought pattern.

So, look through this magazine and see what makes you smile - and maybe come back to reading it a few times. And then look for other things around you that make you happy. At the end of the day, we have the power to control our thoughts and our reactions. ✨

Wishing you many days of light and happiness,

Chumi Friedman

Director, ATIME/HUG Program

chumi@atime.org

Reflections

Rivky R.

Today

I sat on the couch

And did

Nothing.

I didn't fold laundry.

I didn't make supper.

I didn't call the dentist,

Or organize a closet.

I didn't make the grocery order,

Or check what is in the freezer.

I didn't read a book,

Or write a poem.

I didn't listen to music,

Or schmooze on the phone.

I didn't distract myself from my thoughts.

I didn't stop myself from experiencing my emotions.

I didn't push away my sadness.

I didn't deny my grief.

And by doing

Nothing

I did

Everything! ✨

NOTHING *yet* EVERYTHING



Taking a Breather

Paying attention to how we breathe is oftentimes overlooked, as breathing itself is completely automatic. However, becoming aware of it and incorporating breathing exercises into our daily routine has many benefits, including promoting calmness, reducing stress and improving focus.

Paced Breathing

Paced Breathing is a technique that can help activate stress reduction mechanisms in the body by promoting a harmonious state between your respiratory system and your heart.

The basic technique is to inhale for a count of 2-4 seconds and exhale for a count of 4-6 seconds. Find the combination that works for you, making sure to exhale longer than you inhale.

- Focus your attention on a specific object, image, sound or even your breath to free your mind from distractions.
- Begin by taking a normal breath and then take a deep breath. Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting your chest and lower belly expand. Breathe out slowly through your mouth, pursing your lips and making a swoosh sound.
- If your mind wanders, gently redirect your focus back to counting and breathing.
- Using a breathing app in the beginning can help serve as a breathing coach. Eventually, paced breathing can become second nature.

Simple Yoga Breathing

Yoga breathing is relaxing and can be used anytime to help with relaxation responses, including when stretching during yoga.

- Sit or lie down comfortably, resting your hands below your navel.
- Tune in to the way you breathe. Inhale and exhale naturally through your nose for a few minutes, noticing the slight rise and fall of your hands. Consider the way the air feels as it enters and exits your nostrils.
- Start to count silently forward (1, 2, 3...), then backward (... 3, 2, 1) as you breathe in and out.
- Gradually make each exhalation twice as long as each inhalation.
- Focus on breathing slowly and smoothly, humming each time you exhale. The slight vibration can be very soothing.

Abdominal Breathing Technique

This technique can help create a feeling of calm composure, renewed energy, and focus.

- While sitting, with one hand on the chest and the other on the belly, take a deep breath in through the nose, ensuring the diaphragm (not the chest) inflates with enough air to create a stretch in the lungs.
- Exhale slowly through pursed lips. Initially repeat 3 times. You can work up to 6-10 deep, slow breaths per minute for 2-3 minutes.

Breathing Breaks

Several times a day, take breathing breaks to help refresh your energy, let go of distractions, and increase your focus.

- Stand and take a deep breath while raising your arms slowly over your head.
- Exhale as you lower your arms
- Repeat 3 times.

4-4-8 Breathing

The 4-4-8 Breathing technique is great to use when you feel stressed or tense because it can help to calm the nervous system, clear the head of distractions, and reduce stress.

- While sitting, breathe in through your nose for a count of 4, taking the breath into your stomach.
- Hold your breath for a count of 4.
- Release your breath through your mouth with a whooshing sound for a count of 8.
- Without a break, breathe in again for a count of 4, repeating the entire technique 3-4 times in a row.
- Focus on counting when breathing in, holding the breath, and breathing out.

Note: Individuals can sometimes experience dizziness when practicing breathing exercises. With practice, dizziness usually goes away. If holding the breath or any part of the breathing exercise feels uncomfortable, reduce it to just a few seconds. 🌱

uhs.berkeley.edu/bewellatwork

A Treasured Dream

A Dream.

A Sweet Dream,

A hopeful Dream.

Oh! What a dream I had.

A treasured little dream

Of bundles of joy.

So close,

Oh, so near,

My heart swelled with love for her.

A feeling

Of togetherness

Of bonding so dear,

Wrenched out of my grasp.

You were taken away,

Never to enjoy.

My dream was shattered,

Never to come true.

I was left alone

Surrounded by emptiness and
pain....

Months of tears,

Weeks of anxiety,

Looking forward.

Counting hours, counting days.

For the big arrival

I was waiting desperately.

Sadness has blinded me.

I can't understand,

I HURT,

My heart aches.

I am left in the dark,

Alone,

And full of sorrow.

I see my shattered dream in front
of my eyes.

My mind replays the doctor's
words,

"We couldn't save her although
we tried many times."

HOW COULD IT BE?

Does this mean forever,

Or will you come back tomorrow?

I wish I could hold you in my arms
for one long minute,

Kiss you, and show you how much
I love you,

My daughter.

I wish I could see you one more
time and feel your soft pink skin,

And dark black hair.

You were so beautiful,

My daughter.

You were sent down from

shamayim for a very short time.

You fulfilled your tafkid right
away.

I know you were a very special
neshama'le.

I had the zchus to carry you for 9
months.

Yet my heart is bleeding when I
think about you, My child.

I feel the void without you,
My child.

Did I lose you forever?

When Moshiach comes, we will
meet again.

I can't wait to see you,

Embrace you

And thank you,

My daughter,

For you have changed my life

Forever! 

Written by: Tzippy W., 2016

Humor Me

Y. Freund

A legend is told of a simple woman who came up with a major marketing idea: to put an advertising brand in block letters on the front of her shirt. She was walking around, proudly proclaiming the name of the company she was advertising for, as the cash flowed into her account. On one particular day she didn't receive her paycheck. She was told that the community saw her idea as a fad, and that now they were all walking around with the company's logo. Her services were not needed anymore.

Who will join me in the new marketing effort of bringing awareness to the world? Let's riot and yell (while abstaining from breaking glass). Let's write it in block letters on our shirts and wave the banners high: Black Lives Matter! That is... Our Lives Matter! Pushing away my pain won't make it go away! And now even louder! PUSHING AWAY MY PAIN WON'T MAKE IT GO AWAY! And can we do that one more time? Loud and clear, microphones turned on! PUSHING AWAY MY PAIN WILL NOT NOT NOT MAKE IT GO AWAY!!!! Whew... that felt good.

A friend of mine, Surie*, sadly lost her twins at 34 weeks gestation. She shared a horror story about her neighbor that had a full term stillbirth and was told, "But Surie lost two!" Oh. So does this in any way take away from her own pain? These comments cripple. They make us feel inadequate and not licensed to grieve, because, hey! That one's suffering is greater than mine. So what right do I have to grieve my own loss?

"Be thankful for what you do have. You already have three kids!"

And so?? Then I don't get to grieve THIS ONE?

"She had three losses even before she had one live baby."

I feel for her! I really do! But right now I need to be validated. I'm suffering as well :(

The time has come. Enough water flows in the oceans and enough tears run like rivers. What are we waiting for? Let us keep our heads high and the banners even higher. I have the right to grieve the way I want to, at the pace I like. And now, step aside. MY LIFE MATTERS!!! 🌟



Perspective

Gitel K.

My pain overtakes my being
And don't try to convince me that
It'll make me stronger
Because right now
My heart is ripped apart
So don't tell me that
There will come brighter days
I know
And I feel
That this is the end
There is nothing to hope for
I've been shattered too many times
And don't tell me that
Things will change
If I hope for the best

Now read from bottom up to gain a new perspective!



To My Dear Rivky R.

Dear Neshama'le,

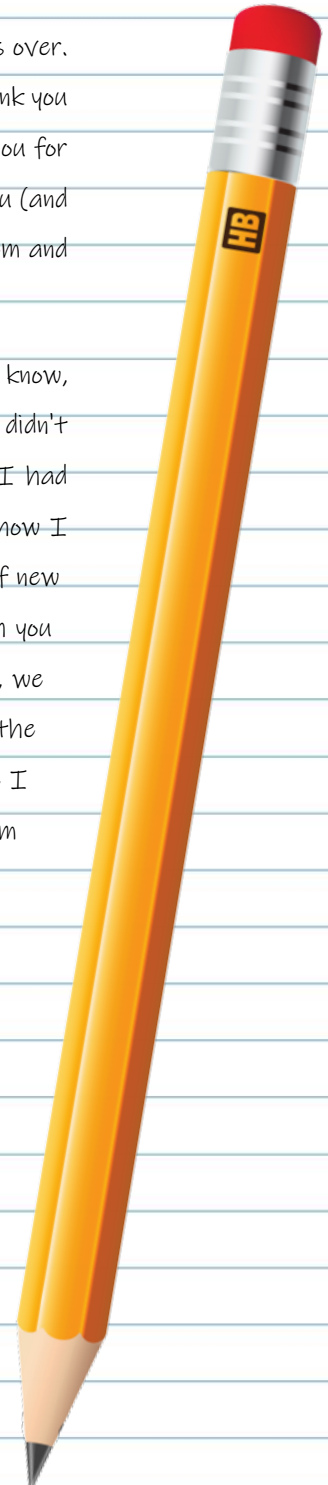
For twenty wonderful weeks I had the zechus of carrying you inside of me... But now it's over. Yesterday I had the procedure to get your guf out. Now I will pull myself together and thank you for giving me the zechus of being the chosen woman to carry your heilige neshama. Thank you for giving me the chance to elevate myself above my maternal instincts and realize how special you (and therefore me) are. Thank you for giving me this stepping stone to bring me closer to Hashem and make me a better person.

I am but a human mother, and therefore, right now it's painful for me. You see, I didn't know, Neshamale, how special and heilig you were. I didn't know I would never get to meet you. I didn't know I would never get to hear your cry, see your face, or count your fingers and toes. I had dreams, I had plans, I had wishes. I had a lifelong vision mapped out for you. I planned how I would love you and feed you and dress you. How I would sing to you and teach you all kinds of new things. How I would tell you about Hashem and how He runs His world. How I would teach you that everything is for the good, and that although we can't understand His Master Plan, we know that everything is for our best. I didn't know, Neshamale, that you were going to be the teacher. I didn't know that you would make me search deep inside of myself to find a place I had never been before. That's what it took for me to really realize that whatever Hashem does is for the best.

And so, Neshamale, don't get scared when I cry or when I'm in pain. I have to readjust my map. I have to come to terms with something I didn't expect. And because I am just a human mother, it might take some time. The loss of my dream is very painful and I had no advance warning. But don't worry, Neshama. I might be sad a little bit, it might take me some time to get back to believing in the strength in me, but I won't let you down. I will be the special mother your heilige neshema deserves. I will accept and move forward and make you proud that I was the one who carried you.

And so, Neshama, even though I never got to meet you, thank you for being my greatest teacher.

Mommy 



Cheesy Goodness

Although spending THIS much time in the kitchen preparing for the Yom Tov meals, we cooks tend to think the aroma itself would be enough to satisfy us. Don't ignore your hunger pangs... prepare this hot satisfying treat, with minimal mess (or stress).

Ingredients:

- 1 package pita
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 package frozen diced peppers
- ¼ cup oil
- Pizza Sauce
- Mozzarella Cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste



Image Credit: Oh!My Image 201-491-2648

Instructions:

Vegetable Letcho:

Line your Betty Crocker with parchment paper.

Place the diced onion along with a package frozen diced peppers into the Betty.

Add oil, salt and pepper to taste.

Sauté for half hour until looks done.

Toss it once during cooking.

Transfer it to a 32 oz. container or 5x7 bekele.

Pita Pizza:

Place 3 pita side by side in the Betty.

Smear generously with Pizza Sauce.

Spread 2 heaping spoonfuls of prepared letcho.

Cover with Mozzarella Cheese (optional).

Bake for 20 minutes. Remove from pizza maker as soon as done to keep the bottom from hardening.

Note: The Betty Crocker Pizza Maker definitely makes life simpler, but don't fret in the event you don't own one (yet)! Prepare yours in a frying pan with the same results.

Tip: Freeze the leftover letcho in portion sizes for a quick meal.

Hugging 'Treat'ment

S. R.



Retail Therapy: It makes you more energized, helps you to be happier, and puts you in a better mood. Although some may say it's wasteful, the physiological benefits are well worth it.

Simply put, shopping brings on happiness. When anticipating a treat, the brain releases dopamine which makes you feel good. A study was done on the correlation of retail shopping and self care, and the results show that 62% of consumers bought something for themselves as a treat.

Shopping encourages social interaction and connects you to society. This simple connection brings about happiness, making you feel 'normal,' even if you browse in stores far from home with complete strangers.

It can also prove to be a 'distraction outlet' ;)

So, why not go out to the mall and treat yourself to some little things that'll lift your mood – without breaking the bank. Some ideas are; a small perfume or lotion, a trendy necklace, little trinkets to enhance the décor of your home, or anything that'll make you feel hugged and cared for! ✨

Small Talk; Big Talk

What helped you get through the initial stages of shock and grief?

In response to your question, I do not think there is something to help one "get through" initial stages of grief. Shock does its own thing and people find themselves in survival mode - whatever that means for each person individually. Speaking about myself, once the initial shock wore off, my 'go-to' was to find people who would help me get through this. I mentally scrolled through my rolodex of friends and contacts to see whom I thought was in the position to hold my grief with me. I searched for an organization I could call to help me make medical decisions. Then, I talked as much as I needed to and gave myself loads of compassion and self care. Things like not cooking for a while, ordering in breakfasts,

and connecting with others in a similar situation through the help of organizations helped me tremendously.

Some more things to mention that helped me include connecting to Hashem, speaking to a Rav, and keeping in touch with some kind, caring friends and family who sent care packages and texts to share empathy and even poetry about my baby. I hope some of these suggestions are helpful for you as well.

S.T.

My loss happened right before Tisha B'av. There is a song composed by Shlomo Yehudah Rechnitz and sung by Simcha Leiner with the

words: "*Vatomer tzion azavani Hashem v'Hashem shichaichani: Hatishkach isha ulla, meracheim ben bitna gam ailleh tishkachna V'anochi lo eshkocheich*" (*Yeshaya 49:14-15*). Translated: Tzion, Bnei Yisrael, say that Hashem has left us and forgotten us. Can a woman forget her baby or disown the child of her womb?! I, Hashem, could never forget you, My children. The words *hatishkach isha ulla*, which are asked rhetorically, gave me such comfort. As everyone was telling me that eventually my pain will fade, my fear was that maybe I'd forget! This reaffirmed that NO, a mother never, ever forgets her child, and even more so, although at times we feel forgotten by Hashem in our intense pain and grief, Hashem says that day will never be...

Next Issue's Talk:

Hashem in His kindness gifted me with a child. Since then I have been through a few losses, the last one being a year and a half ago. How do you get the courage to try again?? I really want to, but I am so, so scared... 

Flicker of Glitter

It may be exciting to throw a handful of glitter into the air, but when you try to clean it up you'll never be able to collect it all. Even long after the event, you will still find remnants of the glitter stuck in the corners, tucked into your sheitel strands, and even affixed to your eyebrows. It will always be there, somewhere.

Grief is like glitter. ✨

Anochi lo eshkocheich.

I had this song on repeat in my head all through the summer.

D. G.

Reaching out for support to the many wonderful organizations out there who gave me a listening ear, reading material with content that was relevant to loss and grief, and of course- *chizuk* and validation. Feeling that there is someone out there that cares and understands what I'm going through did wonders for me.

C. C.

I found that putting a pen to paper helped me sort through my feelings. I kept a diary and I rewrote the diary entries in a few notebooks to help settle my feelings. The first time I wrote an entry, my emotions were still raw and my words were rambling. When I rewrote it in my second and third notebook, I found myself much more relaxed and focused.

S. R.

Hold On Tight

Way up there, high above
With an abundance of love,
To Hashem we are closely connected
Firmly attached and protected.
Each time the connection is shut
The connecting rope is cut,
But then a knot is formed
Bringing us closer than before.
That's certainly in order
For the rope to become shorter.

When in uncertainty you grope
And you're feeling like a dope,
When you're losing all your hope
Hold on more tightly to your rope.
And when you're unable to cope
When life clearly is saying nope,
And you're breathless on a harsh slope
Hold on more tightly to your rope.

You might still be blown
And thrown about on a cyclone,
But you are brought closer to home
More connected, and less alone.

You might not feel that yet
But remember it's a process,
Stop, right now, to breathe in hope
And hold on tightly to your rope. ✨

A Mother's Thoughts

E. T.

Are You My Baby?

Are you my baby, precious and sweet,
With soft skin and tiny little feet.
A cry that is silent, that I'll never hear,
The pain sometimes is too much to bear.

Or are you an unborn child that was never meant to live,
An unborn child to whom I will never be able to give.
You will never see the light of day,
Is this for whom I did pray?

You are my cherished daughter whom I love,
Although no one wished us *Mazel tov*.
You are not just a fetus whose memory will float away,
But a *heiliga neshama* that we will meet one day.

Although I, at this moment, you cannot see,
Etched in my memory you will forever be.
To the *shechina* you are so near,
Yes, you're my precious baby, so dear. ✨



Siddur Secrets

We share many secrets, my siddur and I
Whose pages have witnessed much pain,
You've endured my loneliness, loss and sorrow
But you know that it's not been in vain.

Countless tears seeped through your pages
And as they slid down they blurred your sacred text,
You've felt the intensity of emotion
Been privy to my fear of what's next.

Did you take the pain I transmitted
And carry it off to the Heavenly Throne?
You cushioned the blows of my sadness
Is that why I now feel so much less alone?

Now I implore you; I have one request
Gather every tear that I've spilled,
Offer them to my Creator, plead my case
And beseech Him to return prayers fulfilled. ✨



Dear Diary

E. F.

Dear Diary,

The minute I walked out of my house, I saw her. 'Her' is my neighbor. As usual, I saw her staring at - you guessed it, my stomach. I wished I could just tell her, no, it's not a baby bump, you see. If you would have asked me last week I would have been able to say happily that yes, it's a baby bump. But not anymore.

The next week, we had our class party. I was the first in my class to get married and a bunch of my former classmates had two children already. I also have two... but mine are both neshamos, sitting close to Hashem. I can almost hear their thoughts, 'Nebach, she is married for two years already and still there's nothing in sight. You know what? My classmates are not that bad: they were probably thinking that they need to get the class together and do something as a zechus. Yes, that sounds better. And for the ones that heard about my losses through the grapevine, I was able to spot them from a mile away with looks of pity that said it all.

I'm not even going to start talking about my younger sister who keeps on asking me when I am having a baby and making her into a proud aunt. Dear sister, you are an aunt. You are an aunt to two adorable neshamos, but you will probably never know it...

Why can't people just look past all this and treat me normally? I hate being stared at up and down, and I hate being pitied. I guess I can't change the world, so I just have to accept it for now.

Until next time,

Tova 

Although I am not
where I want to be,

I am glad that I am not
where I used to be

Yom Tov Treat

Creamy Sorbet



Image Credit: Oh!My Image 201-491-2648

Prepare both flavors sorbet and serve a scoop of each for a beautiful contrast.

Ingredients:

Strawberry Sorbet

- 2 lb. frozen strawberries - slightly thawed
- 1 ½ cup sugar
- 2 cups orange juice

Mango Sorbet

- 2 lb. frozen mango – slightly thawed
- 1 ½ cup sugar
- ¾ cup orange juice

Instructions:

- Blend all ingredients in the Food Processor.
- Freeze 2-3 hours until firm (Do not wait until completely frozen).
- Blend mixture once more.
- Freeze until ready to serve!

Artistic Expression

S. R.

Perched atop a beach tower
I watch in fascination,
Unique scenarios playing out
Earning my concentration.

I spot a nimble kid
Swimming swiftly, oh so steady,
In peaceful, calming waters
For the waves she stands so ready.

Yet as the waves crash over her
In no time she gives in,
Gasping for breath, endurance low
Strength growing scarce and thin.

Today a new kid comes along,
Enjoying the sea's silence.
With every passing wave
She grows strong with resilience

Some aren't fighting waves
They give in at the sight of it,
Others struggle through them
Not contemplating when to quit.

Perched atop a beach tower
I watched in fascination, and figured I'll share:
You don't drown by falling in the water
You drown by staying there!!! 🏹



To share your artistic creation, find our contact information on page three.

Quote Me

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't; you are right"

"Worrying doesn't weaken tomorrow's struggles; it weakens today's strengths"

"IF 'PLAN A' FAILS, REMEMBER THERE ARE 25 OTHER LETTERS IN THE ALPHABET"

Did You Know?

S. R.

Food Makes The Mood. We all know that. Did you know that the type of foods you eat greatly impacts your mood? When you eat carbohydrates, your brain is triggered to release serotonin which lifts your mood. Foods that have vitamin D, selenium, or omega 3's are great at boosting your mood. So try some berries or dark chocolate for a quick pick-me-up! ✨



Resources

Asking for help is a sign of strength, not of weakness.

A TIME

P: 718-686-8912 Ext. 113
E: losssupport@atime.org
W: www.atime.org

A TIME/HUG offers emotional support and medical guidance for couples experiencing perinatal and infant loss as well as for terminations for medical reasons. Support includes comforting packets home delivered and/or mailed throughout the world, monthly phone supports, a Groupme support chat, special webinars and teleconferences, 24 hour helpline (Kol Chaya/ 845-81-ATIME), doulas who are trained to be with couples when delivering babies born still, *chevra kadisha* services when necessary, and so much more.

Haneshama

A beautiful telephone line, in Yiddish, for the Jewish Woman. (A project of Tal Shel Tchiya) 718-906-6466, 4, 7. Options 6 and 7. For the password, call/text Rivky at tel # 929-214-0503

Our Tapestry

P: 718-438-6930 and 718-771-3443
E: miriam@ourtapestry.org
chanadevorah@ourtapestry.org
W: www.OurTapestry.org

Our Tapestry provides support and inspiration to families who have suffered the loss of a child, sibling or grandchild. We offer a publication, whatsapp chats, support groups and events.

Knafayim

P: 718-925-2113
E: support@knafayimwings.org

Knafayim Wings supports those who experienced a pregnancy/infant loss. We offer guidance, counseling, and referrals. We hand deliver full care packages for those who experienced a loss, lead phone support groups moderated by licensed professionals, host lectures by doctors discussing topics related to the physical and emotional aspect of loss, and send out weekly inspirational messages culled from the Parsha of the week.

RSK

P: 845-414-8001 Ext. 103
E: thekitchen@rsk.org
W: RSK.org Link for application:
<https://reb-shayala.secure.force.com/applications?id=0014T00000UGZZF>

Our program is geared for families hit by a sudden shift in the household which in their current situation are unable to prepare dinner, and the meals would ease their financial burden. Once an application is submitted and approved, we will send you another email with the menu.

Hug In a Box

E: support@huginabox.org

Are you or someone you know struggling with pregnancy loss or infertility? Contact us for a complimentary care package to know that you are not alone. Available in the US and in Israel.



Dear Friend, remember to be kind to yourself and read this section
when it will be beneficial for you, instead of the contrary.



Whispers of Hope

We all hope. We all have dreams. Sometimes they're readily realized. Sometimes they're hardly conscious at all. And sometimes you are them and they are you, as you yearn and strain to achieve them with every fiber of your being. It is of these hopes that I write.



Have you ever known the pain of hope? Had pain pound your heart, clashing with suppressed hopes in relentless fury? Have you known the pain of reaching out, embracing Hope patiently, with strength and care, only to have it wrested from your grasp - and reach out once again? And again?

To hope again? Barely. With what? Where? Only in the most carefully quarantined corners of the mind. But...if there's Hope...must I not continue to try as I have tried? ...Can I? Can I not, if there is yet Hope? How can I soldier forward nourished only, lonely, by Hope?



So I hope for a child. Hope to wait, wait to hope; hope and try. Touch my dream - almost, before it's cruelly pulled away. And then, when I hope no longer, whispers of Hope sift their way in yet again. Tiredly, I turn away. They knock, but the door is slammed in their face. And when I have no choice but to let those blessed, wonderful Hope-prayers in, I gasp as I try to block their light. With all of my strength, that cannot muster even glimmers of Hope, I cry a wrenching, helpless plea to the Master of Blessing and Hope.



Time passes, Hope becomes real, there's a precious bit of life nestled inside me! Finally, I allow myself to live once again.



Visions of the sweetest, most precious bundles are overshadowed with worries, fear and crippling anxiety. Physical and emotional exhaustion take center stage, leaving me drained, feeling so helpless and lost. Logic worms its way in, shouting, "Nothing's certain, live today! Dream for tomorrow! Leave worry well enough alone..." But my heart knows little reason, frozen in fear of what may be...

Where is Hope? I wish to be strong, to embrace the beauty of my dreams. But Hope is hiding...buried under layers of insecurities, fears, layers of self and presumed strength I've picked up on my journey through life.

And Hashem – it's as if He is begging me to cut through those heavy layers, to find comfort in His true reality, of only beauty and light, not confusion nor pain.



Life has "a life" of its own. A way of moving and swirling 'round even as I pant far behind, trying to catch my breath. And hopes change...perhaps rightly, perhaps wrongly – there are some things I no longer hope for.

Hope? It's the stuff of fools, if you don't know what to hope for...it carries you for a while, then dumps you cruelly to the ground.

Yet –

Sometimes... sometimes you hope for one thing, Hope carries you for a while, and when it leaves you lonely and forlorn, you cry. And then you pick yourself up, with tremendous courage and start hoping once again.

I only **hope** I'm using the opportunities gifted therein.

Permission Granted!

You are hereby granted full permission to feel the way you feel. Be it sad, happy, ecstatic or confused. Whether anxious, glad, blissful, or riding on euphoria. You can be delighted, miserable, or thrilled. Perhaps you are even all of them and none of them at the same time, and you're feeling something new every moment. As humans, we can carry two emotions at once. One feeling doesn't erase the other... They aren't mutually exclusive. You can hate your job and love the money you earn; you can hate your car and love the way it gets you places. You can hate this pregnancy and love what's awaiting you, with Hashem's mercy. So feel the way you feel - guilt free!

MEMORANDUM

Not So Random

1. My past is not my future and previous losses do not mean I will have future losses.
2. Getting my hopes up does not make bad things happen. I will be brave and allow myself to hope.
3. Positive thoughts bring positive energy. I will focus on thinking positive.
4. Miscarriage and loss are not contagious. Just because someone else is having a loss doesn't mean I will.
5. There is nothing I can change with worry. Worrying about something out of my control does not help me in any way.
6. I give myself permission to cry.
7. I believe that sharing with others about my pregnancy will not put me at risk.
8. Although others might not 'get' the upheaval I am in, I deserve the right to own my feelings.
9. I will reach out for support. I don't need to weather the storm on my own.
10. Being pregnant again doesn't erase my past and doesn't take away the right to grieve what I lost.
11. Fear is crippling; I will breathe deeply and try to relax.
12. I will always remember that Hashem loves me dearly.

