



# Bridging the Generation Gap

article by Joanne Feldman  
following the recent  
**Parenting Seminar**

The moment I received the notice regarding a forthcoming Parenting Seminar I felt a surge of anxiety about the prospect of discovering what I had been doing wrong for the last 10 years. In my heart I knew the screaming matches every morning merely to get my two princesses to school on time couldn't be right. The problem was it seemed as if I should be attending each workshop and not just choosing two; anger management, self-esteem, how to maximise your child's potential, additive behaviours—wow! I needed to go to all of them! Fortunately, this problem was substantially resolved during the coffee break when you grabbed anyone who had attended a different lecture to make sure, G-d forbid, you hadn't missed anything.

The general consensus of opinion, quoted whilst munching gorgeous bagels kindly prepared by the wonderful Ladies Guild, was "inspirational".

Therapist, Rivki Litwin, explained to mums like me that our children don't bother hurrying in the morning until we start screaming because that is the pattern we have allowed to develop. In other words, if we explain to our kids they will leave the house at 8.15am in whatever they are wearing AND we stick to it a couple of times, they will soon get the message. They will soon stop relying on mum to scream at them. Natalie Shalom has (confidentially) told me that, thanks to Rivki, she no longer panics if her children don't eat any breakfast in the morning and they have now learned themselves unless they eat something, they get hungry at school. I am determined to give it a try, but old habits die hard.

Rabbi James Kennard spoke so eloquently about maximising your child's potential. It made so much sense to stop judging your child's development by his position in the class, but it's so difficult to stop yourself asking that ridiculous question, "So who came top?"

I am reliably informed by Adam Labaton that Benji Silverstone struck a chord with all those teenagers who wanted to know how to handle their parents by advising them to "Respond not React". This pearl of wisdom could save many rows whatever age.

Rabbi Jonathan Dove really gave everyone some food for thought when he disclosed that regular family meal times have been shown to be the "single, most effective form of intervention for the widest variety of teenage problems". Research has shown that benefits include less alcohol, drug or depression issues, so let's sit down with our kids - and that includes Dads as well!



It was also so reassuring to be told that "failure is so important ... it teaches us how to succeed the next time". A fridge magnet should be made quoting Rabbi Dove saying "Do worthwhile things, grow from your failures, glow from your successes".

Finally, one of the most poignant remarks for me was that we can't pass on a high self-esteem to our children unless we have one ourselves. So for the sake of my kids, I have to step up my adult learning. If Hale Adult Hebrew Education continues to be as good as this, my kids have a chance!