



By Rabbi Moshe Wolf

So how many times have you heard parents lament, "I wish I could communicate better with my children". Why when I talk to my children do they look so distracted.

How many times have we asked ourselves, "why do I have such a difficult time having a meaningful conversation with my spouse or significant other"? Have you ever wondered why is it so difficult to find quality time for our family and friends? I pondered the question with a friend of mine and his response was "I think the answer lies in the story", "The Stranger Who Came To Stay".....let me share the story with you.....

A few years after I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around from then on.

As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me good from evil, and Dad taught me to obey. But the stranger... He was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies.

If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind.

Sometimes, Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to the kitchen for peace and quiet.

(I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.)

Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home - not from us, our friends or any visitors. After our long time visitor stayed longer he became more daring however, and even got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush. My Dad didn't permit the liberal use of alcohol but the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing..

I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked... And NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you could walk into my parents' den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures. His name?.....We just call him 'TV.' He got married and has a wife now.....we call her 'Computer.' They now have two children, their first child .....we call "Cell Phone". Their second child....we call "I Pod" .....End of story..... Moral of the story: We can't change the world, but wouldn't it be nice to start a movement of spending some exclusive time with our loved ones. We are so used to the electronic "strangers" in our lives we don't even realize that we forgot how to have a few minutes of alone time with our family and friends without being interrupted with either a cell call or text. So when you sit down to the Thanksgiving dinner or your weekly family dinner, let's see if we can give it a try to just enjoy each other's company, without letting the "strangers" interrupt the spirit of the moment.....Please let me share with you a short " Everyday's Thanksgiving prayer.".....

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings,

Thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible, Thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising,

Thank you Lord, that I have the strength to rise.

There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned and tempers are short, my children are so loud

Thank you, Lord, for my family.

There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced,

Thank you, Lord, for the food we have.

There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job is often monotonous,

Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work.

There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest,

I thank you, Lord, for life.

On behalf of ALL your Chaplains, thanks for all the Holy and noble work that you do .  
Our City couldn't survive without you.

You can reach a Chaplain 24/7 at our Unit: 1-312-746-8458.

May G-d bless you, keep you safe and always keep you in His loving care. Wishing you a blessed and joyous Holiday Season.

Amen.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain, Rabbi Moshe Wolf

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