

# LIVE MORE, STRUGGLE LESS

## CRITICAL ANSWERS TO TODAY'S UNIQUE LIFE CHALLENGES

A child on his way to cheder today faces more challenges during his 10-minute ride than a *yungerman* faced in his entire lifetime only 50 years ago. Today, adults and children alike face challenges that never existed before. The secular world has become more hedonistic, the seeming pleasures not only more enticing but also more accessible. The outside world is seductive. Enticing. Cunning. Pervasive.

While modern challenges intensify exponentially, the level of emotional and spiritual intelligence has undergone a dramatic decline. Women are bewildered. Searching for growth and spirituality, struggling with time management, low self-esteem, loneliness, *shalom bayis*, or *ben adam l'chaveiro* issues, even people who attended the best schools often find themselves ill-equipped to handle these complex issues.

How can you infuse your daily life with meaning and vitality and joy when it seems like an endless grind? How can you maintain your self-esteem when three out of your seven kids have ADHD, or your mother-in-law has borderline personality disorder, or you're just plain feeling burned out?

Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Personal Development Chabura is

a virtual community of women who embark on a spiritual journey toward finding one's individual purpose in life. They gain practical tools to learn a path toward true happiness and fulfillment. Week by week, they learn how to keep their eye on the goal, how to make it come alive, and how to keep implementing it.

The Chabura, named as one of the six most ambitious spiritual initiatives by *Family First* (Sept. 12, 2012, "Making an Impact"), is based on classic Torah works. With approximately 500 women participating in various groups, members meet for an hour a week via conference call. The curriculum explores the purpose of life — *your* life. The practical tools help you better understand yourself and enable you to grow as you overcome challenges.

In Elul you prepare a year plan. Questions like "What is my life's purpose?" and "What are my goals?" are addressed. The answers serve as your guide throughout the year. Week by week, you learn how to stay conscious of your plan, how to make it come alive; and you continually check that it's authentic and represents the real you. You learn how to find an appropriate mentor, *rav*, *rebbezin*, or confidante. You learn

how to enjoy life, how to live without endlessly complaining.

You can join a *chabura* for three months without a long-term commitment. By reenrolling, you become more and more a part of a virtual community that grows closer while the material becomes more sophisticated. If you miss a live call, members can listen to the recorded class. Plus, there's an online info center that allows you to listen to past *chaburas* and view class notes.

During the three-month initiation starting in Elul, you will uncover your main personality flaw and learn how to go about rectifying it, and how to identify your life purpose. You will create an individualized long-term plan for steady growth. When you see the impact the Chabura has on your life, you can sign on for another three months.

Whether you're dealing with typical modern-day issues or more specific challenges, whether you're searching for self-esteem and meaning or struggling with time management or *ben adam l'chaveiro* problems, the Chabura is a formalized, systematic approach to achieving fulfillment.

Sara Yoheved Rigler, renowned author and speaker, explains how the Chabura gave her focus and helped her actualize her potential. "I've been in Rabbi Ayreh Nivin's Chabura for a year and a quarter so far, and I love it. He has taken personal growth and Torah and practical methods and put them all together in a way that is easy to understand and easy to implement.... He starts out with helping us to define our life's purpose. This was such a breakthrough for me.... By using his wonderful methods, I really feel myself moving forward toward these two luminous goals, vitality and transcendence. I recommend the Chabura highly for any Jewish woman who wants to get there."

**Malki** Werner always envisioned building a loving home based on Torah, producing children with sterling *middos*. But things weren't turning out as planned. She was deeply frustrated. Something was seriously wrong, but she couldn't figure out why.

It started with her older son. He was brighter than the others but somehow didn't fit into the system and wandered from one yeshivah to the next. Her second son stood out less but never acclimated to the disciplined lifestyle of regular yeshivah life. Now both these boys were struggling. Even her "good" kids never seemed really motivated by a *frum* lifestyle. Her family had indeed turned out very different from her vision.

Malki needed a way to overcome these trials. She needed to carve out a new life vision. Rabbi Nivin's weekly phone *chaburas* paved the way.

"I was bitter and frustrated by life," Malki says. "I would often ask myself why I couldn't have a life free of these types of troubles. I want 'normal' struggles, not the one Hashem presented me with. I was looking for a superficial tranquility.

"Then I learned about the concept of personal *tikun* and a person's mission in life. I learned how to have meaning and fulfillment under very trying circumstances. I learned how all

the trials I faced were tailored to me personally — and how to navigate them."

Today, Malki feels equipped to handle these struggles. She has more vibrancy, more energy for life and, most of all, an understanding of how to navigate these types of issues in the future.

**Sheindel** was a deep feeler, always searching for meaning and purpose. Her friends described her as "very intense." But her drive for meaning made her feel different. In fact, others thought she was a little distant.

When she got married, matters grew more complicated. It was very difficult for her to find deep meaning in the "mundane" activities that comprised a large part of her life. She yearned to delve into learning, longed to hear profound *shiurim*. She was unable to connect to spirituality through laundry and dishes.

Sheindel needed a direction, a system for infusing daily life with deeper aspirations. She heard about the Chabura but was hesitant. After years of feeling like an outsider, Sheindel was reluctant to open up to others. Plus, finances were tight, and she didn't want to spend money on herself. Her husband convinced her to give it a try.

She never looked back. Sheindel didn't share any personal information until she felt really comfortable with the group. And she realized that giving to herself was the best investment for her family.

"I never knew how to unify the mundane with my higher spiritual yearnings," Sheindel says. "I learned how to find my positive life's purpose and how to connect to it on a daily basis. I was given practical tools for making it all come alive.

"Without exaggerating, I have to say that the Chabura system changed the way I view my life. Now even the mundane is meaningful, and there is very little dichotomy in my life. I have gained the tools that make life simple and connected. I can say for that first time that I'm actually *happy*."

Two new *chabura* groups for women are starting in time for Elul (August 5th and 6th). Register now for the three-class, no-obligation trial and for a limited time receive a bonus 3-CD series, "The Jewish Woman's Introductory Guide to Achieving Vitality" for \$1. For more information go to [www.newchabura.com](http://www.newchabura.com), call (646) 863-4123 from the US, or (02) 580-6406 from Israel, or e-mail [newchabura@gmail.com](mailto:newchabura@gmail.com).

*If you're traveling this summer, there will be a special review session after the Yamim Tovim so that you can make up any missed classes*