

By Rochel Strauss

# Amazing Transformations

## Something was missing.

Elisheva was pretty satisfied with her life. A husband who brought home a decent paycheck and still found time for *chessed* projects on the side, a nice home, and four kids — she couldn't complain about a single thing.

Except for the nagging feeling that... something was missing. And the frustration of not being able to put her finger on what that "something" was.

Until she joined Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Chaburas.

Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Chaburas is a personal development program geared for the growth-oriented Jewish woman. The weekly teleconference presents a timely topic addressing the different types of life challenges. You connect with other like-minded women facing similar challenges while developing the tools needed to address those challenges. Speaking with a *chavrusa* from the program enables you to practice the skills you learn, and bi-monthly conferences together with all the different Chaburas make you a part of something much bigger — and more powerful — than yourself.

From the very first class, Elisheva was encouraged to explore her inner spiritual yearnings and unfulfilled aspirations. Getting in touch with her inner workings enabled her to find her personal life's purpose beyond her day-to-day responsibilities.

Suddenly, Elisheva understood what she was missing. As a teenager, she had gotten into a lot of trouble. She asked "too many" questions, and not always in the most respectful way. If not for a special mentor in her life, the results would have been disastrous. Deep down, Elisheva had a yearning to work with troubled teens, to be that warm, loving guide. But once she got married and had kids, that goal was forgotten, pushed aside due to the reality of running a busy household.

Once Elisheva was able to put her finger on her dissatisfaction, she made a decision to volunteer for a few hours each week at a local organization that paired up troubled teens with caring mentors. With her experience and understanding, she became an instant success.

Today, Elisheva is a well-known address for high school girls who need help. Her life is filled with far greater pleasure and fulfillment than she had ever experienced before. "Once I discovered the missing ingredient, my life was changed forever. My weekly explorations in Rabbi Nivin's Chaburas gave me the direction I needed to reveal my hidden yearnings. The joy and contentment I feel has had a profound impact on my family in many ways."



Esther had a secret. In her eyes, this secret was too embarrassing to share, as it made her seem different from



every other woman she knew.

Esther hated housework.

Very spiritually oriented, Esther had a strong need to find deep meaning in everything she did. Somehow, folding the laundry and ironing her husband's shirts just didn't do it for her.

Intellectually, Esther knew she had nothing to complain about. And she was responsible; she didn't shirk her duties. But she felt her life was seriously lacking. This "secret" caused her much suffering and self-loathing.

She decided to give Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Chaburas a trial period; she wouldn't commit, because she was concerned she'd be pigeonholed into a role she didn't feel connected to.

Esther didn't need the full three-class trial to know she was in the right place. The Chaburas directly dealt with her issue. She was encouraged to be honest with herself. She learned how and when to make time for recreation. She learned how to make so-called "mundane" activities into something meaningful and satisfying and how to motivate herself to do things she didn't like doing.

Esther was thrilled by how much the Chaburas helped her change her perspective and how her relationship to her home had changed so dramatically. She was also surprised that Judaism genuinely dealt with her issues and didn't sweep them under the rug. Her secret was no longer something to be ashamed of — just a personality and drive to be addressed.



Judy was troubled. No matter how hard she worked, she felt it was never enough. Objectively, she knew she was dedicated to the well-being of her family. She cooked their favorite foods and kept the house clean. She helped the children communicate in healthy ways and respected her husband. She knew she gave her all.

But in her mind, she always fell short. She always heard inner strains of self-criticism, even name-calling.

While she freely criticized herself, she was hypersensitive to criticism from others. Even when her husband respectfully pointed out some things at home that needed improvement,

she was highly offended. It got to the point where her husband would keep his opinions to himself, fearful of her sensitivities. Obviously, this impacted their ability to build a home in the best way possible.

Judy always knew she had self-esteem issues, but she didn't know a way out. The idea of therapy made her uncomfortable. Besides, a close friend, Rivka, had tried therapy and got nowhere. Then one day Rivka suggested she try Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Chaburas, since she'd found an approach that worked for her. Rivka's main life challenge was being organized, but from her experience she knew the Chaburas covered several different life challenge paradigms, and she was confident that Judy would also find the direction she needed.

Unsure, Judy decided to try the Chaburas. She was

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incredibly relieved at the Chaburas' non-confrontational approach, and she was amazed that the more she worked on herself the better she felt. She deeply enjoyed the Chabura experience, drinking up the Torah sources used to explain the concepts.

Slowly, Judy's self-esteem grew. She stopped being so hard on herself and made a more balanced schedule. She was able to listen to her husband's constructive comments, and her *shalom bayis* grew by leaps and bounds.

"One of the most important things that ever happened in my life," Judy says, "was joining Rabbi Nivin's Chaburas. In a safe, gentle environment, I learned how to respect myself and my talents. I learned how to have compassion on myself, accept my flaws, and let myself be human."

Judy wasn't the only one to notice the change. Her friends and family noticed it, too. "I feel like a new person," Judy says.

Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Personal Development Chaburas was named one of the six most ambitious spiritual initiatives by *Family First* (Sept. 12, 2012, "Making an Impact"). *Two new chabura groups for women are starting January 6 and 7.* To find out more about joining the three-class trial for women visit [www.newchabura.com](http://www.newchabura.com), call (646) 863-4123 in the US or (02) 580-6406 in Israel, or email [NewChabura@gmail.com](mailto:NewChabura@gmail.com).