

The Juggler

By: Dr. Leah Adams

In last week's magazine section of the Yated, I had the honor of being the subject of CB Weinfeld's writing. She likened me to a juggler who has to figure out how to manage my roles as psychologist, columnist, talk show host, and costume gemach curator in addition to my roles as mother, grandmother, daughter etc. In reality, we all have so many roles to balance, that of wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, daughter-in-law, employee, friend, neighbor, chessed doer, the list goes on and on. I had been thinking about writing about this very topic for some time now and CB's giving me the title of juggler seemed to lend me the authority to speak like an expert. All kidding aside, we can really learn a lot from this talented circus performer about how to manage our lives.

First, think like a juggler, how much does each item "weigh" in terms of allocating your energy. The juggler realizes that throwing up the bowling ball will take a lot more time in training and a lot more effort when doing it than a small ball. If I have to pay my monthly bills, which takes time and mental energy, that's not the type of activity that can be squeezed in to a small window of opportunity. Loading or unloading the washing machine can be. By taking advantage of these mini opportunities during the day, we can end up with some nice big chunks of time to do our heavier work.

Next, this talented performer knows that perseverance pays off. For example, it's probably easier to keep adding an extra bowling pin to the act and extend that segment of the show than to toss a few, stop and then toss other things. This method helps us as well. Even if cleaning out a certain closet will take a long time, stick to this same activity until its completion. Oftentimes as we stumble across different items in the closet that do not belong there, we are tempted to stop right then and go put that item elsewhere. Persevere with the task at hand, temporarily put those items aside until you finish the rest of the closet. Homework works well with this method as well. Tell the kids to do as much as they can in one sitting, without popping up in the middle to start another

task or get other materials and without letting them get distracted with irrelevant questions.

Picture the juggler who now takes his act up to the tension wire. He knows that balance is the key. Balance your workload with adequate sleep and nutrition. Without these, we can literally lose our footing and then nothing gets done properly. When you give the kids dinner and remind them to eat their veggies, take out a few minutes to sit with them and eat some veggies yourself. Even if you plan to eat dinner later with your spouse, those extra veggies don't count as calories and the chance to sit with your kids for a few minutes goes a long way for them and for us.

Costuming is another important aspect to a good act. If necessary, get up a few minutes earlier (but really just a few, we just said above that sleep is important) to have time to comb your hair and put on some accessories. The way you look can improve the way you feel about yourself and the way you project to others, even your kids. If Eema looks put together, then everyone feels more confident. It sounds superficial, but it's true.

Background music sets the tone for a good show. Keep this in mind at home too. Playing exciting music during cleanup really boosts everyone's energy and enhances the chances for cooperation. At the same time, music closer to bed time should be softer and slower, to match the sleepy, slower paced mood that you're trying to establish.

Last but not least, a good showman smiles and makes us feel like he enjoys what he's doing. We want to stick around this person and even get in on his act when we are endeared by that smile. Smile while you work (it's quieter than whistling and easier too!). Imagine if while delivering the kids' laundry to their rooms you come in with a smile and then ask them while you're in there to pick up their stuff from the floor. We all know that a smile yields a lot more cooperation than an authoritarian scowl. Take a look at yourself in the mirror, you deserve a smile too. After all, you are a world famous and talented juggler!

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This article appeared in “The Front Page Magazine” on 1/23/2013.