



# FINDING THE *Joy*

TEMMI HADAR

## WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE?

Scrolling through my Facebook feed this evening, this ad caught my eye.

*Hey Mom!*

It calls my name, because, yes I am a mom, thank you clever Facebook algorithms for your targeted ads.

*Do you love your kids more than anything?*

Why, yes, yes I do. Why do you want to know?

Oh... if I love them more than anything I will buy them a mermaid tail blanket (which, hilariously, my phone keeps auto correcting to meme maid), which is even discounted.

Now listen here, advertiser, do you know what I spent half the afternoon doing? Sorting out my playroom. Do you know why? Because my children have toys, and they also have junk that they keep collecting, and they definitely don't know what belongs in the toy category and what belongs in the junk category. Therefore, I need to furtively throw things in the garbage, then act super surprised when a child comes crying to me holding a broken plastic toy. *Mommy, can you believe I found this in the garbage?*

No, dear, I cannot believe someone would throw that precious toy out.

Come on moms, don't pretend you don't know exactly what I am talking about.

But I digress.

Back to the ad.

I love my kids.

I love them more than anything. (Whatever that means.)  
I love them so much that I'm not gonna fall for your silly little ad and somehow think that buying them more stuff they don't actually need somehow expresses my love for them.

Somehow, we moms in 2022 sometimes think that our children need more stuff.

Your typical first-world child doesn't. They don't need more toys. They don't need more things. They definitely don't need a blanket knitted like a mermaid tail to know that I love them.

You know what love looks like?

It looks like a mother groggy-eyed and dreaming of a coffee in silence, but instead she is pouring cereal into bowls for her kids.

It looks like a father reading a book to his kids before bed even though he has just walked in after a grueling day at work.

It looks like parents at a back-to-school evening at 8 pm, when all they want to do is be home in pajamas, but now they're in school sitting in little nursery school chairs, decorating a craft for their child to see at school the next day.

**W**hen I was 21 and newly married, I called my parents across the country, with some bad news regarding my pregnancy. Something is wrong and they don't know what. It's Thursday and the results will only come in after the weekend.

My mother phoned me back ten minutes later. Tatty and I have booked tickets. We are coming from Seattle to New York for Shabbos.

They came and they waited with me. In my little apartment. We sat all Shabbos. Talking about nothing. Eating food my mother had bought Friday afternoon on Kingston Avenue. There was nothing they could do.

But they were there.

That's what love looks like. ❄️



**Temmi Hadar**, born and raised on shlichus in Seattle, is now living about a million miles away in Johannesburg, South Africa. In "Finding the Joy," she ponders the meaning of life while perpetually sleep-deprived and attempting to juggle the roles of mother, wife, shlucha, teacher, writer and human being.

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