



FINDING THE *Joy*

TEMMI HADAR

EVER GET HIT BY A SHOE?

Sometimes parenting can make you feel like a failure. We've all got that one (or two or three) kid(s) who know(s) how to press our buttons and escalate a situation faster than we can process.

Recently, one of my children threw something at me. While I was driving. Something heavy.

Luckily the aim wasn't great and it missed me. By a lot. Which is lucky, because I don't want to imagine what could have happened if it had hit me.

Feeling broken and pretty much like the worst parent ever, when I got home, I texted my sisters what had just happened.

I love her, one sister immediately responded.

Feisty, said another.

Through my tears, I started seeing my child through their eyes. Feisty, fun, and maybe I am not the worst parent of the year.

Soon enough another sister responded:

Good news it wasn't you losing it and throwing things at her. Because that's how badly my child is testing me these days.

And finally, through my tears I just started laughing, because she was right, it could always be worse. And luckily I'm not the one throwing things.

They say it takes a village to raise a child.

I've adapted it. I think the real truth is...

It takes a village to keep mama sane so she can raise the child(ren).

I am incredibly blessed in my life to have wonderful sisters and sisters-in-law. Some I speak to every day, some once a week. Some send me singing voice notes occasionally. Some I speak with rarely.

But they're my people.

My village.

Sadly, most of them are across the ocean.

Fortunately, wherever I have been in my life, childhood in Seattle, high school in Los Angeles, seminary in Australia, work in Seattle, then Florida, and then New York, and now South Africa, I've met soul sisters, who've become my people in every way except blood, my family here. My local village.

I know they still get me, and I know they have my back. When we are lucky enough to be in the same city, I always squeeze in time to see them, whether it's meeting them at a kids' shoe shop while they are buying shoes, or having lunch together, or just enjoying a cup of coffee together. They remember my birthday.

But even with all those people behind me, motherhood can be a lonely and isolating experience.

Life is busy, it's hectic, and we no longer see our village while we wash our laundry together in the river, or draw water at the well, or wherever women back in the day met to vent about how crazy their kids were making them.

So let's be that village.

When you see that mother in the kosher store parking lot with her kids in the car tantruming and throwing shoes out the car window, just calmly pass the shoes back to the

frazzled mom, who is attempting to get out of the parking lot without denting her already scratched minivan, smile at her and say *we've all been there, you've got this.*

At swimming lessons after you see a mom chase her naked screaming kids around the pool trying to get them dressed or at least into the car, tell her she's a great mom for not actually losing it. (This actually happened to me once, and I don't know who the woman was but her words were literally the only thing that got me through the day. If by any chance you are reading this, thank you.)

I know that most people don't have a family the size of mine, and not everyone has those soul sisters, or they haven't met them yet, but we are better mothers and wives with that support.

So to my sisters—by blood, by marriage, by friendship—thanks for being my village.

To everyone else out there reading this, find yourself a village; start by trying to be someone else's village. ✨



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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