



# CONNECTING WITH NATURE

GOLDIE GROSSBAUM

“It’s perfect weather to have your morning coffee outside,” my husband tells me when I come into the kitchen Sunday morning.

And he’s right. Crisp low 60s, it’s quiet and still except for the chirping of the birds. It’s my absolute favorite weather in general, and it’s perfect for sitting in my backyard and enjoying my morning caramel-macchiato coffee. And this Sunday morning I’m not rushing anywhere, so the opportunity is perfect.

I head outside for some moments of morning meditation, coffee, and calmness.

I straighten the outdoor table and chairs that tend to wander from their designated spot and settle in for feeling the still freshness and sounds of nature. My entourage follows closely behind.

My one-year-old is happily walking around pushing her dolly stroller. My two-year-old finds a Cozy Coupe that’s clean enough for his liking and takes off. Two of my boys head to the trampoline. Someone decides to climb a tree and someone else goes straight to digging.

I close my eyes and breathe in deeply. The freshness, the birds chirping, the slight breeze. I take my first sip of perfectly just-right coffee, allowing myself to savor every droplet.

“Mommy!!!!” I quickly pause my meditation.



# ANOTHER DEEP BREATH, LISTEN TO THE BIRDS.

The Cozy Coupe seems to be having trouble; maybe it's the fact that my two-year-old has seven different toys on his lap while steering and is therefore now holding onto the steering wheel tightly while dangling in a sideways Cozy Coupe. We straighten him out, assess that there's no damage and he continues on his way "to Walmart."

Back to my seat, another sip of coffee. Another deep breath, listen to the birds.

"Moooooooooooo!!!" Someone climbed too high in his favorite tree. I put down my coffee and head over to see if it is indeed urgent or not. Thankfully, I see he's already working his way down.

I head back to my coffee, and to my deep breathing. Smelling the scent of freshly mowed grass, watching two birds fly overhead.

"Waaaaa!" My baby got a wheel stuck in the grass. I'm out of my chair again, straightening her out and putting her back on track on the pavement.

Back to my coffee. Another sip, and I relax and enjoy the moment of sitting and not moving. Just being one with nature.

"It's my turn!" someone is shouting. "No, it's not!" someone else yells back.

I breathe deeply; this time it's not to connect with nature, rather, it's holding my breath to see if they can work it out without me.

I gulp some coffee a little more quickly and hear the urgency, and off I go to figure out whose turn it is for the handcuffs.

We work it out somewhat and I head back. My two-year-old has a big grin as he proudly sits in what he knows very well is my spot. After some attempts at negotiating, he's back to the Cozy Coupe and I'm back to my chair.

And my coffee.

Breathe. Smell. Listen. Touch. Notice the breeze.

"It's not opening!" I hear the voice of my frantic three-year-old.

I look down and he's handcuffed himself to the chair near mine. I've long ago given up trying to figure out

the "why" of such situations and help him open the handcuff.

Relieved to be set free, he promptly goes and attaches himself again. Like I said, I've long ago given up trying to figure out why little boys do what they do, I have just embraced the fact that they will continue to do what they do, especially when it makes no sense to me.

Another sip of coffee.

The ball hit someone.

Someone is jumping too hard on the trampoline.

My two-year-old is back from Walmart and dumps all his goods on my lap.

My baby is done with the fresh air and has rejected the dolly stroller.

Morning meditation time is officially over. I quickly drink as much coffee as I can.

Someone needs a band-aid now.

And I think of a clip one of my friends sent me, of a woman living in a small RV in the wilderness, with nothing but her one room on wheels, parked at the quiet beach with no one and nothing in sight other than birds, breeze, and nature. Although I'm wise enough to know not to believe from a few-second snippet that this serenity means happiness, still, I think about how peaceful it may be, and for a moment dream of being in a one-room home on wheels. The solitude. The luxury of a slow and quiet cup of coffee, uninterrupted. But at the same time, I know that absolutely nothing replaces what it feels like to be needed and to have a purpose.

At this moment, when suddenly everyone needs me *now*, as I glance longingly at my coffee and wish I could have had a few more moments to actually have consecutive uninterrupted deep breaths, I know with certainty that I am blessed to have the better option. ❀



**GOLDIE** and her husband, Rabbi Yossi Grossbaum, direct Chabad of Folsom & El Dorado Hills in Northern California, with the able help of their 11 children ka"h.

Goldie is a Certified Life Coach as well as a mikvah.org Certified Kallah Teacher. In her spare time, Goldie blogs about being the mom of nine boys and two girls, ranging

from baby to teens, and finding the humor in the ups and downs of raising kids and life in general. Read more of Goldie's writings at [www.littleyellownotepad.com](http://www.littleyellownotepad.com).