

# SIX SANITY TIPS FOR PESACH

GOLDIE GROSSBAUM



The  
countdown  
is on,  
Pesach is  
coming.

**WHEN YOU READ THAT SENTENCE**, did it make your heart start palpitating? Did you break out in a cold sweat?

Or did you feel a thrill of excitement and burst of adrenaline for this incredible, all-encompassing Jewish holiday that wraps you up in a world of its own; where regular life ceases to exist and family and meals become front and center of your life.

Yeah, that really is possible—or you can at least get closer to the latter reaction.

Pesach is a lot. It really is. There's so much to do and so much to buy and so much to prepare.

Now, as I'm preparing to make Pesach in my own home for the 14th year, I'd like to share my top Six Sanity Tips for Pesach, in the hope that they offer some help in some way to some Pesach-makers.



## #1 I must love Pesach.

**Start at the root.** It's the most important and fundamental rule that will make all the difference in everything I do: I must love Pesach.

Yes, love it.

If the feeling isn't natural, I repeat the words "I love Pesach" over and over again until it becomes a part of me. I repeat it again and again. And then again. Starting the day after Purim, I think it while I work, while I walk, while I drive, and just about any other time of day or night.

And it really happens. Try it and see for yourself; you will convince yourself. You will love Pesach.

Especially considering the fact that it comes back every year, rain or shine, it's integral to have a healthy relationship with it.

And to make sure you really love it, buy something new for yourself every year or do something special for yourself; it doesn't have to be expensive, it just has to be something that gives you a positive association with the workload. (Think a new book, chocolate stash, manicure, purse, shoes, costume jewelry or whatever makes you happy and fits your budget.)

**As much as** it's important for me to love Pesach, my kids need to love it too; and really, that's all dependent on what they hear me saying—which goes back to #1. If I become a ranting and raving *chametz* guard, we will all hate Pesach together.

## #2 My kids need to love it too. Really!

Do things that give the kids positive associations with the preparing; be creative with suppers and meals for the days before Pesach—as in, forget the rules and do what works. Can you imagine, nothing says best mother better than allowing cereal and milk for supper! For three days straight! Double points if it's Shabbos cereal!

It's just a few nights; everyone will be okay. Their emotional health is top priority over here.

Whatever it is that works, it has to be in line with making the kids love Pesach and not leaving them wishing it would just go away and so they can get their normal mother back. Buy some new games or books that are special for Pesach.

**I believe that** my cleaning help is just as certified and qualified to do the Pesach cleaning as I am.

If you don't have regular help, hire a company, group, someone, anyone. Your sanity costs a lot more money than the cleaning help; and it is a lot harder to repair or replace your sanity if you lose or damage any of it.

Remember that the *mitzvah* is to get rid of edible *chametz* you can see. Food doesn't fly and crumbs don't jump. Just clean. And save spring cleaning for a calm day in July.

## #3 Pesach certified help.

## #4 No-fuss menus.

**Pesach is not** the time for me to *patchke* and fuss with new recipes; I save that for during the year when there are actual ingredients to use, instead of attempting to use (lousy) makeshift replacements and substitutes. The first year I made

Pesach I made five different types of sweet potato/potato combos. Rolled, layered, scooped—you name it. They all had fancy names and they all tasted the same.

Unless fussing with elegant and delicate foods is something that gives you joy and it's really your thing, just make the food you like and the food your family will eat. No one needs to approve your menu.

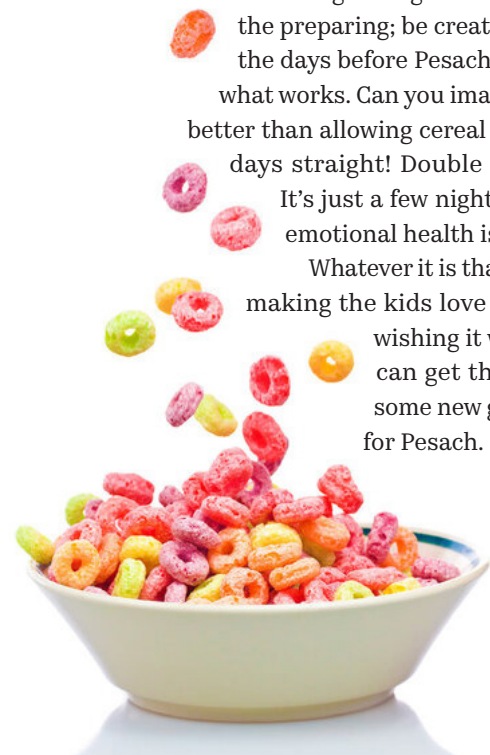
**My best shortcut** is that I don't empty a single cabinet or drawer or pantry in my kitchen. I have two self-standing plastic storage cabinets

from Costco that are in the garage all year long storing all the Pesach stuff and then the cabinets get moved into the house for Pesach. My *chametz* cabinets get spring cleaned on random days in the year when it's not Yom Tov season and it's not spring. True, it's additional clutter to have two cabinets brought into the kitchen; but pick your poison. Go for the one that will give you less work.

## #5 Look for shortcuts.

## #6 Lists.

**Paper, Google docs,** excel or whatever works. But make those lists and plan ahead.



# I Pesach

You can shop around for people's ideas—but most importantly, make them your own.

There are so many different ways to do it: cooking everything before Pesach, cooking everything the day you'll eat it, *kashering* after Purim, *kashering* the day before or *kashering* on Erev Yom Tov. There's no wrong way. Find the right way that's right for you. Do things because they work for you, not because they work for your friend or sister or

mother or grandmother.

Make Pesach yours. Make it your own.

And then you will love Pesach.

You may come to the Seder tired, but there's a difference between tired and resembling something that the cat dragged in. It's okay to be tired but full of pride and joy and a sense of accomplishment, proud you made it without destroying anyone or anything in the process.

And then you can actually be present at the Seder; you will enjoy the time with your family and your food, and actually feel the depth of this holiday celebrating our freedom. You deserve it. ❧



Goldie and her husband Rabbi Yossi Grossbaum direct Chabad of Folsom and El Dorado Hills in Northern California, with the able help of their children. Goldie blogs about being a mom of nine boys and one girl, ranging from baby to teens, and finding the humor in the ups and downs, leaps and lurches, of raising kids. Read more of Goldie's writings at [www.littleyellownotepad.com](http://www.littleyellownotepad.com).

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