



THE MOMMY VAN

GOLDIE GROSSBAUM

“Just do me one favor—whenever picks me up at the airport, make sure they don’t have one of those mommy cars with half-eaten peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches stuck to the seats.”

For a moment I wasn’t sure if the person on the phone was serious or kidding.

Was this person insulting the vans of mommies around the world?

I had hired this person to come out to do an event in our community and my responsibilities included transportation from the airport.

But the comment left me speechless.

This person was scorning my van.

My Mommy Van!

My van that is full to capacity—the one we actually outgrew—and the van we spend countless hours in, driving to and from school, week after week after week.

My van that kids are never allowed to bring food into, let alone leave a trace of it.

My van that I’m the designated driver of—which means for safety purposes I need to keep my eyes on the road and can’t be the food police.

My van that has granola bar wrappers and bits of snacks scattered around, mostly from when I twist backwards while keeping my eyes on the road and hand them to the baby when he’s unhappy in his car seat and I’m about to go insane—and so I break my own rules.

My van that smiley and tired little people board each day with bulging pockets and birthday bags with the crumbiest foods that exists.

My van that brings out the best negotiating skills in me while I drive—bargaining and pleading to convince cranky toddlers that it's okay if someone touches their armrest.

My van that hears conversations that shouldn't be repeated and silly made-up songs that make no sense but at least distract the little passengers from annoying one another.

My van that bears witness to threats that aren't kept and rewards that are over-promised.

My van with a designated organizer bin in the front seat that hosts my roll of packing tape (for my Amazon returns), some broken CD covers, a box of tissues and some loose googly eyes, pipe cleaners and pom poms from crafts that didn't make it—and that bucket is usually turned upside down, thanks to little hands that rummage without permission.

My van with chocolate coin wrappers that everyone promised to put in the garbage when we get home, but at the late hour when we arrived, I was so glad to be out of the van that even I forgot all about it.

My Mommy Van.

And I think somewhere in the back row there are stickers on the window, even though that's totally forbidden.

My van that I vacuum at least once a week... or at least

I intend to.

My van that gets neglected because there are so many things that move ahead of it on the priority list.

My van that I promised myself in my naive pre-mommy days would never look like a Mommy Van.

My Mommy Van—littered with the happiness and joy of a van full of kids who love each other so much that they love nothing more than to drive each other crazy.

My Mommy Van that runs on (gas, yes, but also) a mother's love and stretched patience for her rambunctious passengers.

Was that the Mommy Van this person was referring to, that I shouldn't drive to the airport?

Were they implying that my Mommy Van was a badge of disgrace and not a badge of honor?

It's my Mommy Van and I drive it with pride.

And if anyone wants a sterile, spotless and joyless ride—well, that's what Uber is for. 🚗

Goldie Grossbaum and her husband Rabbi Yossi Grossbaum are the directors of Chabad of Folsom in Northern California and the proud parents of eight children ka"n - their brigade of junior shluchim. To read more of Goldie's writings, visit littleyellownotepad.com or make sure your subscription to the N'shei Chabad Newsletter is up to date.

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