

THAT DREADED SEVEN-LETTER WORD

Goldie Grossbaum

That seven-letter word that strikes fear in the heart of every mom.

It's the word that makes every trip almost not worth taking.

It takes hours, and no matter how organized you will be, you will forget something.

It's called PACKING.

I do not like packing. I *really* do not like packing.

And there I was, with the clock moving quicker than usual, speeding around the house packing for nine individuals of all sizes for a six-day trip. It's good I like math, because it was finally proving useful.

Get 54 pairs of socks, I keep muttering.

And 12 more pants.

Three more size 4 shirts.

Four more size 5 shirts.

Shabbos shoes. Shabbos shoes.

When I pack, I chant. It's the only way I will remember things.

Up the steps again, reciting out loud grey and orange size 7 shirt.

Back downstairs, I glance at the clock.

Big mistake. I've passed my midnight goal.

My husband calls from Walmart—anything else I need before he leaves the store?

It's part of every seven-letter-word-dreaded-experience: a midnight trip to Walmart.

I tell him to leave already, because I won't remember the forgotten items until he has left.

Four more pairs of brown socks. Four more pairs of brown socks.

The piles are sky high, and I try to look at the bright side, which is that at least all this stuff won't be weighed because we are driving to our destination.



Up the steps and down the steps another dozen times Tylenol. Tylenol. I'm chanting out loud. Infant's, children's, adult's.

I pass the couch piled with the kids' backpacks. I had told the kids to pack some stuff to keep them busy in the car.

I suddenly notice the half-empty bookshelves and empty toy bins. And overstuffed backpacks. I try to lift one and nearly fall over. I make a mental note to be more specific next time.

Phone charger. Phone charger. I'm determined not to forget the phone charger this time.

Pampers. Wipes.

I check my pile of lists for the 112th time in 40 minutes, and discover I need to deal with what I've been pushing off longest... packing for myself.

And it's up the steps, once again.

I stand in my closet, seeing a blur of colors and trying to think straight. It's not working.

I grab armfuls of clothing and lug it all downstairs, hoping I'll have enough options for each day of the trip, but too tired to really care.

The clock is still moving.

My body aches and screams for bed.

I line up the suitcases, the shoe bag, the diaper bag, the laptop bag and lots of food bags and some random other bags and collapse into bed, only to jump up two minutes later to get the phone charger and to jot down some more reminders. Long after my intended bedtime, I finally close my eyes and dream about staying home and never packing another suitcase again, ever. 🐼

Goldie Grossbaum and her husband, Rabbi Yossi, direct Chabad of Folsom, California, with the help of their children. To read more of Goldie's musings, visit littleyellownotepad.com.