

# refocus on communication

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refocus on  
communication

refocus  
on limits

refocus on  
connection

refocus on  
relationships

**An 18-year-old boy who  
uses texting for almost  
everything says to me  
wistfully, "Someday,  
someday, but certainly  
not now, I'd like to  
learn how to have a  
conversation."**

– Sociologist, psychologist and MIT Professor,  
**Sherry Turkle**, at a 2012 Ted Talk

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# the mindset

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**Only 7% of what we're sharing is conveyed by what we say.\* The other 93%? It's communicated by how we say it – via body language, expression and tone of voice.**

Communication is so much richer than mere words. When Hashem breathed life into mankind, He breathed into us a power uniquely human, uniquely g-dly. The ability to speak. And with that, He gave us a host of gifts.

- First: a way to broaden our intellect. You can only think in the words you know; the richer your vocabulary, the richer your thoughts.
- Second: a way to share, connect, and resolve differences with others. The success of every relationship – family, friends and work – depends on how we communicate.



- Finally: it's how we tap into a Higher Power. We thank Him in good times, revert decrees in bad times, and give life meaning at all times.

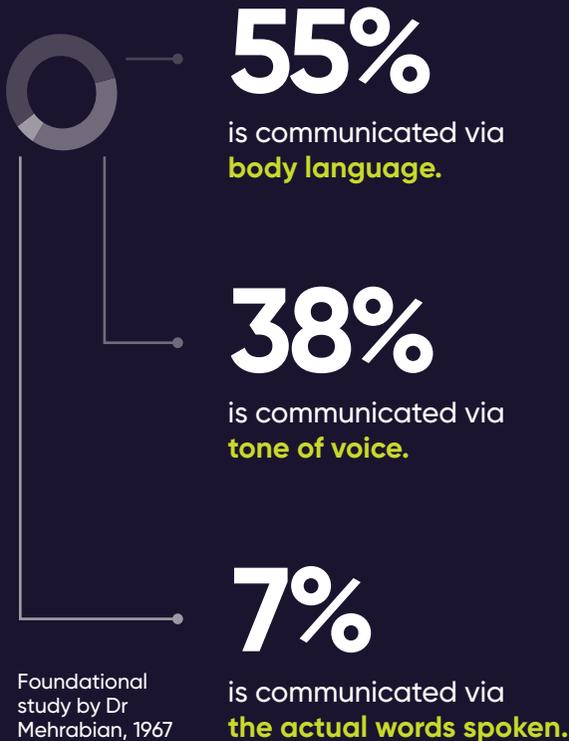
When we use emojis, GIFs or textese, we compromise our ability to process and express subtleties of thought. Over-reliance on emails weakens our ability to share (and read) unspoken nuances of feeling. And as our quality of human relationships declines, it becomes harder to form a connection with a Being we cannot see.

**Let's not let our power of communication decline through disuse. And more importantly, let's give our growing children the opportunity to acquire this skill – for their marriages, their children, their ultimate success.**

\*1967 study by Dr. Mehrabian

# the challenge

When we share thoughts and feelings:





A new term – Online Disinhibition Effect – was coined in 2004 to reflect a new reality:

**We say things online we would never say in person.**

Why:



**anonymity**

You don't know me



**invisibility**

You can't see me



**asynchronicity**

There's no immediate backlash/response



**minimized authority**

We're equals

Wikipedia

> 3/5

Americans report they're lonely, up 13% since 2018.

2020 Cigna Study

**Are numbers jumping higher as technology & social media take over?**

# the growth

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**I was in seventh grade, walking down the hallway deep in conversation with a teacher, when she turned away mid-sentence.**

A few other teachers were approaching, and what they were discussing was more interesting.

A small thing, but it hurt me deeply. I came home and began sharing with my mother, when my brother walked in bursting with an announcement he wanted to make.

My mother turned to him, and asked him to wait until I was finished. She'd love to hear, she told him, but she was in middle of talking to me right now.

My sense of self was soothed, and I felt like a person again.

That night, I made a promise. I'd be 100%

Hello?  
Does anybody hear me?



present and engaged during conversations. Even when the speaker is a child.

When I married and had kids, smartphones hit the scene. My promise became ten times harder to keep. Check a text during a friend's phone call? Take a call when picking the kids up from school? Talk on the phone while checking out at the grocery?

Life is so busy, and it's hard not to want to do ten things a minute.

**But every time I follow my rule of keeping the phone away and engaging in the moment, I know I'm gaining so, so much more than I'm losing.**

I'm making every person, every interaction, every moment matter.

– Tamar

# the habits

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## **Get uncomfortable.**

Avoid using texts and emails to escape tricky conversations. The other person (and you!) deserves the respect of a face-to-face talk, even if it's difficult.



## **Type out loud.**

Read texts and emails out loud before sending to make sure you'd be comfortable saying it directly to the person.



## **Mind your manners.**

Add 3 seconds to type "please" "thank you" or even "have a great Shabbos" for an instant interaction upgrade.



- **Keep meaningful moments offline.**  
Avoid using email or text to connect on an emotional level. Use the phone to say thank you, apologize or make a shiva call.
- **Eyes on you.**  
Look the speaker in the eye (even when it's just a child) to catch nonverbal cues, and show them they matter.

**Small changes with big impact.**

# the standards

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**Is tech creeping into my standards, and making me act in a way I never wanted to, or never thought I would?**

**Do I want to...**

- ① Hide behind my texts for difficult conversations?
- ① Fail to develop strong conversational skills, or lose the ones I have?
- ① Let 🍷, 😊 & 😄 replace hugs, camaraderie and laughter?
- ① Misread people's intentions? Risk them misunderstanding mine?
- ① Forget basic pleasantries like good morning and thank you?

**Talk it over.  
Think it through....**



**What's my IDEAL standard of communication in this age of technology?** What do I want my conversations and messaging to look like?

**What has become my current standard?** Do I text when I should talk? Do my messages reflect the warm, caring person I am?

*My ideal standard is...*

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*My current standard is...*

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**What's one standard I can change right now?** How can I upgrade the way I communicate with others to be closer to my ideal?

*The one standard I will change right now is...*

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# the follow-up

Learn more about the topic of  
technology and communication.

**Wed., Jan. 27, 8PM CST**

**Watch online: [torahanytime.com/focus](http://torahanytime.com/focus)**

**Call in: USA: 718-298-2077 ext. 53**

UK: 0330-1170305 ext. 53

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כמה פעמים שמענו שני בני הזוג אומרים אחד לשני: "איני צריך שום דבר – רק דבר אתי יפה". ועיקר השמחה בבית כשאומרים בצורה יפה "בוקר טוב" ו"תודה"

**"Often we have heard couples say one to the other, "I don't need anything, just speak to me pleasantly." The main happiness in the home is when everyone says "good morning" and "thank you" in a pleasant way."**

– Rav Shimshon Pincus, דברים ייב, תפארת שמשון

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# the change

**Take the first step  
towards the standards  
you wish you had.**

Write down how you will focus on  
communication this week.

*I will...*

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An initiative of  project focus