



Don't Take It Personally

He passed you in the street and looked right through you, as if you were invisible, and didn't even say "hello". Funny, after all the favors at school I do for her, she tells me curtly, "I'm sorry, I have to go", and hangs up the phone! "So the truth finally comes out, that's what they think of me. They didn't even send me an invitation to their son's bar mitzva." I worked hours upon hours at making the dinner reception for his friends a smashing success, and all my husband can weakly offer is, "It was nice". After spending money that we don't have on an exquisite pair of earrings, my wife chides me, "Why did you waste your money on that?" We all experience those ego-deflating moments in life. Be it from

our parent's, spouses, children, teachers, neighbors, or even a complete stranger – somebody, at some time in our lives will either say something or do something that will injure our pride and hurt our feelings. The problem is that most of us allow the stinging arrows of these remarks to penetrate our inner core so deeply that it bruises our ego and impairs our functioning. And, then there are those overly sensitive types that fall apart at the mere word or gesture that remotely hints at criticism. Wincing in pain, they react so offended as if a knife was inserted into them. At the heart of most interpersonal problems, failed relationships, and social dysfunction are the benign remarks and innocently stated opinions of others that we take **too personally**. The first step in stopping the hurt and pain is to recognize that the problem is not so much with them as with you! Admit it, on some deep level these relatively harmless comments, that you misconstrue as personal affronts, touch a raw nerve that exposes your insecure self. While on the outside we may overreact defensively with indignation, or clam-up and withdraw in silence, inside we become an emotional mess. As simple as it

may sound, there isn't a more effective remedy to the emotional complications caused by being overly-sensitive, than to stop taking yourself and life so seriously. Humor is your best weapon against the insults, imagined or real, that others may level at you. Be rational! What does it matter what this one whispers about you, or what rumors that one spreads behind your back? Rise above petty schoolyard politics, by laughing-off these childish behaviors as plain old silly. Why allow others to own the power to make or break you? Remember what Rabbi Nachman revealed in *Likutei Moharan*, (Vol. 1, Chap 34): every single person possesses a unique trait or talent not shared by anyone else. Furthermore, when you celebrate your own individuality, by taking pride in this unique quality and going with it, your confidence level automatically rises to such a healthy degree that rejection and criticism by others just slide-off you. How empowering! But, where do you start? How do you summon enough nerve to overcome self-consciousness, to make a stand against public opinion and raise your own individual banner? The answer is that you have to learn to be comfortable just being

yourself. This is achieved only when the opinions of other people are made to matter less, and G-d to matter more – which only comes with conscious awareness that there is no reality, except for G-d, because G-d is reality. Moreover, it's not by having the right social connections that makes you special, but rather it's by virtue of your connectedness to G-d that deems you special. Like a seed planted in a garden, G-d has placed your soul with its native capacities, in this world, to blossom and flower in its destined role. So, step out from all the confusion created by destructive social comparing, and confidently assume your unique G-d-given role in life. By achieving clarity of purpose and gaining a strong sense of self, you will no longer take **so personally** the opinions of others – which tends to prey on the self doubting and insecure mind. So, stop playing the part of the victim and letting others have a good laugh at your expense. Show the world that you're made of good stuff and you'll be surprised to find yourself laughing along with them.

2.

There are low points in everyone's life, that with just the right emotional resilience you can adopt a "grin and bear it" attitude and overcome it; but, because you are chronically needy and insecure, you seize the opportunity to prove once again that you've been victimized by life circumstances. Unable to accept responsibility for your failures in life, you project your anger onto society. Perceiving the world as a very hostile and unfriendly place, you wage a mental war with society, where every person, friend or foe, is eyed with suspicion. No matter how well-meaning the advice or support offered by friends, to hoist you out of your hole, you invariably suspect them of having ulterior motives. Neutral remarks and even plain ordinary everyday conversation become at once, twisted and distorted by your paranoid mind to extort evil intentions from them that the speaker never even meant. Over-sensitivity, when taken to this extreme, clouds your judgment to the extent that you react purely on a subjective level; no comment can escape a person's lips without being negatively interpreted by you as a personal attack. Not being able to be

convinced otherwise, you willfully wallow in self-pity, withdrawing into morbid social isolation, bitter and angry at the world that you perceive as having conspired against you. Imagine, this elaborate mental chain reaction – with dire consequences – ignited simply because you took an innocent remark **too personally**. Don't let this become your tragic fate! Learn to roll with the punches by **not taking everything so personally**. Recognize that hypersensitivity is a nervous disorder whose early warning sign is the tendency to take small things out of proportion and overreact. Without early intervention, the cycle of feeling easily slighted and offended, can lead to eventual mental incapacitation as you suffer from pervasive thoughts of victimization and distress at mere social contact with others. A word here and a remark there is enough to trigger a shame-response so intense that you flee in a fit of tears, or it may deliver such a devastating blow to the ego, that you automatically plunge into depression. Avoid falling onto the quagmire of this type of delusional thinking, by developing a thick-skin to all the inevitable hurtful remarks and stinging comments that people are prone to

say. Inhibit your natural tendency to cower from every insult, real or imagined, by laughing it off as one big joke. Develop inner strength by not taking the snide comments of others so seriously and stop being so intimidated by people around you no matter how loud their bark. “Easier said than done”, you protest, after all how can you erase years of conditioning of learned timidity and crippling social shyness? The answer is that you must make the conscious effort to stop placing your faith in people and start placing your faith exclusively in G-d. Consider that G-d completely controls every event and outcome in the universe to the extent that, “You can't touch that which is reserved for your friend, and one kingdom cannot touch [overlap] the other, by even a hairsbreadth” (*Yoma, 38a*). When you become thoroughly convinced of G-d's absolute control then the powerful mystique of public opinion loses its persuasive grip over your mind – after all, no one can deprive you of what G-d has reserved for you, and similarly you can't supply someone with something that's not assigned to them by G-d. Isn't it finally time that you live and breathe freely? Then stop expecting

others to come through for you, and likewise, stop living to satisfy their expectations. You have every right to expect all the good things in life, but this can only happen when you expect it from the hand of G-d, and not from the handouts of others.

3.

Reluctant to give-up their personal freedom, our narcissistic generation suffers from a pervasive fear of commitment. Caught between the need to serve ourselves, and to serve G-d, we live in a state of unhealthy tension that comes from a devotion to Him that is incomplete. For all the loosening of our bond with heaven, we paradoxically discover that we've become shackled by public opinion. Aren't you tired already from dancing between heaven and earth; by trying to please G-d and also to please others, you end-up satisfying nobody including yourself. Find the serenity and self-assurance that you're so desperately seeking by making that leap of faith, and fully committing yourself to G-d and not relying on others, as is written, (*Devarim Rabba, Chap. 2*) "Whoever trusts in the Blessed-One-Be-He is worthy of being like Him, [so to speak]."

Meaning that, when your trust in G-d is so absolute and unwavering, you begin to see everything in light of G-d; the opinions of others no longer matters in the least; what counts now is what He thinks about me, not what others might think. Overreacting to the opinions of others, on the other hand, is an unconscious expression of your vulnerability as a result of feeling so far from G-d, as the Sages commented, (*Pesachim, 113b*), “The fussy ones [the overly sensitive types who are bothered by every minor hassle] have no life!” Always on high alert and suspicious of others, he can never feel relaxed, so he’s invariably, moody and resentful. Eventually, with the tension wearing on his nerves, he becomes morbidly depressed, confused, and fed up with his life. Having little basis in reality, the hypersensitive individual’s thinking inhabits a world of imagined danger: his lifestyle resembles the fugitive on the go who is forever fearful of an implied danger lurking behind other peoples’ seemingly innocent remarks or actions. Stop this cycle of flawed thinking by immunizing yourself against the power of others to hurt you, by thoroughly accepting that only G-d has power to affect your life; He

is sovereign over the Universe, and of course over your life; no event or happenstance occurs without His bidding, so much so that, “A person doesn’t stub his finger on earth, unless it is decreed by Heaven (*Chullin, 7a*). There is no such thing as senseless suffering or arbitrary pain in life. Just open your eyes and recognize the single, common denominator unifying the events of your life called G-d, and you won’t feel so offended and overly sensitive to the remarks and actions on the part of others. This is what the Sages meant when they declared that, (*Berachos, 13b*) “whoever prolongs the [the word] “one” [in the “*Shema*” prayer], his days and years will be prolonged”; meaning that whoever wholeheartedly accepts G-d as the underlying unifying force controlling all of creation and determining every outcome, to the exclusion of any other being – truly breathes new life into his days and years. With the opinions of others rendered powerless, he begins to lead a carefree existence. Rejected by others? – who cares, G-d takes care of me; he’s criticizing me or teasing me? – so what, his words are harmless; they laugh in my face? I laugh right

back – I'm not scared, because G-d is on my side. Get it? The cry-baby days are over; stop being so overly-sensitive, by taking everything **so personally**. Don't cringe in pain, because you overheard someone talking about you on the bakery line. Why give someone the satisfaction of getting you hurt or angry by insulting you? – laugh it off and show him whose better! Sure it takes guts! Keep reminding yourself, however, that no person can act independent of G-d's will. Everything, large or small, emanates from G-d; He is found in every action and movement on the part of others, so how can they harm you? The wider your perspective of G-d – as the single, unifying force behind all creation – grows, the more days and years will you spend pleasantly free from the many forms of harm that you imagine others can possibly inflict on you. Sensitized to the presence of G-d, your life will become enhanced, as you become cured from the emotionally handicapping effects of **taking things too personally**.

4.

So, you pride yourself on being able to detect subtle nuances in other people's expressions. You liken your heightened perception to a radar that can perceive sudden changes in people's moods. Confident in your keen powers of sensitivity, you're sure that because he didn't smile at you the same way as he usually does, he's angry with you. And, you always knew that the math teacher had it out for you; why, he even passed you in the hallway today and didn't say "hello". O.K., if you think you're so smart and perceptive, then why are you so miserable in life? And, just because you're having a hard time in life, why do you think the whole world is against you? Stop being presumptuous, and realize that most of the negative intentions and blame that you impute on others are not genuine, and are only the product of your imagination. Most people are walking around with their own pack of troubles, absorbed in their problems, yet you insist on reading into their thoughts and drawing negative inferences about yourself. Feeling low to begin with, your imagination runs wild and builds an elaborate structure out of maybe, one comment or stray

expression uttered by the other person, to prove that he's out to get you – and then your heart sinks as you feel your whole world collapsing. Stop being so self-centered, as if the whole world revolves around you. To overcome your hypersensitivity, you have to remove the spotlight off yourself. Contrary to popular opinion, it's not therapeutic to constantly analyze and rehash the negative thoughts and bad feelings swirling around in your head. You'll only feel more broken, depressed, and vulnerable to criticism from others. So leave your bag of troubles behind, and c'mon get happy! Joy is the best inoculation against the ravages of over-sensitivity. Joy puts you in a good frame of mind and gives you a fresh, sunshiny perspective on life. Having the opposite effect of over-sensitivity, joy gives you the power to laugh things off in life, and not take everything **so personally**.

5.

Let's face it! If you want to tear down the invisible wall that stands between you and the rest of the world that you perceive as cold, you have to be the first to break the ice by saying,

“hello”. Don’t wait around for others to notice you; say goodbye to years of accumulated hurt and feeling slighted, by taking the initiative. Why not restore the faith that you have lost in humanity for all those times people passed you in street and never said ”hello”, by simply greeting them first. For the sake of peace, stop standing on ceremony and be forgiving towards your fellow Jew, as the Sages stated (*Rosh Hashana, 18b*), "When it is a time of peace, it should be [an occasion] for happiness and joy"; Peace and joy are related emotions. Because when a person's aim is to foster peace, and he extends himself for that cause by greeting everyone – even his enemies – he cheers himself up as well. The gesture of goodwill equips him with a positive outlook on life and so he automatically stops acting needy and so easily hurt. On equal footing with the rest of society, he no longer neurotically seeks validation from others nor does he crave their approval. Continue to play the part of the victim, however, and the world will remain a very dark and unfriendly place. As a vulnerable creature lying in wait to be pounced on by a wild beast, so is your heart dangerously exposed for every mere comment,

remark or gesture to wound. And why? Because you have removed G-d from the picture. Don't react so quickly with offense to the insults of others. Take the time to probe into the deeper meaning behind their words and ask yourself what does G-d want me to learn from this situation? When it becomes crystallized in your mind that all along you've been reacting to the puppet-like actions of others, when in reality it was G-d who was pulling the strings, your eyes will open to the farce you've been living. Reconciling with the person who you are and accepting the circumstances of your life – by accepting G-d's absolute control – will help you achieve inner peace and peace with others. Remember that G-d's name is synonymous with peace, and furthermore it's written that, "The Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He did not find a vessel to contain blessing for [the Nation of] Israel, except for peace" (*Shabbos, 10a*), as it is also written, 'G-d will grant strength to His nation, G-d will bless His Nation with peace' (*Uktzin, 83*). That single greeting of "hello" that you rush to offer unconditionally, to all who you encounter, no matter who or what he is, has the power to dissolve the barrier of cool indifference that

exists between people today. The outpouring of love that results and the goodwill between men that it fosters, will earn you many blessings in return, as the Sages said, (*Vayikra Rabba, Chap. 9, par. 9*) “[So] great is peace, that all blessings are included in it.” More importantly, when your attitude towards society switches from one of accusatory and blaming to gentle, loving and peaceful, you’ll cure your mind of its unfounded fear that everyone is out to get you. Therefore, for your own mental health and well-being, just say, “hello” – even to those that you dislike or resent. Then watch as your juvenile, overly sensitive self matures into a self-assured, dignified and independent adult.

6.

Did you ever come across a person who, without even hearing a word of your conversation, accused you and your friends of talking about them? Can you imagine their level of discomfort, always nervously apprehensive that this one or that one is plotting against them or wishes them harm. Unable to contain their curiosity, they search, snoop, and intrude into private conversations

or even eavesdrop for hours, convinced that they will ultimately come across a negative reference to themselves. Sensitive like radars, they continuously capture vibes, real or imagined, from others and lead a hyper-vigilant life with no peace. Despite the fact that sensitivity is a trait that allows us to experience life more richly, overly sensitive people are in pain and are suffering from a disorder. But there is a cure that is simple and effective. If you find that your overly-sensitive nature is socially impeding and you're desperately seeking relief, then you must be willing to stop playing the part of the victim. How long will you allow yourself to feel threatened by others, because in your mind you imagine that they have the power to harm you. Give back the upper hand to G-d, and get control over your life, by recognizing His absolute control over every aspect of reality. By simply changing your perspective on who is really running the show, you render powerless the cast of characters that until now, held your imagination as a captive audience. Now that you are aware that G-d produces and directs every scene of your life, you can get a good laugh out of all the

charades and games that others play at your expense; it's all one big act and performance; they can't harm you because only G-d is in control. Once you learn to become amused and humored by the actions of others, instead of becoming broken by them, then your life will become transformed from a tragedy into a comedy. As an indicator of healing, minor, petty concerns will no longer elicit that strong defensive reaction from you, as they become subordinate to your main concern, which is sensitive awareness of G-d. But to remove the focus off others and to experience the realness of G-d, Who is invisible, you must actively reach out to Him. Make it a practice to speak regularly to G-d and train yourself to get your needs satisfied only from Him, rather than expecting it from others. When you stop needing others so badly and you only need G-d, it will suddenly dawn on you that no one can hurt you anymore; then you will be on the road to recovery from **taking things too personally**.

7.

Taking things too personally is a behavior that typically develops as a natural outgrowth

from childhood jealousies. Based on faulty assessment, a child imagines that other kids have more going for them than they do, or that the other child is favored, and receives more attention from the teacher than them – which only serves to fuel their envy. With no one else to blame, they blame themselves for their deficiencies and they develop low self-esteem. Chronically insecure, they steadily become highly sensitized to what others have and what they have not. Using a mental yardstick, their minds are always busy making social comparisons – in which they invariably come up short against the next guy – to prove once again that everyone has it better than them. Here too, there is a simple solution to repair the damaged self-esteem that lies at the core of the overly-sensitive nature. Get him to stop counting the eggs in other people's basket, and to start counting those that are in his. By helping him to discover his unique abilities and talents, he will begin to like himself more; instead of feeling useless, he will feel useful; when we feel competent we become empowered! So while it's not too late and he is still young, save him from the ravages of an inferiority

complex that dooms so many kids today to failure in adulthood, by cultivating his superior qualities. With eggs in his basket, this child matures with confidence and healthy self-esteem that guards him from emotional entanglement with others that results from being too needy. More globally, parents and teachers must rise to stem the dangerous tide of competition that reigns in the classroom today, which is producing a generation of delinquents and educational fall-outs. The school administration is duty bound to stop assiduously focusing their efforts at preserving their reputations, and do all in their power to ensure the welfare of their students. A new educational philosophy, that stresses the uniqueness of the individual, must be introduced to replace the outdated and stodgy one of measuring a student's worth solely on grades. How empowered we would have felt had we been fed the message in our youth that, as individuals we are each equal, yet unique and special. Remember, all of us have something valuable to contribute towards society. But alas, so many children and students have been lost to a cold and callous, competitive system that pins one

child against the next, and makes the loser feel like a nothing. What happened to the importance of values in the home and the classroom? Shouldn't we be teaching our children that jealousy is a bad trait that should be avoided? Instead we set up our children for failure, by burdening them with undue pressure to overachieve and succeed at a frenzied pace. With so much weight giving to scores, a poor grade or bad report card triggers so much guilt that a child can be traumatized for life. Are we proud that a generation has been spawned of emotionally scarred students, who are highly nervous and neurotic, very image-conscious and overly-sensitive to criticism – and are no longer just plain comfortable with themselves. Mom and dads remember, that when that little innocent baby stares at you, helplessly, with those twinkling eyes from under the blanket of that cradle, he's expecting you to help him grow and develop to the best that he can be. This is not accomplished by means of shame, denigration, humiliation, and insult; nor will he succeed by forcing him to walk in your shoes instead of his own. While yet a toddler, rejoice in his every achievement and milestone

met. Make his interests your interests; be involved in his life and dignify his choices; guide him with love and respect and encourage him to eventually fly from the nest with his own set of wings. The emotional well-being of a child rests in the attitude that the parents display towards the child. Stamp out the roots of jealousy from your child – that stem from being overly needy – early, by meeting the emotional needs of your child. Then you won't suffer regrets later on!

8.

Today the institution of marriage is in danger of losing its meaning, because couples have forgotten what it means to be married. Although they enter the marital canopy as two, the couple must remember that they exit as one. Marriage, like any successful partnership, requires teamwork; the problem, however, is that the couples today have forgotten that they are on the same team. In the climate of pleasure seeking that prevails today, the husband and wife must work even harder to uphold the timeless Torah values that make a marriage work. Unlike the secular view of marriage where each party asks what's

in it for me, the Jewish concept of marriage operates on the principle of deposit without the expectation of return; she asks what can I do to please my husband?; how can I build him up and make him a success so he can feel good about himself?; likewise, he asks how can I be a supportive husband?; a helpful husband?; how can I make her feel good about herself? The secret behind the success of this kind of marriage is that by each spouse striving to fulfill the other ones needs, they paradoxically satisfy their own needs; gone is the need to over-react to each other, which is only a cover-up for the couple's underlying resentment towards each other for unmet needs. With the recipe for a successful marriage in hand, they create a warm, loving and healthy home environment. But an embattled couple misses the point of marriage and with the finger of blame pointed at each other for not meeting each others wants and demands, they pounce on each other for every little remark or action, taking them **too personally**. "He's never home to help me", she persistently whines; "She's always nagging and complaining", he loudly charges. Back and forth do the warring couple tussle, each

reacting with anger at the other, with no one being heard, until the house becomes a war zone. If your marriage is war torn and you both want to save it, then you must call for a cease fire. Step back from the midst of the battle and realize that this is a no-win situation because you are both wrong for taking things **too personally**. Get beyond all the petty arguments and senseless fighting, and reach the core of the problem, which is that you both feel unloved and unappreciated. If there is to be any future to the marriage, recognize that you can't go on hurting each other in this manner by taking everything **so personally**. Let down your defenses enough to read each others pain, anguish and disappointment that underlies all the antagonistic remarks and nasty insults. When you both transcend the bounds of your own angry and hurt feelings, and are able to feel the pain of your spouse, then you will have arrived at the true meaning of marriage. Then, instead of trying to dominate each other, you will both experience the joy of marital bliss that comes when you start to care about each other.

9.

Does sitting in a room full of people make you uncomfortable? Do you catch yourself wondering how much more put together the other people seem in comparison to you? Do you hesitate to speak your mind in front of them out of fear of making a fool of yourself? You should know that, because you have failed to give yourself a stamp of approval, you have condemned yourself to a life of seeking approval from others. Lacking any backbone, you twist, turn, and roll-over in order to attract the notice of others and gain favor in their eyes. And when they fail to notice, smile, praise, or say the right thing, you take it **so personally**, that you become automatically crushed and functionally impaired. After so many years spent on pleasing others, and not yourself, isn't it time to get back in touch with your neglected self? This is not selfishness, this is self-preservation! Stop passively allowing the course of your life to be determined by the reactions of others. Cut the codependent ties with others, and achieve emotional independence, by not being so concerned with impressing others, and not being so impressed by them. You want to be a

writer – go for it; you always dreamed of being a doctor – turn it into a reality; having your own business excites you – then let nothing stop you. You can only pilot your own future, when you're seated in the cockpit, and don't allow others to cloud your vision or break your spirit. Continue to play the role of the victim, however, and your life will never get off the ground. Afraid to step on anyone's toes and take the risks necessary to move forward in life, you remain helpless and stranded, blaming a seemingly hostile world for all your failures. Don't you want to taste the sweet smell of success in your lifetime? Then stop giving up and start standing on your own two feet. Begin by not sticking your nose into everyone's conversation so you can overhear what their saying about you. And if they are – so what! Laugh it off, and show them that it doesn't bother you, by **not taking it so personally**. Your best defense against the insults of others is not to give them the satisfaction of your reaction. They're expecting to get a rise out of you, and when you don't deliver, they're the losers, and you emerge the winner. Remember, you can only get hurt, if you allow yourself to get hurt – because you

need to feel hurt. Sitting passively in the corner sulking like a cry baby will not earn you the sympathy you're seeking; on the contrary, people will feel that much more up, because you're so down. So stop waiting around in life for a ride from others that's never coming. Get moving, by jumping into the driver's seat and reach for the stars.

10.

The teacher scolded you in front of the class, so you never want to step foot in the school again. The matchmaker informs you that after four dates, the boy is not interested, so you think that you're not normal and need therapy. Your best friend decided to spend the holidays with someone else instead of you, so you begin to doubt that people really like you. Your boss denied you the day-off that you requested, so you feel like a failure at the job. Wait a moment! Why are you getting so broken? Everyone has feelings, not just you! Yet, there are some people whose egos are so fragile that the slightest hint or indication of disapproval or criticism can pain them to the point that they wish to die. Existing in their own delicate bubble, they lead a tormented

life, where at any moment, a remark or comment can be blown out of proportion and trigger an overreaction. Be realistic! As human beings, we all have our weak points that are a source of shame and embarrassment to us when attention is drawn to it. He's ashamed of not finishing high school; she's sensitive about being overweight; he's humiliated because he's a poor breadwinner. Remember, you're not alone – everyone has their issues! So, stop making yourself an exception to rule, as if your feelings have the special status of untouchable. “Yes, but I get hurt easily”, you insist. Your blood is not redder than your friends, so **stop taking everything so personally**, as the Sages said (*Shabbos, 31a*), “What you despise, don't do to your friend”. If everyone would be sensitive to each others sore points, as we are to our own, then we would cease hurting each other and the world would be a better place.

11.

Most of the chronic unhappiness of our generation is due to our rat-race mentality, which defines success in terms of how well we outdo the other guy. Pressured to compete, we

are jealous of the other person's triumph, and hate him more, because it means our defeat. We take his success **too personally**, and let resentment build, because we blame him for our failures. Nothing could be further from the truth than this misguided philosophy. True success is not born out of ill-will; on the contrary, it is only achieved by displaying good-will to each other. Restore serenity to your life, by quitting the race against your fellow man. Cut the codependent cord with others, by declaring everyone a winner and nobody a loser, and then you will be emotionally free from relying on others for your happiness. Having no expectations from others, will automatically eliminate the resentment and jealousy you felt towards them, and you will not take everything they say or do **so personally**. No longer threatened by the success of others, you can join in fellowship with them, as your heart fills with genuine love and concern for your fellow man. Once again you will learn to smile at others, as you search for ways to help them succeed and advance their cause, without expecting anything in return. You will have arrived at a place of emotional and spiritual health, and

success will come to you naturally. You may have as many enemies as the hair on your head, but, because of the strength of your conviction in G-d's absolute control, you avoid emotional enmeshment with others, so what harm can they possibly inflict? Relying only on G-d and not expecting any favors from others, you don't get hurt because you **don't take anything personally**; On the contrary, you inspire others and wish them well, because not a trace of unhealthy attachment to them remains. Now it's up to us to correct man's inhumanity to man, by **not taking everything so personally**, by caring for each other in a healthy way.

