

Dear OU Parenting,

With Pesach coming up, I want my family to have several daytrips over Chol Hamoed, especially because we haven't been able to do family Chol Hamoed trips the past couple of years. My teenager has already started to give us a hard time about coming, as he prefers to stay home or go places with friends, but I really want him to join our family. How can we best handle this situation?

—P.T.

**Rabbi Dr. Ethan Eisen, PhD**

Dear P.T.,

Your question raises a challenge that comes up in a wide array of situations, particularly with teenagers, which I think about in terms of balancing conflicting values. On the one hand, as he gets older, he increasingly has his own life and his own interests, and this type of growth is something that you may value and want to nurture. In many ways, as described in an earlier column, successfully navigating the decision-making processes of adolescence

makes for a successful transition into early adulthood. If your child is expressing to you that he wants to have social activities with his friends, you may view that choice as a values-driven preference that you want to foster.

On the other hand, parents have interests and values of their own that relate to the family as a whole. In addition to the short term *nachas* you cherish from having your family together, you also see the long-term benefit of the shared family experiences that Chol Hamoed trips facilitate (a longer topic for a different column involves limiting use of electronics on these trips). As a parent, you are allowed to exercise this value at times, even if your teenager may express being upset.

The way I see it, there are three possibilities for how to resolve this issue: 1) acquiesce to your son's wishes; 2) allow your son to join one or two trips, while staying back for the other; or 3) have your son join all the trips. As you have already

Dr. Eliezer Rosenblum

NYS Licensed and Board Certified

Chiropractor

Offices in Jerusalem, Ramat Beit Shemesh

052-662-4658

Pinchus Klahr, MD

Rheumatology

US Board Certified / Misrad HaBriut recognized specialist
in all Arthritis conditions Joint and Muscle Pain
Conscientious "American style" Care

Conveniently located at
Refa Na Medical Center, Givat Shaul, Jerusalem

052-713-2224

Now also seeing patients at the
LaBriut Health Center in RBS **02-970-1100**

expressed that you want him to be part of the family trip, I do not see the first possibility as a values-based resolution—it may avoid conflict, but it's not consistent with the values you want to guide your judgment.

Your decision regarding whether you are okay or not with his missing any of the family trips will determine how you communicate with him, and how you honor the value of fostering his ability to choose. As with other parts of life, effective communication can help bring everyone on board as much as possible. If you want him participating in everything, it can be helpful to consider three separate parts of the conversation: 1) It is important to me that you are part of the family trip (expectation); 2) I understand you may not want to come, and that you are upset that you will be missing time with your friends (validation); and 3) you have the choice to have as best a time as you can with the family (empowering). This last component is not meant to be sarcastic—this is actually a choice that your teenager has, and it can be effective to remind him that he can choose to make the best of the situation.

Alternatively, you may decide that you want to honor your child's desire to spend

some time with his friends. For example, let's say you are going on three Chol Hamoed daytrips. You can communicate your desires directly, while expressing clearly to him that you want him to be able to have some choice about his plans. This conversation would include the following components: 1) I want you to join two out of our three trips, and it is important to me that you join us for trip A; 2) you can decide whether you want to come on trip B or C.

Barring exceptional circumstances, if you remain firm, are mindful not to take his resistance personally, and remind your son that he can choose to have a good time (and limit the electronic use!), after a few minutes he will figure out how to have a nice time, which is an important skill you can teach him for this *chag* and for life! ■

Dr. Ethan Eisen, PhD is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist (Israel and U.S.) offering Evidence-Based Solutions for Individuals and Couples

Feel free to send in any parenting questions you may have to parenting@ouisrael.org (Details will be changed to preserve anonymity).

To all of our devoted friends and donors who contributed MAOS CHITIM and helped over 200 poor and needy families enjoy the Holiday of Pesach - Best wishes for a Chag Kasher V'sameach, and a healthy spring and summer.

**Send your contributions to the
Clara Hammer Chicken Fund
P.O.B.18602 Jerusalem 91185
(02)5810256**

Donate via PayPal at Chickenladyofjerusalem.com

**חג שמח
וקיץ בריא!**

