



## Tochecha - Talking Back

### Tochecha – Rebuke

*One who rebukes a person shall in the end find more favor than the one who flatters with words.  
– Mishlei 28:23*

*Tochecha* is a Jewish value and our obligation to tell someone when they have done something wrong – whether to us, or to another. There are guidelines on acceptable ways to engage in *tochecha*, beginning with never embarrassing someone in public, or humiliating the person. There are many reasons why *tochecha* is essential to healthy relationships and communities.

*You shall not hate your fellow human being in your heart. Rebuke your fellow human being but incur no guilt because of him. — Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:17*

### Avoiding Traingulation

When you have an encounter with someone else that leaves you uneasy, upset or uncomfortable, you have two options in responding – you can talk to the person who makes you uneasy, or you can let it go. Sharing the information with friends or colleagues builds a culture of *lashon hara*. Rather going directly to the person, and having a conversation about why their words or actions made you uncomfortable, is fulfilling the commandment of *tochecha*.

### Conflict is Okay

It's not only okay, it's a healthy part of our existence in life to disagree, to share our thoughts when we believe something that has happened is wrong, and to intervene when we believe something someone else is doing is harmful to another human being.

### You Can't Just Stand By

When you see someone doing or saying something harmful to another human being, and do nothing to stop their actions, it is as if you helped to commit the action yourself. As Jews we are commanded to seek justice and pursue it, and stepping up, where others might not, is an important step in that direction.

*Rebuke leads to love, as it states: Rebuke a wise person and he will love you. This is the opinion of Rabbi Yossi the son of Chanina who said: "All love that does not include some criticism is not true love." — Proverbs 9:8 and Genesis Rabbah*

It is our obligation to be stand up and be critical when we see that our society or individuals are making harmful, hurtful or degrading mistakes. Criticism through the Jewish value of *tochecha*, is an expression of our care for others, and as Jews, it is our sacred obligation.

Tochecha Rebuke, reproach.

Rebuke To criticize sharply, to reprimand, to reproach, to reprove

Reprove To scold or correct with kindly intent, to express disapproval