

THE MIRACLE OF LIGHT

BY ILANA GERSCHLOWITZ (AUTHOR OF SAVING MY SONS - A JOURNEY WITH AUTISM)

In 2004, darkness descended upon us, when my son was diagnosed with autism. David is not neuro diverse nor is he gifted. Just like most individuals on the spectrum, he suffers from a debilitating illness called autism.

Although autism is treatable, it's misunderstood, with limited access to medical professionals, who truly understand the make-up of autism. For many years, the

fear of an unknown future and worry of what would become of him and us, caused us a deep sense of pain and suffering coupled with grief. Autism clung to David like a magnet with its powerful force. We would draw on our inner strength, to pull ourselves out of the deepest of dark days, where hope was a mere flicker in the very far distance. Looking back now- we made it. We didn't allow autism to prevail. We clung to hope and always fought back.

When life presents obstacles, we tend to become absorbed in the details. We forget that what we're experiencing, is all part of a bigger picture. The key to overcoming these hurdles is to hold on to hope and faith - no matter the odds stacked against us. If

we give up on hope, we will lose the will to succeed.

Hope, implies a certain amount of perseverance, such as believing that a positive outcome is possible, even when there's strong evidence to the contrary. You always have to have hope and look at the positive in everything - no matter how bad it seems. If you can see some light around the next corner, you can carry on going in the right direction, but the second you lose hope you're finished.

This means you have to find ways of keeping that hope alive. When you're trying new medications, if one doesn't work, try another. If you've tried one treatment or strategy and it didn't work, move on to the next one. If you've reached a road block or dead end, turn around and take another route. There is always something that can be done.

Keeping hope alive during the hardest days of our lives proved incredibly challenging. We chose not to let darkness and fear become our fortress. Over time, we learnt that there are many ways to build a beautiful life irrespective of hardship. We chose healing and hope instead of defeat and despair. The key to success, is to search for the light and to never ever give up hope.

During Chanukah, we celebrate the power of light over darkness. It's a reminder to us that miracles are possible and are happening every day. The Zohar teaches that darkness, is the absence of light. If darkness is the absence of light, then we know, that a little bit of light, will illuminate alot of darkness. Even the light of a single candle makes a difference.

According to Rabbi Gutman Locks, our soul is like the flame on the wick of a candle. It has no form unlike the candle, which represents the physical body. The primary purpose of a candle, is to give light. So to the body, has an essential task to house the soul in order to bring light into the world. We're all instrumental in spreading light and finding ways to combat, treat and overcome illness, hardship and suffering. Light can be regarded as an emblem of hope and a reminder that anything is possible. We can therefore always hope for a better tomorrow.

With a brave heart, keep hope alive and you will succeed.

