

Shalom Bayis Newsletter - Issue 6

Stick Your Foot Out



How do you stop a big-sized fifteen-year-old shoplifter who is running like mad to get away with his heist? Simple, you put an eighty-four-year-old man in his way.

Seriously, this actually happened.

On November 2nd 2016, ABC news reported on a theft that was stopped in its tracks in a mall in Chile. An elderly couple was just minding their own business – like everyone else in the mall (except for the thief) – when they suddenly heard some shouts and saw a guy putting on the afterburners.

Without missing a beat, the octogenarian husband stuck out his leg and tripped the would-be robber.

But not without taking a hit. The thief had built up enough kinetic energy in his mad dash that the elderly hero was spun around and knocked to the ground.

At that point, also without missing a beat, the elderly hero's wife started berating him for his foolhardy stunt!

When he was later interviewed in the hospital, the eighty-four-year-old said that he felt ok and was in good spirits. "My biggest concern," he said, "is that my wife is upset with me. After that incident, she didn't speak to me for hours!"

Now, it *is* tempting to intellectually dissect this dynamic duo and ponder a plethora of points, isn't it?

For example, why was the wife so worked up?

Shouldn't she be properly proud of her heroic husband?

Is there anything her husband could have said to calm her down?

Is there something that *she* could say that would discourage her getting-on-in-years-husband from attempting such age-inappropriate activities in the future? Or at least help him understand why she is so upset?

Without a doubt, there is what to pick apart over here. But that's not what I'd like to focus on, at least not directly.

What I would actually like to focus on is the phenomenon of a well-placed and well-timed motion being able to completely turn a situation around on a dime.

All that elderly man did was stick out his foot – quite a minor effort

in terms of its inherent force – and voila! The theft and thief were stopped in their tracks (with some serious ouchies to boot).

The reason why I feel like this is such a worthwhile point to dwell on is that, sometimes (oftentimes?), marital discord can feel like a runaway train, right?

A conflict can pick up steam with alarming acceleration to the point where one may be inclined to feel that all is lost. It seems as though the train of pain is hurtling down a dark, dead-end tunnel at breakneck speed and that there is nothing that can be done to prevent the inevitable crash.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

It is truly phenomenal how a slight, swift motion can completely change everything.

A lot of times (almost all the time?), all it takes is but three little words: "I was wrong". Or perhaps a flower or a chocolate bar. Or maybe a brief walk and some fresh air.

After all, the Gemara tells us that even just a gulp of a drink can have profoundly impactful effects (Sanhedrin 103b).

The only thing stopping couples from "sticking out their foot to stop the thief" is tunnel-vision.

In the heat of the moment, it can be difficult to think out of the box. It's only natural to feel stuck in the muck of conflict and see nothing other than pain, insult, and the perceived need for emotional self-defense.

But even if for but one fleeting moment you take a bird's eye view of the situation, you may suddenly hear a voice shouting in your head.

the situation, you may suddenly hear a voice shouting in your head,
“All you have to do is ‘stick your foot out’ and you’ll be the hero who
saved the day!”

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**Do you have a question you'd like to see addressed in a  
newsletter? A comment to share with the SBN community?  
Please do email it to me at [rbsa613@gmail.com](mailto:rbsa613@gmail.com).**

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