

# Finding the space

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Sometimes the stress of life, specifically in hard times, can become so intolerable that it feels like our whole world is crumbling before us. They say “when it rains, it pours”. It’s almost like the *side of evil* is going for the knockout punch. He sees us floundering, with very little resolve or hope, so he brings an onslaught of – maybe even small – inconveniences or nuisances to finish us off in a final blow.

What do you do when it seems like everything is going wrong?

King David sang (Psalms 4:2) “ָאַתָּה רָחַמְתָּ נַפְשִׁי בְּצָרָה”, “You gave me space in my pain”. ָצָרָה literally means narrow. So David was saying something like, *I was narrow-minded, and only thinking about my pain and struggles. It seemed that everywhere I turned, there were more obstacles and suffering. My world was caving-in on me. But You, Hashem, gave me space, even in that*

*constricted mindset.*

Reb Nosson says on that verse ([Kilei B'heima 4:8](#)) that in every state of pain or suffering, our minds can find a space that's free of the pain. We need to search for those spaces of ease when we're feeling squashed by the stress around us.

Reb Nosson suggests that the space can simply be recognizing the good that Hashem gave us until now. I hate to say this, but in my inferior opinion, I think that his suggestion is for someone on a high level. When my world is crumbling, I find it very difficult to be thankful for the good in my life. My narrow-mindedness doesn't really allow me to focus on the good of the past. I need to get back my equilibrium before I can start being thankful. I find that breathing can be very helpful. I'm not even talking about fancy meditation and not even necessarily following my breath. Just putting my phone away and breathing quietly for a few minutes, maybe with my eyes closed; maybe not, gives me some space. When I find myself too worked up to even breathe, I find it can even be helpful to merely recognize that I'm flooded with emotion. Just noticing that I'm overwhelmed makes me feel a bit less overwhelmed. Maybe even say something like, "I'm overwhelmed. I feel like the whole world is against me. Everywhere I turn, I get more and more stressed". But even without using words, just observing the feeling is a space that's free of the feeling. When things are so tough, we tend to think that we need an enormous miracle to get out of it, but it usually doesn't take that much to release the pressure.

This is why when Jacob sent the gift of many animals to Esau, he left a space between each herd. [Rashi](#) says it was to make the gift look very big, but Reb Nosson adds that symbolically, it was to show that in every time of struggle (like the one Jacob was having with Esau), there is a space that's free of struggle. Our job is simply to find it. It's not easy, but it's simple and it makes all the difference. Good luck!

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