

BOLD | INSPIRING | RELATABLE

it **ALL**
starts *with an*
IDEA



FREEDOM

SPEAK YOUR TRUTH


UNMUTED

T H E M A G A Z I N E

PILOT EDITION

-

PESACH 2026

IT'S NOT JUST A PODCAST. IT'S A COMMUNITY.
THOUGHT-PROVOKING. INSPIRING. RELATABLE.

JEWISH THE MISFITS PODCAST



Scan
to stream
& connect





MESSAGE *from The* **EDITOR**

Another project.

Yes I know, I have started a lot of those.
Mah Nishtana?

How is this one different than all the others?

The answer is you.

You are the people who (will) bring life to this project.

Your success stories, your advice, your relatable struggles, your ideas that bring light to the world.

Life is an open book waiting to be written. So a magazine sounded like a good idea because, well, who has the time and enough attention span to finish a book these days?

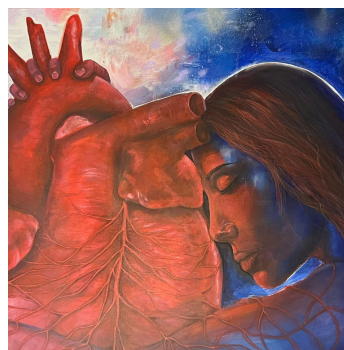
I get an opportunity to share my humble thoughts and experiences along many other wonderful individuals who have changed the face of the human race and continue to empower the Jewish community, and the entire world at large.

Happy reading!

With Love,
Rivkah Esthen

Welcome
LETTER

Table of contents



The Duality of Life

Life is not always black or white. There is so much more depth in all the layers and shades of grey.

05

Shifra Studio

Art can take many forms. Shifra shares how her journey led her to dive into painting as an outlet and eventually as a business.

19

The Case for Making Aliyah

It's 2026 and you're wondering if you should be making Aliyah. Hillel Fuld will tell you that now is the time and there is no doubt Israel is the place to be.

09

Getting Ready for Pesach with OCD

Q&A with Rabbi Yoni Rosensweig, expert on Halacha and Mental Health

27

Community Spotlight

The story of how one man in Dallas single-handedly started a movement called Bayit Miklot: a safe place to call home.

12

The Sweetness of Mourning

Life doesn't always deal you the best cards. Here is a more personal and touching share about life's most difficult, yet enlightening moments.

29

THE DUALITY OF LIFE OR HOW TO WEAR MULTIPLE MASKS

by Rivkah Esther



Life can pull you in so many different directions.

You strive to be present but you also have to think ahead about all the potential scenarios.

You train yourself to find the silver lining but you also need to be aware of realistic threats.

You're filling up your life with new goals and accomplishments, but you're also taking on more roles than you can handle.

You're happy and grateful, but you're also exhausted and overwhelmed.

You look at the world and are amazed at the countless miracles happening, but your heart breaks multiple times from all the pain and catastrophes.

Watching the world around you move on in slow-motion like you're having an out-of-body experience.

Juggling more emotions than the amount of breaths you remind yourself to take.

With the weight of the world on your shoulders, you google which vitamins will prevent the world from crumbling in front of your eyes. Or at least the ones that will keep you in denial. But you're also more mindful than ever before about what you're ingesting.

Seems like putting on a mask is the way to go. Makes you feel empowered. Like you have super-powers. Like you can handle anything and everything.

Because then you can switch your face according to the current needs. That would mean it's an either-or type of world we live in. That you can only pick one. But that wouldn't be realistic.

But that makes you dependent on the outside world. Waiting for other people to tell you how to feel, what to think, and what to share.

Does it mean I'm living a double life? What should I do when my emotions contradict themselves? Why does it feel like nothing makes sense anymore? Maybe we're just simply forgetting we are meant to be human. We are not above what makes us so unique.

What if every morning when we looked in the mirror to decide what to wear, we also looked inside to choose our perspective and disposition dress code for the day? Figure out which parts of ourselves need some attention and which need to be expressed? What if we looked at our emotional spreadsheet the same way we looked at our financial budget? What if this was a conscious decision instead of a passive reaction? If we could take the time to think ahead and gauge our inner power and energy level for the day, would we do anything differently? Would we adjust our expectations? Shove more caffeine and alcohol into our system? Would we design a better mask to show the world we can handle anything that comes our way? Or just add another layer to hide our inability to embrace our humanity?

Experiencing such contrasting emotions on a daily basis can be very confusing. And de-stabilizing. Leaving us wondering if we're crazy or being un-realistic.

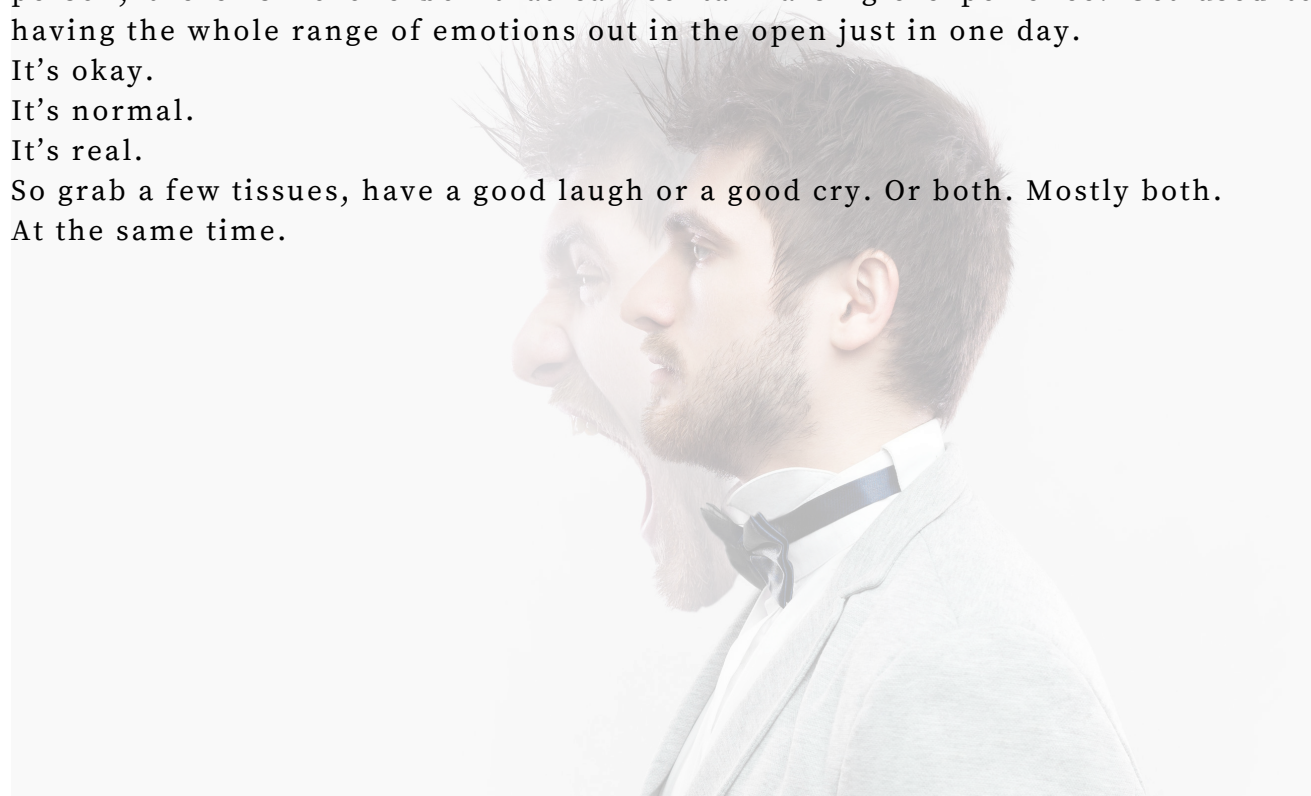
Rest be assured it is quite normal. Lately, we've all been through quite the roller-coaster. And it's particularly traumatizing on many different levels. But if there's one thing it's not, it's fake. It's the most real it's ever been. If you are going to live life to its fullest, you will need to accept and embrace the fact it will rarely be black and white. Just like one box cannot fully describe who you are as a person, there is no one box that can contain a single experience. Get used to having the whole range of emotions out in the open just in one day.

It's okay.

It's normal.

It's real.

So grab a few tissues, have a good laugh or a good cry. Or both. Mostly both. At the same time.





Sababa
MUSIC FESTIVAL

JOIN US FOR

THE HAPPIEST SHABBOS OF THE YEAR

Music • Campfires • Nature • Shabbos • Workshops

June 18–21, 2026
Narrowsburg, NY

LIMITED TICKETS

[SABABAFEST.COM](https://sababafest.com)

SCAN TO REGISTER





These are the people who
have made their life's
mission to be the voice of
our nation and bring light
to the world...



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a crowd of people with their hands raised in the air, suggesting a concert or a large gathering. The image is slightly blurred and has a warm, golden-brown color palette. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the title text. The text is in a bold, white, italicized serif font. The box is framed by a thin white border and a dashed white line.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS



THE CASE FOR MAKING ALIYAH IN 2026

with Hillel Fuld



hizfuld 
340k followers

Hillel Fuld | Global Speaker
Proud Zionist/Jew • Startup Advisor
Tech Columnist • Israel Advocate
Husband • Dad x5 • Carnivore
Banned from Australia

R.E: When did it become your personal mission to help the Jewish world make Aliyah?

H.F: I was born in NY and when I was a teenager, I moved to Israel with my family. I went to the army, and got my BA in Political science from Bar Ilan. Then I started blogging about tech and this is how my career took off. I met with hundreds of entrepreneurs and helped many start-ups grow. I was very successful and I thought I would be able to retire soon.

When October 7 happened, I shut down my business even if it meant giving up on financial security and dedicated all my time becoming Israel's biggest advocate. The world needed someone to defend Israel and fight for it. So that's what I did, and still do everyday. I meet with people to guide them in the Aliyah process (sometimes I have 3 or 4 back to back meetings in the same day). I post tirelessly on social media to debunk lies about Israel. I share what it's like to live in our beautiful land and the miracles that come with it. It's a full-time job.

*Nes Harim is a moshav
settlement in central
Israel.*

*(Photo Credit Shmuelshots
Fine-Art Photography)*



R.E.: What do you tell people when they share their fears and doubts about moving to Israel?

H.F.: I hear so many people telling me how difficult life would be regarding Parnassa, affordability, language, culture... but those are just excuses that are no longer valid. There are so many beautiful areas where you can live that are very affordable. Many American communities are increasingly moving in groups. You don't have to speak Hebrew. Look, I'm not saying it's easy, I'm just saying this is a much better (if not the only) option than staying where you are.

R.E.: Even with the current safety threats?

H.F.: My brother was killed in a terrorist attack in September 2018, I know firsthand what antisemitism feels like. But at least we have an army here, our own. And yes, the IDF failed us on October 7 but we have the strongest army. And when you think about it, there is nowhere else in the world that has soldiers patrolling everywhere to protect you. And not just jews. The IDF protects everyone. So come here and help us fight and protect our country. Hasbara and Aliyah go hand in hand. The future is here.

R.E.: What about those who say they have to stay in their country to support the rest of the world's jewry?

H.F.: That's what jews said in Germany. And even way back when in Egypt, people chose to stay back. We all know what happened next. People don't want to give up their comfort even if it leads them to their destruction. Think about all the decisions you've made in your life, you don't tell yourself: "well I haven't fallen in the pit yet". So learn your lesson from history and make a smarter move.

**“The world
needed
someone to
defend Israel
and fight for
it.”**

R.E.: And to all those who want to make Aliyah but can't for different reasons (elderly relatives, career, kids etc...)?

H.F.: Prepare an exit strategy. Be ready, so when the time comes, you have what you need.

R.E.; How do you stay inspired on a daily basis?

H.F.: How can you not? There is so much beauty and unity here to be grateful for. I even started an initiative where I post a picture of a different place in Israel with the hashtag #realsrael so people can witness the beauty of it all.

R.E.: What are some resources that you think would be helpful for people on the fence?

H.F.: Believe it or not, the Nefesh b'Nefesh website has everything you need! From job boards, to assistance finding the right school for your kids, helping you open a bank account, Ulpan options, representatives of different communities will set up a Zoom call with you to talk to you about the best options for you, and so much more! They are also developing resources to connect people living there in different fields to assist those moving, in terms of career transfers, and support looking for the right work environment. We are so lucky to be part of this amazing nation always looking out for each other!

R.E.: Has your message changed over the years?

H.F.: On a personal level I understand that there might be legitimate reasons that can be holding you back, but on a collective level, there are no more excuses. We beg jews to come home. Now is the time. Now more than ever. Be a part of History.

And when you finally make Aliyah, send me a message, Shawarma's on me!

**“Describe
Israel**

in 3 words:

1. Dream

2. Come

3. True ”

- Hillel Fuld

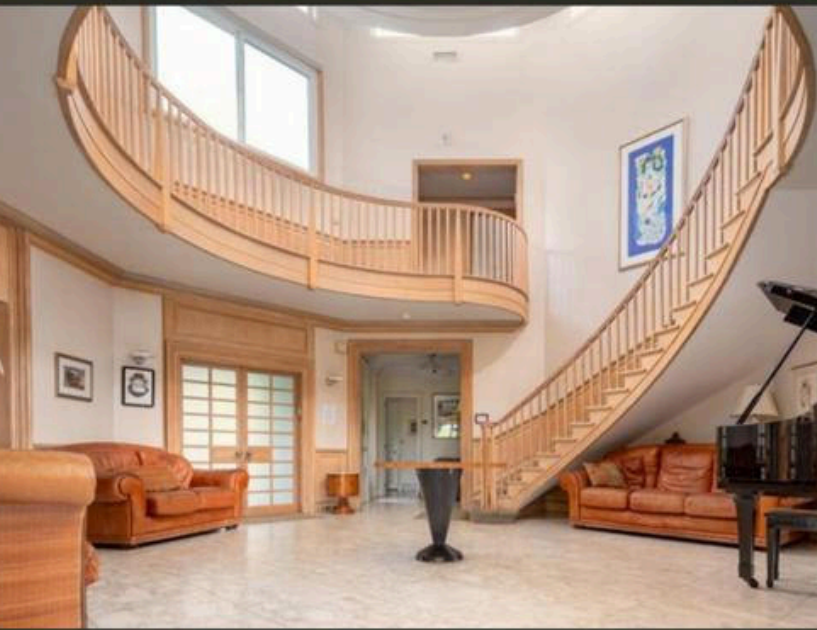
*Hashmonaim is a town
adjacent to the city of
Modiin.*

(Photo Credits: Hillel Fuld)



Vallevue

KOSHER FARM ESTATE
Morristown, NJ



Contact to reserve now:

Sharon (201) 787-4778

www.vallevue.com



CO
CO
SP



Leach Island

The background is a faded map of Texas. A thick, teal-colored brushstroke runs horizontally across the lower third of the image. Overlaid on this stroke is the text 'Dallas, TX' in a white script font.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Dallas, TX

IN CONVERSATION WITH



Avi Herman

BAYIT MIKLOT

A place to call home

“The opposite of addiction is connection”

Q. What is the story behind Bayit Miklot?

A. Bayit Miklot, Home of Refuge, was born because I couldn't take it anymore. Burying friend after friend: overdoses, suicides; watching them slip away while I kept cycling through facilities that “fixed” me just enough to send me back out alone. Clean for a minute, then the isolation hits hard. **Drugs weren't the problem; disconnection was.** I was sick of it. Sick of the losses. Sick of the revolving door. Johann Hari nailed it: “the opposite of addiction is connection”.

So, after sober living, I got my own place and started doing the only thing that made sense, opening the door. Fridge stocked with drinks and nosh, board games out, couch ready. Come hang if you're overwhelmed. If things are dark, crash here, no questions. There wasn't some grand plan; I was always the guy inviting people over, but this time it was survival.

Friends came. Strangers in crisis came.

Hangouts turned into lifelines. One home became several, neighborhood families helped by boarding a few of our girls, for safety. It grew from there, because the need never stops.

We began as more of a Jewish-focused endeavor: Shabbat meals, Torah if people wanted, kosher food, acts of kindness, because that's what grounds me and heals so many. But pain doesn't check religion at the door, so neither do we. We're open to young adults (20's-50's) fighting addiction, mental health hell, trauma, homelessness, anyone. Shabbat and kosher are here because they build real belonging for a lot of us, but nothing's forced. Participation is your decision.

This is the home I wish existed when I was drowning.

The one I'm still fighting to build bigger, because no one should have to bury more friends or face the darkness alone.

Q. What are the different services offered?

A. Right now it's me, limited cash, and whatever I can pour in. But it's real support for people who need a restart. Currently, we have mostly young men in our homes, with a few girls boarded with neighborhood families (we'll have women's homes, with female staff, when we can expand. It's not right for me to be around too much).

Below are a few of the highlights:

- **Safe Transitional Housing:** 3+ homes with up to 19 residents at the peak. We're not taking new intakes currently, while I stabilize, expand and am helping current residents step up.
- **24/7 Open Clubhouse** (my place): Drop in anytime: food, drinks, games, puzzles, quiet couch, ear to listen. Mixed space for when isolation bites.
- **Weekly Group Therapy:** I run it with a simple process: “How was your week?”, What do you need from me or the group?” I give people the space to be honest and ask for help.
- **Shabbat & Community:** Friday meals with hot kosher food, game nights, social activities to feel connected.
- **Practical Help:** Job leads, therapist connections, getting integrated back into life. Kosher and Shabbat rhythms for those it helps, which are voluntary, always. It's a small operation at the moment, but it's saving people one day at a time.

“ Pain doesn't
check religion
at the door ”

“People show up shattered, stay through therapy, meals, clubhouse, get jobs, and mentor the next in line. Quiet flips from despair to purpose.”

Q. Any hashgacha/inspirational stories you can share?

A. One that still wrecks me: Last February, Rabbi calls, “Avi, a 33-year-old Jewish guy in a Fort Worth rehab is struggling hard. Can you go?” I drive over. They bring this broken, disheveled man with empty eyes. We talk. He says, “I know you”. I didn’t think so, but as we exchanged numbers, I realized... he’s already saved in my phone from over a year ago. So I asked him, “Do you remember 09/28/23”, my day, the day I went to rehab? I was in a parking lot at a Caron facility in PA with cold feet, telling my brother and friend, “I’m out”. The phone rings: it’s him, a complete stranger, or so I thought at the time. “I heard from a mutual friend, you’re checking in today. I just finished myself and I live close by if you need anything, call and I’ll come over.” He talks me down for 20 minutes. I turned around and went inside.

That call saved my life.

A year and a half later, he’s the broken one and I’m there for him. We hug, cry on each other’s shoulders. Three weeks later he joined Bayit Miklot. Now 6 months later and he has a job and is setting up an apartment. And it turns out this same guy had been trying to win my business in a professional capacity for over 15 years. I’d literally been ignoring his emails for that length of time.

If we had met then, while we were both still using, we’d likely be dead. God knew the timing.

A stranger saved me... really, set him up to save himself later.

That’s the pattern here. People show up shattered, stay through therapy, meals, clubhouse, get jobs, and mentor the next in line. Quiet flips from despair to purpose.

Q. What accomplishments/inspirational milestones are you hoping will happen at Bayit Miklot in the next 5 years?

A. Texas is the pilot program. We want to grow it so we never have to turn anyone away, then train others to replicate the model in other areas, both nationally and internationally. Our immediate attention will be focused on:

- **Women’s Transitional Housing:** with female staff and dignified spaces.
- **24/7 Crisis/Call Center:** to talk with people in need and connect individuals with resources and facilities that best meet their individual circumstances.

- **Robust PHP/IOP ~30 min from Dallas:** day treatment, vocational tracks, therapy.

- **Large Central-Texas Property:** to create the true vision for Bayit Miklot, which will offer residential facilities, animal therapies, such as horses, dogs and a petting zoo. We’ll also have gardens to tend, for grounding and productivity.

- **A Bigger Clubhouse in Dallas:** with more space for engaging activities, rooms for group therapies, family-style meals, as well as family/community education rooms for connectivity and networking.





BAYIT MIKLOT

An Integrated Clinical Approach to Mental Health

- [App for Clients/Alumni](#): to facilitate care, mentorship, group chats, videos, discussions, staff check-ins, etc.

We're here to take the most challenging cases. We have compassion and confidence that with the right therapies, community and proper assistance, everyone can succeed. The drive exists; we want to turn the hardest stories into the strongest comebacks. Every soul gets a home.

Q. How can people get involved?

A. Right now, two things would change everything:

- Connecting people who need this: share our story, tell anyone in crisis. Text or call me anytime if someone's struggling.
- Donations: I've poured my heart and finances into this organization, but I need your help to keep the doors open and grow the organization. Resources are used for homes, services, staff and expansion. Visit our website at bayitmiklot.com to help our cause. Every dollar is appreciated and keeps our doors open longer.

Other ways:

- Volunteer: Meals, game nights, mentoring, future vocational help, reach out via email to get involved.
- Partner: Therapists, job folks, funders, reach out..

Q. Who do you turn to for guidance?

A. Rabbi Bentzi Epstein. He's been a guiding force in our organization and ensuring we all remember our moral and ethical responsibility to those we're working to assist.

“Every soul gets a home”

To connect,
please reach out:
info@bayitmiklot.com
917.676.2014



SHIFRA STUDIO

original art

live painting

commissions

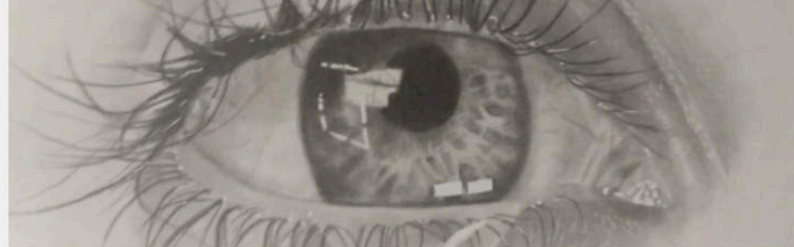
art events

lessons



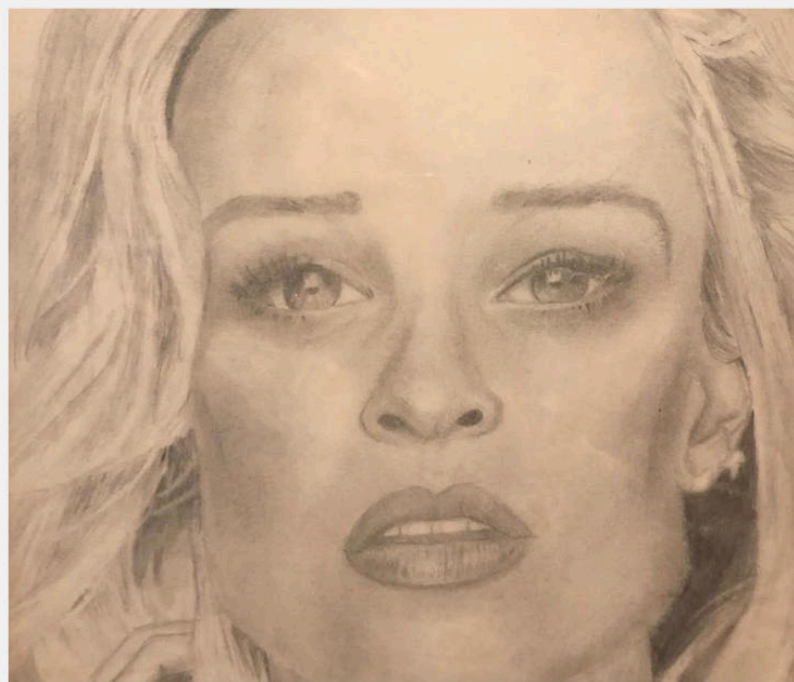
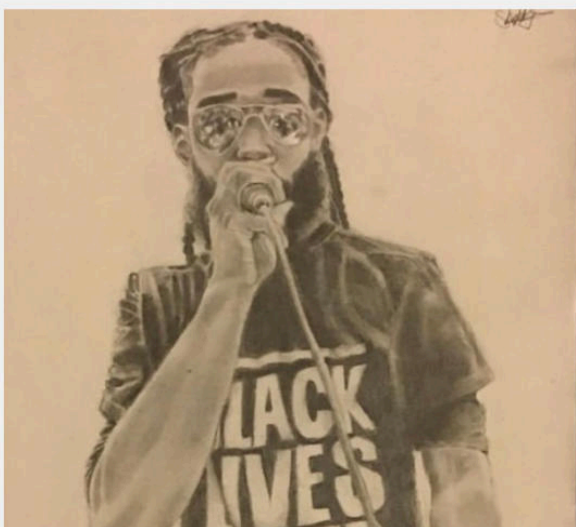
shifrastudio.com





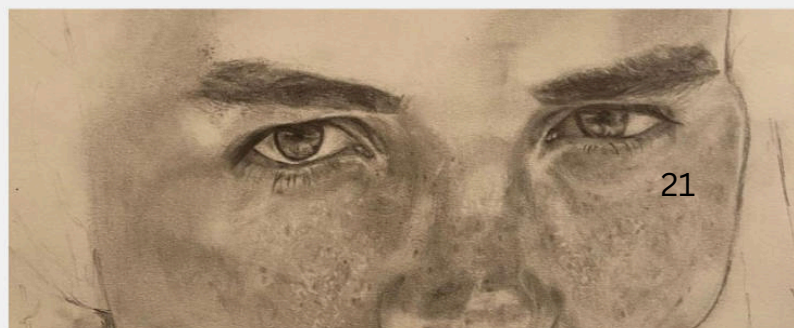
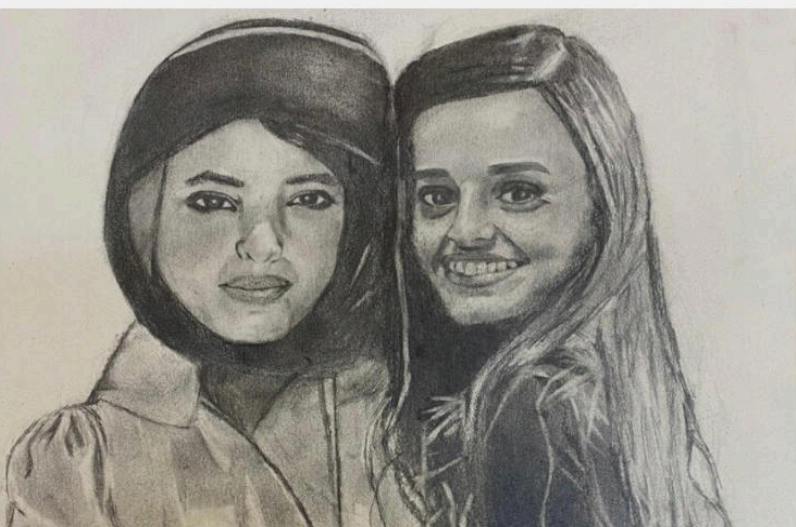
ART IS FOR EVERYONE

by
Shifra Sonnenchein



My burning desire to be an artist began in middle school when I walked into my friend's older sister's room and saw her pencil portraits taped to her wall. I was fascinated and determined that I would learn to draw like that. I went home, gathered magazines and a pencil, and began to copy the faces I saw. Thus began my journey into self-taught hyperrealism.

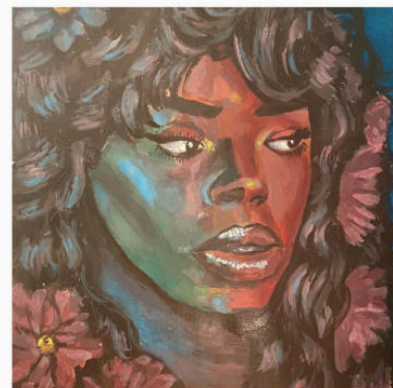
And into the era of using art as a coping mechanism. I mean, isn't being a teenager rough for everyone? It didn't help that a global pandemic hit just as I learned everyone's names in the ninth grade. So I drew. I made it my mission to create pencil



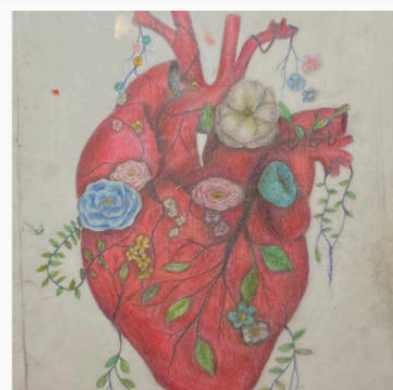
drawings so realistic, they looked like photographs. I shut myself in my room with a pencil, a reference photo, and an audiobook, and completely lost myself in the details.



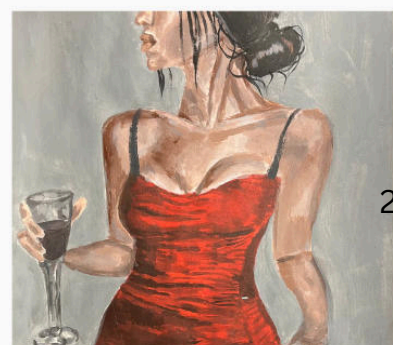
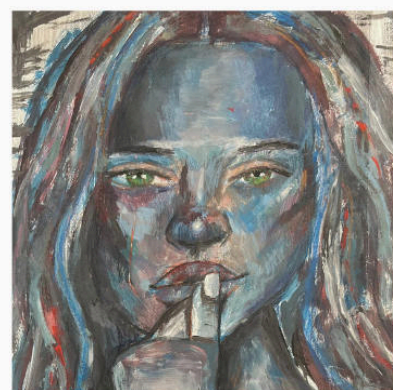
Meanwhile, I was switching schools to a different state. That meant I would be living by a family I didn't know, and going to a school filled with strangers. So I drew. I was getting better, too. In class - where I couldn't have my phone - I was beginning to draw portraits without references. They were a bit wonky at first, but I kept going and all the hours of copying reference photos and watching YouTube videos were paying off. The more boring the lecture, the deeper I threw myself into my... um... notes. Some of my best work at the time was done during those classes. Eventually I made close friends and formed connections at my new school, but that first year, as hard and as isolating as it was, was great for my art. Bright side, right?



By the time I was completing high school, I was no longer satisfied with hyperrealism. I had mastered what I set out to learn and now I had an itch not just to show how things looked with my art, but how they felt. The transition from high school to beyond is a rough one. It's bitter, it's sweet, and it's absolutely terrifying. I needed my art to do more than distract me, I needed it to express what was going on inside of me. I started to experiment with paint, adding color to what had been a greyscale. I released my inner world onto the canvas, adding abstract emotional elements for the first time. I was starting to discover my style.



When I found myself paying rent, it was time to begin a career path. So I did the obvious thing. I became a paralegal. I know, law is about as far from art as you can get, but being a lawyer had been a dream of mine since I'd watched Suits back in high school. Yes, I love art but you can't actually make a real career out of it,



right? (Wrong! But we'll get there.) And I love arguing - sorry, I mean debating with people. But I wasn't fully committed. During the morning I was behind a desk sorting paperwork and using ChatGPT to send emails, but in the evenings, I was running Shifra Studio, my small art business.

I smile every time I think about it. My favorite part of being a paralegal was definitely telling people I was a paralegal ("wow, that's so cool!" "Yes I know, I'm hot stuff.") But my favorite part of running my art business? I loved every minute of it. I was teaching art lessons to kids. I was getting some Judaica commissions that expanded my skill set. I was booking a few paint parties here and there. I got a job teaching art in a wonderful adult medical day program where I still teach now. The mornings at the law firm would deplete me and drain me and the rest of the day filled me up with light.

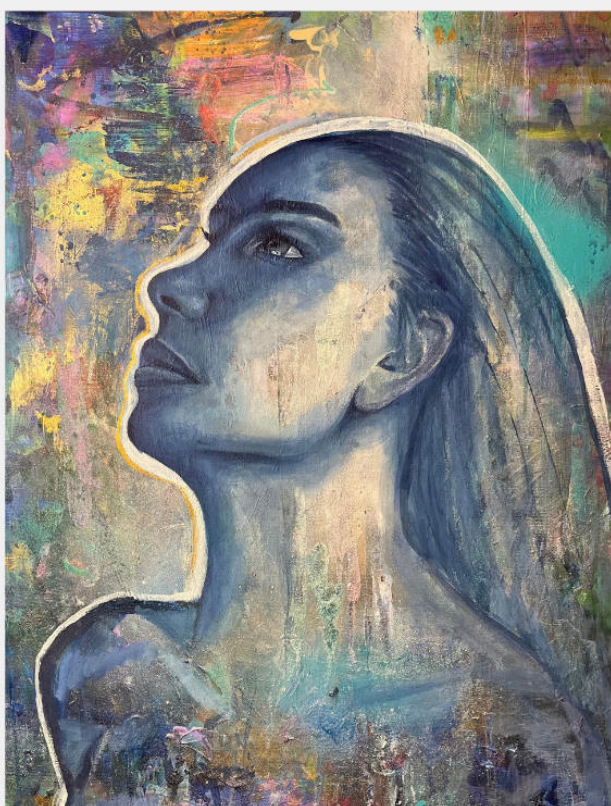
But I would have chased a career in law, convincing myself it would be better as a lawyer than as a paralegal, had I not been abruptly fired one Wednesday. I drove home in utter shock, furious and devastated with my pride very bruised, from what would turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to me. After a couple days of sulking, I came to the conclusion that I don't love law and I do love art. It's a risk, but why would I do anything other than what I love? So Shifra Studios became my full time job.

The first thing I did was build a vision. Until now I had just been trying to make money doing art but if I wanted this to be my career, I needed to shift my perspective and think about things from a larger standpoint. I needed to think about my why. And this is why:

Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Maslow said that humans have a hierarchy of needs. First: physiological needs -





food, water, WiFi...(kidding, we can actually survive without that last one.) Second: safety- things like housing, money, and health. Third: love and belonging. Fourth: Esteem- achievement, responsibility, respect. And lastly, self actualization - personal growth, fulfillment, and creativity.

We aren't just here to survive, we have higher needs as humans. Art has such a unique way of meeting those needs. It has the power to help us work through big, messy emotions. It has the power to form a bond between two people- I've seen it again and again. It gives us the power to create. As humans, it is our deepest nature to create because we are creations. We have an inner need to bring beauty into the world. Every single person can benefit from art because every single person can benefit from having more creativity, connection, and color in their day. You don't have to be an artist to take a few minutes away from the noise and take a couple deep breaths while you scribble the energy onto a page. You don't have to be an artist to join a paint night and meet new people. You don't have to be an artist to turn a room from blank and emotionless to warm by hanging art on a wall.

Further, you don't have to be rich. Only a niche part of art is luxury; buying original artwork. The amount of time and care an artist puts into a piece and the fact that it's one of a kind, gives it extraordinary value. This makes it inaccessible to anyone who doesn't have that kind of money to spend on art.

The problem is that because of this, people associate all art with luxury. Art is for everybody. Don't have an extra ten grand to it spend on art? Yeah, me neither! But this same piece sells in prints that start at \$40. Your neighbor gives art classes for \$30 a class. The crayons at the dollar store are \$1.25. Art is not a luxury, it's a big part of the human experience and it should be accessible to every single person.

That is my why. Because art important. It is a 24

fundamental part of who I am and how I interact with the world and I want to bring it to as many people as I can.

Enter: Shifra Studio. My vision is to create an art business that can bring art to everybody -- including the artists.

Right now, to survive as an artist you need to be a businessperson, too. Spoiler alert, most of us are not. Most of the time, you're lucky if you can keep track of your paintbrushes, let alone create a successful business from the ground up in one of the most competitive industries in the world. That's upsetting because art is the only thing I want to do and I can't imagine doing anything else.

It's impossible on the other end, too. There's no good system for regular people to find artists. If you're looking for art lessons for your child, I don't know- post on a WhatsApp chat? If you want to commission someone Facebook is always an option but that comes along with everything that social media comes along with. It's difficult to find artists and affordable, accessible ways to integrate art into your life.

I want to create a platform that makes art

easily accessible. One place you can get lessons, social art events, private paint parties, art therapy, buy originals and affordable prints, artist training courses, and more. It will employ artists, giving artists a chance to earn a stable income doing art, and act as a connector between people who need art and people who need to provide it.

Right now I'm bringing the beauty of art into people's lives with my awesome students and by bringing people together for community art nights. I do live wedding painting to turn a couple's most beautiful day into an heirloom, preserving that beauty forever. I also paint commissions to memorialize people's loved ones.

At the center of it all is my own art and how much I love creating it.

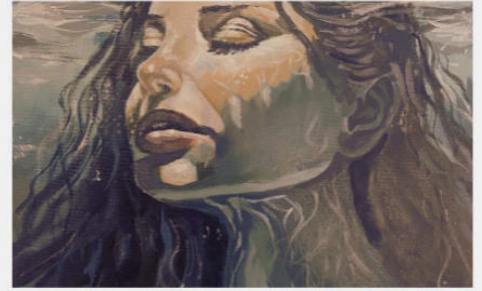
My personal artwork is all about emotion. I attempt to express in color what I cannot through words, using realism and portraiture alongside abstraction. My latest piece depicts a woman hugging a heart. The heart is glowing a warm red that's reflected in her face as she holds it and rests against it. The veins of the heart grow over her arms, like they're becoming one.

I want people to look at it, rest their hands on their hearts, and take a breath.



original art

My original artwork is very emotion-driven. Themes like resilience, female empowerment, and the heart appear throughout my work. I sell both originals and limited-edition prints. I also have a Judaica collection featuring originals and prints that explore themes of Israel and Jewish joy.



live painting

A one-of-a-kind painting created live at your wedding, capturing a meaningful moment from your day and finished afterward as a timeless piece of art for your home.



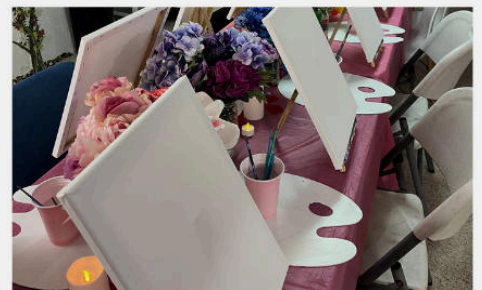
commissions

My specialty is portraits. I love depicting my clients' loved ones, focusing on both realism and the soul in their eyes. I also take on many kinds of commissions beyond portraits, with murals being a personal favorite.



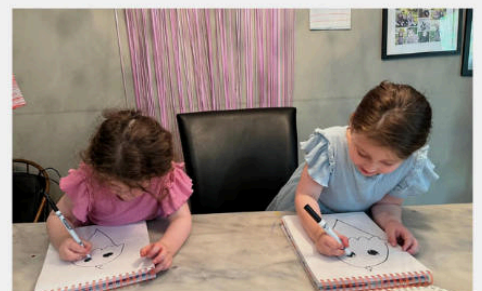
art events

I host art events that are open to the community. You don't have to be an artist to join—just come for the vibes, leave with an artwork, and maybe a few new friends. I also run private paint parties and other art events.



lessons

I offer individual and group art lessons for all ages. I teach both skill-based lessons and open studio classes. My focus is building a connection with my students and creating a warm, welcoming space where they feel safe to create.



Wrapunzel

Celebrate the Art of Headwrapping

Headscarves, pre-tieds,
community, support, tutorials,
non-slip essentials & more!



Local Pickup
in Baltimore



Question & Answer



**with Rabbi Yoni
Rosenzweig**

Type something...

HALACHA & MENTAL HEALTH

GETTING READY FOR PESACH

with



Question: I have been diagnosed with OCD, and find the prospect of Pesach daunting. Could you give me a set of guidelines to help me clean for Pesach without compromising my mental health?

Answer: Those who struggle with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) often suffer greatly from the meticulous cleaning for Pesach. They should do only what is required by the basic halacha, namely:

- (a) Any chametz they do not wish to keep should be discarded or destroyed through the mitzvah of bi'ur chametz.
- (b) Chametz that they intend to keep for sale should be sealed off in a designated place.
- (c) If they plan to be at home for Pesach, the kitchen should be kashered in accordance with the relevant halachas. Those who know that cleaning is difficult for them should ask someone else to clean and kasher the kitchen on their behalf. It is important to emphasize: one must rely completely on the person performing the kashering. Halacha recognizes the trustworthiness of such a person to do the job properly. There is no need to clean after them, supervise them, or interfere with their work while it is being done.
- (d) If a person decides that they are able to clean the house and can control their OCD while doing so, the following are some general guidelines for the main items:
 - 1. **Oven** – Clean for no more than 30 minutes, then turn it on for one hour at the highest heat. Instead of regular baking trays, disposable trays or Pesach trays may be used. A self-cleaning oven does not need to be cleaned beforehand at all.
 - 2. **Microwave** – Clean for no more than 10 minutes, immerse the turntable in boiling water, and run the microwave for 5 minutes with a cup of water inside.
 - 3. **Countertops** – Wipe once with a cloth, and pour boiling water over the surfaces.
 - 4. **Gas stovetop** – Clean for no more than 20 minutes; the grates should be taken for full libun or covered with aluminum foil. For electric stovetops, turn them on at maximum heat for 20 minutes after cleaning.
 - 5. **Hot plate** (blech/plata) – Clean for no more than 10 minutes, turn on at maximum heat for 30 minutes, and cover with aluminum foil.
 - 6. **Sinks** – Clean each sink for no more than 5 minutes, and pour boiling water into it.
- (e) Regarding the rest of the rooms in the house: Pesach cleaning should not take an excessive amount of time. The most important thing is to go over the places where you know chametz was eaten and clean them. Afterwards, sweep and wash. In any case, if you see that you are spending more than an hour in any one room, you should stop and have someone else finish the work.
- (f) Perform the bedikat chametz (search for chametz) on the eve of Pesach as usual. Do not spend more than 5 minutes in each room, and if it extends to 30 minutes, stop and recite the nullification formula; at that point the search is concluded.
- (g) Do Bitul chametz on Erev Pesach.

A kosher and joyful Pesach to all!

The Sweetness of Mourning



by Rivkah Esther

My mother's ratatouille

by Rivkah Esther (written April 2025)

Today I picked up some fresh vegetables.

Wondering what to do with them, my mind wandered and settled on a memory...

My childhood favorite dish.

My mom wasn't much of a cook, most of her cooking was bland, undercooked or overcooked.

But she made the most delicious ratatouille ever.

The smell, the taste, the texture brough back some warm memories...

How was that even possible?

My childhood was not remotely close to anything warm. My relationship with my mother was pretty strained.

Scratch that. Let me not mince my words.

My childhood, growing up alone with my mother was the most toxic experience I could ever go through.

I still have knots in my stomach when I think about it. Scared, sad, alone. Scarred for life.

But then there is ratatouille served over warm pasta and cheese. And everything feels better. It doesn't make any sense. It doesn't have to.

So many memories, so many triggers.

A few bites later, I feel a strange feeling coming over me. It's warm and peaceful, but it's also triggering and making me uneasy.

There is no right or wrong way to experience it.

I want to embrace the trigger because it has feelings attached to it.

It's been 4 years since she passed away. I'm still learning to process. How do you mourn someone with such a difficult past?

I used to think that I needed closure to move on. I used to think that closure meant to resolve all the issues I had with the people around me. But I was wrong.

Closure doesn't happen when someone who hurt you finally apologizes...she never did

Closure doesn't happen when you actually get to say goodbye, I didn't get a chance to...

Closure doesn't happen when you're at peace with the choices you've made, I still have many regrets

Closure doesn't happen when you resign yourself

Closure doesn't happen when you embrace the fact that you've allowed people to hurt you over and over

Closure doesn't happen when you're done healing, you're never fully done

Closure happens when you decide to let go.

Closure happens when you accept people for who they are, with their strengths and limitations, their qualities and pitfalls

Closure happens when you forgive yourself

Closure happens when you remember all the abuse and still choose to be the better one

Closure happens when you choose a healthy future over holding on to an unstable past

Closure happens when you look at the shaky grounds and stand up straight to face whatever is in front of you

Closure happens when you forgive yourself

Closure happens when you forgive yourself

Tonight is my mother's yahrtzeit

I light a candle in her memory

A candle for her soul

A candle for my life

A candle to bring more light

A candle to warm my heart

I'll never be able to say that my mother was proud of me back then, but I know now her soul is watching over me and sending me warmth. She is guiding me now more than ever.

Get close to the memory

Let it trigger you

Breathe into it

You're safe now

You are not alone

L'iluy Nishmat Danielle Emma bat Esther

This year my mother's yahrtzeit falls on my birthday.

Yeah, it's heavy.

I don't know whether to celebrate or mourn.

In no particular order.

Not all birthdays need to be celebrated, and not all deaths need to be mourned.

Not everyone has something to celebrate, or something to look forward to.

Not everyone has had a good relationship with the person who's gone.

“Not every birthday needs to be celebrated, and not every death needs to be mourned.”

For one, I know I didn't.

I've left all the toxic memories in the bottom of that bin down in the basement.

I've relinquished the power they've had on me all those years.

I'm not mourning a person, but I'm still mourning something.

Feelings. Needs. Connection.

Mourning the thought I might never experience those.

And celebrating? Now? It just doesn't feel right.

Both on a personal and global level.

The older I get, the more hyper-conscious I get regarding the use of my time.

Kohelet 7:2: “It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting... and the living will take it to heart.”

Why? Because a funeral forces a person to confront mortality, purpose, and accountability.

A wedding brings joy, but a funeral brings clarity.

But those unavoidable life events beg us to reflect.

What has changed since last time?

Who have I become since then?

What am I still missing?

Who am I missing?

What have I learned?

What am I going to do differently from now on?

With everyone so focused on being present, I think we can have one day every year where we think about the past and wonder about the future. Yes we should live for the moment and appreciate what we have. But we also need to remember what was, so we can adjust our choices. We need to look forward so we can create appropriate goals for ourselves.

“We need to remember what was, so we can adjust our choices. We need to look forward so we can create appropriate goals for ourselves.”

After all, isn't mourning really a celebration of a life well lived?

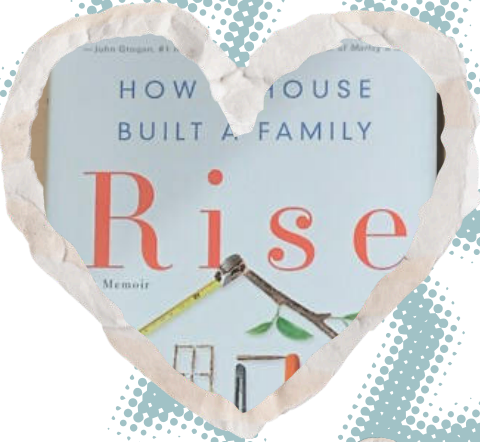
And isn't a birthday really the awareness of life becoming shorter and shorter by the year?

Not to be dramatic or anything but that just changed your whole perspective on life, didn't it?

The Editor's Pick

Book:

**Rise: How a House
Built A Family**
by *Cara Brookins*



e
n
i
o
y



Song:



Ki Lo Yidach
by *Yosef Zev Braver*

Book:



Essentialism:

**The Disciplined
Pursuit of Less**

by *Greg McKeown*



Song:



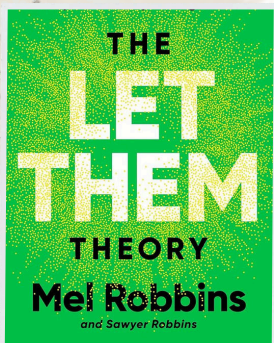
Pharaoh (Let My People Go)
by *Brandon Lake*

Song:



שפּוּרָה

by *Ephraim Dovid*



Book:

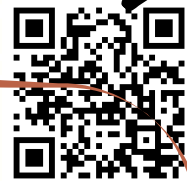
The Let Them Theory
by *Mel Robbins*





Readers FEEDBACK

Feedback
Poll



If you've made it this far, thank you!
As we all know, feedback is gold
and goes a long way. So let us know
what went through your mind as
you turned these pages full of
content that I hope inspired you on
time for Pesach!



And please send me
your "Letters to the
Editor" so I can publish
them in next issue

FOR ADVERTISING AND COLLABORATIONS, CONTACT US:

Phone: (443) 455-0587

Email: theunmutedmagazine@gmail.com

Instagram: [@unmutedthemagazine](https://www.instagram.com/unmutedthemagazine)

Facebook: [facebook.com/unmutedthemagazine](https://www.facebook.com/unmutedthemagazine)

Also Contact Us
but with a QR Code





**"Success is getting
what you want.
Happiness is
wanting what you
get.**

DALE CARNEGIE



CRYSTAL CLEAR OCCASIONS

Event planning done right

FULL PARTY PLANNING PACKAGES
CATERING | THEMED DECOR | MUSIC & LIGHTING | PRIVATE EVENTS



443.455.0587



CRYSTAL_CLEAR_OCCASIONS

FROM FEMALE DJ - ENHANCING EVENTS WITH
SPIRIT & MUSIC