



## Chavrusa Profile

### Meryl Nadell

#### LOCATION

Florham Park, New Jersey

#### OCCUPATION

Artist, Teacher, Healer

### Mushka Eidelman

#### LOCATION

Brooklyn New york



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# Healing and Holiness – A Lifelong Journey of Growth

**M**eryl Nadell is an artist, a teacher, a healer, and most of all, a spiritual seeker. But as a teenager growing up in Brooklyn in the 1950s, Meryl couldn't explain why she felt different from her friends.

"I didn't have a Jewish vocabulary to put my feelings into words," Meryl recalls. "Today I recognize that my neshamah, my Divine soul, was always thirsting for G-d. Back then, I just thought that I felt a little more deeply and experienced life more intensely than other people did."

Meryl's Jewish education began and ended with a short stint in Hebrew school, where she picked up only two words: "Sheket bevakasha (quiet please)." Her poor teacher had to shout it over and over to the class of unruly students. Yet, despite receiving little guidance, Meryl knew instinctively that she wanted to marry a Jew. As a young woman, long before the days of Jdate or Jswipe, Meryl was set up on a blind date. That's how she met Conrad, a fellow Jewish Brooklynite. The couple dated for a long time and eventually became engaged.

"It was the 1960s and getting married in a catering hall was all the rage," Meryl shares. "But Conrad and I wanted to get married in a synagogue. We met with a Rabbi and he asked me, 'What do you want from marriage, Meryl?' I answered, 'I want to grow.'"

That simple response foreshadowed the decades to come.

Meryl and Conrad had three sons in a span of four years. Becoming parents inspired them to join their local Conservative synagogue and introduce Jewish traditions into their lives. Meryl began lighting Shabbat candles and hosting Shabbat dinners. After their children grew older, and one son became more observant, the Conservative movement no longer felt like home. "We found ourselves drawn to Chabad, and started attending a local Chabad near our home in Scotch Plains, New Jersey," says Meryl.

The decades flew by and Meryl continued to grow. She had been in therapy as a young woman to work on her emotional health which ultimately led her to become a licensed clinical social worker. She explored somatic forms of healing to advance her understanding of the mind-body connection. She even researched reincarnation, and karma. "My mission was consistently to encourage self-awareness and self-appreciation and help people in any way I could," Meryl says. "But I hadn't yet discovered what the Torah had to offer."

It wasn't until last year, when Meryl's friend invited her to a Siyum (a celebration for concluding a lengthy period of Torah study) in Lakewood, that she first considered studying Torah herself. As she listened to her friend discuss his transformative experience learning with a chavrusah (study partner), she found herself wishing to learn more about her own heritage.

Meryl submitted an application to JNet and was connected with Mushka Edelman, a young mother in her twenties. Although Mushka and Meryl's differences span decades, religious upbringing, and life experiences, the two were "bashert"—a match made in heaven.

What began as a weekly learning partnership soon blossomed into an intergenerational friendship filled with mutual growth. "It has been such a pleasure and joy to learn with Mushka every week," says Meryl. "We began by delving into the sefirot, which deepened my understanding of energy medicine and healing. That was fascinating. Now we are studying Tanya. As a retired therapist, I've always given a great deal of power to emotions. But the Tanya teaches that the mind is in charge of the heart. This gave me new appreciation for cognitive therapy and the value of working through issues by harnessing the power of our minds."

In their weekly study sessions, Meryl and

Mushka are both giving and receiving. Mushka brings her rich understanding of the Jewish texts and Meryl shares her wealth of experience in the psychological world. Combining their knowledge, they each come out of their video calls with a broader perspective on life and human nature.

"Everything I am learning with Mushka not only aligns with my understanding of psychology but expands it," says Meryl. "Through my years of study, I was already aware of the secularized versions of the animalistic and Divine soul, the internal fragments of us that are constantly fighting with each other. But now my understanding of the human psyche has a new dimension. It includes G-d. All of this has been lurking in me for a long time but I finally recognize it and can give it a name."

This new consciousness has transformed Meryl's relationship with G-d and her day-to-day decision making. "What I used to call truth, beauty, and goodness



I now call G-dliness. I am grateful that in my stage of life, I continue to evolve, new doors open up, and new possibilities awoken in me. Today, when I make a difficult choice, I am acutely aware of the struggle between my animalistic soul and my Divine soul. And this awareness helps me choose the right path more often than not."

At 85, Meryl continues to embody the lifelong journey of growth that she envisioned as a young bride—a testament to her enduring quest for healing and holiness.

## News

### Parsha Pursuit -

In tribute to the holy victims of the Simchat Torah Massacre on October 7, 2023, we invite you to honor their memory by deepening your connection to the Torah.

Join Parsha Pursuit, a meaningful weekly challenge designed to inspire study of the weekly Parsha. With curated learning material and a weekly Parsha Shmooze.



### Judaic Journey -

Start your journey into Judaism with personalized Torah tutoring. Our knowledgeable tutors provide guidance tailored to your pace, helping you explore and connect with Jewish teachings in a way that's meaningful for you.



**Meet Matti Baitelman**, our newest team member! Passionate about Jewish learning and connection, Matti is excited to inspire and grow our community of volunteers. Welcome, Matti!



## Accomplishments - 2024 Recap

### JNet's Year of Growth and Impact

This year, JNet has truly soared to new heights! We've seen an incredible 48% increase in active chavrusa learning, and a 37% boost in Judaic Journey chavrusa learning, bringing even more Jews together to connect through

Torah. With the generous support of over 150 donors, we've been able to amplify our mission and launch inspiring projects, including captivating book reviews on our YouTube channel. Thank you for being part of our journey, may we reach even greater milestones together next year!



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