Abstract

On more than once, while teaching my classes, I have sensed that something significant is happening – invigorating the learning process, energizing me, and vitalizing the connection between me and the other learners. By contrast, at other times I sometimes I feel that the group learning experience evokes in me and in the other learners feelings of dry monotony, or intimidating anxiety.

Similarly, it also happens that while treating a patent as a professional educational psychologist, or coaching teachers or parents, I have felt something surprising and wonderous taking place. But at other times I feel that even though all the right words were spoken, that empowering experience did not take place. However, when I try to determine what it was about the words that were spoken at those precise learning moments that induced such distinctive experiences for me and others, I find it surprisingly difficult to identify the cause.

This study presents the results of my attempts to identify a learning component that pertains both to classroom teaching and to psychotherapy, in light of the Hasidic thought of the Maggid of Mezeritch and the psychoanalytic thought of Wilfred Bion. This component is the element that empowers learners, and its absence is felt quite strongly. It is apparently influenced not only by the content of the words spoken during the learning experience, but also by elusive factors hidden in the blank spaces between the letters.