



Story #2

An *ehrliche* doctor shared that when he graduated from medical school, a grand graduation ceremony was held at which it was customary to shake hands with the faculty and colleagues. He grappled with how he could possibly avoid shaking hands with members of the opposite gender on such a scale. Until Hashem helped him devise a plan...

In advance of the ceremony, he sent a message to all participants, asking them to research the meaning of “*shomer negiah*” (a common term used to describe the concept of avoiding physical contact between genders). They followed his advice and became familiar with the concept, understanding that it was a religious practice and not personal. The graduation proceeded without a hitch. (*Ben Aliyah B’olam Haparnassah*, p. 255)

It is important to note that unfortunately in some sectors of Klal Yisrael, the term “*shomer negiah*” is used as if it’s a custom or optional stringency. In reality, however, this notion has absolutely no basis in halachah. Physical contact between genders violates a severe prohibition. If contact is made with even the slightest bit of pleasure, it is deemed *abizrayhu d’giluy arayos*, for which one must give up their life rather than transgress. Every Jew — without exception — must abide by these *halachos*.