Several years ago, my wife and I were hiking in a state park near our home when we heard the music of children’s laughter off in the distance. We veered off the path to follow the source of the sounds and found a 30-something man wading waist-deep in the stream along with his three preteen children – all of them fully clothed. Not wanting to intrude on their privacy, my wife and I watched them splashing, cavorting and giggling, before moving on.

It was simply the most beautiful “Kodak Moment” one could imagine. (For those raised with digital cameras, Kodak is a company that makes film, and they ran ads for many years in which photographed treasured times in one’s life were “Kodak Moments.” Film is what old people used to put in their cameras before taking pictures.)

I very strongly urge you to do everything in your power to spend quality time with your children and help each of them create their own album of “Kodak Moments.” Parents often make the mistake of thinking they need to take their children on exotic vacations or to an expensive amusement park for them to enjoy themselves. That is just not so. They don’t need your money; they need you. That fellow I saw in the park didn’t spend a dime on the outing with his kids – all of them fully clothed. Not wanting to intrude on their privacy, my wife and I watched them splashing, cavorting and giggling, before moving on.

One of the great ironies of life is that when our children grow through their teenage years and beyond, it is so challenging to get them to spend time with us. However, when they are younger and craving for our attention, we often are too busy, too preoccupied, too distracted and too unaware of how important our time with them is to their emotional health.

When our oldest was eight years old, I taught myself – and later each of our children – to ski and golf because I felt those two activities would allow me to spend huge blocks of time with them in their adolescent years. (Where else other than a chairoplane can you get your teenager to spend 10 minutes with you, 20 times in one day?) And when the realization hit me years ago that between learning with our sons and taking them to shul, I was spending far more time with them than I was with our daughters, I decided to create a yearly NBA (No Boys Allowed) vacation with our two eldest daughters, when I would spend two-three days with them alone – without my wife or sons. They are both married but to this day, they regularly mention our NBA vacations and talk about how much they looked forward to them all year long.

When our youngest daughter, Sara, was 10 years old, she and I were planning our NBA vacation. I told her I would take her shopping for the trip the night before and asked her if there was anything special she wanted me to purchase. With a straight face, she asked me to get her a cell phone battery. Perplexed, I asked her why she needed a battery for a cell phone she didn’t have.

“No, Tatty,” Sara responded with a twinkle in her eyes, “for this trip, I want you to take the battery out of your cell phone and give it to me.”