

Shira and the Poster That Was Never Done

A story about good enough

Shira's class is making posters about the Yamim Tovim. Each girl gets a big white sheet of paper and four days. Most of the girls finish in two. Shira has been working for four and her poster still is not done.

She has erased the title nine times. The first letters were uneven. Then the color of the border was wrong. Then one of the apples was not round enough. Every time she fixes one thing, she sees three more. The paper is starting to look gray from all the erasing.

On the last night, Shira sits at the kitchen table with tears in her eyes. The poster is due in the morning. There is a smudge by the shofar. There is a sun that is slightly crooked. "It is ruined," she tells her older sister Dassie. "I should start over."

Dassie looks at the poster for a long moment. "It is not ruined. It is beautiful." Shira shakes her head. "You are just saying that." "I am not," says Dassie. "But I want to ask you a different question. When you look at it, what are you looking for?"

Shira blinks. She realizes she is not looking at the poster at all. She is looking for mistakes, the way a guard looks for thieves. She cannot see the bright colors or the careful honey jar. All she sees are the places it is wrong.

"What would you say if your friend made this?" Dassie asks. Shira thinks of Rochel and her messy, cheerful poster. "I would say it looks happy. I would say she worked hard." Dassie nods. "Try saying that to yourself."

It feels strange. Shira says the words out loud, quietly. "I worked hard. It looks happy. Some parts are not perfect, and the poster is still good." Her chest loosens a little. The word good enough lands in her mind like a new word in a language she is learning.

She picks up her pencil one more time, and then she puts it down. She does not erase the sun. She decides to stop. The rule she makes is simple: she can fix one thing she truly cares about, and then she is finished. She fixes the smudge by the shofar. Then she signs her name.

In the morning, the morah hangs all the posters in the hallway. Shira's hangs between Rochel's and Bracha's. Nobody stops to look at the crooked sun. A younger girl stops at the honey jar and says, "I like that one." Shira smiles, and for the first time all week, her shoulders come all the way down.

Shira's Good-Enough Tool

Notice the mistake hunter. If you are only looking for what is wrong, you will miss what is right.

Talk to yourself like a friend. What would you say to a friend who made this?

Pick a stopping rule. Choose one or two things worth fixing, then decide you are done.

Let it be good enough. A finished, imperfect thing can still be good and kind and yours.

Good enough is allowed, and it is enough to be proud of.