

Rabbi David Wolpe's

# *Off The Pulpit*

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## Corridors and Cows

Here is a remarkable sentence from Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun*: "a seventeenth century palace was totally without privacy. Architects had not yet invented the corridor. To get from one part of the building to another, one simply walked through a succession of other people's rooms, in which literally anything might be going on."

In these days when we communicate long distance, it is easy to forget the close quarters in which our ancestors lived. Tents, like barracks, don't have rooms; palaces did not have corridors. Privacy is a luxury we have converted into a need.

The change recalls the story of a man who complained to the Rabbi that his house was crowded. The Rabbi told him to take in a chicken. Puzzled, the man complied. Then on successive days, the Rabbi instructed him to bring in a rooster, a sheep and finally a cow. At the end of the week the man was frantic. "Now," said the Rabbi, "take all the animals out and you will be amazed how much room you have."

Next time your space seems small, imagine a world with no corridors or no separate rooms. Or, a cow.