

# Retracing the Path

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

The Talmud teaches that one is not to give advice knowing it will be ignored. For in doing so, you simply create ill-will on both sides.

But one should give advice that might eventually be heeded. We are not only friends, or parents, or teachers, for the moment. We drop our words in each other's hearts in the hope that one day they will grow. The gift of love is not only to offer a way, but to offer a way back. While a relationship may now be difficult, or fraught, it need not be ended or over. "Go often to the house of a friend," Emerson reminds us, "for weeds choke the unused path."

As we move through the world, we should leave trails of breadcrumbs for those we love, so that we can find each other again. Irish bard Seamus Heaney writes in *Changes*:

*So tender, I said, 'Remember this, It will be good for you to retrace this path when you have grown away and stand at last at the very center of the empty city.'*

At times we all stand, unexpectedly, at the center of the empty city. True tenderness promises *teshuva*, return, to one another and to God.