

# WHEN CELEBRATION FEELS COMPLICATED

Your birthday is in three days. A text from your best friend pops up: "Finally booked the restaurant! 7pm Sunday!"

The message lands heavily. Two days ago, there was another attack in Israel. The group chat with Israeli friends has gone quiet except for "everyone ok?" messages. At home, your mom keeps refreshing the news. And you're supposed to show up at a restaurant and celebrate?

After October 7th, your sister skipped homecoming. During the Iran attacks, your cousin postponed her engagement party. They both said that having fun while people were in danger felt impossible. But watching them sit at home for weeks, scrolling endlessly, did not seem to help anyone. It only made their worlds smaller.

Another text comes in: "What are you planning on wearing?" You think about how your aunt said staying joyful is its own kind of resilience, but your thoughts keep returning to the families who will not be celebrating anything this week.



Do you go to dinner and let your friends celebrate you, or tell them you need to cancel?



## ISRAELI COMPASS

**Yonatan Perez** was wounded fighting Hamas just days before his planned wedding to Galia. At the same time, his younger brother **Daniel Perez**, a tank commander, was declared missing and later confirmed taken hostage. As the family struggled to decide what to do, Yonatan's commander urged them forward, saying, "The Jewish people need moments of joy now. You should get married tonight." Friends transformed a local school into a wedding hall. In the midst of trauma over Daniel's fate, the family celebrated Yonatan and Galia's wedding, holding joy and loss together. Daniel was later declared killed in action, and his body was returned for burial in Israel two years later.

In contrast, many Israelis chose to delay celebrations in the **aftermath of national trauma**. In the days following October 7th, couples across the country publicly postponed weddings and gatherings, explaining that celebrating felt misaligned with the depth of loss around them. Waiting was described as an act of solidarity, a way of staying present to shared grief and honoring a moment that still felt unbearably heavy.

**How do we best celebrate joy and live with trauma at the same time?**

**BIG QUESTIONS. DEEP VALUES. BOLD CONVERSATIONS.**

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