

# Torah Portion for Chayei Sarah

*Shabbat beginning November 18, 2022*

We learn basics of counseling from this Torah Portion. A few dozen verses begin with “and they were the lifetime of Sarah” and end with Abraham securing Israel by purchasing a cave for burying Sarah and himself. But most of the portion concerns arranging Rebecca’s and Isaac’s marriage. As instructed, Abraham’s servant traveled to Abraham’s original home where he found beautiful Rebecca at a well. She kindly provided him and his camels with drink and travels with him to marry Isaac, who becomes the Torah’s first person to be in love.

The unnamed servant was a clever counselor. He plans, by not just doing Abraham’s bidding, but also considering how others might receive his offers. On discovering Rebecca’s beauty, kindness, and openness, he plans to meet her family to persuade them of his mission. The servant then sets up a transformative environment by introducing Rebecca to Isaac at Sarah’s tent, so that they can discover each other. This simple story models counseling development, as our Reform seminary scholars described it, beginners plan events. Next, counselors explore various types of learners. Mature counselors develop plans for unique understandings for each learner type. Ultimately, inspiring counselors create transformative environments for rich learning.