

# A life organizer

• ALAN ROSENBAUM

**I** am the Marie Kondo of Jerusalem,” proclaims Miriam Gold, “except I’m less annoying. And I speak English!”

Blond, blue-eyed and full of energy, Gold may not be as well known as the famed Japanese organizing consultant and Netflix series host, but the Worcester, Massachusetts, native is rapidly making a name for herself with her own home and office organizing business.

Ironically, Gold, who prides herself on her organized way of life, decided to make aliyah almost on a whim. In the summer of 2012, Gold, who was then a full-time social worker and part-time home organizer, lost her rent-stabilized apartment in Manhattan. “I said, ‘I can move around the corner, I can move 10 blocks away, or I can move to Israel.’ I decided to take a year off and move to Israel. I’m a professional organizer, and I would not have come if I had planned it out. Most things in my life are planned out, and coming on the spur of the moment was the best way.”

Shortly after arriving in Israel, Gold, who was spending her first year studying Hebrew in ulpan, decided to open her own organizing business. “I decided to do professional organizing here because there is a need for it, especially with a lot of the people that I know who keep excess [goods] from America. They fear they won’t be able to replace what they leave behind, but the excess is cluttering up their lives, and it’s making it hard for them to function.” Gold Standard Organizing was born.

Gold, who possesses a quick sense of humor, says that she combines her social work skills and home organizing talents. “I work with people, and my social work skills come into play working with people. I am a behavioral person, and I do more life coaching. Through the organizing, I’m always coaching and counseling.”

The youngest of five, Gold grew up in Worcester, where her father served as a congregational rabbi. “I went into social work because I saw my father being a social worker, essentially,” she says.

Gold explains how she analyzes her customers’ needs. “They show me how they function on a daily basis, and how they function with their daily routines, so that I can make sure that things are put in the right places for them to function in the easiest manner possible.”

She has organized everything from large homes in Jerusalem’s Baka neighborhood to small apartments in Beit Shemesh, as well as home offices.

Most of Gold’s clients are English-speaking olim.

“People have too much stuff,” she says. “They bring furniture that is oversized and inappropriate for this country. It doesn’t fit.” Gold advises prospective olim to downsize before they arrive.

She explains that most people don’t realize how much extra goods they have. “It’s the extraneous stuff that gets in the way that people think they need, but then they realize



**MIRIAM GOLD**  
FROM NEW YORK  
TO JERUSALEM, 2012

(Rachel Strumberger)



they really don’t require. When I organize a closet, I take everything out. Then I say, ‘Now, let’s put back what you really need and set an order to it.’ Then they see that they have 75 coffee mugs and only four people in the house drink coffee.”

Gold explains that organizing is not just a matter of getting rid of things, but “keeping the important things.”

Many people who make aliyah from the United States bring a huge number of possessions, she notes. “You don’t want them to get frustrated living in this country, feeling like, How can I live in such a small space? You want them to appreciate that simplicity.”

She is particularly happy when she sees her clients adopt her ways. “When I see my clients’ lives are functioning better and they are happier and more at ease, and then they come back to me and tell me ‘Look what I did on my own,’ I get so happy for them. I want them to function better.”

Gold is resolute that her clients’ excess goods find new homes.

“I’m very proud of the fact that I’ve been able to donate a lot of items to different organizations in this country,” she says. “The thing that I try to impart to my clients the most is that there are a lot of people in need in this country, and there are a lot of organizations that help people in need.”

In addition to her home organizing business, Gold also works part-time creating online marketing for a real estate company in Israel. She has extensive family living here and has made many friends since her arrival almost seven years ago. While her Hebrew is not perfect – “It’s probably as good as Marie Kondo’s

English,” she jokes – it is passable. Though she misses both her family and the shopping in the United States, she says: “If I moved back to America because I wanted to shop, that would be the saddest commentary on my life.”

Gold laments the lack of customer service in Israel and the rough edges, but at the same time retells how, as a new *olah*, she was cut off on the highway by a particularly rude Israeli driver. A few minutes later, Gold stopped at a gas station to fill up. The same man who had obstructed her just a few moments earlier now happily volunteered to help her fill up her car with gas.

“That’s Israel,” she says with a smile.

Since making aliyah, Gold has greatly expanded her worldview. “What I appreciate about living in Israel is the cast of characters you meet. The people I was friendly with in the US were more one-dimensional – all from the same schools and with a Modern Orthodox upbringing. When you’re in Israel, you meet your friends from the embassies, from Switzerland, England, Australia and South Africa. You’re exposed to more people and places. I am friends with people that never would have entered my world in America.”

Acknowledging the informality of her decision to make aliyah, Gold says that “coming to Israel was the best nondecision decision I ever made in my life.”

Kondo fans know that her motto is that people should keep only those things that speak to the heart, and discard items that no longer spark joy. What is Miriam Gold’s mantra? Without a moment’s hesitation, she says, “There’s a place for everything, and everything has a place.”

For Miriam Gold, Israel is her place. ■

‘CLIENTS TELL me about their daily routines so I can ensure their things are put in the right places for them to function as easily as possible.’ (Courtesy)