

ASK ANYTHING

Question: I know that my friend is taking drugs. It started off as a fun thing, but it has led to some serious stuff. I don't want to rat out my friend, but I am worried about her. Do I have to tell anyone?

Answer: No one likes being a rat, and in fact the Torah forbids telling anyone something negative about another person. We all know that saying something negative is loshon hara. At the same time the posuk that says that one can't speak loshon hara ends off by saying that we can't stand by while our brother's blood is being shed. Our Rabbis understood the second part to be telling us that when our friend is in physical, emotional or financial danger, and saying something negative can help the situation, there is no prohibition of loshon hara.

For example:

If I hear Joey the Murderer say that he is going to kill Mandy the Magnificent, even though it would be loshon hara to tell Mandy that Joey is planning on killing her, I have to tell her in order to save her.

Our Rabbis also tell us that there is no grey area when it comes to saving someone vs. loshon hara. If someone is in physical, emotional or financial danger, I must say something, even if it's negative. If no one is in danger, I'm not allowed to say anything negative.

In your case your friend is into some pretty serious stuff, and you've got to say something. I would suggest doing it anonymously, but keep in mind your friend might figure out it was you. If she figures it out she'll probably hate you. Sometimes you have to make sacrifices to save someone. While you might be losing your friendship, you might be saving a friend.