

SEASON 1



OLAMI MENTORSHIP

**SESSION 1:
STORIES**



WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

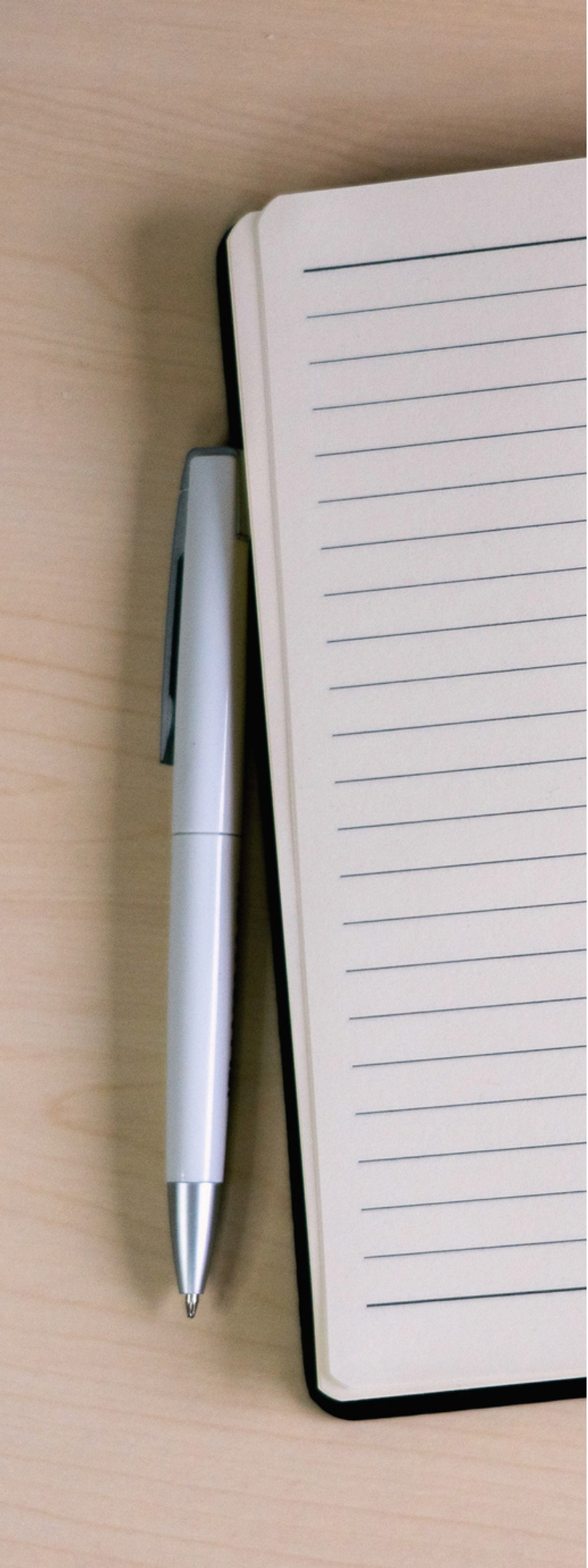
Wikipedia defines mentorship as (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mentorship>) a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the mentee).

And while Wikipedia has a pretty complex understanding of mentorship, it is not a new concept. For generations, apprentices have connected with experts to learn a trade. Disciples have served more experienced elders to learn and to drink from their knowledge. Most prominently, Rabbinic Judaism and organized religion is built upon passing a message from mentor to disciple, from generation to generation. The research shows that the secret sauce to successful mentorship is the evolution from a strictly professional relationship to a relationship that is more personal in nature. Towards that end, the initial mentorship meeting seeks to quickly take both the mentor and mentee on a personal journey to create a meaningful relationship that will foster truth and trust. The result of developing this bond will upgrade and intensify the subsequent meetings that are richer in exploring your Jewish identity and values.

Lastly, each mentor and mentee is a whole world unto themselves, henceforth their approach to meeting, learning and communicating often differs. OLM is proud to present three approaches to facilitate discussion about the mentor's and mentee's personal stories. Please feel free to quickly review the three different one-page resources and incorporate the materials that best speak to you.

We are honored to provide personal guidance or assistance if necessary. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us directly. To reach the Director of Community Mentorship, Rabbi Shlomo Landau, please call 908.770.0056 or email slandau@olami.org. To reach the Associate Director of Community Mentorship, Jordana Baruchov, please call 973.370.0414 or email jbaruchov@olami.org.

Wishing you the best of luck on this journey!



REMINDERS:

- Check-in: How was your week?
- Goal check-in. Do you both feel on track?
- Journaling: The journal is a space to track progress and growth throughout this journey.
- Set a time for your next meeting.

What's your story?

PATH 1: STORYTIME

Step 1:

Mentor begins by asking the mentee to share the story of their life in under five minutes.

Step 2:

Mentor shares their personal story with their mentee in under five minutes.

Step 3:

Mentor circles back to the mentee's story and shares what they personally understood about their mentee from the mentee's personal narrative.

Step 4:

Mentor asks mentee to do the same with mentor's story.

PATH 1: STORYTIME

It is fascinating to note that the Torah already refers to our lives as stories in a book.

PLEASE EXAMINE THIS TORAH SOURCE TOGETHER.

The Torah describes the totality of human life as a book, by describing mankind's life journey with the following powerful phrase:

Bereishis 5:1

This is the book of man's generations, on the day that the Almighty created man in His image.

זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת אָדָם בְּיוֹם בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אָדָם בְּדִמּוּת
אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אוֹתוֹ:

Hamek Davar Ibid 5

The understanding of this verse is that from the moment of birth until one's last day he is writing a book...

ומשמעו שמספר הכתוב איך שנעשה עמו בעת שנולד..
שנעשה בו משעה שנולד עד סוף היום הרי הוא כספר שלם

What follows is that each unique individual is a unique story in this vast collective book of life. As long as we are alive we are always writing new chapters of our very special story!

PROFESSIONAL THOUGHT QUESTIONS: DOES YOUR COMPANY HAVE A MACRO-VISION OF THEIR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE?

DOES YOUR CAREER HAVE A FUTURE? IS IT COMPATIBLE WITH THE LIFE THAT YOU WANT TO LEAD?



PATH 2: THE STORY OF OUR FAMILIES

Step 1:

Please introduce to your mentee that today's session is about getting to know one another in a more multifaceted way. It follows the format of "speed-dating" with rapid fire questions. Feel free to share your answers as well...

1. WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES? HOW DO YOU RELAX?
2. WHO ARE THE TWO PEOPLE THAT YOU LOVE MOST? WHY?
3. FOR WHAT IN YOUR LIFE DO YOU FEEL MOST GRATEFUL?
4. WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?
5. WHAT ARE YOUR MOST IMPRESSIVE LIFE ACHIEVEMENTS?
6. WHAT ARE YOUR TANGIBLE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?
7. WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST STRENGTHS? WEAKNESSES?
8. WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AT THIS POINT IN YOUR LIFE?

PATH 2: THE STORY OF OUR FAMILIES

Step 2:

After the two of you have shared the answers to the above questions, please take a few minutes to highlight the areas that you share in common

Pirkei Avos 5:3

Abraham our father was tested ten times and he successfully grew from them all, to teach us how beloved Abraham our father was in the eyes of the Almighty.

עֲשֶׂה נִסְיוֹנוֹת נִתְּנָה אֲבִיהֶם אֲבִינוֹ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם וְעַמֵּד
בְּכֻלָּם, לְהוֹדִיעַ כְּמָה חֲבֵתוֹ שֶׁל אֲבִיהֶם אֲבִינוֹ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם

Tosfos Yom Tov Avos 5:3

Abraham; our father in whose merit we still benefit, is called our father because of his challenges and his ability to persevere...

אברהם אבינו. שאנו זוכים ומקבלים טובה בזכותו זה שעמד
בכל נסיונותיו לפיכך קראו התנא בכאן אבינו

The Tosfos Yom Tov writes that the reason that our avos and imahos are forever known as our “parents” is due to the fact that they all had unusually challenging lives, but rather than become dejected, they used their challenges and ordeals as stepping-stones for growth. Thus on some level similar to a parent, they continue to teach every unique generation of Jews about embracing life’s challenges and using them to grow.



PATH 3: THE NEXT CHAPTER IN OUR STORY



For the intellectually curious student, here is a powerful lesson on Judaism's perspective on one's unique life-journey and self-identity.

Imagine that we are in a vast library. In every direction we look there are bookcases. Each has shelves stretching from the floor to the ceiling, and every shelf is full of books. We are surrounded by the recorded thoughts of many people, some great, some less so, and we can reach out and take any book we wish. All we have to do is choose. We begin to read, and for a while we are immersed in the world, real or imaginary, of the writer. It may intrigue us enough to lead us to look for other books by the same writer, or perhaps others on the same subject. Alternatively, we can break off and try a different subject, a different approach; there is no limit. Once the book no longer interests us, we can put it back on the shelf, where it will wait for the next reader to pick it up. It makes no claim on us. It is just a book.

PATH 3: THE NEXT CHAPTER IN OUR STORY

This is more than an
imaginative exercise.

There is such a book, and
to be a Jew is to be a life, a
chapter, in it. This book
contains the knowledge of
who I am and is perhaps
the most important thing I
can be given.

זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֵי אָדָם;
this is the book of
mankind's life-journeys.”

PLEASE WRAP UP YOUR FIRST DISCUSSION BY
REFLECTING ON THIS EXERCISE. THINK ABOUT
WHAT YOUR STORY IN THIS BOOK WOULD LOOK
LIKE AT THE CURRENT POSITION IN YOUR LIFE.

That, for the contemporary secular culture of the West, is
what identity is like. We are browsers in the library. There
are many different ways of living, and none exercises any
particular claim on us...The various lifestyles into which we
enter are like books we read. We are always free to
change them, put them back on the shelf. They are what
we read, not what we are.

Judaism asks us to envisage an altogether different
possibility. Imagine that, while browsing in the library, you
come across one book, unlike the rest, which catches your
eye because on its spine is written the name of your family.
Intrigued, you open it and see many pages written by
different hands in different languages. You start reading it,
and gradually you start beginning to understand what it is.
It is the story each generation of your ancestors has told
for the sake of the next, so that everyone born into the
family can know where they came from, what happened to
them, what they lived for and why. As you turn the pages,
you reach the last, which carries no entry but a heading. It
bears your name.

According to the intellectual conventions of modernity,
this should make no difference. There is nothing in the
past that can bind you in the present, no history that can
make a difference to who you are and who you are free to
be. But this cannot be the whole truth. Were I to find myself
holding such a book in my hands, my life would already
have been changed. Seeing my name and the story of my
forebears, I could not read it as if it were just one story
among others... Once I knew it existed, I could not put the
book back on the shelf and forget about it, because I
would now know that I am part of a long line of people who
traveled toward a certain destination and whose journey
remains unfinished, dependent on me to take it further...

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

**For educational questions or support,
please contact:**

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