

SEASON 1



OTLAMI MENTORSHIP

SESSION 6: FLIPPED MENTORSHIP

DEAR MENTEE AND MENTOR,

Chazal teach us that **אִיזְהוּ חָכָם, הַלּוֹמֵד מִכָּל אָדָם**, a truly wise person lives their life constantly trying to gain insight from all those that they encounter.

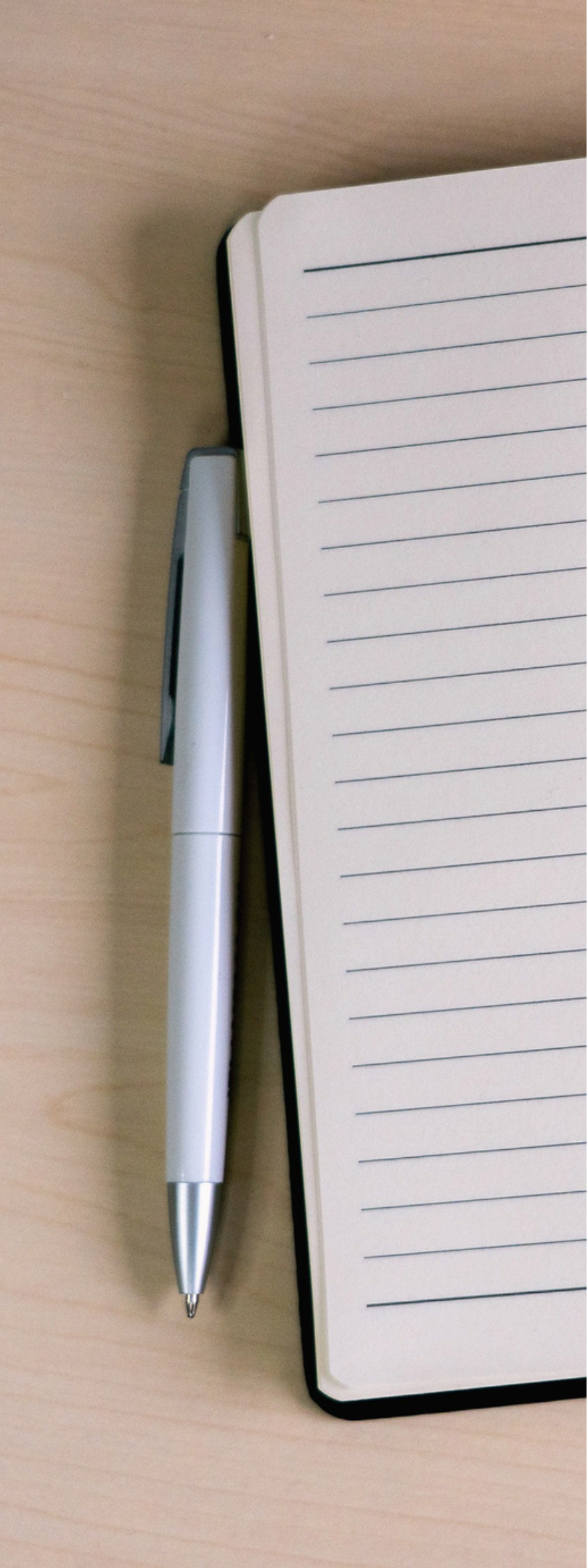
The first 5 sessions have given the mentee an opportunity to learn from you, dear mentor. This session will turn the tables and give your mentee an opportunity to serve as a mentor to you!

The thought process for this concept is twofold:

1. Until this point, your mentee has been a mekabel; a reciever... Today's session will empower your mentee to be a nosen, a giver.
2. As we will see in the content, **"מִתֵּלְמִידֵי יוֹתֵר מִכּוֹלֵן"**. You may learn a lot from your own teachers but the potential to learn from a student is even greater. We always gain from teaching and guiding, but today hopefully you can gain from your mentee in a proactive way.

Please take a few minutes to think about something that you can ask your mentee for guidance about... perhaps an issue or two that you are dealing with. Professional, personal, spiritual... it doesn't really matter, as long as it is relatable and it's you. (Please see Path 2 for a few examples of potential scenarios.)

What follows are resources and talking points about learning from everyone and particularly from students/mentees. It is truly empowering to internalize that this concept is a core foundation of Torah learning.



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.

PATH 1: ALWAYS A STUDENT



Step 1:

Prior to practically flipping this session, this may be a nice opportunity to share with your mentee that while you may have been in the “giving/mentoring” role, you have definitely gained from meeting them. Please feel free to share this concept highlighted by this fascinating Talmudic teaching of Rabbi Chanina (1st Century Mishnaic Rabbi).

Taanis 7a

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said: Why are words of Torah compared to a branch of a tree, as it is stated: “It is a tree of life to those that cling to it” (Proverbs 3:18). This verse comes to tell you that just as a small piece of wood can ignite a large piece, so too, Torah students can sharpen the minds of great Torah scholars. This is what Rabbi Chanina said: I have learned a great deal from my teachers and even more from my friends, but most of all from my students!

אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן בַּר יִצְחָק: לָמָּה נִמְשָׁלוּ
דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה כְּעֵץ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: “עֵץ חַיִּים
הִיא לַמַּחְזִיקִים בָּהּ”, לֹאמַר לָהּ: מָה עֵץ
קָטָן מַדְלִיק אֶת הַגָּדוֹל, אֲפִי תַלְמִידֵי
חֲכָמִים קָטָנִים מַחְדָּדִים אֶת הַגָּדוֹלִים.
וְהָיְינוּ דְאָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: הֲרַבָּה
לְמַדְתִּי מֵרַבּוֹתַי, וּמִחֲבֵירֵי יוֹתֵר
מֵרַבּוֹתַי, וּמִתַּלְמִידֵי יוֹתֵר מִכּוֹלָן.

PATH 1: ALWAYS A STUDENT

Step 2:

What do you think that Rabbi Chanina meant when he said that he learned the most from his students?

Step 3:

Feel free to share this incredible anecdote about one of the greatest Torah geniuses in the last few centuries.

A student once hid in the study of the legendary Torah genius Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebowitz, one of the most prominent and revered European Torah scholars of the first half of the 20th century, to get a firsthand view of how he prepared his classes. Rabbi Boruch Ber's lectures and classes were arguably the highest caliber Talmudic discourses in the entire world, and the student was intrigued as to how these lectures were formulated.

He was stunned as he heard Rabbi Boruch Ber begin to prepare by delivering the lecture as if he were standing in front of a packed Lecture Hall. Suddenly, Rabbi Boruch Ber stopped and said "and when I give this explanation, my student Chaim will certainly challenge me with the following question, which I will then retort with the following solution. But then my other student Shimon will challenge what I just said... to which I will counter..."

Rabbi Boruch Ber continued his entire discourse in this fashion concluding only when he felt that he would adequately elucidate the entire content of his lesson.

This is the power of a talmid/student!



PATH 1: ALWAYS A STUDENT



Step 4:

A fascinating insight into the title “Talmid chacham:”

Ben Yehoyada (ibid) (Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, d.1909)

Torah scholars have always been known as talmid chacham”/“wise student.” This is a constant reminder that true wisdom is stimulated by one’s students.

כל חכם נקרא בשם
תלמיד חכם לרמוז
עיקר שלימות חכמתו
הוא מכח התלמיד.

PATH 2: LET'S GET PRACTICAL!

To assist you in optimizing your mentorship flip, we have prepared a few ideas in which your mentee, due to their age and stage, may actually provide real-life value.

Please try to come up with a personal application to share with your mentee and benefit from their professional and personal experience and expertise.

1. Technology:

From social media marketing to ecommerce and from simple scheduling software to google suites, chances are that your mentee has interfaced with these technological advancements. Please try to identify an aspect of your personal or professional life that you feel technology may simplify and upgrade and ask your mentee for their approach and input.

THOUGHT QUESTION:

HOW DO YOU BALANCE THE BARRAGE OF INFORMATION, SOCIAL MEDIA, COMMUNICATIONS WHILE STAYING FOCUSED ON YOUR JOB AND PRIORITIES?



2. Quick Learning:

Our rapidly evolving world requires a new skill: learning quickly. Conditions change too fast to learn one skill and spend years developing it in the workplace. Working on developing the skill of learning and adapting quickly so you can do many different things is invaluable.

Perhaps you can learn something about this value from your mentee.

THOUGHT QUESTION:

WHAT IS ONE SKILL YOU WANT TO LEARN IN THE COMING YEAR? WHY?

PATH 2: LET'S GET PRACTICAL!

3. Developing Multiple Revenue Streams:

More than 50% of young Americans have a side hustle — that's millennial speak for a second, unofficial job they work from time to time. Older Americans could benefit as much as anyone from picking up a side hustle. A second revenue stream increases income while also diversifying dependability on one revenue source. While your current position in life may not afford you the time for a side hustle, it may be fascinating to understand your mentee's understanding of this concept and even have them identify a talent or resources that they have identified in you that could potentially branch off in a different direction.

THOUGHT QUESTION:

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT THE YOUNGER GENERATION HAS ANY EASIER TIME IDENTIFYING "SIDE HUSTLES?" IS THIS A POSITIVE QUALITY?



4. Hard to live it while you are in it...

As frum people, we often fail to focus on many aspects of the way in which our Torah way of life drives our decisions, our conduct and even our thought process. It may be interesting to query your mentee if they have noticed any of the differences in how you approach life and how they would have approached these very things in a very different way.

THOUGHT QUESTION:

CAN YOU PINPOINT ONE AREA IN LIFE WHERE YOUR JEWISH IDENTITY HAS DEFINED YOUR ASPIRATIONS OR ATTAINMENTS? HOW? WHY?

PATH 3: GIVERS AND TAKERS



THOUGHT QUESTION:
ACCORDING TO RABBI
DESSLER, WHILE ALL
HUMAN BEINGS AT
TIMES ARE TAKERS AND
AT TIMES ARE GIVERS,
ESSENTIALLY, THEY
STILL FALL INTO ONE OF
TWO CLASSES, GIVERS
AND TAKERS.

WHICH OF THE TWO
TYPES ARE YOU? A
GIVER, A TAKER?

Step 1:

Please read through the formative ideas of Rabbi Dessler

“Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (Lithuania, UK, and Israel d.
1954) “Michtav Me’Eliayahu” -- published in English as
“Strive for Truth”, “The Treatise on Loving Kindness”

ויש אשר אין עול בידם כלל נגד רעיהם במה שיקחו. אלא שאוהבים
ליטול מבלי שלם בתמורה; כגון אוהבי המתנות והירושות ונטילת הצדקה.
ואוהבי תבצע והדיווחים הגדולים. גם כל אלה בנוטלים יתחשבו, ועליהם אמר
החכם מכל אדם: “ושונא מתנות יחיה” (משלי ט”ו כ”ו). שני הכחות האלה —
הנתינה והנטילה — הם שרשי כל המדות וכל המעשים. ויש לך לדעת. שאין דרך
ממוצע בזה. כי נפש האדם לעולם תשאף לאחד משני הצדדים ובתשוקת הלב
הפנימית אין פשרות, זה הכלל: אין ממוצע בהתעניינות. נמצא שבכל מעשה,
בכל דבור, ובכל מחשבה — אם לא בנוגע לפנימיות נפשו מבלי שייכות
למציאות מוצגת לו — הנתן אם מתחסד ונותן, או חוטף ונוטל. וכעין זה איתא
בחובות הלבבות (שער עבודת האלקים, פ”ד) שבפנים הלב אין לנו דבר הרשות.
אלא או חובה או איסור.

(פרקי “הנותן והנוטל”)

פרק א' ידבר בנותן ובנוטל

כאשר ברא אלהים את האדם, עשהו לנותן ונוטל. כח הנתינה הוא
כח עליון ממדות יוצר הכל ברוך הוא. שהוא מרחם ומטיב ונותן, מבלי קבל
דבר בתמורה; (הן לא יחסר לו כלום, ככתוב: “ואם צדקת מה תתן לו”
(איוב ל”ה ז’). רק שאנו מביעים לו את תודתנו, אשר זה שורש עבודתנו לו)
וככה עשה את האדם, ככתוב: “בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם”, כי יוכל
לרחם ולהטיב וליתן.

אבל כח הנטילה, הוא אשר יתאוה האדם למשוך אליו את כל הבא
בתחומו, כח זה הוא אשר יקראוהו בני האדם “אהבת עצמו”, והוא שורש
כל הרעות.

When the Almighty created human beings He made
them capable of both giving and taking... Giving is a
sublime power; it is one of the attributes of the
Almighty Himself.

Man has been granted this sublime power of giving.
“God created man in His own image.”

On the other side stands the faculty of taking, by
which a person aspires to draw to himself all that
comes within his reach.

These two powers—giving and taking—form the
roots of all character traits and of all actions. And
note: there is no middle way. Every person is
devoted, at the deepest level of his personality, to
one or the other of the two sides, and in the
innermost longing of the heart there are no
compromises. It is a basic law that there is no middle
path in human interest. In every act, in every word, in
every thought... one is always devoted either to
lovingkindness and giving or to grasping and taking.

PATH 3: GIVERS AND TAKERS

Step 2:

Consider the following real-life scenario

A number of years ago, a successful husband and wife welcomed a young man from a highly dysfunctional and impoverished home into their home and into their lives. He quickly warmed up to the functionality of their lives and to the kind attention that the couple showered upon him. As he spent more time with their family, his self-confidence grew as did his overall joie de vivre. Approximately, a year after meeting these kindhearted hosts, they received an expensive gift from his parents expressing their joy and appreciation for what they had done for their son. The couple was appalled by the gift. As it was, they did not appreciate receiving gifts from anyone. And more importantly, this gift had certainly cost them a fortune and may have literally taken the food out of their mouths! On the spot, they decided to return the gift to the store where it had been purchased and somehow figure out a way to get the money back to them...

A close friend told them that they thought their perspective was wrong, and that they'd be doing more for the family by graciously accepting the gift.

THOUGHT QUESTION:

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE? WHY?



PATH 3: GIVERS AND TAKERS

Step 3:

Please read this philosophical dilemma from Rabbi Dessler and see if you can solve it on your own.

Ibid

Since it is true that there can be no giving without someone receiving what is given, surely giving itself leads to evil? Surely the giver makes the recipient a taker? It follows too that there can never be a perfect world. If all human beings were to become givers, who would there be to take from them?

פרק ב' במשא ומתן

והנה ישאלונו הסוחרים בעלי המשא והמתן : «אתם אומרים שאך הנתינה היא טובה, וכל נטילה היא מדה רעה ? הלא בזה תפריעו את סדר כל העולם, הן כל הברואים בראם ה' לחיות נותנים ונוטלים כאחת. וככה סידר את עולמו, האם אין האדם כאחד מהם, ולמה לא יטול וגם יתן?»

אבל האמת תורה דרכה, כי גם באלה שני מינים המה. יש אשר יטלו הרבה, ואך מעט יתנו, הלא המה הסוחרים אשר ישתמשו בכל מקרה להרויח בו, מבלי התחשב אם טרחם ועבודתם אשר עבדו שוים המה באמת די הרויח אשר ישינו בתמורתם. גם יתאמצו ליהנות בכשלון רעיהם וחסרונם ידיעתם, האם אין זו גניבת הודעת ורמאות. מבלי הפרש ? וכל שכן אלה אשר סחרם וקנינם ירבה, ועמל אחריים יאכלו, בנשך ובמרבית ; או אלה אשר במחיר קל יעבידו את מועליהם ושכיריהם לעבוד עבודת פרך, וכן המשעבדים בעמים ורודים במ בחזק יד (אף שיועילו לאומתם) הן כל אלה ודומיהם נטילתם מרובה ונתינתם מועטת.

Step 4:

There is a great difference between a “recipient” and a “taker,” and similarly between a “giver” and “one from whom things are taken.” We would do well not to confuse these concepts.

Step 5:

What do you think Rabbi Dessler meant by differentiating between recipients and takers?

Step 6:

If you can, please attempt to relate Rabbi Dessler’s concepts to your unique mentorship experience.

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

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