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TEACHER'S GUIDE

TRY, TRY AGAIN

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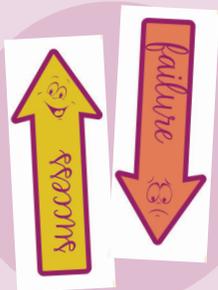


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✍ TRY, TRY AGAIN | SOURCES:

- "אנו עמלים ומקבלים שכר והם עמלים ואינם מקבלים שכר" (הדרן) (גמרא ברכות כה עמוד ב)
- "שבע יפול צדיק וקם" (משלי כד:טז)
- "אינני רחב לב ולא אוכל לגמרה ומה יתרון בעמל? ומה אועיל ביגיעתי שלא עליך לגומרה" (רבינו יונה)
- "ועתה אם שמוע תשמע בקולי ושמתם את ביריתי והייתם לי סגולה מכל העמים (שמות יט:ה)
- "אל תחזקו לשונת" (רש"י שמות יט:ה)

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1 set per class

FAILURE/SUCCESS ARROWS
Anticipatory Set



1 set per class

GALLERY WALK POSTERS
Activity

Try, Try Again

LESSON AT A GLANCE

INTRODUCTION

CONCEPT:

Even if I fail, Hashem considers me a success if I try again.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

If I know I am not going to reach perfection, why bother trying?

ANTICIPATORY SET:

'The Secret to Success'

Brainstorm: What is the difference between success and failure?

LESSON

PARABLE POINT:

'A Sketchy Start'

Message: Failed efforts are not wasted; they are part of the process that leads to ultimate success.

ACTIVITY:

'Try, Try Again' Gallery Walk

Purpose: Students will experience true-to-life examples of opportunities for perseverance.

DISCUSSIONS:

- The Mistake About Mistakes
- The Path to Greatness

CLOSURE:

'Self-Talk'

Take it to Heart #8

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Try, Try Again



Even if I fail,
Hashem considers me a success if I try again.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

If I know I am not going to reach perfection, why bother trying?

ANTICIPATORY SET

FAILURE?

BRAINSTORM: What is the difference between success and failure?

Teacher explains to students: The following story describes the ups and downs in Soichiro's life. Using arrows, we will track the ups and downs - his successes and failures on the board.

While the teacher or a student reads the story, whenever an arrow is featured, Teacher prompts students: Did Soichiro just experience an up or down in his life? *After students respond, Teacher pastes the arrow on the board. Anytime the arrow faces down, Teacher asks:* Do you think Soichiro will keep on trying to succeed?

READ-ALONG // THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

Ever since Tenryū, a small Japanese village, knew that if they were looking for Soichiro, the first place to look was his father's bicycle shop. He was almost a fixture there, tinkering with his father's tools, an intent look on his little face. He was fascinated by anything that contained a mechanism of some sort. Yet despite his inquisitive nature and handiness, Soichiro did not do well in school.↓

At age fifteen, Soichiro heard that an auto repair shop in Tokyo was seeking employees. Driven by his love of machines and fascination of cars, Soichiro set off for Tokyo, and was accepted by the auto repair shop... to clean and prepare meals for the other workers.↓

Not allowing himself to be disheartened, Soichiro accepted the job. Eventually, the owner of the shop realized Soichiro's talents and allowed him to help fix cars.↑

After several years of apprenticeship, Soichiro was ready to open his own small auto repair shop. Ever the inventor,

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תורה, they may feel that learning the תורה and keeping the מצוות are hard. So when Hashem offered the תורה to Bnei Yisrael, Hashem encouraged them by saying:

...ועתה אם שמוע תשמעו בקולי ושמרתם את בריתי והייתם לי סגלה מכל העמים - *"And now, if you listen to My voice and agree to keep My mitzvos, you will become My most treasured nation..."* (לפי רש"י - שמות יט:ה)

Why did Hashem say the seemingly extra word "ועתה" - "and now"? Hashem was hinting to a very encouraging message: If you agree to keep the Torah now, when it is hard for you, it will become easier and more pleasant to keep the תורה as time goes on. "כל התחלות קשות" - All beginnings are hard. Yet going through this hardship is worthwhile. It becomes easier as time goes on. (שמות יט:ה רש"י)

We can all take encouragement from this. When we have just begun to be more careful with a certain *mitzvah* or *middah*, and it is so hard, we should not give up! "כל התחלות קשות" - All beginnings are hard. It becomes easier as time goes on. Going through the initial struggle is worthwhile.

THE GROWTH PROCESS

Hashem encouraged Bnei Yisrael with a similar message long before Matan Torah, while Bnei Yisrael were still in Mitzrayim.

Before *yetziyas Mitzrayim*, Hashem told Moshe to teach Bnei Yisrael the *mitzvah* of *kiddush hachodesh*. Hashem instructed Bnei Yisrael to start every new month after the moon has disappeared from view and then reappeared as a tiny sliver in the sky. Why did Hashem give this *mitzvah* to Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim, long before they received the other mitzvos?

When Hashem gave the *mitzvah* of *kiddush hachodesh*, He was giving a message to Bnei Yisrael. Bnei Yisrael are compared to the moon. The moon does not always appear to be the same size in the sky. Sometimes it looks full and round, and other times, it appears as a tiny sliver or is even completely invisible. Unlike the sun, the moon is always coming into full view and then disappearing. Every time it shrinks and disappears, we look out to see it appear and grow once again. That is the precise time which we look towards the moon, to determine when to start a new month.

Bnei Yisrael are like the moon, both as a nation, as well as on an individual level. There are times when we are like a full, round moon; we are doing well spiritually. We see that we are growing and developing, doing many *mitzvos* and improving our *middos*. There are other times when we are like the moon in its waning stage; we feel like we are struggling to do *mitzvos*. We feel like we are showing our 'bad side' to the world, and are constantly falling and failing. At such times, we should infuse ourselves with the encouraging message of *kiddush hachodesh*: going through the stage of 'becoming smaller' - of stumbling and falling, is often a phase on the way to growing once again. When we fail,

Letter // Failure is Very Good:

Rav Yitzchak Hutner received a letter from a talmid. The talmid had gone on to learn in a different yeshiva. He poured out his frustration and anguish onto paper, as he explained to his beloved rebbe how hard things had been recently. He was trying so hard to learn Torah and grow in his avodas Hashem, yet he felt all he was left with was the bitter taste of failure.

Rav Hutner wrote back to this talmid:

דע לך חביבי - Know, my beloved student...

רעה חולה היא אצלנו, שכאשר מתעסקים או בצדדי השלמות של גדולינו, הננו מטפלים בסיכום האחרון של מעלתם. מספרים אנו על דרכי השלמות שלהם, בשעה שאנחנו מדלגים על המאבק הפנימי שהתחולל בנפשם.

There is a big mistake which we tend to make. We read [in biographies and articles] about areas in which our גדולים reached perfection. We focus on the end goals which they reached in the later stages of their lives. We speak about their perfect ways, and yet we fail to think about the inner battles which they faced before they reached those goals.

"הכל משוחחים, מתפעלים ומרימים על נשאת טהרת לשון של בעל החפץ חיים זצ"ל, אבל מי יודע מן כל המלחמות, המאבקים, המכשולים, הנפילות והנסיגות לאחור שמצא החפץ חיים בדרך המלחמה שלו על ידו החפץ חיים."

We all discuss the greatness of the חפץ חיים. We are amazed by the incredible purity of his speech. But who thinks about all the battles, pitfalls and failures which the חפץ חיים faced on the way? We don't even know how hard it was for the חפץ חיים when he battled his תוכחה and how many times he failed, and still encouraged himself to reach his goal!

אילו היה מכתבך מספר לי אודות המצוות והמעשים הטובים שלך, הייתי אומר שקיבלתי ממך מכתב טוב. עכשיו שמכתבך מספר על ליבוי יתר... "וגנפילות ומכשולים, הנני אומר שקיבלתי ממך מכתב טוב מאוד. רוחך סוערת לקראת השאיפה להיות דור."

If your letter would have spoken about the *mitzvos* and *maasim tovim* which you are accomplishing, I would have said that I received a good letter. Being that your letter tells of your unsuccessful attempts, stumbling and failing, I can now say that I have received a *very* good letter. Your letter was very good, because it showed that you are weathering stormy challenges on the path towards greatness...

 **DISCUSS: The Path to Greatness**

According to Rav Hutner, which mistake do many people make when they read about gedolim?

Why did Rav Hutner view a letter about a student's failures as "very good"?

Many people do not realize that every *gadol* faced many challenges and stumbled many times before reaching a high level in any area.

The student's failures showed that he was trying to become great. Someone who does not try will not fail. Only by trying and persevering, even in the face of failure, can a person grow and succeed.

THE TRUE EXPERT

Post the word "expert" on the board. Instruct students to choose which of the following phrases define the word 'expert' correctly.

- A) Someone who was born with a certain ability
- B) Someone who can do things well on the first try
- C) Someone who has worked hard to acquire a specific skill

After listening to students' responses, conclude: An expert is someone who has worked hard to acquire a specific skill. Becoming an expert takes a lot of effort. Often, on the way to becoming an expert, someone will fail many times. The only way to becoming an expert is trying, failing, and trying again.

Consider the following scenario:

- A group of friends sat together at lunch time, discussing a complex recipe for triple layer mocha chiffon cake, which had been recently featured in the recipe column of a popular magazine. Each girl shared her opinion on the recipe.

Write the following three statements on the board. Alternatively, read them aloud to students.

The following three statements are the reactions of three different girls at the lunch table:

1. "It'll never come out the way it looks in the picture anyway. It's not even worth it to try."
2. "I would try it once. But if it doesn't work, then I'll know I'm not able to bake such fancy cakes."
3. "I'm willing to try until I get it. It might not work the first time... but that's OK. Sometimes you need to try a bunch of times before you get it right."

Which girl is most likely to bake the cake expertly, and why?

After listening to students' responses, conclude: Statement #3 expresses the mindset of an expert. The girl who thought this way will most likely succeed in baking the cake expertly, because she is willing to try again and again, until she succeeds in baking a beautiful cake. She will not view failure as a reason to stop trying. Each failure will be viewed as a message to try again!

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This can be applied to becoming an expert in spiritual accomplishments, too. Someone who will not try will definitely not succeed. A person who views failure as a reason to stop trying is unlikely to reach their *ruchniyus* goals. Someone who views each failure as a message to try again will eventually reach the goals for which they aim!

ACTIVITY TRY, TRY AGAIN GALLERY WALK

» **PURPOSE:** Students will experience true-to-life examples of opportunities for perseverance

PROCESS:

- Teacher divides students into groups.
- Teacher hangs posters around the room, each one featuring a different scenario
- Groups travel around the classroom and write an encouraging response to each scenario
- After all the students are finished, the class reviews all the scenarios and responses

GALLERY WALK POSTERS:

1. *I really tried to wake up on time this week. I set an alarm clock right next to my bed. But every morning, I snoozed my alarm a few times, and was late for school every day this week. I guess I'm doomed to a year of being late to school.*
2. *I try to stay calm when my sister annoys me... but usually I end up screaming at her anyway. I feel like such a failure.*
3. *I keep trying to concentrate during davening. I want to remember that I'm talking to Hashem, and I want to think about the meaning of the words. Every time I try to have kavanah, I get distracted. I feel like my davening will never really improve.*
4. *I really wanted to make new friends this year in school. Every day I tell myself that I'll strike up a conversation with new friends and join a group at lunch. But every day my courage deserts me. I'll never be able to do it.*
5. *A seventy? Again? I might as well not study anymore. What is my studying worth, if I'm still getting seventies?! I don't know why I even bother taking notes in class.*

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