

# Theory of Teacher Effectiveness

## Background information

Jewish Academy teachers should exemplify three core Middot in our approach to our students, parents, and colleagues: Positivity, Leadership/Ownership, and a Growth Mindset. These three Middot each correlate to a secular theory of teacher effectiveness:

- Positive Youth Development/Positive Psychology (Positivity)
- The Teacher as Leadership Framework (Leadership)
- Growth Mindset Framework (Growth Minded)

Each of these three secular theories of education align to higher Torah values. The purpose of this document is to briefly describe each of these three approaches and foundational Torah that align to these theories.

These ideas must be more than dusty words on a shelf in the back-school office, rather they must be lived in our thoughts, our actions, and our hearts. Walking the halls of the school, we need see and hear our positive approach to communication. We must be owners who are self-accountable and forward thinking. We must also dedicate toward (yet patient toward) our own growth and the growth of others. Rav Yisrael Salanter Z"l famously stated that "the longest distance in the world is between a person's mind and their heart." My bracha to us all this this these words learned in our mind penetrate more and more each day into our hearts.

The chart below provides a brief overview of each of the theories that ground our understanding of Teacher Effectiveness. This document will provide Torah & secular sources to highlight both core approaches. Through reading, reflecting upon, and practicing of the ideas presented in these sources, Bezrat Hashem (With Hashem's Help) we will grow to exemplify the words inside.

	Theory of Teacher Effectiveness		
	Positive Youth Development/Positive Psychology	The Teacher as Leadership Framework	Growth Mindset Framework
Middot Represented	Positivity	Leadership/Ownership	Growth
Foundational source in Torah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay on "Created in G-d's Image" (the Alter of Slobodka)</li> <li>• "Personal Growth: The Challenge of Our Generation" (Rav Wolbe)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chovas HaTalmidim (R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira)</li> <li>• Planting and Building (Rav Wolbe)</li> </ul>
Secular Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What Is Positive Youth Development?" (William Damon)</li> <li>• VIA Strengths (Martin Seligman)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Effective Teaching Model" (Harry Wong)</li> <li>• The Teaching as Leadership Framework (TAL) (Steven Farr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Growth Mindset Theory (Carol Dweck)</li> </ul>

# Positive Youth Development/Positive Psychology Secular Sources

## Except of What is Positive Young Development by William Damon

Every child has talents, strengths, and interests that offer the child potential for a bright future. The field of positive youth development focuses on each and every child's unique talents, strengths, interests, and future potential.

Positive youth development contrasts with approaches that have focused on problems that some young people encounter while growing up—problems such as learning disabilities; affective disorders; antisocial conduct; low motivation and achievement; drinking, drug use, or smoking; psychosocial crises triggered by maturational episodes such as puberty; and risks of neglect, abuse, and economic deprivation that plague certain populations.

Models of youth that focus on such problems have long held sway in the child care professions, the mass media, and the public mind. In such models, youth is seen as a period fraught with hazards, and many young people are seen as potential problems that must be straightened out before they can do serious harm to themselves or to others. This problem-centered vision of youth has dominated most of the professional fields charged with raising the young. In education and pediatric medicine, for example, a huge share of resources has been directed to remediating the incapacities of young people with syndromes such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

In child psychology, intense attention has been directed to self-esteem deficits, especially among girls; to damage created by childhood traumata such as poverty, abuse, and early separation; and to destructive patterns such as violence and aggression. Phrases such as "the at-risk child," "the learning-disabled child," "the juvenile delinquent," "the bully," "the man girl," and even "the super-predator" have filled professional journals as well as the popular press. The old suspicion that there are bad seeds, or (switching metaphors) that there are rotten apples that will spoil the barrel if not removed in time, has been kept alive in the guise of scientific theories that propose a genetic determinism for youth crime. The job of youth professionals has been seen to be identifying the problem early enough to defray and then patch up the damage. This focus on problems and deficits is part of a mental-health model left over from the work of child psychoanalysts such as Fritz Redl (Redl and Wineman 1951). It is also drawn from a criminal-justice model that has stressed punishment over prevention. One of the legacies of this problem-youth tradition has been its influence on the way young people have been portrayed in the mass culture and, as a consequence, in the popular mind.

The positive youth development perspective emphasizes the manifest potentialities rather than the supposed incapacities of young people—including young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and those with the most troubled histories. While the positive youth development approach recognizes the existence of adversities and developmental challenges that may affect children in various ways, it resists conceiving of the developmental process mainly as an effort to overcome deficits and risk. Instead, it begins with a vision of a fully able child eager to explore the world, gain competence, and acquire the capacity to contribute importantly to the world. The positive youth development approach aims at understanding, educating, and engaging children in productive activities rather than at correcting, curing, or treating them for maladaptive tendencies or so-called disabilities. The radical change brought about by this shift to a more positive vision of youth potential has taken place in a number of research areas. In each area, concepts that clearly were not valid have been discarded and replaced with ideas that have reversed the old way of thinking. This alteration in perspective has transformed the questions that researchers are asking, the insights that they have been able to discover in their research, and the practice recommendations that have been implemented in all varieties of youth-related work, from education to social policy.

## Benefits of Positive Youth Development:

“According to FindYouthInfo.gov, a website on youth development, research suggests positive youth development offer youth the following benefits:

- Increased protective factors; reduction in risky behaviors
- Higher grades and expectation to go to college
- Higher rates of successful transitions into adulthood
- Improved social and emotional outcomes
- Greater likelihood of contributing to their communities
- Less depression”

(RHYIssues@aGlance)

### **VIA Survey of Strengths:**

“Research has found a strong link between the utilization of one’s character strengths and valued outcomes (e.g. life satisfaction, achievement). Knowing one’s character strengths are extremely important as they are the fundamental building blocks of goodness within an individual. Although character traits can be changed or altered, the first step in life is to build and develop our natural goodness and nature, which is the nurturing and development of our strengths.” – Yosef Lynn in the VIA Survey Appendix

## **Torah Sources**

“We are worthwhile people because we are created b'tzelem elokim. Everything we think, say, and do must show that we are created b'tzelem elokim”- Rabbi Kalman Rosenbaum

### **An excerpt from “Created in G-d’s Image”**

A Talk by Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt”l, the “Alter of Slobodka” (1849-1927) (Translated by Rabbi Nosson Scherman):

All aspects of our life, whether physical or moral, communal or personal, are conducted and directed, founded and based, on the middah (character trait) of recognizing-our-self-worth. Someone who lacks understanding generally, and particularly doesn’t understand who he is, treats himself cheaply and treats all of life cheaply, even to the extent that he might sometimes carelessly endanger himself even for the sake of insignificant benefits. Someone who is wise acts differently. This person recognizes himself and considers his life precious and dear. With all this strength he attempts to uplift himself and his life.

Recognition of our self-worth is the measure of our life, and it is the fundamental middah responsible for human growth. Therefore, the most essential of all essential principles of life is that we must learn to value a person.... Only when we value ourselves appropriately can avodah (our attempt to achieve growth) really begin. Only when we possess a realistic self-evaluation do we possess the yardstick we will need to measure our behavior and actions, our general and particular conduct.

The Mishna (Pirkei Avos 3:18) teaches: “Beloved is man who was created in G-d’s image; G-d revealed an even greater love for us by informing us that we were created in G-d’s image, as it is said (Bereishis 9:6): ‘For in the image of G-d He made man.’”

It is indicative of a greater love that we were informed that we were created in G-d’s image. That revelation informs us of human greatness and value, of our own personal importance and our preciousness to our Creator. If we thoughtfully consider the qualities and value of our Tzelem Elokim (Divine image), and pause to appreciate the extraordinary potential perfection that actually exists within us, then we will realize that we tower infinitely above the most refined and exalted creatures, from the heights of heaven to the depths of the seas.

Then we also will begin to recognize that even the wisest secular scholars in history — who attempted to fathom the uniqueness of the human being and his greatness and value — failed to appreciate even a fraction of the true greatness, the Tzelem Elokim, that the Torah attributes to us. After all, the real value and exaltedness of a person who strives to imitate G-d is no less than the value and exaltedness that our infinite G-d is capable of granting. Our real worth is determined by Him, and He tells us that we are infinitely valuable, even by His standards.

If we recognize how incomprehensibly valuable we really are, then we begin to understand the awesome responsibility we have to work on changing and perfecting ourselves. We begin to understand our obligation to fulfill the duties of the heart found in our Holy Torah, in our great and exalted Torah of mussar which is unparalleled by any of the self-improvement systems designed by the wisest of human minds.

From within the perspective we have assembled we must examine the great mitzvah to “walk in His ways,” to imitate Him, as our sages explained (Tractate Shabbos 133a): “‘This is my G-d and I will glorify Him’ (Exodus 15:2) — I will become similar to Him: just as He is merciful, so must I be....” This mitzvah encompasses all the halachic obligations to change, grow, and achieve perfection by acting like Hashem. We must reach an accurate enough appreciation of who we really are that we don’t respond to this mitzvah with astonishment, “How can a mere human being, with his human weaknesses, be expected to imitate G-d?”

We must recognize and know that the mitzvah to imitate G-d is not an impossible decree of the King to become different than we are; rather, this great mitzvah befits us, especially once G-d has revealed His great love by informing us that we were created in His image. The Divinity within us obligates us to become whom we really are in potential, whom we were created to be — to release the potential within each of us and become people who truly reflect G-d’s image.

Once G-d has revealed his great love by informing us that we were created in His image, that fact must become the seal and emblem emblazoned on the surface of our hearts. We must never be distracted from this seal and emblem. Rather, we must courageously exert ourselves to drive our true identity into all layers of our consciousness, so that we will love ourselves as much as G-d Himself loves us. We are the most beloved creatures in His universe. We must struggle with all our strength to become perfect, as we all are in potential. Our outsides (our real character) must match our insides (our potential). Our bodies’ every move must be guided by the goal of imitating Hashem. Then we will deserve to be described by the Holy One’s proud exclamation (Midrash Bereishis Rabbah chapter 12), “Look at the creation I created in My world, and the form that I formed!”

## **Personal Growth: The Challenge of Our Generation**

Based on an essay by Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe zt'l

When we look at the generations of our grandparents and their parents, we find, generally, that people were intellectually and emotionally stronger, more confident and independent, and better able to deal with the problems and challenges of life. Although they had none of the technological innovation or economic affluence that exists today, they lived spiritually fulfilling and happy lives. Today, in contrast, while the external trappings of our world, such as technology, transportation, and economic affluence, have advanced immensely, the generation has dropped considerably in its perception of what it means to be a great human being.

When people say, “I want to be great,” they say it without knowing what greatness means. They often mean that they want honor or material wealth. True greatness is virtually hidden from our field of vision. Most people have never personally encountered a great person.

People of our generation cannot endure exacting reproof, like the reproof of the great Ba’alei Mussar, the Jewish masters of character development, who used to analyze their students’ deeds and character traits down to their very core level, exposing their hidden flaws and shortcomings. While people in previous generations gained wisdom, insight, and motivation to grow from such deep internal scrutiny, most people today would become crushed from it or suffer from despair.

Today, a new approach to personal change must be taken. The spirit must first be uplifted, the person must become deeply aware of the idea of man’s greatness. Afterwards, he is able to endure the scrutiny of his deficiencies. The first step of character development is to learn the greatness of what man can achieve.

One who begins the journey of personal growth must first gain the ability to perceive attributes of greatness. This requires serious study, for without learning, we cannot know that there are such attributes. We live in a primarily material world, and we are much more in touch with our physicality than with our spirituality, the true root of growth and greatness. After one studies the texts that teach what greatness is, one must introspect, deeply and for an extended period of time, and discover what attributes of greatness rest within himself.

Accordingly, the first practical step is to study the classic *Mesilat Yesarim*, *The Path of the Just* (first published in 1738). It is appropriate not to attempt, at first, to discover and build within oneself the particular attribute discussed in each chapter. Rather, one should merely learn about the attribute, understand what it means. He should learn to appreciate it, value its purpose, and desire to develop it in himself. This approach is what the author himself, the Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato), advocates in his other classic work, *Derech Etz Chaim*:

Why does a man not think, every day, even for a moment, thoughts, real thoughts, like “What am I?” “Why have I come into the world?” “What does G-d request of me?” “What should I have accomplished by the end of my life?”

Such thinking about your purpose in life is the most powerful way, and has the greatest impact, to equip you to battle the inclination for indolence and apathy. It is easy to think such thoughts. It changes you rapidly and bears significant results. A man should seclude himself every day for a period of time, free from distractions, just to think over this matter about which I have spoken, and think about things such as: What did the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) do to endear them so much to G-d? What did Moses, our teacher, do that made him so great? What did King David, and all the great people before us, do? Contemplate how good it would be for man, all the days of his life, to do like them. Afterwards, explore your inner world to know what your strengths are, and ask yourself, isn't there something you can do?

Here is the general rule: A person who does not think about how great a person can be will find it very difficult to reach greatness, while a person who thinks about this matter is very close to it.

The benefit of merely thinking about the good traits of others is that it brings one close to those traits. What is the Ramchal asking us to do? He is asking us to engage in self-introspection that focuses not on the deficiencies within ourselves, but on our positive traits.

Discovering one's strengths, however, is more difficult than knowing one's deficiencies. Man today is drowning in feelings of lowliness and depression. His base inclination constantly pushes him towards inaction and mediocrity, and his conscience assaults him. If a man concentrates on himself honestly for a little time, he will see his flaws and what he is doing wrong, and as a result he will begin to despair and to lose sight of any way to change. In that state it is difficult for him to think about greatness, especially about the greatness within himself. Nevertheless, focusing on the greatness of man is the only effective way to lift oneself out of a sense of lowliness and insignificance.

Most people think that "knowing ourselves" means knowing what's wrong with us, our flaws, and our negative attributes. While it certainly is important to be aware of our weaknesses, before we explore our deficiencies, we are obligated to recognize the greatness of man, the greatness within ourselves, with candid clarity.

## **The Teacher As Leadership Framework**

### **Secular**

#### **What is a Teacher Leader? by Chris Yeager**

"Teacher leaders" are a hot topic of conversation in education right now. Over the last few years, there has been a sharp rise in the number of workshops, books and articles aimed at developing teacher leaders and deploying them to improve school outcomes.

But what exactly do we mean by a "teacher leader"? What is their role in the school, and how is it different from that of an instructional coach? Are teacher leaders just the latest school improvement fad, or are they an essential part of the fabric of a successful school? Let's take a closer look at how this important role has evolved.

#### **The Evolution of Instructional Leadership in K-12 Schools**

Teachers have always been instructional leaders in their own classrooms. But the concept of instructional leadership on a school-wide level has evolved quite a bit over recent years.

The rise of the school accountability movement via No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in the early 2000s, and the more recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), has put increased pressure on schools to standardize instruction across classrooms. Today's teachers must work within the framework of grade level standards and high-stakes testing programs designed to ensure that all students master the same core skills and content.

This level of standardization and accountability required more oversight of instruction at both a school and district level. Within the school, this often means asking principals to take on additional instructional leadership responsibilities at the classroom level in addition to their other leadership and management responsibilities.

Many districts have put instructional coaches in place to fulfill the instructional leadership role. Coaches fulfill an important role in analyzing ongoing classroom data and delivering professional development in response to this data. Because they are not responsible for one class of students, many instructional coaches are overloaded with various additional responsibilities coming from the district level as well. Like administrators, they are stretched too thin and are often unavailable to assist classroom teachers on a regular basis.

### Three Levels of Instructional Leadership

Many schools now have three levels of instructional leadership, all addressing different needs for the learning community. These include:

Principals who understand their role as instructional leaders and provide support for coaches, teachers and teacher leaders. These principals value the role of instructional coaches, allowing them to do what they should be doing and not just sending them to meetings so they don't have to pay for subs.

Instructional coaches who can help teachers understand all of their data and the rigorous standards they are responsible for teaching. Since they don't have classroom responsibilities, they should be able to spend the necessary time to make sure that professional learning is related to the data, is practical in the classroom, and can be used to address the standards instead of just piling on new ideas.

The teacher leader who knows that her responsibility is to learn new ideas at a deeper level so that when she applies them in her classroom, she uses these new ideas at a rigorous level. She can then share these productive strategies with confidence because she knows they will increase the achievement of her own students and the other students at that grade level.

### Teacher Leaders vs. Instructional Coaches

Ideally, a district should have both instructional coaches at every school and teacher leaders at every grade level or content area. Instructional coaches must have the time to analyze classroom data and help teachers implement new programs, strategies and methods in the classroom. Through professional development, active coaching and model lessons, instructional coaches can make a difference at the classroom level. Without classroom responsibilities, they have time to stay on top of emerging practices, dive deeply into research, and vet new ideas to determine which ones will be most beneficial for the school or district.

Instructional coaches are almost always experienced classroom teachers. However, when they take on the coaching role they are removed from the classroom. This means that they are no longer directly applying the knowledge and initiatives they are responsible for imparting to teachers with students of their own. Without classroom application, coaches are removed from an important part of the feedback loop: they no longer have first hand understanding of how students are responding to a new method or program, where potential challenges or misunderstanding arise, or the natural adaptations teachers make to meet the unique needs of their classrooms.

Teacher leaders are, by definition, still in the classroom, providing day-to-day leadership and support for peers informed by their own classroom experience. This makes them different than coaches in important ways. Instead of coming in from the outside to share knowledge or impose district directives, they are providing direct support for their closest peers, informed by their shared classroom experience. In this way they provide the missing link between demonstrating new methods and successfully applying them—a critical part of the learning cycle.

### Leading from the Classroom

Teacher leaders commit to developing new skills and applying them in the classroom and then sharing their lessons learned with a close group of peers. When a new initiative is rolled out, these teacher leaders become grade level or subject area experts, providing additional support for colleagues once trainers or coaches have departed. This can happen during regularly scheduled collaboration and planning periods or during time set aside for ongoing professional development.

“Leading from the classroom” gives teacher leaders a number of advantages over other types of instructional leaders.

**Ongoing support:** Teacher leaders provide ongoing support to peers long after instructional coaches or outside trainers have moved on to other initiatives. Working within a collaborative team, they have opportunities for both formal and informal daily interaction that helps them better understand the needs of the team.

**Credibility:** Teacher leaders have built-in credibility with peers, because they are actually applying the new methods in the classroom themselves. They have a vested interest in making sure new strategies and programs will work because they will be using them with their own students as well.

**Direct insight:** Teacher leaders provide critical insight into what’s working, what isn’t, and what needs to change. They can interface with coaches and curriculum leaders, providing critical insights into classroom needs and realities that can inform decision making around future initiatives.

Building a culture of shared instructional leadership takes more than simply naming a teacher a “leader” in a specific area. Teacher leaders must be given time, support and resources to successfully fulfill their role. School leaders must also create an environment of trust and collaboration among all staff. We’ll take a closer look at how school leaders can build great teacher leaders in the next blog.

## **The Growth Mindset Framework**

### **Secular**

“Treat a man as he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he could be, and he will become what he should be.”- Ralph Waldo Emerson

#### Growth Mindset

A question is asked by some: Why can’t change happen quickly? Some want quick transformation. However, such is not always effective. If a stream of water was dumped on the rock all at once, instead of the drops, what would happen? The rock would likely be washed away and much of the water not absorbed. Growth requires focus on effort and process, as well as a realistic timeline for change. We don’t expect perfect from ourselves or students. Rather, we our goal is growth.

#### Growth Mindset by InnerDrive.Co.UK

How to develop a growth mindset in Schools? You have heard about growth minded and know many teachers are keen develop it? But how do you develop a growth mindset in schools?

Growth mindset refers to a learning theory developed by Dr Carol Dweck. It revolves around the belief that you can improve intelligence, ability and performance. The opposite, a fixed mindset, refers to the belief that a

person's talents are set in stone. Years of research have shown that mindset is malleable. This means that by helping students to develop a growth mindset, we can help them to learning more effective and efficient.

### *Advantages of a Growth Mindset*

There is a lot of peer-reviewed research on the pros of encouraging a growth mindset in students. These include:

- They will seek out better feedback and persist for longer
- They cope better with transitions and develop better self-regulation
- It reduces stress and aggression in students as well as increasing wellbeing and emotional functioning
- It Improves self-esteem, learning orientation and reduces helplessness
- It's linked with grit and pro-social behaviors

Growth mindset coaching has been shown to be most beneficial for disengaged students.

### *How to develop a Growth Mindset*

There is no set way on to develop a growth mindset in students. Areas that may act as a good starting point include:

- Types of Praise – praising the process, their effort and individual development over the result, Encouraging your students to ask for and act on feedback. Encouraging a sense of curiosity
- Level of Expectation – having high, challenging but realistic expectations of their performance and communicating this to your students. This can also help to fight against Imposter Syndrome.
- Positive Group Norms – creating a growth culture that values learning, education and development

Helpful Self-Talk – Teaching students to manage how they talk to themselves and to do so in a positive, helpful and energised way.

A recent survey found that 98% of teachers believed that if their students had a growth mindset it would lead to improved student learning.

However only 20% of them believed they were good at fostering a growth mindset and 85% wanted more training and practical strategies.

## **Torah**

### **Exerpt from “Chovas HaTalmidim” by R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira**

The teacher and the parent have to recognize it as their duty to educate and bring out the potential of these children of G-d, the [future] gedolim [Torah giants] of our people. They should consider the youngsters under their care as great souls in their infancy, whom they must nurture and raise. We are gardeners in G-d's garden, and our task is to tend and protect it. Even if we see a child with a sour character and poor character traits, we should be aware that this is typical of the unripe" soul-bitter at first, sweet and fruitful in the end. Jewish children have no essentially bad nature or virtue, the Baal Shem Tov and his pupils have taught us. All we need to know is how to attend to their needs and raise them. If, for example, a teacher has an especially stubborn pupil who causes him no end of trouble, he should consider the virtues the child will display when he grows up and embraces the yoke of Torah and the service of G-d. How stubbornly and devotedly will he then see to these labors! If a teacher encounters a youngster who is chronically angry, he will find it an unpleasant experience, to be sure. But is this a legitimate basis for concluding that the child is inferior and "bad" by nature? Would we not laugh at the simpleton who plucks an esrog off the tree, eats a seed, and yells "What a bitter, vile fruit this is!"?

### **Parsha Persepectives: Rebuke in this generation by Ozer Alport**

King Solomon writes, “Do not reprimand a scoffer lest he hate you; reprove a wise man and he will love you” (Proverbs 9:8). Why would the wise Solomon advise rebuking a person who seemingly shouldn’t need it, and ignoring a scoffer whose ways need correcting? Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz (known as the Shelah Hakadosh) suggests that the erudite Solomon is actually talking about only one person. The Torah obligates a person who sees another Jew engaged in inappropriate activities to rebuke him and attempt to inspire him to change his ways and return to the proper path (Leviticus 19:17). In order to do so successfully, a bit of wisdom is required. King Solomon advises that talking condescendingly to the scoffer will be useless and cause the sinner to hate the one attempting to reprove him. However, talking to him as if he is wise and respectable will likely move the sinner to accept his words and feel they are meant for his benefit. A modern-day application of this lesson is offered by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, a well-known contemporary psychiatrist and author. He writes that when growing up, he was a typical child who got into his share of trouble. However, his father taught him a priceless lesson in how to raise well-adjusted children by the manner in which he was rebuked. All too often, we hear parents screaming at their children, “You good-for-nothing bum! How could you have been so foolish and lazy?” A child who grows up repeatedly hearing this message slowly absorbs the belief that he truly is foolish and lazy. Not surprisingly, he will likely go on to make decisions in his life which will reflect this self-image. Rabbi Twerski’s father, on the other hand, used to scold his children in Yiddish, “Es past nisht” — “What you did isn’t appropriate for somebody as wonderful and special as you!” The message which was constantly driven into him was that he was an amazing child with tremendous potential who simply needed to maintain his focus on channeling his energy properly. With this introduction, Rabbi Horowitz explains that before fully launching into his criticism of the Jewish people, Moses first built them up by emphasizing their many good qualities and tremendous potential, which would in turn allow his message to be well received. The lesson to us is clear: whenever we may need to correct a family member or even a co-worker, we should do so in the respectful manner taught to us by Moses and King Solomon. Rabbi Alport can be reached at [parsha@partnersintorah.org](mailto:parsha@partnersintorah.org)

In fact, a positive self-image is the greatest deterrent to wrongdoing. When I was a child, my father would chastise me for doing something wrong by saying, "Es past nisht (it doesn't become you). I was not told that I was bad, but rather that I was too good to be doing something inappropriate. A person with self esteem will not engage in any behavior that is beneath his dignity and will be motivated to improve upon his character defects. This is a commendable type of self-love, and if a person cares for himself in this way, he can fulfill the mitzvah of "Love your fellow as you do yourself" by caring for others as he does for himself. - Rabbi Twerski

### **Rabbi Akiva and the Rock by Rabbi Yaacov Haber**

“Then, one day walking through the field he witnessed a miracle. Not a supernatural event as did Moses when he was shepherding, but rather a very ordinary miracle. He came upon a rock. As its strength overwhelmed him, he examined the rock and noticed a cavity. "What could be strong enough to bore a hole in this rock" he asked. Then he noticed a drop of water fall upon the hole from a mountain. He understood that drop by drop, the water, soft and refreshing to the touch pierced a hole through the impenetrable stone. R. Akiva then reasoned that, if soft water can penetrate hard rock, certainly Torah, which tough as steel, can penetrate his mind.”