

# chosen words

## Personal Growth

### The 48 Essential Qualities for Learning

*If you want to acquire Torah, all you have to do is study. Right? Surprisingly, Pirkei Avos tells us that study is just one of 48 qualities that are necessary to successfully acquire Torah, to truly make it yours.*

Among the others named in the Mishna are joy, modesty, slowness to anger, a good heart, and closeness with peers. According to Rav Chaim Volozhiner, you attain Torah in direct proportion to your efforts in developing these traits. Without them, Torah can't be fully grasped.

Quality #7: Humility

The Torah teaches us to strive for the trait of humility, and gives us the example of Moshe, the greatest man in all of history, who was also the most humble. Does this mean that

Moshe didn't realize his own greatness? Could he have not known that being chosen by Hashem to lead his people out of slavery, forge them into a nation and receive the Torah were marks of extraordinary greatness? How is it possible to be aware of one's achieve-

#### Effective Prayer

### Getting Inside

*Eleventh in a Series on Preparing for Prayer*

The Hebrew word "teivah" has two meanings. Most commonly it is used to mean the vessel Noach built—the ark.

But it can also mean "word."

Thus, in Parshas Noach, when Hashem tells Noach to "enter the ark," the phrase can also mean "enter the word," directing him to envelop himself in his words of prayer.

Rabbi Moshe of Kobrin was once asked

"How can a big

person fit inside a tiny word?" He answered, "A

## Torah Tools for Personal Growth

### Inspiration

#### Ideas

#### Excellence

#### Success

ments, and yet be humble?

Rabbeinu Yonah explains that one who is haughty, who lacks humility, is most often one who underestimates himself. Because he feels inadequate, he protects himself from being "discovered" by slapping on a veneer of pride. But such feelings of

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## Better Relationships

### Speak Up

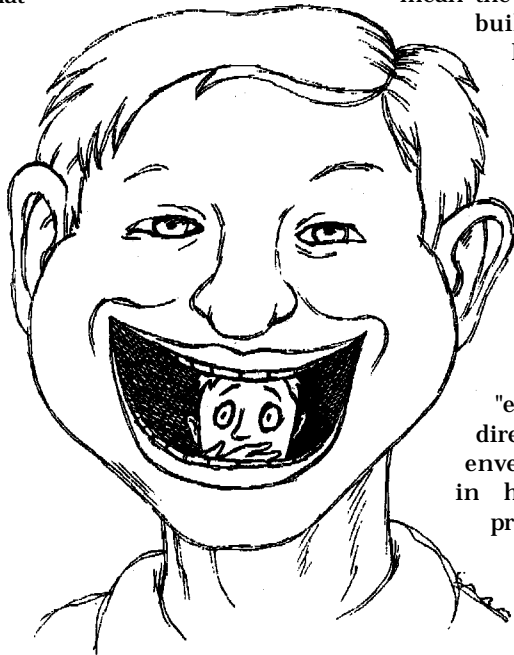
*Eleventh in a Series on Loshon Hora-Free Living*

When a loshon hora conversation is in full throttle, and efforts to divert it have failed, it's then necessary to take the direct approach. But this doesn't mean going to war. A non-confrontational way to handle the situation is to put it in terms of oneself: "Could we change the subject? We're wrecking my latest loshon hora resolution." Or one can leave the words "loshon hora" out altogether: "You know, I have so much to work on myself, I don't even want to think about someone else's problems."

Sometimes it's hard to find the right opening to interject such a remark. But waiting is not an option; one must be ready to jump right in, because each word spoken adds to the damage. Imagine the room were on fire behind the speaker's back. You wouldn't wait for a polite moment to tell him.

Speaking up can feel awkward at first. But when you see how easily you can succeed in cutting off loshon hora, your confidence will grow, and each successive instance will become easier. You will have saved yourself, the speaker and listeners untold spiritual harm, and protected the subject from devastating damage as well.

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"A haughty veneer masks a low self-esteem."

#### Shabbos Table Discussion:

Brainstorm together to develop a one-sentence thought that will help you come humbly before Hashem each time you pray.

*Adapted from "Growing Each Day," by Abraham J. Twerski, with permission from Mesorah Publications*



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# Listening to Anger

Sixth in a Series on Anger

No knowledge is more important than self-knowledge in the effort to refine our own character. And few tools are as valuable as anger, which has a lot to teach us. If we listen to our own outbursts, we can discern a lot about our inner workings and our priorities. For instance, if we become upset when someone accidentally breaks a possession, we learn that material things matter to us, perhaps even more than another person's feelings. If requests for favors annoy us, we learn that our commitment to chesed might be lacking. If we curse or abuse others in

anger, we learn that anger destroys our self-control. From anger comes knowledge of our need to control others; our level of self-esteem; our level of patience and humility; our willingness to accept responsibility; our ability to forgive, and much more.

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Anger is an important teacher —if we will only hear it, analyze it and use it—to gain that crucial knowledge with which to grow.

**To Do:**  
Think of a situation that normally gets you angry. What can you learn from this that will help you avoid

anger in the future?  
*"Anger, the Inner Teacher," by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, with permission from the author*

## 48 Qualities

Continued from front

inferiority are unnecessary, because each of us possesses the immeasurable potential contained in the soul implanted within us by Hashem.

When one comprehends his innate self-worth and potential, as Moshe certainly did, one loses the need to inflate himself before others. He isn't ashamed to ask advice and admit what he doesn't know, enabling him to learn from others throughout his life, to cultivate the open mind and open heart essential to growing in his service of Hashem.

**Shabbos Table Discussion:**

Think of other people, either from Torah or from your life, who have accomplished much, yet embody the trait of humility. What specific instances can you recall that illustrate this trait?

*Adapted from "Majesty of Man," by Rabbi Henoah Leibowitz, shlita, with permission from Mesorah Publications*

## Speak Up

Continued from front

**Shabbos Table Discussion:**

Role-play a loshon hora conversation (using a fictional subject) and let each member of the family try to bring it to a halt.

*Adapted from "Strategies," an upcoming book to be published by the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation*

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# Really Living

Dayan Yechezkel Abramsky was assigned to a bitter internment in a Siberian prison. Everything he lived for—learning, mitzvos, davening—were denied him, and even worse, he was subjected to the ridicule and scorn of guards and prisoners alike.

One morning, as he began repeating the words of "Modeh Ani," he stopped himself. "Why am I thanking Hashem for another day of life?" he thought. "This isn't a life." Nonetheless, he finished the verse. When he came to the last words, "Rabbah emunasecha,"—"great is your faithfulness,"—his spirits revived. "Yes, G-d, it's true I can't perform your mitzvos and learn your Torah. But they can't take away my faith in You."

Each day we live is an expression of emunah in Hashem. Even on days when adversity prevents us from accomplishing anything at all, if we've accepted these adversities with emunah, we have indeed lived the day.

*Adapted from "Facing Adversity with Faith," by M.L. Cramer, with permission from Feldheim Publishers*

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