

Tani Talks Life (TTL)-The Shiur Where We Talk A Topic Per Session With Some Practical Lessons

Tonight's Topic: "What is real strength?"

All of my Podcasts of the TTP, TTPA, TTOT, and this life show, AND NOW THE DAF SHOW as well are on podcast forums including iTunes Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and MOST RECENTLY, YIDPOD! (The Jewish podcast app service—download it on the app store!)

Shout out to Jake W/Eli N for their amazing hard work!

For the refuah and yeshuah of anyone who wants or needs

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L'zecher nishmas Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ZT"L whose yartheit is tonight bo bayom, Harav Yaakov Tzvi Ben Dovid Aryeh

One beautiful quote/mantra from Rabbi Sacks - "*Non jews are comfortable with Jews who are comfortable with themselves, none jews are uncomfortable with jews who are uncomfortable with themselves*"

Who is the strongest person you know? What makes them strong? What type of strength are you thinking about?

Strength is not in muscles, weights, dumbbells, or medicine balls. Strength is from inner character and inner conviction. As Pirkei Avot tells us, and we'll see it again later g-d willing:

Ben zoma asks, eizehu giber? Hakovesh es yitzro. Who is strong? He who conquers/ overpowers his inclinations/desires/urges/bad traits. A truly strong person is not the body builder from muscle beach in guatelehara. The truly strong person is one who works on himself, trying to overcome himself.

Take the example of sleep. I personally would like nothing more than to sleep in late every single day. When the alarm goes off at 6 in the morning, I'd like to toss it on the floor until 9 am. But of course, I can't do that. Mind you the little boys come in to the room anyway before 6 am, but there's just too much to do, too much to get ready—for everyone to get out to school and work by 8 am. We *have* to get going. It definitely is not easy for me on any level, and I have to fight within myself to get out of bed and get started on the day, every day. It takes much inner work, much inner strength.

We all have to harness our inner strength. What is real strength? The strength to work on ourselves, to overcome ourselves, to fine tune our insides and our traits, which is one of the major life missions of all of us.

The patriarchs come to mind when I think of inner strength. I think of Avraham withstanding his ten tests being the only real Jew in the world as we are now going through the three parshiyot of

Avraham, especially with this week of Chayei Sara when Avraham must find the strength to deal with the loss of his beloved wife. Avraham was the one real IVRI against all the non believers or idol worshippers on Earth.

I think of Yitzchak having the inner strength to willingly (almost) sacrifice himself on the akeidah. I think of Yaakov with all his struggles throughout his whole life. Further on we can think of David Hamelech and his very difficult life, as well as Rabbi Akiva who started late in life and lost so much—starting from abject poverty at age 40.

When I think of a tremendously strong person in recent past decades, I think of the Klausenberger rebbe, whose family was very close with my wife's grandfather's family.

Wikipedia has a whole description about the klausenberger rubber, Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam:

Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam (January 10, 1905 – June 18, 1994) was an **Orthodox rabbi** and the founding **Rebbe** of the **Sanz-Klausenburg Hasidic** dynasty. Halberstam became one of the youngest rebbes in Europe, leading thousands of followers in the town of **Klausenburg**, Romania, before **World War II**. His wife, eleven children and most of his followers were murdered by the **Nazis** while he was incarcerated in several **concentration camps**. After the war, he moved to the United States and later to **Israel**, rebuilt Jewish communal life in the **displaced persons** camps of Western Europe, re-established his dynasty in the United States and Israel, founded a **Haredi** neighborhood in Israel and a **Sanz** community in the United States, established a hospital in Israel run according to **Jewish law**, and rebuilt his own family with a second marriage and the birth of seven more children.

The Rebbe's decision to move to the United States was not a permanent one. Throughout his travails in the Holocaust, he always had in mind the goal of settling in **Israel**. Toward that end, he established the **Kiryat Sanz** neighborhood in the beachside city of **Netanya** in 1958.^[1] In so doing, he was the first Rebbe to establish a **Haredi** neighborhood in an Israeli development town. Over the next few years, he raised money for the establishment of key neighborhood institutions, including girls' and boys' schools and **yeshivas**, an **orphanage**, and an old-age home.^[1] The Rebbe moved permanently to Israel in 1960, settling in Netanya and directing both the community there and in Williamsburg. He also founded **battei medrash** and schools in other cities in Israel, and established the **Kiryat Sanz** neighborhood of **Jerusalem** as well. In 1968 he founded another Sanz community in **Union City, New Jersey**,^[5] and afterwards divided his time between that community and his residence in Netanya.^[1]

Laniado Hospital^[edit]

The Rebbe is known for having established **Laniado Hospital**, a voluntary, not-for-profit 484-bed hospital in Kiryat Sanz, Netanya. The hospital is run according to **Jewish law**.

The vision for establishing the hospital originated during the Holocaust. At the cornerstone-laying for the second building in 1980, he told the assemblage in **Yiddish**:

I was saved from the gas chambers, saved from Hitler. I spent several years in Nazi death camps. Besides the fact that they murdered my wife and 11 children, my mother, my sisters and my brother – of my whole family, some 150 people, I was the only one who survived – I witnessed their cruelty. I remember as if it were today how they shot me in the arm. I was afraid to go to the Nazi infirmary, though there were doctors there. I knew that if I went in, I'd never come out alive. ... Despite my fear of the Nazis, I plucked a leaf from a tree and stuck it to my wound to stanch the bleeding. Then I cut a branch and tied it around the wound to hold it in place. With God's help, it healed in three days. Then I promised myself that if, with God's help, I got well and got out of there, away from those *resha'im* (wicked people), I would build a hospital in **Eretz Yisrael** where every human being would be cared for with dignity. And the basis of that hospital would be that the doctors and nurses would believe that there is a God in this world and that when they treat a patient, they are fulfilling the greatest **mitzvah** in the Torah.^[6]

Rabbi Halberstam spent 15 years raising funds to build the hospital, which would come to be named **Laniado Hospital**, after the Laniado brothers, two bankers from **Switzerland** whose estate provided a \$300,000 donation for the Rebbe.^{[6][7]} The hospital's first building, an **outpatient clinic**, opened in 1975.^[8] In the next few years, a **maternity ward**, **emergency room**, **internal medicine** department, a **cardiology** unit, and an **intensive-care unit** opened. The hospital continued to expand, and today encompasses two medical centers, a children's hospital, a geriatric center and a nursing school, serving a regional population of over 450,000.^[9] The Rebbe continued to plan and supervise the expansion of the hospital until his death in 1994.

In addition to his achievements in rebuilding the Sanz-Klausenberg dynasty and establishing many communal institutions, one of the Rebbe's most far-reaching accomplishments was his establishment of "*Mifal HaShas*" ("Talmud Factory") in 1982. This worldwide project encourages thousands of Jewish men and boys to study copious amounts of **Talmud** and **Shulchan Aruch** and complete written tests on 20–30 pages per month in return for a monthly **stipend**. *Mifal HaShas* continues to operate today worldwide.

Can you imagine such strength of character and spirit to go through such tragedy and come out so strong and accomplish so much? Mind boggling and amazing—-simply amazing.

chabad.org points out from Mendel Kalmenson

In difficult moments, many have found encouragement in a pivotal and inspiring teaching of the Rebbe, based on the words of the Talmud,¹ “G-d does not make impossible demands on His creations.”

Just as it is inconceivable that loving parents would knowingly give their child a task that is beyond their capabilities, **G-d**, our loving Parent, does not present us with a challenge that is beyond our capacity to meet.

The Rebbe took this idea a step further, teaching that the greater the challenge we face in life, *the greater is the accompanying inner strength we possess* in order to overcome the challenge. As

the following story demonstrates, in the Rebbe's worldview, challenges of any kind are indicative of inner strength, not weakness.

A traditional Jew who found himself in a relationship forbidden by the Torah once visited the Rebbe to discuss his religious quandary.

After presenting his situation to the Rebbe, the man fell silent. He braced himself for a rebuke, expecting to be told how grave a transgression he was committing.

The Rebbe was silent for a little while. "I envy you," he finally said.

The young man did not quite grasp the meaning. "The Rebbe," he thought, "who is on the highest of spiritual planes, is envious of *me*?"

The Rebbe continued: "There are many ladders in life; each person is given his or her own. The ladders present themselves as life's challenges and difficult choices. The tests you face are the ladders that elevate you to great heights—the greater the challenge, the higher the ladder.

"G-d has given you this difficult test because He believes you can overcome it and has endowed you with the ability to do so. Only the strongest are presented a ladder as challenging as yours.

"Don't you see, then, why I envy you?"²

Along similar lines, the Rebbe wrote the following lines to a young man who wrote to him describing the difficult moral and religious dilemma he faced:

By the Grace of G-d

25th of Shevat, 5746 [February 4, 1986]

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 26th, in which you write about a serious problem.

As requested, I will remember you in prayer for the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good....

Needless to say, a person who is afflicted with this or other neurological problems may well ask, "Why has G-d created such a compulsive drive, one that is in direct contradiction to His moral Code? Why has he afflicted me, who desires to comply fully with His commandments?"

No human being can answer such questions, which only G-d, the Creator, can answer. One observation that can be suggested in relation to the question "Why me?": If an individual experiences a particularly difficult, or trying, situation, it may be assumed that G-d has given him extraordinary powers to overcome the extraordinary difficulty. The individual concerned is probably unaware of his real inner strength; the trial may therefore be designed for the sole purpose of bringing out in the individual his hidden strength, which, after overcoming his problem, can be added henceforth to the arsenal of his revealed capacities in order to utilize both for infinitely greater achievements for the benefit of himself and others.

[Maimonides, the "Guide of the Perplexed" of his generation and of all subsequent generations, who was also acclaimed as the greatest physician of his time, declares in a well-known passage in his famous Code, Mishneh Torah (Yad Hachazaka): "Every person has the option (power), if

he so desires, to direct himself to do only good and be a tzaddik, or, if he chooses, to follow the bad road and be a rasha. Do not ever think that a person is predestined from birth to be a tzaddik or rasha. Nor is there any inner compulsion to make a choice, but one has the capacity to choose the right behavior, and it is entirely a matter of one's own will and determination" (Free translation from Hil. Teshuvah, Ch. 5. See it there at length.)]

As the Rebbe made clear on many occasions,³ the idea that G-d does not give human beings greater challenges than they can handle applies to all of life's challenges, not just moral and religious ones.

In the summer of 1976, the Israeli Defense Forces sponsored a tour of the United States for a large group of disabled veterans. While they were in New York, a Lubavitcher chasid came to their hotel and suggested that they meet with the Rebbe. When the group accepted the invitation, arrangements were quickly made to transport them (many of them were wheelchair bound) to the Rebbe's headquarters. Soon they found ourselves in the famous large synagogue in the basement of 770 Eastern Parkway.

After apologizing to the group for his Ashkenazic-accented Hebrew, the Rebbe delivered a short address, in which he said: "If a person has been deprived of a limb or a faculty, this itself indicates that G-d has given him special powers to overcome the limitations this entails and to surpass the achievements of ordinary people. You are not 'disabled' or 'handicapped,' but special and unique, as you possess potentials that the rest of us do not."

"I therefore suggest," the Rebbe continued, adding with a smile, "of course it is none of my business, but Jews are famous for voicing opinions on matters that do not concern them—that you should no longer be called *nechei Yisrael* ('the disabled of Israel,' their official designation by the IDF) but *metzuyanei Yisrael* ('the special of Israel')."⁴

After delivering his address, the Rebbe walked among the group, going from wheelchair to wheelchair, shaking their hands and adding a personal word or two to each. He also gave each a dollar bill to contribute to charity on his behalf, making them his partners in the fulfillment of a mitzvah.

It was the Rebbe's staunch and empowering belief that all challenges, as impossible and insurmountable as they may seem, are accompanied by a commensurate reservoir of fortitude and inner strength, empowering us to reach deeper into ourselves and muster the courage and conviction necessary to forge ahead on our life's journey. The Rebbe taught that a challenge is a calling and that the tribulations sprinkled throughout our lives are there in order to bring us into closer contact with our deeper or higher selves.

What a tremendous outlook to have and to be reminded as to how we should view different struggles and challenges in life.

Rabbi Berel Wein points out on rabbiwein.com

When we finish a book of the Torah we are privileged to participate in the traditional Jewish custom of reciting publicly the blessing "chazak, chazak v'nitzacheik." This blessing is proclaimed at the conclusion of the reading of one of the five books of Moshe. This custom is an ancient one, dating back to Talmudic times in Babylonia and the Land of Israel. The blessing

literally means, "be strong, be strong and let us strengthen ourselves." The usual interpretation given to the recitation of this phrase, when concluding the reading of one of the books of the Torah, is that we should strengthen ourselves for further Torah readings and greater accomplishments in Torah knowledge and Jewish life. But why the use of the verb that symbolizes strength - "be strong?" Would it not be more sensible to say "lmad, lmad, v'nilmad" - "study, study, and we will be learned?" What does strength have to do with the completion of a book of the Torah?

It is obvious that the above custom and its blessing has little to do with physical strength, though health and bodily strength are certainly necessary for normal life and any spiritual or intellectual achievements. The custom is therefore based upon the unique Jewish definition of strength - of an inner characteristic of strength of purpose, will and morality. The rabbis in Avot taught us: "Who is a strong person? One who has the strength to overcome one's base desires." Thus, self-control, moral probity, modesty of behavior and personality are the components of true Jewish strength. It is therefore most fitting that the blessing of strength is recited publicly at the conclusion of the reading of one of the books of the Torah. For the entire lesson to be learned from that holy book that we have just concluded reading and learning from is this message of Jewish inner spiritual strength, probity of behavior and self-discipline. We are a strong people, perhaps ultimately the strongest of all peoples, because of our inner strength. Bilaam, no friend of ours, nevertheless compared us to a lion. Rome thought of the Jews as being their strongest enemy and most unconquerable foe. Even the anti-Semites, who unfortunately currently abound, emphasize our attribute of strength. This leads then to their belief in the real plausibility of their cockeyed conspiracy theories about how the Jews run the world. But they misread our strength. Our strength lies in our faith and our loyalty to God and His Torah and to the traditions of Israel that have nurtured us for thousands of years.

There is a special ceremony that custom dictates to take place at the conclusion of a tractate of the Mishna or Talmud. Some sort of festive meal usually accompanies that ceremony, called a "siyum," which literally means "the ending." The "siyum" itself involves the recitation of a blessing thanking God for the privilege of studying His Torah and for being able to celebrate the completion of one of the tractates of Mishna or Talmud. The ceremony also includes a commitment to study further and to return and review once again the tractate just completed. In fact, most times the "siyum" ceremony includes the actual beginning of study of another tractate of Mishna and Talmud. This is to indicate the infinity of Torah study and that there really is never any end point to this pursuit. This is also in line with the custom practiced on Simchat Torah. Immediately after the Chatan Torah has completed the reading of the cycle of the entire five books of Moshe, the Chatan Bereshit begins the cycle anew by the reading of the first chapter of the Torah. At a "siyum," traditionally a "hadran" lecture is delivered by a scholar. The "hadran" concentrates on a certain subject covered in the tractate that has just been completed and also connects to the subject matter of the new tractate that will now be studied. There are a many great books of Jewish scholarship based solely on the lectures of "hadran." The "siyum" always concludes with a prayer for strength to be able to continue studying Torah and with a special text of "kadish" regarding the redemption of Israel, Zion and Jerusalem. The prophet Zecharia taught

us: "not by physical strength nor by physical power alone shall you prevail, but rather by the strength of My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." And so it is.

So our strength, our true strength comes from strength of inner will and strength of inner character. What is real strength? Inner conviction and inner ability to fight the battles within and to fight the battles, the spiritual battles, around us.

Rabbi Wein points out on aish.com

The Rabbis of the Talmud said that Israel is the strongest and boldest of all nations. This was meant both as criticism of Jewish brashness and aggressiveness and a compliment to the tenacity and singleness of purpose of the Jewish people. Only a very strong people could have withstood and survived the events of the centuries of the Jewish story.

The strength of Israel was built upon an inner sense of self-worth, of being chosen and unique. It encompassed an iron determination to build and create and prosper and survive, no matter what the odds or the opposition. Our strength was built upon a vision of a better world and a holy future. It provided strength when we were obviously physically weak and persecuted.

We as a nation are truly strong when we all stand together with common purpose and omen goal, without divisiveness within us.

Dr. Morinis points out on aish.com

In Mussar thought, the strength that concerns us is not the power to move mountains but the strength you need to overcome your greatest challenge: yourself. This is an especially important concern for our generation because we live surrounded by a culture that exuberantly celebrates complete self-indulgence, the very opposite quality from self-restraint.

It's true that not everyone needs to develop self-restraint. Some people are already masters of saying "no" to themselves and would do much better to foster soul-traits that will help them loosen up and unbind themselves. Still, everyone still has much to gain from this exploration, even if *gevurah* is not a major subject on your curriculum at this time.

Self-restraint works for us in a positive way when it helps us say "no" to those desires that are not nourishing. Self-restraint is negative when it keeps us from doing things that actually are good for the soul.

Saying no to ourselves is not a hugely popular concept today. Look at the significant portion of the population that is overweight. Even among those who do want to hold their body weight within a healthy line, many prefer diet pills to the disciplined act of pushing away the plate. How can so many people continue to smoke cigarettes in the face of all the proof that it is nothing less than suicide? And among those who would stop, sales of anti-smoking products boom because people can't simply stop themselves from striking the match.

Exercising self-restraint has always been difficult. Perhaps that's why the Hebrew word *gevurah* contains the Hebrew word for hero, *gibor*. Exercising self-restraint is nothing less than a heroic act.

You can be a hero by saying no to that chocolate. (You can fill in your own place of dynamic challenge here. Maybe it's coffee, wine, television, lottery tickets, pulp fiction? Where in your life do you have difficulty saying no to your wishes?)

The Jewish tradition in no way condemns our wishes per se. We have no tradition of monastic or priestly staying away from getting married. Wine is sacramental. Feasting is more common than fasting. The issue is not the need itself, because the rabbis recognize that it is a constructive force in life. We read in a *midrash* (*Bereshit Rabbah 9:7*) that the world would not exist but for need, because without it, "no one would parent a child, build a house, or make a career."

But the picture changes drastically when it is allowed to go unbridled. Without fences and limits, our otherwise healthy wishes become a source of enslavement. The Jewish tradition provides us with many laws and communal guidelines to help us restrain our needs -- you shall not kill; you shall not steal; etc.— though these commandments for self-restraint are actually not enough to guide a spiritual life. As soon as we encounter rules, it seems to be human nature to start to get very clever about finding ways to gratify our wishes even within the parameters of the rules.

We have to find healthy outlets, otherwise known as sublimation in Psychology defense mechanism thought—to push our wishes and needs into proper functional outlets. We need to make sure to use our strength to put and push our wishes through in proper manners.

Here's a story from Nesanel Yoel Safran from aish.com

"Sorry kid, I can't help you." The door slammed closed before Matt even had a chance to say, "Thanks anyway." It had been one hard afternoon. He and his friend, Gary, had been so full of energy and enthusiasm when they began their rounds trying to sell raffle tickets to raise money for their school's annual charity drive for the local children's hospital.

The pair who sold the most - besides doing a good deed - would also win a big prize. But it had been a lot harder than they thought, and two hours later the guys had given up on the prize and were feeling pretty down about the whole thing.

"What do you say, Gary? Should we just call it quits?" Matt asked.

Gary shrugged. "I don't know. We have one more street we're supposed to do. I don't imagine we'll do any better here than the other streets, but we might at least try and do a few more houses, don't you think?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Matt reluctantly agreed and the two of them decided to save time by splitting up, each taking one side of the street.

Matt took a deep breath as he shuffled up the driveway of the first house on the street. He still had so many unsold tickets. A few people had bought them, but a lot of people seemed really annoyed when asked.

Matt hesitated as he nervously got ready to ring the doorbell. He pushed the small red button and braced for the worst.

The door slowly opened. "Why, hello there!" came a surprisingly cheerful voice. Matt looked up to see an elderly woman with smiling eyes. She didn't look familiar, but from her greeting, Matt wondered if she knew him.

"And how can I help you today?" she asked.

"Um, I, I'm selling raffle tickets for our school charity drive," he quickly stammered. This was the point where a lot of people had closed the door on him.

"Really?" she smiled, "That's fantastic. A young fellow like you would take off from a whole day of playing to do such a good deed!"

Matt was taken aback by the lady's comment and felt himself straightening up as she continued to speak. "Now you stay right there, young man. I'll be right back."

Maybe I'm actually going to sell a ticket, Matt thought to himself.

A moment later the woman returned. "I'm sure you must be pretty hungry and thirsty after working so hard for such a good cause. This nice cold drink should hit the spot! And you came at the right time - these cookies are straight from the oven."

Matt's mouth watered as the lady invited him to sit down.

"You should be so proud of yourself to be working hard to help make sick children's lives more pleasant. Would you like another cookie?" she asked.

Matt looked at his watch. "No thanks. They were great but actually I've got to get going," he said, standing up and turning to leave.

"Not until I buy a ticket first." The lady smiled and pulled a bill out of her handbag. Matt blushed, he had felt so good just being there and hearing all her encouragement that he had forgotten even to ask. She wished him the best of luck and waved to him as he walked down the driveway. The snack and drink - and especially the lady's kind and encouraging words - made him feel so much better than he had just a few minutes ago.

He got to the sidewalk to find his friend, Gary, sitting on a bench, his head hanging down.

"How'd it go?" asked Matt with a new sense of energy and excitement.

"Not good," Gary replied. "They wouldn't even open the door. Let's just call it a day. Hey? What are you so happy about? You just sell all your tickets or something?"

"No, only one. But the lady was so nice and encouraging..." Then, looking at his down-looking friend, Matt got an inspiration. If positive, encouraging words helped him so much, why not pass them on?

"Hey Gary, do you realize what a fantastic thing it is that you're trying to do, even if it's hard? What do you say we finish it out to the end of the street? Let's give it our best shot!"

Gary sat up a bit straighter and smiled for the first time in hours. "Okay," he said.

Matt didn't know how much money they would raise, but he already felt rich from learning from that special lady the secret of how to raise another person's spirits.

Sometimes, strength doesn't come from the gym. It comes from a kind act, a kind deed, kind words, encouraging speech from those right around you. A person can give you strength, real spiritual and physical strength by hearing you out, talking to you, giving you a snack, and helping you recharge.

From aish.com daily lift

Why don't people like to remain silent when others insult them? Because they're afraid that others might think they're weak and unable to answer back.

The truth is, it takes much greater strength to remain silent when someone insults you. Revenge, on the other hand, is a sign of weakness. A revenger lacks the necessary strength of character to forgive.

Source: (Rabbi Yerachmiel Shulman; Ketzais Ha'shemesh Big'vuraso, p.42; Rabbi Pliskin's "Gateway to Happiness," p. 302)

The best way often to answer a nasty person, a narcissistic person, and aggressive bully, is sometimes not to answer at all, or to answer in a soft, gentle tone. I personally have had bosses and encounters when being yelled out or demeaned demanded an answer and they were waiting for one, but instead I either did not answer at all, or answered in a soft gentle tone—and that really kicks them off of their horse. It takes alot of work and willpower but it does work.

From Rabbi Heller on aish.com

Just as achieving peak physical health requires working on one's core strength, so too achieving peak spiritual health requires working on one's emotional core strength.

A person who has a strong core self will be able to take on most anything life throws at him. He will experience life with vitality, passion, and empowerment. He will be moving towards developing and actualizing his unique creative potential while being able to form deep intimate relationships without fear of losing himself.

Someone with a weak core self will find himself struggling with taking ownership of his life, developing his unique creative potential, and building stable intimate relationships.

Here are 12 questions to help you evaluate the strength of your core self.

Evaluate each question on a scale of 1-5. Be fully honest; no one but you will see this.

1. I accept myself fully with my limitations, weaknesses, and flaws without shame or self-hate.
2. I have the capacity to experience a wide range of feelings without being overwhelmed or paralyzed by them.
3. I take full responsibility for my life while refusing to blame others or circumstances.
4. I can experience deep closeness and emotional intimacy without fear of being abandoned or engulfed by the other person.
5. I am able to tell others the truth about how I feel with minimal anxiety.
6. I have the ability to consistently find creative and satisfying solutions to my problems and life challenges.
7. I have the ability to stick to commitments I make.
8. I feel deserving of having good things in life happen for me.
9. I am able to consistently assert myself in order to get my needs met without shame, guilt, or aggressiveness.
10. I can disagree with others and still respect and love them.
11. I handle criticism and rejection well and regain my equilibrium fairly quickly.
12. I am generally content with my portion and am not jealous or envious of others.

If your score is 50 to 60 you are a very solid and emotionally healthy person. And you didn't need this test to tell you that because you and your friends already knew it! If you scored between 25 and 50 it is suggested that you consider doing some self-help work in order to improve your emotional core strength.

The real problem is if you scored 24 or below. Although this is not a scientific test, the guess is that such a score indicates that you are not an emotionally strong person and should seek out someone to help you work on yourself. Working with a good psychotherapist may be the most effective way to strengthen your core self.

A person can work on inner strength in a few ways—

1. **Work on self-acceptance.** Acceptance gives us peace, wholeness, and strength.
2. **Stop comparing yourself to others.** Don't copy someone else
3. **Don't say yes when you mean no.** Be honest about what you need and want. Take care of yourself and stop caring so much about what others think -do what you really want to help!
5. **Think for yourself.**
6. **Give yourself permission to make mistakes.—do teshuva**
7. **Know that no matter what, God always loves and values you.**

A person has to first and foremost take care of themselves—be there for themselves and make sure they are in a sound mind and pace to have proper strength internally-with eating, sleeping right and having self care in all ways.

Slovie Yungreiss Wolf explains on aish.com

Amidst all the chaos we have the power to bring light.

King David says it best: “The world is built through kindness.” When the universe around you is falling down you have the ability to raise it up. Compassion becomes a mighty force of strength that transforms sorrow into joy. Every time you connect with another soul you create a link of unity. Hope for the future is born.

Slovie Yungreiss Wolf also points out on aish.com

To be physically strong, we stop eating junk and start lifting weights.

To be emotionally strong, let's do the same.

Begin by getting rid of mental junk food. Feeding yourself unhealthy beliefs about your life story, your potential to succeed or blaming others accomplishes nothing. This is like downloading a virus on your laptop. You'd never do it because you know the harm it will cause, so why damage yourself emotionally?

Start clearing out your emotional malware:

*clear out unhealthy beliefs in yourself. Stop saying things like “I never win”, “No one ever likes my ideas”, “My life's impossible”. We are doomed to failure if we see ourselves in a negative light.

*clear out unhealthy beliefs about others. Stop comparing your life. Stop resenting other people's success. Challenge yourself to get off Facebook and Instagram and Tiktok and Pinterest and WhatsApp a few hours a day. See what happens. Don't limit yourself by believing that other people control the way you live. Maybe there are people in your life who frustrate you but you

choose your reaction. Rebbetzin Jugreis A”H would always say, “Don’t allow people to live in your head rent free.”

*clear out unhealthy beliefs about how life happens. We are used to getting whatever we want with a click of a button. We have forgotten how to wait for things. Amazon Prime delivers into our house in no time. We expect. We want. We get. Instant gratification makes life feel complicated when we don’t have our dreams fulfilled quickly. If this is our attitude we will be left feeling frustrated and disappointed.

Ask: Which unhealthy beliefs are preventing me from mastering my life?

Exercise Mental Weights

Step 1: Work Your Core Muscles

This means that we identify our strengths, our values, and our beliefs. Let’s ask ourselves these basic questions: Do I believe in my ability to succeed? What could I dedicate my time to? What type of person do I hope to become? Focus and clarify a life goal. Set daily targets that are doable even if they may seem small. These goals can be character traits such as working on not losing it when things go wrong. An example is keeping control when you misplace your wallet. Think of it as starting with 5 pound weights and increasing as time goes. Work your way up; what happens the next time someone says something that really angers you?

Step 2: Allocate Your Energy

If we use a huge amount focusing on worries or negativity, how much energy remains to think positive?

Clear away the habit of allowing others to discourage you, belittle your dreams, or placing yourself in ‘worry mode’. You can’t strengthen your core by wasting energy needlessly.

The moment your head starts taking you to a negative direction, counter the thought with a positive one. Negativity and worrying are ‘brain drains’. We require brain power to strengthen our mental fortitude.

Step 3: Find Perspective

Perspective means that we decide to focus on the good or the purpose that every situation has. Yes, there may be times that it is difficult to see the positive. This translates into ‘mental strength’.

In life we often ask why? Why did this happen, why did I have to go through this? In Hebrew, ‘why’ translates into ‘lamah’ which can be read as ‘limah?’-- for what purpose? We don’t simply ask why me? We move on to ponder. What is the purpose of this challenge? What can I learn, how can I grow, what is the potential here to discover something about myself that I never knew before?

This brings us to endurance; to greatness instead of giving in to failure. Perspective allows us to pick ourselves up and keep on walking despite the stress weighing us down.

See the good now. Ask yourself how to strengthen your values and beliefs despite the disappointments. Success will come when you are able to handle life and maintain self-worth.

Mental strength means that we overcome, even triumph, when life brings hardship.

We need more strong moral role models in our lives-especially the lives of our children. We need to learn from those who created a life of blessing through ‘living strong’.

We have been deluged with witnessing the failings of too many men and women who have succumbed to human frailty.

Those who have had family members go through the gehinnom that was the holocaust know about real strength. When you think of mental strength, you know that you have been privileged to witness the power of the human spirit. We should never be fed 'emotional junk food'. Be aware of the ability to create, to find purpose, to keep walking and never ever give up. Think of those whose entire family perished and began life anew and never sank into sadness, but with a joy of life and purpose like the klausenberger rubber.

Rebbetzin Jungreis was once asked by a university student after she spoke: "Rebbeitzin, you always have a smile on your face. You've gone through so much in life, the concentration camps, and the loss of your husband. How can you always be smiling? Tell me, does your smile start on your lips or in your heart?"

The Rebbetain replied that she had never really thought about it, but now that she was asked the question she realizes that her smile must start on her lips. "In my heart I have many worries. I know pain. But once I place a smile on my lips, it travels to my heart and makes everything easier." She demonstrated once again the power to endure, to create connection, to overcome and not fall into despair despite the hardships we face.

Each generation has its challenge. Each person faces his or her life test. We can discover the mental strength to endure and harness the spiritual fortitude that lies within our soul.

Understand where real strength comes from. Think about how to get rid of the emotional junk food and the emotional bad habits. Think how to tap into the inner recesses of power to help you stand up and fight the evil around you and within you every single day. You will be much better off for it and the world will be as well.

Let's look at some other sources.

Proverbs 16:32

טוב אָרֶךְ אַפַּיִם מִגִּבּוֹר וּמֵעֵל כָּרוּחַו מִלְכָּד עִיר:

Better to be forbearing than mighty, To have self-control than to conquer a city.

PTC. Real strength is that of the inside, not on the outside, of your inner muscles, not your physical outer ones.

Pirkei Avot 4:1

....: בֵּן זֹמָא אוֹמֵר... אֵיזֵהוּ גִבּוֹר, הַכּוֹבֵשׁ אֶת יָצְרוֹ, שְׁנַאֲמַר (משלי טז) טוֹב אָרֶךְ אַפַּיִם מִגִּבּוֹר וּמִשְׁלִכְרוּחַו מִלְכָּד עִיר

Ben Zoma said: Who is mighty? He who subdues his [evil] inclination, as it is said: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

PTC. This is the true strong warrior. Someone who works on his inner self, his true self and put real effort into changing bad traits, bad middot or bad qualities.

Jeremiah 9:22-23

Thus said the LORD: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; Let not the strong man glory in his strength; Let not the rich man glory in his riches. But only in this should one glory: In his earnest devotion to Me. For I the LORD act with kindness, Justice, and equity in the world; For in these I delight—declares the LORD.

PTC. Real strength to be proud of is strength to make the world a better place, and be involved in kindness, justice, and good things in the world through mitzvoth, Chessed, and torah learning.

Proverbs 21:22

עֵיר גִּבּוֹרִים עָלָה חָכָם וַיִּרְדּוּ עֵץ מִבְּטָחָהּ:

One wise man prevailed over a city of warriors And brought down its mighty stronghold.

PTC. A wise man can be stronger in many ways than a bodybuilder and use real might in the right ways.

Avot D'Rabbeinu Natan 23

Who is the strongest of all? One who is able to conquer his desire, as it says (Proverbs 16:32), “Better to be forbearing than mighty, to have self-control than to conquer a city.” And one who conquers his desire is considered as if he had conquered a city full of warriors, as it says (Proverbs 21:22), “One wise man prevailed over a city of warriors.” The true warriors are warriors in Torah, as it says (Psalms 103:20), “Mighty warriors do His bidding.” Some say these are the angels who serve God, as it says (ibid.), “Bless the Eternal, His angels, [mighty warriors.]” And some say: One who can turn an enemy into his friend.

PTC. Fighting the inner bad inclination within us is a struggle and a daily battle. Someone who is able to fight every day and win, even most days, or even some days, is really a strong person.

Derashot Haran 5

What demands explanation, however, is why a prophet must also be strong and wealthy. Some interpret "strong" in this connection as asserting one's intellect over one's needs...

Yoma 69b

As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Why are the Sages of those generations called the members of the Great Assembly? It is because they returned the crown of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to its former glory.

PTC. Real strength is the inner conviction to stand up for Hashem, the Torah, its mitzvos and way of life.

Megillah 15b:4

Apropos a quotation from Isaiah, the Gemara explains the following verse, which states: “And for a spirit of justice to him that sits in judgment and for strength to them that turn back the battle to the gate” (Isaiah 28:6). “And for a spirit of justice”; this is referring to one who brings his evil inclination to trial and forces himself to repent. “To him that sits in judgment”; this is referring to one who judges an absolutely true judgment. “And for strength”; this is referring to one who triumphs over his evil inclination...

PTC. One who puts real effort to better his inner self better not only himself and his surroundings, but the world at large.

Ecclesiastes 9:16

So I observed: Wisdom is better than valor; but A poor man’s wisdom is scorned, And his words are not heeded.

Pesachim 112a

בְּדַתְנֵנוּ, רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן תֵּימָא אָמַר: הָיִי עֵז כְּנִמְר וְקַל כְּפֶשֶׁר, רֵץ כְּצִבִּי וְגִבּוֹר כְּאַרְיֵ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שְׁבַשְׁמִים.

As we learned in a mishna: Rabbi Yehuda ben Teima says: Be bold like a leopard, light like an eagle, run like a deer and be strong like a lion to do the will of your father in heaven...

PTC. Real strength is needed to do the will of Hashem, sometimes to the opposite of the forces and society around us. Be strong, with real proper inner strength to uphold the will of Hashem and the Torah and the Jewish lifestyle.

Duties of the Heart, Third Treatise on Service of God 10:6-7

There are two other emotions: strength and timidity. The right occasion for showing strength is when you meet the enemies of the L-ord, to wage war against them. [strength is also in place,] to endure all distress and all trials in fulfilling the will of the exalted Creator and of His saints...

Guide fo the perplexed part 2, 38

EVERY man possesses a certain amount of courage, otherwise he would not stir to remove anything that might injure him. This psychical force seems to me analogous to the physical force of repulsion. Energy varies like all other forces, being great in one case and small in another.

There are, therefore, people who attack a lion, whilst others run away at the sight of a mouse. One attacks a whole army and fights, another is frightened and terrified by the threat of a woman. This courage requires that there be in a man's constitution a certain disposition for it...

PTC. Use your inner strength to fight the enemies of Hashem within yourself and outside, with proper real strength of character and spirit.

Berachot 60a

The Gemara relates: Rabbi Abbahu entered a bathhouse when the bathhouse floor collapsed beneath him and a miracle transpired on his behalf. He stood on a pillar and saved one hundred and one men with one arm. He held one or two people in his arm, with others holding on to him and so on, so that all were saved. He said: This is confirmation of the statement of Rav Aḥa, who said that one should offer thanks upon leaving the bathhouse safely.

PTC. This is like the strength of Shimshon, different KIND of strength. We need to be spiritually strong and strong within ourselves.

PTC.

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PTC. A wise man can be stronger in many ways than a bodybuilder and use real might in the right ways.

PTC. Fighting the inner bad inclination within us is a struggle and a daily battle. Someone who is able to fight every day and win, even most days, or even some days, is really a strong person.

PTC. Real strength is the inner conviction to stand up for Hashem, the Torah, its mitzvos and way of life.

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PTC. Real strength is needed to do the will of Hashem, sometimes to the opposite of the forces and society around us. Be strong, with real proper inner strength to uphold the will of Hashem and the Torah and the Jewish lifestyle.

PTC. Use your inner strength to fight the enemies of Hashem within yourself and outside, with proper real strength of character and spirit.

PTC. This is like the strength of Shimshon, different KIND of strength . We need to be spiritually strong and strong within ourselves.

Wrap-up.

When we talk about strength, real strength, we are talking about the strength that is within us to stand up against the bad inclination within ourselves. That is what really makes one strong. To fight the temptation, the desire to do something wrong when it is overpowering and all encompassing. For an alcoholic to refuse the drink, for the smoker to refuse the cigarette, for the overeater to refuse the food. This is what we need to do to fight the good fight to be really strong people. Stand up every day, day by day, fighting the good inner fight to be that really strong person you know you can be. Shake off the inner turmoil and inner junk food, and clear you soul of the excesses it doesn't need. If you can stand up each day to be a true warrior of Hashem, the whole world will be much better off for it.