

Tani Talks Life (TTL), Brought to you by The Tani Talks Podcasts-This is the Shiur Where We Talk A Topic Per Session With Some Practical Lessons

Tonight's Topic: "Who is a real role model, anyway?"

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The shiur should also be for the refuah and yeshuah of anyone who wants or needs Reachable at maximumtee@yahoo.com

Growing up, we are inundated by society, through Hollywood, TV, movies, radio, papers, and much more on who is to be our role model and who is to be our heroes.

Take a minute to think. Who are the first five people that come to mind if I were to ask you to name me someone famous? Let it simmer around.

Next ill ask you to think who are your top five role models or heroes. Go ahead, try it.

Unfortunately, I bet its people from society, from movies, tv, radio, magazines, etc. I bet it is actors or actresses, sports players or musicians, celebrities or the like.

The question is why are these people famous? Why are they role models? Do they deserve to actually be role models? *In real life are they actually good people?* Chances are that in real life they are not. Are they even married? Are they good spouses? Are they kind? Benevolent? Charitable? Do they even have good morals, or any morals at all? What makes them worthy of your admiration and making them into your role models or heroes?

Think about the true picture these people show us. Think about the following:

Joe Lullbacker who plays for the jets for more than the past ten years is the teenaged-Yankel Fiverish's favorite football player. He has his posters all over his room, and even has a signed autograph from him! However, did you know that Joe Lullbacker was recently arrested for possession and distribution of over five kilos of cocaine? He only got one week in jail and then made bail easily. Can he still be a role model at all for anyone?

Johnny Pitts is one of the most successful actors in Hollywood. He gets paid 20 million dollars to play Rock one the duo of Rock and Spitz (his beloved dog weird jeans) in his best selling movie series franchise "Captain Lumberjack and the Majestical Jeans." He is beloved by all and has a million dollar smile that captures all of the world's hearts. Everyone gets star struck when they see him. However, he recently left his family of five, of ten years of "matrimony", moved to the cayman islands, and took all his money with him, leaving his wife and three kids with next to nothing, being forced to move into a small three bedroom apartment from their 16 bedroom 15.5 million dollar estate, with not much else but a beat up secondhand minivan and petty cash, He gave no reasons for his actions and cannot be reached by his family or by anyone to comment. He was not arrested or faulted or held liable on any account, or on any charges. I ask again, is this really a role model to anyone?

James Casherstein has one of the best selling country albums of all time. His music is always playing on 104.9 Lite Day FM and his songs are uber Catchy. He has a great personality on stage and people pay 400 dollars just to get into a concert. In the nosebleed bleacher section. However, he recently was pictured holding up a store near his Bollerly Rills Mansion because he left his wallet at home, all to get a pack of cigarettes. He was put in jail for one night and got off the hook without even paying much I bail. The question again is, is he really a role model at all?

Jon Dimiggano is the inventor of the talking hand robot called HAND_OID. He was paid 7 million dollars to sell it to amazon. He is the face of the ad slogan "I have to hand it to you! Hands free since 2003!" But do you know he was video'ed on countless occasions being obnoxious and rude, and even nasty to people around him. At one point he was captured on video making nasty remarks about different people, including jews. Yet, no one cares and sales only went up. They even renegotiated his contract and gave him an extra million, just for fun. A role model? I don't think so.

These stories may be made up but I bet its not far from the truth.

We think about disney prince's and heroes and even marvel superheroes and think they save the day but in real life these people are not who you would ever want to look up to as a real role model. Mind you, each and every Disney story if you analyzed it is seriously messed up. Many have no parents or siblings, messed up family relationships, and plot lines that are super disturbing, borderline creepy. Even the Great Harry Potter, which I personally love the story, has no real family to speak of, albeit some great friends, and when he's older and married in the sequel of the cursed child, its not too enlightening or optimistic, and definitely does not depict really good relationships.

Think of the character of these so called heroes in culture and society and media. Are they ever home? Do they give attention to their kids if they even have kids? To their spouse? Or are they just always out at night fighting "crime" and thinking they are better than law and order and causing mayhem in their wake. I used to love batman and superman, along with Spiderman and

so many others. Why? What do they really teach us to value? Do they even have stable relationships or jobs or kids or homes? Do they make good wise moral decisions? Are they really relatable characters at all? Teachable characters at all? Role models at all?

Even when we read books and novels, besides for what shows or tv or radio we choose to watch or listen to, has to be with careful choosing. Even the great Jewish novels my wife and I read, don't always have good relationships, either purposefully or not. We have to realize what is presented to us often times is not good role model material and not good hero material.

The question therefore becomes, “**WHO IS A REAL ROLE MODEL, ANYWAY?**”

I think of my own dad, who even though I only got to have 9 years with him, made a real impact on my life and was a role model to me and everyone around me, as a helper, a doctor, a leader, and so much more.

I think that I myself want to be a good role model for my own kids and those around me, and we each should want to do so, but the question is how.

The first key element to realize and remember is that : KIDS LEARN FROM WHAT WE DO, NOT WHAT WE SAY.

If I say I will do this for someone or that for someone else, but I don't do it, what am I teaching my kids? **MAKE SURE TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THINGS AND DO THEM TO REALLY INFLUENCE AND INSPIRE.** If I show my kids I am giving clothes to someone else, I am giving items, books, utensils, etc for someone else, I am cooking for someone else, as I like to do, *that's how they really learn.* And when you do that something—go above and beyond—don't give one tiny shirt away, give three bags of clothing away! Don't make just chicken, give them chicken, rice, fruit, utensils, a drink and dessert! Go all the way! The kids will learn from your behavior to be going and generous too.

The answer to this role model question, I believe, is to be someone who is involved in doing mitzvos through action, someone who has real values, does really good things in life, spreading good for the world with Torah, Mitzvos and Chessed....but doing so as a humble person you don't ever hear about or know about....the total opposite of what we see in society.

Every single person can be their own role model and be a role model for their children. It's not words, it's about talking the talk and walking the walk, it's about actual doing. Kids learn much more from what we do than what we say. Actions go a long long way, while words go in one ear and out the other.

Wikipedia says: A **role model** is a person whose behaviour, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people.

What can you do to be such a role model?

WEB Dubois is reported to have said, “*children learn more from what you are than what you teach*”—I would add, they learn more from what you do than say or teach.

Harlan Cuban has said, “*kids don't do what their parents say, they do what they see their parents do.*”

O.A. Battista has said, “*the best inheritance a parent can give his children is a few minutes of his time each day.*”

How true are all these statements. Statements we should try to implement and live by.

[What is a Role Model? Five Qualities that Matter to Teens](https://www.yitfredericton.ca)

<https://www.yitfredericton.ca> > s

Top Five Qualities of Role Models

- Passion and Ability to Inspire.
- Clear Set of Values.
- Commitment to Community.
- Selflessness and Acceptance of Others.
- Ability to Overcome Obstacles.

Are these qualities we can try to have within ourselves and show to others?

[aish.com](https://www.aish.com) points out with Debbie Gutfreund a story from when she was a kid,

It was 9 pm, and I was supposed to be asleep in bed. It had been a rough day in first grade. Someone had teased me about my new shoes, and my team had lost the kickball game at recess. I peered around the dining room doorway and saw my father sitting by the table with his late dinner. He had just arrived home from work, and he looked tired. The *Wall Street Journal* was open in front of him.

I tiptoed into the room and slid into a chair. I waited for him to tell me to go back to sleep. Instead he closed his newspaper and smiled.

"Hey kiddo. You look like you had almost as rough a day as I had," he said as he offered me some buttered bread. I didn't realize how hungry I was; I hadn't eaten much at dinner. I poured out my woes as my father listened. He didn't say anything; he just listened.

Then he pointed to a Scholastic books catalog on the table. "Mommy told me what a great reader you are becoming. Do you want to pick out some books and I'll order them for you?"

Unburdened from my day, I sat with my father and chose books from the brightly colored pages. It wasn't until years later that I realized how tired my father must have been that night and how badly he must have wanted to just be left alone to read his newspaper in peace. Instead he put being a father as his highest priority and thought about what I needed.

Here are five crucial things children need from their father but it of course applies to mothers too.

- 1. A role model.** Children look up to their [fathers](#) and yearn to be like them from their earliest years. Sons will watch how they work and speak and play sports. Daughters will often choose spouses who reflect their father's values. Every conversation and interaction that your child witnesses may become part of what they try to imitate. A father's connection and feeling towards Judaism create a foundation for his children's spiritual lives. Make sure your life embodies the traits and ideals that you want your children to reflect.
- 2. A listening ear.** Children need their fathers to listen to them. When you stop what you are doing to give your child attention, he knows that you not only love him but are interested in his life. Fathers who can listen without immediately jumping in to problem solve create crucial space for their children's feelings. They teach their kids that it's okay to feel angry or sad or defeated, and that they won't be judged for their failures. The Torah tells us "Do not harden your heart or close your hand." (Deut. 15:7) Being open to others emotionally and listening to them is harder and often more important than giving anything else because it requires us to give of our own hearts.
- 3. A coach.** Sometimes you need someone in your life to tell you when your shot is off. Or you're not trying hard enough in school. Or you're driving the wrong way down a one way street. [Fathers](#) can be amazing coaches. They can tell their kids the truth when they need to hear it and encourage them to keep reaching for their goals. There is no limit for a child whose father coaches him and believes in him every step of the way.
- 4. A comforter.** The most comforting words a child can hear are: "It's going to be okay." Those words spoken from a father mean everything because Dad knows how to fix your bike. How to catch the huge spider in the kitchen. How to build a campfire and how to put it out. He knows when things are going to be okay and when they aren't. Fathers can give their children hope and courage and strength. Sometimes it only takes those five words: it's going to be okay.
- 5. A source of wisdom.** Fathers can see what makes their children shine and what brings them down. They can help them choose the right friends, the right classes, the right spouses. But the best fathers are able to do this selflessly. To put aside their own interests and help their kids choose what will make them happiest, even if it conflicts with their

own goals. This is a delicate tightrope that fathers must walk, but children yearn for their father's approval and helping a child choose what is best for him is a precious blessing that a father can give. Getting to that objective place as a father is hard, but teaching a child Torah can help pave the way by bringing eternal wisdom and ideas into the picture. Learning together creates a strong, deep bond between fathers and children as they share and explore questions and answers about life itself.

Even though the author was talking about a father, it of course applied to moms as well. Parents are the anchors and real role models.

[aish.com points out from author Adina scoff](#)

We all want our children to grow up to be resilient, kind and caring adults. One of the most important ways to do is to make sure that they have a good role model. Obviously, the most influential and significant role model they have is us, their parents.

Children do what we do, not what we say, and they pick up on everything. This can give us the push we need to improve our own character traits. And when our children exhibit poor behavior, before we rush to punish we should take a good look in the mirror. If our child is behaving irresponsibly, it might mean that we've been shirking our responsibilities. If our child is being disrespectful, it might mean we have to take a look at how we have been speaking to our loved ones.

Here are 7 ways we can be a good role model for our children.

1. Be positive: No one likes a grump. Optimistic people are generally more resilient, more well-liked and subsequently more successful in life. One of the best gifts you can give your children is to role model positivity. We can simply talk about the good things that happened to us that day at dinner or even bed time.

When something challenging happens to us, we can say, "I am sure there is something good with this setback...I might not see it now, but I am sure down the line something good will come from this." This gives children a clear picture on how to weather the vicissitudes of life with happy, healthy attitude.

Parents who cultivate a sense of good fun create a loving atmosphere in their home. Jokes and lightheartedness can help a child and parents develop a wonderful relationship.

2. Be healthy: Childhood obesity is at an all-time high. It's not easy but we need to eat properly and find time to exercise. Children who see their parents eating well, exercising, going to the doctor when they are sick and maintaining regular check-ups will have an easier time managing their own health.

3. Keep your cool: Do you have an angry kid? This is the perfect opportunity to model anger management techniques. For example, if you get angry, use the “talk out loud technique.” Say things like, “Oh boy, I am getting really upset, I am going to count to 5 and see if that helps!”

Examine what triggers your anger. Everyone gets angry for different reasons. For example, I know when I am tired I am more susceptible to snapping at my family. I will let my kids know, “I am tired today and I have to really work on my patience because when I'm tired, I get irritated and angry easily.” If I start to see that my patience is short, I will take a break instead of yelling. This gives children a living model so that they can hopefully try to figure out what their own triggers are.

4. Be respectful: Often the biggest complaints about modern children is their lack of respect. One of the reasons for this is that they don't have good models for respectful behavior. Whether its television or just the world around them, sadly, studies have shown that people in general are ruder.

As parents we need to step up our game. Children learn the most from how we interact with our spouses. Treating our spouse with respect is the first step. Then we need to act respectfully towards our children. We can do this by speaking in a calm manner, avoid barking out commands, (Take out the garbage now!) and by listening to them and their needs. This also means appreciating them for who they are, not who we want them to be.

5. Be caring: If we want our children to care for others, then they obviously need to see us act in nurturing ways. Again, this starts with how we care for our spouse, our children, and our extended family. We can also do this by volunteering, cooking for shut-ins or new mothers, and giving Tzedakah. Let your child help you. Depending on their age, they can cook some of the dinner, deliver the packages or just put the coin in the tzedakah box for you.

6. Talk about your values: If your children are not exhibiting the behavior you'd like to see, avoid the long lectures and instead talk about yourself, (using the ever-handy parenting technique of “I” statements).

For example, if your child lies to you about their homework, instead of saying, “How could you lie about your homework? What were you thinking?” say: “It's important that homework should be done in a timely fashion. I would appreciate honest answers in the future.”

If your older child is watching a TV show on the sly that you don't approve of, instead of saying: “How can you watch such garbage. It is so not appropriate! You should watch educational shows!” It's best if you just say, “I would appreciate if you watched shows that align with our family's values. The violence and content is not something that I approve of.”

Then just sit back and let it sink in. Further arguments won't pack as big a punch as those two sentences.

It's also helpful to remember at that point, what Michael C. Bradley says in his book, "Yes, Your Teen Is Crazy". He assures parents that "your morals, values and ethics become an integral part of your child's psychological makeup. If you have been imparting good values to your children, they will stay with him for the rest of his life. During adolescence, "(they) may have put them (your values) in cold storage...but they're there and they will reappear in time."

7. Love them: Finally, you want to have a good and loving relationship with your child. The more you show that you love them, the more they will love, respect you and want to be like you.

Try to see if you can implement some, if not all of these points in your own life. See what effect it can have on your kids and the people around you. Hopefully, it will positively affect your life, kids, and the world around you.

aish.com points out

Learn from positive role models. Every person you meet today will have positive qualities, habits, and strengths that you can learn from. Learn from role models who handle difficult situations calmly and effectively.

Rabbi Kelemen points out on aish.com

Our tradition tells us that we parents and teachers can be powerful role models. The rabbis of the Talmud long ago explained, for example, that a child speaks in the marketplace the way he heard his parents speaking at home.¹ Psychologists also remind us that the model we parents present influences even our youngest children.

If we respond to disobedience harshly, our children and students will likely do the same. If we are dishonest or steal, the odds are that our children will internalize these behaviors too. Whether or not we intend to do so, through example we plant our own behavior in our children. Unless they make heroic efforts to uproot these seeds later in life, our children will grow up to be very much like us.

Of course, we parents can also be the most powerful *positive* role models in our children's lives. A mother whose child attends a yeshiva high school told the author this story:

She went to the market with her children. When she was checking out, the clerk failed to properly credit her for a promotional item. After unsuccessfully trying to rectify the matter with the checkout clerk, the woman approached the store manager and explained the mistake. The manager was busy, not terribly interested in the woman's complaint, and initially uncooperative.

However, eventually the manager reached into his cash drawer and handed her two dollars compensation. On their way home, the woman realized that the manager had given her too much money. She was already late, however, and could not return to the market.

That night, however, the woman could not sleep. She kept thinking about the money in her wallet that did not belong to her. In the morning, she rushed the children to get ready for school early, left with them ahead of schedule, and drove straight to the market. There, in front of her children, she explained to the manager the mistake he had made the previous day. The manager was not interested in the story but took the overpayment and returned it to the register drawer.

Months later, the woman's son took a difficult test at school. Most students did poorly on the test, but her child received a mark of "A+". Indeed, in front of the class the teacher praised the boy for his perfect performance. Then, because so many students had received low grades, the teacher decided to review the correct answers aloud with the class. During the review, the boy realized that he had actually made a mistake on the exam but the teacher had failed to see it. Throughout the review the boy struggled with his desire for the "A+". Ultimately his conscience triumphed. After class he approached the teacher and pointed out the grading error.

At home later that day, the boy told his mother the story. She praised him for his willingness to sacrifice his "A+" on the altar of honesty. Her son explained that a battle had raged inside of him while he listened to the review. But then he remembered his distraught mother trying to give some cash back to a market manager. The boy told his mother that in that moment his internal battle ended and he realized what he was going to do. (As a pleasant postscript to the story: The teacher was so impressed with the boy's honesty, she rewarded him by giving him the "A+" despite the mistake.)

Most parents and teachers realize that values and perspectives must be planted by personal example. However, in practice we sometimes try to build into our children and students behavioral routines that we personally have not yet mastered. We insist that our children get proper sleep, even though we scrape by on far less than we need. We insist that they eat properly, even though we survive on coffee and donuts. We insist that they control their anger, even though we sometimes show rage. In short, we find it easier to work on our children than on ourselves, and so that is sometimes what we do.

This hypocrisy has disastrous results: Too many children legitimately view their parents and/or teachers as insincere. Disrespect burgeons slowly until, around ages 12-15, it shreds the parent-child or teacher-student relationship. Then children reject the moral authority of the adults in their lives. They isolate themselves emotionally from parents and teachers, and begin making their own (often self-destructive) decisions.

Or sometimes these children thoroughly accept the lessons of their childhood. They might behave beautifully and do well in school, but they also absorb their mentors' inconsistency. By

their late teens or early twenties, these children have mastered the art of hypocrisy, and much of their behavior has absolutely nothing to do with their stated values. These are the university-age students who claim they want a better world and yet purchase term papers off the Internet. Even if we never did so in school, if we acted with hypocrisy in other areas of our lives, our children will absorb that lesson and practice it wholesale.

Eventually, the real values and perspectives we parents and teachers planted through our own behavior (for better or worse) show themselves. If we want to raise children who will grow into good adults, we must plant the seeds of goodness with our own sterling conduct.

Being a role model is not easy. Our children see us at all hours of the day under all circumstances, making it impossible to maintain a facade of ethical refinement. If we have a temper or other negative traits, they will see these. Moreover, as we struggle to behave appropriately at all times, we discover that good intentions alone do not produce good behavior. Sometimes, even when we do not want to get angry, we find ourselves slipping out of control. We have no choice but to work on ourselves. We must set aside time to develop our character, especially our patience.

When our forefather Abraham sent his servant Eliezer off to find a wife for his son, Isaac, Abraham asked Eliezer to swear that he wouldn't bring home a woman from the local Canaanites -- known for being murderers and thieves. Rather, Eliezer was told to select a woman from Abraham's homeland -- even though those women were known for being idol worshippers.

Only our character traits pass instantly and without modification into our children.

The author of the Torah commentary *Kli Yakar* 6 asks why Abraham preferred an idol worshipper over a murderer or thief. He answers that although we parents attempt to pass two inheritances to the next generation -- our character traits and our beliefs -- only our character traits pass instantly and without modification into our children. Our beliefs hover in spiritual no-man's-land until our children choose to accept them or reject them.

Abraham understood that murder and theft result from *corrupt character*. He reasoned that a woman from a family with corrupt traits would necessarily pass those traits on to her children, and the Jewish People would need to make a massive effort in later generations to clean out this character-contamination.

Idol worship, in contrast, results from *mistaken beliefs*. Unlike the inheritance of character traits, parental beliefs don't necessarily penetrate too deeply and their superficial influence could be corrected quickly. As long as the character traits of Isaac's future wife were in order, a few introduction-to-Judaism classes could straighten out her beliefs, and her descendents then would be refined, faithful members of the Jewish nation.

Some people use vaads or groups or workshops to work on middot and character traits, especially bad ones like anger, greed, jealousy, etc. Some talk to counselors or therapists on a weekly basis to vent off anger or frustration and to work out problems. I myself talk to one on a regular basis, striving for weekly.

It is important to recognize problem traits, learn about the particular character trait, and work on it. A person needs to work on it consistently and long term. A person should receive practical exercises and readings that will help internalize the character trait, and discuss their successes and failures.

This can be supremely helpful to be our best role model selves for others.

Jewish day school administrators, teachers, and parents now have an extraordinary opportunity to guarantee the inheritance of our children.

We need to work on ourselves to be the best version of ourselves for others, especially as role models for our children.

Rabbi Blech explains on aish.com from 2012

Tragedy, Aristotle taught us, requires that someone prominent fall from lofty heights. It is the sudden and abrupt plunge of a hero from his pedestal that defines a true misfortune.

In that sense, according to some, the Lance Armstrong story surely qualifies. According to others he is a victim of jealous competitors, the subject of a witch hunt.

He won the Tour de France an unprecedented seven straight times, becoming one of most accomplished athletes in recent history. And he acquired almost iconic stature because of his heroic and ultimately successful triumph over the the big C that threatened his life at the young age of 25. Already a world champion cyclist at the time, with but a thin chance for survival, he conquered his illness and went on to even greater victories.

Lance Armstrong was more than a winner. He was an inspiration. His adoring fans round the world revered him as role model. He was the paradigm of the human spirit refusing to be defeated by affliction and overcoming all obstacles by indomitable courage.

According to the United States Anti-Doping Agency, banned substances played a crucial role in Armstrong's amazing success. His need to win translated into a win-at-all-costs outlook.

Wikipedia explains that He admitted that he used **EPO, human growth hormone, and diuretics**, and that he had blood doped as well as falsifying documents saying he passed drug tests. Doping helped him for each of his seven Tour de France wins, Armstrong told Winfrey.

The USADA made the controversial move to strip the cycling superstar of his historic seven Tour de France titles, the bronze medal he won at the 2000 Olympics and all other titles, awards and money he won from August 1998 forward. He is now barred for life from competing, coaching or having any official role with any Olympic sport. Armstrong decided to no longer fight the allegations, triggering the contested punishment.

In a culture becoming more and more inured to corruption, to illegal practices, to dishonesty and to fraud in almost every area of life, it is high time to make clear a simple truth that is at the heart of Judaism: Actions have consequences.

We can certainly feel compassion for those who made wrong choices in life that led to their downfall. But to feel sorry for them is not the same as agreeing that there be no penalty for their misdeeds. If there is no retribution for our actions, why bother being honest when it's so much easier — and certainly far more profitable — to cut corners and then simply expect to be forgiven?

The USADA's judgment against Lance Armstrong took place during the days Jews prepare for [Rosh Hashanah](#) and stand before God who assumes His role as Judge of the universe. We, too, will be placed on the divine scale of the Arbitrator of our fate for the coming year. And God's judgment is perfect and uncontested, unlike the ASADA. We had better internalize the message that if our life's victories are based on fraud they will eventually be overturned.

So, s he really a role model for anyone?

Joe Paterno: Another Fallen Giant

It is a truth that was stunningly illustrated just a few months ago in a remarkably similar story of a fallen giant. There probably was no more successful football coach than Joe Paterno who led the Penn State Nittany Lions from 1966 to 2011. Paterno coached five undefeated teams that won major bowl games and, in 2007, was inducted into the [College Football Hall of Fame](#). In all, he led the Nittany Lions to 37 bowl appearances with 24 wins. Paterno was the only coach with the distinction of having won each of the four major bowls — Rose, Orange, Fiesta, and Sugar — as well as the Cotton Bowl Classic, at least once. Penn State won at least 3 bowl games in each of the 3 decades between 1970 and 1997.

Outside the Penn State football stadium stood a 7-foot tall statue of the man who assumed mythical proportions. And this past July the statue was removed from its pedestal outside Beaver Stadium, to be stored in an unnamed "secret location." The decision came 10 days after a scathing report by former FBI director Louis J. Freeh found that Paterno had concealed allegations of child abuse made against former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky. Paterno chose to turn a blind eye to moral impropriety. He preferred to live by the famous credo that "Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing." His victories were tainted by scandal.

The outcome of his ethical failure was monumental. It was not only the removal of the statue that vividly marked the extent of Paterno's fall. The NCAA hit Penn State with a \$60 million sanction, a four-year football postseason ban and a voiding of all wins dating to 1998 — and Paterno's legacy will now reflect these vacated records.

For years it was a given that Penn State had won all those games. Now it turns out they didn't. How is it possible for winners to be losers? The answer is one that we need to acknowledge not only as crucial for cyclists or football coaches but for every one of us as well: Winning isn't just determined by the score or by who came in first. At least as important is being aware of how we got there. And unethical wins are nothing less than losses. So is he at all a role model, either?

It reminds me of the Sean Peyton scandal (also shown in the Netflix movie Home Team).

Sean Payton was suspended without pay for the 2012 season for his role in a scheme to pay players who hurt opponents and knocked them out of games, a scandal that became known as Bountygate. He was gone a year and coached his sons middle School team of football. He is retiring this year.

A role model? Really?

Tainted wins are no substitute for eternal legacies.

In terms of a real role model, think about the great sage Rabbi Akiva.

[aish.com](#) points out with Dovid rosenfeld

1. He was of Humble Origins
2. He Saw Inspiration and Acted on it
3. He Patiently Started from the Bottom
4. He was No Super-Genius but worked hard for years at his studies
5. He Asked All the Tough Questions
6. It was All Because of His Wife – and He Knew it
7. He Never Forgot His Origins
8. He Lost All – and Kept Going
9. He Always Saw the Positive—“Whatever God does is for the good.”
10. He Died a Hero’s Death

This is a real role model and hero.

Adina Socloff points out on aish.com

Building good character in our children is the most important tasks we have as parents. It's a life-long process that begins with parents and continues hand-in-hand with our schools and community. But children learn the most about acting with integrity, morals and compassion from their home.

So often kids first hear of our value system or about middos when they are breaking the rules.

Here are four ways to reinforce our values and build good character in our children:

1. Role Modeling:

Our children are watching our every move. We need to be a living, breathing model of how life should be lived. If you want responsible children, you need to be responsible. If you want respectful children you need to be respectful. If you want grateful children, they need to see gratefulness in action. In general, children grow up to embrace the values of their parents. It may take a while for you to see the fruits of your labor, but eventually you'll see it.

This doesn't mean you have to be perfect. It's a great lesson for children to see their parents struggle with moral challenges and strive to be better. It is helpful to say to children, "I was so frustrated today, the computer wasn't working and I really wanted to yell at the technician, but I kept my cool. I was polite, it was such an effort!"

And when you fail and lose it, use it as an opportunity to convey another lesson. "Boy, was I angry at the plumber today -- he promised he'd come in the morning but he showed up at the end of the day. I really let him have it! My anger got the best of me and I need to work on that!"

2. Articulate expectations:

Let your children know what's expected of them throughout the day as you set up their schedule and routine. Here are a few common examples:

Wake up in the morning:

- We say *Modeh Ani*
- We get dressed
- We brush our teeth
- We eat breakfast

When they come home from school:

- We get a snack
- We do homework
- We play outside

Dinnertime:

- We sit at the table for 5 minutes
- We eat what is served or we can make our own sandwich
- We make blessings
- We ask to be excused

When we get angry:

- We can find a place to calm down
- We can count to ten
- We can yell in our room

Obviously this doesn't mean a child will always follow the rules. He's not a robot. But when children understand how a routine works, have skills to manage their negative behavior, and understand what is expected of them, they've been set up for success and have a better chance of behaving with good character.

3. Catch phrases:

Short phrases are an effective way to convey and instill the values of your home. You can use them over and over again, like a broken record.

And it's hard to argue with neutral and non-confrontational one-liners.

Cooperation: "In this family we clean up our toys after we use them."

Positivity: "In this family we look at the cup as half full!"

Perseverance: "In this family, we try to meet challenges head on!"

Responsibility: "In this family, we keep our word."

4. Praising:

Be on the constant lookout for the good in their behavior.

When pointing out children's good behavior we want to be as specific as possible and focus on the actual positive behavior that we are noticing. Phrases like "great job" or "good boy" are too general and don't work. In the long run it just makes children feel more insecure and less capable.

Here are some examples of how we can use this technique to help our children improve their behavior and learn good character traits.

To encourage kindness:

Instead of focusing on the negative: "Why can't you just share all of your toys with Dara?" Try this: "You gave Dara one of your dolls. That doll is one of your favorites. That's sharing. You were being kind."

To encourage good manners:

Instead of focusing on the negative: "Why do I always have to remind you to say 'please' and 'thank you'?" Try this: "You said 'please' when you ordered your ice cream and 'thank you' when you got it. You know how to be polite."

Helping our children develop good character is one of the most important jobs we have as parents. Role modeling, articulating our expectations, using catchphrases and praising appropriately can help us do that.

If we implement some of these ideas we can instill proper role modeling for our kids.

Let's listen to this story from Nesanel Safran from aish.com

"You call this a portion?" a kid snarled to the older man serving in his summer camp's cafeteria lunch line. "Why, I need a microscope just to see what it even is - then again, maybe I don't wanna know. Anyway, put that tiny thing back and give me a different one!" the kid demanded. The man sighed and switched the kid's portion.

Jay, who was a couple of places behind in line and had been watching the whole thing, turned to Ed, the kid one place in front of him and whispered, "Isn't it rude, the way that kid's talking to him?"

"So what?" Ed shrugged as the line moved forward. "You must be new here. At this camp, everyone does it. It's the only way to get anything decent around here. Anyway, it's my turn." Ed held his tray up to the server, "Give me something decent, or you're going to have to scrape it up off the floor when we leave!"

After a few more snarks, he finally took his food and Jay, who was indeed new at the camp, reached the front of the line. Silently he took the portion the man offered and moved on with a nod.

And so it went day after day, Jay watched the campers bad-mouth, rank on, make fun of, and generally trample over the various food-servers, janitors and service personnel. And while he - who'd always believed in treating everyone with respect - didn't join in, he also found himself kind of 'getting used' to their behavior. It didn't shock him anymore and started to seem almost okay.

One lucky lunchtime, Jay, who by now had become expert in the camp's schedule and layout, had actually beaten all the other campers in their mad dash to the cafeteria and was very first in line.

He grabbed his tray and brought it forward to the server, who he hadn't seen there before, who proceeded to give him the puniest piece of chicken on the platter.

Jay gulped. He was really hungry after a whole morning of sports and by now also an expert on the rude, rowdy lingo his campmates hurled around, got ready to let loose a string of insults and epithets that would put this stingy server in his place. He opened his mouth, but the words seemed stuck. He'd never mouthed off at an adult before. Sure, the other guys did it all the time, but deep down Jay knew it wasn't right for them - and it wasn't right for *him*.

"Uh, thanks," he said. "Do you think I could please possibly have a bigger piece, though?"

The server looked up, as if checking Jay out, then shrugged, "Why not?" he said, switching pieces and sending Jay on with a grin.

As he moved on, Jay looked back, for no special reason, and noticed that the line was moving faster than usual - even the most obnoxious kids were just taking their portion and hurrying on.

He sat down and Ed joined him.

"I got a lousy portion, but nothing I could do," Ed grumbled, picking at his plate. Before Jay could question him, the boy went on, "With 'Drill Sergeant,' the head counselor taking over for the server, who'd gone home sick today, I didn't dare complain or he would've had me bounced from the camp - or if I was lucky, maybe just had me do a gazillion jumping jacks instead. Hey," he looked at Jay's portion, "how'd you end up with such a big, good piece?"

Jay stopped chewing as he realized just how close he'd come to getting 'chewed up' himself by getting drawn into his fellow camper's improper ways. "It was simple. I just asked nicely."

We have the power to be that good role model. If we model the good behavior, the good traits, we can see it in our kids. The work starts with us, teaching what we do in our lives with good *mitzvot*, *Chessed*, *mitzvot* and *torah* learning. Who is a real role model, anyway? You—it all starts with you. You can and should be that role model as best as you can be.

Let's see some other sources.

Yoma 35b

Hillel obligates the poor to study Torah, Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum obligates the wealthy, and Joseph obligates the wicked. For each category of people, there is a role model who overcame his preoccupations and temptations to study Torah.

PTC> Talk about real role models—each of these characters of people had major impediments to torah, yet they persevered and won. Hillel was dirt poor but did it anyway. Yosef had a major test of his inner will at his house of work, and he persevered. Rabbi Elazar had major wealth but persevered in torah.

Sforno Devarim 32:46

לשמור לעשות, you have to observe all these matters in order that as their role model, your children will do so also.

Tur HaArokh, Genesis 12:2:1

You will be the blessing by whom the nations will bless themselves when they quote you as a role model when blessing others and wishing that they should turn out to be like Avraham.

Or HaChaim on Genesis 25:19:7

He was "self-made," did not have a father who served as his role model. This was the reason that the prophet Isaiah quotes G'd as describing Abraham as "the one who loved Him."

Gray Matter III, Medical Issues, The Prohibition to Smoke 37

In a number of places, the Torah presents us with the mission of serving as a role model for other nations.

PTC> We have to be a role model not only for our children and families but for the world at large, with out behavior and actions

Chagigah 15b

The Gemara poses a question: And Rabbi Meir, how could he learn Torah from the mouth of Aher? But didn't Rabba bar bar Hana say that Rabbi Yohanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek Torah from his mouth; for he is an angel of the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 2:7)? The verse teaches: If the rabbi is similar to an angel of the Lord of hosts, perfect in his ways, they should seek Torah from his mouth; but if not, they should not seek Torah from his mouth.

Reish Lakish said: Rabbi Meir found a verse and interpreted it homiletically: "Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to My knowledge" (Proverbs 22:17). It does not state "to their knowledge," but "to My knowledge." In other words, one must listen to the words of the Sages, despite their flaws, provided that their opinion concurs with that of God.

Rav Hanina said that one can find support for this idea from here: “Listen, daughter and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people and your father’s house” (Psalms 45:11), which likewise indicates that one must listen to the words of a Sage while forgetting, i.e., ignoring, the faulty aspects of his teachings.

When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia, he said: In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say: Rabbi Meir ate a half-ripe date and threw the peel away. In other words, he was able to extract the important content from the inedible shell. Rava taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: “I went down into the garden of nuts, to look at the green plants of the valley” (Song of Songs 6:11)? Why are Torah scholars compared to nuts? To tell you: Just as this nut, despite being soiled with mud and excrement, its content is not made repulsive, as only its shell is soiled; so too a Torah scholar, although he has sinned, his Torah is not made repulsive.

He said to him: Why should he be judged unfavorably for that? Rabbi Meir found a pomegranate and ate its contents while throwing away its peel. He said to him: Indeed, your defense has been heard above.

PTC>Be careful who your role models are and what you learn from them. Pirkei Avot teaches a wise person learns from all people, but careful what you learn.

By contrast, R’ Akiva who also entered the Pardes with archer and other entered and exited in peace and he was a real full role model.

Kedushat Levi, Exodus, Ki Tisa 18

If G’d were to exercise so much self restraint that He would make Himself truly equal to us His creatures, how could He serve for us as a role model or authority?

Depths of Yonah 1:1:5

Nineveh provides an especially good role model since the people repented the first time they heard rebuke from a Navi.

Tur HaArokh, Genesis 18:18:1

Having been on record as praying on behalf of people who had already been condemned, his way of life of combining charity with righteousness, justice, would prove to be an acceptable role model...

Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Toldot, Torah Ohr 9

Since the world as a whole could not measure up to such a demanding standard, Jacob combined within his person a blend of both attributes to serve as a role model for future generations of mankind.

PTC>Being involved with the action of mitzvos, torah, and Chessed, and putting those things into action is a great way to show and be a role model to others

Redeeming Relevance; Deuteronomy, CHAPTER 5 Kings and the Problem of Professionalization 40

Being at the helm makes the king an automatic role model. His subjects will naturally look up to him and many will want to emulate him – especially if he is successful.

Daf Shevui to Avodah Zarah 8b:1

An important person, a role model, should be even more stringent in avoiding such situations.

Depths of Yonah 1:2:3

One might think the story of Yonah is simply the story of a sinner who is punished and performs Teshuvah and repents, serving as a role model for us especially as we read Sefer Yonah on Yom Kippur.

Redeeming Relevance; Deuteronomy, CHAPTER 5 Kings and the Problem of Professionalization 36

While not every judge was a great role model, there is no question that as a group the judges remained much more loyal to the Torah and its tenets than the kings.

PTC>We should look up to proper torah models and heroes, such as those in the ganache who were true heroes, like Avraham, David, Eliyahu, and the like. Think about the life and actions of people throughout history and in current times to determine who is a real role model from within our own walk and way of life in Judaism.

Peninei Halakhah, Days of Awe 7:4:6

It is also possible that had he been a better role model, he would have positively influenced them, so they would not have sinned. Finally, all Jews bear responsibility for one another.

From David to Destruction, The Failures of Beit Achav, Two Tales of Yehoshafat 29

Divrei HaYamim, though, instead focuses on his many positive achievements, which serve as a role model of nation-building for the new era of the return to Zion of Bayit Sheini.

Reminds me of Yoshiahu in Lemachim bet 22, where joshiahu was a good king while his mentor was alive and guided him, that of Hilkiyahu the kohen gad who had saved him and raised him and mentored him on the throne at the age of eight.

PTC>We can do well with good role models , as long as we are around them and their influence. Without them, we can fall fast and hard. We as role models need to be around to hep guide our kids as they grow up.

In the Narrow Places; Daily Inspiration for the Three Weeks, [Day Twenty One] 8 Av; Words on Fire 22

It is up to each of us to own a Jewish library, both for our own spiritual and intellectual growth, and to be a role model for our children, demonstrating what it means to live by the word.

Or HaChaim on Exodus 19:9:5

that when you, Moses, will command the people to obey the instructions of any prophet in the future who also identifies himself by means of a miracle, they will do so because they have seen you as a role...model of a prophet.

Peninei Halakhah, Simchat Habayit U'Virkhato 1:8:2

He was supposed to shelter her, to protect her from tyrants and oppressors, to support her and defend her honor, to be a role model for their children.

Sforno on Genesis 3:20:2

כי היא היתה אם כל חי, even though the function of the female of the species listed here also applies to all women after Chavah, she is used as the role model and therefore accorded this name.

PTC> Be that good role model. Influence those around you for good. By doing good in action deed and practice.

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WRAP UP.

What can we do in our lives to be real good role models for one another? For our kids? For those around us? Kids learn best from what we do, not what we say. Hopefully we can implement different ideas of how to role model for those around us. We can hopefully answer the question of “Who is a real role model, anyway? As us ourselves, day in and day out to make the world brighter and greater for our kids and those around us.