

Additional Resources for
Changing the World from the Inside Out
by Rabbi David Jaffe

PRACTICE: **Kavod/Dignity**

Jewish Wisdom about Kavod

Everyday Holiness, Dr. Alan Morinis, chapter 13

The Moral Principles, Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook, Translated by Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser

Focus Phrases

Choose a phrase to repeat out loud for a minute or two each morning. You can adapt the phrases to your own language. Write the phrase on an index card and put it somewhere you will see it each morning. Some people tape the card to their car dashboard or computer.

“Kavod is external behavior mandated by and appropriate to a reality of inner holiness.” – R. Shlomo Wolbe

אִיזְהוּ מְכַבֵּד, הַמְכַבֵּד אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת

“[Ben Zoma said]: Who is honorable? One who honors all others.” – Pirkei Avot 4:1

אֵל תְּהִי בֹז לְכָל אָדָם, וְאֵל תְּהִי מַפְלִיג לְכָל דָּבָר, שֶׁאִין לֹא אָדָם שָׂאִין לוֹ שָׁעָה וְאִין לֹא דָבָר שָׂאִין לוֹ מָקוֹם:

“He (Ben Azzai) used to say: Do not be scornful of any person and do not be disdainful of anything, for you have no person without his hour and no thing without its place.” – Pirkei Avot 4:3

“It is only in a state of low-level spirituality that there will be aroused in a person a desire to glorify himself before others, both with the virtues he possesses and with others he does not possess.” – Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook

“Transform blood to stillness” – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

Guided Meditation

This is best done with a group or at least a partner. Have one person read the meditation while the others follow the instructions read by the leader.

Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down.

Feel the weight of your body against the chair or ground.

Rest your hands on your lap or at your sides.

Gently let your eyelids close.

Take three deep breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth.

Imagine yourself or someone else as made in the Divine image.

What are you or this other person worth?

How much is your car, your home, your bicycle worth?

You or this other person are more valuable than these things.

Add up all the value of everything in the world and we are worth more than that.

What would it take for you to really believe that?

What does it mean to be unique?

Imagine one ball, and then two, three, five, 10, 20 , 100, 500, 2000, 50,000, 1 million balls all different from each other in some way.

All unique.

This is humanity – we are all different from each other in some essential way.

What does it mean to be equal?

$2+2=4$

2 pounds of coffee beans and 2 pounds of quarters – they are not the same but have equal weight.

Our souls are unique but have equal weight as Divine.

What difference would it make in how you related to people if you really believed that we have infinite value, are equal and unique? If you knew that you had infinite value, were unique and equal to all others?

Visualization I

This exercise can be done individually or with a group. If a group, choose one person to read the description once through.

Recall a time you were criticized or insulted, especially if it happened publicly.

Imagine your heart in that moment pounding hard with adrenaline.

Blood pumps quickly into your left ventricle and your heart expands and contracts.

Expands and contracts quickly.

Sit with this image until you can see the blood raging in your heart.

Take a deep breath.

Now imagine the blood slowing down to a steady pace.

The walls of the ventricle return to pumping in a regular, moderate rhythm.

In and out smoothly and gently.

The blood is now a slow, lazy river.

In comparison to the raging torrent moments before the heart seems still in its gentle, but steady beat.

Out of this stillness a space grows in the left ventricle

This space allows breath and air to enter the heart and cool it down.

Imagine this spaciousness filled with clarity about your Divine inheritance.

Visualization II

Eating quickly while walking through the market is the talmud's image of not having self-respect. What is your image of self-respect, of knowing you are made in the Divine image? What are you wearing? How are you walking and carrying yourself? What are you talking about? What do you look like?

Contemplation I

This exercise can be done individually or with a group. If a group, choose one person to read the description once through.

Contemplate the idea that social change activism is about making the Divine image in each person more manifest in the world. What would it mean for social change efforts if this were really the goal?

Contemplation II

Contemplate the possibility that you never again need to seek praise or recognition.

What would you feel?

What impact would this have on your life?

Kabbalat

The kabbalat are designed to do individually. If you are using this book with a group give people a few minutes to choose a kabbalah and close the session with people sharing which kabbalah they are going to practice until the next meeting.

Choose someone in your family, organization or community and deliberately do something to honor him or her. Choose a different person each day. Vary between people who have more power than you (eg. Your boss or a superior at work) and people have less power than you (your children or someone you supervise).

Practice turning DaM to DoM. Each day when confronted with an insult, attack, or some perceived slight to your honor, be still and quiet for at least one minute before responding.

Notice each day at least once how you seek praise.

Once each day notice yourself doing something good, or doing something well.

Once each day notice someone else doing something good, or doing something well.

Choose one 30 minute period during the day and during that time do whatever you can to honor anyone who comes your way.

Do one thing each day that demonstrates *Kavod* for yourself.

Cheshbon Hanefesh

Set aside five to ten minutes at some point in the day to either journal or do the hitbodedut practice answering these questions.

What good points did you notice in yourself or others?

What choice points did you notice in honoring others?

In what ways do you seek praise and recognition?

In what ways do you and the people you work with to make change model or not model the dignity you are trying to bring to others?

How is your Kavod aligned or not with your understanding at this moment of God's will for you or what the universe is calling for from you right now?

How is your level of Kavod expressing or working against your own deep desire/will?

Sichat Chaverim

1. Trade turns listening to each other for 2 minutes talking about a good point from the day and anything else the speaker wants to get off his or her chest

2. Journal quietly for five minutes about the Cheshbon Hanefesh questions

3. Trade turns listening to each other for 10 minutes talk about the experience with the focus phrase, kabbalot, Cheshbon Hanefesh, meditation, visualization and contemplation. Then discuss any insights or challenges with Kavod that came up during the week. End with a commitment for practice for the next week.