

**How to be the Best Version of**

# **YOURSELF**

**at Work, at Home  
and in Every Aspect of Life**

In this four-part series, Rabbi Goldberg will draw from 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Good to Great, Essentialism, and other fantastic motivational works in combination with Torah thoughts and messages. Learn skills, tools, and how to form habits that will optimize your productivity, self-esteem and help you become the best version of yourself in all aspects of life.

Part II

January 11, 2017



**SPECIAL SERIES WITH RABBI GOLDBERG**

# In Part 1, We Talked About...

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1. Feel like drowning but we don't have to
2. Not impressive to say "crazy busy"
3. We have limited time and can't get more
4. What we do shows what we really want to be doing
5. Have free will to prioritize our lives
6. **168 hours in your week, how will you spend them?**
7. Sharpen your saw
8. Create more margin in your life





## More on Choice and Free Will

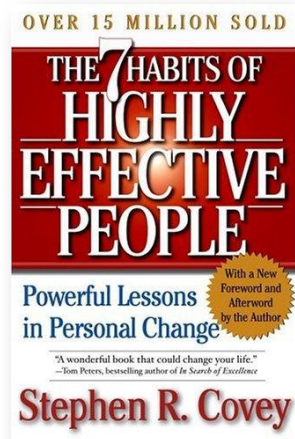
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Be intentional about everything you do:

- ❖ "If you don't prioritize your life, someone else will." Greg McKeon, *Essentialism*
- ❖ "If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice." Lyrics to *Freewill* by Rush

*Decision* comes from the *Latin* *decisio* -- A cutting off (like incision, precision, excision)

When you eliminate and narrow down options, you have made a decision and it is liberating.



## Habit #1 – Be Proactive

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- ❖ It is the most important habit, without which one cannot form the other habits.
- ❖ If you don't believe you have the strength to make proactive, intentional choices you have conceded control of your life.

# Shemos 6:9

Interpretation of the Ohr Ha'Chaim,

R' Chaim ibn Attar

6. Therefore, say to the children of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will take you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their labor, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

7. And I will take you to Me as a people, and I will be a God to you, and you will know that I am the Lord your God, Who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8. I will bring you to the land, concerning which I raised My hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it to you as a heritage; I am the Lord.' "

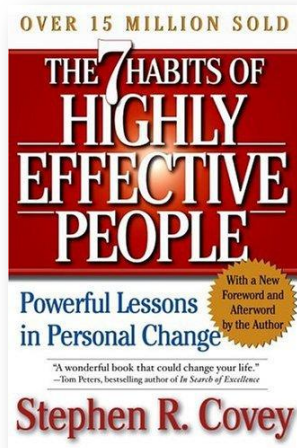
9. Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel, but they did not hearken to Moses because of [their] shortness of breath and because of [their] hard labor.

ו לכן אמר לבני ישראל אני יהוה והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים והצלתני אתכם מעבדתם וגאלתי אתכם בזרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדלים:

ז ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי לכם לאלהים וידעתם כי אני יהוה אלהיכם המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים:

ח והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ אשר נשאתי את ידי לתת אתה לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב ונתתי אתה לכם מורשה אני יהוה:

ט וידבר משה בן אל בני ישראל ולא שמעו אל משה מקצר רוח ומעבדה קשה:



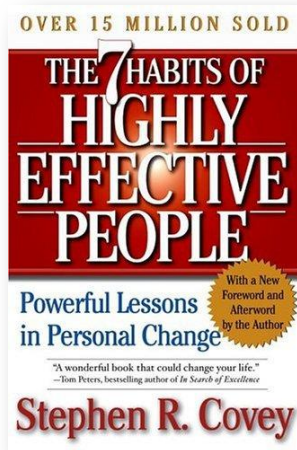
# Habit #1 – Be Proactive

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Covey says:

- ❖ “Your life is a product of your values, not your feelings.”
- ❖ “Your life is a product of your decisions, not your conditions.”





## Habit #1 – Be Proactive

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- ❖ The opposite of being proactive is being reactive.
- ❖ The opposite of being proactive is being impulsive and impetuous

Covey says:

- ❖ Proactive people take responsibility.
- ❖ They don't blame circumstances, people or conditions.
- ❖ Responsibility = Response-ability, ability to respond

# Elazar ben Durdaya

- ❖ Talmud - Avoda Zara 17a
- ❖ Elazar ben Durdaya had patronized every harlot in the world.
- ❖ He traveled across 7 rivers to solicit the services of one more.
- ❖ At their moment of intimacy, she blew forth breath and said the same way my breath will not return, so too Elazar ben Durdaya's teshuva, repentance will never be accepted.

נמו הואי בה ומעבירה לא והתניא אמרו עליו על ר"א בן דורדיא שלא הניח זונה אחת בעולם שלא בא עליה פעם אחת שמע שיש זונה אחת בכרכי הים והיתה נומלת כים דינרין בשכרה נמל כים דינרין והלך ועבר עליה שבעה נהרות בשעת הרגל דבר הפיחה אמרה: כשם שהפיחה זו אינה חוזרת למקומה כך אלעזר בן דורדיא אין מקבלין אותו בתשובה הלך וישב בין שני<sup>א</sup> הרים וגבעות אמר הרים וגבעות בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו לו עד שאנו מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו שנאמר<sup>ב</sup> כי ההרים ימושו והגבעות תמוטינה אמר שמים וארץ בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו<sup>ג</sup> עד שאנו מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו שנאמר<sup>ד</sup> כי שמים כעשן נמלחו והארץ כבגד תבלה אמר חמה ולבנה בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו לו עד שאנו מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו שנאמר<sup>ה</sup> וחפרה הלבנה ובושה החמה אמר כוכבים ומזלות בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו לו עד שאנו מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו שנאמר<sup>ו</sup> ונמקו כל צבא השמים אמר אין הדבר תלוי אלא בי הניח ראשו בין ברכיו ונעה בבכיה עד שיצתה נשמתו יצתה בת קול ואמרה ר"א בן דורדיא מזומן לחיי העולם הבא [והא הכא בעבירה הוה ומית] התם נמי כיון דאביק בה טובא כמינות דמיוא<sup>ז</sup> בכה רבי ואמר יש קונה עולמו בכמה שנים ויש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת ואמר רבי לא דיין לבעלי תשובה שמקבלין אותן אלא שקורין אותן רבי ר' חנינא ור' יונתן הוו קאזלי באורחא ממו להנהו תרי שבי



# Elazar ben Durdaya

- ❖ He turned to the mountains and hills, to the heavens and earth, to the sun and moon to advocate on his behalf but they said no.
- ❖ At that point he declared, “*ein ha’davar taluy elah bi*, the matter depends on me alone.”
- ❖ His placed his head between his knees and wept until his soul departed and a heavenly voice proclaimed RABBI Elazar ben Durdaya is invited to the world to come.

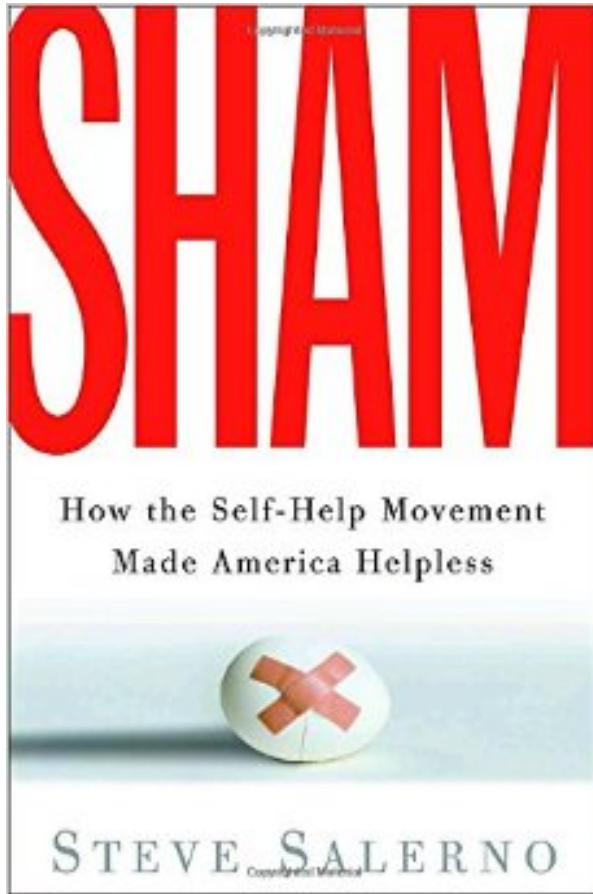
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# Self Help Genre

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- ❖ On January 5, 2009 in one of her top rated shows of that year, Oprah Winfrey made a public confession – she had regained all the weight that she so publicly lost.
- ❖ “I am embarrassed,” she said. “All the fame and all the attention and the glamorous life and the success doesn’t mean one thing if you can’t control your own being.”
- ❖ This episode and her statement left many puzzled – why can’t America’s self help queen help herself? She has a personal trainer, a personal chef, a staff of people. Every day she has on the next great motivational speaker, author, guru, expert or self help coach.





## Self Help Movement

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- ❖ Steve Salerno, author of “SHAM: How the Self Help Movement Made America Helpless” explains that this is simply a symptom of the greater phenomenon that self help actually seems to hurt more than help.
- ❖ He explains that “the culture of self help teaches people to rely on things that don’t provide any answer. Hope, Trust the Universe, Believe it, Achieve it. In fact, the majority of people who buy self help books tend to buy similar books on the same topic over and over. The hope is that one day, something is going to click.”

# Devarim 30:11-14 Parshas Netzavim

## Interpretation of the Ramban (Nachmanides)

11. For this commandment which I command you this day, is not concealed from you, nor is it far away.

יא כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוה היום  
לא נפלאות הוא ממך ולא רחוקה הוא:

12. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us, so that we can fulfill it?"

יב לא בשמים הוא לאמר מי יעלה לנו  
השמימה ויקחה לנו וישמענו אתה ונעשנה:

13. Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us, so that we can fulfill it?"

יג ולא מעבר לים הוא לאמר מי יעבר לנו  
אל עבר הים ויקחה לנו וישמענו אתה  
ונעשנה:

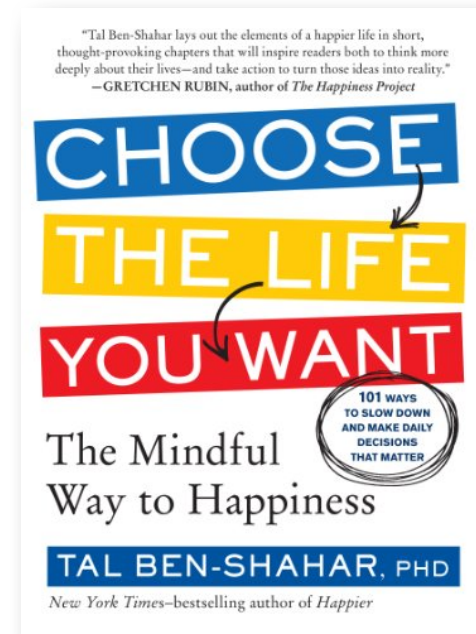
14. Rather, [this] thing is very close to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can fulfill it.

יד כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיה ובלבך  
לעשתו:

# Dr. Tal Ben Shahar

“If you want to change, don’t read self help books including mine, read biographies”

Lecture at Boca Raton Synagogue



# Language Matters

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- ❖ Don't be resigned to a reality and surrender to circumstance. The language we use matters.
- ❖ Reactive language becomes self-fulfilling prophecy
- ❖ Study from the Journal of Consumer Research

120 students were divided into two groups with one instructed to respond to facing temptation with the words "I can't" and the other with the words "I don't." If offered ice cream, members of group #1 were taught to say "I **can't** eat ice cream" and when the second group was given the same temptation they were told to say "I **don't** eat ice cream."

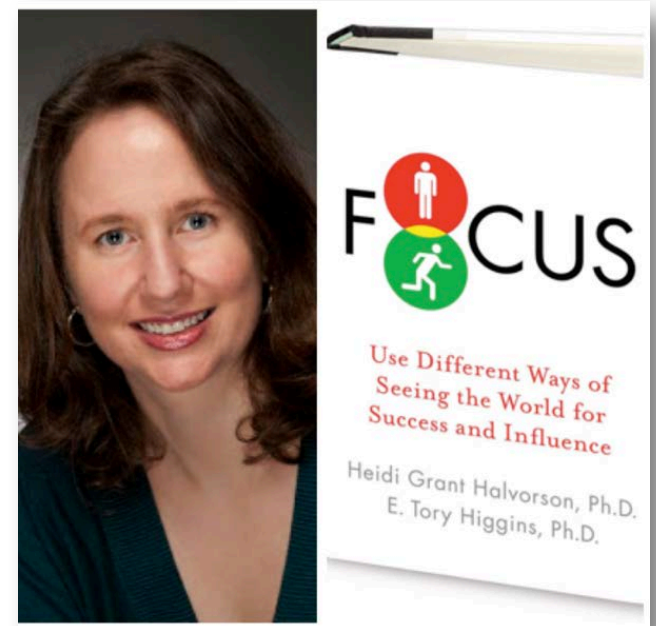
Each group repeated their phrase over and over and then they were given a questionnaire to fill out that had nothing to do with the study. After turning it in, on their way out they were offered a complimentary treat, either a candy bar or a health bar.



# I Can't or I Don't?

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- ❖ The study found that those who said “I can't eat X” chose the candy bar 61% of the time. Those who said “I don't” chose the candy bar only 36% of the time. Researchers concluded that the very terminology we use can influence our will, discipline and self control.
- ❖ Heidi Grant Halvorson, director of the Motivation Science Center at Columbia University explains: “I don't” is experienced as a choice, so it feels empowering. It's an affirmation of your determination and willpower. “I can't” isn't a choice. It's a restriction, it's being imposed upon you. So thinking “I can't” undermines your sense of power and personal agency.”
- ❖ Put differently, the phrase “I don't” is a psychologically empowering way to say no, while the phrase “I can't” is a psychologically draining way to say no.



# Listening to our Language

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Habit #1 – Be Proactive means using the correct language.

“Our language is a very real indicator of the degree to which we see ourselves as proactive people.”

REACTIVE LANGUAGE:	PROACTIVE LANGUAGE:
There's nothing I can do.	Let's look at our alternatives.
That's just the way I am.	I can choose a different approach.
He makes me so mad.	I control my own feelings.
They won't allow that.	I can create an effective presentation.
I have to do that.	I will choose an appropriate response.
I can't.	I choose.
I must.	I prefer.
If only.	I will.

\* Source: Stephen Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"



# The "Have's" and the "Be's"

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## Have's:

- I'll be happy when I have my house paid off...
- If only I had a boss who wasn't such a dictator...
- If only I had a more patient husband/wife...
- If I could just have more time to myself...

## Be's:

- I can be more patient
- I can be more wise
- I can be more loving

"Anytime we think the problem is "out there," that thought is the problem."

Proactive approach focuses on being different, effecting positive change.

As an example of have vs. be, Covey brings the story of Yosef and his brother



# Don't be Carried by Momentum



Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm  
“Seventy Faces”

Be intentional, don't just go  
with the flow or swim  
downstream



The 85 letters of the two verses of the *Va-yehi bi'nesoa*, which we recite when the Ark is opened before the reading of the Torah, appear in the Torah surrounded by two strange symbols, one at the beginning of the passage and one at the end. They are the *nunin hafukhin*, the letters Nun inverted. The reason for this strange use of orthographic symbols is offered by the Kabbalistic work, *Midrash Ha-ne'elam*—and it is even stranger than the symbols themselves!

The Midrash Ha-ne'elam states:

They are the actual glory of the Holy One, the foundation of the world, and by means of these nuns the Holy One will redeem Israel and bring the Messiah. It is by means of these nuns that Jacob blessed his grandchildren, [as it is written] *ve'yidgu la-rov be'kerev ha-aretz*

The last item refers to the root of *va'yidgu* which is *dag* or fish, meaning that Jacob blessed his grandchildren that they increase as profusely as the fish of the sea. (so the Aramaic translation by Onkelos).

I suggest that what this extravagant praise of the inverted Nuns means is this: In order to bring about the Redemption, to set the word aright and justify its continued existence, to bring the spirit of Divinity into the world, what is necessary is—the readiness to do what fish do, namely, to swim upstream, to go against the tide, to dare the raging currents of the foaming sea. It means the ability to hew to your vision even when the masses declare you blind or unfit, even when the powers of the world or community disparage you and isolate you.

## Nonessentialist

## Essentialist

### Thinks

#### ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

"I have to."  
"It's all important."  
"How can I fit it all in?"

#### LESS BUT BETTER

"I choose to."  
"Only a few things really matter."  
"What are the trade-offs?"

### Does

#### THE UNDISCIPLINED PURSUIT OF MORE

Reacts to what's most pressing  
Says "yes" to people without really thinking  
Tries to force execution at the last moment

#### THE DISCIPLINED PURSUIT OF LESS

Pauses to discern what really matters  
Says "no" to everything except the essential  
Removes obstacles to make execution easy

### Gets

#### LIVES A LIFE THAT DOES NOT SATISFY

Takes on too much, and work suffers  
Feels out of control  
Is unsure of whether the right things got done  
Feels overwhelmed and exhausted

#### LIVES A LIFE THAT REALLY MATTERS

Chooses carefully in order to do great work  
Feels in control  
Gets the right things done  
Experiences joy in the journey

# Being Proactive Means Practicing Essentialism



# Pruning - Zemiros



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The purpose of pruning is to remove the unessential so the essential can blossom.

Pesukei d'zimra, zemiros = removing distractions so our spirits can soar.



Chametz:  
The Search  
is On!

## Chametz – Wasted Time & Energy

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The only difference between bread and matzah is time.

We search and destroy chametz as a symbol of eliminating waste and non essential from our lives.

Rav Asher Weiss – we put the chametz out that we will search for as acknowledgement that we are responsible for the chametz in our lives.



# Resolutions

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Every year, data shows that the biggest spike in gym memberships occurs in the second week of January. With the New Year comes resolutions and by far the most popular is to get in shape. However, statistics show that by the second week of February, almost 80% of the new members stop coming.

It isn't just weight loss or exercise. While 45% of Americans make New Year's resolutions, only 10% are successful at keeping them and meeting their goals.

# Goals and Resolutions

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Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, hy" d, also known as the Piaseczno Rebbe writes:

“If you want to know if you you’ve progressed on your spiritual path over the years, the way to judge is to look at your resolution – at your *inner drive* – and not at your wishes. Only the inner drive with which you work to attain your desired goal is called resolution. But if you don’t work but rather just want, this is not called resolution. It is just some wish that you wish for yourself to be blessed with that desired objective. For example, the pauper who works to sustain himself, this is a drive, because he is doing something constructive toward it. But the wish that he’ll find a million dollars is just a wish to be rich and not a resolution. Every Jew would like to be a *tzadik*, but this is no more than a wish; he’d like to wake up in the morning and suddenly find himself a *tzadik*. Only the level and state of being that you seriously work toward can truly be called a resolution.”

We claim to want to do make changes, but the truth is they are just wishes. We wish to wake up one morning and find ourselves suddenly doing those things or living that way. The real secret to change is to stop wishing and to start making real resolutions. Personal growth is the result of making a plan, spelling it out and holding ourselves accountable to keeping to it.





## Write Down Goals

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Dr. Gail Matthews, a psychology professor at Dominican University in California, did a study on goal-setting. She found that you are 42 percent more likely to achieve your goals just by writing them down.



# Goal Setting - Michael Hyatt

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The best goals are:



- ▶ **Specific** enough to focus and direct your energies.
- ▶ **Measurable** so you can keep track of your progress.
- ▶ **Actionable** with clear initiating verb that prompts specific activity.
- ▶ **Risky** enough to leverage our natural tendency to rise to challenges.
- ▶ **Time-keyed** so you're prompted exactly when to act.
- ▶ **Exciting** enough to inspire and harness the power of your intrinsic motivation.
- ▶ **Relevant** within the overall context of your life.

# Thirty Day Challenge

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- ❖ Over the next 30 days, go from being reactive to proactive.
- ❖ Be intentional in all that you do and eliminate the nonessential.
- ❖ Be mindful of the language you use.
- ❖ Don't focus on "have," focus on "be."
- ❖ Set realistic, achievable goals.
- ❖ Write them down and ask others to hold you accountable.
- ❖ At the next session of this course, what will be different about your life? Make the decision tonight and proactively achieve it!

