

Challenge Success; Making Life Enjoyable and Healthy
Mechina 5769

By, Aliza Gazek, NFTY President 5769-5770

Touchstone Text:

- "Both a healthy body and a healthy mind are necessary for human beings to be complete." –Religious Action Center Responsa to Maimonides
- "More than the Jewish People have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish people." –Abraham Joshua Heschel
- "I don't have to—I get to!"
- People don't go to school to learn.
They go to get good grades,
which brings them to college,
which brings them the high-paying job,
which brings them to happiness,
so they think.
-14 year old boy

Big Ideas:

- Our society defines success in such a way that leads us to endure stress and suffer sometimes-unhealthy lifestyles in attempts to meet expectations
- We have the ability to make sure that our endeavors are full of enjoyment and are engaging, and to work to redefine our notion of success
- We can find fulfillment by doing what we love and loving what we do.
- We don't have to—we get to.

Goals:

- To redefine our notion of success in a healthier way
- To explore the stresses for Regional Board members and what can be done about them
- To enable Regional Board members to explore the stressors in their regions and what can be done about them
- To understand that mental health and physical go hand in hand and are equally important
- To empower Regional Board members to enjoy their years—now and always

Objectives:

- By hearing from a doctor in the Challenge Success DVD and learning stress-related statistics in the Powerpoint, PPs will understand the legitimacy of the cause
- By creating a 24 hour chart, PPs will have a visual representation of how they spend their time and how little time they may have for things like fun and sleep
- By discussing Shabbat, PPs will understand Judaism's role in minimizing stress and develop new traditions for themselves accordingly

- By creating personal and group stress trees, PPs will visualize the root causes of their stress and the ways that stress manifests itself, enabling them to see what they can and can't change
- By creating campaign posters, PPs will take action
- By hearing a student story, PPs will hear see an example of what can be done

Materials:

- Projector
- Computer to play DVD
- Challenge Success Conference 2008 DVD
- Poster Paper
- Paper with day planners (Tuesday or another week day on one side, Saturday on the other)
- Colored markers/crayons
- Small scraps of paper with a fruit, vegetable, and Jewish food written on each to indicate groups

Spaces Needed:

- Beit Am

People Needed:

- 1 PL (Program Leader)
- 10 GLs (Group Leaders)
- 124ish Mechina PPs

Time Table:

00:00-00:08 Introduction
 00:08-00:10 DVD Intro
 00:10-00:13 Split into groups and Disperse
 00:13-00:25 Rotation 1
 00:25-00:27 Transition
 00:27-00:39 Rotation 2
 00:39-00:41 Transition
 00:41-00:53 Rotation 3
 00:53-01:05 Posters
 01:05-01:15 Wrap Up
 Post-Program: Optional Yoga with Persephone

Detailed Schedule:

As participants enter, hand them slips of paper with a vegetable, fruit, and Jewish food written on each. These will indicate their groups for the program.

00:00-00:08 Introduction

When we become Regional Board members, we commit to making NFTY our number one extra-curricular activity. NFTY comes after three things: family, academics, and health.

The high school students who want to be on Regional Board usually have commitments other than NFTY. You are all interested individuals engaged in the world around you.

So think about these questions:

How many hours a night do you sleep during the school year?

What are your incentives to perform academically?

What do you do to take breaks?

Do you really have time to be making all the commitments you've made for this coming year?

How are you going to satisfactorily fulfill your obligations to NFTY this year?

Now for this question, take thirty seconds to discuss your response with your neighbor. Then you'll have a chance to share with the group if you want to. Here's the question: How do you define success?

(Ask some PPs to share with the group)

American Heritage dictionary defines success first as "the achievement of something desired, planned, or attempted," and the second definition given is "the gaining of fame or prosperity." The number two definition from another dictionary is "the attainment of popularity or profit." Fame, prosperity, popularity, and profit. Those are the specific definitions our dictionaries provide for success.

In a moment, we'll be watching a video clip of a conference for Challenge Success, a program through the Stanford School of Education. Challenge Success observes that a young person's success is too often measured by trophies, grades, test scores, and acceptance into prestigious schools, which leads to poor mental and physical health. The program works to broaden the definition of success to include character, health, independence, connection, creativity, enthusiasm and achievement.

A fourteen-year-old boy said this:

"People don't go to school to learn.
They go to get good grades,
which brings them to college,
which brings them the high-paying job,
which brings them to happiness,
so they think."

Keep this in mind as we watch the video clip.

00:08-00:10 DVD Intro with Ken Ginsburg

- Play clip from Challenge Success Conference DVD
- 2:29:05-2:30:55

10:00-13:00 Transition

- PPs will go to the station with a sign that has the name of a vegetable on it matching the vegetable on their paper. For example, a PP with a paper reading “carrot” will find the table with a sign that says “carrot” and sit down.

00:13-00:25 Rotation 1: Powerpoint Stress Statistics Quiz

- GL will lead the PPs through a PowerPoint show quiz of statistics about stress and the like. When the statistics are compared to the number of Mechina participants, we are considering that there are 124 Mechina participants.
- Once the slideshow is done, discuss reactions, including:
 - Which facts stood out to you?
 - Which of these concepts do you witness most?
 - Do you feel like any of these statistics are not accurate based on your own experiences?

00:25-00:27 Transition

- PPs will go to the station with a sign that has the name of a fruit on it matching the fruit on their paper. For example, a PP with a sticker that says “strawberry” will find the table with a sign that reads “strawberry” and sit down.

00:27-00:39 Rotation 2: Twenty-four Hour Day Chart and Shabbat

- PPs will be instructed to map out a day in their life during the school year. The aim is that they will be able to visualize and assess where they’re spending their time.
- PPs will be given a sheet of paper with a 24-hour day planner on it and a list of ways they potentially spend their time that they can include. For each activity (sleep, work, school, friends, etc.) that they choose to include, they will choose a color for it and shade in all the squares for the hours they spend doing that activity. They should make a key so that they can identify their categories later.
- PPs can feel free to add in ways they spend their time other than those on the list provided. The list is merely suggestions.
- When they are done, discuss reactions, including:
 - Where are you spending your time?
 - Do you get to do everything you want to in this day?
 - Do you have to say no to anything so that you can fit all of this in?
 - Do you have playtime?
 - Do you have family time?
- **IMPORTANT:** Discuss the importance of Shabbat and how PPs can observe it:

- “More than the Jewish People have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish People.” –Abraham Joshua Heschel
 - What does this mean?
- Shabbat is our day of rest. What are ways we can observe Shabbat?
 - E.g. Don’t go on Facebook, don’t wear a watch, sleep in, go to the beach, have breakfast with family...
- Discuss: Does your Shabbat have to be Saturday?
- On the other side of the paper, PPs will fill in Saturday with how they realistically think their Shabbat could be, whether or not their Shabbat is on Saturday.

00:39-00:41 Transition

- PPs will go to the station with a sign that has the name of a Jewish food on it matching the Jewish food on their sticker. For example, a PP with a sticker that says “matzah ball” will find the table with a sign that reads “matzah ball” and sit down.

00:41-00:53 Rotation 3: Stress Trees and Coping Mechanisms

- PPs will each draw a tree with root causes of stress at the base (US News & World Report College Rankings, SAT, family, college admissions, peer pressure etc.) and manifestations of stress on the branches (anxiety, depression, suicide, lack of laughter, manipulating school systems, headaches, etc.)
 - Root causes are uncontrollable and won’t go away—at least not any time in the foreseeable future.
 - Branches are things that we *can* change.
- PPs can share things that they put on their roots and branches if they choose
- Brainstorm how to deal with the root causes by preventing those manifestations of stress.
 - What are positive coping mechanisms?
 - What are negative coping mechanisms?

00:53-01:05 Challenge Success Campaign Posters

- In their last groups, PPs will wrap up discussion and make posters with slogans for a Challenge Success campaign. The aim of the posters is to communicate a way in which we want to be treated by the world with regards to the scope of our program. Examples include “Don’t ask me *where* I’m going to college—ask me *why*.”

01:05-01:15 Wrap Up

- To conclude, we’ll watch another clip from the Challenge Success conference, this time from a Stanford student named Zev.
- Watch the clip 2:19:25-2:27:00
- GL: “I hope that you’ll remember your discussions and the things you created today in your coming year as NFTY leaders. You will be stressed at times. So assess your commitments when that happens. It might mean dropping a class or an activity,

sleeping more, spending more time with friends, with family.

- In the traditional *mi she-beirakh* prayer for the sick, we pray for a *refuah sheleimah*—a complete recovery—which includes both *refuat ha-nefesh u'refuat haguf*, a healing of the soul *and* the body. Judaism acknowledges a distinction between mental and physical health. However, tradition treats them on an equal plane, recognizing that both a healthy body and a healthy mind are necessary for human beings to be complete.
- When stressful times come around, remember that you don't have to—you get to, and remember why you love what you do.

Challenge Success Posters from the Program at Mechina Regional Board Training at the Kutz Camp, June 2009

don't ask me about my
Grade Point Average
ask me about my
Great Personal Achievement

Your Net Worth
Isn't
Really
What You're Worth

Don't Know of Me,
KNOW ME
I am more than my accomplishments

Success...
I'm more than just a few digits

Don't ask me what
Stresses me out, YOU
Stress me out!

N
I am NOT my GPA
T

The BEST I
Can do is
The Best You
Will GET.

-I just ran the best race of my life! Who cares if I didn't get first place?
-This is the best paper I've ever written. Who cares if I didn't get an A?

Do what you love and love what you do!
No regrets.
You don't have to do it, you get to do it.
Love your LIFE
Work hard—Relax harder!
Don't ask me what I got on my test, ask me how my day was!

Have You Taken Time to BREATHE Today?
To love what you do, you should do what you LOVE.
Don't worry, BE HAPPY!

Live life to the fullest
Enjoy every moment.
Make it a “want” not a “need!”
Don’t ask me about my GPA, just ask me if I’m okay!
Stop and look back at how far you’ve come.