

## HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

“How to Win Friends and Influence People” was one of the top bestselling self-help books ever published. The reason for this is obvious. We as human beings, more than anything else, want and need to make a difference in the lives of others. The positive impact we have on others gives us a profound sense of self worth and provides us with meaning in our lives. Furthermore, a dynamic is created resulting in a genuine connection with other people which is what friendship is all about.

Let's look into this week's Torah portion to gain some profound insight into this most intriguing subject.

In one of the most difficult passages in the biblical narrative is the incident of the “Waters of Strife” where G-d decrees that Moses would die in the desert and not bring the Jewish people into the land of Israel. The two most popular reasons given by our sages as to why Moses was dealt with so harshly are: 1. Because he smote the rock to produce the water, rather than speak to the rock as he was instructed by G-d (*Rashi*), 2. Because he spoke with anger to the Jewish people (*Maimonides*).

In a most beautiful insight into these explanations, the famed Chassidic master **Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**, fuses these two classic commentaries into one. He explains that in fact these two insights are two sides of the same coin.

The reason why the rock did not produce the water after Moses initially spoke to it was because he did so in an angry manor. Had Moses spoken to the Jewish people in a loving and compassionate way even the rock would have produced the water that the Jewish people so desperately needed.

Here we have a classic lesson with regard to successfully influencing the people around us. If we want to have an impact on others and win them over we have to behave towards them with genuine care and love. Yes, we might be good people and the views we have are correct and indeed beneficial to the people we are trying to influence. However if our patience is limited and there is no genuine concern for the people which we are trying to impact, we will have no success. It is only when we speak with love and compassion and an understanding of their situation, that we can make a profound impression on their lives. To the extent, that even if the people that we trying to influence are as tough and hard as a rock, they too, will eventually respond. As in the story, even a rock when spoken to with love, will produce water.

*By Yosef Vogel*

Fri 14<sup>th</sup> June

Chukat

Shabbat Begins: 9.05pm

Shabbat Ends: 10.25pm