

## 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 the lives of others provides us with a profound sense of meaning and self worth. Furthermore, a dynamic is created which results in a genuine connection with other people which is essentially what real friendship is all about.

When we look into this week’s Torah portion, we are able to gain a profound insight into this most intriguing subject.

In one of the most difficult passages in the biblical narrative, we find the incident of the “Waters of Strife” where G-d decrees that Moses would die in the desert, before bringing the Jewish people into the land of Israel. This was a harsh punishment for Moses for which our sages provide the two most popular reasons. 1. Because he smote the rock to produce the water, rather than speak to the rock as was instructed by G-d (*Rashi*), 2. Because, he spoke to the Jewish people in anger (*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 the rock did not produce water after Moses 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.

From here, we are able to deduce an axiom for all relationships. When we set out wanting to influence the people around us, we have to behave towards them with genuine care and love. Yes, we might be good people and the views we have may be correct and indeed beneficial to the lives of the people we are trying to influence. However if in our dealings with others, our patience is limited and there is no sense of genuine concern, we will have no success. It is only when we deal with others in a loving and compassionate way and displays a real understanding of the other’s situation, that we can make a profound impression on their lives. If we employ this methodology, then even if the people that we trying to influence start out displaying a lack of malleability, we will see that they too will eventually respond, because eventually breaks down the blockages and barriers that people construct. This is evident in the story with Moses and the rock because if Moses had spoken gently to it, even the rock would have conceded to his will and produced water.

*By Yosef Vogel*

Fri 27<sup>th</sup> June

Chukat

Shabbat Begins: 9.08pm

Shabbat Ends: 10.27pm