

• A bumper sticker says, “Practice Random Kindness and Senseless Acts of Beauty.” Describe a time when you were either on the giving or the receiving end of an act of random kindness or senseless beauty OR go out and commit such an act and then write about what happened.

• If you had \$50 to improve the world, how would you spend it? What if you had \$500? \$5,000? \$50,000?

• What’s the most difficult thing about being involved in *Tzedakah in Action*? What’s the most rewarding thing?

• If you were asked to deliver a short speech explaining *Tzedakah in Action* to your regular school class or a group of non-Jewish peers, what would you say?

• What has been the most boring, uncomfortable, or depressing aspect of your experience with *Tzedakah in Action*?

• Look through newspapers and magazines for an article that relates to philanthropy. Write a summary of the article and any personal reactions you have to it. (If you do this activity, be sure to keep a scrapbook of the articles and students’ reactions.)

• Which of your personal skills will make the greatest contribution to the success of *Tzedakah in Action*?

• What do you wish you had been told at the beginning of this project that would have made the experience better?

• How have you changed as a result of your involvement with *Tzedakah in Action*? What have you learned from the experience?



HOW HAVE YOU HELPED OTHERS & HOW HAVE OTHERS HELPED YOU?¹¹

THIS EXERCISE PROVIDES students with an opportunity to examine interdependence in their lives. Distribute copies of the worksheets on pp. 52-53 and give students 10-20 minutes to fill in the charts. As students finish, put them in small groups of 3-4 and have them share their responses. This should spark additional ideas and examples so everyone will be able to fill in many if not most of the boxes. After the exercise, gather everyone together and discuss the responses.



LIVING HIGH AND LETTING DIE:¹² AN EXPLORATION OF SURPRISING AND ENLIGHTENING MORAL DILEMMAS

NOTE: This discussion is suited to high school students, though it can be adapted to younger students.

I. PRESENT THE VINTAGE SEDAN AND THE ENVELOPE.

After reading each scenario, ask students whether they consider the behavior immoral. After both have been presented, ask in which scenario they believe the behavior was more immoral.

(NOTE: Most people concur that the behavior in the Vintage Sedan is far more immoral, and to a certain extent, the discussion questions that follow presuppose that the class shares that sentiment. If they’re ambivalent, shift on the fly.)

REAL LIFE KAVOD

Rank each act of tzedakah on the Kavod-Bushab scale. Then match each act with one of the Jewish quotations on the back of the page.

1. ____ Robert belonged to the local Rotary Club. He also had a small business in town. His business had a lot of little troubles: some theft, bad economy, some people who hadn't paid their bills. He was close to going bankrupt and having to leave town. At a Rotary Club Luncheon, Frank, who was sitting next to Robert, stood up and told Robert's story. He suggested, "We should all take up a collection for Robert – he's been good to all of us." They raised over \$7,000.

Kavod 1 2 3 4 5 Bushab

2. ____ Leslie was out collecting money for a charitable organization. She was working her way through an apartment building. She knew that Russell lived on the next floor. Russell was in her class and always dressed in clean but tattered clothes. She had heard from some of her classmates that Russell and his family lived on welfare money. When she got to Russell's door, she rang the bell and asked him if his mother was home. Then she asked her for a donation.

Kavod 1 2 3 4 5 Bushab

3. ____ Mr. Keltzman was a nice old gentleman who lived down the street. He was poor and lived on a pension. He didn't always have quite enough to eat. But he kept his house in perfect order, and always dressed nicely. Even though his suits were old, he always pressed them and placed a handkerchief in his pocket. Some of the people on the block took up a secret collection to help Mr. Keltzman. They gave the money to David and told him to "buy the old man some food." David used the money to buy Mr. Keltzman a new pair of shoes.

Kavod 1 2 3 4 5 Bushab

4. ____ Mr. Cohen was rich. Mr. Kaufman was poor. One day, Mr. Kaufman borrowed \$25 from Mr. Cohen. Months went by and Mr. Kaufman never seemed to have the money to pay it back. He came up with a lot of excuses – a forgotten wallet, a bad week, the kids needed new shoes, etc. Mr. Cohen did not need the \$25. One day, however, he mailed a note to Mr. Kaufman. It said, "Next time you mow your lawn, if I find mine done, too, we'll call it even." Mr. Cohen then instructed his gardener not to mow the lawn that week.

Kavod 1 2 3 4 5 Bushab

5. ____ Irv Brentwood liked to help people. One day, when invited to an event to raise money for a good cause, he made a big pledge. The cause was one he really believed in, but he pledged more than he could afford. Irv made good on the pledge, but took months to pay off his dentist, his butcher, and many other people he owed.

Kavod 1 2 3 4 5 Bushab

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REAL LIFE KAVOD

A.

Even persons living on *tzedakah* are obligated to give part of their money to *tzedakah*.

–*Gittin 7b*

B.

The highest degree of *tzedakah* is to aid someone by offering him/her a gift or a loan, by entering into a partnership with him/her, or by providing work so that he/she can become self-supporting.

–*Mishneh Torah*

C.

When *tzedakah* collectors would see Eleazer of Bartota, they would hide from him, because he would give away all that he had with him. He was once on his way to the market to purchase something for his daughter's wedding when the *tzedakah* collectors saw him. They hid from him, but he came running after them.

–*Ta'anit 24a*

D.

It is a *mitzvah* to give a poor person what is needed. If one has no clothing, clothing should be provided. If one has no furniture, it should be obtained... Even if an impoverished person was used to riding on a horse with a servant running ahead, you should provide a horse and servant. It is a *mitzvah* to meet a poor person's needs – but you are not required to make that person rich.

–*Mishneh Torah*

E.

Rabbi Yannai once saw a man give money to a poor man publicly. He said, "It would have been better for you not to have given him anything, rather than giving it to him as you did, causing him embarrassment."

–*Chagigah 5a*

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