

Chapter 1 : Beyond Self-Interest: A Democratic Core Curriculum - Educational Leadership

Leadership can be hard to define. Many have tried, but most of the definitions aren't that convincing. What if leadership is simply the lack of self-interest. And the perceived lack of self-interest.

They are called shlichim. This simple name, however, carries within itself volumes of invaluable lessons for each one of us. Lessons that have the power to change your life forever. When it comes to big life issues, we humans have the tendency to avoid drawing very distinct lines. Life is far too complex and nuanced to impose a black and white perspective. Grey is the color of choice. Despite this general rule which itself, by the logic above, should not be etched in stone, the fact is that there are areas where lines can be drawn. And one primary one is the big choice we make about our careers – where we will invest the bulk of our life energies. In this area we really have only two choices: Will you live your life driven either by self-interest, or by dedication to a higher cause than yourself? The undisputed argument can be made, that even self-interest can benefit the public. Personal gain and even greed serve as a powerful catalyst to create products and services that benefit the public. Even a self-interest driven individual can be charitable and benevolent. And conversely, even dedication to a higher cause can also be driven by self-interest, in effect, making it just another expression and extension of personal gain and benefit. Yet, the very clear distinction remains between the primary and secondary drives: One has chosen a life driven by self-interest, which also – as an ancillary element – can happen to benefit others. The latter has chosen a life that is primarily driven by helping others – a cause beyond himself – which also can satisfy his self-interest. You can be involved in your self-interests without anyone else gaining anything. Or your self-interest can be directed toward efforts that benefit many. Like the difference between the two options of putting on a fur coat or lighting a fire to keep warm in a cold room: By donning a fur coat a tzaddik in peltz, you serve and keep yourself warm, but no one else. Lighting a fire warms you and everyone else in the room. Sadly, even religious commitment today, due to its mechanization, has become trapped beneath these two options. Every person on Earth is sent here on a mission; your soul was dispatched for you to accomplish a particular assignment, which is your calling. Abraham sending Eliezer as his emissary to find a bride for Isaac. To fuse matter and spirit, body and soul into one seamless union see Messenger or Matchmaker. Dedicating your life to a cause beyond yourself, unleashes many powerful forces. Leaving your comfort zones creates challenges that always bring the best out of you. Secondly, it empowers you to become a leader instead of a follower. Like the windows in the Holy Temple, which were narrow on the inside and wide on the outside, in order to allow the transmission of the inner holy light to the outside. In Kabbalistic and Chassidic terms this is the concept of Ohr, light-energy, whose fundamental property is bittul – the ability to transcend your own ego and self-interest. In our universe made of matter and energy container and light – with all matter being essentially energy – we always have a choice: Matter, by nature and by definition, is self-contained, concealing the energy within and denying any root source. Energy is selfless, always pointing to a source of the energy. Will we choose a life driven by matter and substance, which is selfishly oriented; or will we seek out the energy within which directs us to a higher source? The sense that the energy is entirely dependent and has no being without its source. The first level of bittul is only circumstantial. In face of its source the energy feel utterly nullified. But not that the energy on its own is actually insignificant. Take a candle for example. But move the candle away from the presence of the sun into a dark room, then the candle has a very significant presence. The example for this would be sunlight itself: Applying this to the concept of shlichus – the role each of us plays when we sense ourselves as Divine emissaries on a mission to serve a higher cause than our own needs – two possibilities arise in the way we serve as messengers on our missions: Your dedication to the cause – your bittul – can be one in which you feel yourself utterly humble in face of the cause you represent. Like a student who feels absolutely trivial in the presence of his great teacher. But this feeling does not permeate your entire being. Your ego and personality remains intact, only nullified in the presence of your teacher. The messenger feels that his entire being has no substance if not for being a messenger of the sender. Practically, the difference between these two attitudes is not mere semantics. Take, for example, a situation where a student of a great

teacher is faced with a serious dilemma and does not have the ability to consult his master. In the first instance, the student would have no choice but to decide what to do based on his own instincts and knowledge. If he were in the presence of his master, he would of course defer to the master. Faith alone connects you with the Divine. In the name of faith you defer and surrender to a Higher Will. But where do you, as an individual, remain standing? When faith is integrated into your system "your mind and heart" then you become transformed into an instrument: Your mind channels a higher intelligence and state of consciousness, your heart channels a higher state of emotions, and your actions, your arms and legs and your entire body, manifest a higher, refined state of behavior. You and your faculties have become, in effect, agents of higher energy. Wherever there is Coca-Cola you can find Chabad. Others talk about their great dedication, no matter what they will never leave their job. I humbly submit, that the greatest story of all, is the fact that the Rebbe understood the need to empower and to create proactive individuals, who would transcend self-interest, or harness their self-interest for the good of the greater cause. Especially in times of freedom and prosperity notwithstanding the current economic meltdown it is so easy to gravitate to a state of complacency and passivity, immersed and engulfed by self-interest. The model of shlichus "that an individual, or a couple, leave their comfort zone and self-orbiting life and go out to build communities" is a model for us all: But before you get too excited, there is yet another, third and even more profound dimension of bittul.

Chapter 2 : "Ethics" Means Acting Beyond Self-Interest | Leading in Context

In Beyond Self-Interest, leading social scientists argue for a view of individuals behavior and social organization that takes into account the powerful motivations of duty, love, and malevolence. Economists who go beyond "economic man," psychologists who go beyond stimulus-response, evolutionary biologists who go beyond the "selfish gene," and.

Chapter 3 : Beyond Self-Interest - Google Books

In Beyond Self-Interest, leading social scienti Political scientists, psychologists, economists, and evolutionary biologists are beginning to reject the view that human affairs are shaped almost exclusively by self-interest" a view that came to dominate social science in the last three decades.

Chapter 4 : Chayei Sarah: Beyond Self-Interest - The Meaningful Life Center

1 Beyond self-interest? A comparative study of public service motivation among Masters of Public Administration students in China, Denmark, Taiwan and the United States.

Chapter 5 : Beyond Self-Interest by Jane J. Mansbridge

The model of shlichus - an individual, or a couple, leave their comfort zone and self-orbiting life and go out to build communities - is a model for us all.

Chapter 6 : Beyond Self-Interest, Mansbridge

"Enlightened self-interest is a philosophy in ethics which states that persons who act to further the interests of others (or the interests of the group or groups to which they belong), ultimately serve their own self-interest.