



**Kallah Networking Session: Teen Program Facilitators
Monday, January 31, 12:25pm-1:25pm**

Presenters:

Leslie-Anne Copes-Finke, *Director of Teen Program* & **Sarah Canfield-Dafilou**, *Teen Program Associate*

A. Life Through a Jewish Lens: Text Talk on Truth

“The most basic parameter of truth is consistency. Truth requires not only that there be no discrepancy between knowledge and awareness on one hand, and reality on the other hand—but also that there be no contradictions within a person’s essential nature.”

(Rav Shlomo Wolbeⁱ)

“A fact is always the same. Once you learn it, you have it forever. But truth is different. Once you understand it, you are forever changed and ‘the truth’ disappears.”

(Rabbi Lawrence Kushnerⁱⁱ, *The Book of Words*)

Discussion Prompts:

1. How do you understand the difference between R’ Wolbe’s notion of truth as “knowledge and awareness” and truth as “reality?”
 - How does this compare with Rabbi Kushner’s notion of “fact” vs. “truth”?
2. We all have multiple faces that we put on in life. (i.e., We may differ in how we show up in different situations given our roles, i.e., student, peer, family member, etc.)
 - Identify a specific example of multiple truths you exhibit in your life. How do you behave or act in these different situations?
 - What would it be like if you were consistent in how you show up? What is your “authentic face?”
 - What makes it hard to be your true self in every situation?
3. What would your life be like if you were living with more truth, integrity, and alignment?
 - How can you uncover the unseen, hidden truths? What do you need to examine or consider?
 - Try to identify a primary source of falsehood in your life. (i.e., you became a lawyer because it was important to your parents; you act like you’re confident but you’re really insecure)

B. Personal Practice for Facilitators:

Seed Thought for Journaling:

- As a Mussar facilitator, how might you guide your students to uncover their “true nature”?
- What do you need to do (if anything) to expand your own practice of truth or “truth-perception?”

C. Bringing the Learning to Heart: With Your Teens

Truth/Emet – THE RANGE



1. The Range

Activity A: Examine the above range on truth/*emet*.

- Think of and share a situation when *too much* truth was demonstrated, resulting in brutal honesty and hurt feelings.
- Think of and share a situation when *too little* truth was demonstrated, resulting in deception.

Activity B: Pick your own range in *chevruta*

- Put the list of truth words in the order you think they belong in to represent the range of truth from too little to too much.
- Have a discussion with your *chevruta* partner about how each of the words can be expressions of truth depending on your reality/perception.

Alignment	Authenticity
Disconnection	Dissonance
Falsehood	False representation
Harmony	Holy purpose
Integrity	Misalignment
White lie	<i>Choose your own word</i>

2. Art Project



Looking at the three Hebrew letters at the root of *EMET* (aleph, mem, tav) note that the aleph is the first letter of the aleph-bet, the tav is the last letter of the aleph-bet, and the mem, is in the middle – demonstrating that the word itself shows that TRUTH is open and broad enough to hold all of reality.

Using art supplies, invite the students to create a visual image of where their truth begins and ends for them, individually. Show visually, your personal guiding values and how you truthfully demonstrate them. Draw the obstacles that get in the way of your being truthful.

3. Group Game: Step Forward, Step Back

Instructions: To begin, form a line in the middle of the room. The facilitator will read a series of statements. Think about how the statements apply to you and do the appropriate action.

*Be sure to leave ample time to debrief and process following this activity.

- 1) If you have ever lied to your parents, take a step backward
- 2) If you have ever told the truth even when it made you look bad, take a step forward
- 3) If you have ever lied and allowed someone to get in trouble for something you did, take a step back
- 4) If you have lied to prevent someone you love from being hurt, take a step forward
- 5) If you have not told the entire truth to avoid an argument, take a step backward
- 6) If you have been brutally honest with someone, and in doing so, hurt them, take a step back
- 7) If you have ever observed someone lying to a friend and said nothing, take a step back
- 8) If you have ever observed someone lying to a friend and spoke up, take a step forward
- 9) If you have accepted credit for something you didn't do, take a step back
- 10) If you intentionally shared credit for a group project you participated in, take a step forward
- 11) If you returned something that didn't belong to you without being asked, take a step forward
- 12) If you have ever acted like you understood something that you really didn't understand, take a step back
- 13) If you have ever corrected yourself or asked for forgiveness after lying to someone, take a step forward

4. Personal Practice:

- Seed Thought for Journaling: What does it mean for you to “live your truth?” Journal about what would be different in your life if you were living with more integrity.
- Kabbalat: For a day, try to be as honest as possible without hurting the feelings of others.
- Focus Phrase: Create a mantra or hashtag to remind you to be honest with yourself and others.

ⁱ **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe** (born: Wilhelm Wolbe, 1914 - 2005) was the pre-eminent Mussar master of our generation and our primary link to the Mussar academies of pre-war Europe. Often referred to simply as “The Mashgiach (The Spiritual Supervisor),” he was best known as the author of *Alei Shur*, a modern Mussar classic, the first volume having been written over a span of thirteen years.

ⁱⁱ **Rabbi Lawrence Kushner**, born in Detroit in 1943, is one of the most widely read authors by people of all faiths on Jewish spiritual life. Kushner graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Cincinnati and went on to receive his rabbinical ordination from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He served for 28 years at Congregation Beth-El in Sudbury, Massachusetts, and currently serves as the Emanu-El Scholar at San Francisco's Congregation Emanu-El and as an adjunct professor of Jewish mysticism and spirituality at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion.