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Shalom Secrets



HOW TO LIVE IN PEACE
WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS
A CHILDREN'S GUIDE

RABBI CHAIM TRAINER

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SOCIALLY SMARTER IS dedicated to helping people of all ages become more successful in all areas of *bain adam lachavairo*; interpersonal relationships.

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PRAISE FOR SHALOM SECRETS

“There is no doubt that after children read this book their *middos* will be significantly improved, and they will be more equipped to get along with others for the rest of their lives.”

—**Rabbi Shimon Finkelman**, author of *Rav Belsky* and *Chofetz Chaim: A Daily Companion*

“Your messages are clear and to the point. I feel many children will benefit greatly by this informative and inspiring work. I wish you continued success in spreading *Shalom Secrets*.”

—**Rabbi Zelig Pliskin**, author of *Happiness* and *Upgrade Your Mind, Upgrade Your Life*

“Rabbi Trainer’s productive work with students and with their parents, has earned him the admiration and respect of professionals whose work is focused on conflict resolution and the development of social skills.”

—**Rabbi Dr. Dovid Fox**, Rabbi, *Dayan*, Psychologist and Director of Crisis and Trauma for Chai Lifeline

“I found myself barely spending any time on student fights after teaching my *talmidim* the program.”

—**Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Lowy**, Rebbe, Yeshiva Ketana Ohr Reuven, Monsey, New York

“The program diverts the children’s focus away from who started and who’s right, to rather solve the conflict and make shalom. Our own children at home have also used it and gained tremendously.”

—**Rabbi David Miller**, Rebbe, Hillel Hebrew Academy, Los Angeles, California

“Before, I had to spend class time working out squabbles that occurred during recess, but those discussions were useless. Now, students no longer need me to solve every problem, and I have so much more time for teaching!”

—**Mrs. Chani Wolin**, teacher,
Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn, Los Angeles, California

“This is incredible! It actually works! Every day there would be a major fight over who gets which seat in the car. Now, no fight exists at all! It’s unbelievable how it works even with the two- and four-year-olds in my family.”

—**Mrs. Miriam Gerber**, parent, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

“This has had a tremendous effect on our son. He is really integrating these concepts. I could give you pages and pages of examples.”

—**Sima**, parent, Los Angeles, California

“This program has really been amazing. Our son is constantly using these methods with his siblings and gets very encouraged when he sees success. It’s really made such an impact on him and on his siblings — they try to use these methods as well! Thank you so much!”

—**Leah**, parent, Valley Village, California

“There used to be a lot of fighting in our home. I taught my brothers all about *Shalom Secrets*, and now there's peace in our home. Thank you so much!”

—**Yehuda Aryeh**, fifth grade, Lakewood, New Jersey

“*Shalom Secrets* helps me control my anger and stay calm.”

—**Efrat**, fourth grade, Brooklyn, New York

“*Shalom Secrets* teaches us how to express our feelings politely and nicely without hurting the other person.”

—**Aviva**, sixth grade, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approbations.....	8
Acknowledgments.....	11
Introduction for Educators and Parents	13
A Welcome to All Readers	15
Secret #1: If You Could Receive Only One Gift, What Would It Be?	18
Secret #2: Resolve Your Conflicts	22
Secret #3: The Simple Rule	25
Secret #4: Don't Be a Murderer!	28
Secret #5: It's Not Weird to Be Different.....	30
Secret #6: What We Say Is Important; How We Say It Is Even More Important	34
Secret #7: When You Can Forget and Forgive, You Will Be Happier	36
Secret #8: Why We Need to Talk About What Bothers Us	38
Secret #9: Here Are Three Big Benefits of Talking to Someone Who Hurt Us	42
Secret #10: Keep the Peace and Avoid This Huge Mistake	46
Secret #11: What's the Problem with Correcting People, Even When They're Wrong?.....	52
Secret #12: You Can Correct People Without Embarrassing Them; Here's How.....	55

Secret #13: When We Talk to People, They Will Hear Us Better If We're More Specific	60
Secret #14: Unleash the Magical Power of the Word "Okay"	63
Secret #15: What to Do When Nobody Wants to Apologize	68
Secret #16: Why Being the First to Apologize Makes All the Difference.....	72
Secret #17: More Apology Tricks.....	75
Secret #18: How to Answer Someone Who Talks About the Past	79
Secret #19: It Didn't Work? Repeat it — and Be Amazed.....	83
Secret #20: A New Type of Conflict	88
Secret #21: The Quickest Way to Resolve Conflicts of Interest	91
Secret #22: Know Who's Really Strong.....	96
Secret #23: Everyone Can Win.....	99
Secret #24: Double Conflicts	103
Secret #25: When SAYROC Doesn't Work.....	106
Secret #26: Tame the Bully	110
Secret #27: Take Charge of Your Feelings	114
Secret #28: Use Your Head.....	118
Secret #29: Conflicts with Adults, Part 1 Ask; Don't Demand.....	120
Secret #30: Conflicts with Adults, Part 2 Answer, Apologize, But Beware of Repeat.....	124
Secret #31: Conflicts with Adults, Part 3	128
It's Best to Give In	

Table of Contents

A Final Thought	131
Conflict Resolution Guide	132
Endnotes and Sources	134
Glossary.....	138
Bring Shalom Secrets to Your School.....	142

INTRODUCTION FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

Do your children or students ever get into fights? Are you tired of serving as the conflict-police?

Imagine if there was a way to train them to avoid hurting each other's feelings.

Imagine if there was a way to teach them to resolve their own conflicts, so that you would never have to act as their police officer.

Shalom Secrets is here to do all that, *b'ezras Hashem*, and more.

As an elementary school *rebbe* I encountered these challenges quite often. One year in particular, several boys in my class were constantly teasing another boy, whom we'll call Dovi. All my admonitions fell on deaf ears.

It was terribly painful for me to watch this boy suffer, and I was clueless as to how to put a stop to it. To be fair, Dovi wasn't altogether innocent; he did annoy those boys. But there had to be a better way for them to try to stop his annoying behavior without hurting him – which wasn't working very well anyway.

While most of my angst stemmed from my feelings for the victim of the abuse, part of me was also struggling with the question of how we as a society could allow these boys, who were inherently good, to continue with their cruel behavior. I knew that we should be concerned with improving their middos, which would certainly impact their future relationships.

And I knew that the Torah had the answers. In fact, I had previously delivered a number of *shiurim* on the topic of interpersonal relationships. The challenge was to distill the Torah's wisdom into

an easy-to-learn method that would be appropriate for children to use. Having no other option and with nothing to lose, I sat down and, with *Hashem's* help, came up with the basics of the *Shalom Secrets* method. I tried it out in my class, and it was successful beyond my dreams. The boys were actually learning to resolve conflicts on their own!

Fast-forward 20 years. Over 15,000 copies of *Shalom Secrets* have been sold, a Yiddish version was published in response to strong demand, and over 70 schools and 40,000 children have learned this method. The verdict is in: It works! *Baruch Hashem*, the feedback I have received from many teachers and families has been only positive.

Don't expect miracles; but with patience and perseverance, I believe you will see a definite improvement in how your children and students interact. The book itself is geared to 9- to 12-year-olds, but the ideas are appropriate and meaningful for all ages.

Schools can use this book as a textbook, and families can read the Secrets together. In addition, many supplemental materials are available, and more are being developed, such as: workbooks to reinforce the lessons; a Teacher-Parent Guide, which includes ideas on how to run an exciting school training program; educational videos for children, educators and parents; and more, at **sociallysmarter.com**.

Shalom Secrets is focused on one topic: living in peace by avoiding, and resolving, conflicts. More comprehensive materials on interpersonal relationships, including materials for the socially challenged, are in the works and will be available, *b'ezras Hashem*, at **sociallysmarter.com**.

SECRET #6

WHAT WE SAY IS IMPORTANT; HOW WE SAY IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT

Sometimes it's not **what** we say that hurts others; it's **how** we say it. Our tone of voice, the expression on our face and how loudly we speak make a big difference in how another person feels. So we must be careful not only about what we say, but also about how we say it.¹⁰

There are three things we should keep in mind whenever we speak to someone:

1. **Tone of voice.** Do we sound angry, frustrated or teasing?
2. **Expression on our face.** Are we frowning, looking upset, or laughing at the person we're talking to?
3. **Loudness.** Are we raising our voices more than necessary?

Tone.

Expression.

Loudness.

T-E-L. That's a



good way to remember it. Before you say something, make sure you are going to **T-E-L(L)** it correctly!

Sometimes, we may say things in an unpleasant tone of voice with an angry expression without even realizing it. We need to remember that even if we didn't mean to sound upset, the other person will feel hurt if our tone and facial expression show that we are upset.



THE BOTTOM LINE

How we say something is often more important than just the words we use. Try to always keep in mind how important it is to use a pleasant tone of voice, to keep a friendly facial expression and to speak softly.

SECRET #12

YOU CAN CORRECT PEOPLE WITHOUT EMBARRASSING THEM; HERE'S HOW

Now we come to the first letter of SAYROC. The “S” is about how we “say” what is bothering us in a way that will bring shalom.

The reason so many people get into fights when they try to correct someone’s mistakes is that they tell the other person that he did something wrong. Is that really always necessary in order to correct someone? Must we talk about what already happened in the past in order to bring about peace?

Take, for example, this story:

Your teacher hands you the marked test you took yesterday. You know you didn’t do as well as you usually do, since you didn’t study properly. You walk back to your seat and peek at the mark: 65%! Boy, that’s the lowest mark you’ve received in a long time. What are you going to tell your parents?

Then you notice that your classmate is looking over your shoulder! “Hey,” he or she says with a grin, “this is the first time I got a higher mark than you!”

You’re really embarrassed and upset. What would you say?

“What did you look at my test for?!” Or: “Who gave you permission to look at my test?!”

You Can Correct People Without Embarrassing Them; Here's How

Think about those questions. Is that really what you want? Do you think that knowing *why* your classmate looked at your test or *who* gave him or her permission will solve the problem?

Of course not. Your classmate might answer with one of the following comments:

"Because I wanted to know what mark you got."

"Because I felt like it."

"No one gave me permission, but I did it anyway."

"If you didn't cover it, it's like giving me permission."

"I wasn't really trying to see your mark."

Do you think those answers will bring shalom? No way! You'll just get more upset and argue over whether that answer is a good excuse.

The problem here is that you're talking about the *past*, about what already happened. It's too late! Your classmate already saw your test and nothing you're going to say is going to take that back. So, what do you really want?



You want to make sure that they don't do it again— in the future! So— say what you really want!²¹ You may also want to make sure he doesn't tell anyone your mark. This is also about the future.

How about these comments?

"Please don't ever look at my tests."

"In the future, I would appreciate it if you wouldn't look at my test mark without asking me."

"Please don't tell anyone my mark."

These comments do not accuse the other person of doing anything wrong. That's why they won't usually start a fight. If the other person is a decent person (which most people are), he will say, "Fine." He might even apologize for what he did!

Now we understand why it is so important to always speak about the future when correcting someone. Don't even mention what happened in the past — even if it just happened a couple of seconds ago!

The future could also be in a couple of seconds from now. For example, if you want someone to stop banging you on your back, you can say, "Please don't hit my back." If someone threw your ball into the street you can say, "Please get my ball back." That's also talking about the future. You don't have to say the words, "In the future," and you don't have to only talk about what you want next time. As long as you're not talking about something that happened already, you're okay.

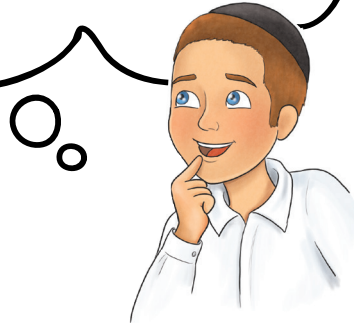
Sometimes the other person might stop bothering you for only a day or two and then start again. Don't think that this means that SAYROC didn't work. Keep in mind that you also

sometimes forget to do things you're told. There's nothing wrong with reminding the person a day or two later.

THINK ABOUT & DISCUSS

Try to remember a recent conflict in which either you or someone else talked about the past. What was the other person's reaction? How could you have changed that comment (or question) in order to switch the focus to the future? What do you think the other person's reaction would have been then?

Why do people so often ask questions about the past, if what they really want is to prevent this from happening again in the future?



THE BOTTOM LINE

Focus on your goal: to stop him from hurting you again. There's no need to discuss what he already did wrong, just tell him how you want him to act in the future.

BRING SHALOM SECRETS TO YOUR SCHOOL

Upgrade your school's culture by training children to avoid hurting others' feelings, and equip them with tools they can use to resolve their interpersonal conflicts easily.

Socially Smarter provides supplemental materials, to ensure that the program successfully enhances the shalom in your students' lives. Workbooks to reinforce the lessons, and a Teacher-Parent Guide, are available online at sociallysmarter.com. More materials are in the works, as well.

With *Shalom Secrets*, principals and teachers will be spending less time on refereeing conflicts and more time on teaching. Parents will be delighted to know that their children are learning crucial life skills. Children will be happier and more focused in the classroom when their lives become more peaceful. Everyone wins!

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**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS
EXPERIENCING A CHALLENGE IN
RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS,
SIBLINGS, TEACHERS, OR PARENTS?**

SociallySmarter offers evaluations and remediation in all areas of social competence, including developing empathy, reading social cues, using effective body language, conversational skills, social cognition, social anxiety, appropriate behavior, flexibility, and more.

Rabbi Trainer works with individuals and groups at his office in Los Angeles. Call for a free phone consultation, or visit SociallySmarter.com for more information.

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WHEN THEY'RE
SOCIALLY SMARTER**

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“Rabbi Trainer’s method successfully instills refined character, respect among children, and shalom.”

—from the *haskamah* of **Harav Matisyahu Salomon**, שליט"א
mashgiach, Beth Medrash Govoha, Lakewood, New Jersey

Did you know that in all the years a child spends in school, very little time is dedicated to learning techniques for getting along peacefully with others?

Empower your children or students with a crucial life skill: knowledge of how to get along peacefully with family, friends, and peers.

With ***Shalom Secrets***, children will gain practical and effective tools to ensure their social success.

Through stimulating, thought-provoking lessons, this book teaches children how to be sensitive to others’ feelings and how to independently resolve the inevitable interpersonal conflicts that show up in their lives.

***Shalom Secrets* just might be the greatest gift you can give your child.**

“This delightful book can help children grow in their *ahavas Yisroel* and in their relationships in school and at home.”

—**Rabbi Pesach Krohn**, noted lecturer, and author of the *Maggid* series

“You can’t imagine the impact you created in our yeshiva! This program really works. Parents see a tremendous benefit at home, too.”

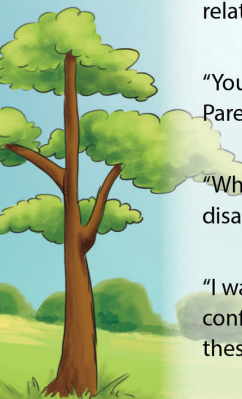
—**Rabbi Dovid Engel**, *menahel*, Toronto Cheder, Canada

“What brought us the most joy was watching our students actually resolve disagreements that in the past would have blown up into major fights.”

—**Rebbetzin Kriendy Sorotzkin**, principal, Mosdos/Bnos Melech, Lakewood

“I was flabbergasted by how my son calmly, quickly and successfully resolved a conflict with his peers. I am filled with gratitude that our children are acquiring these tools that they need for life.”

—**Mrs. Chaya Stansky**, parent, Monsey, New York



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