

NOTE TO FACILITATOR

Time: 18 min.

Age: High school – adult

Number of participants: 6 -

Enduring Understanding: How we greet each other is essential to building community as *rodfei shalom* (pursuers of peace).

The Rodef Shalom Who Runs to Say *Shalom* First

“Run” over to one person you may not have previously know, say *shalom*, introduce yourself, and invite them to be your *Havruta* (study partner/friend) for just one source. Choose who will read out loud the source below then take turns discussing the question under the source. At the end of 3 min. you will be asked to run to someone else and repeat the exercise with the next source.

(1) Seinfeld (season 2, episode 1, "The Ex-Girlfriend", Jan. 23, 1991)

Then one day, he doesn't nod. Like I don't exist?! He went from nods to nothing.... And now, there's this intense animosity whenever we pass. I mean, it's like we really hate each other. It's based on nothing....

Discussion Question: Do people say hello to each other in your community?

(2) Ethics of Our Fathers 4:20

R. Mattityah ben Heresh said:
Take the initiative, and be the first to greet with a *shalom*, every person.

משנה אבות ד:כ

רבי מתיא בן חרש אומר:
הוי מקדים בשלום כל אדם.

Discussion Question: When you are not participating in an icebreaker, do you like to be the first to greet someone you do not know? Why yes/no?

<p><u>(3) Kalah Rabati 3:1</u> Such, indeed, was the practice of Aaron, the righteous. When he (Aaron) heard of two people who were fighting with each other, he would go to one and say to him, 'So-and-so, peace be upon you, my master! And he would reply (to Aaron), 'Peace be upon you, my master and teacher!</p>	<p><u>כלה רבתי ג:א</u> כך אומנותו של אהרן הצדיק (הכהן הגדול, ואחיו של משה רבינו בתורה). שמע על שנים שהיו מריבין. הולך אצל האחד ואומר לו "שלום עליך רבי." והוא אומר לו (לאהרן): "שלום עליך רבי ומרי".</p>
<p><i>Discussion Question: Why would Aaron, who was known as a pursuer of peace, open with a "peace be upon you my master" to each side in a conflict? How do you, as a third party in a conflict, greet conflicting sides?</i></p>	
<p><u>(4) Avot DeRabbi Natan A 12</u> When Aaron would be walking on the road and bumped into a wicked person, he would (nevertheless) greet him with a <i>shalom</i>.</p>	<p><u>אבות דרבי נתן נ"א פ' יב</u> כשהיה אהרן מהלך בדרך פגע בו באדם רשע ונתן לו "שלום".</p>
<p><i>Discussion Question: Why, in your opinion, would Aaron say shalom even to the wicked? Have you ever tried greeting someone who may be considered your enemy? What happened?</i></p>	
<p><u>(5) Babylonian Talmud, Berachot (6b):</u> R. Helbo said in the name of R. Huna: If one knows that his friend is used to greeting him, he should try to greet his friend first. For it is said: Seek peace and pursue it. (Ps. 34:15) And if his friend greets him and he does not return the greeting he is called a robber.</p>	<p><u>בבלי ברכות ו ע"ב</u> ואמר רבי חלבו אמר רב הונא: כל שיודע בחברו שהוא רגיל ליתן לו שלום - יקדים לו שלום, שנאמר: בקש שלום ורדפהו (תהילים לד), ואם נתן לו ולא החזיר - נקרא גזלן, שנאמר: "ואתם בערתם הכרם גזלת העני בבתיכם" (ישעיה ג).</p>
<p><i>Discussion Question: Can you recall a time when you greeted someone first and was not greeted in return? Did you feel 'robbed' or humiliated? If not, can you think of such a scenario?</i></p>	

(6) Rabbi Shmuel Idelsh, Berachot 6b
(The Maharsha, 16th century, Pozna)

However if he (the other person) was not accustomed to saying *shalom* to him (you), he (you) should not say *shalom* to him first, out of concern that his (your) friend (by not responding with *shalom*) will be called a 'robber'.

מהרש"א חידושי אגדות
ברכות ו ע"ב

אבל אם אין רגיל ליתן לו
שלום לא יקדים לו שלום
דשמא חברו לא יחזיר לו
שלום ויקרא גזלן.

Discussion Question: Can you think of a scenario when it would be inappropriate to greet someone else first?