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Derech Eretz - The Power of Words, *Specialty Track 2*

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SUMMARY:	A form of “dodgeball” that teaches participants how hurtful words can be both on and off the field of play and it’s connection to the Jewish idea of Derech Eretz (The Way of the World). - <i>Submitted by Yoni Shear</i>
TOPICS:	Communication Skills, Community Building, Group Dynamics, Inclusion- Special Needs, Jewish Text, Jewish Values, Leadership Development, Sports & Games, Team Building, Teen Programs
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Teammates consistently hearing the positive, more times than not, only lead to positive results. At the same time, when negativity is used, barriers are raised and isolation seems to be the only outcome. In this session, participants will experience how isolating negativity can be and the words that can cause someone to be cut off.
AUDIENCE:	Mainly to be used for older campers.
LENGTH:	75-90 Minutes
APPENDIXES:	Yoni MS 2 Derech Eretz
MATERIALS:	12 dodge balls Copies of Master Session #2 (Yoni MS 2 Derech Eretz)
SETTING:	Basketball court (Indoor or Outdoor)

Session Description:

SETTING THE SCENE:

1. We live in a very ego-centric world. The company Apple has done a wonderful job of hammering this thought home for us. A lot of “I” things... Ipod, Iphone, Ipad.... But it’s more than that. While on the court, field, dance studio, many campers are concerned with being the best and not concerned with making other people the best. More than that, many of our campers will do and say terrible things to make sure that they are seen as the best. In other words, it’s about them! Rarely do they stop to realize or see, what their words, attitude, actions do to others around them.

- Ask for understanding?
- Is this something participants have seen?
- Do they agree/disagree? Let’s hear specific examples of what has happened.
- How do we change this need we see in our campers?

It’s my belief that we need to help them realize that they become the best when everyone else around them becomes the best. It’s very much about them! It’s about them, making their teammates better through positivity and only putting up instead of putting down.

Derech Eretz is a term that is thrown around in various ways. The term is directly translated as meaning, “The way of the Land”. The reasoning is that Derech Eretz provides guidance for all aspects of



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our behavior, from the ethics of law and business to how we treat our parents, L'shon Hara, proper speech, how we eat and dress, and personal relations. It can be considered "Life's Instruction Book" for proper conduct and common courtesy. Basically, Derech Eretz is the way in with which we learn how to be a "Mensch"!

2. READING THE SOURCE

Pass out source sheets for learning... Please read OUTLOUD to each other and discuss.

Questions for Discussion:

- What does Rabbi Shapira want from his students?
- Do you agree with his sentiments?
 - Easier done than said or are his goals completely reachable?
- How do these two texts relate to one another (Maimonides and Pirkei Avot?)
 - What would the world be like if we were only for ourselves?
 - Could improvement happen?
 - Is it better to self improve rather than have others around you improve?

3. PLAYING THE GAME (**Power of Words**)

This game is intense and should be used only with participants / campers who can "take it".

The participants are split into 2 teams in order to play dodgeball and (depending upon the number of participants) 12 balls are placed in a line at center court. Participants who are hit by a ball thrown by the opposing team (shoulders or below), stand on the baseline of the opposing side (jail). If a participant catches a thrown ball, the person who threw the ball is out and they have to stand on the opposing baseline (jail). Once a ball touches the ground the throw no longer counts. A participant is only out if a ball touches them "on the fly". If a ball is thrown over the opposing side and is caught by one of their fellow teammates who is in the jail, the entire side is let out, with a free walk to safety, and can return to the game. If a ball is dropped by a participant who is in the jail that was thrown to them, then the ball is considered out of play and is given to that side for them to use. The game is won when one entire side is "captured".

The game is played only once. As soon as a winner is declared, the game should be re-set for what would seem to be another chance to play. The rules change a little for the second game. Everything stays the same with the exception of when someone gets hit with a ball. For the second game, all participants who are hit with a ball are to sit on the side away from the game in a designated area. If a ball is caught that a participant throws, the person who threw the ball is NOT out. They can continue to play. The only way to be labeled as "out" is to be hit with a ball. The game is over when there is only one person left standing.

The balls are to be collected and brought to the middle of the court. Each ball will then get a piece of wide masking tape put on it by a participant who has been sitting on the side as a result of being hit by one of those balls. As each participant comes up they will also write one of the following words on one on the masking tape they put on.

Words:

1. Suck
2. Can't
3. Slow
4. Dumb
5. Stupid
6. Retard



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7. Bad

8. Lame
9. Eye Roll
10. Shut Up
11. Crap
12. Weak

(These words can be modified of course depending upon the number of balls being used and the intensity of the words that the participants would like to use)

This should be said to the “winner” of the game:

As you can now see, each of these balls represents a word. A word that you have used on people in this community and as a result of using these words, you are alone. You have alienated everyone else and you are the one who is alone. You haven't isolated anyone else except yourself and now, no one wants to be with YOU. This is what happens when we use words. When we use words to break apart and not build up.

The group should then be broken up into 4 smaller groups in order to discuss and debrief.

Debrief:

- Think back to the first session, how does this session build on the first session we participated in?
 - What was the point of the game?
- What are some personal stories of when words or actions made the group better as a whole?
- Do you really think this can be taught to our campers this summer? Why or Why not?
 - Think of some obstacles that might exist to getting this message across and how to overcome them?
- Do you see this activity working at your camp? Why or why not?

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

The words to be used to for the balls could be changed depending on the age of campers this is being used for.



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APPENDIXES:

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