



Hello,

We know that great counselors do more than supervise campers – they help shape a positive, supportive, and values-driven camp culture. To support your staff in this role, we're excited to provide you with a training resource focused on character development and mentorship at camp. The **three minute-video**, *Mensches in the Making*, and the accompanying **Conversation Guide** will help staff explore **Jewish values and character strengths**, reflecting on how they can foster these traits in campers and within themselves. The training:

- Empowers staff to be intentional role models.
- Strengthens your camp's culture by helping counselors see their work as more than a job, but rather an opportunity to shape young lives.
- Creates a shared language for discussing character and values among staff, CITs, and campers.
- Helps new and returning staff reflect on real-life camp experiences that demonstrate your camp's values in action.

This training can be used:

- In-person during staff orientation
- In a virtual training before camp
- As part of ongoing staff support and training
- For CIT training

This training resource will help your staff promote character growth and a values-led culture in your camp community. If you have any questions or would like guidance on how to best facilitate this training, we'd love to connect!

Here, you can find the link to the film:

[Mensches in the Making: Growing Character at Camp](#)

Best,

The Character at Camp Team



Conversation Guide

How to Lead this Training:

1. Introduction to the Video and Discussion

- a. Begin by showing the video to the staff. Afterward, use the questions and story reflections in the pages below to prompt a discussion. This will help staff connect the values from the video to their own roles and responsibilities at camp.

2. Sharing Personal Stories and Examples

- a. Directors, CIT Heads, or other leadership staff overseeing the training may choose to share personal stories or examples from past summers to illustrate the values discussed in the video. These could include:
 - i. A camper or staff member's growth journey.
 - ii. A moment of teamwork that brought out the best in everyone.
 - iii. A powerful experience of belonging and making an impact at camp.
 - iv. A time when a camper gave meaningful feedback to help a peer grow.



OVERALL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes a mensch?

After watching, how would you define a mensch? What traits and behaviors stand out? How do mensches treat others and which qualities do they value?

2. Bringing it Back to our Camp

Which of our camp's values did you see reflected in the video? Were there any of our values that weren't explicitly mentioned but are key to creating a community of mensches here?



FOCUSING ON THE STORIES

1. Own Your Weird

Ilana reflects that as a camper, she felt like “the weird kid”. Think of a moment at camp when you did not fit in. How did that make you feel weird? What emotions came up for you? What did others around you do to make you feel like you belonged? What worked and what didn’t? What do you wish others would have said or done to make you feel like you belong? How can we bring these lessons to help every camper feel included and comfortable and confident being their true self? Finally, how can we bring campers out of their comfort zones to be more confident?

2. The Power of Feedback

Reuben shares that a powerful moment for him at camp was when he gave someone feedback. Holding peers accountable while treating each other with respect helps our community grow. But giving and receiving feedback can be uncomfortable and challenging if we are not sure how to give it in a way that helps. How can we model Reuben’s approach in our camp? What are ways we can ask our campers and colleagues for feedback? What makes feedback effective?

Set a Goal: Name a goal of yours related to giving or receiving feedback.

Examples of what make feedback effective:

- *Kind & Constructive:* Delivered with care and with a goal of helping, at a time that works, not in public, and not criticizing.
- *Specific & Actionable:* Focuses on a clear behavior or action (what they did), not on personal traits (who they are).
- *Balanced:* A mix of encouragement and areas for growth keeps the conversation positive and productive.
- *Timely:* Given soon after an event so it’s relevant and useful, but ensure they are open to receiving feedback.
- *Two-Way:* Good feedback goes both ways. Learning how to receive feedback with openness is just as important.



3. Teamwork

Reuben mentions how teamwork is very important. Teamwork requires us to support each other. When done correctly, it can make things better and bring out our best selves. Think of an instance when you worked with others. How did collaboration help you achieve your collective goals? What challenges did you face, and how did you navigate those challenges? How did this experience lead to growth?

Set a Goal: What is one goal you have for strengthening your teamwork skills this summer?

4. Confidence and Community

Vivian says that camp has given her the opportunity to branch out and trust others. This is possible because her camp has a supportive and comfortable environment. How can we make our campers feel safe trying new things? How do special moments like Maccabiah or Shabbat impact us? How do they make us feel connected to something larger?

Set a Goal: What is one goal you have for an area where you would like to grow confidence this summer?