

Putting the Pieces Back Together

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I want to let you know how sorry I am for what I did, and to say that I'll never even think about doing it again. What I said about you was mean and hurtful; I shouldn't have said it, no matter how angry I was at you or how frustrated I got at you when you never answered me. I really regret that it happened; I just wish I could erase it, delete the file, but that's not possible. I know going forward that I'll never say anything like that again. I realize it must be difficult for you to trust me after what I did, but I'm begging you to try. I really hope that we'll be able to rebuild our relationship back to what it is, and grow even closer together going forwards. Please consider this as the first step towards putting all the pieces back together.

With sincere apologies,

- Who is writing this letter? What happened?
- Who is this letter addressed to?
- Can the letter be broken up into individual steps?

## Putting the Pieces Back Together-Facilitator's Guide

1. Cut up/carefully rip the letter into 12-14 pieces, jigsaw-style.
2. Give each teen one piece, or scatter the pieces around the room that the teens will be using. Make sure they know the pieces will be needed for an activity later, so they don't toss them in the garbage! They will likely read their scrap, be intrigued by the piece that they can read, and turn to other teens to try and put the letter together themselves.
3. If there are more than 12-14 teens, consider either writing up multiple letters or making copies of this one and handing the pieces out in groups. To make it less confusing, pieces from different groups should be marked on the back (Group 1, 2, etc). If multiple letters are in use, they can filled in to reflect different relationships and made more specific-for example, a friend apologizing to a friend for stealing his homework, a child apologizing to their parent for ignoring curfew.
4. After the teens have put the letter/s back together, ask one of them to read it aloud, ideally dramatically/emotionally.
5. Using the discussion questions, discuss the letter.
6. Discuss how one can fix a relationship after breaking someone's trust-how can you show that you won't just do it again?
7. Bring up our relationship with God as a possible subject of the letter, and Teshuva as the steps to repair that relationship. Return to the letter and have the teens identify the 4 steps.

The two sources from the מרמבם show the 4 steps of Teshuva, and highlight the idea that through Teshuva we can fix and improve our relationship with Hashem.

## Sources

1. **Rambam (Maimonides), Hilchot Teshuvah (Laws of Repentance), 2:2, 9 – The components of teshuvah: regret, cessation, confession, resolution, and if necessary, asking forgiveness from others.**

How does one do teshuvah?

- The transgressor stops doing the transgression and removes it from his thoughts.
- He resolves that he will not do it again in the future ...
- He regrets [that which he did] in the past ...
- He verbally expresses his wrongdoings to God and makes a verbal resolution for the future.
- Regarding wrongdoings against one's fellow man: one must reimburse whatever he owes him, and ask the other person's forgiveness.

ומה היא התשובה?

- הוא שיעזוב החוטא חטאו ויסירנו ממוחשבתו,
- ויגמור בלבו שלא יעשהו עוד ...
- וכן יתנחם על שעבר ...
- וצריך להתודות בשפתיו ולומר עניינות אלו שגמר בלבו.
- אבל עבירות שבין אדם לחבירו ... אינו נמחל לו לעולם עד שיתן לחבירו מה שהוא חייב לו וירצהו ... ולשאל ממנו שימחול לו.

2. **Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah (Laws of Repentance) 7:7 – How wonderful is teshuvah!**

How wonderful is repentance! One day a person can be separated from the Lord, God of Israel, as it is written, "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God ..." – and on the next he can be attached to the Divine Presence, as it is written, "But you who are attached to the Lord your God ..."

כמה מעולה מעלת התשובה אמש היה זה מובדל מה' אלהי ישראל שנאמר עונותיכם היו מבדילים ביניכם לבין אלהיכם... והיום הוא מודבק בשכינה שנאמר ואתם הדבקים בה' אלהיכם...