

Virtue – Tranquility

מְנוּחַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ

M'nuchat Nefesh / tranquility
noun / tran•quil•li•ty / tran-'kwi-lə-tē
the state of being calm

Guide For Your Circle

1

ICE - BREAKER

Ask each person to introduce themselves, and to share with the group:

(a) their name; and

(b) a part of their day they would like to bring with them as they begin this conversation, and/or a part of their day they would like to leave behind

2

RECAP LAST MONTH'S VIRTUE

Ask the group to reflect on how they fared with their commitment from the last month

- Did you achieve your commitments around this virtue?
- What challenges did you face?
- What surprised you about the experience?
- Did your understanding of the virtue change over the month?

3

DISCUSS NEXT MONTH'S VIRTUE

Compare Ben Franklin's definition of the virtue with the passage from Pirkei Avot. Use the questions below to help guide the conversation.

4

MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT:

Before your meeting ends, set a goal for yourself for how you can better live that month's virtue. Share it with the group and plan to follow up on how you did at your next meeting.

Example: For tranquility, could you commit to leaving part of your weekend unplanned or unscheduled? Practice tranquility by eliminating some of the stress that happens when packed schedules go awry.

Side-By-Side: Ben Franklin And Pirkei Avot

BEN FRANKLIN'S DEFINITION:

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

PIRKEI AVOT

(PA 3:1)

Akavia ben Mahalalel says: Keep your eye on three things, and you will not come to sin: Know from where you came, and to where you are going, and before Whom you are destined to give an account and a reckoning. From where did you come? From a putrid drop. And to where are you going? To a place of dust, worms, and maggots. And before Whom are you destined to give an account and a reckoning? Before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

(PA 4:16)

Rabbi Yaakov says: This world is like a hallway before the world to come. Fix yourself in the hallway so you may enter the drawing room.

Questions To Ask The Group

- Both Pirkei Avot passages speak to how we conduct ourselves in the world. How does this relate to Ben Franklin's definition of tranquility?
- We might summarize Franklin here as saying: "Don't be petty and don't cry over spilled milk." Why is tranquility, understood in this way, important?
- What are the consequences of failing to be tranquil?
- When was the last time a "trifle" or "accident" bothered you? Were you able to practice this virtue, and let go? If so, what helped you successfully let go? If not, what hindered you?
- How can keeping Shabbat encourage tranquility?