



*Revealing the inner beauty of the Torah in a way that touches and inspires the Jewish soul*

## ADVERSITY

B.S.D.

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In every person's life, there comes a time of ultimate challenge - a time when every resource is tested. A time when life seems unfair. A time when our faith, our values, our patience, our compassion and our ability to persist, are all pushed to our limits and beyond.

Some people use such tests as opportunities to become better people - others allow these experiences of life to destroy them. Have you ever wondered what factors make the difference in the way human beings respond to adversity?

Our Sages teach us that leaders and successful people live with 4 central beliefs that help them overcome life's challenges and ordeals.

### Belief #1

That life has meaning and we are here to be tested. Leaders believe that life has purpose and meaning. Therefore, to them, life's tests are not random and haphazard. Rather, they believe life's tests are tailor made and specifically designed with their unique needs in mind and of great cosmic significance. They know from the minute they are born until the day they die, they are being tested, and that each test is there in order to help them discover and fulfill the higher purpose for which they were created. They understand that life's challenges are not a punishment or some form of bad luck. Rather, leaders know, like a loving father - the universe tests, challenges and disciplines us in order to help us grow, and reach our full potential.

### Belief #2

Everything happens for a reason and a purpose and it is there to serve them. Successful people take whatever happens to them and they make it work for them in whatever way they can. They have an uncanny ability to focus on what is possible in every situation. No matter how bad things are and no matter how much negative feedback they get from their environment - they always think in terms of possibilities and opportunities. They know that everything happens for a reason, and it's there to serve them. They know that every adversity contains within it the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit.

### Belief #3

There is NO such thing as failure. There are only results. Most people have been programmed to fear this thing called failure. Yet all of us can think of times when we expected one thing and received another. We have all flunked a test, suffered through a frustrating relationship, started a business that was unsuccessful or made a bad investment. Successful people do not see failure, they think only in terms of results and outcomes. They live with the idea that if they try something and it does not give them the results they want, they had a learning experience.

There is a famous story about Thomas Edison. After numerous unsuccessful attempts to perfect the light bulb, someone asked him, "Are you going to have even more failures?" He answered, "I did not fail, I just discovered another way not to invent the electric light bulb." Leaders understand if they try something and do not get the outcome they want, it is simply feedback.



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#### Belief #4

Whatever happens, take responsibility. Most of us have been conditioned to blame something or someone outside of ourselves for the parts of our lives we do not like.

When we blame our parents, our teachers, our bosses, our friends, our clients, our spouses, the economy, or our lack of money, we are doing ourselves a great injustice. Disowning responsibility and finding fault is an external process that causes us to look outside of ourselves. Successful people realize everything happens for a reason - and when they take responsibility for their actions it triggers inside them an internal process. This provides them with the opportunity to look inside themselves for the valuable and priceless lessons life is trying to teach them. It is specifically in these life tests that our greatest life lessons are hidden.

Many people have overcome so called limiting factors - so it cannot be the limiting factor that limits us. The secret is to take responsibility, and to approach life's tests and challenges with a spirit of optimism and positive expectancy. Knowing that years of personal growth and life lessons are secretly disguised and concealed in our life challenges. Instead of going through a test feeling sad, broken, confused and disillusioned - the test itself becomes a stepping stone and a pre-cursor to a life of greatness.