

Why Are Children Better at Technology Than Adults¹

Years ago, I panicked when I was invited to a remote meeting. Not being technically inclined, I worried that I would make some really dumb mistake. I tried to schedule our meeting after 4:15PM, so that I could get some help from my technical assistant—my 10-year-old son, who by then would be home from elementary school.

Nowadays, that son spends his time studying in a yeshivah, but he still helps me from afar. My new in-house personal assistant is my 12-year-old daughter. To her, and to the younger generation, technology is intuitive.

Why are children so much better with apps, electronic toys, and computers than their adult counterparts?

Researchers at the University of California set out to find out.

They discovered that young children, even 4-year-olds who couldn't tie their shoes yet, were better at gadgets than adults.

*Psychologist Alison Gopnik, who led the study, thinks it's because **children approach solving problems differently**. They try a variety of novel ideas and unusual strategies. "Exploratory learning comes naturally to young children. **Adults, on the other hand, jump on the first, most obvious solution and doggedly stick to it, even if it's not working**," she said.*

*When approaching a solution, **adults rely on their ingrained way of doing things, whether or not it's been successful**. Children, on the other hand, **have much more flexible, fluid ways of thinking and are far more willing to explore an unlikely hypothesis**. In fact, the younger the child is, the more flexible is his or her thinking.*

***We often get stuck with the familiar, afraid to make necessary changes outside our comfort zone**. We approach our relationships by dancing the same steps and reacting instinctively, even if that has intensified the conflict in the past. We solve problems using the same tried-and-true methods, even if these created the problems. We may be afraid to leave an unhappy job or circumstance because it is all we know.*

When the spies return from scouting the Land of Israel, **all but two shared a false, negative report**. One of their statements was:

It is a land that consumes its inhabitants.—NUMBERS 15:32

The word for "its inhabitants," *yoshvehah*, literally means "its settlers."

The Chasidic master Rabbi Yitzchak (1779–1848) of Vorka (in central Poland) extrapolates from these words:

The Holy Land does not tolerate [but rather "**consumes**"] **those who settle down, content with their achievements**.

Holiness means constantly climbing and reaching higher. We cannot allow our lives to "be settled" with stagnation; at every stage, we need to explore new opportunities for growth.

Through their technical expertise and by their constant open-minded curiosity, children remind us that our ingrained patterns shouldn't keep us stuck in a rut. **To truly thrive, we need to open our minds to new possibilities and keep reaching higher.**

1. *Why are children so much better with apps, electronic toys, and computers than their adult counterparts? ... Children ... have much more flexible, fluid ways of thinking and are far more willing to explore an unlikely hypothesis.*

a. Matthew 18:1-4

¹At that time the disciples came to Yeshua and asked, "**Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?**" ²He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. ³And he said: "Truly I tell you, **unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven**. ⁴Therefore, whoever takes **the lowly position of this child** is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

CJB, KJV, MIT, NAS, NKJ, RSV, YLT—as humble as this child ...

NIRV—as free of pride as this child ...

NJB—as little as this little child ... (?)

1) The child is held up as an ideal, not of innocence, purity, or faith, **but of humility** and unconcern for social status. (Yeshua) advocates humility of mind (v.4), not childishness of thought (cf. 10:16). With such humility comes childlike trust (cf. TDNT², 8:16-17).³

2) In verse 4 (Yeshua) went on to say that the one who ... **hum-bles himself**, who regards himself as lowly, is great in the Kingdom. (Some of) the Jewish religious leaders of (Yeshua's) day were well known for drawing attention to their virtues. The Greeks despised humility as weakness. (Yeshua), however, taught that one should not strive to be great, but lowly. Status, position, and prestige are attained in this world only by

¹ Chana Weisberg, *Shabbat deLights*, Vayikra/Bamidbar/Devarim, (Chabad.org), pp. 133-135.

² TDNT—Geoffery W. Bromily, Ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Eerdmans Publishing Company).

³ Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 8, (Zondervan Publishing House), p. 397.

making other inferior, but to achieve these things in the Kingdom of (Heaven) the exact opposite is the case. One must place himself in submission to others; to become great one must become least of all.⁴

- 3) **To be like a child is to be innocent, not to be humble.** The former can be amply illustrated in rabbinic literature, the latter cannot.⁵
- 4) Notice that Yeshua's answer is a response to the question; "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **Maybe it's more about teachability (or "hear-ability")** rather than innocence or humility *per se*, because Yeshua frequently taught about the importance of service.
 - a) Matthew 20:25 (cf. Mark 10:42-43; Luke 22:26)
²⁵Yeshua called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant ...
 - b) Matthew 23:1-11
¹Then Yeshua said to the crowds and to his disciples: ²"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach ... ⁵"Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others. ⁸"But you are not to be called '**Rabbi**,' for you have one Teacher, and **you are all brothers**. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth '**father**,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called **instructors**, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. ¹¹**The greatest among you will be your servant.**
 - c) Mark 9:35—a response to the argument re: who is the greatest.
³⁵Sitting down, Yeshua called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

- d) Numbers 12:5-8—God's response to Miriam and Aaron
⁵Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them stepped forward, ⁶he said, "Listen to my words: "When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. ⁷But this is not true of **my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house**. ⁸With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against **my servant Moses**?"

1] The greatest leader of that generation was a "servant."

- 5) Perhaps James and John were not listening!

- a) Luke 8:4-8
⁴While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Yeshua from town after town, he told this parable: ⁵"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. ⁶Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ⁸Still **other seed fell on good soil**. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "**Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.**"
- b) Revelation 2:7
⁷**Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the k'hilot.** To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
- c) Revelation 2:11
¹¹**Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the k'hilot.** The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.
- d) Revelation 2:17
¹⁷**Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the k'hilot.** To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

- e) See also Rev 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22, 13:9

4 Thoralf Gilbrant, Int'l Ed., *The Complete Biblical Library, Matthew*, (The Complete Biblical Library), p. 375

5 Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinical Commentary On The New Testament*, (KTAV Publishing House, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith), p. 265.

2. We often get stuck with the familiar, afraid to make necessary changes outside our comfort zone.

- a. The single most important factor that effects our ability to learn new things (about something/anything) is what we already believe to be true about it—**WHETHER IT IS OR ISN'T**.
- b. How many of you are familiar with the saying from the Book of Isaiah that when the Messiah comes and establishes his kingdom, the “lion will lie down with the lamb”?

1) Isaiah 11:6 (DSS)

⁶**The wolf will live with the lamb**, and **the leopard will lie down with the kid**, and **the calf (m’ri) and the young lion will graze together**, and a little child will herd them.

- a) In all but one of the eight passages, **m’ri is used of cattle who were intentionally raised and fed for meat for the purpose of sacrifice to God**. The Hebrew word is not concerned with the species but rather with the quality of the animal. The significance is that when one offers a sacrifice to his Lord, he offers his best and most valuable (TWOT).

c. How many of you are familiar with the “nativity” scene that pictures the three *magi* kneeling before the baby Yeshua?

1) Matthew 2:11

¹¹On coming to the **house** (הַבַּיִת), they (the *magi*) saw the **child** (הַיֶּלֶד) with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh ...

בַּיִת < הַבַּיִת —house

יֶלֶד < הַיֶּלֶד —child, son, boy, youth

—παῖδιον (*pahee-dee'-on*)—child, infant

- a) How many *magi* were there? We have no idea.

Luke 2:15-16

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the **baby**, who was lying in the **manger** (הַיֶּלֶד שֶׁכָּב בְּאֵבֹס).

יֶלֶד < הַיֶּלֶד —child, son, boy, youth

—βρέφος (*bref'-os*)—baby, infant

שָׁכַב < שֹׁכֵב —lie down

אֵבֹס < בְּאֵבֹס —feeding-trough

d. How many of you are familiar with the saying from the Book of Acts, when after hearing Paul’s testimony Agrippa responds, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a **Christian?**”

1) Acts 26:27-28

²⁷“King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”

²⁸Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a **Christian?**”

a) Χριστιανός (*christianos*)—*Christian, an adherent of Yeshua*.

b) מְאִמִּין בְּמִשִּׁיחַ כְּמֹחָא (ma-amin bim-shi’ach-cha ka-mocha)—**a believer in the Messiah like you**.

3. To truly thrive, we need to open our minds to new possibilities and keep reaching higher.

a. Avot 1:13

He (Hillel⁶) used to say; He who seeks renown loses his reputation; **he who does not increase [his Torah learning] decreases it**; he who refuses to teach [Torah] deserves death; and he who exploits the crown [of Torah] shall fade away.

1) *He who seeks renown loses his reputation ...*

a) One whose noble reputation is the result of self-promotion rather than the result of exemplary behavior will eventually lose that good name (*R’ Yonah*⁷).⁸

2) *he who does not increase [his Torah learning] decreases it ...*

a) One either ascends or descends in torah learning; **if one does not continuously increase in knowledge, he will inevitably forget that which he previously learned**. Included in this directive is the duty to master new areas of Torah (*Meiri*⁹) ... **Life is made for growth**. One who feels no need to learn more is spiritually dead; the gift of life is wasted on him (*R’ Yonah*).¹⁰

b) Mark 4:21-25

²¹He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand?” ²²For

6 The House (or Academy) of Hillel (*Beit Hillel*) was the school of thought of Judaism founded by Hillel, a Jewish scholar of the 1st-century, BCE.

7 Rabbi Yonah was an Amora (*Expounder*) of the 4th-generation (320–350 ce) active in Eretz Yisrael.

8 Rabbi Moshe Lieber, Ed., *The Pirkei Avos Treasury*, (Mesorah Publications, Ltd.), p. 40.

9 Menachem ben Solomon Meiri (1249–1306) was a famous Catalan rabbi, Talmudist and Maimonidean.

10 Rabbi Moshe Lieber, Ed., *The Pirkei Avot*—, pp. 40-41.

whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. ²³If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear." ²⁴"Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. ²⁵**Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.**"

b. Avot 2:10-11

¹⁰Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai¹¹ had five (primary) disciples. They were: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania, Rabbi Yose the Kohen, Rabbi Shimon ben Nesanel and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach.

¹¹He used to enumerate their praises: (Rabbi) Eliezer ben Hyrkanos is (like) a cemented cistern that loses not a drop; (Rabbi) Yehoshua ben Chanania, praiseworthy is she who bore him; (Rabbi) Yose the Kohen is a scrupulously pious person; (Rabbi) Shimon ben Nesanel fears sin; (and **Rabbi Elazar ben Arach is like a spring flowing stronger and stronger.**

1) With his penetrating mind and broad understanding, R' Elazar ben Arach was able to formulate new ideas and interpretations in Torah. Unlike R' Eliezer ben Hyrkanos, who repeated only what he had been taught ... **R' Elazar applied creative thinking to his learning** (*Rav*,¹² *R' Yonah*).¹³

2) Ta'anit (Fast-Days) 7b

R. Nahman b. Isaac⁴⁹ said: Why are the words of the Torah likened to a tree, as it is said, It is a tree of life to them that grasp it? This is to teach you. just as a small tree may set on fire a bigger tree so too it is with scholars, **the younger sharpen the minds of the older.** This will be in agreement with what R. Hana said: I have learnt much from my teachers, and from my colleagues more than from my teachers, **but from my disciples more than from them all.**

c. Avot 1:6

Yehoshua ben Perachyah and Nittai of Arbel received the tradition from them (i.e., from Yose ben Yoezer and Yose ben Yochanan). Yehoshua ben Perachyah says: Appoint a teacher for yourself; acquire a friend for yourself; and judge everyone favorably.

1) *Appoint a teacher for yourself ...*

a) Even if he is equal or inferior to you intellectually, appoint him as your teacher, because studying with another person is much more efficacious than studying alone. The exchange of ideas yields greater clarity (*Rambam*). *R' Yonah* states additionally that one remembers that which is learned from a teacher better than what he learns by independent study. Therefore *even* a study partner is justifiably called a teacher, since his participation in the learning process increases its success.

b) Matthew 13:47-52

⁴⁷"Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all these things?" Yeshua asked. "Yes," they replied. ⁵²He said to them, "Therefore **every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.**"

1] In Matthew 13:52 the words of (Yeshua) concerning parables describe the process: "And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'" When viewed in the context of the Second Temple period, the Gospel parables are imbued with old and new. According to a saying attributed to Hillel, anyone who does not add to one's learning through new and innovative creativity should be killed (Avot 1:13). **One adds to the old as one captures the essence of Torah and passes the message on to subsequent generations.** The parables embrace the old world of Jewish learning by making new old of the earlier tradi-

11 Rabban Yochanan was among the younger disciples of Hillel ... He lived for 120 years; forty were spent in business pursuits, forty years in study, and forty in teaching (see Rosh HaShanah 31b). Even though he was not a member of the family of Hillel, which occupied the position of *Nasi*, he still received the title "Rabban."

12 Abba Arikha (175–247) was a Jewish Talmudist who was born and lived in Babylonia, known as an Amora (commentator on the Oral Law) of the 3rd-century who established the systematic study of the rabbinic traditions, which, using the *Mishnah* as text, led to the compilation of the *Talmud*. He is commonly known simply as *Rav*.

13 Rabbi Moshe Lieber, Ed., *The Pirkei Avot*—, p. 96.

tions. The new, however, is not a rejection of the old but rather a renewal and reapplication that blends together a powerful combination of ancient themes and fresh ideas.

Such a process makes the message of the Torah relevant. This dynamic breathes fresh life into the old message, which actualizes Torah in experience. It does not replace or cancel Torah but renews its essence through revalidation and reinterpretation. The primary objective of Jewish learning is to realize the purpose of Torah in the fear of God. Each generation must embrace the old and the new ...¹⁴

4. John 13:31-35

³¹When he was gone, Yeshua said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. ³³"**My children**, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. ³⁴"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

a. Shouldn't Yeshua have said in v. 33 "My brothers ..."? Is Yeshua the "Father" or the "Son."

b. Matthew 25:40

⁴⁰"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these **brothers and sisters** of mine, you did for me.'

c. Mark 3:31-35

³¹Then Yeshua's mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." ³³"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. ³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵**Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.**"

¹⁴ Brad H. Young, *The Parables, Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation*, (Hendrickson Publishers), pp. 29-30.