

# Mr. Tempkin Climbs a Tree

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{ what makes a good friend? }

## A Friend Indeed

Mr. Tempkin and Marky are pretty wise guys. Says who? Says *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of the Ancestors*, an ancient collection of rabbinic wisdom). Right in the very first chapter, readers are encouraged to “acquire for yourself a friend.” Mr. Tempkin and Marky talk, enjoy the outdoors, have adventures, and show up when they need each other most. There’s nothing better than knowing that someone understands you and is there for you. In Jewish tradition, it’s even customary to pair up when studying religious texts. These study buddies are called *hevruta*, which is Hebrew for “friendship.” Friendship enhances everything! To learn more, visit [pjlibrary.org/mrtempkin](http://pjlibrary.org/mrtempkin).

## Ages and Stages

Do you have a friend who is much older or much younger than you? We can learn a lot from people at different stages in life. The *Mishnah* (a collection of rabbinic law and debate) has a road map of appropriate activities for each age. For example, 13 years old is the age of a bar mitzvah, when kids assume responsibility for keeping *mitzvot* (plural of *mitzvah*, Hebrew for “commandment” or good deed). Marky isn’t 13 yet, but as his dad points out, he’s performing a mitzvah by helping his friend. Fun fact: The *Mishnah* also says that by age 80, one can be fearless. Maybe that’s why Mr. Tempkin climbs that tree!

## Body and Soul

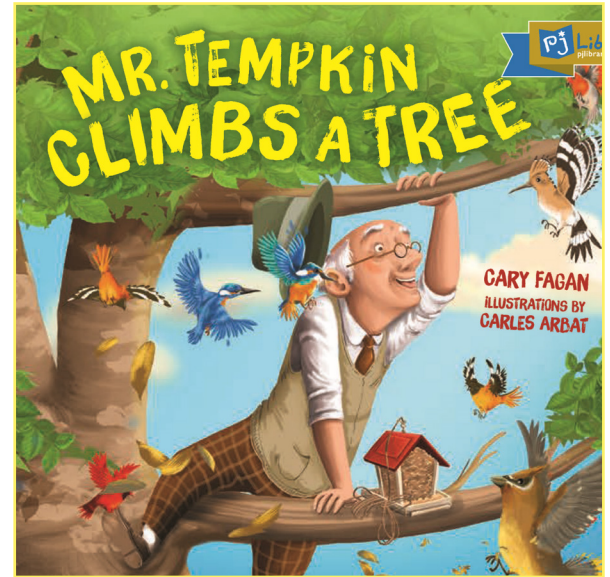
Mr. Tempkin knows what he needs to stay happy and healthy. He tells Marky that there are four things that keep him going in his old age: walking to synagogue every day, smelling roses, listening to the birds, and spending time with his young friend. It’s a good reminder that being healthy is not just a matter of taking care of the body. We have to feed and exercise the soul, too. Feeling connected to the people around us actually improves our physical health. When community, nature, and friendship feed our spirits, the rest usually falls into place.

## TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

**D**o your friends help you feel happy? How?

**W**hat can you do to help a friend or family member?

**W**hy is it important to learn from other people?



## HANDS ON!

### Make a Milk Carton Bird Feeder

Mr. Tempkin loves feeding the birds...and the birds love being fed. You can make a simple bird feeder for the feathered guests in your backyard, too.

#### Supplies

Empty milk carton

Scissors

Hole punch

Yarn

Old pencil, chopstick, or other small stick

Art supplies

Bird seed



Cut an opening in one side of the milk carton (this is a parent’s job). Punch a hole through the top of the carton and loop some yarn through it. For a perch, punch another hole just under the opening and fit the pencil or chopstick in, taping to secure it if necessary. Decorate the outside of the bird feeder however you like. Pour some birdseed into the opening and hang the feeder outdoors.

