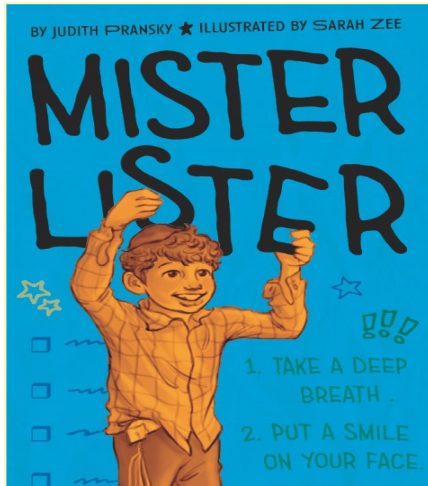


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{ What are the blessings in your life? }

HANDS ON!

You Can Be a Lister, Too

Reuven loves making lists. When he makes a list, he knows exactly what to do, and he knows he'll do it well. Lists help everyone get things done, even if we're not "mister listers" ourselves. Here are ways to integrate list-making into your daily life.

Get a jump on tomorrow. Lots of people keep to-do lists. Write out things you need to do tomorrow before you go to bed. When you rise in the morning, you'll be able to jump right into getting things done.

Think about favorites. Make a list of all your favorite songs to sing (you can keep that in the car), a list of all your favorite books to keep on the bookshelf, a list of favorite snacks on the fridge door...you get the idea. Add on as you discover new favorites!

List out kind deeds you can do for others. Sometimes we intend to do kind things for people we care about, and then...life gets in the way. Write out specific things you'd like to do for family members (take out the trash without being asked), neighbors (help your neighbor weed a garden), and friends (share a toy), and then go and do them!

Check List

Reuven loves making lists, so the custom of literally counting one's blessings is right up his alley (it's traditional to say at least 100 blessings each day!). But Reuven is more than just a list-maker: he's a sensitive kid who sometimes acts impulsively and often has trouble finding the words to express himself. Luckily, the same loving parents and teachers who help him with his blessings also help him tune into his emotions, take deep breaths (and giant steps), and articulate his feelings. Over time, Reuven will learn to keep track of his emotional checklist, too. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/misterlister.

On Bended Knee

Sometimes we stand tall with confidence and independence, but other times we need to bend a bit in gratitude to acknowledge all the blessings we receive. The Hebrew word for blessing, bracha, stems from the word berech, which means "knee." When we say a blessing, whether traditional or ad-libbed, we figuratively bend in appreciation of a moment or experience. Doing so helps us to notice the many gifts we receive, every day -- and that is another blessing in and of itself.

Count to Three

There's a saying in Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Ancestors, an ancient collection of rabbinic wisdom): "Find yourself a teacher, acquire a friend, and judge people according to their merits." Reuven does a good job on all three counts. Rabbi Goodman becomes a real teacher for Reuven, helping him grow in important ways. When David reaches out to Reuven, he becomes Reuven's first genuine friend at his new school. And Reuven works hard to admire his classmates' and sister's strengths, which are often different than his own. Great job, Reuven!

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

REUVEN'S mother helps him make a list of things to do when he's nervous: take a deep breath, put a smile on your face, and have a great day. When do you feel nervous? What things would you put on your list to help you?

RABBI GOODMAN asks his students to make riddles about what makes them special. What are some things that make you special? Can you make riddles about them?

HOW is Reuven's school similar to yours? How is it different?