How Stubborn Are You?



**#1**

**You are in the middle of an argument... and realize you are wrong. What's your next move?**

**(a) Continue arguing, and hopefully bring up even better points.**

**(b) Understand you were wrong and end the fight early even though you lost.**

**(c) Get overly frustrated and storm away.**

**(d) Get emotional about it and hope the other person feels bad.**

**#2**

**Questions:**

* **How does it feel dealing with a stubborn person?**
* **When there is overwhelming evidence that we are wrong, but we still insist on staying our own course, what pushes us not to give in?**
* **How do you know that you are just being stubborn?**
* **What are the signs of a stubborn person?**

**#3**

The Torah idiom for stubbornness is *“keshei oref,”* *“a stiff neck.”*

**Question: Why is "stiff neck" a description for stubborness?**

**#4**

**Question: Is stubbornness a good or bad trait?**

**Too Stubborn, Muriel Maignan Wilkins, Harvard Business Review, May 21, 2015**

Stubbornness is the ugly side of perseverance. Those who exhibit this attribute cling to the notion that they’re passionate, decisive, full of conviction, and able to stand their ground — all of which are admirable leadership characteristics. Being stubborn isn’t always a bad thing. But if you’re standing your ground for the wrong reasons (e.g. you can’t stand to be wrong, you only want to do things your way), are you really doing the right thing?

**Questions:**

* **Does a stubborn person have a greater chance of succeeding in life?**
* **What is the difference between being stubborn and being persistent or strong-willed?**

**#5**

**Question: In this case, Moshe employs the term “stiff-necked” as a reason to receive G-d’s mercy.**

In the tragic incident of the Golden Calf, G-d told Moshe He would destroy the Jewish people because they are a stiff-necked people:

**Torah Shemos 32:9-10**

*I have seen this people, and behold they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave Me alone and My wrath will blaze against them and destroy them. I will then make you into a great nation.*

But later in the narrative, Moshe used the trait of being stiff-necked to advocate for the Jewish people:

**Torah Shemos 34**

*Moshe hastened, bowed to the ground… and said, ‘If I have found favor in Your eyes my Master, let my Master go among us, because it is a stiff-necked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sins, and take us as Your own possession.’*

**How could Moshe use this same term to win G-d’s favor?**

**#6**

**TODAY'S LEARNING MATERIAL**

**Torah, Bereishis 12:1-3**

*And G-d said to Avraham, "Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you.*

*I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing.*

*And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you."*

**Rabbi S. R. Hirsch**

*How could we have survived, how could we continue to survive, had we not inherited from our father Avraham the courage to be a minority? … The strongest protest against such a notion is conveyed by the first command given to Avraham:* **“***Go forth from your land …!” Was Avraham’s first stand in keeping with the spirit of his times … Except for a few faint traces, the G-d-idea had almost vanished - until Avraham arose and appeared in the world! And when everyone else in the world was seeking to integrate, to establish himself, and win the rights of a citizen, Avraham gave up his homeland and his rights of citizenship; of his own free will he became an outsider and openly denied the gods worshipped by all the nations! Such conduct demands courage and firm belief in the truth of one’s inner convictions and one’s awareness of G-d; it demands Jewish awareness, Jewish “stubbornness.”*

**Midrash, Bereshis Rabbah 42:8**

*Avraham was called "Ivri" or “Hebrew” because he stood alone on one side of the world, facing the whole world on the other side.*

**The Dip: A little book that teaches you when to quit (and when to stick), Seth Godin**

I feel like giving up.

Almost every day, in fact. Not all day, of course, but there are moments.

My bet is that you have those moments, too…

Most of the time, we deal with the obstacles by persevering. Sometimes we get discouraged and turn to inspirational writing, like stuff from Vince Lombardi: ‘Quitters never win and winners never quit.’ Bad advice. Winners quit all the time. THEY JUST QUIT THE RIGHT STUFF AT THE RIGHT TIME.

**Question: How do you know when to persevere and when to let it go?**

**#7**

**Talmud Eruvin 19a**

*The wicked won’t repent even as they stand at the entrance to purgatory*

**Rabbi E.E. Dessler, Strive for Truth, volume 1, p. 63**

*Even knowing the weight of their evil actions and seeing their punishment tangibly before their eyes does not convince them to change, because they are too stubborn.*

**Questions:**

* **How do you handle a stubborn person?**
* **If we run into a stubborn person how can we help him get 'unstuck'?**
* **How do you stop being stubborn?**
* **How do you avoid being a stubborn individual?**

**#8**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**