Standing up for Everyone (Including Yourself)

**#1**

**Margie Warrel, Stand Up For Yourself: You Teach People How To Treat You, Forbes.com**

"Why do you let him push you around like that?” I overheard a woman asking another woman on the train recently. While I had no idea who "he" was - her boss, her lover, her father, or her co-worker - I sensed that the person in question had been pushing her around - to use her friend's language - for some time. I could hear her friend's bewilderment and frustration and how passive her friend had been in the face of poor treatment. Perhaps you've felt that way yourself at times. But let's face it - if it were easy to stand up for ourselves, everyone would...

**Question: Why do people not stand up for themselves?**

**#2**

Jenn was complaining to her coworkers about the way their manager, Rich, treats her. Bob was just hired by the company but feels that this kind of talk is wrong. He tells his new coworkers that he believes the best way to solve the problem is for Jenn to speak to Rich directly, and that speaking about Rich's behavior behind his back is wrong.

**Questions:**

* **Did Bob act wisely?**
* **Would you be able to do the same thing?**

**#3**

**Mishnah Pirkei Avos 5:13**

*There are four character types among people:*

*a) One who says, “Mine is mine, and yours is yours,” is an average character type, but some say this is characteristic of Sodom (The residents of Sodom epitomized selfishness. They engaged in all sorts of cruelty and enacted absurd laws which banned acts of kindness such as hospitality, charity etc.)*

*b) “Mine is yours, and yours is mine,” is an unlearned person;*

*c) “Mine is yours, and yours is yours,” is scrupulously pious;*

*d) “Yours is mine, and mine is mine,” is wicked.*

**Question: How can an average person become evil by living with the motto of “minding his own business”?**

**#4**

**Michael Bloomberg, Goalcast, January 7, 2017**

*Do not be afraid of saying what you believe is right no matter how unpopular it may be, especially when it comes to defending the rights of others.*

**Mishnah Pirkei Avos 1:14**

*He (Hillel) was accustomed to say: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am for myself, what am I? ...*

**Questions:**

* **Did anyone stand up for you?**
* **Did you ever stand up for someone when it was not comfortable doing so?**
* **When is it appropriate to stand up for someone else?**
* **When is it inappropriate to stand up for someone else?**
* **When is it difficult to stand up for people that could use your help?**
* **When is it easy to stand up for people that could use your help?**

**#5**

**Today’s Learning Material**

**Torah Bereshis Chapter 18**

*20 And the Lord said, "Since the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah has become great, and since their sin has become very grave,*

*21 I will descend now and see, whether according to her cry, which has come to Me, they have done; [I will wreak] destruction [upon them]; and if not, I will know."*

*[...]*

*23 And Avraham approached and said, "Will You even destroy the righteous with the wicked? “*

*24 Perhaps there are fifty righteous men in the midst of the city; will You even destroy and not forgive the place for the sake of the fifty righteous men who are in its midst?*

*25 Far be it from You to do a thing such as this, to put to death the righteous with the wicked so that the righteous should be like the wicked. Far be it from You! Will the Judge of the entire earth not perform justice?"*

*26 And the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous men within the city, I will forgive the entire place for their sake."*

*27 And Avraham answered and said, "Behold now I have commenced to speak to the Lord, although I am dust and ashes.*

*28 Perhaps the fifty righteous men will be missing five. Will You destroy the entire city because of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy if I find there forty-five."*

*29 And he continued further to speak to Him, and he said, "Perhaps forty will be found there." And He said, "I will not do it for the sake of the forty."*

*30 And he said, "Please, let the Lord's wrath not be kindled, and I will speak. Perhaps thirty will be found there." And He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."*

*31 And he said, "Behold now I have desired to speak to the Lord, perhaps twenty will be found there." And He said, "I will not destroy for the sake of the twenty."*

*32 And he said, "Please, let the Lord's wrath not be kindled, and I will speak yet this time, perhaps ten will be found there." And He said, "I will not destroy for the sake of the ten."*

*33 And the Lord departed when He finished speaking to Avraham, and Avraham returned to his place.*

**Questions:**

* **Why would Avraham fight for people that go against his ideology of kindness etc, people that Torah calls wicked people?**
* **When is it okay to stand up for people that don’t deserve it?**

**Medrash Tanchuma Metzora 1**

*Whoever is compassionate to those who are cruel ends up being cruel to those who are compassionate.*

**Question: How would you reconcile this statement with Avraham's behavior?**

**#6**

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