



Support. Strategies. Solutions.

Book Club -Discussion Guide
Part I
Just Love Them

Chapter One

1. Why does the author begin with Rabbi Trenk's family history?
 - a. Which pieces do you think were significant to his character development?
 - b. What part of your history has been significant for you?
 - c. How can we recognize our students' family histories as impactful?
2. Why was it important for Rabbi Trenk to be intentional about his fulfillment of Kibbud Av V'em to his students?
3. Let's analyze the passage on P. 38 - ***"My father, "remarks Reb Zevi Trenk, "always allowed us to do things that expanded us, that made us bigger."***
 - a. What do you think this meant in practical terms?
 - b. How did this affect Rabbi Dovid Trenk?
 - c. Is there someone in your life who did this for you?
 - d. How can you do this for your students?

Chapter Two

4. The book relays how a 5 year old Rabbi Trenk taught Alpeh Bais to Mr. Gerard Wortkin. What are all the elements of chinuch we see here?
5. Let's analyze the passage on page 52. ***"Until the end of his life, Reb Dovid Trenk would refer to Ronnie Greenwald as 'Rebbi' even though Ronnie had never formally taught him."***
 - a. What about Mr. Greenwald's vision and values impacted Rabbi Trenk?
 - b. Who do you consider your 'Rebbi' or 'Morah' in chinuch?



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- c. What values did you consider instrumental in shaping your role?
 - d. What values are you imbuing in your students to shape them?
6. Let's analyze the passage on page 54, Rav Blech said about Rabbi Trenk, ***"Early on, he learned how to make other people feel big."***
 - a. What are some examples of how he did this?
 - b. Has anyone ever done this for you?
 - c. How can you do this for the age/grade you teach?
7. Rabbi Trenk shared a story about his beloved Rosh Yeshiva Reb Shmuel Brudny and finished it by saying ***"His Kavod haTorah included Kavod for his talmidim too!"***
 - a. How did Rabbi Trenk emulate his Rosh Yeshiva?
 - b. Have you observed someone else doing this?
 - c. What would that look like or sound like in your classroom?
8. The author shares the story about Rabbi Trenk asking the Mir Rosh Yeshiva Reb Avrohom Kalmanowitz, for mercy on behalf of his friend who had been instructed to leave the yeshiva.
 - a. What does the inclusion of this story foreshadow for us?
 - b. What characteristics of Rabbi Trenk helped him think of doing this?
 - c. What is the message for us as Mechanchos?
 - d. How can this message change our view of students on a daily basis, not just when students do what is considered egregious behavior?
9. Let's analyze the passage on p 61-62. The book relays how Rav Ruderman told his talmidim that he had been boisterous and lively. ***"That sort of energy the Alter (of Slabodka) understood, could be used constructively, and unlike so many other educators who might have tried to stifle it, the Alter embraced it"***
 - a. When discussing Rabbi Trenk's time in Yeshivas Ner Yisroel, it is mentioned that perhaps the reason Rav Ruderman ztl appreciated



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- Rabbi Trenk's personality, was because Rav Ruderman was a Talmid of The Alter of Slobodka. Why is this nuancing important?
- How do you see the transmission of this value from the Alter to Rav Ruderman to Rabbi Trenk? Was it experiential or theoretical?
 - How did Rabbi Trenk show his Talmidim that he also understood this?
 - Do we appreciate that energy can be used constructively? How do we show that to our students? To their parents?

Chapter Three

- Rabbi Trenk felt that Mr. Mike Tress had been the critical figure in shaping the future of post war American Torah World.
 - Are your students familiar with the some of the visionaries mentioned –Mr. Mike Tress or Reb Shraga Faivel Mendlowitz? If not, would it be important for them to know?
 - Who are the visionaries you would select?
 - Who would your students select?
- Let's analyze the passage on page 73 - After explaining how the chavrusa tumult works , Mrs. Trenk asked Rabbi Trenk what sort of chavrusa did he look for – to which he replied, ***“I wait until the end of the day and I see who didn't get any chavrusa, the one with whom no one chose to learn. Then I go to that person and make him my chavrusa. That's who I want to learn with!”***
 - Did he really want to learn with that person?
 - Do we see these types of opportunities in our classroom?
 - Do we ever view students as less desirable? How can we change our view? How can we change other student's view?



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12. This chapter discussed Mrs. Trenks's early pioneering accomplishments with Bnos. Why are they important to mention?
 - a. Is it necessary for spouses to also share chinuch ideals? Always? Sometimes?
 - b. What values in chinuch do you share with your family?

Chapter Four

13. The chapter begins with discussing Rabbi Trenk's impact on RTB's, the group of Talmidim he pioneered as a Rebbe for. His sharing of his family life with them through invitations and contact, made a deep impression on that group of boys.
 - a. Why?
 - b. Do you share your family life with your students? How? What effect do you think it has?
14. Rabbi Trenk wrote two popular words at that time, POT and LSD on the board and reframed them to let his students know he knew where they were coming from.
 - a. Is it important for a teacher to know what's trending in her student's lives?
 - b. What specific challenges do your students encounter?
 - c. How are you open with them about this?
15. Rabbi Trenk would frequently ask about their sleep and their hobbies. What message did this send?
 - a. What can you do that would send that message?
16. Rabbi Trenk praised his talmid's Kibbud Av V'em even when it was impacting the talmid's ability to remain awake in class. Why do you think it was important for him to turn a classroom weakness into strength?



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17. When asked why he was so animated or would jump up and down during class, Rabbi Trenk replied that he was competing with an 8 foot bird (a popular character on TV during that time).
- What are you competing with?
 - What can you do in your classroom to win the competition?
18. Let's analyze the passage on p 86. After being told that Rabbi Trenk got problem kids and sent out stars, he replied, ***"No, said Rabbi Trenk emphatically. I got superstars and gave back superstars; what I did do was not get in the way. No one else realized it then, but they were stars all along."***
- How do you think Rabbi Trenk was able to view every student as a superstar?
 - How can you?
 - What did getting into the way mean for Rabbi Trenk?
 - What does getting in the way mean for you?