

(Movie Guide Questions are below my remarks)

As our families are, for all intents and purposes, confined together in a small space, three very different, yet strangely connected, stories came to my mind.

The first is the four children of the Passover Haggadah. With the wise, the wicked, and the simple child, along with the child who doesn't know how to ask, we are challenged by the Talmud to teach the story to each child in the way he or she needs to best learn. One of my favorite teachings connected to the four children reminds us that while we may each have primary learning styles or elements to our personality, rarely does anyone fit into any one category. We all possess elements of each of the four children, and our needs are different at different times. To hear of the complexity each individual brings to the table is no surprise to anyone joining us today as we are about to enter what is the third week of home-confinement for many of us. While far from perfect, the fact that our tradition was speaking about differing personality traits and learning styles 2,000 years ago is remarkable. The categorization of the four children helps provide a framework for the telling of the story and recognizing categories that we may be seeing in our own homes can help us maintain that healthy space during our time of confinement in a time of increased anxiety from the outside world.

- The wicked part of each of us puts blame over compassion. Both to the world and to the people we love. We see the impact on each of us, we lose tempers, we make poor choices.
- The simple part of us is able to ignore the adversity. Life should be as normal as possible even when it's anything but normal, and this part of us finds the joy in our shared moments together.
- The part of us that doesn't know how to ask, I think, is the anxiety we feel for our world and for our own wellbeing and that of those we love. Sometimes we can ask the question, but often we just feel it, and whether or not it's verbalized, the lack of answers leaves a pit in our stomachs.
- The wise part of each of us, I believe, is what allows for balance. We recognize that moments of blame are normal, but we have to choose how we act upon them. Ignoring the outside world may be necessary at times, but not all the time. Our wisdom is also how we positively and healthily balance our anxiety, allowing us to be realistically optimistic.

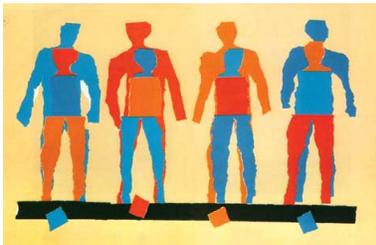
And all of these characteristics, with differing levels, are present in each of us and each of our children. I'm so glad Dr. Bloom and Dr. Rice are here this evening. And as we talk about the different reactions you might be seeing in your homes (and in yourselves), we'll most likely see each of these traits, and more, and we'll see that so much of what will be discussed will apply to each of us.

Another of our hopes is that this conversation goes beyond tonight, and that's where the other two places my mind has been come into play. I have such fond memories of sitting on the couch or in my parents' bed for a family movie night. We'd share a bowl of popcorn, and even though we weren't talking during the movie, we were sharing the experience together. We also had to watch things we wouldn't have chosen ourselves. A trip to Blockbuster usually resulted in three movies. One that my brother would choose, one that I would choose, and one that my mom would choose. And no, my dad never got to choose one. We would all watch each of the movies over the weekend. (and my dad, having not chosen any of them, often slept through all of them). Most of our kids will never know Blockbuster, or even remember when Netflix was mailing DVDs, and I fear that as each of us has more choice of what to watch on our own personal screens, our kids are more and more often watching their own screens while we watch ours. Our hope is that this week, you can have a family movie night.

The two movies we're recommending, *Breakfast Club* and *Inside Out*, while very different from one another, each represent both the meshing of very different characteristics, and co-existence in a confined space.

Depending on the age of your kids, one of these movies is going to be more appropriate than the other for a family movie night, but I encourage you all to watch both if you can. The five stereotypical high school students portrayed in the *Breakfast Club*, along with its 80's nostalgia, gives many opportunities for the movie to create conversation in our families with teenagers, and *Inside Out* brings the emotions we feel every day, that may be intensified in our current situation, to life. What a great way to talk to our kids about why they have tantrums, and why we have tantrums sometimes as well. And as we are all creating "core memories" right now, it's important to remember the pieces of those memories over which we have control.

I love stories – whether they're in our Haggadah, on a tv screen, or the stories we write in our own lives. We are writing a story right now, and my prayer is that we can use the lessons from the stories that came before us, along with similar stories that are also being written currently, to allow us to write a story during this pandemic that will teach our children how to deal with adversity with compassion and grace, forgiving themselves when they err, and learning from their mistakes to do better in the future.



From Dr. Rice - <https://www.jewishboston.com/the-four-children-and-covid-19/>

Breakfast Club – Mature middle school students and High School Students

Warning – The film contains bad language, drug use, conversations about sex, rape, parental abuse, and other difficult topics, but most are important in relating these timeless high school issues. (Please see <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088847/parentalguide> to decide if this movie is appropriate for your family.)

There is so much to talk about in this film:

Jewishly, the idea of the four different kinds of children lends itself to the concept of high school cliques. We may have one area in which we focus most of our time, but there is usually a part of each clique in each of us.

- Is there a character they relate to? Which character would they want to be friends with?
- This is also a great opportunity to share a little about your own high school experience with your kids.
 - What clubs/activities were you in? What were your friends like? How was the world different, and how was it the same?

There's also the element of being stuck in a room together. While the characters in the movie are often close to killing one another, they ultimately bond with one another and protect each other.

- How often are the kids mean just to be mean?
 - Is that something you've seen in your home?
- In looking at the past two weeks, when have you driven each other the craziest?
- What could you have done differently?
- When have you been most present for one another?
 - How can you try to be present more often?

The letter at the end of the movie reads: "We accept the fact that we had to sacrifice a whole Saturday in detention for whatever it was we did wrong, but we think you're crazy to make us write an essay telling you who we think we are. You see us as you want to see us... In the simplest terms and the most convenient definitions. But what we found out is that each one of us is a brain... ..and an athlete... ..and a basket case... ..a princess... ..and a criminal."

If you had to write a family letter to your "principal," what would it say?

Assuming this is a movie from your childhood, try to remember a movie your parents showed to you that they enjoyed from their childhood. Ask your kids what recent movie they would want to show their kids one day. As we think about the Passover story being told from one generation to the next, we recognize the emotions that come from sharing something we love from our own childhood with our children today.

Inside Out – All ages

Like most Disney/Pixar movies, there are some frightening and intense scenes along with jokes aimed at the adult viewers. See <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2096673/parentalguide> to decide if this is appropriate for your children

There is no better way to see inside the human mind than this film that literally shows you the inside of a mind. After being introduced to five emotions that battle for control within a young girl, we see what happens when her world is turned upside down upon moving. Depending on the age of your child, the conversations that can come from this film are endless. For a younger child, it would be good to pair this movie with Daniel Tiger's, "Two Feelings at the Same Time," (<https://pbskids.org/video/daniel-tigers-neighborhood/2365903649>).

- Talk with your kids about what the girl lost in moving.
 - Why was it so hard?
 - How did her emotions lose balance?
 - What happened when anger, fear, and disgust took over?
 - What are the losses we are currently experiencing, and how can we make sure our emotions don't lose balance?
- Why is it so important that all of these emotions are able to exist together.
 - What positive things can sadness, anger, and anxiety can bring to our lives?

With younger children, You may want to pause the movie at a few places:

- When the emotions have all appeared, it might be good to review them all. It's important that kids know their parents have them all as well (which they'll see in the movie later on)
- When everyone in the family was angry, what happened?
 - What do we do as a family when we all feel angry?
- When sadness shows compassion to Bing Bong., how can understanding sadness help us help others when they're sad

After the movie:

- Can we be sad that we can't do something that makes us happy without getting angry?
 - How can acknowledging our sadness keep us from getting angry?
- The entire experience of moving causes Riley to grow up.
 - What does growing up mean?
 - How are the members of our family growing up through our time at home?
- For parents – as we talk about growing up, part of what we might see is regression as well. See <https://www.today.com/parents/child-regression-signs-regression-kids-what-do-about-it-t177861>