# 7 Skills for a Soft Landing

### **Supporting the Transition Back to School**

Rabbi Shlomo Goldberg • January 2021



We will not be able to start like we always do in the fall.

### Courage · Trust

I learned that my students need more differentiation.

Once the teachers got the hang of it, it was hard to behave badly in Zoom classes. How can we keep this kind of culture going even without a mute button? How can we make classes socially safe for kids to participate in and do well? Not afraid to be nerdy. We want a school culture where kids are safe to have their own voice. Now that we've discovered that they have one. we have to do what we can to keep it alive. Oh, the irony that it takes a mute button for kids to learn they were safe to learn and to speak up without fear

I had less inhibitions. I could be full throttle "Me."

My satisfaction in teaching comes from knowing I make a difference.

For me it is always a struggle between hands on and covering material. Zoom reinforced the importance of hands-on.



Teachers need to find their own voice, even as they help students to find theirs.



### **Flexibility**

PE and Gym teachers had to really stretch! We pivoted to movement, and exercise, and improvised equipment from what was available at home.

"If I can learn to teach through this, then I really am a teacher."

I had no choice! I had to learn new tricks.

It was liberating to know that the situation wasn't my fault. I was able to stop berating myself for what went wrong, and focus on what I wanted to do next.

I learned not be afraid of change; what you fear is just a sign for where you need to grow.

All my prior knowledge and skills needed relearning.

I'm a control freak, and the main thing I learned was Flexibility.

I'm proud of myself! I learned that I cannot be in control and things still work out.



There's no way to avoid learning new things.



### Collaboration

The reading teachers worked together, shared ideas, collaborated tremendously and traded students, leading to a lot of accomplishment.

An Aide: We had more time to speak with teacher before class to plan and after class to discuss how it went.

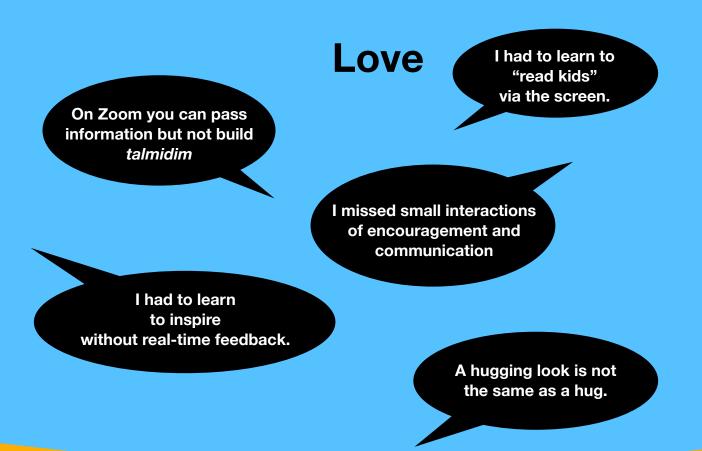
A few teachers were able to achieve collaborative assignments - 6G made children's books. Mrs. Ganchrow taught the middah, Ms Castagna taught the writing, and Mrs. Saks the art.

I have colleagues who teach in other prestigious private schools whose Zoom experience was "here's an online textbook, good luck."



**Teacher collaboration leads** to fresh ideas and better student outcomes.









### Communication

Some students asked for extra "office hours" with their teachers (or other teachers) just to talk.

When given patience and understanding, students are able to accomplish a lot, at a high level.

The importance of open communication with parents became very evident.

> Play and conversation between students are important ways that children learn.

Having time after class for aides and lead teachers to speak and talk about how the class went was valuable.

Teacher-facilitated conversations are important for helping students transition back to school and process the stresses and fears they've experienced.

My calmness transferred.

Many kids have busy parents. Sometimes, students just needed someone to talk to, or show a picture to.





### Resilience

Although they didn't accomplish as much academically, they learned a Work Ethic that will serve them well in life.

We can do more on guiding them in their exploration of independent learning.

I learned that teaching is more about starting than finishing. Usually, we think about what we accomplished and finished. But really it was about getting the kids to buy in at the beginning, since no one else had control over the results.

We're expecting less they can do more.

When class info was posted up front, students were able to view it at their own pace. Self-pacing really helps kids, faster and slower.

The kids can be more independent; they are more resilient than we think they are. We should try to unleash that and give opportunities to access the material.

One girl was excellent at multitasking - on Zoom, listening, doing work, and rocking the baby!

When the girls realized that 8th grade wasn't going to be like what they expected, they knew had to make it special for themselves. They understood that what they would get out of it was a function of what they would put into it.

> Learning became for life, not for grades.

Many teachers recorded sessions. Parents would ask for the videos, so they could use for review or to re-learn.



Kids can develop a sense of ownership of their learning.



# A resilient mindset is composed of several main features:

- Feeling in control of one's life
- Knowing how to fortify one's "stress hardiness"
- Being empathetic
- Displaying effective communication and other interpersonal capabilities
- Possessing solid problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Establishing realistic goals and expectations
- Learning from both success and failure
- Being a compassionate and contributing member of society
- Living a responsible life based on a set of thoughtful values
- Feeling special (not self-centered) while helping others to feel the same
- The Power of Resilience, Dr. Robert Brooks