



Yoni's Global Sukkah Placemat and Conversation Starter

Don't make out something is very obvious – by Elie Jesner

#YonisGlobalSukkah

Yoni Jesner
FOUNDATION

Inspiring young people to do more and care more

"Don't make out that something is very obvious or people will be scared to ask questions."

One of the laziest ways to convince people of a point, either as a teacher or simply in a conversation, is to state something as if it is obvious.

Such a move is disappointing enough if it's simply a matter of taking shortcuts, if it's a matter of poor teaching, a weakness in character. But Yoni gets at something bigger here, suggesting that the problem with this approach is that it kills the most important part of any learning process - the ability to openly and honestly question.

A question is a sacred gesture, a profound moment wherein a person opens themselves and others to new understanding and insight. It keeps a conversation or lesson dynamic and alive, preventing it from becoming stale and repetitive. A question leads to uncharted territory, opening multiple paths and directions, giving flight to our imaginations.

Someone who destroys the desire to question, the thirst for knowledge, the surging of curiosity, has betrayed these values, has shown that they misunderstand the quest for understanding. For the quest is about the searching, about the looking, about being comfortable with uncertainty, excited by it even. It is not about showing off, humiliating others, scaring them away with your confidence and certainty.

The mishna states that Torah scholars bring peace to the world. Rav Kook questioned this, for surely they are always arguing; how are they thus increasing peace? He explained that their arguing was aimed at a deeper clarification, a more profound truth, which would ultimately result in a more lasting and meaningful peace.

One of my last memories of Yoni is of a long afternoon discussing the big questions of philosophy, of his fearless and endless searching. It thus seems fitting to learn from him that we should never scare off the questions of others, and never ourselves be too intimidated to ask.



Elie Jesner is a Psychotherapist and Educator. Elie works with a variety of individuals as a psychotherapist, and teaches and writes about philosophy, psychology and Judaism in a number of different places.

Connection to Yoni:
Elie was Yoni's cousin, and had the privilege of growing up with him in Glasgow.

Questions:

Why is it lazy to pretend something is obvious?

Is it ever alright to be lazy?

Why are questions so crucial to learning?

'A great question can be ruined by a mediocre answer'. Would you agree with this? Can you think of examples?

'Who is wise? The person who learns from everyone.' How does this mishna link up to the themes of this discussion?