



# RESET #8

## Part 2 Going for the Gold

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**R**ecap: Eight-year-old Goldie H. was a child who left her parents and teachers exhausted. She couldn't sit still or focus in school, was constantly demanding toys and clothes and didn't respect rules and limits.

We set out to stop giving Goldie negative attention for misbehavior and, instead, lavish her with positive attention for good behavior — even if we had to creatively seek things to praise. The idea was to reset her image of herself from a troublemaker to a sweet, fun, creative girl who can respect the rules in school and play nicely with her peers. After a month, things seemed to be improving slowly.

### WEEK FIVE

Goldie's mother walked into our session glowing. "Goldie got invited to two friends' houses this week!" she reported. "It's wonderful that other children are

showing that they like her!"

"What do you think this says about Goldie's progress?" I asked. We talked about whether this development was just a fluke or if there had been a real shift in Goldie's behavior.

"It doesn't matter, really," I said. "We can build success from any event. Let's think of ways to build Goldie from this moment."

We brainstormed a little. We came up with ideas like telling her, "Gee, Goldie, these invitations mean the girls really enjoy being with you! You're fun to be with, and you're flexible about what they want to play."

Mr. H. mentioned that he had begun using the word "reset" with all his children, setting boundaries in a clear, non-negative way. Recently, he had an opportunity to set clear rules: His parents had invited Mr. and Mrs. H., Goldie, and her older sister out to dinner at a fancy restaurant. "I didn't think it would

be worth it to go," he said. "I couldn't imagine Goldie behaving herself for an entire evening. But I used the opportunity to teach Goldie and her sister about rules. I told them nice restaurants have rules about how to dress and behave. No one can jump or run or yell. We actually had a great discussion, and Goldie seemed to take it in."

In the end, both girls behaved in exemplary fashion and seemed very proud of themselves for exhibiting such grown-up behavior.

"Wow, that's amazing!" I said. "You were calm and matter of fact, but you taught rules clearly, and Goldie followed. You are on the way!"

We moved on to speak about school, and the possibility of reaching out to Goldie's teacher. The H.s can share with her that they've been trying a new approach at home which appears to be helpful. They can also ask the teacher to clarify which rules Goldie needs work on adhering to.

### WEEK SIX

It seems that progress is always two steps forward, one step back.

Goldie's mother came in on the verge of tears. "We had a meeting at the school," she said. "It wasn't the teacher who summoned us; it was the principal. She thinks Goldie should be evaluated as to whether or not she should be put on a medication like Ritalin."

Mrs. H. was so frustrated. "Goldie is doing so well at home!" she said. "I almost lost it with the principal. I told her, 'I'm not medicating her, at least for now. I'm not totally opposed to the idea, but she is responding so well to the Nurtured Heart Approach at home. I realize she can be challenging, but she needs to be built up and reinforced for her strengths.'"

"Of course, we do that here as much as we can," the principal countered. "But it's just taking too much out of the teachers, and honestly, there aren't that many positive moments to reinforce."

Mrs. H. shot back, "Well, please find those

moments! Goldie needs positive connection. She's good at recess, gym, and arts and crafts. We don't want to medicate unless it's absolutely necessary. At home she is really improving when we are clear about our expectations."

I listened to all this with growing respect for Mrs. H. "What an advocate you are for Goldie!" I said. "So, what happened? Did the principal get angry? Did she seem open?"

"She agreed to give it more time," she said.

### WEEK SEVEN

This week, Goldie's parents had better news from school. Goldie's teacher sent home a positive note about the way Goldie was doing her work and staying focused, and she mentioned that Goldie did a great job on her journal assignment! "We told Goldie to call her grandparents to share the news," Mr. H. said, beaming.

At home, Goldie continued to respond better. She was more flexible and cooperative, and the other children were also responding well to NHA methods.

We spoke about making "wins" like the teacher's note into a really big deal for Goldie. In school, the teacher had become more open to helping Mr. and Mrs. H. and learning from their successes. She had started to establish clear rules with Goldie: No more slime or goo and no more leaving class unless she asked permission.

While things were not perfect, I could see they were doing much better than before, and the teacher seemed excited to see the way we could work as a team to help Goldie thrive. The teacher even laughed as the H.s acknowledged that working with Goldie could be a struggle and admitted, "Goldie is a firecracker!"

Our teachers need tools and support just like parents do. There are always intense, firecracker kids in the classroom, and they have the potential to set off the others.

We spoke about recognizing the teacher for her

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cooperation and willingness to go the extra mile. Teachers work so hard! Mrs. H. proposed writing a thank-you note to the teacher and also sending the principal a note about Goldie’s progress.

## **WEEK EIGHT**

Goldie’s parents reported that they were feeling more and more confident about setting rules and limits for her. This included bedtime and homework time. When they were very clear, Goldie was better able to comply. For example, they told her she was only allowed to come into her parents’ room after 6:30 a.m. They would observe her looking at her digital clock and waiting for that moment.

Goldie still asked often for things like clothing and toys, but she would stop when Mrs. H. would write them on a wish list and remind her, “Goldie, that bracelet you asked for is already on the wish list, so no more asking for it.”

Things had improved in school. There were no longer complaints or requests for meetings. Goldie was able to respond to greater clarity from her teacher, who became so interested in NHA that she took my online training class and began seeing good results with other students as well.

Goldie was getting lots of playdates, which made everybody happy and was a terrific way to build her up.

As we concluded our last session, I did a quick review with them of what we’d learned and accomplished:

“We began by understanding how our words, interactions and energy help a child craft an image of who they are,” I said.

“We decided what to notice and focus on and to stop giving energy to negativity with lectures, reprimands, warnings and even loving discussions. We learned how behaviors like sending a child out of the classroom only escalate bad behavior.

“Instead, we built a toolbox of emotional nutrition. We show our children evidence that they have the strengths we want to see. We don’t wait for success. We become creative in finding and connecting to the

child’s inner spark.

“We learned to get clear with our expectations, limits, and rules. It’s not about punishment! It’s about setting limits without anger or negativity.”

Mr. and Mrs. H. celebrated their own hard work and dedication. “It wasn’t easy, but it was worth it,” Mrs. H. said. “Before, I always felt like a policeman, giving tickets for bad behavior. Now I’m giving tickets for greatness! I feel more like a coach.”

Mr. H. said, “My wife has been incredible in building success with Goldie and her teacher. This has been life-changing!”

Our discussion reset me to my personal WHY: Why I do this work, and the vision that lies behind it. It gives me such joy to walk parents through a new path, empowering them to help their children uncover the strengths within and set them on course for lifelong healthy relationships. It allows parents and their children to banish their storm clouds and bring *menuchah* and sunshine into their lives. NHA, for me, has been a gift I will always be grateful for.

## **TAKEAWAYS FOR TRANSFORMATION:**

- We need to believe in the child and his inner strength.
- We don’t wait for success. We need tools to build and create success.
- We must be relentless, even though it’s often not simple. We must be unstoppable in helping each child see the strength he has within. Once he sees it, he’ll live it.

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