

And he asked Pharaoh's courtiers who were with him in the prison.... "Why do you appear downcast today?" (40:7)

Four words! Yosef turned to the dejected, deposed courtiers of Pharaoh, noticing their downcast appearance, he asked them, "Why are you so downcast? What is the cause of your depression?" Yosef's sensitivity catalyzed circumstances that changed his entire life and the history of *Klal Yisrael*. Our course of history was altered because Yosef asked a simple question. He noticed--he cared--he took action. First and foremost, however, he noticed. This caring for another human being ultimately led to Yosef's salvation from imprisonment and elevation to the position of viceroy. Thus, his father, Yaakov, was able to come down to Egypt as royalty -- all as the result of a few words.

Horav Ze'ev Weinberger, Shlita, cites *Targum Onkelos*' interpretation of the *pasuk* describing Yosef as foreman in the prison, "*And everything that was done there, he would accomplish.*" (39:22) Everyone -- prisoners and warden alike -- admired Yosef. He succeeded in everything that he undertook. He was, therefore, given dominion over the entire prison. In translating the above *pasuk* *Onkeles* says, "And everything that was done was according to his command." This does not seem consistent with the *pasuk* which implies that Yosef did more than command--he worked! *Horav* Weinberger says that Yosef's tendency to work with the other prisoners achieved for him the respect and admiration necessary for his directives to be executed. When the other prisoners saw that Yosef cared for them and that he also worked **with** them, they were happy to carry out his orders. All of this happened as a result of Yosef's sensitivity to them, his caring.