



# TIKKUN HANEFESH AS TIKKUN OLAM

**“Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if they destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if they saved an entire world.” - (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5)**



## What does this text mean to you?

When thinking about this text, many if not most of us would assume saving a world refers to saving another’s life. But **what we need to consider is that our own lives, and our own worlds, deserve saving too.**

Rosh Hashanah is a time to celebrate the end of one year and all its accomplishments and the start of another year and all its potential. For many, this involves resolutions of self-betterment and/or growth as well as a dedication to the pursuit of **tikkun olam** — repairing the world. Before we can repair our world, however, we must begin to repair ourselves. This is known as the mental health middah of **tikkun hanefesh**. In bringing healing to ourselves, we bring healing to the world.



## How does helping yourself help others?





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## Activity - Repairing Your World

On the outline of the world map below, think about the gifts you bring to the world, and write one for each continent.





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## How do we dedicate ourselves to tikkun hanefesh?

Tikkun hanefesh can take many forms, but repairing our souls begins with forgiving our mistakes in order to move forward. While that can be extremely difficult to do at times, forgiving ourselves is a central theme of Rosh Hashanah and the High Holy Days.

**“Though self-forgiveness may end with God, it begins with us...it is difficult largely because we hold ourselves to such high standards.”**  
- Rabbi Alan Lew

Instead of forgiving ourselves, we often avoid our own reality. We leave our weaknesses unacknowledged and completely refuse to identify what we have done wrong, because we can't face those parts of ourselves. **But in order to give ourselves a chance to step back and see the situations where we need forgiveness for ourselves, we must accept our past** and understand and affirm our goodness beyond the mistakes we made. This means before we can forgive ourselves and practice tikkun hanefesh properly, we must face who we are deep down. **Only when we do that can we truly repair ourselves and, ultimately, the world.**





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## Activity - Repairing Your Self

On the outline of the human below, take stock of the values that are most important to you, and write at least five.

