



# BUILDING MY FUTURE

During the High Holidays, as we consider the decisions we want to make for our future, we may get bogged down by the notion of committing to them. We may even feel paralyzed by the fear of making a wrong decision. But we need to accept that while we have the potential to make a wrong decision, we also have the power to make ones that lead us in the right direction.

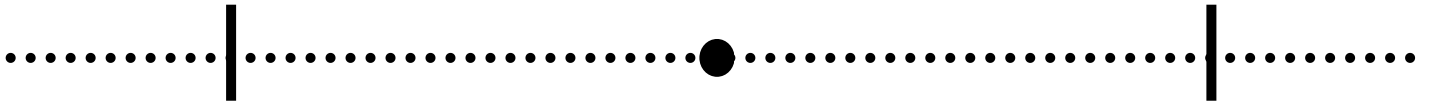
[Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler](#), an eminent Torah scholar and thinker of the 20th century, offers us additional encouragement in our struggle for greatness. In the collection of his writings known as "Michtav Me-Eliyahu," he explains the concept of "nikudas habechira," the "free-will point." It is the metaphysical point at which we make moral decisions, the place where we choose to act in ways that align with our values or not. The concept of free will underscores that we have the power inside us to make the choices we think will best improve our lives. It is incredibly empowering to realize we are the masters of our choices. Granted, we are capable of making mistakes, but we are also capable of growth.

Now, with the realization of the power you have to decide your destiny, you need to decide what destiny you want to work toward.



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In the following activity, you will visualize your growth journey. The goal is to reflect on where you are, the challenges you face and how you can overcome them.



## 1. Identifying Your Challenge

Label the dot on the line above with a new or recurring struggle you are facing that involves or is based on your values. It could relate to any aspect of your life you want to improve, including interpersonal relationships and your self-relationship. **Example:** If someone values privacy but finds themselves sharing too much with others, they might write “setting and sticking to personal boundaries.”

## 2. Identify Your Strengths

Label the first tick-mark with a situation that is similar but that does not challenge you, i.e., a situation where it is relatively easy for you to make a decision based on your values. Perhaps this was a previous challenge you have overcome. Maybe your values were never tested like this before, but on your personal ladder, you are currently on a higher rung.



Now, consider where you'd like to go.



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## 3. Identify Next Steps

On the second tick-mark, write out a value-driven decision you aren't ready to make right now but you'd ideally like to make in the future. This might be tricky to visualize — it's possible the ideal situations ahead are too blurry, or it's difficult to see beyond the challenges immediately in front of you. **Example: If someone values their health but struggles with exercising even once a week, they know working out more is not a viable choice right now. So they might make a decision now to work out three times a week in the future.**

We all have the power to make our own choices, despite the forces inside of us that pull us in different directions. When a situation tests one of your values, find strength in your principle, and allow it to propel you to triumph over the challenge.

