



GRATITUDE PRACTICES TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

Gratitude — the middah, or Jewish value, of [hakarat hatov](#) — is the feeling of thankfulness or appreciation. Focusing on what we have rather than what we don't have helps enrich ourselves and our mental well-being. In the Jewish tradition, we say:

"Who is rich? Those who rejoice in what they have." (Pirkei Avot 4:1).

Gratitude can play a large role in healing, both physically and mentally. It is a form of self-care that helps us build resilience and strengthen our mental health. For those living with depression or other mental illnesses, gratitude can be even more important — especially right now, when we might not be able to spend time with our loved ones during the holidays. But that feeling of being grateful is a muscle we need to exercise — like any other muscle. Practicing gratitude regularly is essential to feeling grateful more generally.





GRATITUDE PRACTICES TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

Gratitude Jar or Box

- Use markers, stickers, paint and other materials around the house to decorate a jar/cardboard box.
- Every time you are grateful, write it down on a slip of paper, and put it in the jar.
- For a fun twist, make one for someone else! Every time they do something that makes you smile or for which you are grateful, write it down. Share the jar/box later with them.

Gratitude Walk

- Fresh air and natural light can make a big difference to our mental health.
- Take a walk and try to clear your mind. Instead of thinking about something specific, imagine the thoughts floating by. Focus on the sight, smells and sounds.



Gratitude E-card

- Think about a person who has done something recently to help you or something that made you smile. One of the ways we can infuse gratitude into the world is to remind people their actions have had a positive impact on us.
- Send a virtual card through the Blue Dove Foundation at thebluedovefoundation.org/gratitudecard.

Gratitude Reflection/Meditation Activity

- Find a comfortable position. You can sit, lie down or use any relaxed posture. Take a few deep, calming breaths to relax and center yourself. Allow your awareness to move to your immediate environment — all the things you can smell, taste, touch, see or hear.
- Say to yourself: “For this, I am grateful.”
- Next, bring to mind those people in your life with whom you are close — your friends, family, partner or someone else. Say to yourself: “For this, I am grateful.”
- Next, turn your attention to yourself: You are a unique individual, blessed with imagination, the ability to communicate, to learn from the past and plan for the future, to overcome any pain you may be experiencing. Say to yourself: “For this, I am grateful.”
- Finally, rest in the realization that life is precious, that you have been born into a period of immense prosperity and that you have the gift of health, community, and access to spiritual teachings. Say to yourself: “For this, I am grateful.”



GRATITUDE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

Memory is a critical component of any value system. Taking the time to remember what you stand for and the ideas you live by helps engrain those values in your life. Jewish liturgy includes six items all Jews should remember each day, including the Exodus from Egypt and the commandment to keep the Shabbat. Ask yourself these questions daily to help engrain the value of hakarat hatov in your daily life:

What am I lucky to have in my life?

What have I done to help another person, family or community this year?

Which strength can I rely on to help me be my best self?

What is going right in my life right now?

What is one thing I can do to bring joy to somebody's day?

What is one thing I have learned about myself this year?

What am I hopeful for?



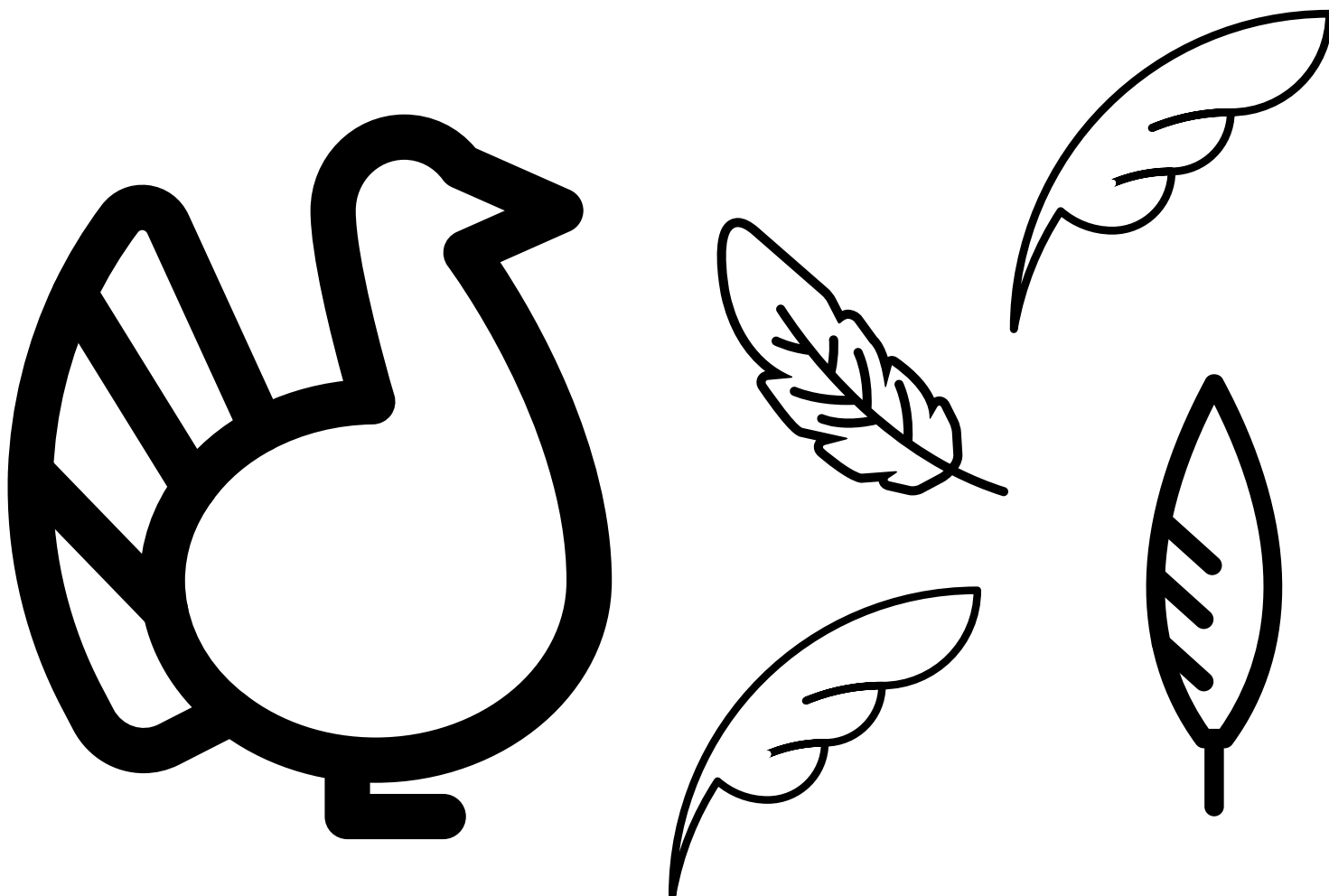


PRACTICING GRATITUDE ON THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving, while not a Jewish holiday, is a great time to meditate on the middah of hakarat hatov. Try utilizing the gratitude practices discussed above and the activity below to bring more hakarat hatov into your holiday experience.

Create a Gratitude Turkey

- Draw or print the turkey body on a separate piece of paper and decorate it.
- Draw or print out and cut the feathers.
- Sit for a moment and think about what you are grateful for. You can use the questions above to help guide you.
- On each feather, think of one thing you're grateful for, and write it down. Challenge yourself to get as many feathers on your turkey as you can!
- In the body of the turkey, write one kavanah, or intention, you have for the upcoming year.



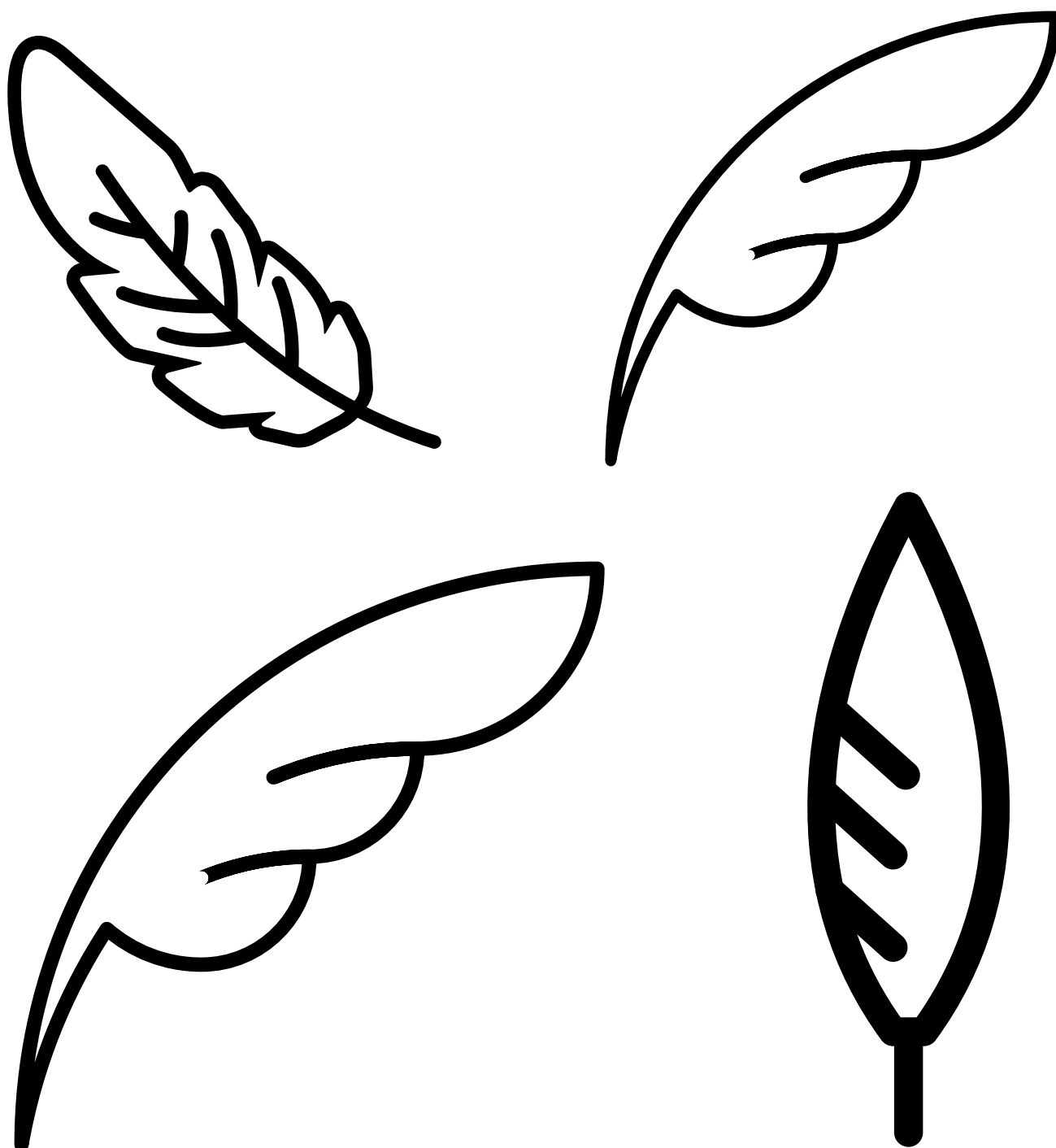


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