



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH WORKBOOK

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ABOUT YOU

Name:

Age:

Relationship with mental health:

State of being at the beginning of the month:

What I hope to work on this month:

ABOUT US

OUR STORY

The Blue Dove Foundation was created to address mental illness and addiction in the Jewish community and beyond. We work with organizations and communities -- both Jewish and interfaith -- across the country and around the world.

OUR WORK

- 1 Educate the community about mental health through a Jewish lens.
- 2 Produce powerful and engaging educational resources about the connections between mental wellness and Judaism.
- 3 Spearhead and design programs that can be replicated easily in communities across the country: mental health Shabbat dinners, various training programs, interactive events with speakers, and more.

WHY THE DOVE

The dove represents peace of the deepest kind. It soothes and quiets our worried or troubled thoughts, enabling us to find renewal in the silence of the mind. Its role as a spiritual messenger imparts an inner peace that helps us go about our lives calmly and with purpose.

Some believe the dove also represents hope, while others believe it denotes freedom. Bringing peace, life, hope, and freedom to those facing addiction or other mental health challenges is the goal of the Blue Dove Foundation.

ABOUT THE WORKBOOK

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental Health Awareness Month (“Mental Health Month”) has been observed every May in the United States since 1949, raising awareness and educating millions of people each year about the dangers and experience of living with mental illness. *As of 2019, it was estimated that more than 26 percent of American adults — about one in five — live with a mental illness* (National Institute of Mental Health), and many of them often face that reality alone. That is why, every May, the Blue Dove Foundation and hundreds of other organizations join the national movement to shine a spotlight on the issue and, ultimately, #QuietTheSilence.

A JEWISH APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH

Judaism isn't just a religion of laws; rather, it is a religion of ideas and experiences, all aimed at cultivating a healthy and sound mind, body, and soul for all of its practitioners. Our goal is to explore them, reveal the deep messages hidden within, and shed some light on how one can utilize them to live a healthier and happier life with this four-week Jewish guide through Mental Health Awareness Month. Each week, we will focus on a Jewish approach to a different aspect of mental wellness and then engage in activities to help make mental health a bigger part of your life.

“

**GUARD YOURSELF AND GUARD YOUR SOUL
VERY CAREFULLY (DEUTERONOMY 4:9)**

JEWISH MENTAL WELLNESS VALUES

Jewish values, or **middot**, help build the foundation on which the Jewish community stands. We believe middot empower us to connect Jewish thought to mental wellness. Jewish literature and discussion have focused on healing, wellness, and community for years, yet we often shroud mental health in a cone of silence. To emphasize the role the Jewish community plays in promoting mental wellness, the Blue Dove Foundation focuses on our eight middot.

כל ישראל ארעבם זה לזה - Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh La Zeh - All Jews are Responsible for One Another

We are all interconnected in unique and special ways, so we must be invested in the mental wellness and overall well-being of everyone. We must be willing, informed, and prepared to help one another, because we all benefit.



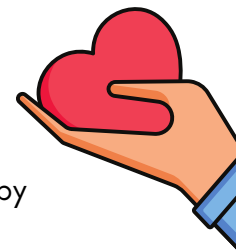
פיקוח נפש - Pikuach Nefesh - Saving a Life

For the Blue Dove Foundation, there is no greater priority than saving a life. This leads to the idea that having order, rules, and structure to your life is not restricting life but rather about enabling us to live our most meaningful lives and helping others do the same.



חסד וגבורה - Chesed u'Gevurah - Balancing Loving Kindness and Discernment

Kindness and limitation balance one another. Kindness requires us to put aside our projections and assumptions about what someone needs and really listen, so we can see what the person in front of us is saying. Too often we diagnose someone or think we know what might “fix” a situation, but when it comes to mental wellness, we must come from a place of listening and openness. We don’t want to make anyone feel like they are defined by their illness or struggle. At the same time, we want people to know they are being heard. Unbounded kindness can lead to unrealistic promises, overextending, unhealthy dependence, and depletion. We must understand our limitations. We need to be aware of the realistic nature of our time, resources, and ability.



JEWISH MENTAL WELLNESS VALUES

רפואה שלימה - Refuah Shleimah - Healing and Wholeness

We recognize healing is not just physical; it is holistic, which is to say it has physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual components that are all interconnected. We also emphasize healing rather than curing. Even when mental illness is under control, healing and a return to wholeness is in order. We see healing as a process that has many components and may be a lifelong journey.



נושא בעול עם חברו - Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro - Sharing a Burden with One's Friend

Beyond the idea that we are responsible for one another, we teach the value of supporting another person. Going along with the value of kindness, one of the greatest acts of kindness is to bear a burden with another. However, again, it is important to recognize and establish limitations in how much you can give to someone else.



לפני עיוור - Lifnei Iver - Before the Blind (Inclusivity)

We teach that we must not harm those in vulnerable positions, whether they be due to disabilities (deafness and blindness) or disempowered positions (widows, orphans, strangers, etc.). It is our responsibility to do our best to create a community that meets the needs and celebrates the value of everyone. Rather than looking at a disability or mental illness through the lens of handicaps, we can uphold this value by seeking to ensure all individuals are fully able to participate in the community.



תיקון עולם - Tikkun Olam - Repairing the World

This value focuses on social justice and communal responsibility. What can we, as human beings, do to make this world a better place? Building our community is essential if we're going to help meet the needs of all those who belong to it.

Blue Dove has taken this idea a step further with the value of repairing the soul. The work of repairing the world begins with repairing the soul. Before we are responsible to others, we are responsible for ourselves. In healing ourselves, we heal the world, and in healing the world, we bring healing into our own lives.



WEEK ONE

ניקוי - CLEANSING

State of being at the beginning of the week:

What I hope to work on this week:



WEEK ONE - CLEANSING - נִיקּוּי

JUDAISM ASKS US TO CLEANSE OURSELVES OF NEGATIVITY.

Before the holiday of Passover, Jews are tasked with cleansing their homes of chametz, or leavened bread, which they are prohibited from eating on the holiday. Chametz is also symbolic of other things like the yetzer harah (the ego, the self, mental clutter, negativity) that live within us and distract us from our true goals. We are tasked with cleansing ourselves of that kind of "chametz" as well, which allows us to focus on what matters in our lives.

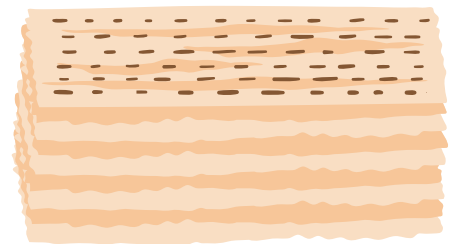
We must cleanse ourselves of any residual chametz and use that mental clarity to focus on the goals of Mental Health Awareness Month. This is why for the first week of MHAM, we would like to encourage you to do a mental cleanse.

Much like chametz, a mental cleanse involves taking a critical look at your mental space, determining which feelings are serving your larger goals and which are holding you down. You can also take a look at your physical space to identify relationships or behaviors that are functioning as triggers for negative thoughts and create boundaries between those people and things.

By creating boundaries and ridding yourself of negative thoughts and triggers, you can excise the mental clutter from your mind and focus on what truly matters to you.

“

IF I AM NOT FOR MYSELF, WHO
WILL BE FOR ME? - HILLEL



WEEK ONE - ACTIVITY

In order to truly cleanse yourself of negative thoughts and feelings, you need to identify them. **Be sure to repeat these practices each morning.**



ACTIVITY ONE - ACTIVITY ONE - FIND CHAMETZ IN YOUR MIND

- Identify the thoughts and feelings that weigh heavily on your mind, and write them down on a piece of paper and throw it away.
- Now, write a list of things you want to bring into the next year.

ACTIVITY TWO - FIND CHAMETZ IN YOUR WORLD

- Identify the people and things in your life that are triggering you, and create an action plan for setting boundaries with them.
- This can mean unfollowing people who hurt you on social media or asking a certain friend for some space, even if it's hard. Sometimes you need to take time to heal for the sake of your mental health and even the relationship itself.

Once you have your list of goals for the next year and your plans for achieving the mental clarity to accomplish them, read each item out loud and proclaim:

בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּבְרִיאוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ!

Next year in mental wellness!

CHESHBON HANEFESH - ACCOUNTING OF THE SOUL

I. UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES

Personal responsibilities and mental wellness may seem like different conversations.

After all, the world is seeing record levels of burnout, anxiety and exhaustion — partially resulting from our overwhelming lifestyles, neverending to-do lists and unforgiving schedules. So how could adding more responsibilities improve things? How could having additional duties benefit our mental health?

Achieving an understanding of our hearts is no small feat, but if it is a first step to healing, we must work toward that goal. Practices such as mindfulness and meditation can be important guides to help us understand our internal worlds. The Jewish concept of cheshbon hanefesh — the accounting of — the soul can also aid with this enlightenment.



CHESHBON HANEFESH - ACCOUNTING OF THE SOUL

II. UNDERSTANDING CHESHBON HANEFESH

A cheshbon hanefesh is not as spiritual or ephemeral as its translation sounds. We practice different types of cheshbonot every day: when we check our credit card statements and resolve to work harder on our spending; when we realize we scroll on our phone for too many hours a day and install a time-management app; or when we recognize the ways we could be a better friend to someone who's struggling. Similarly, a cheshbon hanefesh is an analysis of the ways in which we can do and be better to ourselves (which, of course, can have an impact on the world around us).

This may sound like the idea of a New Year's resolution, and in many ways it is! The Jewish new year is a great time for reflection. It provides a benchmark by which we can measure our progress and see if our goals have changed, and it allows us to think about how best to move forward based on what has worked and what hasn't. That kind of clarity and self-acceptance can help us move forward in our mental health journeys with intention and resolve, and it can feel deeply cleansing to engage with honesty and awareness.

Maybe you're convinced and want to give cheshbon hanefesh a try. There's no "right way" to do it, but here are some places to start:



CHESHBON HANEFESH - ACCOUNTING OF THE SOUL

III. PERFORMING A CHESHBON HANEFESH

1

ASSESS THE RESPONSIBILITIES YOU HAVE TO YOURSELF, THOSE YOU HAVE TO OTHERS AND THE ONES OTHERS HAVE TO YOU. ARE YOU MEETING THESE RESPONSIBILITIES? ARE OTHERS IN YOUR LIFE MEETING THEM?

Taking responsibility starts with the recognition that we all have some power and ability to affect others, and that every person has some capacity to affect the world. We have responsibilities to ourselves: developing our mental wellness, keeping our spaces clean, working hard, managing our time and being honest. Other people have the same responsibilities.

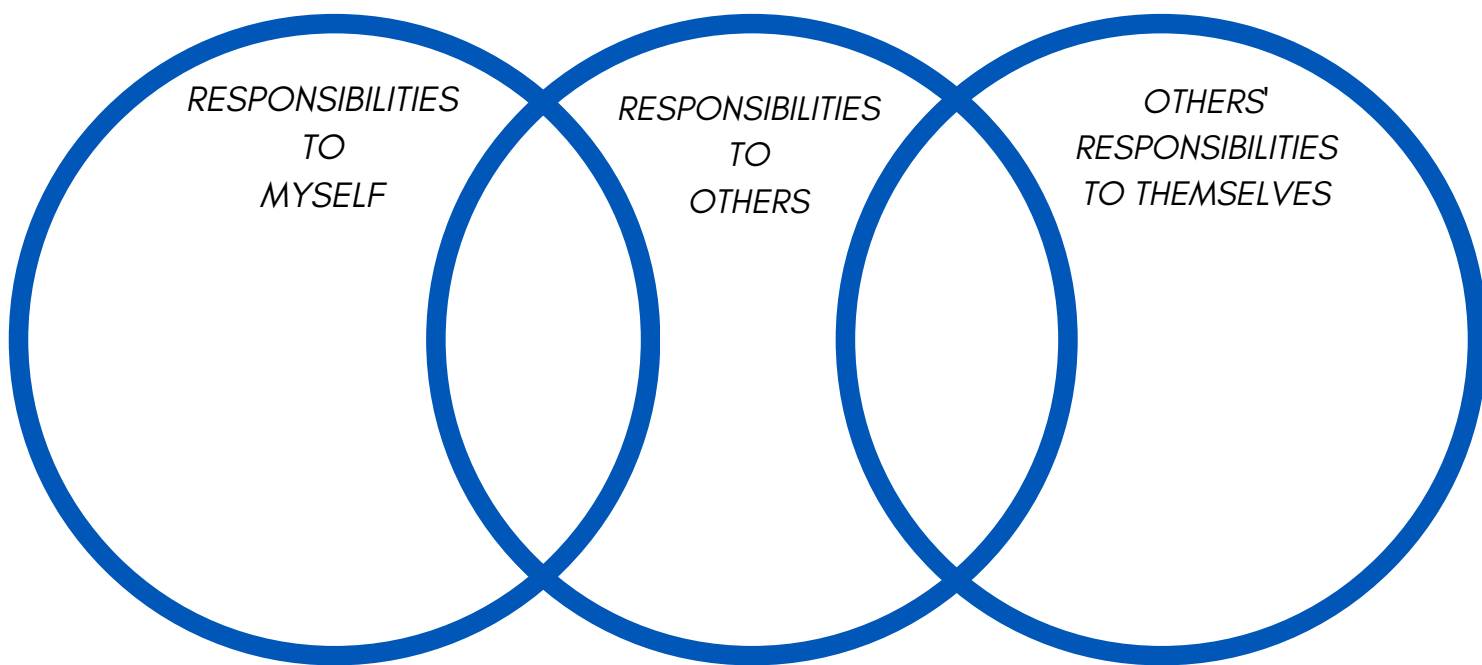
Then there are the responsibilities we have to others. They can be small, like saying "please" and "thank you" or throwing cans into the recycling rather than the garbage can. Or they can be big, sometimes very big, such as not letting people fall through the cracks or stepping up and taking a stand when we see wrongdoing.

A powerful quote from Pirkei Avot posits “[we] are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are [we] free to desist from it” when it comes to our responsibilities to others — and especially for those we have to the world.

CHESHBON HANEFESH - ACCOUNTING OF THE SOUL

Ask yourself if you are engaging realistically with your responsibilities. Are you able to manage them? Which ones are truly essential? Which people and environments support (or hold back) the fulfillment of these responsibilities?

Below is a Venn Diagram that can help with this exercise.



2

WRITE A "PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT."

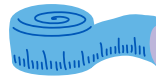
In Greg McKeown's bestselling book [Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less](#), he writes about the ways we can achieve clarity and increase opportunities for joy within ourselves. One of these tools is the personal mission statement.

CHESHBON HANEFESH - ACCOUNTING OF THE SOUL

When a company or organization is struggling over what direction it should take, it often turns to its mission statement. Similarly, writes McKeown, we can create our own mission statements to help us determine the right path when we are conflicted or confused. A good personal mission statement should be:



CONCRETE — SPECIFIC AND
NARROW ENOUGH THAT
YOU CAN PLAN PROPERLY



MEASURABLE — WITH A BEGINNING
AND END YOU CAN MEASURE YOUR
PROGRESS AGAINST



ATTAINABLE — REALISTIC
AND DOABLE GIVEN YOUR
SKILL-SET AND ABILITIES



INSPIRING — ALLOWS YOU TO
STRIVE TOWARD SOMETHING
BIGGER THAN YOURSELF

McKeown encourages those struggling with this lofty set of adjectives to ask themselves two questions: “If [I] could be truly excellent at only one thing, what would it be?” and “How will [I] know when [I’m] done?” Try writing your own mission statement.

CHESHBON HANEFESH - ACCOUNTING OF THE SOUL

3

LOOK BACK AND SEE WHERE YOU WERE LAST MAY.

Yes, really! Sometimes going backward for self-reflection can be tremendously helpful in knowing what's next. Look back on the achievement of last year's goals — and the things that affected their achievement, positively and negatively.

Like with any mental wellness practice, the goal is not to judge your progress but to observe it. Look for “cause and effect” over the last year, and reflect on why you may have been able to complete certain priorities and resolutions over other ones. There are many reasons we do and do not achieve the things we set out to do, including some of the following:

A. They aren't realistic. Sometimes we set goals that are too big or unattainable, given the place we are in life. It can help to work toward those goals by breaking them up into small chunks: If we want to learn guitar, we should start by learning how to play the chords and read music rather than aiming to play a very advanced song within a year.

B. They don't make us happy or bring us joy. In *Tiny Habits: The Small Changes That Change Everything*, author B.J. Fogg recommends creating a celebratory routine that supports us in creating change. It may feel silly, but recognizing each moment we make progress by doing a fist-pump in the air or a little dance can help condition feelings of positivity toward our goals.



CHESHBON HANEFESH - ACCOUNTING OF THE SOUL

C. They aren't supported. The environments we are in play a large role in achieving our goals. If we are looking to work on intuitive eating, being around people who fuss about calories and dieting is likely to disrupt our progress. If we want to work on the skill of positive self-talk, it may not be helpful to be in a social environment where people speak negatively about others. One of the most helpful examples of "cause and effects" comes from the places and people that affect our goals. Sometimes, in looking to make progress, it's important to shake things up and seek new experiences or relationships.

If you can make the time over the next few weeks, find a quiet space, take a pen and some paper, and give yourself respect and self-acceptance as you reflect. May you use cheshbon hanefesh as a tool for making your entry into the Jewish new year feeling clear headed, recharged, hopeful and mentally well.

WEEK ONE - JOURNAL

HOW DID YOU PERFORM YOUR MENTAL CLEANSE, WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR MOST POWERFUL REALIZATIONS, AND HOW DID IT CHANGE YOUR PERCEPTION OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS THIS WEEK?

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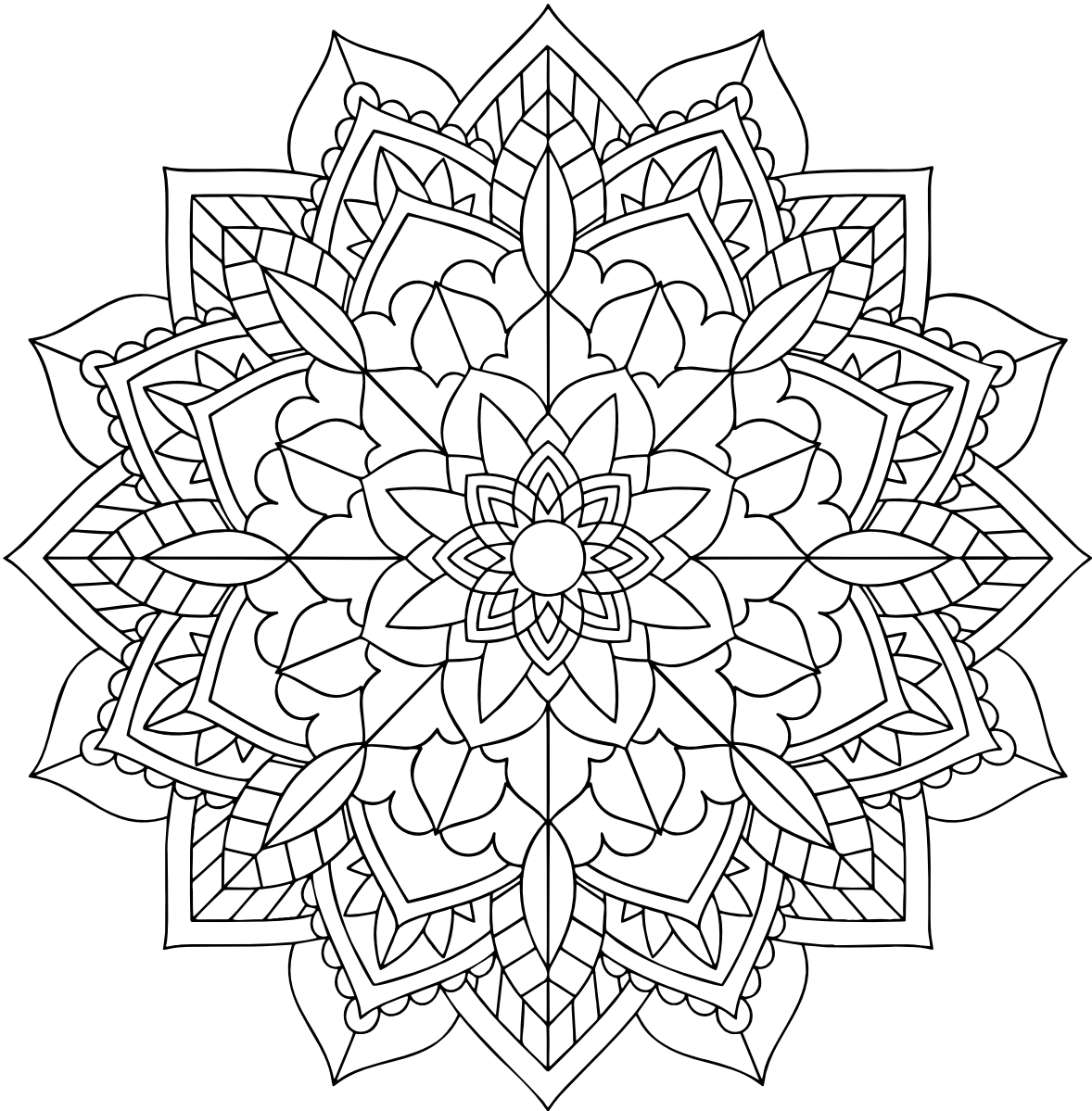
WEEK ONE – JOURNAL

State of being at the end of the week:

What I gained from the work this week:



MANDALA COLORING PAGES



**ACTIVITIES LIKE COLORING HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO
BE A USEFUL TOOL IN CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS
AND REDUCING STRESS.**

WEEK TWO

פולחן - RITUAL

State of being at the beginning of the week:

What I hope to work on this week:



WEEK TWO - RITUAL - פולחן

JUDAISM ASKS US TO ESTABLISH HEALTHY ROUTINES.

It is no secret that rituals are a basic component of Judaism. But people often fail to recognize the benefits of them.

Rituals keep us grounded and help us keep track of different parts of our lives that could otherwise fall apart. Take your week for example. Amidst the hustle and bustle of busy life, whether you are a young entrepreneur working at a busy start-up, a student in college trying to keep up with your studies, or a parent trying to keep track of your kid's schedule, life pulls you in too many directions to count. **It is helpful to have a routine or ritual — like prayer or Shabbat — to give you dedicated moments to pause and reflect.** The ritual of lighting the candles or saying set prayers can provide clarity and help you reorient yourself regularly.

Of course, rituals don't need to be religious. They can be anything from a weekly journaling practice to a daily meditation routine. The key is to find something that grounds and centers you.

Ultimately, practicing any ritual keeps you on a rhythm, which is vital to mental wellness — especially when your life feels out of control.

This week, consider some rituals — religious or secular — you can incorporate into your life to give you that sense of routine, regularity, and control.



**WHEN WE ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO CHANGE
A SITUATION, WE ARE CHALLENGED TO
CHANGE OURSELVES. - VIKTOR FRANKL**



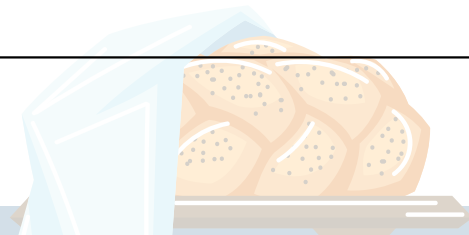
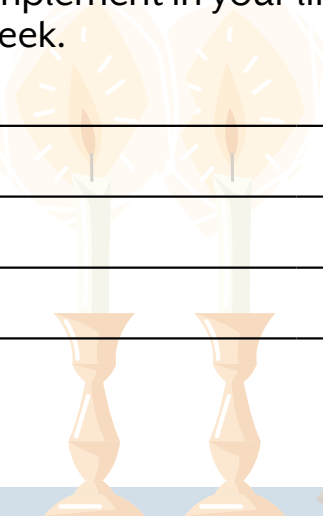
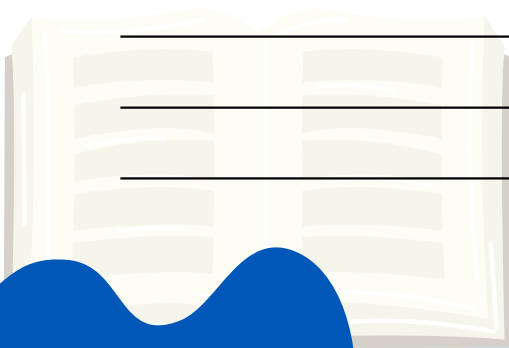
WEEK TWO - ACTIVITY

Creating a ritual requires focus and concentration. Follow these directions to help you craft your perfect ritual.

Ask yourself what parts of your life need more attention. Do you need more space to take a break, time for exercise or just time with friends?

Then, determine which parts of your day would be best to incorporate some kind of ritual or routine.

Plan a ritual you want to implement in your life, practice it, and make a plan to follow it for one week.



PRAYER RITUAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS

Introduction

Prayer ritual is an essential aspect of religious experience. But while hundreds of thousands of people around the world practice daily prayer, they don't always fully appreciate the ways prayer, at least Jewish prayer, can actually help to nurture our mental health and wellness with its proscribed routines and ways of thinking that can act as self-care.

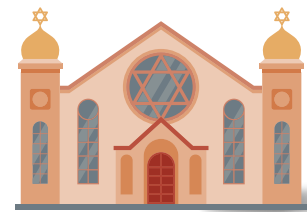
The National Wellness Institute promotes the use of the “Six Dimensions of Wellness”. Addressing these dimensions — occupational, emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual and physical — “builds a holistic sense of wellness,” which in turn helps “build resilience and enable us to thrive amidst life's challenges.” Arguably, Judaism's conception and implementation of prayer meets the spiritual, emotional and social dimensions of wellness. Each dimension has its own goals.



PRAYER RITUAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS

Social wellness follows these tenets:

- It is better to contribute to the common welfare of our community than to think only of ourselves.
- It is better to live in harmony with others and our environment than to live in conflict with them.



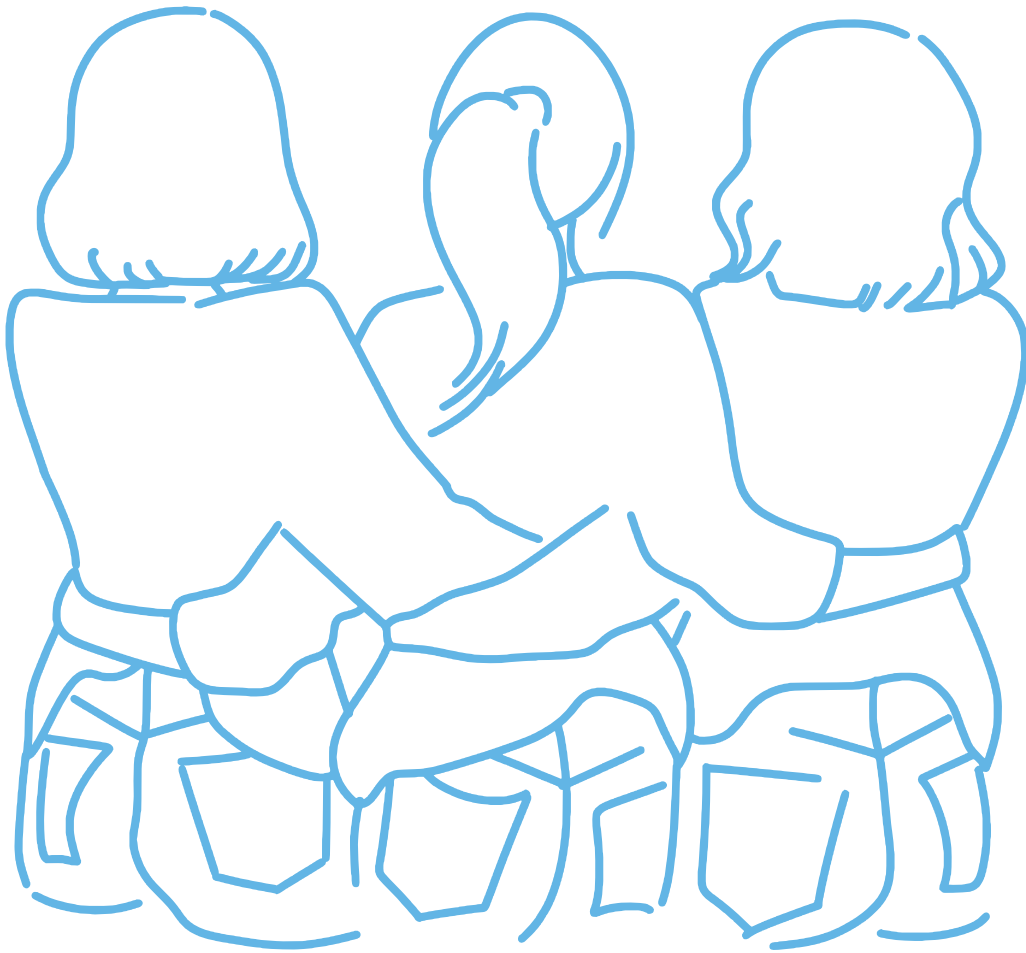
Jewish prayers accomplish our need to live in harmony with others and regularly think of ourselves as being a part of a community with its choreography and liturgy. If you examine Jewish liturgy, you will discover that almost all prayers are written in the plural. The standard opening of all Jewish blessings refers to “our G-d” who has sanctified “us” with the commandments, and perhaps the most famous of all Jewish prayers, the Shema, declares that “our G-d” is one. The reason for this can be found as early as a discussion in the Talmud about how to formulate the travelers prayer (Tefillat HaDerech):

Abaye said: At all times a person should associate himself with the congregation and should not pray for himself alone. (Talmud Brachot 30a)



This, in addition to the fact that traditional Jewish practice emphasizes that all prayer should be chanted in a group of 10 individuals, perfectly satisfies the social dimension of wellness.

PRAYER RITUAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS



***Love your fellow as
yourself (Leviticus 19:18)***

PRAYER RITUAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS

Emotional wellness follows these tenets:

- It is better to be aware of and accept our feelings than to deny them.
- It is better to be optimistic in our approach to life than pessimistic



One of the great religious thinkers of the 19th century, Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch wrote:

Hitpallel, from which “tefillah” (prayer in Hebrew) is derived, originally meant to deliver an opinion about oneself, to judge oneself or an inner attempt at so doing...it denotes to step out of active life to attempt to gain a true judgment of one’s relationship to G-d and the world, and the world to oneself. (Horeb Part IV)



Through an examination of the Hebrew word for prayer, we recognize that prayer is not only supplication but also reflection and introspection. When we pray, we should be thinking about what we are saying, coming to a deeper understanding of ourselves and leaving the prayer experience changed and improved, living the emotional dimension of wellness.

PRAYER RITUAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS

Spiritual wellness follows these tenets:

- It is better to ponder the meaning of life for ourselves and to be tolerant of the beliefs of others than to close our minds and become intolerant.
- It is better to live each day in a way that is consistent with our values and beliefs than to do otherwise and feel untrue to ourselves.

The spiritual dimension of wellness necessitates creating moments and environments to “ponder the meaning of life for ourselves” and align our internal worlds with our external worlds and live our most authentic and fulfilling lives. This goal can be seen as being addressed within the daily recitation of the Shema in the morning and evening, as it seeks to promote a sense of self-awareness and individuality in Jewish thought.

*You shall love the LORD your God
with all your heart and with all
your soul*



וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אֶת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ
וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ

Over the centuries, Jewish commentators have had a lot to say about the Shema, but a central theme of this line is that we are tasked with bringing all of ourselves to the table in the way we serve G-d and the impact we make on the world at large.

PRAYER RITUAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS

That is the mindset with which we are supposed to start and end each day. Prayer in Jewish thought is both supplication and reflection. In reciting this prayer, we are SAYING we will bring all of ourselves to the table, but we should be THINKING about what that means for us as well. In promising G-d we will bring all of ourselves to our service of G-d and the world, we should also be asking ourselves what those special, unique things are that we bring to the table and hopefully living our lives according to that most authentic and true version of ourselves. At the beginning and ends of our days, and perhaps even our lives, the Torah and the Shema want us to ensure we are making the most of our unique talents and abilities.

Conclusion

When framed properly, prayer is so much more than a collection of supplications. Rather, it is a carefully composed method of imbuing our lives with values and ideas that can fill our days with spirituality and mental wellness. Finally, Judaism's prescribed schedule of prayers (three times each day) allows for a well-balanced opportunity to focus on all three dimensions of wellness each day; once in the morning (Shacharit), once in the afternoon (Mincha) and once in the evening (Maariv).

PRAYER RITUAL AND MENTAL WELLNESS

With these perspectives in mind, why not do as many Jews have done over the centuries and compose your own prayer with these core facets in mind? Jews have a rich history of composing prayers, particularly in the form of a *mi sheberach* – a prayer that addresses prominent spiritual and physical needs plaguing both individuals and communities at large. Most recently, prayers have been composed to address and acknowledge the growing issues of mental illness and substance abuse in the Jewish community.

Before you write your prayer, think deeply about those issues and/or concerns within you and your community with which you align most, and write it in the plural. Then, create a practice or ritual of reciting it regularly, placing yourself within your community and praying to G-d that you shall be alleviated speedily within your days.

We believe Jewish prayers and rituals can help to strengthen our mental well-being, resilience, and recovery in the same way *middot*, or Jewish values, can promote them.



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***MAY WE APPROACH OUR PRAYERS WITH THESE VALUES
IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS SO WE LIVE OUR BEST LIVES
THROUGH THE LENS OF JEWISH PRAYER.***

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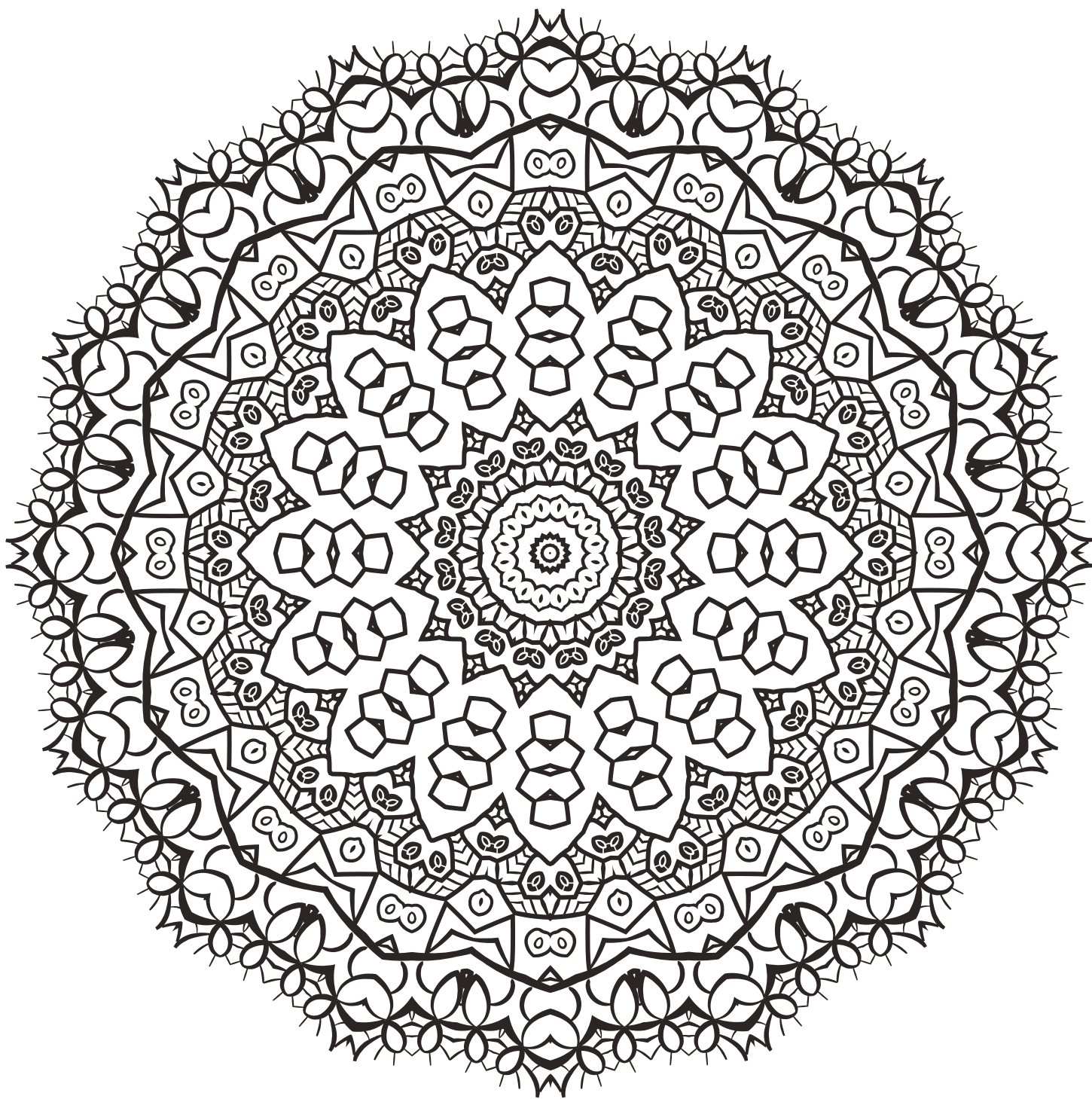
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WEEK TWO – JOURNAL

State of being at the end of the week:

What I gained from the work this week:



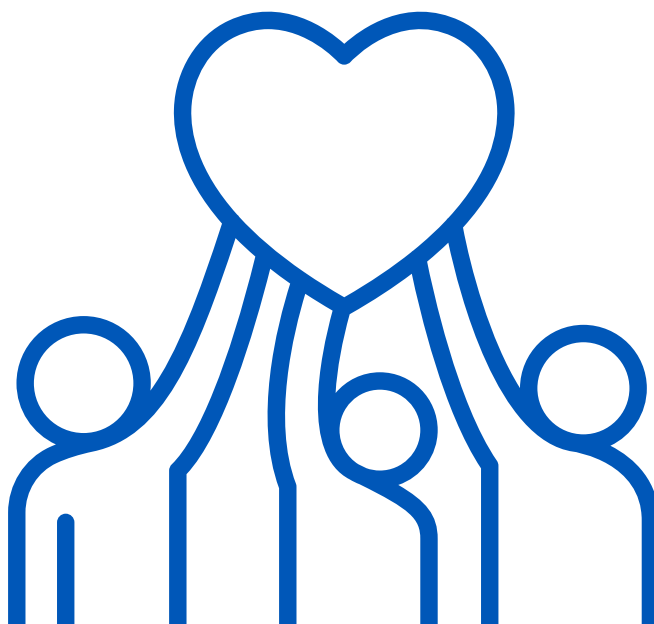


WEEK THREE

קהילה - COMMUNITY

State of being at the beginning of the week:

What I hope to work on this week:



WEEK THREE - COMMUNITY - קהילה

JUDAISM ASKS US TO MAKE CONNECTIONS.

In Judaism, living within, or identifying with, a community is a powerful aspect of religious life. Whether you are a member of a synagogue, regularly participate in Shabbat meals, or just identify with the Jewish people, [you are a part of something bigger than yourself](#). That is extremely valuable to your mental health.

A key component to mental wellness is a sense of belonging and community, but very often we are so comfortable in our communities we take them for granted.

This week, we encourage everyone to [reflect on what it is that makes a community and what you can do to play a larger role in your own](#). This can mean anything from volunteering at a local community center to connecting with a friend or loved one who needs you.

“

IF ONE...SAYS, "WHY SHOULD I TROUBLE MYSELF FOR THE COMMUNITY? WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME TO TAKE PART IN THEIR DISPUTES? WHY SHOULD I LISTEN TO THEIR VOICES? I'M FINE [WITHOUT THIS]," THIS PERSON DESTROYS THE WORLD. - MIDRASH TANHUMA, PARSHAT MISHPATIM



WEEK THREE - ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY ONE

Identify three things you think are vital to cultivating a sense of community.

Think of one actionable item you can do to contribute to one or all of those aspects of community.

ACTIVITY TWO

Take a moment to appreciate a member of your community who helped you through a tough time, and write a 'thank you' note to them.



JUDAISM AND GRATITUDE

JUDAISM AND GRATITUDE

Judaism teaches us to practice the middah (Jewish value) of **hakarath hatov**, or gratitude. Translated from Hebrew, the term means “recognizing the good.” Traditional Judaism implores us to focus on the message of **hakarath hatov** by finding one hundred things to be grateful for every day.

In Biblical Hebrew, the word that serves as the source for the name Jew/יהודה or Yehuda, actually shares a linguistic root with the Hebrew word for thanks, תודה.



The essence of **hakarath hatov** isn't just to express thankfulness to those around you and the objects you possess in your life; it also is to truly feel the gratitude deep in your heart and soul. It must stem from the intention of finding the good in everything you do, which can be measured easily through writing and keeping a log of the things you are thankful for. **To accomplish this, you must practice gratitude every day.**

Day by day, **hakarath hatov** can change your mindset into more positive thinking and help you see things and people around you that you may not notice, which is a breath of fresh air for those who struggle with mental health.

JUDAISM AND GRATITUDE

CREATE A GRATITUDE LIST

Aim for one hundred things. This can be a very daunting task. The trick is to start with broad categories, and then engage your senses to identify the specific items you're grateful for relating to the larger category.

Examples:

CATEGORY - MY PET DOG

- I love that my dog is always waiting at the door for me when I get home.
- The soft touch of his head on my lap.
- His excitement when he puts his head out the window.



CATEGORY - SAYING HELLO TO A STRANGER

- I see the smile and reaction on a stranger's face when I say "hello."
- It makes me smile when the stranger returns the "hello."
- I hope I make people feel special when I acknowledge them.



CATEGORY - A GOOD CUP OF COFFEE IN THE MORNING

- Enjoy the smell of the coffee as it cools down.
- I am so thankful for this moment of peace and quiet, as I look outside my window and see the great world around me.

WEEK THREE - JOURNAL

DO YOU TAKE COMMUNITY FOR GRANTED? IF SO, WHY, AND IF NOT, HOW WOULD YOU ADVISE OTHERS TO NOT DO SO?

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WEEK THREE - JOURNAL

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WEEK THREE – JOURNAL

State of being at the end of the week:

What I gained from the work this week:



WEEK FOUR

מנוחה - REST

State of being at the beginning of the week:

What I hope to work on this week:

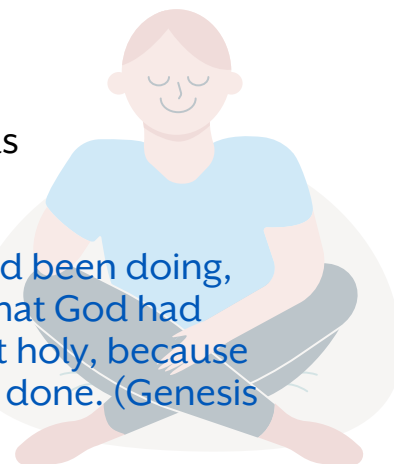


WEEK FOUR - REST - מנוחה

JUDAISM ASKS US TO REST.

Rest is a deeply Jewish ideal and can be found as early as the second chapter in the Torah.

On the seventh day, God finished the work that God had been doing, and God ceased on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation God had done. (Genesis 2:2-3)



After completing the task of creating the world, the Torah tells us God took an entire day to rest when the work was complete. A core principle of Jewish tradition is to emulate God's ways, and this text teaches that recovery, rest, and self-care are not only good; they are godly.

Rest is not always defined as sleep. As important as a good sleeping schedule is, this week's theme is not about getting eight to 10 hours of sleep a night. Rather, it is about achieving true rest by doing things that massage your brain. **Sleeping just turns the brain off; true rest — taking a step back from your daily routine and prioritizing your wellbeing — actually helps your brain recover.** Whether you're reading, exercising, gardening, or cooking, true rest means doing something that heals you. This kind of rest is key to avoiding things like burnout.

For the final week of Mental Health Awareness Month, **take a break by (ironically) staying active doing whatever makes you feel best.**

“

**RESTING IS NOT SLEEPING BUT LETTING
THE MIND AND HEART BE CLEAR.**

- CANTOR SUSAN CARO

WEEK FOUR – ACTIVITY

How do we determine what our true rest is?

ACTIVITY

- Reflect on what activities help you experience the most relaxation and rejuvenation.
- Schedule three rest periods this week, specifically on days that are generally busier for you, and commit to resting during those periods.
- Record how it felt to take those restful moments on a sheet of paper.







BEATING BURNOUT

One of the primary traditions associated with Shavuot, the Jewish holiday commemorating the Jews receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, is staying up all night learning Torah. This custom is not a direct commandment in the Torah, but a number of sources reveal this has been a long-standing tradition among many Jewish communities. One of the core justifications for this practice can be found in the Midrash, a collection of commentaries on Biblical passages in the form of legends and proverbs:

"For the third day, the Lord will come down in the sight of the people." Israel slept all through the night, because the sleep of Shavuot is pleasant and the night is short. Rabbi Yudan said: Not even a flea stung them. When the Holy One, Blessed Be He, came and found them asleep, he started to get them up with trumpets, as it is written: "And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings." (Exodus 16:16) And Moses roused Israel and took them to meet the King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, as it is written: "And Moses brought forth the people [out of the camp] to meet God." (Exodus 19:17) And the Holy One, Blessed Be He, went before them, until they reached Mount Sinai, as it is written: "Now mount Sinai was altogether on smoke." (Exodus 19:18) Rabbi Yitzhak said: It was this for which He chided them through [the prophecy of] Isaiah. As it is written: (Isaiah 50:2) "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there no answer? Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?"

Essentially, this interweaving of commentary and Biblical passages describes a scenario in which the Jewish people overslept on the morning they would be receiving the Torah. As a result, the practice developed to stay up all night learning Torah to ensure we do not repeat the mistakes of our ancestors as described in the Midrash.

This text may also serve as a jumping-off point for a discussion so many of us, particularly young adults, need to have. [That conversation is about burnout.](#)

BEATING BURNOUT

Burnout is defined by the International Classification of Diseases-11 (ICD-11) as:

A syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.
- Increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job.
- Reduced professional efficacy.

A recent study by the employment website Indeed found that rates of burnout among all age groups have soared in recent years, especially during the pandemic. [Of the millennials surveyed, 59 percent reported experiencing burnout](#), with Gen-Zers facing similar numbers. Even older generations like baby boomers and Gen-Xers have seen increases in burnout. [Of course, the recent increase has had a lot to do with the pandemic, but even pre-pandemic, studies found that 53 percent of millennials reported experiencing burnout.](#)

Clearly, burnout is a major issue caused by prolonged workplace-related stress — something that is particularly relevant to the circumstances of the Midrash quoted above. The slavery in Egypt lasted hundreds of years, according to the Torah. It was back-breaking and intensive work that ended only a couple of months before the Mount Sinai experience.

[Within that context, it is no wonder the Jews were exhausted when they finally had a moment to pause and reflect at the foot of Sinai. The extensive period of slavery, followed by the intensity and stress of the Exodus, took its toll on the Jewish people, and what they needed more than anything was a break.](#)

BEATING BURNOUT

ACHIEVING TRUE REST

We have a number of tools at our disposal to combat burnout, but they all involve truly resting our minds, not just zoning out in front of a television or computer screen. Burnout damages the mind, which can only be repaired with activities that both relax and rejuvenate it.

Suggested activities include:

- Going on long walks.
- Exercising: Ride a bike, jog, play a sport, or do some yoga. Physical activities will make you feel better.
- Taking periodic breaks from work.
- Taking in some sun.
- Meditating, practicing mindfulness and doing some deep-breathing exercises.
- Avoiding cell phones and screens before bed to ensure quality sleep.

Identify some activities that truly put your mind at ease and actually help you recover rather than numb the pain of burnout. Once you identify at least three, write them in the thought bubbles below. On the next page, create a plan for how you are going to include them in your day.



WEEK FOUR – JOURNAL

THINK ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU REALLY NEEDED REST BUT DIDN'T TAKE IT, OR MAYBE YOU DID TAKE IT, BUT IT DIDN'T GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEEDED. WHY WASN'T THAT RESTING EXPERIENCE "TRUE REST," AND WHAT COULD REST HAVE HELPED YOU ACCOMPLISH, HAD YOU GOTTEN IT?

[illegible]

WEEK FOUR – JOURNAL

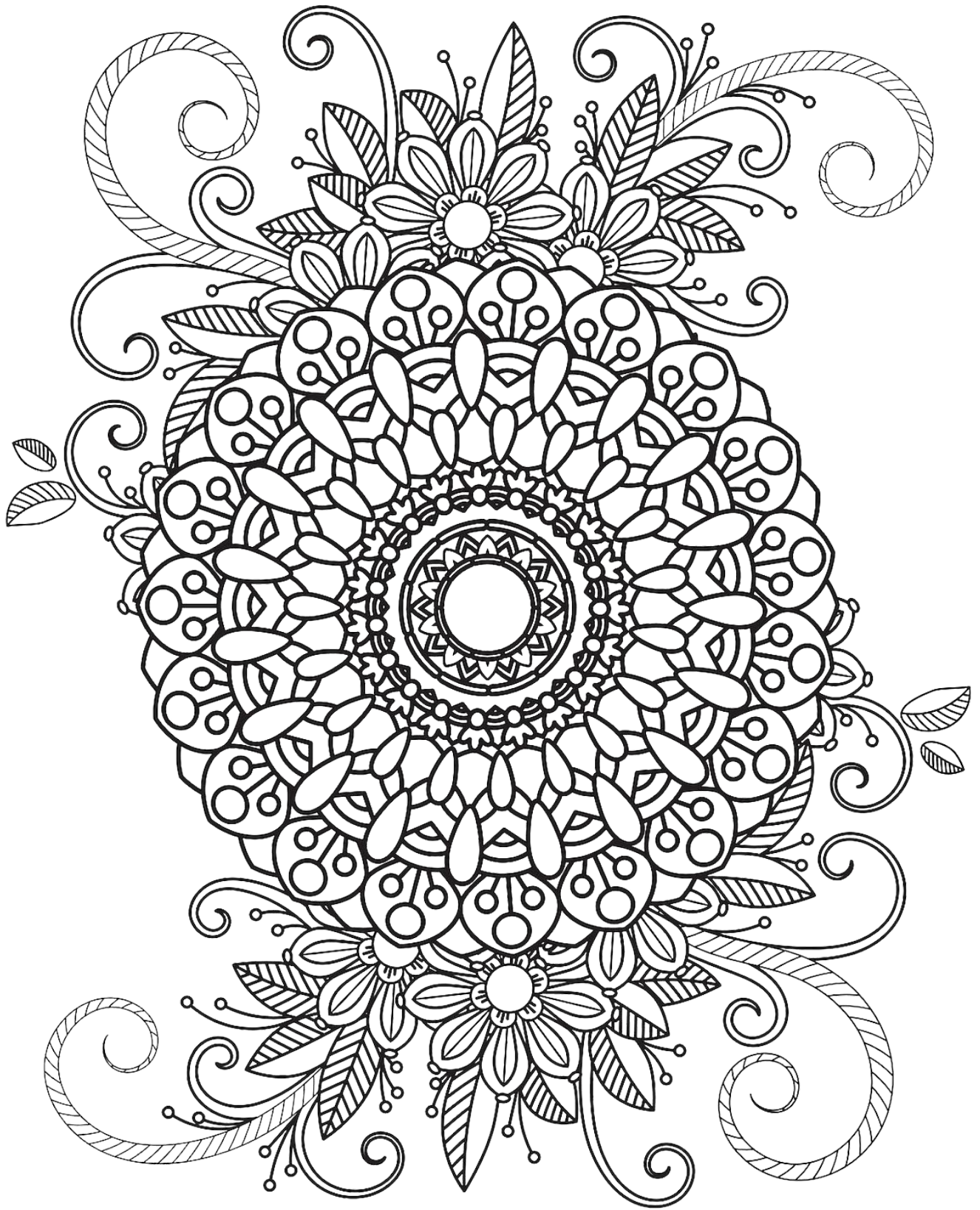
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WEEK FOUR – JOURNAL

State of being at the end of the week:

What I gained from the work this week:





MENTAL WELLNESS TOOLS



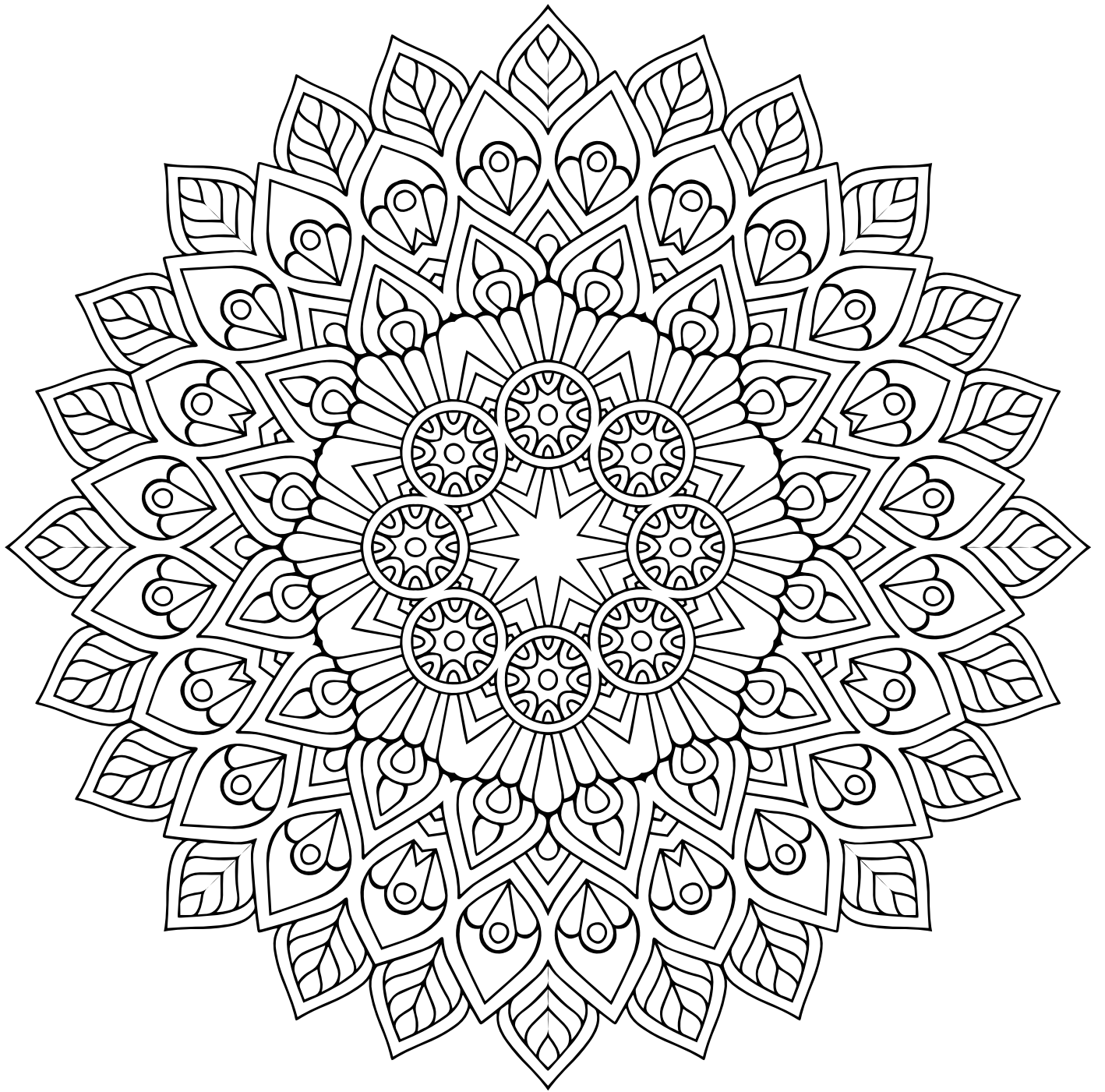
MENTAL HEALTH MOOD TRACKER

This Month, Pay more attention to your emotions and how you are feeling by Coloring in the dots according to your mood at the end of each day.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

CREATE YOUR EMOTIONAL COLOR KEY (EX. HAPPY, SAD...)

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____



MI SHEBERACH FOR MENTAL WELLNESS

We believe Jewish prayers and rituals can help to strengthen our mental well-being, resilience, and recovery. Faith is an important part of healing for many, and Jewish thinkers and leaders historically have brought the two together. When someone is ill or recovering from illness or an accident, we often recite a mi sheberach to wish them a [refuah sheleimah](#), or a “full recovery.” We have expanded this prayer for those who are struggling with mental health.

מי שברך אבותינו אשר קרא לנו ישראל שנאמר שרית עם אלהים, הוא יברך וירפא את אלו מבינינו הנאבקים ברוחה הנפשית. יהי רצון שיכירו בכוחם ובחסנם, ויתחסו לעצמם בסליחה ובסבלנות, וימצאו עזרה, חמלה ומשאבים בעת צרתם. הקדוש ברוך הוא יעניק לאלו מאתנו שאינם חווים קשים נפשים את הכח, החסן והיכלת להקשיב ללא שפוט ומתוך פונה, ואת היכלת להבחין באשר אחרים נאבקים. יהי רצונך שנצור קהלות שמקבלות, מרוממות ותומכות באלה שבינינו הנאבקים. השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב. ונאמר אמן

May the One who blessed our ancestors and named us Israel bless and heal those among us who struggle with mental well-being. May they acknowledge their own strength and resilience, treat themselves with forgiveness and patience, and find help, compassion, and resources when they need them. And, may the Holy One grant those of us who aren't experiencing mental health issues the strength, resilience and capacity to listen without judgment and with intention, and the ability to notice when others are struggling. May we create communities that accept, uplift, and support those among us who are struggling. Now, speedily, and in a time soon to come. Amen.

FAITH, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Religion and spirituality have been linked together for a long time and examined in a psychiatric and social science research. While spirituality and religion can bring healing and support for many, for some it can also bring anxiety and neuroses. This resource's goal is to outline the benefits of faith, religion, and spirituality on the mental health of their practitioners.

Defining Our Terms

Religion

Religion is generally agreed on and involves beliefs, practices, and rituals related to the sacred

Spirituality

Spirituality is considered more personal, something people define for themselves that is largely free of the rules, regulations, and responsibilities associated with religion. There is a growing group of people categorized as spiritual-but-not-religious, who deny any connection at all with religion and understand spirituality entirely in individualistic, secular terms.

Mental Health

Mental Health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how one thinks, feels, and acts.

Mental Illness

Mental Illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood. These conditions impact daily living and can affect the ability to relate to others.



FAITH, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Understanding the Facts



More than **80%** of persons with persistent mental illness use religion to cope.

Despite spectacular advances in technology and science, **90%** of the world's population is involved today in some form of religious or spiritual practice.



Based on a study* completed by Dr. Harold Koenig at Duke University, religious involvement is related to:

- **Less depression, faster recovery from depression in 272 of 444 studies pre 2010 (61%)**
- **Less suicide and more negative attitudes toward suicide in 106 of 141 pre-2010 (75%)**
- **Less alcohol use / abuse / dependence in 240 of 278 studies pre-2010 (86%)**
- **Greater well-being and happiness in 256 of 326 pre-2010 studies (79%)**
- **Greater social support in 61 of 74 studies (82%)**



*Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: A Review by Harold G Koenig, MD

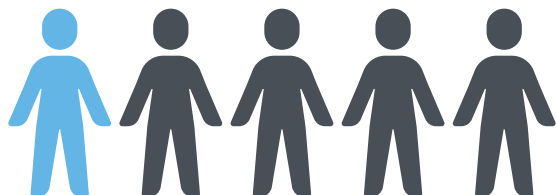
Even if depressed, research* suggests that deeply religious people more often experience.

Greater purpose and meaning
Greater optimism and hope
More gratitude and thankfulness
More generosity

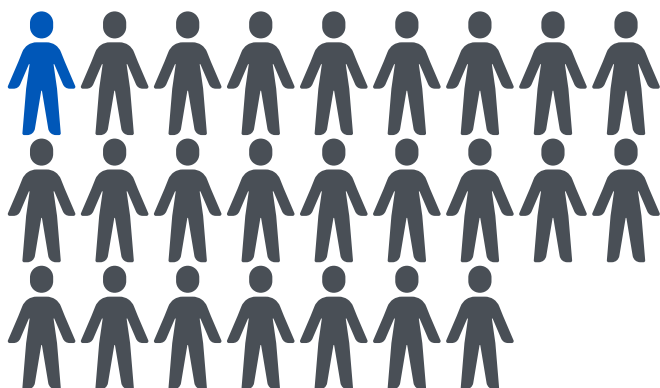
*Tepper et al. (2001). The prevalence of religious coping among persons with persistent mental illness. Psychiatric Services. 52(5):660-665



FAITH, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH



**1 IN 5 U.S. ADULTS
EXPERIENCE MENTAL
ILLNESS EACH YEAR**



**1 IN 25 U.S. ADULTS
EXPERIENCE SERIOUS
MENTAL ILLNESS
EACH YEAR**



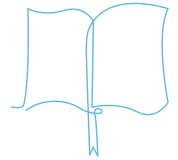
**1 IN 6 U.S. YOUTH
AGED 6-17 EXPERIENCE
A MENTAL HEALTH
DISORDER EACH YEAR.**



**50% OF ALL LIFETIME
MENTAL ILLNESS
BEGIN BY AGE 14, AND
75% BY AGE 24.**

FAITH, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Religion and Depression



The data collected on the subject of religion and mental health seems to suggest a major correlation between religious affiliation and having greater chances of managing depression.

A recent study looked at a group of 67 people at high genetic risk of depression, and found that those who described religion as important to them were 90% less likely to get depressed. This correlated to increased grey matter in their brains, and this effect was seen in those at risk for depression but not in a control group.

The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that religion can have, not only psychologically, but physically benefits on one's life.*

Religion and Mental Health Benefits

- MORE EFFECTIVELY
MANAGES DEPRESSION
- LESS SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- LOWER RATES OF SUICIDE
- HIGHER LEVELS OF
HAPPINESS
- GREATER LIFE
SATISFACTION
- INCREASED POSITIVE
PERSONALITY TRAITS

Prayer and Mental Health Benefits

- GREATER LIFE SATISFACTION
- DECREASED ANGER
- INCREASED GRATITUDE
- BETTER COGNITIVE FUNCTION
UNDER STRESS
- GREATER SENSE OF WELL BEING
- INCREASED FORGIVENESS
- DECREASED TENSION AND
CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIPS
- INCREASED RELATIONSHIP
SATISFACTION

FAITH, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Sources

- Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: A Review by Harold G Koenig, MD
- Tepper et al. (2001). The prevalence of religious coping among persons with persistent mental illness. *Psychiatric Services*. 52(5):660-665
- Koenig HG, Berk LS, Daher N, Pearce MJ, Belinger D, Robins CJ, Nelson B, Shaw SF, Cohen HJ, King MB (2014).
- Religious involvement, depressive symptoms, and positive emotions in the setting of chronic medical illness and major depression.
- The Blue Dove Foundation Jewish Mental Wellness Toolkit
- Psychiatrist Dr. Dan morehead



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REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

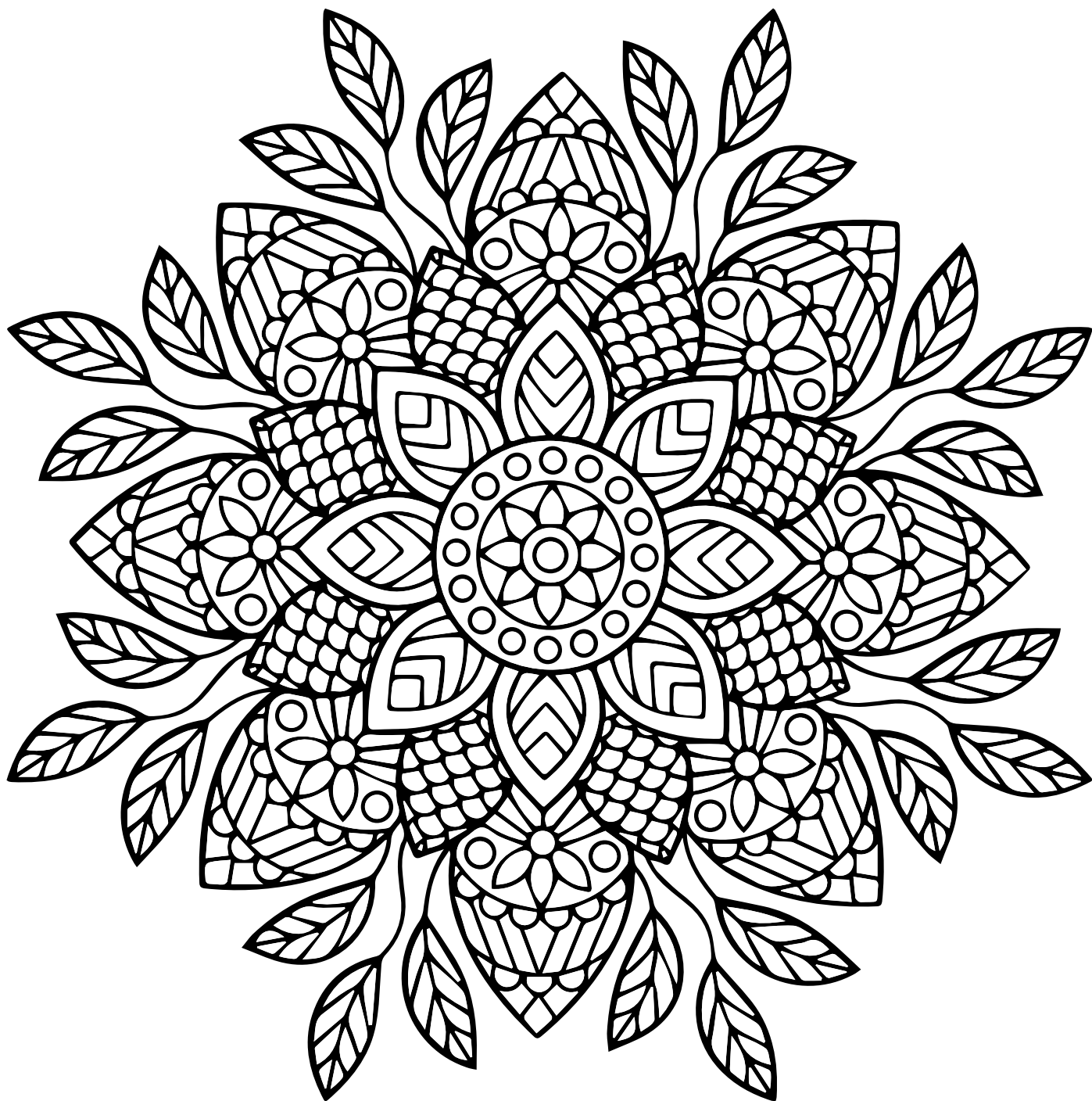
Name:

Age:

Relationship with mental health:

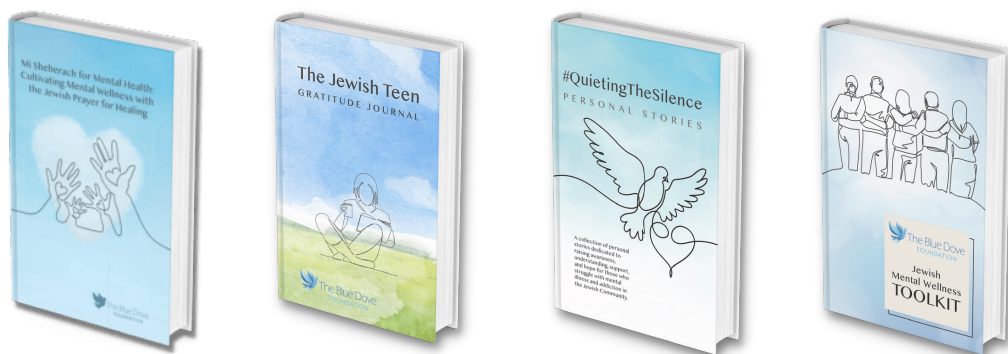
State of being at the end of the month:

What I worked on this month:



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Blue Dove Foundation has a variety of resources and publications available to help bring Judaism and mental wellness to your life and community, including publications:



Mental Wellness and Jewish holiday resources:



The Blue Dove Foundation also is thrilled to offer a number of **incredible workshops** to help bring mental health and wellness to your community, utilizing both medically backed information and resources, and relevant and impactful Jewish sources. This gives the materials a sense of practical significance and spiritual depth.

CONTACT US



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