

H I G H
H O L I
D A Y S

WELCOME TO ROSH HASHANAH!

It's the celebration of the Jewish New Year, but without the sequin dress and champagne (although you do you). Unlike Times Square on December 31st, Rosh Hashanah is a tad more introspective. At the core, it's about cleaning up things in your life so that you can start the new year with a fresh slate. A good way to get started is by asking yourself where you're hitting the mark and where you need some adjusting. It's not a coincidence that Rosh Hashanah is also about the trifecta of forgiveness: apologizing, forgiving and receiving forgiveness. Making amends with loved ones (ideally before Rosh Hashanah starts, but don't worry about when, especially if this is all new to you) is likely to be the most powerful part of the holiday. And no, it's not going to be easy, but do it anyway.

Start by saying "I'm sorry" to whoever you hurt. There are no shortcuts for the person-to-person part of this. Although texting instead of talking is kind of a shortcut which sort of works. But what we mean by person-to-person is just that. Have conversations with people in your life. It doesn't work if you try something like, "Hey God, please make sure my sister forgives me for telling our mom about her new tattoo..." And if your sister is still mad at you after you apologize? Well, Jewish tradition says that if you apologize to someone three times from your heart and that someone still doesn't forgive you, you've fulfilled your obligation. Interesting, right? Rosh Hashanah is also time to try an underutilized but fabulous tradition of checking in with people who you may have hurt without even knowing it, by saying something like this: "If I hurt you this year and I didn't realize it, I apologize." Sometimes that can be the start of an important conversation. If not, it's still a sweet gesture that can strengthen relationships.

Still with us? Good, cause there's more! Technically, the High Holidays are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and the days between them are known as the Days of Awe, which are a time for serious introspection. By the time Yom Kippur rolls around, you have theoretically asked for forgiveness from everyone in your life and forgiven those you were angry with, e.g. no more holding grudges. This leaves you with one last person to deal with... yourself. Not to sound all new-agey, but Yom Kippur is also when we are closest to God/Spirit/the essence of our souls. One of the reasons that people fast on Yom Kippur is that being hungry is supposed to help with introspection. What if you don't believe in God? Good news! It works just as well! The genius of the High Holidays is that no matter what you believe or don't believe, taking time each year to put forgiveness, repentance, prayer and good deeds front and center is honestly pretty great. This Rosh Haggadah will help!

Love,
team jewbelong

"FORGIVENESS IS GIVING UP ALL HOPE OF HAVING HAD A BETTER PAST."

ANNE LAMOTT



WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

ROBERT THIELE, GEORGE DAVID WEISS (SING TOGETHER)

I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom, for me and you
And I think to myself what a wonderful world
I see skies of blue, and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, dark sacred night
And I think to myself what a wonderful world
The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces, of people going by
I see friends shaking hands, sayin', "How do you do?"
They're really sayin', "I love you."
I hear babies cryin', I watch them grow
They'll learn much more, than I'll ever know
And I think to myself what a wonderful world
Yes, I think to myself
What a wonderful world

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

ADAPTED FROM MAYYIM HAYYIM

May I begin this year fresh and open to the possibility of transformation.
Though the future is uncertain, I release this past year with all its difficulties and joys.
I open my heart to receive the blessings of the New Year.
May I return to my true self and be strengthened as I continue my journey of *tikkun halev* — repairing the heart, *tikkun hanefesh* — repairing the soul and *tikkun olam* —repairing the world.

TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD

RABBI DAVID J. WOLPE

A woman once stood before God, her heart breaking from the pain and injustice in the world. "Dear God," she cried out, "look at all the suffering, the anguish and distress in your world. Why don't you send help?"

God responded, "I did, I sent you."

HEENAYNEE

RABBI RAMI M. SHAPIRO

Here I am. A little bit nervous, a bit self-conscious.
After all, who am I talking to? And what have I done?
Am I a sinner in search of grace or a saint seeking salvation?
Am I so evil or so good as to warrant this season of introspection?

And yet here it is, and here I am:
this time of change and correction, this heart of confusion and contrition.
Oh, if I could change!
If I could be so sure of myself that I no longer had to imagine the slights of others;
to be so loving of myself that I no longer had to ration my loving of others;
to be so bold with myself that I no longer had to fear the bravery of others.

Oh, if I could change there is so much I would change.
Maybe I will, but it scares me so.
Maybe I won't and that should scare me more.
But it doesn't.

So let me pray just this:
Let no one be put to shame because of me.
Wouldn't that make this a wonderful year?
Heenaynee – Here I am!

GET UP!

ADAPTED FROM RABBI ALLEN MALLER

O Lord, sometimes I feel sad, useless. So aware of the times I have failed. Last Rosh Hashanah's resolutions soon faded away. My bad habits remain unbroken. My good intentions remain unrealized. I can make no new vows, I can make no new efforts, so I give up.

And then, I heard your plea, "Get up! I only commanded one day for afflicting your soul. I gave you ten days for repentance, for turning over a new leaf in the Book of Life. Now you will have 50 weeks... to be renewed. Even if you don't have faith in yourself, I have faith in you. Get up off the floor and get up quickly. Falling isn't the worst sin. Staying on the floor is."

A REBBI'S PROVERB

DANNY SIEGEL

If you always assume
the one sitting next to you
is the Messiah
waiting for some simple human kindness
you will soon come to weigh your words
and watch your hands.
And if the Messiah so chooses not to be revealed
in your time
it will not matter.



ROSH HASHANAH-NA

SUNG TO THE TUNE OF "DECK THE HALLS"
NEW LYRICS BY CLAY BROWN

Happy New Year, in September:
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na
Mom says come, or it will end her.
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na
Dip the apples in the honey,
Rosh Hashanah-nana na na na
Uncle David's jokes aren't funny...
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na!

Shanah Tovah / Happy New Year!
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na
Took off work so I could be here...
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na
Toss our sins into the water,
Rosh Hashanah-nana na na na
Patiently forgive your daughter.
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na!

Got here late, but it's still going...
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na
Favorite part's the Shofar blowing.
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na
Hebrew's tough, what is that letter?
Rosh Hashanah-nana na na na
Surely, next year I'll do better...
Rosh Hashanah-na nana na na!!

WHY FORGIVE?

JOHANN CHRISTOPH ARNOLD

Forgiveness is a door to peace and happiness. It is a small, narrow door and cannot be entered without stooping. It is also hard to find. But no matter how long the search, it can be found... When we forgive someone for a mistake or a deliberate hurt, we still recognize it as such, but instead of lashing out or biting back; we attempt to see beyond it, so as to restore our relationship with the person responsible for it.

Our forgiveness may not take away our pain – it may not even be acknowledged or accepted – yet the act of offering it will keep us from being sucked into the downward spiral of resentment. It will also guard us against the temptation of taking out our anger or hurt on someone else.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act; it means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning.

I HEREBY FORGIVE

Whoever has hurt me or has done me any wrong
Whether he did it deliberately or by accident
Whether he did it by word or by deed
May no one be punished on my account
May I transgress no more
That I do not revert to my old ways
After that I do not do that which is wicked
Let the wrongdoing that I have committed be wiped away
But not through sickness or suffering
May the words of my mouth
And the prayers that are in my heart
Be my inspirations for the coming year

EACH SECOND

PABLO CASALS

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again – and what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two is four, and that Paris is the capital of France.

When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to them, “Do you know what you are? You are a marvel! You are unique. In all of the world there is no other child like you. And look at your body... what a wonder it is. You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is like you, a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work – we all must work to make this world worthy of its children.”

FOR THE SIN WE COMMITTED

ADAPTED FROM RABBI DOV PERETZ ELKINS (CALL AND RESPONSE:)

For the sin we committed by not serving our community.

And for the sin we committed by serving our community and neglecting ourselves and our families.

For the sin we committed by chasing after material possessions.

And for the sin we committed by thinking we are unworthy of owning nice things.

For the sin we committed by saving the world and ignoring our own people.

And for the sin we committed by saving Jews and ignoring the rest of the world.

For the sin we committed by being too busy for our children.

And for the sin we committed by indulging our children.

For the sin we committed by ignoring the past.

And for the sin we committed by living only in the past.

For the sin we committed by being selfish.

And for the sin we committed by not loving ourselves and not caring enough for ourselves.

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

(THAT WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP ON IN A FEW WEEKS...)

A JEWBELONG ORIGINAL

Many of us make resolutions on Rosh Hashanah about the kind of person we want to be in the coming year... call your mom, start meditating, lose five pounds. This Rosh Hashanah there is a resolution that we all must make, and stick to, because it's literally a matter of life and death. Antisemitism is on the rise and we must all do our parts to stop it. Jews and allies need to be courageous, to call it out and to never make excuses for it. Antisemitism isn't new, but there are new and insidious strains of it. There's the familiar white supremacy movement that pretty much hates everyone who doesn't look like them, the run-of-the-mill antisemites, the subtle I-don't-really-mean-it-when-I-talk-crap-about Jews kind, and a relatively new form of hate directed at Israel which crosses the line to antisemitism far too often. Antisemitism is hate. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, atheists... literally everyone is worse off for it. Are we going to end it completely? Probably not. But that doesn't give us permission to throw our hands up and accept it, make excuses, or discount it. It's exactly the opposite. We must talk about it, write about it, learn about it, and call it out. No matter how difficult or uncomfortable, we can't ignore, chuckle along, or accept it. We've already learned the bitter lesson that true hate is never little, it is never unimportant, and it should never, ever be ignored.

FOR THE MITZVAH

(CALL AND RESPONSE:)

We spend a great deal of time at Rosh Hashanah thinking about mistakes that we have made in the past year. The following reading has us recall some of the deeds we have done that make us proud:

For the mitzvah we have done when we held back a sharp and critical tongue.

For the mitzvah we have done when we gave a compliment and a hug.

For the mitzvah we have done when we gave charity to causes that needed our help.

For the mitzvah we have done when we helped strangers or friends in need.

For the mitzvah we have done for giving unconditional love.

For the mitzvah we have done when we put the needs of the community ahead of our individual needs.

For the mitzvah we have done when we thought well of ourselves in situations where we used to shame ourselves.

For the mitzvah we have done when we give loving attention to children.

For the mitzvah we have done when we took action for the sake of Tikkun Olam, the repair of the world.

For the mitzvah we have done when we opened our homes in hospitality to guests.

For the mitzvah we have done when we chose not to use products which harm the environment.

For the mitzvah we have done when we took action in the face of hopelessness.

For the mitzvah we have done when we acted or spoke out in the face of racism, sexism and homophobia – and acted as an ally to those who face discrimination.

For the mitzvah we have done when we resisted addictive use of alcohol, drugs, food or sex and instead acted in loving and responsible ways towards our bodies.

A MODERN ASHAMNU (CONFESSON)

BY ALISON LAICHTER

We have behaved arrogantly,
We have betrayed ourselves and our families,
We have acted out of contempt,
We have been dishonest,
We have erred out of ignorance,
We have forgotten who we are,
We have gossiped,
We have been hypocritical,
We have been insensitive,
We have justified bad decisions,
We have killed our impulse to do good,
We have looked the other way,
We have been mean,
We have been neglectful,
We have acted out of fear instead of love,
We have pushed too much,
We have been quiet when we should have spoken up,
We have been rageful,
We have stolen,
We have tried to teach when we should have tried to learn,
We have been untrue,
We have behaved violently,
We have withheld that which could have been given freely,
We have held others to unrealistic expectations,
We have yielded instead of moving forward,
We have zoomed too narrowly into challenges.

BLESSING FOR ANYONE WHO ISN'T JEWISH

(“CAUSE WE KNOW THIS IS A LOT”)

INSPIRED BY RABBI JANET MARDER

May everyone who shares in a Jewish life feel welcome and integrated. We lovingly acknowledge the diversity of our community and are deeply grateful for the love and support you provide by opening your heart to Judaism, no matter how big or small a part it is in your day. Your presence at this Jewish experience is valued. It is not taken for granted because not everyone in this broken world will sit at a Shabbat dinner or attend a Passover Seder. We are a very small people and history has made us smaller. As we once again see a rise in hatred and hear fear in the voices of our community, we are grateful for your presence. We pray with all our hearts that all you give to the Jewish people will come back to you and fill your life with joy. Amen.

ADD WHEN READING TO A FAMILY RAISING KIDS:

We offer special thanks to those who are raising their sons and daughters with Jewish identity. Our children mean hope, life and future. With all our hearts, we want to thank you for your love and willingness in giving the ultimate gift to the Jewish people. Amen.

**I NEVER KNEW HOW STRONG I WAS UNTIL
I HAD TO FORGIVE SOMEONE WHO WASN'T SORRY
AND ACCEPT AN APOLOGY I NEVER RECEIVED.**

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

A PRAYER FOR THE JEWISH NEW YEAR

ADAPTED FROM RABBI JOHN L. ROSOVE

May we hold lovingly in our thoughts
those who suffer from tyranny, subjection, cruelty, and injustice,
and work every day towards the alleviation of their suffering.

May we recognize our solidarity
with the stranger, outcast, downtrodden, abused, and deprived,
that no human being be treated as “other,”
that our common humanity weaves us together
in one fabric of mutuality,
one garment of destiny.

May we live harmoniously with each other
and side by side,
respecting differences,
cherishing diversity,
with no one exploiting the weak,
each living without fear of the other,
each revering Divinity in every human soul.

May we struggle against institutional injustice,
free those from oppression and contempt,
act with purity of heart and mind,
despising none, defrauding none, hating none,
cherishing all, honoring every child, every creature of the earth.

May the Jewish people, the state of Israel, and all peoples
around the world know peace in this New Year,
and may we nurture kindness and love everywhere.

PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Let no one be discouraged by the belief that there is nothing one person can do against the enormous array of the world's ills, misery, ignorance and violence.

Few will have the greatness to bend history, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events.

And in the total of all those acts will be written the history of a generation.

It is from numberless, diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped.

Each time a person stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends a tiny ripple of hope.

Crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples can build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

ANOTHER PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY (BECAUSE WE NEED IT)

RABBI AYELET COHEN

Our God and God of our ancestors, bless this country and all who dwell within it. Help us to experience the blessings of our lives and circumstances, to be vigilant, compassionate, and brave. Strengthen us when we are afraid, help us to channel our anger, so that it motivates us to action. Help us to feel our fear, so that we do not become numb. Help us to be generous with others, so that we raise each other up. Help us to be humble in our fear, knowing that as vulnerable as we feel, there are those at greater risk, and that it is our holy work to stand with them.

Help us to taste the sweetness of liberty, to not take for granted the freedoms won in generations past or in recent days, to heal and nourish our democracy, that it may be like a tree planted by the water whose roots reach down to the stream; it need not fear drought when it comes. Source of all life, guide our leaders with righteousness, strengthen their hearts, but keep them from hardening. That they may use their influence and authority to speak truth and act for justice. May all who dwell in this country share in its bounty, enjoy its freedoms, and be protected by its laws. May this nation use its power and wealth to be a voice for justice, peace, and equality for all who dwell on earth.

May we be strong and have courage to be bold in our action and deep in our compassion, to discern when we must listen and when we must act, to uproot bigotry, intolerance, and violence in all its forms, to celebrate the many faces of God reflected in the wondrous diversity of humanity, to welcome the stranger and the immigrant and to honor the gift of those who seek refuge and possibility here, as they have since before this nation was born. Let justice well up like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.



WHEN I'M GONE

PHIL OCHS

There's no place in this world where I'll belong when I'm gone
And I won't know the right from the wrong when I'm gone
And you won't find me singin' on this song when I'm gone
So I guess I'll have to do it while I'm here

And I won't feel the flowing of the time when I'm gone
All the pleasures of love will not be mine when I'm gone
My pen won't pour out a lyric line when I'm gone
So I guess I'll have to do it while I'm here

And I won't breathe the bracing air when I'm gone
And I can't even worry 'bout my cares when I'm gone
Won't be asked to do my share when I'm gone
So I guess I'll have to do it while I'm here

And I won't be running from the rain when I'm gone
And I can't even suffer from the pain when I'm gone
Can't say who's to praise and who's to blame when I'm gone
So I guess I'll have to do it while I'm here

Won't see the golden of the sun when I'm gone
And the evenings and the mornings will be one when I'm gone
Can't be singing louder than the guns when I'm gone
So I guess I'll have to do it while I'm here

All my days won't be dances of delight when I'm gone
And the sands will be shifting from my sight when I'm gone
Can't add my name into the fight while I'm gone
So I guess I'll have to do it while I'm here

And I won't be laughing at the lies when I'm gone
And I can't question how or when or why when I'm gone
Can't live proud enough to die when I'm gone
So I guess I'll have to do it while I'm here

THE PAST GOT IN MY EYES

There is a Peanuts cartoon that poses food for thought for the High Holy Days. In the cartoon, Lucy walks toward Charlie Brown, who is standing on the pitching mound. She tosses him the baseball and says, "Sorry, I missed that easy fly ball. I thought I had it, but suddenly I remembered all the others I've missed. The past got in my eyes!"



The purpose of the High Holy Days is to acknowledge the past, deal with it and ask for forgiveness for our failures. The hope is that we leave it behind and begin our new year with a clean slate. This cartoon reminds us that if we choose to allow it, the past can continue to influence our present and, in turn, our future.

To what avail, we might ask? Are we to let our past misdeeds be the sole determinant of what happens to our future? Or perhaps, if we enter the New Year with a new image, one in which the past does not get in our eyes, this time we may catch on to the importance of taking a renewed look at dealing with life.

FORGIVE, FORGIVE, FORGIVE

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

If I have harmed anyone in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through my own confusions, I ask their forgiveness. If anyone has harmed me in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through their own confusions, I forgive them.

And if there is a situation I am not yet ready to forgive, I forgive myself for that. For all the ways that I harm myself, negate, doubt, belittle myself, judge or be unkind to myself through my own confusions, I forgive myself.

THE DAY THE CHILD REALIZES THAT ALL ADULTS ARE IMPERFECT, HE BECOMES AN ADOLESCENT. THE DAY HE FORGIVES THEM, HE BECOMES AN ADULT. THE DAY HE FORGIVES HIMSELF, HE BECOMES WISE.

ALDEN NOWLAN

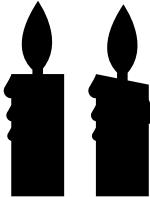
IT'S TIME FOR THE PERSONAL ROADMAP! (TURN TO PAGE 16)

Caution! Before you start to listen to that voice in your head which is just dying to censor you, remember that Rosh Hashanah is about transformation. The more honest and vulnerable you are, the more you'll get out of it. (Kind of like everything in life actually.) The more you share, the more others will too.

BLESSING OVER THE CANDLES:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel yom tov, Amen.

We praise God, Spirit of Everything, who hallows us with mitzvot,
commanding us to kindle the holiday lights. Amen.



BLESSING OVER THE WINE:

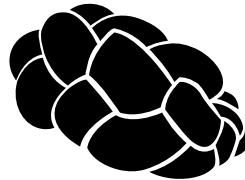
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen, Amen.
We praise God, Spirit of Everything, creator of the fruit of the vine. Amen.



BLESSING OVER THE BREAD:

Rather than braided challah, during the High Holidays, the challah is round to symbolize the cyclical nature of one year ending and another beginning.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz, Amen.
We praise God, Spirit of Everything, who brings forth bread from the earth. Amen.



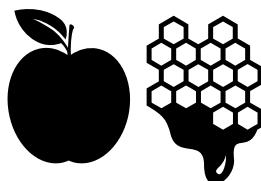
BLESSINGS OVER APPLES AND HONEY:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha'eitz, Amen.

y'hi ratzon mil'fanekha Adonai eloheinu ve'i'lohei avoteinu
sh't'chadeish aleinu shanah tovah um'tukah.

We praise God, Spirit of Everything
who creates the fruit of the tree. (Amen)

May it be Your will, Lord our God and God of our ancestors
that you renew for us a good and sweet year.



TASHLICH

Tashlich is the symbolic gesture of *Teshuvah* or *repentance*, as we empty our pockets of our sins and cast them away. Tashlich literally means “casting off” and involves symbolically casting off the sins of the previous year by tossing pieces of bread or the lint in our pockets into a body of water.

If you are near a natural body of water, you can do Tashlich there. If not, the kitchen sink or a garden hose will do. Just as the water carries away the bits of bread, so, too, are our sins symbolically carried away.

If only it were that easy! We take this time to reflect on our mistakes. In addition to our sins, we have negative baggage that we carry around every day. Fears, stubbornness, anger, competitiveness... feelings inside of us that we perhaps needed at one point, but we are ready to let go of. Lightening our load of bad feelings and making space for good and positive energy will allow us to go into this new year with a clean slate and have more peace in our daily lives.

AT THE WATER'S EDGE

ELIZABETH TRAGASH

On this sacred day
when the old year slips away
we prepare to meet the year ahead,
we stand at the water's edge
our pockets lined with dust and bread,
symbols of our shortcomings and regrets.

Many are the regrets and sorrows
that weigh upon our souls,
let us cast them off into the moving waters
so we may begin anew.

Great is our regret
for the harsh words we have spoken,
the tender words we left unsaid,
for the anger we let smolder,
the compassion we withheld,
for our greed and jealousy,
our lack of generosity.
for all that we could have done,
all that we have left undone.

Many are the regrets and sorrows
that weigh upon our souls,
let us cast them into the moving waters
so we can strive to become
all that we were meant to be.



Great is our remorse
for the energy we spent fighting
instead of trying to make amends,
for the times we could have lent a hand
instead of keeping our hands by our sides,
for the times we looked away from those near and far
who need our help and caring,
when we turned away from the places in the world
in need of repairing.

Many are the regrets and sorrows
that weigh upon our hearts and souls,
let us cast them into the moving waters
so we can begin to build bridges
connecting us one to another.

PRAYER FOR TASHLICH

RABBI RACHEL BARENBLAT

Here I am again, ready to let go of my mistakes. Help me to release myself from all the ways I've missed the mark. As I cast this bread upon the waters, lift my troubles off my shoulders. Help me to know that last year is over, washed away like crumbs in the current. Open my heart to blessing and gratitude. Renew my soul as the dew renews the grasses. Amen.

SHANA TOVA

HAPPY NEW YEAR

ROSH HASHANAH PERSONAL ROADMAP

The start of the Jewish New Year is a great time for soul-searching, and the Personal Roadmap is a perfect starting point. For some of us at JewBelong, it's the most thought-provoking part of the holiday. The Personal Roadmap challenges us to consider the past year and think about how we'd like to move our lives forward. It can even be transformative, especially when shared with a group.

ASK YOURSELF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

ADAPTED FROM "ROSH HASHANAH/YOM KIPPUR SURVIVAL KIT" BY RABBI SHIMON APISDORF

Like a mini-spiritual workout! You don't have to answer every question, but tackling a few is impactful.

1. When do I feel that my life is most meaningful?
2. What would bring me more happiness than anything else in the world?
3. What are my three most significant achievements in the past year?
4. What are my biggest mistakes in the past year?
5. What project or goal, if left undone, will I most regret a year from now?
6. If I knew I couldn't fail, what would I try to accomplish?
7. What is the most important decision I need to make this year?
8. What important decision did I avoid making last year?
9. Over the last year, did my most important relationships become closer and deeper, or was there a sense of stagnation and drifting?
10. What can I do to nurture those relationships this year?
11. If I could change one thing about myself, what would it be?
12. Are there any ideals I'd be willing to die for?
13. If I could live my life over, what would I change?
14. What do I want written on my tombstone? And how do I begin living that way now?

A QUOTE TO INSPIRE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR

Spend some time looking at quotes to motivate and refresh! If you are celebrating with family or friends, bring a quote to share. Here are some to get your jew-ces flowing!

“You are never too old to become younger.” - **MAE WEST**

“In some families, ‘please’ is described as the magic word. In our house, however, it was ‘sorry.’”
- **MARGARET LAURENCE**

“Making the decision to have a child — it's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking outside your body.” - **ELIZABETH STONE**

“Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.” - **DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN**

“Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors and let each New Year find you a better man.” - **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

“Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go.” - **OSCAR WILDE**

AND SINCE IT'S ALMOST YOM KIPPUR... YOM KIPPUR CHEAT SHEET

Yom Kippur is when we get to atone for the mistakes we made during the past year and think about who we want to be in the coming year. Whether you're at services, at home or in the office, fasting or not, or just happy you'll get to wear your skinny jeans tomorrow, use these readings to help you focus on the important stuff – so you don't "cheat" yourself out of all the holiday has to offer. We wish you a meaningful Yom Kippur.

FORGIVE YOURSELF

DR. MAYA ANGELOU

I don't know if I continue, even today, always liking myself. But what I learned to do many years ago was to forgive myself. It is very important for every human being to forgive herself or himself because if you live, you will make mistakes. It is inevitable. But once you do and you see the mistake, then you forgive yourself and say, "Well, if I'd known better I'd have done better," that's all. So you say to yourself, "I'm sorry."

If we all hold onto the mistake, we can't see our own glory in the mirror because we have the mistake between our faces and the mirror. We can't see what we're capable of being. You can ask forgiveness of others, but in the end the real forgiveness is in one's own self. The real difficulty is to overcome how you think about yourself. If we don't have that we never grow, we never learn, and sure as hell, we should never teach.

"NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU REVISIT THE PAST, THERE'S NOTHING NEW TO SEE."

ROBERT TEW

THE WORLD DOESN'T NEED MORE PEOPLE BEATING THEMSELVES UP INSIDE

CRISTEN RODGERS

The world doesn't need more people beating themselves up inside, making a bloody mess of their broken hearts and tattered shreds of their minds. There's quite enough of that and all it brings is more pain. The world needs more beautiful souls like yours who choose to see the beauty in their scars, who dare to forgive, to take their great big hearts and turn them inside out and give themselves the same kind of compassion that they give to others.

If I have harmed anyone in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through my own confusions, I ask their forgiveness. If anyone has harmed me in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through their own confusions, I forgive them. And if there is a situation I am not yet ready to forgive, I forgive myself for that. For all the ways that I harm myself, negate, doubt, belittle myself, judge or be unkind to myself through my own confusions, I forgive myself.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE ANGRY

LORI DESCHENE

You have a right to be angry. It's not negative or wrong. You don't have to condone someone's actions or pretend you're okay with them in order to be a good or spiritual person. Just know that you have the power to move beyond your pain, when you're ready. You have the power to find lessons in your heartache, gains in your losses, and reasons to forgive. It might take time, and it might not be easy, but it is possible to heal and move on.

HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE

YEHUDA BERG

Hurt people hurt people. That's how pain patterns get passed on, generation after generation after generation. Break the chain today. Meet anger with sympathy, contempt with compassion, cruelty with kindness. Greet grimaces with smiles. Forgive and forget about finding fault. Love is the weapon of the future.

AND SINCE SHABBAT HAPPENS EVERY WEEK... A FEW JEWBELONG SHABBAT FAVORITES

JewBelong's Children's Blessings are a highlight for many families. Of course we all love our kids and having a special time to express that love out loud every week is a gift. Try putting your hand on your child's head if you can, or just connect over FaceTime, and read it out loud. No matter how your children react (yes, some will roll their eyes), just know they hear you and they care.

BLESSINGS FOR CHILDREN

FOR EVERY STEP ALONG THE ROAD...

-ADAPTED FROM MAH TOVU'S RABBI KEN CHASEN AND RABBI YOSHI ZWEIBACK

Here with you beside me, I feel so greatly blessed.
This moment means much more than I can say.
A time to be together, a time for us to rest.
Shabbat is here.
The time has come to celebrate the day.
So I hold you close, my hands upon your head.
As I watch you growing, I smile through my tears;
Sometimes I wish you'd stay forever small.
But then I see you blossom,
And I befriend the passing years.
I love you now, I'll love you then, I love to see it all.
So I lift my voice to offer you this prayer,
for every step along the road, I will be there.

WISHES FOR MY CHILD

-AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Our dependent and delicious newborn,
Our self-assured and adventurous youngsters,
Our rebellious yet loving teenagers...
As our children keep changing,
Growing from infancy to adulthood,
Our relationship with them keeps changing too.
But our wishes for them stay the same always.
We want them to be blessed with health and happiness;
We want them to know how much they are loved.
While in our hearts, we wish the very best
for our children every moment of every day;
We want to take this time each week to bless our children
as it encourages us to express our wishes for them out loud.
May I have the wisdom to know what blessing my child truly needs.
May my child be able to receive my blessings
and to know my love is deep and unconditional.

A PRAYER FOR COUPLES

There is a very old blessing, called Eishet Chayil, generally translated as A Woman of Valor that is recited in many observant Jewish homes on Shabbat before the blessing over the wine. In this blessing, the husband recites the blessing to give honor to his wife. Sweet, right? During the blessing he compares her to rubies and compliments the cleanliness of the house, and how well she sews curtains and bakes bread. While JewBelong is all for blessing or declaring love for one another as much as possible, Eishet Chayil is outdated and doesn't resonate the way it did back in the shtetl. JeBelong's modern version is a beautiful way for all couples to show appreciation to one another. Enjoy!

A MODERN EISHET CHAYIL

- A JEWBELONG ORIGINAL

[Partner 1]

To you, my partner, I say: "Thank you."
Thank you for being you, in all your flawed perfection
Thank you for sharing your heart and your life with me
For your laughter and your tears
Your strength and your struggles
Your certainty and your doubts
Thank you for growing with me and not away from me
For talking and for listening
For arguing and for making up
For seeing and being a light in the darkness
For all these things, I say: "Thank you."

[Partner 2]

To you, my partner, I ask: "Please."
Please see me as I am, in all my flawed perfection.
Please show me compassion and understanding
Through my breakdowns and breakthroughs
My triumphs and tribulations
My miracles and meltdowns
Please continue growing with me and not away from me
Seeing the goodness in my soul
The sincerity of my love
And my desire to continue building this life with you
For all these things, I ask: "Please."

[Both Partners in Unison]

To you, I say: "Thank you."
To you, I ask: "Please."
To you, I pledge my love
And with God's blessing, may we enjoy the best of times together. Amen.