



JMR 31 - Gratitude in Action

These are items to consider that have been collected from members of the planning team. Read through, ponder, consider which ones you connect with.

- Embracing Gratitude through our use of Hebrew:
Three phrases to consider:

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| ● Modeh Ani / I give thanks to you, | מֹדֵה אֲנִי |
| ● Hakarat haTov / recognition of the good, | הַכֵּרַת הַטוֹב |
| ● Gam Zu l'Tov / this too is for the best. | גַּם זֶה לְטוֹב |

- Explore the concept of a *Beracha* (blessing) and its relationship to gratitude. Why is it important to recite a *Beracha* - think of blessings over food and lighting candles, and the dozens of other prescribed blessings - eg, upon seeing a rainbow, for safe travels, and more. What are we acknowledging when we recite a *Beracha*?
- Where do you feel gratitude in your body? When you are giving? Receiving?
- How does society's explicit and implicit norms impact a man's experience with gratitude? With your experience of gratitude? Given our focus on achievement and success, always targeting another future goal - how might this impact our ability to experience gratitude and be connected with others?
- Do you want to change/increase gratitude in your life?

If not, i.e., why not? Is there something holding you back, perhaps from within?

If so – if you're ready for more Gratitude...

What avenues of gratitude are you most drawn to? In what ways do you find the most ease in expressing gratitude, or in receiving an appreciation from another? Which of these would you choose to increase?



- Why would we/you care about Gratitude? Is there a particular story behind it?
- Can you think of a relationship or occurrence where in retrospect you realized that someone was offering you compassion or understanding and you totally misperceived their gift? Close your eyes and recreate that scene internally. What were you feeling about yourself or the other person that blinded you to that understanding or compassion? Where in your body did that feeling originate? What did you say; how did you react? Why couldn't you see what the other person was doing or intended? Now recreate and replay the scene in your mind, but this time see if you can perceive the person's positive intention.
- *Awareness of the Feelings that Interfere with Gratitude:* What are the feelings, biases or perceptions that might block your ability to be grateful or realize that someone is doing something positive for you? Have you ever misperceived a positive selfless action that was an expression of kindness to you as something else or even negative? When we are in a self-protective or defended state how does that influence our interpretation of the intentions of others?
- Think of a situation where you were very grateful to someone for something and actually expressed that gratitude but they didn't receive it. How did that make you feel? What were the implications for your relationship with that person?
- *Self-Gratitude.* How much gratitude do you express for your own qualities, gifts and achievements? Are there internal voices that berate you or belittle your contributions? Where do those voices come from? What is the effect of those voices on the quality of your life and your ability to express gratitude to others? Must you show some self-forgiveness, self-love or self-compassion before you can express gratitude?
- *Saying Dayenu:* Invite the group of men to each offer one or more Dayenu's – taking stock of their own achievements and gifts and where they are in life
- How might you dedicate yourself to a daily Gratitude Awareness and Practice – formally and informally? If you could decide to take on or expand a tangible Practice, which one(s) would it be?



What avenues and what specific actions are you willing to start, with the goal of enhancing and increasing your gratitude, every day and every week all the time?

What are the different ways in which you can express gratitude? Are there higher levels of gratitude than saying thank you? What might those be?

Explore different forms of gratitude:

- Unexpressed verses expressed gratitude
 - Gratitude for what we, or others, have
 - Gratitude for someone supporting your interest
 - Gratitude for someone overcoming obstacles, and growth
- Make a blessing, e.g., on a meal, or a special moment. This could be done once, or as often as every time you intake any food or drink.
 - Perform an act of kindness – a mitzvah – small or large. If you find gratitude there, decide to add e.g. one more mitzvah to your activities, every day.
 - Greet a neighbor. Say hello to at least one person every day, on your street or in town. This involves getting out now and then, which is its own source of gratitude!
 - Connect with a friend by phone or in person, sharing joys together. Make a commitment to reach out to one or two friends each week.
 - Take time to connect with someone you love – in your family or a friend.
 - Recite the bedtime Shema.
 - Recite Modeh Ani, “I am thankful for”, upon rising, throughout the day, and at the end of each day. Notice gratitude moments throughout the day for what happens in your life that you are thankful for.
 - True forgiveness is when you can say, “thank you for that experience”.
 - Reframe a judgement; for example, consider how you might think about roses having thorns -- is it a complaint, or a wonder?
 - Reflect at the end of the day how you might set aside excuses, judgements, over-



explaining in your head. How might you engage the next day without regrets?

- Notice people, places or things that you take for granted. How might you approach those areas with gratitude?
- Notice moments of goodness. Know that ‘Thank You’ can be a prayer.
- Find the sparkles of joy around you... and celebrate them!

MORE AVENUES OF GRATITUDE:

Avenue of Health and Vitality: Grateful for my Breath, my Strength, my Resilience, my ongoing Healing.

Feel into the **Avenue of Relationships, especially with Family and closest Friends:** Feeling **Appreciation;** marinating in moments of love and connection you feel for each and all of them.

Blessings are an avenue for acknowledging all of the many gifts we receive & appreciate.

Some of us have deep **Gratitude for making it through a difficult time** – whether an Illness or Surgery, or a Loss of some kind – and finding the silver linings to those most challenging times.

Appreciate A Special Accomplishment: Letting in Gratitude for being able to envision and enact this unique Activity, and the genuine contribution it made to the participants, and other beneficiaries, of your mitzvah.

