

AM I ENOUGH?

Overview

This resource unpacks the issue of **Digital Overload** through the value of **Contentment**.

At-a-Glance

This resource provides an opportunity to engage with the value of contentment as it plays out in our digital landscape, one that invites seemingly endless points for comparison with others. It prompts learners to think about the different ways we are all quite ordinary and also quite extraordinary. It offers an opportunity to reflect on how we can at once be content with our ordinariness and at the same time, lean into further achievement and aspiration. It encourages us to monitor our online habits, emotions and reactions in trying to achieve contentment in the digital ecosystem. It draws upon a well-known Hasidic teaching which hints at the duality of our experiences as a core part of being human and concludes with a chance for learners to create their own mantras to use while walking the world.



MATERIALS AND SET-UP

Time estimate:
40-45 minutes

Best Uses:

- For a reflective and personal exercise.
- For a full group activity or in pairs.

Materials Needed:

- Blank paper and pens for the Make Meaning and Take Action Prompt.



FRAME THE ISSUE (7 MINUTES)

Read the following for context:

The digital world in which we live gives us the ability to look at the lives of others, on social media and through other shared platforms, on a consistent basis. When we constantly look at other people's lives and compare ourselves to them we may walk away feeling inadequate, unworthy, uninteresting and questioning whether we are "enough." These feelings are exacerbated by the fact that everyone works to project a particular kind of image to display to the world, yet we can only know other people's "outsides." The only "insides" we can really understand, are our own.

Facilitator prompts the group:

- ▷▷ When was the last time you felt a feeling of unworthiness after seeing or reading something online about another? Share details with the group that animate when and why you felt that way.
- ▷▷ Think of your online habits. Is there a particular kind of image of yourself that you seek to project to the world? *This is a thought question, you do not need to share your answer with others, simply hold the image with you throughout the discussion.*



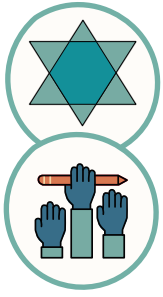
EXPLORE THE VALUE (8 MINUTES)

Read the following:

Exploring the value of contentment can help us navigate these mixed feelings. Contentment can be defined as possessing the quality of happiness and satisfaction, often because we have everything we need. Self-assessment about our own contentment, and mapping what brings us satisfaction, can help us name the different parts of ourselves and our lives, in the interest of recognizing where we are satisfied, and where we might still like to grow and change.

Facilitator prompts the group:

- ▷▷ What gets in the way of your being content?
- ▷▷ When do you feel most content?
- ▷▷ Consider the following statement: What would stop me from feeling anxious about being plain and boring, is the recognition and knowledge that everyone else is the same. Does that resonate?



ACTIVITY AND JEWISH ANCHOR (15 MINUTES)

Read the following for context:

A key to contentment is holding the perspective that we are all – at once – both ordinary and extraordinary.

Simcha Bunim of Peshischa (also known as Rebbe Reb Bunim), was a key leader of Hasidic Judaism in Poland (1765-1827). He combined enlightenment philosophy with traditional Judaism while always emphasizing the importance of the individual in regard to one's personal relationship with God and Judaism. Above all else, he believed that authenticity and self-honesty were the foundations of true righteousness and encouraged others to pursue the most authentic versions of themselves.

It was said of him, that he carried two slips of paper, one in each pocket.

‣‣ On one he wrote: Bishvili nivra ha-olam – “for my sake the world was created.”

‣‣ On the other he wrote: V'anokhi afar v'efer” – “I am but dust and ashes.”

He would take out each slip of paper as necessary, as a reminder to himself. The tricky part was knowing when to reach into each pocket.

[Note: The first phrase was spoken by Abraham (Genesis 18:27) when he is bargaining with God over saving the cities of S'dom (סדום) and `Amora (עמורה).

The second phrase is a quote from the Talmud (Sanhedrin 37b) to explain why Adam was creating “alone.”]

Facilitator prompts the group:

‣‣ What is the importance of carrying these around at all times?

‣‣ Think of situations in your life:

- When have you had a “dust of the earth” moment?
- When have you had a “the world is created for me” moment?
- Turn to a *havruta* partner, and for a few minutes share and compare your “moments.” Reflect together.

‣‣ How does walking the world with these quotes deepen our engagement with the value of contentment?



MAKE MEANING & TAKE ACTION (7 MINUTES)

Facilitator prompts the group:

- ▶ Take a few minutes to create your own version of “*anochi afar v’efer*” - “I am but dust and ashes” - and “*bshvili nivra ha’alom*” - “for my sake the world was created” on two pieces of paper.
 - **If you are comfortable, share them with the group.**
- ▶ For the next few days, keep them close to your computer/phone, and monitor your social media habits:
 - When you want to post something “braggy” - pull out your “*anochi afar v’efer*” mantra.
 - When you encounter someone else’s post that makes you feel “ordinary” - pull out your “*bsvhili nivra haolam*” paper.
 - Keep track of how often you reached for each.
 - What does that show you?
- ▶ What would it take for you to be content with who you are and what you have, while also - when it feels right - continuing to aspire to achieve more?
 - Reflect in writing.



CLOSE WITH INTENTION (5 MINUTES)

Read the following:

In the exploration we have just experienced, we took a contemporary issue - our digital world with its constant pull to compare ourselves to others - and explored it through the value of contentment. Through a recognition that everyone in the world is at once ordinary, and also quite extraordinary, we can each become more content with our own sense of self. Today’s conversation provided a chance for us to explore how we can remind ourselves to pull out our pieces of paper - “dust of the earth” and “the world is created for me” - each at the moments that are appropriate.

Facilitator prompts the group:

- ▶ As a result of this session, I can commit to strengthening my own sense of contentment when scrolling online, by ...