



HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

This resource explores **Service and Giving** through the value of **Contentment**.

At-a-Glance:

This resource explores the value of contentment as it relates to our material needs and desires. Identifying one's contentment point can help them know when they have surplus that they can feel confident about donating or sharing. The resource is designed to be facilitated in sections, with a break in between for the service activity. Prior to the service activity, a question will be posed to learners to consider during their service. After service, they will have an opportunity for reflection and processing.



Time Estimate:

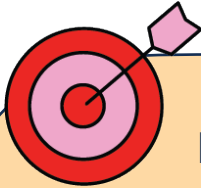
30 minutes



Best Uses:

- To be paired with a service activity component
- For adult learners
- For a more philosophical conversation to be paired with service activity

LET'S GET STARTED



FRAME THE ISSUE

Facilitator reads the following for context:

Our capitalist, rat-race world teaches us to always want more and more and more. That can make it hard to give freely of our time or resources, because the focus is so much on acquisition. Through today's combination of service and reflection, Jewish text and reflection, we'll explore that drive and how one element of Judaism's many conceptions of God might serve as a spiritual tool to help us quiet or master it.

When we step back from the rat-race social pressure and reflect on what's true for us, we start to free ourselves and empower ourselves to give more freely.

Facilitator prompts the group:

- When do you feel yourself able to give most freely – both in terms of your time and resources?
- What brought you here to the service activity today?

5 min





EXPLORE THE VALUE: CONTENTMENT

5 min



Facilitator reads for background:

Being content means being satisfied with what you have. That doesn't mean scraping out a basic, minimalist existence, but rather having enough so that you thrive. Identifying your contentment point can help you know when you have surplus that you can feel confident about donating or sharing. Contentment also means, and allows for, a certain degree of internal balance and groundedness.

Contentment, or the search for contentment, operates in many aspects of our lives: relationships, jobs, community, etc. Today we'll focus on material contentment, having enough money to live a good life. Contentment can be in tension with the value of ambition, which is also a good thing. Ambition pushes us to dream big dreams, to aspire to great achievements. But if we give ambition too much power over our lives, it can become an unhealthy taskmaster rather than a goal we strive towards.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Turn to a partner and for 60 seconds each take turns filling in the following prompt for discussion:
 - Finding and achieving material contentment can be challenging because ...

5 min



JEWISH ANCHOR

Facilitator reads or, depending on context, has group members read in havruta/ pairs and respond to the prompts below:

Judaism uses many different names for God; when we choose a particular name, we are thinking about or activating a particular aspect of divinity. When God appears to Abraham and invites him into a covenantal relationship, God says: "I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless." (Genesis 17:1). What does this name "El Shaddai" mean? Consider these two interpretations:

- Rashi (11th century commentator): "Shaddai"—In My divinity, there is enough (Hebrew: *dai*) for every creature.
This explanation draws on the same Hebrew word in the Passover song "Dayeinu," "It would have been sufficient for us."
- *Shaddayim* is the Hebrew word for breasts. El Shaddai can therefore be interpreted "God of breasts," i.e. God who provides sustenance as a mother does for her baby. Biblical scholar [David Biale](#) notes that of the six times that the name El Shaddai appears in the Book of Genesis, five are in connection with fertility blessings.

Prompt questions:

- Do these explanations feel familiar to you or different from how you tend to think about God?
- How does the idea of a God who provides for us—perhaps not in a literal way—resonate for you? Are there ways it does not sit well for you?
- How do you struggle with this theology in the face of poverty?



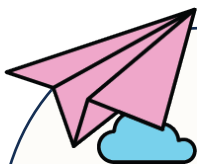
* PROMPT BEFORE SERVICE *

Facilitator prompts the group:

As we prepare to move into service, think about what you need to be content.

- Where are you driving with ambition and where are you letting ambition drive you?
- How might this impact your capacity for service and giving?
- Pay attention to how you feel during the service activity today after considering these questions as framing.

BREAK FOR SERVICE EXPERIENCE



PROMPT ACTION

Facilitator prompts the group:

Now that we've thought about the value of contentment in both personal ways and in context of the service we did, let's spend a few minutes taking stock.

Can you identify if you have "enough" in your life?

- If you can, and the answer is yes, are there places you are continuing to acquire out of ambition?
- If you can, and the answer is no, what do you need to get yourself to 'enough'?
- If you cannot, what is making that hard?
- What is one commitment you can make in the coming days to move yourself closer to where you want to be?





CLOSE WITH INTENTION

Contentment means knowing when you have enough and don't need to keep accumulating more and more stuff. Identifying what you need to be content can help free you to give money or time to causes that need them. Thinking of God as a source or a sense of "enoughness" can provide us with spiritual support as we try to sift through the ambient "noise" of capitalist pressures and discern our own truths in this regard.

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Facilitator prompts the group:

- What new self-awareness do you have—as a result of today's service, this conversation, and these God texts—that you take into the coming days, and ultimately the rest of your life?

3 min

