



WHAT ARE MY SOURCES OF STRENGTH?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

This resource explores our ability to respond to **Antisemitism** through the value of **Intentionality**.

At-a-Glance:

This resource offers an opportunity to help learners be intentional about the different ways they can respond to the thoughts, emotions and opinions of others during this fraught time of antisemitism and political divide. Through a combination of self-assessment and looking at various texts as guides, learners can adopt a mindset of intentionality to help them shift from reacting emotionally to being more thoughtful and deliberate.



Time Estimate:

40 minutes



Materials Needed:

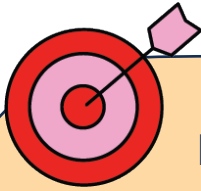
- Sourcesheet, [click here](#) for PDF
- Pens
- Post-It notes (if possible, or just some blank paper)



Best Uses:

- For older teen and young adult audiences
- To find sources of strength when antisemitism hits home

LET'S GET STARTED



FRAME THE ISSUE

Read the following for context:

A common sentiment among Jews right now is an amplified sense of fear, and for good reason.

There's plenty of footage of students on campus ripping down signs of hostages, professors legitimizing Hamas's 'resistance' and Jewish students experiencing physical threats and violence. This palpable feeling extends far beyond academia and is being experienced by teens in school, adults at their workplace, families in their community, and more.

Facilitator prompts the group:

- Close your eyes and imagine a bubble of quiet or calm on your campus, in your classroom or at home.
- Now, fill it with as much noise as possible about the current moment we are experiencing.
- What is the "noisiest" thing you hear? How do you respond to it?

Facilitator continues reading:

Sarah Hurwitz, a renowned author and speechwriter for Michelle Obama, recently spent time on campus to investigate how students are managing with antisemitism and divisiveness on campus.

Read the following excerpt from her SAPIR piece *To Jewish College Students Who Are Scared*.

Scan the QR or [click here](#) for the full article.



8 min



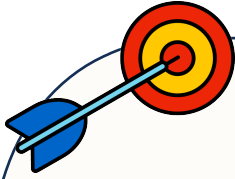


“...You spoke with nuance, care, and precision... I couldn’t get over it—and I couldn’t figure it out. How had you turned out this way? But I think I get it now. Because your feelings are often dismissed, you’ve learned to seek out facts and get them straight before posting on social media, and you understand that feelings are not a substitute for critical thought. Because you know your classmates will relentlessly question your arguments, you’ve learned to question them yourself. Because your stories are often decentered, you spend a lot of time listening to others’ thoughts, emotions, and opinions, and they inform your own. You have learned to hold these opposing viewpoints, to wrestle with them.”



Facilitator prompts the group:

- What is the main takeaway from Sarah's message above?
- Does her message resonate with you?



EXPLORE THE VALUE: INTENTIONALITY

Facilitator reads:

Getting through such difficult moments of divisiveness and antisemitic discourse – on campus and beyond – can be a bit easier if we hold onto a deep sense of intentionality. When we are deliberate about and aware of every act that we perform and experience that we have, then we are being intentional. Using a mindset of intentionality can help us as we respond to the thoughts, emotions and opinions of others. It helps shift us from reacting emotionally to being more thoughtful and deliberate.

- When is being intentional hardest for you?
- When is it easiest for you?

6 min





ACTIVITY

7 min



HOW DO I REACT?

Facilitator reads:

Sarah identified five sensibilities that help students relate to others in such a fraught time and ones that can help them be intentional about their reactions.

They are:

- You've learned to seek out facts and get them straight before posting on social media.
- You understand that feelings are not a substitute for critical thought.
- You've learned to question your arguments yourself.
- You spend a lot of time listening to others' thoughts, emotions, and opinions, and they inform your own.
- You have learned to hold these opposing viewpoints, to wrestle with them.



Facilitator prompts the group to discuss in havruta/pairs:

- Review this list again. Which of these reflect an approach you have ever taken?
- Select 1-2 from this list and describe where/how it has shown up for you in recent weeks?
- Which would you like to be able to practice better?
- What would you add to this list? Write it down for yourself.

Facilitator gathers the group together to de-brief.

8 min



JEWISH ANCHOR

Facilitator reads:

Jewish wisdom has been captured in texts spanning from the ancient Bible and Talmud to the modern State of Israel and Hollywood. Reading and contemplating such texts encourages us to slow down and be intentional in our thoughts and responses.

[Click here](#) to use this sourcesheet of short quotes, and consider how they can serve as a mantra as you navigate the challenging reality.

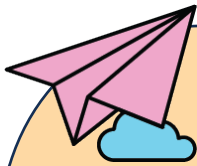


Facilitator prompts the group:

With a havruta/partner, review the quotes and texts.

- To help you face the moment of antisemitism we are in, which quote one would you like to carry around with you in your pocket, put on your desk or slip into your backpack? Why?
- Which one encourages you to be intentional in your thoughts and responses to antisemitic rhetoric that you see or read?

5 min



PROMPT ACTION

Facilitator prompts the group:

Now that you've reviewed texts from the Jewish tradition that can be used as mantras, now it's time to come up with one of your own.

- In the space below write a quote/sentiment that can serve as a source of comfort to remind you that you are not alone during challenging times of antisemitism.
- Feel free to adapt a quote from above or find an alternate one altogether and then write it on the note below.
- Next to the quote, include an image that reflects your intention. It could be the image of a person, an event, a piece of artwork, or more.

3 min



CLOSE WITH INTENTION

Facilitator prompts the group:

- Based on the conversation above, what is one immediate commitment you can take that will allow you to be more intentional in how you respond to antisemitic and divisive discourse?