



HOW DO I LIVE INTENTIONALLY IN A POST-OCT 7TH WORLD?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Session Objective:

Through exploring the value of **intentionality**, learners will develop new insights about how they can be intentional about how they show up for themselves and others post-October 7th.

At-a-Glance:

Since October 7, 2023 many of us are consumed by challenging situations related to Israel that we are unsure how to respond to. For others of us, we are going through the motions of our day to day lives not giving much thought to what is happening on the other side of the world—or feeling guilty that we are so removed from what is going on. Using a short text study, this resource helps learners use the value of intentionality, framed Jewishly as *Kavanah*, to reflect and make intentional choices moving forward about how they respond to areas in their life that could use more intention - particularly related to Israel and antisemitism. Learners will create physical intentionality objects to help make their commitments visible.



Time Estimate:

60 minutes



Best Uses:

- Best for middle school through adult learners
- Designed for in person settings. Can be adapted for a virtual experience.

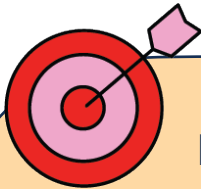


Materials Needed:

- Notecards and pens
- Jewish wisdom [handout](#)
- *Kavanah* Plan [handout](#) for each participant
- Set up a table with materials for the *Kavanah* Intentionality Object construction (Use what you have and be creative): transparent tape, masking tape, construction paper, card stock, scissors, brad paper fasteners, paper clips, stones, empty jars, notecards, markers, cardboard tubes, feathers, felt, pipe cleaners, ceramic tiles.

LET'S GET STARTED

10-15
min



FRAME THE ISSUE

The world changed on October 7th, 2023. For many of us it has been difficult to show up in conversations or in community with others with intentionality - meaning, to pause and take time to deliberately choose how we are going to interact.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Think back on the past year. What have been some significant moments when you acted with intention or when you wish you acted with more intention?

These could relate to 10/7 and Israel or be unrelated. Consider, what was an argument or disagreement you had where you made a deliberate choice to either stay or leave the conversation? When did you make a choice to either attend to or stay home from an event? Or a choice to publicly share your Jewish identity through your words or actions? When did you go along with something that your friends were doing without giving it too much thought? When did you keep doomscrolling on your phone even though it did not make you feel good? Write down 4-5 of these moments where you were either intentional or you wish you were more intentional.

- What prevents you from acting with intention all the time? What is an area of your life where you want to live with more intention?

It is okay if you did not have many moments in the past year when you actually were intentional.

This difficulty may be because of 10/7 and the ensuing war, or because of other things happening in your lives that have demanded your attention. When we are constantly thinking about the next thing that we have to do, we feel barraged by upsetting content on social media and elsewhere, or when we feel like we do not have control over so many things, it can be really hard, even impossible to be intentional!

For the next 45 minutes to an hour, we are going to make space together to be intentional and to explore what intentionality means.



EXPLORE THE VALUE: INTENTIONALITY



30 min



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Think of an intention that you would like to personally bring to this next hour. Write that intention down. Now, turn to the person next to you and share your intention with them.

After a couple of minutes of sharing, facilitator prompts group:

How did you choose your intention? Why that one and not something else?
How will you be able to tell if you have met it by the end of our time together?

Judaism acknowledges that sometimes we are going through the motions and need a framework to act deliberately and intentionally. Over one thousand years ago humans were struggling with this stuff. It is not just the cell phones and social media! Saying a blessing over bread for instance calls our attention to the food that we are about to enjoy. Keeping kosher is also a way of making intentional choices about what we eat and when.

When we are deliberate about and aware of the actions that we perform and the experiences that we have, then we are being intentional. It is mostly a mental state of mind, but it demonstrates itself in the actions we take.

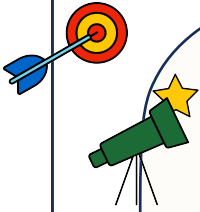


JEWISH WISDOM

The Jewish concept for intentionality is called *kavanah*. Often when it is discussed it has to do with prayer, but for our purposes we are going to use it more broadly, but in the text we are going to look at – Maimonides (Rambam) who wrote the text – was thinking about prayer that was not optional but required.

With a partner, I invite you to read the text aloud and then spend 5 minutes intentionally (!) digging into the questions that follow. You will want to have your notecard available.

Realistically we are not going to be intentional in every area of our lives. We might forget to floss for a few weeks and then make the deliberate choice to start again because we have an upcoming dentist appointment. We might be overwhelmed by our anger at a post on social media and jump to comment on it without thinking about what message we want to convey. That is human!



ACTIVITY

I will invite you to choose one area of your own life that needs more *kavanah* in how you respond to things in this post October 7th world. Look at your original intention for our time together, or refer back to your list of moments from the past year for inspiration. Maybe you want to bring more intention to a specific relationship or to the way you interact with social media right before you go to bed. Perhaps you want to be more intentional about how to speak to your family members about Israel. Or maybe something else!

There is power in writing down your intentions. It makes them real and lets you hold yourself accountable. On the *Kavanah* Planning Page, make your commitment and think about what might get in the way. I will invite you to be thoughtful for about 5 minutes.

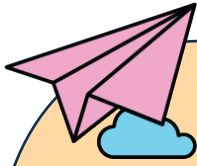
Note to Facilitator: you might choose to play quiet Israeli instrumental music in the background.

Now that you have a plan, I will invite you to visit the *Kavanah* Intentionality Station. Here, you will turn your *Kavanah* Planning Page into a physical reminder. We have all sorts of materials to inspire your creativity. What can you make today to help you stay committed to the *kavanah* plan you have created for yourself? If you are not sure what to make, it can help to pick up a few objects in your hand and see what comes to mind. These do not have to be perfect. You will have 10 minutes to create and then we'll clean up for 5.

Facilitator Note: Expect some mayhem as people try to convert their ideas to physical reminders. Just cheerlead and encourage people to pick up something and play with it.

Ideas of physical reminders might include:

- Physical reminder signs that you put above your computer with a slogan (e.g. "No Israel doom scrolling after 10 pm")
- A jar that functions like a swear jar to motivate me to pause and take a breath when I am ranting about the political leadership
- A braided bracelet to remind myself that multiple narratives can exist at once
- An Am Yisrael Chai sticker to remind myself to be proud of the Jewish people



REFLECT AND PROMPT ACTION

10-15
min



Facilitator note: Invite everyone to place their reminder objects on a table or on the floor so that it creates a gallery space. Depending on the number of participants either complete the following reflection as a whole group share or a partner share.

Welcome back! I cannot wait to hear about what you created and what the process was like.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- What is a new insight you are taking away on how you will live this upcoming week with more *kavanah*?
- Take a look at your intention from the beginning of our gathering. How did you do?

I know everyone is eager to see the objects that were created. Saying an intention out loud seals it into being. We will go around the circle and share.

Share your *Kavanah* Intentionality Object and how you will use it to live more intentionally this year.

Let's celebrate the creativity in the room! Thank you so much. Do not forget to take your *Kavanah* Intentionality Objects with you. Thank you for your thoughtful engagement today. Keep us posted on how you use your reminders! We want to share in your *Kavanah* success!