

Rebbetzin Feige Twerski on Rosh Hashanah Preparations for 5778

All too often we hear a wonderful shiur that is brilliantly presented, and as hard as we try we cannot hold on to the concepts. Taking notes helps when we review them. The worksheet concept is used in typical classrooms to reinforce the material and concepts. We hope these written exercises will be an aid to accompany Rebbetzin Twerski verbal shiur. It might helpful to buy a notebook so that you can keep the exercises and notes together. The exercises follow in the order of the shiur.

Part 1: Overview of Rosh Hashanah and Shofar

Shofar is the wake up call.

We have lulled ourselves into believing that we have “all the time in the world” to work on teshuva. Hazal says, one purpose of the sound of the shofar is to wake us from our slumber. To arouse us to evaluate where we are, and where we know we want to be. If we take the extra few minutes to identify the “areas in which we slumber,” we will be inspired with the route or map that guides our travel to our goal.

Example: You want to increase your acts of chessed. Now that you’ve made that determination, think about how often and what types of chessed you are doing now, and what you would look like to be doing by next Elul. Now, think about what actions you need to take-- for example, do you need to find a Bikur Cholim organization or drive an extra carpool for people with new babies, during the school year? Rabbi Paysach Krohn suggests having a small notebook in which you write just one chessed you do each day. It can be anything from reaching out to a person who you know is having a challenge, to anonymously paying for someone else's child to attend camp. YOU know what you can handle and how much you can stretch.

Exercise 1: Wake up call

Take a few minutes and identify where you are and where you want to be,

Think about the key relationships in your life that can be improved.

Think about how you use your time.

Think about the “things” you never seem to get around to, but always evoke angst when you think about them.

You can split your paper into two columns. On the left list the Now and on the right column write Future. Pick one or two and create the map that will take you from one column to the next.

Exercise 2: Learn from the Tailor- What is torn we repair and what is whole we strengthen

We tend to be very self critical. We are human. Make a cheshbon hanefesh that includes both positives as well as negatives. For example, give yourself credit for all your even small attempts at not speaking lashon hara, or the small kind gestures you make, or the bracha for which you slowed down and thought about or even the bracha you raced through in the midst of many distractions. Take notice of both the positives and the negatives on your list. Maybe take two different colors of highlighters and color code your list. You might be surprised at how many positive items you have written.

Visualization:

One aspect of hearing the Shofar, is to recall the blast at Har Sinai. All of our neshamos were there. Close your eyes and visualize standing at the mountain, seeing the sound and hearing the light. Look around you and see all of Am Yisroel standing with you.

Exercise 3: Coronate HaShem, King over Your Life

One of our most frequent mistakes is to operate under the illusion that we run our lives. We think we write the script, and we become frustrated when unscripted events intersect with our plans. Our script often has us playing the lead in a flawless existence. When we find that we are not the lead and that our day, or week or month has been derailed from its course, we are angry and assume the victim's role.

Stop and take a step back. Trace your reactions to what your preconceived expectations as opposed to acknowledging HaShem is running the world.

Example: (This just happened to me) You plan a trip. You book plane tickets and the rest of the itinerary is designed around the flight plan. You pack and proceed to the airport. As you walk into the airport all the flights to your destination are cancelled for the day. How do we respond? It's not fair, I had a great plan = *I think I run the world*; this is my first real vacation in "x" number of years, things never go my way = *I am a victim*. OR, do we try to take events in stride and regroup = HaShem runs my life and I am where I am supposed to be right now.

Exercise 4: Recognize the small roles we play in HaShem's Script

HaShem put you here in this place at this time with these attributes and opportunities because you have a mission that only you can fulfil. It is challenging because that mission may not seem clear to us. But what is clear, is that we need to be the kindest and most considerate person we can be each day.

Make a list of the nice things you do for others on a particular day. Did you smile at a stranger, give an unsolicited compliment? Did you make a family member's favorite dish for supper? Did you call a friend because you were concerned about her? Once you start noticing these small acts, you will find yourself doing them more and more often.