

# HOW DO WE TURN TOWARDS CHANGE: BY HOLDING OURSELVES RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT WE'VE DONE AND ACCOUNTABLE TO WHAT WE'VE LEARNED?

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*This exercise is written as a lesson plan, but works equally as well for personal reflection. It is possible to do Activity 1 and 2 on their own if you'd like to do an abridged version. It is also set up so that you can work through it over time, rather than all at once.*

## LESSON GOAL:

The goal of this session is for participants to feel more connected to their own role in building a culture of consent in their lives, relationships, communities, and in the world / for the planet at large, and gain a better understanding of how they can show up for others and themselves in cultural climates that can make it hard to think clearly and feel fully noticed and received.

## LESSON OVERVIEW:

In Judaism, *Viddui* means “confession,” and in the context of Yom Kippur, it ushers and anchors an opportunity to consider our missteps and hold ourselves accountable for how to improve. In this lesson, we will use writing and reflection activities that can help us explore our relationship to consent in our own personal lives, in our relationships with others, in our communities, and in the world and for the planet at large as part of a way to engage more deeply with the ritual tradition of *Viddui*. We'll also consider how breaking or not setting boundaries—first and foremost for ourselves—can potentially impact how we are able to show up for others/the world.

## MATERIALS:

- Something to write with – (either a utensil & paper, and/or computer or tech-based)
- A comfortable place to be present

## SUGGESTED GUIDELINES / SELF-AGREEMENTS:

- Confidentiality/privacy: Whatever you write during this lesson belongs to you. You have control over whether or not you keep everything to yourself, or share it with others.
- Annotate & ask questions: This lesson is designed to be exploratory and thoughts and feelings expansive. Feel free to take notes in the margins. Ask questions out loud or on the page. You don't have to have solid answers. It's an opportunity to engage and reflect.
- It's ok to be messy: You don't have to have everything figured out. This is an opportunity to take risks, process and reflect, and try out new ideas or thoughts.

## TIMELINE:

8-10 minutes – Activity 1

15 minutes – Activity 2

5-10 minutes – Activity 3

2 minutes – Closing

30-37 minutes – TOTAL

# LESSON PLAN

## Lesson Overview:

There is a Jewish value and concept called “*Shmirat Haguf*,” which means “guarding one’s / caring for one’s body.” Building healthy boundaries for ourselves and our own body’s needs—whether that’s as individually specific as sustainable sleep routines and movement practices, or as global as recycling and helping support sustainable practices for the planet—is a powerful way to help build a culture of consent. All too often, entire systems of oppression are the result of a lack of consent and/or boundary crossing. When individuals, communities, institutions, and/or entire nations or even the world determine the value or worth of another person’s body by ways of discrimination, hate, and oppression, this act is—at its core—a breach of consent. Therefore, taking the time to reflect upon consent at a personal, interpersonal, communal, and global level can help build a foundation for our overarching practices with and relationships to justice and anti-oppression.

## Activity #1:

To begin, we invite you to take a moment to first reflect on this term *Shmirat Haguf*. You are welcome to write a list of thoughts, journal, and/or simply think about it silently to yourself.

1. What does this concept—*Shmirat Haguf*—mean to you?
2. What does *Shmirat Haguf* mean to the people closest to you in your life?
3. What does *Shmirat Haguf* mean to the community/communities of which you are a part?
4. Do you notice any similarities or consistencies amongst your answers?

## Activity #2:

Now that you’ve had some time to reflect on what the notion of guarding and caring for one’s body means for you and your life, we invite you to think more specifically about the ways consent shows up for you in your life personally, interpersonally, communally, and globally.

Below, we invite you to think through the ways consent shows up in your life in each of these areas. We’ve provided some examples to help you in thinking through the activity. Each area—self, interpersonal, communal, global—will have three questions / sections to explore.

Feel free to answer with lists, and/or journal as an overall and larger writing exercise. Feel free to get creative and think expansively about the ways consent happens in each aspect of your life.

### Self

#### Examples:

- Addiction of any kind
- Pushing one’s self to stay awake past one’s natural bedtime / needs
- Saying “yes” to something - personal or professional - before fully thinking it through
- Saying blessings before eating food
- Anytime there’s a self-check in / taking deep breaths
- Stretching / yoga in the morning
- Movement and/or exercise

1. What are some ingredients and elements of consent with only yourself involved?
2. What are examples of ways you exercise / experience consent with, for, and by yourself?
3. What are ways you could expand how you practice consent with, for, and by yourself?

## **Interpersonal**

### **Examples:**

- Asking people if they want to hug before hugging them
- Asking someone when / if they're available to speak or have plans
- When asking someone at a store / restaurant for help / taking someone's order (i.e. "May I take your order?" and "Can I please ask you for help?")

1. What are some ingredients and elements of interpersonal consent (with another person)?
2. What are examples of ways you experience consent with another person?
3. What are ways you could expand how you practice consent with another person?

## **Communal**

### **Examples:**

- When a group/community assigns a nickname to someone without asking the person
- Creating group agreements and/or guidelines for expectations and communal needs
- When a group and/or community has assumptions about people's accessibility needs
- Overusing and/or excessively using materials / resources beyond necessity
- Recycling, composting, and/or engaging in sustainable activity
- Being aware of one's "carbon" usage locally, regionally, and/or globally

1. What are some ingredients and elements of consent in a communal space?
2. What are examples of ways communities exercise and experience consent?
3. What are ways your communities could expand their practices of and around consent?

## **Activity #3:**

Finally, we invite you to take some time to reflect on the activity you've just completed by answering the following questions. Feel free to write your answers and/or think about them.

1. What did it feel like to think about consent in those particular ways?
2. What did you notice about your responses in each area?

3. What are your biggest takeaways from this activity?

4. How do you envision yourself taking action, engaging with yourself and/or your community, and/or creating cultures of consent in new or expansive ways?

## Closing

What is a single word or phrase that describes how you're feeling, something you learned, or something you're taking away from this lesson?

