



# Year of Growth

A Momentum Publication

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First Edition

Written and edited by Dr. Ronit Ziv-Kreger

Please note that this volume includes sacred texts, and should be treated accordingly.  
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# INVITING YOUR EMPOWERMENT

## Introduction

### Welcome back from your Momentum Israel trip!

Amidst the laughter and tears that we experienced on Momentum, the essential core of our personal transformation was rooted in knowledge. We all experienced those “AHA!” moments, when information was received and processed in a deeply meaningful way, forevermore changing the lens through which we see the world.

Momentum gave us the inspiration to live our Jewish values of faith, dignity, courage, truth, peace, unity, gratitude, generosity... and a commitment to learn and grow. That means to dig deep, to actively listen, to question, to seek truth, to exercise respect and tolerance, to empathize and to problem solve. We know it's not about having all of the answers, but a willingness to be patient with the process of transformation and real internal change.

This *Year of Growth* curriculum is designed creatively and intentionally to carry forward the learning which

created magic for us in Israel. The key element here is collaboration. We encounter each chapter of growth together, free of the traditional teacher-student structure, where we are all capable facilitators with a well of wisdom to share.

As sisters across the globe gather to learn together in groups, we move the needle closer toward realizing unity of the Jewish people. We are grateful for your participation in our movement to change the world through Jewish values and practicing the courage it takes to live those values. May God bless you in your pursuits on both personal and communal levels. And may this *Year of Growth* serve as a meaningful stepping-stone in your lifelong journey of acquiring wisdom.



Manette Mayberg  
Co-Founder of Momentum and  
past President

## *Year of Growth Itinerary*

Our year-long journey will be built around the following components:

**You** We invite you to encounter, deeply encounter, yourself on this journey. Perhaps you will discover new hitherto-unseen sites within yourself. Perhaps you will learn to further mine riches that are already known. In our over-scheduled lives, it is revolutionary – and yet crucial - to allow for spaciousness and time to listen for our deepest prayers. The *Year of Growth* gifts you with a ritualized time and space to listen your way towards your own innate nature and God-given gems.

**Your Sisters** Gathering with your community of women and building a supportive sisterhood is an essential ingredient of this continued journey. A safe space of confidentiality and compassionate listening, free of judgment and unsolicited advice, is a much-needed respite from the culture at large. Creating this time with your sisters can usher forward your personal and spiritual growth profoundly. Your sisters can mirror aspects of your journey, and help with accountability and discipline to slow down, order your time, desires, and thoughts. Remember the “See good, say good” trip-saying, and actively welcome each person’s unique contributions, questions, and pace of growth. These gatherings and relationships will be the vehicle and the fuel for your continued journey.

**Jewish Values** Judaism’s treasure-house of teachings will provide the spiritual pathways of this journey. These pathways are ancient, having guided generations. They are accessible and applicable and profoundly potent. The learning is woven around fourteen key Jewish values that sit at the bedrock of our ancient tradition. The teachings are dovetailed with the best of contemporary insights from research in neurobiology, motivation, management, and psychology for a roadmap to inspire, nourish and guide you along your way.

**Jewish Holidays** Along this journey you will visit sites of Jewish holidays, helping you order you time and suffuse it with meaning. Each one is like a chamber filled with jewels of wisdom. Each holiday chamber draws you in to employing time-tested tools for invigorating your growth, enhancing your joy and empowering your life.

You have journeyed through the Land of Israel...now journey through the temporal terrain of the year. Visit her rituals & holidays. Discover and mine new magnificent sites within yourself as well as within your sisters. Bring those riches back to your family and build a richer life, a better home, a stronger community and a rectified world.

## What's Included in Each Session?

Within each chapter, in addition to the Jewish values and holidays, you will find the following elements:

**Group Exploration** To support your group in delving deeply into the material, we provide dialogue questions and activities for each session. Each session contains a menu of ideas from which to select. However, the ideas in this book can be further expanded upon. Consider the content of the book as a springboard for enhancing your group's creative exploration of each topic. The sky is the limit to the creative possibilities of turning the sessions into memorable gatherings.

**Reflection** The impassioned pace of your Momentum trip afforded wonderful insights – with limited opportunities for reflection. Integrating the insights of the journey into our hearts and lives requires and deserves time and processing. The group sessions are designed to support this reflection and integration through conversation, writing, and other activities. You may want to select a journal to use in your group sessions and for further reflection on your own or during one-on-one partner learning with a Momentum sister.

**Try it Out Practical Tips** Each session includes an array of ideas for how you can share the learning with your family. We offer options tailored to fit children of different ages. As you look through these ideas, consider what would be most appropriate for your child(ren) and when you might utilize them. You might consider ideas for the dinner table, bedtime, carpooling, family time, Shabbat or other holiday gatherings.

**Spotlight on Israel** In nearly every session, through the lens of each Jewish value, we invite you to further connect and engage with Israel. These Israel spotlights can also be fitting for sharing with family, friends or colleagues to expose them to stories of the Land of Israel.

**Learn with Your Sister** While there are many things we can do best on our own, personal and spiritual growth is not necessarily one of them. During your monthly group sessions, arrange a weekly time to connect with another Momentum sister to continue exploring, reflecting, and offering each other support and accountability. Each session offers a few starting places for conversations: *How are you doing with gratitude? What step can you take to become your better self? How would you describe your relationship with God? Where in your life can you transform an experience of disagreement into an opportunity for growth?* In addition,

it can often be helpful to stay in touch between sessions via phone, text or email, so you can check in on your progress with the goals you have set for yourself.

**Facilitator's Guide** Each session also includes a facilitator's guide, which is filled with ideas for shared leadership, making it easier for all to get involved.

### Ways You Can Take an Active Approach

Benjamin Franklin said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." Here is your opportunity to truly get involved.

The mission of Momentum is to empower women to change the world through Jewish values that transform ourselves, our families and our communities. Empowerment begins with stepping forward to be crew rather than passengers of our life journey.

Imagine a boat where everyone on board pulls at an oar and no one sits by watching. Won't it go faster and farther?

We invite you to be part of the crew on this *Year of Growth* journey. Active learners get more out of the learning process. Since we all have different life experiences, gifts and challenges, our learning will be richer for each person stepping forward to contribute as a crew member.

You'll note that each session in this book is packed with more ideas than will fit into a typical group gathering. Often, less is more

when you are seeking real connection and deeper learning. The sessions are filled with ideas so that those who step up to facilitate will be able to choose from the material and tailor a session that would be a fit for their interests and the interests of their group. It also allows for additional enrichment that can be read before or after and can be shared with family members and friends.

We suggest you experiment with different ways of getting involved. Draw on your personal passions: prepare a story or activity that dovetails with the session, facilitate or co-facilitate a section or join the planning of a session to help select what to include. Alternatively, invite a speaker fitting for the session, or initiate a group project to better your community. Consider hosting or sending out a reminder email before the session or highlights after it to those who couldn't attend. Consider getting in touch with other Momentum partners, locally or globally, to share ideas, for example, by posting on the *Momentum* Facebook page.

### The Art of a Great Session

A Momentum group and the year-long learning sessions it offers include many opportunities for each participant to contribute toward crafting meaningful gatherings. While your group may have only one Community Leader, each individual can help with leading or co-leading sessions. You may wonder, "what makes a great session and what might I do to help?" The following suggestions are adapted from the excellent and warmly recommended book, *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why it Matters*, by Priya Parker.



**Identify a Purpose** Priya suggests that in planning a gathering we ask ourselves questions based on what she names the “Passover Principle.” Our sages sought ways of infusing meaning and energy into the Seder gathering, for example by giving good reasons for asking: “Why is this night different from all other nights.” So too, in planning each session we can ask “why and how is the gathering for this session going to be different from other gatherings?” “How can I help it be unique?” Using the menu of options in each session, narrow to one clear focus. Trying to do too much can dilute the depth of the learning. Ms. Parker advises that the most dynamic purposes are disputable, and as such they help to serve as a decision filter for planning. The type of modesty that wonders “who am I to impose my ideas on others,” can bog us down with a hesitancy that doesn’t consider that it’s often a favor to all participants when the session is focused.

**Own Your Power When Facilitating** Setting the purpose, direction and ground rules in the beginning of the session is a good start. These also require enforcement during the session, otherwise things often drift. It’s helpful to have someone taking care of the participants with generous authority - keeping the gathering true its purpose, with an eye to interpersonal dynamics, keeping everyone actively involved, and protecting all from addictive and distracting technologies.

**Prime, Usher and Launch** Consider the pre-game to your session as an important part of its success. It’s

an opportunity to set expectations and help create the spirit in which participants will attend. Consider crafting an invitation that helps set the mood. You might invite participants to send or think of something in advance. Inviting responses to a question or inviting each to share a photo, challenge, or a quote in advance could prime participants to reflect on personal connections with the purpose of the session. Receiving advance information can also help the facilitators and hosts tailor the session, so it feels especially designed with the participants in mind. When the day arrives, consider how to transition participants across the proverbial threshold, leaving the tasks of the day and entering the magic of your session. How might you craft this entry? At Momentum events we often use music or visuals in the passageway into a space. “Quit starting with logistics,” writes Priya Parker. What could grab participants’ attention, awe them, honor them, and connect them? How might the purpose of the gathering be felt from its first moments?

**Foster Good Conversation** Help keep people vulnerable and real. Our culture trains us to share our strengths, successes, and best selves. But sharing half-baked thoughts, and authentic, raw moments, focusing on experiences rather than on ideas helps people connect and grow. A good conversation also has space for healthy discord or controversy. How might you help draw out different opinions and provide a structure that can contain a productive tension?

**Closure** How do we end the session with a high? You can consider offering participants two processes for the ending: (1) Looking inside to synthesize the learning to take stock of what they absorbed, to reflect on its meaning for them personally. (2) Looking outside to connect once more before parting and to plan for how they will carry the learning into their daily lives, and experiment with trying new things. This can include priming the next gathering.

### ***Shehinah* – the Divine Mother Presence**

The sages of the Talmud likened a relationship between children and their mother to a relationship with the Divine Presence saying that “Whenever Rabbi Josef heard the footsteps of his mother, he would say, ‘Let me rise because the *Shehinah* is coming.’”<sup>1</sup> The Divine presence that is immanent and close to us is described as a loving mother - as the *Shehinah*, from the Hebrew root that implies one who dwells close by.

The Divine, as a mother, embraces us, cares for us, and loves us. She is attentive to our wellbeing. The *Shehinah* is there with us like a thoughtful mother, who supports the development of a child, pained in the child’s struggles but giving space for the child to grow in resiliency from working through challenges, “Come and see how beloved the Jewish people are before the Holy One of Blessing. At every place they were exiled the *Shehinah* went with them.”<sup>2</sup> How might we support each other as mothers to foster our own spiritual development and the spiritual well-being of our children?

1 Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 31b

2 Babylonian Talmud Megillah 29a

3 Rabbi Joseph Ber. Soloveitchik, Family Redeemed

Joseph Ber Soloveitchik was a major American rabbi, and Talmudist. He was a scion of the Lithuanian Jewish Soloveitchik rabbinic dynasty.

Rabbi Soloveitchik taught<sup>3</sup>, “As a mother, *Shehinah* wants... that the child be aware of Her presence ... She wants that her child be near Her, and that the child warmly welcome Her presence... Quest after Her, and seek Her. [if you seek for the *Shehinah*,] You will indeed find Her if the quest is sincere and genuine, if it is done ‘with all your heart and with all your soul’ (Deut. 4:29)” May your journey be one in which you indeed experience her loving presence increasingly often– within yourself, and in the presence of the Sisterhood you create; may you feel her ever-more-present in your home, and may you consider taking community action that draws Her presence closer yet.

With creativity, you can help instill a collective sense of activism and cooperation among your JWRP Momentum for a joyful joint adventure.

### ***Here’s to a Year of Growth!***

Wishing you a blessed journey,



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Momentum Director of Education  
and Leadership Development