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Positive psychology and the Jewish holiday calendar: a resource manual for small groups

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POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND THE JEWISH HOLIDAY CALENDAR:

A RESOURCE MANUAL FOR SMALL GROUPS

A clinical dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Psychology

by

Tami Krichiver

February, 2010

Shelly Harrell, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This clinical dissertation, written by

Tami Krichiver

under the supervision of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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VITA

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Provided weekly individual psychotherapy to a population of homeless adult men enrolled in long-term substance abuse recovery program in downtown Skid Row. Conducted psychodiagnostic assessments. Co-facilitated group therapy. Received specialized training in sociocultural factors in therapy and multicultural approach to personality assessment.

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Facilitated crisis interventions with high-risk clients. Led insight-oriented individual and group therapy with adults and adolescents. Received specialized training in solution-focused brief psychotherapy.

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Facilitated pilot program providing comprehensive support, education, and counseling services to professional young performers in the entertainment industry. Developed organizational infrastructure by creating assessment

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ABSTRACT

Research indicates the Jewish community could benefit from additional resources aimed at supporting the psychospiritual needs of community members. While clergy and mental health professionals often collaborate to address these needs, there is no model that utilizes psychologists in a non-clinical setting for the purpose of integrating common positive psychology and spiritual concepts. The literature reveals many commonalities between positive psychology strengths and Jewish holiday themes. The purpose of this study was to develop a resource manual for psychologists and rabbis. The primary aims of the manual were to (a) utilize positive psychology to enhance psychospiritual development within the Jewish community; (b) explicitly connect positive psychology and Judaism through common themes; (c) provide opportunities for active personal integration of these common psychological and spiritual concepts; and (d) apply positive psychology through experiential small groups in synagogue settings. The specific objectives of the study included (a) an extensive review of the literature to identify the intersection between positive psychology and Judaism; (b) the collection of informal data from rabbis, Jewish professionals, clinical psychologists, and positive psychologists, to assess the need for additional resources; (c) the development of the resource manual; and (d) a critique of the manual by an expert psychologist and rabbi to evaluate the accuracy and relevance toward its intended population.

Major issues in the evaluation results led to recommendations that the author formalize ground rules, direct greater attention to screening and recruitment procedures, and expand the experiential aspects of the groups. Further development of the manual may focus on utilizing additional research in positive psychology in conjunction with

consultations with positive psychology experts to increase and deepen the experiential

elements of the groups.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

In this introductory chapter, an overview of the literature provides the rationale for the development of a positive psychology resource manual. The goals of the manual are presented, followed by a broad review of the literature pertaining to spirituality, religion, and psychology. This is followed by a review of literature exploring the compatibility of positive psychology and Judaism, and concludes with literature that describes small group process.

Rationale

Jewish holidays are a central focus for building Jewish identity and for growth. They provide numerous opportunities for individuals to explore relevant psychological themes. It is my experience that while many Jews come to the synagogue to nourish themselves spiritually and religiously, to study, learn, and grow within the context of Jewish tradition, they are thirsting for additional ways to integrate their experiences with religious services, life cycle events, text studies, programs, and other events. They are yearning to take a more active role in the deepening of their lives, their psychological growth, and their search for meaning. I believe there is a need for psychologists who are expert in the field of psychology and intimately connected to the Jewish community to create opportunities for Jews to expand their development, actively participate in the personal integration of Jewish messages and values, and to share with other members of the community during important moments of loss, transition, growth, joy, and self-reflection.

Small group process within the synagogue provides an avenue for individuals to integrate both psychological and religious content areas. Groups may also provide the opportunity for congregants to move from a relatively passive role within the synagogue to one in which they actively participate in the integration and deepening of their religious and personal experiences.

Purpose

Psychologists currently play a role in many synagogues across the country, bringing psychological issues to congregants through workshops, groups, and classes. Adding a resource manual to bring positive psychology to Jews in a synagogue setting would expand the current role of psychologists in Jewish community settings. The goals of this manual would include: (a) to deepen individual learning by making it an active process, (b) to help Jews actively participate in the personal integration of psychological and spiritual concepts through interactive positive psychology groups, (c) to create an explicit connection between the principles of positive psychology and the psychological themes embedded in the Jewish holidays, (d) to provide opportunities for psychological growth in a non-clinical setting, and (e) to provide resources to psychologists and rabbis across the country to collaborate in engaging congregants in meaningful small group work. There is a large continuum of mental health services and interventions, and this resource manual would potentially reach Jewish congregants in a number of ways pertaining to overall mental health.

Spirituality, Religion, and Psychology

Historical Connection

Prior to the time that logical positivism gained a foothold in the psychological community, psychology and religion were commonly viewed as inextricably linked, with a rich culture of theologians, philosophers, and scientists struggling to understand religion and psychology in a shared context (Delaney & DiClemente, 2005). Delaney and DiClemente describe philosophers such as Augustine, Aquinas, Maimonides, Edwards, Upham, Kierkegaard, James, and Hall, each great contributors to modern psychology, whose ideas were steeped in religious philosophy.

Throughout history, great religious thinkers have grappled with a psychological explanation of human nature, of human growth and development, and for the ways in which psychology fits into a larger spiritual or religious context. For example, Augustine was a Neoplatonist, who believed in the interior realm of motives and conflict seen by an omniscient deity to whom one is personally accountable. His ideas about human nature and the psychology of the mind were set within a religious context in which God was the creator of life and around whom life centered. According to Delaney and DiClemente (2005), many of Freud's psychoanalytic concepts grew directly from an Augustinian viewpoint, although the two had diametrically opposed ideas about God and faith. "Augustinian views of psychology included the prominent view of sexuality in one's development, dreams as a mechanism for uncovering unresolved issues, and the concept of cathartic release, all of which later influenced Freud" (pp. 34-35).

Another point of view, as argued by Bakan (1958), is that many of Freud's ideas came specifically from Jewish tradition, ideas that were part of the greater mainstream

culture in Europe during Freud's lifetime. Bakan argued that "movements of thought of the stature of psychoanalysis usually have prominent antecedents in the history of man's thought" (p. ix). Therefore, although in some ways Freud rejected religion as a significant factor in his development of psychoanalysis, others believe that his ideas were influenced heavily by Judaism and, specifically, Jewish mystical tradition. He consciously (or unconsciously) secularized Jewish mysticism (Bakan).

Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) was a Jewish scholar who also made a significant contribution to the field of psychology. Maimonides posited a view of human free will that allowed for moral accountability. He suggested that this accountability was present in varying degrees in different individuals under different circumstances (Delaney & DiClemente, 2005). Locke, who played a significant role in founding the concept of empiricism, also believed that "an eternal, omnipotent Being exists" (Delaney & DiClemente, p. 38). Even Kierkegaard, the father of existentialist philosophy, who considered himself a psychologist, wrote about themes of will and authentic existence within the framework of a self that God designed for each individual (Delaney & DiClemente). William James, often regarded as the greatest American psychologist, struggled with the idea that human nature may be spiritual in nature as opposed to material (Delaney & DiClemente). These examples are significant because they demonstrate that the forefathers of modern psychology were psychological thinkers whose ideas were intertwined with theological doctrines and concepts. In Judaism, "the connection between healing and spirituality is as old as humankind itself. The word 'heal' shares the same root as 'whole' and 'holiness'" (Weiss, 2000, p. 19).

Freud and the recent dissolution of religion and psychology. "Throughout most of the 20th century, the idea of taking Judeo-Christian teaching seriously within psychology was generally considered taboo" (Delany & DiClemente, 2005, p. 31). Scientists in the field lost sight of a common worldview that once existed between psychological scientists and religious philosophers, affirming a connection between psychology and religion. Ironically, despite the influence of religious ideas in psychological thought, Freud, Watson, and other psychologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries contributed heavily to the breakdown that occurred between religion and psychology when logical positivism was embraced uncritically by American psychology (Delaney & DiClemente). Logical positivism essentially stated that science and religion were entirely irrelevant to one another (Plaut, 1962). According to Delaney and DiClemente:

> Given that 'psychologists were stationed at the periphery of science, and therefore they were the most threatened by challenges to the boundary,' spirituality and religion were rejected along with introspective methods and cognition generally in favor of animal learning and conditioning studies. (p. 46)

It was not only the behaviorists who rejected religion. Although Freud did not explicitly deny religion, he posited that religious experience was not a reflection of encounters with God but instead creations of a person's mind (Plaut, 1962). He believed that people were unable to deal with the hardships of life directly, and instead created religious experiences to aid in coping.

> We solve the riddles of existence by falling back on our father to whom we ascribe all power and wisdom. When we were children, our natural father provided this needed security; as we grow older we substitute a supernatural father and transfer our sense of reliance to him. Religion, said Freud, is a collective neurosis. (Plaut, p. 63)

Recent reconnection of religion and psychology. The marginalization of religious thought in the field of psychology continued through most of the 20th century with the

exception of a few psychologists and members of prominent organizations, who made a concerted effort to oppose this marginalization. Those interested in reconnecting religion and psychology came largely from sectarian contexts, most often from Roman Catholic institutions (Delaney & DiClemente, 2005). Psychology programs were developed within religious institutions, and associations such as the American Catholic Psychological Association were formed. The Catholic Psychological Association, created in 1949, eventually became Division 36 of the APA, focused on the psychology of religion.

Well-known modern psychologists such as Allport, Jung, and Maslow also opened the door to reintegrating psychology and religion as they attempted to approach religion from a psychological perspective. For example, in Maslow's hierarchy model, "[t]he self-actualization at the top of this hierarchy was characterized in part by mystic or peak experiences, described in ways similar to how some might characterize intense religious experiences" (Delaney & DiClemente, 2005, p. 48). Maslow considered spirituality to be on the same continuum with human personality and asserted that personal spirituality was a major component of one's psychological growth (Elkins, 1998). From Maslow's (1976) perspective, not only should spirituality be incorporated in any thorough psychological introspection but also that, in the process of delving deeply into one's psyche, an opening would form into the realm of the spiritual. Ultimately, despite the progression and reintegration of religion and psychology, it is only in the last 10 years that mainstream psychology has been open to a constructive and fruitful relationship with religion (Delaney & DiClemente).

Shafranske and Sperry (2005) take a modern look at the recent upsurge in interest between religion/spirituality and psychology. They stated that, due to this interest in the

connection between religion and psychology, the psychological community has seen an increase in support for empirical studies that consider both the role of religion/spirituality in mental health and the role of religion/spirituality in clinical practice. Specifically, they offer supporting data through an analysis of the ways in which the positive psychology movement has influenced the connection between religion and psychology. "Positive psychology reflects a sea change in how we are beginning to approach psychological health—virtues and strengths are now being considered alongside vulnerability and psychopathology" (Shafranske & Sperry, p. 12). The authors noted that psychological scientists are interested in exploring what is outside traditional empirical science and neuroscience to understand the human experience that is beyond this realm. This exploration applies to human experiences related to religion and areas of questioning that cannot be fully addressed by scientists.

> Although science can offer no judgment or prediction regarding the veridical status or value of the destination or endpoint of spiritual striving, psychology can investigate the means by which people put into practice their religious commitments, and a spiritually oriented psychotherapy can assist in such pursuits through an understanding of spirituality. (Shafranske & Sperry, p. 13)

Distinction between Religion and Spirituality

Shafranske and Sperry (2005) compared the concepts of religion and spirituality in both an historical and modern context. Throughout much of history, spirituality and religion were concepts used interchangeably, connoting the incorporeal. The authors referred to William James, who defined religion as a very personal, private set of experiences, feelings, and acts of men in relation to the divine. In other words, religion did not encapsulate a collective experience but instead represented very differing personal experiences with the divine.

According to Shafranske and Sperry (2005), the terms *religion* and *spirituality* were gradually dissected in modern times, with spirituality encompassing a more private realm and religion becoming more associated with public membership, organized religion, religious institutions, religious doctrines, and formal rituals. "Increasingly, religion and spirituality, although related, appear to connote in the public's mind, institutional—public and individual—personal expressions of religious sentiments with transcendent realities" (Shafranske & Sperry, p. 14). The authors acknowledged the difficulty in trying to define concepts of spirituality and religion, even in a modern context, and cited empirical investigations into defining spirituality and religion. The results of such research demonstrate that, while the concepts of spirituality and religion have variable meanings, a clear polarization has occurred in which spirituality more often relates to private, personal experiences, and religion more often relates to organized, public experiences.

In considering the ways in which differences of religion and spirituality impact specific therapeutic interventions, Richards and Bergin (1997) presented two categories. They defined religious interventions as "those that are more structured, behavioral, denominational, external, cognitive, ritualistic, and public" (pp. 236-237). Examples of religious interventions include quoting Scriptures and engaging in religious rituals and traditions. In contrast, spiritual interventions are defined as "those that are more experiential, transcendent, ecumenical, cross-cultural, internal, affective, spontaneous, and personal" (Richards & Bergin, p. 237). Private prayer, spiritual meditation, and keeping a spiritual journal are all examples of spiritual therapeutic interventions.

Role of Religion/Spirituality in Psychology

     Ethical considerations. Richards and Bergin (1997) addressed many of the ethical issues that are raised when therapists allow spirituality or religion into a therapeutic setting, namely dual relationships, displacing religious authority, imposing religious values on clients, violating work-setting boundaries mandating the separation of church and state, and practicing outside of one's area of clinical competence.

     Like any dual relationship that violates the ethical guidelines put forth by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002), dual relationships whereby therapists provide therapy to congregants in their own congregations or whereby therapists who serve as religious leaders provide therapy to paying clients who are congregants, increase the risk of harming clients. For this reason, such dual relationships are to be avoided unless it is clear that the therapeutic relationship would be in the best interests of the client (Richards & Bergin, 1997).

     In addition, when psychologists allow religion into the therapy room, there is a chance that they may undermine or inadvertently assume the authority of the client's religious leader. "Perhaps the most benign way this occurs is by therapists' failure to consult, cooperate with, or refer to the religious leader or pastoral counselor" (Richards & Bergin, 1997, p. 148). Taking on any role that would traditionally belong to the client's religious leader may be confusing to the client and is inappropriate. Most importantly, Richards and Bergin stated that it is critical that therapists not utilize a client's vulnerability surrounding religious issues or feelings toward religious leaders as a platform for their own agendas or biases. This is potentially detrimental to the client and is clearly unethical. This idea extends to not imposing one's own religious views onto

any client at any time. If spiritual interventions are to be used in therapy, explicit informed consent must be gained at the outset of therapy, and the goals need to be in the best interests of the client.

According to Chappelle (2000), to ethically implement spiritual interventions into therapy, therapists need to account for individual differences in clients, the specific role of the therapist, the therapy setting, and clients' presenting problems. For example, although therapists and spiritual leaders may have overlapping roles at times, therapists must stay clear and focused about their specific role in therapy, differentiating it from that of a religious leader. "There are several precautions that a psychotherapist may take to avoid stepping beyond the boundaries of his or her role as a therapist, usurping the role of the client's religious or spiritual leaders, when incorporating spiritual interventions in therapy" (Chappelle, p. 45). Some of Chappelle's suggestions include consulting, referring, or working collaboratively with the client's religious leader, refraining from performing tasks that fall directly within the purview of a religious leader, and avoiding dual relationships by trying to serve as both therapist and religious advisor. When considering the appropriateness of spiritual interventions, Chappelle stated:

> A general rule is that spiritual interventions should not be used unless they are relevant to the client's presenting problem. Otherwise, the therapist runs the risk of using therapy as a 'pulpit' for pushing his or her own religious or spiritual values. (p. 48)

Richards and Bergin (1997) listed four situations in which religious and spiritual interventions are specifically contraindicated: clients specifically ask not to participate in such interventions, clients are suffering from psychosis, the spiritual interventions are not relevant to the client's presenting problems, and with minors whose parents have not consented to religious or spiritual interventions in treatment.

Multicultural considerations. In considering the role of religion in psychology, the APA requires that psychologists consider religious identity as a primary element of multiculturalism and diversity in working with clients (APA, 2002). In other words, religious and spiritual identity is one way in which individuals express their unique development and worldview and therefore must be handled with care, competence, and consideration in therapy.

The *Handbook for Positive Psychology* not only outlines the current status of positive psychology principles and applications, but there is also a special chapter titled "Putting Positive Psychology in a Multicultural Context" (Lopez et al., 2002). In the chapter, the authors stated:

> Religion, spirituality, and the diverse constructions of meaning held by various populations across the world can serve as sources of comfort and support for those who are searching for the good life but are unable to find it within their current cultural milieu. Thus, a goal of clinicians could be to increase client awareness regarding their innate personal spirituality so that they may reap the benefits. (pp. 705-706)

The authors suggested that one way positive psychology can be used in a multicultural context is "to recognize in clients the value of religious practices, spirituality, and the diverse constructions of life meaning" (p. 711).

Competence. According to the ethical guidelines of the APA, no psychologist should practice outside of his or her areas of competence, based on education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional expertise (Richards & Bergin, 1997). If a psychologist wants to move into a new area, such as spiritual counseling, adequate and appropriate training must be gained before implementing these strategies into therapy sessions with clients. For many years, there were few resources available to help train psychologists in the area of spiritual or religious competence in a therapeutic setting.

However, training is now available for almost any professional psychologist looking to expand his or her area of expertise, and psychological literature in this area has grown tremendously (Richards & Bergin). For example, Tan (2005) outlined the goals of an annual continuing education workshop held by Division 36 of the APA between 1990 and 1993 to train psychologists to work with religiously-oriented clients. The workshop focused in six main areas: (a) identifying religious themes in client presentation; (b) learning to recognize the potential influence of religious and cultural affiliation on clients' perceptions of their psychological problems; (d) understanding the ways in which client resistance to, or support of psychotherapeutic processes may be rooted in religion; (d) using the religious world view of clients to support therapeutic change (which may include using interventions of a religious nature; (e) identifying systems of support within religious traditions; and (f) consulting with religious professionals to better understand clients' religious perspectives.

McMinn, Aikins, and Lish (2003) make a distinction between basic competence and advanced competence in working collaboratively with clergy to serve the best interests of clients with religious/spiritual needs. They suggest that a basic level of competence simply involves adhering to the APA Ethical Code of Conduct, which states that the ability to consult with other professionals and make referrals as necessary is expected of all licensed psychologists. There must be a basic respect for clergy members as co-professionals and for their unique expertise to serve clients in meaningful and helpful ways. Implicit in this idea is that psychologists will not provide any services that are beyond their scope of expertise without additional training.

McMinn et al. (2003) further stated, "Minimal clergy-psychologist collaboration does not require complete agreement on fundamental worldviews of values but rather enough respect and communication to work together well despite the differences" (p. 201). Advanced competence between psychologists and clergy involves a much closer connection, in which there are more shared values, a higher level of training for psychologists, and shared goals. "Here the goal is not just competence in working with religious clients but the pursuit of a holistic and integrative view of wellness that includes psychological and spiritual dimensions" (McMinn et al., p. 201).

General models, examples of religion in psychology. There are many examples in the literature highlighting the intersection between religion and psychology. "The general purpose of religious and spiritual interventions is to facilitate and promote clients' religious and spiritual coping, growth, and well-being (Richards & Bergin, 2005, p. 282). The authors outline some of the atheoretical, overarching goals of treating clients using theistic, spiritual and religious interventions. Each of the interventions provides the opportunity for therapists to make direct therapeutic interventions based on their clients' religious/spiritual practices and beliefs. Some examples of religious and spiritual interventions highlighted include making reference to scripture by using direct quotations or citations, religious relaxation or imagery using spiritual or biblical concepts, encouraging forgiveness, spiritual confrontation, direct referrals to religious leaders for additional adjunctive support, assigning homework with religious content, and discussion of faith (Richards & Bergin). In addition, theistic approaches have been used with a range of clinical disorders and populations (Richards & Bergin).

Richards and Bergin (1997) reviewed five studies (Ball & Goodyear, 1991; Jones, Watson, &Wolfram, 1992; Richards & Potts, 1995a; Shafranske & Malony, 1990; Worthington, Dupont, Berry, & Duncan, 1988) in which religiously oriented licensed therapists or doctoral students in clinical psychology, largely from Christian faiths, were asked to provide information, including which religious interventions they used in therapy. Over 25 distinct interventions were shared across these studies.

Shafranske and Sperry (2005) stated, "Religiosity or spirituality plays a role in the orienting systems of most individuals and therefore requires deliberate and thoughtful assessment in respect to its contributions to mental health and well-being" (p. 18). They identify three situations in which atheoretical, spiritually-oriented psychotherapy is regularly used with clients: (a) as a resource in psychotherapy, (b) for conservation and transformation of spirituality in psychotherapy, and (c) as a spiritual quest in psychotherapy. In their model, spiritual interventions may be used as an adjunctive resource to complement traditional interventions. "The task of the therapist is to identify and to integrate the beliefs, values, and practices involved in the patient's spirituality to enhance coping" (p. 20). Helping clients construct meaning in their lives is paramount to their model—it goes beyond addressing clients' issues for the purpose of symptom alleviation.

Tan (2005) described two distinct models for integrating religion and clinical practice: (a) implicit, and (b) explicit integration. Tan wrote:

> Implicit integration of religion in clinical practice refers to a more covert approach that does not initiate the discussion of religious or spiritual issues and does not openly, directly, or systematically use spiritual resources like prayer and Scripture or other sacred texts, in therapy. (p. 368)

Religious issues can still be discussed, when introduced by the client; however, if it looks

like interventions may involve more direct spiritual practices, a referral will be made to

another therapist who employs a more explicit integration model. Tan stated:

> Explicit integration of religion in clinical practice or psychotherapy refers to a
> more overt approach that directly and systematically deals with spiritual or
> religious issues in therapy, and uses spiritual resources like prayer, Scripture or
> sacred texts, referrals to church or other religious groups or lay counselors, and
> other religious practices. (p. 368)

In an explicit integration model, one of the underlying assumptions is that the spirituality

of both the client and the therapist is fundamental in the therapeutic growth process of the

client. A therapist need not be religious in order to successfully practice within an explicit

integration model, but must respect a client's religious beliefs and be open to the process

in therapy. Specific therapeutic techniques from this model may include: the use of

prayer before, during, or after therapy sessions, utilization of Scripture or sacred texts in

psychotherapy, and referrals to clergy members or other religious organizations.

While several authors (Richards & Bergin, 1997; Shafranske & Sperry, 2005)

provide models for incorporating spiritual and religious interventions into a larger,

atheoretical, holistic approach to psychotherapy, spiritual and religious interventions can

also be integrated into specific secular, theoretical approaches to counseling. Theistic

perspectives have been incorporated into most mainstream theoretical orientations by a

number of scholars, including theistic approaches for psychoanalysis, Jungian approaches

to spiritual psychotherapy, theistic approaches for behavior therapy, and cognitive

therapy, to name a few. For example, Propst (2005) outlines cognitive-behavioral therapy

for religious/spiritual clients. She noted that, "Cognitive therapy is uniquely suited to

address the beliefs and assumptions that religious clients bring to psychological

treatment" (p. 391). According to Propst, the basic principles of a CBT model can be applied to religious persons, in that cognitive distortions/irrational ideas that lead individuals to experience dysfunction and distress often apply regardless of whether beliefs are religious or secular. Further, the emphasis in cognitive therapy on personal beliefs may make the model accessible to religious individuals. In one example, Propst asserted that the religious idea of repentance originates from Greek, meaning literally to change one's mind about self and the world, and that this mirrors the concept of cognitive restructuring.

In previous studies conducted by Propst (1980; 1992), she found that for religious patients the inclusion of religious themes and interventions in combination with traditional CBT techniques enhanced the therapeutic process. Specific interventions outlined by Propst involve utilizing the fundamental theory of CBT and then adapting the interventions for use with religious clients. For example, thought monitoring is a typical CBT intervention. When applying this intervention with religious clients, therapists may incorporate religious and theological themes as a behavioral motivational tool to encourage the use of the technique. Religious themes can also be used in the process of changing thoughts and assumptions by helping clients analyze the beliefs of characters in the Bible. "Techniques of thought stopping, cognitive rehearsal, and confrontation of dysfunctional forms of thinking (e.g., arbitrary inference and overgeneralization) complement the use of Scripture and theological reflection in the examination of core beliefs and assumptions" (Propst, 2005, p. 401).

In another example, spiritual and religious interventions have also been used with religious clients seeking psychoanalytic treatment. "Psychoanalysis has proven to be an

invaluable tool in understanding the dynamic components of religious beliefs and affects in normal people and neurotics alike" (Rizzuto, 2005b, p. 410). According to Rizzuto, psychoanalysis is consistent with the idea that no person who grew up in a religious culture comes to analysis without some representation of God, and should that aspect emerge during analysis, it can be a powerful tool in an individual's growth process. The author suggested that taking a religious history is a significant part of the intake process and informs the therapist of the role that religion may play in therapy as well as about the specific development and formation of religious beliefs. Interventions include the exploration of affects, wishes, conflicts, and representations as they surface from the unconscious, just as in traditional psychoanalysis. Rizzuto noted that individuals create God-representations in their minds at any given moment to help cope with different situations. Through analytic techniques, clients are able to understand their God-representations and the meaning of these representations in their lives. For example, religious associations provide information about meaning, desires, object relations, and affects and actions, all expressed in religious language. This is shaped by past religious experiences or religious training (Rizzuto).

As the field continues to evolve in understanding and studying the role of religion/spirituality in psychotherapy, some clients are seeking therapy to engage in dialogue about their religious/spiritual issues. "The request for the help of a therapist or a spiritual guide reflects a wish to obtain relief from suffering, orientation in moments of confusion, or the aid of a mentor during a personal journey of spiritual self-transformation" (Rizzuto, 2005a, p. 42). According to James (1902), the human personality at its further limits opens into the spiritual realm. "Speaking metaphorically,

one might say that the human personality is a river that, if navigated to its end, opens into

the ocean of the mystical realm" (Elkins, 2005, p.131). Maslow (1976) was convinced

that spirituality should be brought under the umbrella of psychology. According to these

scholars and many others, there is a place for religious/spiritual issues in psychotherapy

that can be invaluable and even second-nature to clients.

    Judaism in psychology. When considering the specific ways in which Judaism has

been incorporated into psychotherapy with Jewish clients, it is important to examine how

Judaism and psychology overlap. Many in the field of psychology have been reluctant to

consider this overlap because of the perceived incompatibility between religion and

science.

> It is difficult to compare most psychological or psychotherapeutic theories to
> religions or religious philosophies because such theories do not include explicit
> statements about overall moral or spiritual goals of living or the good life that are
> obviously central to religions. (Manaster, 2004, p. 420)

However, Manaster acknowledged that the incongruity between science and value-laden

religion is not as clear as many theorists and philosophers have claimed over the years.

Langman (1997) asserted that not only were many contributors and theorists in the field

of psychology Jewish, but that the influence of Judaism comes through their work. For

example, in looking at psychoanalysis, Bakan (1958) noted that psychoanalytic theory

was in fact a secularization of Jewish mystical ideas (called *Kabbalah)*. Langman

compared the similarities between psychoanalysis and Judaism and showed that an

emphasis on acquiring knowledge is fundamental to obtaining benefits in both areas.

Further, both psychoanalysis and Judaism emphasize manifest and latent meanings that

must be interpreted—either by psychoanalysts or in the case of Judaism, by rabbis.

Plaut (1962) wrote that dynamic psychology is a partner to Judaism in helping individuals understand and analyze their deeper layers of personality. And while the two are different in fundamental function and deal with "incommensurables" (p. 66) they share commonalities. For example, they are both in dynamic pursuit of the human mind. In expressing the shared goals of psychology and Judaism, Plaut noted:

> 'How can I learn to love God?' a rabbi was asked. 'Learn first to love man,' was his answer. Worship, study, and the performance of *mitzvahs* (good deeds) are designed to help us in our process of self-development and in establishing mature, accepting relationships with others. Dynamic psychology has similar aims, and this makes it the natural ally of a liberal, non-authoritarian Judaism. (p. 65)

There are also numerous examples of psychology embedded in Jewish tradition and texts. Weiss (2000) outlined several examples, specifically including the therapeutic effects of dialogue in the bible. "Isaiah (50:4) declares that 'the Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain him with words who is weary'" (p. 20). Weiss also noted that Proverbs (12:25) includes the following: "Care in the heart of a man bows it down, but a good word makes it glad" (p. 20). In other examples, Talmudic and midrashic literature include numerous psychological insights including those about the ills of anxiety and the somatic consequences of ideations (Weiss).

In Medieval pre-modern times, Jews received counseling directly from their Hasidic rabbis, who served as therapists for the community. In counseling cases, the rabbis engaged clients in a process to achieve empathy, negate judgment, and permit the rabbi as counselor to be guided by intuitions rather than intellectual, cognitive interactions. Transference was also a part of the therapeutic relationship and other

counseling techniques were utilized to help individuals strive for self-enhancement,

meaning, and actualization, foreshadowing Maslow and Frankl's work (Weiss, 2000).

> Rebbe Nahman of Bratslav, one of the most insightful of the Hasidic masters, in
> an approach which is again reminiscent of Maslow, focuses on self-created
> evasions of his clients' destiny by helping them overcome their fear of growth and
> their self-inflicted limitations. (Weiss, pp. 21-22)

The second Jewish spiritual movement during the Medieval period was Musar

counseling, created by Yisrael Salanter, in which the rabbis utilized many psychological

techniques to transform the personalities of their clients. Subconscious motivation was a

primary concept in Musar counseling, but differed from Freud in that it was not

considered biologically deterministic. Instead, the irrational motivating force was the

yetzer ha-ar (inclination toward evil), that could be altered through learning and

habituation achieved through discovery and cognitive-affective learning techniques

(Weiss, 2000). "Salanter's doctrine of the subconscious is predicated upon his belief in

human freedom and the human capacity to change" (Weiss, p. 23). According to Weiss,

some of the techniques used in Musar counseling foreshadowed techniques later utilized

in dynamic therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, learning theory, group process and

humanistic existential therapy.

The Eastern European hasidic and musar ideologies and traditions of counseling

were destroyed temporarily by the holocaust, but eventually reemerged in modern times

in Israel and the United States as paradigms for Jewish psychotherapies (Weiss, 2000).

However, Western European Jewry and psychotherapy was based on acculturation,

modernity, and approaches that were intellectual and denied religious underpinnings.

> It is quite plausible that the anti-religious bias of Western intellectuals was an
> important factor in the hiatus in the development of ostensibly Jewish
> psychotherapeutic approaches and Jewish pastoral counseling in Western Europe

and the United States. Secular Western intellectuals had come to be persuaded that religion and psychology were largely incompatible. (Weiss, p. 26)

As a result, there were a number of Jewish psychological theorists who believed that religion contributed to irrational thinking and psychopathology. "Paradoxically, the same holocaust experience which had brought the vibrant rabbinical counseling tradition to a virtual halt, also accounts for its contemporary revival (Weiss, p. 27). According to Weiss, the holocaust impacted mental health in the following ways: (a) the restoration of spiritual values to psychology, in which a spiritual will to meaning is at the core of psychological growth; (b) the pursuit of Jewish particularity, social and psychological dimensions, in which psychologists infuse psychological theory with Jewish ideas or developed uniquely Jewish therapeutic systems based on Jewish concepts; (c) the attempt by Jewish psychologists to create new syntheses, in which Jewish concepts are synthesized with other systems of psychology; and (d) psychotherapy with survivors, which addresses the unique issues relevant to holocaust survivors and their family members.

Role of Psychology in Religious Settings

Existing models, general. In modern times, psychology has played a role in religious settings, primarily facilitated by members of the clergy conducting spiritual or religious counseling. However, psychologists have also carved a unique role for themselves in religious settings, providing a service to supplement the work of clergy in responding to the mental health needs of their members. Regardless of whether mental health services are provided by psychologists or clergy, it is important to understand the place of psychology in a religious setting. "The complexity of religious systems suggests that churches and synagogues will view and respond to psychologists in very different

ways (Pargament, Ensing, & Falgout, 1988, p. 396). Further, psychologists must not make assumptions about the nature of religion in the lives of congregations' members, nor underestimate the complexity of religious systems. Each synagogue or church is a unique entity with varying needs from mental health professionals (Pargament et al.).

> Nothing in the character of congregations excludes them from being understood or assisted through psychological methods, because churches and synagogues are similar to other systems in several important respects. They are open systems, both affecting and affected by their members and their larger social context. They have organizational structures and organizational processes. And, like other organizations, each congregation has its own 'personality,' including a special history, identity, language, purpose, structure, process, and social context. (Pargament, Falgout, & Ensing, 1991, p. 395)

In one study conducted by Kunst (1993), the level of religious conservatism among congregants in a Protestant Christian setting influenced attitudes toward mental health care within and outside the church—specifically, church psychological interventions vs. non-church psychology interventions or mixed interventions (traditional in-church and traditional non-church psychology interventions). Church interventions included bible study, prayer, pastoral counseling, and special Christian workshops. Traditional non-church psychological interventions included psychotherapy, stress management, support groups, and psychology workshops.

The study was an important step in helping psychologists design mental health programs to integrate into religious settings because the results indicated that conservative Protestant Christians had more favorable attitudes toward in-church, Christian mental health interventions than did less conservative Christians; therefore it is likely that traditional psychological techniques implemented in church settings would be less effective among more conservative Christians. The author concluded:

> By taking a congregation's conservative-liberal religiosity into consideration, professionals concerned with fostering mental health in the church will likely meet with greater success. Mental health education may also be an effective means of cultivating favorable attitudes toward traditional non-church psychology interventions, and to expand the range of available mental health resources of potential benefit to church members. (Kunst, 1993, p. 233)

This study is important because for psychologists to successfully integrate mental health services in religious settings, they need to have an idea about what interventions are meaningful to members of religious communities and what mental health interventions these members are open-minded about receiving.

Consultation. According to Pargament et al. (1988), synagogues and churches are rich centers of personal and social support for vast number of people in the United States, and therefore, religious organizations represent an area where psychologists have a true opportunity to effect change. "Through collaborative, consultative work with churches and synagogues, we have an opportunity to 'multiply our effects,' reaching important, underserved segments of the population reluctant to use traditional mental health services" (Pargament et al., p. 394).

The authors noted that most consultations with synagogues and churches focus in two areas: clergy-centered consultation and congregation-centered consultation, covering a full range of issues from concerns of individual members, to conflicts among clergy and staff, and organizational and programmatic questions. Pargament et al. (1988) characterized clergy-centered consultation as addressing the issues, concerns, and needs of the clergy; specifically, knowledge and skill-related concerns, identity-related concerns, and feeling-related concerns. As clergy members look to support their congregants, they often need help in honing their counseling skills, understanding their congregants, and developing skills to be of psychological assistance. Identity-related

concerns relate to clergy members learning to understand their role as pastors in their congregations. "Clergy are so often called on to be 'all things to all people' – theologians, administrators, educators, counselors, crisis workers, and community leaders – increasingly welcome psychological help built on respect for their professional competence" (Pargament et al., 1991, p. 395). Feeling-related concerns involve helping clergy members find more effective ways of coping with their feelings.

In addition to clergy-centered consultation, psychologists participate in congregation-centered consultation as well. "In more recent years, psychologists have become increasingly involved in consultation with a focus on the congregation, rather than the clergy, as the target of change" (Pargament et al., 1988, p. 396). Organizational change and programmatic development are the two primary foci. Programmatic development target areas typically include: marital and family enrichment, prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse, self-help or support groups, and other programs that address the mental health and social justice needs of congregants. Organizational change typically focuses on issues that impact the mission and future of a congregation. For example, while the issues are diverse and vary from congregation to congregation, they may include: lack of clear congregational mission, significant internal changes (new clergy member, changing demographics of constituents) or external changes (new zoning laws or need to change neighborhoods), lack of funding to support congregational needs, or other issues. Organizational and programmatic development are both areas where psychologists have expertise and can positively impact the lives of congregants in religious settings (Pargament et al.).

Psychology in the Jewish community. In a study, Weiss (2000), looked at synagogues in America to assess whether the psychospiritual needs of congregants were being met. Weiss feels that Jews are yearning for more psychological and spiritual sustenance and are seeking it through synagogues. Further, he believes that rabbis are not succeeding in nourishing their congregants' needs. He points to a trend of increasing numbers of Jews turning to pop-culture Jewish organizations such as The Kabbalah Center and Eastern religions to fulfill their needs, and suggests that rabbis must find a way to better address the psychospiritual needs of their congregants. As Jewish baby-boomers age, intermarriage rates increase, divorce rates increase, and blended families become more prevalent, the Jewish family needs a place to seek support and guidance.

> In addition, the values of Main Street have increasingly insinuated themselves into the community. Members of contemporary American synagogues are no longer insulated from substance abuse and addiction, spousal, sexual and child abuse and adolescent delinquency, indeed, or all that ails the wider society. (Weiss, p. 16)

In light of these major spiritual and psychological issues facing Jews, Weiss conducted an exploratory study to: (a) learn about the counseling needs of congregants, (b) to see how rabbis are perceived as counselors, (c) to help alert rabbis of the needs of their congregants so they would get additional counseling training, and (d) to impact rabbinic training programs to change the focus of their curricula to include more thorough attention to the training of rabbis as counselors. While Weiss's primary focus was equipping rabbis with counseling skills to meet the changing and increasing psychospiritual needs of congregants, his study opens the door for psychologists to serve as the mentors, consultants, teachers, and trainers of rabbis, providing them with the counseling skills they need to succeed in their positions.

In a review of the literature, Weiss (2000) cited only four published studies, supplemented by two Ph.D. dissertations, and one Psy.D. project that addressed the counseling role of rabbis. And, these studies gathered information from rabbinical providers of counseling as opposed to congregants, the consumers of the services. Weiss hoped to gain insight into ways to better train and equip rabbis for serving their congregants, by conducting a study that went beyond what was gleaned from the previous research studies, namely, discovering what psychological problems are typically brought to rabbis, counseling techniques and orientations utilized by rabbis, and referral practices of rabbis. Weiss thought it would be important to learn who brings his/her problems to clergy, understand predictors for the decision to consult with clergy rather than mental health professionals, and gain information about congregants' perceptions of clergy as counselors. The answers to these research questions have the potential to greatly benefit the psychological community in providing complementary psychological services to members of the Jewish community.

In Weiss's (2000) study, two types of focus groups were convened, one comprised of rabbis and the second comprised of lay members of the Jewish community, both groups representing members of reform, conservative, and orthodox denominations. The focus group members were handed a list of eleven questions to serve as a springboard for discussion. The 11 questions were as follows:

1. Why do you think that a member of the congregation would bring a problem to the rabbi rather than to a licensed mental health professional?

2. Why do you think a member of the congregation would bring a problem to a licensed mental health professional rather than to the rabbi?

3. Why do you think that a member of the congregation would *not* bring a problem to the rabbi?

4. Why do you think that a member of the congregation would *not* bring a problem to a licensed mental health professional?

5. Are you concerned that a licensed mental health professional might attempt to impose values upon you that go against you religious beliefs?

6. What kind of a problem would you consult your rabbi about?

7. What kind of problem would you *not* bring to your rabbi?

8. Why not?

9. How do you see your rabbi's role in the counseling process?

10. If your rabbi will refer you to a licensed mental health professional, how many sessions should your rabbi spend with you before he/she refers you out?

11. Are there any other matters you would like to raise? (p. 52)

The responses of the participants in the focus groups informed the construction of a questionnaire survey that was mailed to a representative sample of members of conservative, orthodox and reform synagogues in the Los Angeles area. The survey was intended to study a greater range of variables related to the content areas addressed in the focus groups.

Weiss (2000) concluded:

Finally, our findings may provide the impetus to train rabbis to be counselors in the Jewish counseling tradition, by teaching interventions that are uniquely Jewish or secular interventions that are tailored to the needs of religious Jews—and by utilizing the personal spiritual resources of their congregant clients and the social and spiritual resources of the congregation in achieving improved client coping, healing, relating and growth. (p. 17)

Weiss's study makes clear the need for psychological services in the Jewish community. The research shows that most respondents believed that mental health professionals are better trained than rabbis, that there is an advantage in having less social contact with mental health professionals than with rabbis, and that there is a greater likelihood of privacy in the mental health professional's office than in the rabbi's. "Nevertheless, despite the fact that mental health professionals were rated higher only on training and confidentiality, and that rabbis were rated higher on four qualities, a majority in each denomination preferred mental health professionals to rabbis as counselors" (Weiss, p. 131). Ultimately, in meeting the psychological needs of congregants, whether psychologists provide the services or consult and train rabbis, there is a burgeoning interest and emphasis within the Jewish community on meeting the psychospiritual needs of congregants in a meaningful and professional way.

There are some current programs that bring psychology into the Jewish community. For example, the Rafael Spiritual Healing Center was opened at the mental health agency, Jewish Family Services in Denver, with the express purpose of adding a psychological and spiritual component to the process of healing and comfort for families experiencing illness, bereavement, crisis, or profound life changes. The Center offers spiritual and psychological support, and recognizes the role of psychologists and mental health workers in contributing to the support and growth of community members above and beyond what is offered by rabbis. Another program, Jewish Spiritual Direction was written about extensively by Addison and Breitman, (2006), who describe the program as providing spiritual direction for Jews looking to increase their relationship with the Divine. "Spiritual guidance points the seeker beyond the 'normal,' to see the Divine that

underlies and transcends the everyday" (Addison & Breitman, p. xix). The program is facilitated by either a rabbi or a trained psychotherapist and is structured in a format that is similar to a therapy session.

Several American Reform congregations offer counseling services within their synagogues. For example, Temple Judea in Tarzana, California, utilizes mental health professionals from the community to offer support groups and counseling to congregants in need. They also require group therapy for young Jews in their 10th grade confirmation class, co-facilitated by a psychologist and rabbi. Temple Chai in Phoenix, Arizona, has a center for healing called the Shalom Center, where mental health professionals, doctors, nurses, and clergy work to provide comprehensive support services to congregants. Their belief is that these services will free the soul of a Jewish individual to pursue a higher religious purpose of contemplating God. These synagogues and many others recognize the need for collaborative psychological and spiritual services for congregants.

The national association that serves as the organizing body for the Reform Movement, the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) also works to guide reform congregations in meeting the psychospiritual needs of Jews. While the URJ does not have formal data tracking the utilization of psychologists in synagogue settings, they do provide resources and programs to congregations to support their congregants. Many of these programs are facilitated by mental health professionals. In addition, the URJ reports that many local Jewish mental health services, such as Jewish Family Services, work in collaboration with synagogues to implement programs that address the psychospiritual needs of congregants. For example, the URJ created a Jewish text-based program focused on eating disorders and then encouraged mental health professionals in local

congregations to facilitate the program. In addition, the work of the URJ in merging psychology and Judaism has spawned the development of several congregation sponsored conferences that explore the linkage of Judaism and mental health issues. The URJ also confirms that psychologists are working throughout the Reform Jewish community in the capacity of consultants to rabbis (rabbinic coaches), staff, leadership boards, and even congregations (R. F. Address, personal communication, May 2, 2008).

Collaboration between psychologists and clergy. Aside from a consulting or referring role, the literature shows that in many communities psychologists and clergy are actively collaborating, working together to meet the psychological needs of religious members of the community. This may be due in part to the large percentage of Americans who seek mental health services directly from clergy members.

> Indeed, surveys conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health have found that clergy are more likely than both psychologists and psychiatrists combined to be approached for help by a person who has a mental-health diagnosis included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III-Revised. (Oppenheimer, Flannelly, & Weaver, 2004, pp. 153-154)

Given the high percentages of people seeking services through clergy, Oppenheimer et al. suggest that a collaborative relationship between psychologists and clergy is one solution to providing meaningful services such as preventive interventions.

McMinn et al. (2003) addressed the difference between basic and advanced competence for psychologists collaborating with clergy. In their study, the collaboration largely took the form of referrals back and forth, but they acknowledged that with certain advanced competency, collaboration can go beyond basic referrals. Benes, Walsh, McMinn, Dominguez, and Aikins (2000) described a model for collaboration that included a wider spectrum of services, including: preventive, consultative, and direct

services. They proposed an indirect service delivery model in which psychologists and clergy work within a collaborative and consultative relationship. In their model, clergy not only refer congregants to psychologists, but consult with psychologists to become more empowered to do their own counseling with congregants, providing a continuum of services. Even when congregants are referred to psychologists, clergy remain involved in treatment whenever the clients grant permission. In their model, both clergy and psychologists are considered professionals with important resources to offer.

Perhaps the most expansive model of collaboration came from a study by Edwards, Lim, McMinn, and Dominguez (1999) who revealed four contexts for collaboration between psychologists and clergy: (a) mental health services, (b) congregational life (c) community concerns, and (d) academics. The authors did a qualitative analysis of 77 narratives offered by psychologists and clergy working collaboratively in order to differentiate the contexts in which these professionals collaborate. Mental health service collaboration largely incorporated consultations or referrals between psychologists and clergy. Congregational life included workshops, direct services, and assessments offered within a congregational setting to enhance congregational life.

The study indicated that some workshops were co-led by a psychologist and a clergyperson, while others just involved a psychologist as guest in a religious setting. In addition, "psychologists reported leading parenting skills groups, marriage enrichment groups, and personal growth groups" (Edwards et al., 1999, p. 549). In these types of situations, psychologists reported receiving a high level of support from the clergy leader of the congregation. Workshops also extended to speaking with groups of clergy about

issues that impact them and working with congregational staff to better define their vision. Direct services to enhance congregational life took many forms such as resolving conflicts between staff persons, training lay ministers in counseling techniques, or co-leading groups with clergy members at the congregation. In the study, collaboration for the sake of addressing community concerns involved psychologists and clergy working together in prison settings, hospice settings, marriage preparation programs in the community, crisis counseling after community disasters, and other public education efforts as well. And finally, collaboration in academic settings involved providing services in formal educational contexts outside the congregation.

 Collaboration between psychologists and rabbis. The collaboration between psychologists and clergy extends specifically to work between psychologists and rabbis. While a dearth of studies exist in the Jewish community highlighting this collaboration (Weiss, 2000), one recent study (Milstein, Midlarsky, Link, Raue, & Bruce, 2000) suggested that formal studies looking at collaboration between rabbis and psychologists would be fruitful because "in previous studies of the consultation practices of several types of clergy, rabbis demonstrated both the greatest frequency of interaction with mental health professionals and the greatest awareness of distinct psychiatric categories" (p. 609). In other words, although studies are lacking, it appears that collaborative alliances exist between psychologists and rabbis and it would be of benefit to Jewish congregants and clients as well as to Jewish psychologists and rabbis to explore these alliances to increase mental health support within the community.

Compatibility of Positive Psychology and Judaism

Many of the principles of positive psychology are very closely aligned with spiritual and religious concepts in Judaism. Just as positive psychologists study the mark of gratitude, forgiveness, optimism, hope, laughter, well-being, strength, and fulfillment in the human experience, Judaism embodies these ideas and many others that lead individuals to deeper meaning and connection in their lives (Snyder & Lopez, 2005). Further, positive psychology opens its doors to the intersection between psychology and religion, making it a more natural fit with certain concepts in Judaism, particularly the search for meaning (Peterson, 2006).

> Today's positive psychologists also emphasize a life of meaning and emphasize that it can be found in both spiritual and secular pursuits. In so doing, positive psychology places the psychology of religion in a central place it has rarely occupied in the history of the discipline. (p. 6)

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is an approach that calls on therapists to instill hope, cultivate optimism, and help clients identify and build upon their "signature strengths." (Peterson & Seligman, 2005, p. 18). According to the founder of positive psychology, Seligman, positive psychology has three pillars: the scientific study of positive subjective experiences, the study of positive individual traits, and the study of positive institutions. "A theory is implied here: Positive institutions facilitate the development and display of positive traits, which in turn facilitate positive subjective experiences" (Peterson, 2006, p. 20). Utilizing these principles, Seligman and many others around the country are finding ways to test their theories of change. Seligman and Czikszentmihalyi propose that "the mission of positive psychology is to understand and foster the factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish" (p. 5).

In describing the nature of positive psychology, Peterson (2006) writes the following:

> Positive psychology is the scientific study of what goes right in life, from birth to death and at all stops in between. Everyone's life has peaks and valleys, and positive psychology does not deny the valleys. Its signature premise is more nuanced but nonetheless important: What is good about life is as genuine as what is bad and therefore deserves equal attention from psychologists. It assumes that life entails more than avoiding or undoing problems and hassles. Positive psychology resides somewhere in that part of the human landscape that is metaphorically north of neutral. It is the study of what we are doing when we are not frittering life away. (p. 4)

Peterson explains that while the formalized field of positive psychology has only existed since 1998, concepts of happiness, wellness, self-efficacy, and human agency, and the research that supports these ideas draw from a long history of study in research in the various fields of psychology. This recent interest and collective awareness of positive psychology by modern psychologists may be due in large part to the exposure and promotion given to it by Seligman during his APA presidency. However, many would argue that the concepts have been around for decades (Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

> Indeed, pioneering thinkers over the past several decades have provided compelling exemplars of positive psychology in their theories and research endeavors. Therefore, what appears to be a phenomenon that suddenly jumped into our awareness, actually has been growing steadily through the efforts of these theorists and bench scientists. (Snyder & Lopez, p. 752)

Additionally, it is important to note that positive psychology includes an experiential element that is considered central to learning. Just as with certain other psychological approaches, such as humanistic/existential, the ideas of positive psychology can best be integrated through practice (Peterson, 2006).

While positive psychology does not offer a comprehensive theory or set of techniques necessary to be considered its own psychological paradigm at this time,

research in this area is vigorous and gaining momentum. Peterson and Seligman (2004) and a team of researchers put together a system classifying and measuring character strengths and virtues. In their research, they identified twenty-four specific strengths under six broad virtues that exist across culture and throughout history. Within this classification system, virtues are defined as "the core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence" (Peterson & Seligman, p.13). Character strengths are defined as "the psychological ingredients – processes or mechanisms – that define the virtues" (Peterson & Seligman, p. 13). In other words, strengths include pathways to achieving the virtues. The benefits of this type of positive classification are numerous, including setting the foundation for psychologists to help clients cultivate these positive traits as they strive for a good life (Peterson & Seligman). This will be achieved in part by helping clinicians speak a common language related to character strengths, based on empirical research. "Consensual classifications and associated approaches to assessment provide a common vocabulary for basic researchers and clinicians, allowing communication within and across these groups of professionals as well as with the general public" (Peterson & Seligman, p. 3). This classification of strengths addresses one of three primary focuses in positive psychology, which is the study of positive individual traits. The other two consist of studying positive subjective experiences and the study of institutions that enable positive experiences and positive traits (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Research in positive psychology is also focusing on specific interventions that may be utilized by clinicians. In the first large study designed in the area of positive psychology, Seligman and his research team designed an internet intervention that

reached almost 600 participants across the country (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Seligman found that three positive psychology interventions lastingly increased happiness and decreased depressive symptoms. Two of the exercises, entitled "using signature strengths in a good way" and "three good things" increased happiness for at least 6 months, and the exercise "gratitude visit" increased happiness for one month (Seligman et al.). In the study, happiness was defined as containing three constructs: positive emotion, engagement, and meaning. The results provided preliminary evidence for empirically-based positive psychology interventions that therapists can use to increase happiness and decrease depressive symptoms when treating clients. Despite the limitations of the study, research in the area of positive psychology is burgeoning, with increased funding and support from psychologists and foundations across the psychology spectrum (Seligman et al.).

In a more recent look at positive psychology interventions, Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of positive psychology interventions (PPIs) designed to enhance well-being and alleviate depressive symptoms. They looked at treatment interventions aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive behaviors, or positive cognitions, as these areas represent the foci of positive psychology. The study was the first systematic quantitative review of the research published to date. In their study they conducted a meta-analysis of 51 positive psychology interventions, ranging from gratitude exercises to mindfulness practices to hope therapy and myriad others. Their results show that positive psychology interventions both significantly enhanced well-being and decreased depressive symptoms, particularly for depressed individuals (versus non-depressed. However, both clinically depressed and healthy populations are likely to

benefit from positive psychology interventions. They were most effective with those who were self-selected for the interventions (who perhaps had positive expectations for the interventions or were motivated), and those who were older (effects increased with age). In addition, interventions administered in individual treatment were more effective than group-administered or individually-administered, and longer interventions produced greater gains (Sin & Lyubomirsky). This broad meta-analysis provides solid empirical support for the role of positive psychology interventions in helping individuals achieve more optimal mental health and well-being, as well as fighting against symptoms of depression.

The interest in discovering positive psychology interventions that may be effective in the treatment of a clinical population in addition to bolstering the strength of a non-clinical population has led to the early emergence of positive psychotherapy (PPT), developed largely by positive psychologists Rashid and Anjum (2008). The researchers were motivated to develop PPT in part by the lack of psychotherapies that attend to the strengths of clients, with the large majority focusing on clients' presenting weaknesses. In addition, prevention of psychological disorders is largely absent in traditional psychotherapies (Rashid & Anjum).

The goal of PPT is to build positive emotions, strengths, and meaning in clients' lives, with the end result of promoting happiness and complete mental health (Rashid & Anjum, 2008). As with positive psychology, PPT is not meant to supplant traditional therapies that are empirically supported for treating various mental health ailments; contrary, it aims to reach beyond traditional therapies in support of the development of positive emotions and strengths. However, PPT is not designed only to add value to the

lives of those who are functioning at high levels. It was developed for the treatment and prevention of various disorders. Complete mental health is both the absence of psychopathology and the presence of happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction. PPT focuses on the interventions and avenues that promote the positive elements of life (Rashid & Anjum).

The theoretical basis for PPT stems from the assumption that positive emotions are as authentic as negative ones (Rashid & Anjum, 2008). "PPT regards positive emotions and strengths of clients as being as authentic as their weaknesses are, valued in their own right, contributing to happiness as weaknesses and symptoms contribute to psychological disorders" (Rashid & Anjum, pp. 259-260). The central hypothesis of PPT is that building positive emotions, building strengths, and finding meaning are potent factors in treating psychopathology and buffering against psychological disorders. The interventions utilized in PPT are rooted in the research of positive psychology indicating that happiness (positive emotion, engagement, and meaning) is scientifically measurable and manageable; therefore, PPT is designed to further these aims (Rashid & Anjum). A series of preliminary randomized control trials, conducted both with depressed clients as well as with a non-clinical population led to clinically and statistically significant decreases in depression and increases in happiness (Rashid & Anjum).

One of the mechanisms of change in PPT is rooted in the *broaden-and-build* theory developed by Frederickson (2001). She looked at the many ways that principles of positive psychology can be applied in clinical settings. Her foundational idea is to shift the focus in therapy from one of a problems-based perspective to a strengths-based perspective. She asserts that events in life are neither inherently positive nor negative,

and are free of value until placed in a context of meaning established through comparison with other events. The more individuals are aware of internal positive emotions, the more they can utilize these emotions to lessen the negative attributional process associated with difficult life events. In addition, cultivating positive emotions over time can lead to a greater sense of psychological well-being that lasts well beyond a pleasurable moment. Creating and enjoying pleasure in life is not simply feeding into a desire for instant gratification; the effects of well-being are lasting. Fredrickson's *broaden-and-build* theory suggests that building and broadening a repertoire of positive emotions can promote a reserve of personal resources that can be tapped-into during future times of psychological hardship – like a reservoir of psychological resiliency (Fredrickson).

There are hundreds of psychologists currently looking at concepts of positive psychology and their research will define the future of the field (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). As Peterson (2006) wrote, "What is the future of positive psychology? The details are impossible to predict, although the endeavor will swim or sink in accordance with the science it produces over the next decade" (p. 305). One area that needs focus is that of the biological basis of psychological wellness and "the good life." In addition, research needs to elucidate the idea that feelings of subjective well-being may be changeable as opposed to genetically fixed (Peterson). Further, cultural factors and information need to be incorporated in a greater understanding of positive psychology as it affects people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Other potential research questions include ways to increase the good life, how to encourage people to participate, and creating interventions that produce positive outcome results (Peterson). As positive psychologists continue to search for ways to help individuals thrive, greater connections will

undoubtedly be generated with spiritual and religious leaders seeking to answer the same questions.

Positive Psychology and Judaism

In many ways positive psychology goes hand-in-hand with Judaism. Myers (2000) described a connection between happiness, finding meaning in life, and spiritual commitment. In addressing the reasons why faith seems to increase happiness, he wrote, "Another possible explanation for the faith-well-being correlation is the sense of meaning and purpose that many people derive from their faith" (p. 64). Early philosophers, including Victor Frankel, recognized that human beings by nature are searching for meaning. This search for meaning is not only a spiritual pursuit, but one that positive psychologists are working to understand, particularly as they explore the ways that meaning impacts psychological functioning (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Baumeister and Vohs described the search for meaning as one of humanity's primary tools for seeking stability in a constantly changing world. They suggested that there are levels of meaning-making and that at different times in life, people are inclined to lower or higher levels of meaning. "Increases in level of meaning do more than help one escape from suffering: They also enhance positive satisfaction and the sense of fulfillment (Baumeister & Vohs, p. 610). In addition:

> Even in the absence of suffering, trauma, pathology, or misfortune, human life will fall far short of its best potential if it lacks meaning. By understanding how people seek and find meaning in their lives, positive psychology can enhance the human experience immensely. (Baumeister & Vohs, p. 616)

It is clear that this concept of meaning-making is central to the work of positive psychologists and theologians alike.

A Positive Psychology Approach to the Themes of the Jewish Holiday Calendar

Positive psychology provides a relevant framework for looking at the psychological themes embedded in Judaism, and specifically, the Jewish holiday calendar. Just as the search for meaning is central to a fuller understanding of both positive psychology and Judaism, there are additional connections between the spiritual elements of Judaism and a psychological approach to human development and thriving. And while Judaism is not monolithic and there are multiple themes and concepts that can be related to each Jewish holiday, many of the themes of positive psychology are a natural fit with Judaism, and cut across Judaism's denominations.

The themes associated with the holidays of the Jewish calendar provide a fertile landscape for personal exploration and growth. Each Jewish holiday is rich with psychological themes that challenge and invite individuals into a cycle of reflection, month by month, year after year. Jewish authors, rabbis, and psychologists have written copiously on themes related to holidays and their thoughts are manifested in books, sermons, adult education courses, and lectures. In fact, each week, rabbis speak in their congregations about the Torah portion of the week, gleaning wisdom from the text about how Jews may live better, fuller, more meaningful lives. This process of looking to religious texts and writings for psychological understanding and guidance applies to the cycle of Jewish holidays in each calendar year as well.

Holidays are a central focus of Jewish identity and learning, and provide ample opportunities for individuals to explore themes of growth and change from various perspectives (Waskow, 1982). In describing the meaning of the Jewish cycle of holidays,

Waskow stated the following in his book, *Seasons of our Joy: A Modern Guide to the Jewish Holidays*:

>All of them [holidays] are richer than we are liable to remember, because they fit together into a coherent whole. As the seasons follow each other in a profound pattern, as a human life grows and falls in a profound pattern, as a whole society grows and changes in a profound pattern – so do the Jewish holidays. Indeed, they were intended to teach us how to experience more fully the profound patterns of the world – how to enrich them, nurture them, learn from them. So if we can learn how the cycle of the festivals works as a cycle, we can learn how to live better with the earth and air and water; how to live better with each other; and how to live better inside our selves. (p. xviii)

Waskow continued:

>And the cycle would also help us as individuals. It is intended to help us feel more deeply, more intensely, the cycle of feelings that make us fully human. We learn from these holy days that when it is time to grieve, we are to grieve deeply. When it is time to be angry, we should be furious. If it is time for happiness, we dance with joy. Through walking the path of the year, we can renew in ourselves a sense of deep calm, internal harmony, the peaceful sense of *shalom.* (p. xxiii)

Strassfeld (1985) described the Jewish holidays as an experience of traveling in time, purposeful events that are layered with meaning, offering insight into several dimensions of existence. The holidays allow Jews to encounter psychological themes, both human themes and themes of transcendence.

>It is part of the richness of the festival cycle that any one holiday can mean different things to different people. Each of us will find that some holidays will speak more clearly than others at different times in our lives; however, each also provides a sustaining continuity to our lives as we celebrate it once again. (p. 2)

In their book, *Judaism for Two*, Fuchs-Kreimer and Wiener (2005) utilized the Jewish calendar as a guide for couples. They explained, "More than just calendar commitments, the holidays carry with them a view of what is important in life, a set of assumptions that challenge and deepen the way we think about relationships" (p. 2). They continued by suggesting that the holidays provide an opportunity for individuals to shift

perspectives, creating new personal narratives (Fuchs-Kreimer & Wiener). There is no one authority on the interpretation of a Jewish holiday's meaning. However, for a more extensive description of the Jewish holidays, including information about the history, themes, rituals, and customs, see (Appendix A).

There is a flow to the Jewish calendar that brings individuals on a journey of highs and lows, the depths of which one might expect to encounter in life. The rhythm of the calendar is marked by the rhythm of nature and the changing seasons, as well as the rhythm of a human life – marked by change and development. Conceptually, this flow of ups and downs mirrors the principles of positive psychology, which seeks to view humans from a complete lens, incorporating both the difficult and the positive. Gable and Haidt (2005) stated, "The recent movement in positive psychology strives toward an understanding of the complete human condition, an understanding that recognizes human strengths as clearly as it does human frailties and that specifies how the two are linked" (p. 109).

Specifically, the themes of the Jewish holidays are broadly and easily correlated with positive psychology themes, outlined by Peterson and Seligman (2004) in their classification of character strengths and virtues. It is important to note that Judaism and Jewish holidays are complex and encompass layers of themes and concepts; however, when considering how positive psychology relates to the Jewish holidays, certain common themes emerge. For example, Passover elicits themes of personal and community empowerment. Community empowerment can be related to Peterson and Seligman's character strength of *citizenship*.

In the table below, each Jewish holiday is paired with a related psychological theme and more specifically, a character strength that has been researched in the field of positive psychology (for some Jewish holidays, the psychological theme and positive psychology character strength are the same). The character strengths are rooted in empirical research measured and classified by Peterson and Seligman (2004). In their classification system, character strengths are grouped together based on similarities and organized under six broader character virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. The positive psychology character strengths shown in Table 1 represent a cross-section of strengths from each of the six virtues outlined by Peterson and Seligman.

Table 1

Jewish Holidays, Psychological Themes, and Related Positive Psychology Character Strengths

Jewish Holiday	Psychological Theme	Positive Psychology Character Strength
Rosh Hashannah	Self-reflection	Integrity
Yom Kipper	Forgiveness	Forgiveness and Mercy
Sukkot	Gratitude	Gratitude
Hanukkah	Hope	Hope
Purim	Humor	Humor
Passover	Empowerment (Personal/Community)	Citizenship
Shavuot	Meaning-making	Spirituality
Tisha B'av	Loss, Posttraumatic Growth	Perspective (Wisdom)

The High Holy Days: Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur. "Through the holiday cycle of the year and other rituals, the past can be summoned up to infuse the present with meaning" (Greenberg, 1988, p. 39). The Jewish calendar begins with the High Holy Days of the New Year, *Rosh Hashannah* and *Yom Kippur.* "The blast of the *Shofar* ushers in the New Year, announcing the season of repentance" (Knobel, 1983, p. 5). It is during *Rosh Hashannah* that Jews are commanded to rest, to sanctify the day by making it holy and different from the other days of the year. During this holy day, there is an emphasis on self-reflection and self-renewal. Jews commit themselves to change, taking a spiritual inventory of how they have lived their lives during the past year. For our ancestors, *Rosh Hashannah* was, "a day to change their lives and turn toward God" (Waskow, 1982, p. 2).

Rosh Hashannah is about engaging in true self-examination in order to make changes for the future. This process of self-reflection does not emphasize the examination of sin or evil-doing, as these are not Jewish themes; instead, the focus is reflecting about the ways that individuals "missed the mark" in their relationships with self and others. "At this time we try to look as objectively as we can at our actions of the previous year" (Mijares, 2003, p. 115). During *Rosh Hashannah,* Jews are reminded that it was in a still small voice that God was heard…not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in a still small voice. Judaism emphasizes that in these single moments of deep reflection, Jews can gain clarity about making better choices, mending relationships, and coping with difficulties. It is in these moments of self-reflection that comfort can be found and the spirit of change can be harnessed. Reflecting can lead to greater balance

and can help individuals come closer to hitting the mark in the future. The more Jews are able to self-reflect and look inward, the greater chance they have to make changes.

From a positive psychology perspective, self-reflection is critical for psychological wholeness. And from a larger psychological perspective as well, the study of the mind and the psyche is based largely on the concept of self-reflection. Regardless of psychological orientation, it is clear that the ability to become aware of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions serves as the foundation for making change. For Freud and psychoanalysts, bringing dynamic unconscious material to the conscious mind was a critical component of change. For cognitive theorists, awareness of how thoughts and beliefs impact mood is the foundation for positive change. For behaviorists, even without deep self-insight, one may notice how changes in behavior often lead to positive change (Clemens, 2003). Reflection is a step in a process toward self-awareness, which can lead to chance.

> Reflection by its very definition implies a 'bending or folding back' like a ray of light. In essence, one reflects light and focus within, taking time to look more deeply, and pulling back to discover a wider view. Reflection, then, becomes a contemplative process undertaken to uncover knowledge and filled with the potential for transformation. (La Torre, 2005, p. 85)

Positive psychology also emphasizes self-awareness, suggesting that reflection may be a necessary catalyst in the process of harnessing and increasing gratitude, hope, and other emotions that impact one's sense of meaning, engagement, and positive emotional states. In other words, one must begin to notice and reflect on one's internal sense of subjective well-being, before beginning to make changes, or as Judaism would suggest, changing to avoid "missing the mark" as often.

Rosh Hashannah is followed by the holy day of atonement and confession of transgressions, *Yom Kippur*, bringing individuals closer with God and each other as they begin a new year. *Yom Kippur* represents the deep moment of highest striving for Jews. "At *Yom Kippur,* God and the Jewish people stand face to face at an inward, not an outward mountain. It is the mountain of our misdeeds and our sorrows" (Waskow, 1982, p. 27). In her book, *Sacred Therapy* (2003), Frankel discussed the ways in which Jewish teachings mirror a psychological, therapeutic process for change. She described *Yom Kippur*, using the theme of *teshuvah,* returning, as a model for change during the High Holy Days.

> The key to *teshuvah*, according to the rabbis, is knowing how to harness this very moment in time – the now! When we live in the now, we are always free to change the course of our lives. The evil urge, said the rabbis, often comes to us as a voice reminding us of our past errors in order to discourage us from believing we can change. This voice tries to convince us that the past will always determine the future. And so the rabbis taught that whenever the word *now* (*atah* in Hebrew) appears in the scriptures, it alludes to the possibility of *teshuvah*, or repentance. Through *teshuvah* we always have the power and freedom to begin anew so that our past need not determine our future. Not only can the pain of the past be healed, but we actually have the power to transform it into a redemptive force in our lives. (pp. 139-140)

Yom Kippur is also a call to action, a call to righteousness. James wrote, "The best repentance is to up and act for righteousness, and forget that you ever had relations with sin" (as cited in Stern, 1998, p. 160). It's a time to ask for forgiveness and a time to forgive. It is a day in which Jews strip themselves of their heaviest armor – their defenses, untruths, material protections, and emotional barriers used for hiding themselves, in order to stand as vulnerable as possible before God, self, and others, in an effort to return to a more righteous path. Some of the most powerful liturgy of the day,

giving meaning to the nature of *Yom Kippur* is found in the *Kol Nidre* prayer, read at the

beginning of the *Yom Kipppur*:

> *Kol Nidre* is the prayer of people not free to make their own decision, people
> forced to say what they do not mean. In repeating this prayer, we identify with the
> agony of our forebears who had to say 'yes' when they meant 'no.' *Kol Nidre* is
> also a confession: we are all transgressors, all exiled from the Highest we know,
> all in need of the healing of forgiveness and reconciliation. For what we have
> done, for what we may yet do, we ask pardon; for rash words, broken pledges,
> insincere assurances, and foolish promises, may we find forgiveness. (Stern,
> 1989, p. 250)

It is said at the end of *Yom Kippur* that the fate of every individual Jew is sealed

in the Book of Life. In other words, there is hope at the end of a solemn and holy day—a

day that is painful for Jews to endure. "We are reminded that brokenness is part of the

package, that our challenge is to grow in character, and that, in that end, there is joy and

blessing in the work of repair" (Fuchs-Kreimer & Wiener, 2005, p. 108). "*Yom Kippur*

provides us with the opportunity to alter our conduct, readjust our values, and set things

right in our lives" (Knobel, 1983, p. 49). Asking for forgiveness entails confessing or

acknowledging acts of wrongdoing against others, self, and God, taking responsibility for

the wrongdoing, and repenting. It is our obligation as Jews during *Yom Kippur* and

throughout the year to ask for forgiveness. Should another not grant forgiveness, it is

imperative to ask on three different occasions before accepting that forgiveness may not

be granted by another. There is hope in new beginnings and *Yom Kippur* is the chance to

hit the restart button, to do the work necessary for healing and a return to a better self.

Positive psychologists assert that the concept of forgiveness is one of primary

focus for human well-being. Historically, forgiveness was thought to be predominantly a

subject of theology, and therefore, didn't receive much attention in the scientific

psychology community. However, positive psychologists, including Pargament and

Mahoney (2002), view forgiveness as a construct that while rooted in religion, carries a spiritual significance that can be applied in preventive, educational, and therapeutic settings. There is evidence in support of prosocial changes that occur when individuals forgive others.

> When people forgive, their responses (i.e., what they feel and think about, what they want to do, or how they actually behave) toward people who have offended or injured them become less negative and more positive – or prosocial – over time. (McCullough & Witvliet, 2002)

Research suggests that forgiveness is essential to subjective feelings of well-being. "In general, self-report measures of the propensity to forgive (and, conversely, the propensity toward vengeance) are correlated positively (or, conversely, negatively) with measures of mental health and well-being" (McCullough & Witvliet, 2002, p. 451). In close relationships, forgiveness promotes relationship harmony (McCullough, 2000). There are certain factors in relationships that allow for forgiveness, including: empathy, perspective-taking, and lack of rumination. In addition, qualities of relationships such as closeness, commitment and satisfaction also impact the ability of individuals to forgive one another (McCullough).

According to a cover story written for Harvard Women's Health Watch, research suggests that forgiving another person can make a positive difference in our lives. "Now there's increasing evidence that when we forgive, we help ourselves to greater health and a happier life" ("Five for 2005: Five reasons to forgive," 2005). The authors noted that psychological research points to the following five benefits of forgiving: reduced stress, reduced risk for heart disease, stronger relationships, help with pain and chronic illness, and greater happiness. If, in fact, forgiving is a factor in psychological well-being, then it

is viewed by positive psychologists as a human strength that can be drawn upon to sustain or improve mental health.

In a recent study of conceptualizations of forgiveness, Mullet, Girard and Bakhshi (2004) studied approximately 1000 laypeople in France and concluded that to forgive another person may encourage repentance in the offender, and better behavior in the future. By forgiving another and setting a good example, the offender may be more likely to "acknowledge their wrongs, regret their acts, and repair their faults" (pp. 84-85).

Andrews (2000) described the difference between unilateral forgiveness, which is unconditional and is complete the moment a person decides to grant it, versus negotiated forgiveness, in which the participation, admittance of wrongdoing, and repentance of the wrongdoer plays a role in the process of forgiveness. Negotiated forgiveness is a joint interpersonal effort in which parties come together to work through injustices and move beyond them. One of the benefits of negotiated forgiveness, beyond acknowledgement and repentance by the wrongdoer, is a gesture or agreement that the offending action will not occur again in the future. According to Andrews, "We are social beings; the act of forgiveness, which re-establishes severed ties between us, must be built on a recognition of our interconnectedness. The forgiver and the forgiven need one another for justice to be enacted" (p. 84).

In Worthington's REACH model of forgiveness (2001), forgiveness is an intrapersonal experience, not an interpersonal one. The model consists of five steps to forgiveness: (R) recall the hurt, (E) empathy, (A) altruism, (C) commit to forgiveness, and (H) hold on. Worthington's model of forgiveness may be commensurate with Judaism's concept of *Teshuvah*. While *Teshuvah* is usually thought of as a process

involving individual responsibility for seeking to mend relationships, it can also involve

forgiving another. While this may seem to suggest an interpersonal process, forgiving

involves a critical intrapersonal component, one of letting go. The concept of *Teshuvah*,

or returning, is about fixing relationships in an effort to ultimately let go.

      Sukkot. Sukkot comes on the heels of *Rosh Hashannah* and *Yom Kippur*. The

process of renewal, self-examination, searching for a truer self-identity, and

reconciliation with God and others through forgiveness is followed by the joyful

celebration of *Sukkot.* (Waskow, 1982) "Its beautiful symbolism of the successful

harvest provides a welcome change of religious pace from the solemn days of prayer and

introspection of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*" (Knobel, 1983, p. 80). *Sukkot* is a

harvest festival that connects the Jewish people with their history and with the fruits of

the land. During *Sukkot* Jews focus on the experience of fulfillment. *Sukkot* is the

"Festival of Booths," recollecting the time when the Jewish people traveled in the

wilderness and lived in temporary huts. During this time, they gathered the harvest and

enjoyed the fruits of their labor. Part of the spiritual significance is the sense of protection

and safety the Jews felt while living in the wilderness. They were able to reap the benefits

of their work, rejoicing in it.

      The harvest of *Sukkot* also reminds Jews that they are caretakers of the world and

of each other, and it is a time to remember and care for those who are less fortunate

(Knobel, 1983). And just as *Sukkot* is a time of joy, gratitude, and safety, there is the

reality that a *sukkah* (booth) is only a temporary shelter – that while Jews feel the comfort

and protection of God, there is also an element of impermanence that accompanies this

holiday. Fuchs-Kreimer and Wiener (2005) stated:

> It symbolizes both the bounty and the frailty of the created world. It embodies the paradoxical truth that, in nature, growth can occur only when it coexists with death and decay. The *sukkah* is a reminder that to be alive is to change, and that everything that lives must die. Constructed to last for just one week, its existence is finite. It offers beauty, respite, and peace, but not eternity. (pp. 127-128)

Knobel (1983) echoed this idea, writing, "Even while we rejoice, the *Sukkah's* temporary and fragile structure reminds us how precarious life may be" (p. 80). These themes of *Sukkot* provide rich psychological material that impacts human growth and development: uncertainty, change, vulnerability, safety, protection, gratitude, joy, and fulfillment.

Gratitude is a virtue that is deeply rooted in Judaism. In many ways, this connection to religion has kept modern psychologists from exploring its psychological efficacy. However, positive psychologists view gratitude as an emotion that is a foundational part of psychological well-being, and an area in which they are gaining momentum in conducting scientific research (Emmons & Shelton, 2002).

> Gratitude may in fact be a positive, universal characteristic that transcends historical and cultural periods. Therefore, illuminating the nature of gratitude and its functioning in both individual and societal contexts might help to elucidate cross-cultural similarities and differences in emotional experience and expression, and, consequently, advance psychology's mission in identifying a taxonomy of human strengths. (p. 460)

Emmons and Crumpler (2000) stated, "a conscious focus on gratitude makes life more fulfilling, meaningful, and productive" (p. 67). Recent studies have shown that there are emotional and psychological benefits that accompany the experience of gratitude, and that these benefits seem to positively impact somatic health (reviewed in Emmons & Crumpler).

In an additional study, individuals who kept gratitude logs not only scored higher on measures of psychological well-being, but scored higher in displaying prosocial behaviors such as helping others, compared to a the control group (Emmons & Shelton,

2002). Emmons and Shelton reviewed a study (McAdams, Reynolds & Lewis, 2001), which challenged those in the psychology field who believe that gratitude is simply taking a pollyannish view, or searching for the good in inherently negative situations. On the contrary, the study reported the benefits of extracting good from difficult situations. Emmons & Shelton described their impression of the results as follows:

> One can draw a significant conclusion from these studies, in our estimation, in that grateful individuals are not naively optimistic, nor are they under some illusion that suffering and pain are nonexistent. Rather, these persons have consciously taken control by choosing to extract benefits from adversity, with one of the major benefits being the perception of life as a gift. (p. 468)

Watkins, Woodard, Stone, and Kolts (2003) showed that grateful thinking improves mood and found that grateful individuals report a greater sense of subjective well-being. In fact, these individuals appear to enjoy simple pleasures because their threshold for gratitude may be lower than those who are less predisposed to feelings of gratefulness (Watkins et al.). In their study, gratitude was inversely related to many states and showed the strongest negative relationship with depression.

> With the emergence of the positive psychology movement, now is the time for a renewed focus on gratitude as a valued subjective experience, a source of human strength, and an integral element promoting the civility requisite for the flourishing of families and communities. (Emmons & Shelton, 2002, p. 468)

Hanukkah. As winter arrives, *Hanukkah* is a look into the darkest days of the year, mirroring the dark experiences of our ancestors. The story tells of the search for light in a time of darkness, a heroic victory, and rededication. At its core is the concept of hope and miracles. In modern times, Jews gather in the home during *Hanukkah* to remember the miracle experienced by their ancestors and to think about miracles in their own lives. It is a time to seek light, and Jews use the symbolism of light as they strive to model righteous acts to others. There is an awareness that hope and miracles are often

what sustain people in times of darkness. Fuchs-Kreimer and Weiner (2005) suggest that throughout many generations, Jews have retold the narrative of *Hanukkah,* highlighting different aspects. This idea of evolving narratives is one key aspect of this holiday, and it reminds Jews to continue to ascribe new meanings to past events in order to grow. "*Hanukkah's* changing narratives encourage us to reconsider our own old stories in light of our new insights" (Fuchs-Kreimer & Weiner, p. 17). While there are many themes attached to the holiday of *Hanukkah*, hope is a central theme for finding light in the midst of darkness.

Interestingly, positive psychologist, Snyder (2004), used a similar metaphor for hope in his article, "Hope and depression: A light in the darkness." The author presented hope as a natural balancing force against depression by analyzing the message he found salient in William Styron's book *Darkness Visible.* Snyder highlighted the way that Styron used darkness as a metaphor for depression, and likened it to the words that clients use in session to describe their experiences with depression: suffering, victimization, evil, danger, isolation, confinement, mystery, uncertainty, endlessness, and others. Snyder explained that in his clinical experience, even in the darkest of depressions, there can still be some psychological light, or "sliver of hope." Hope serves as a balancing force against the negative and painful experience of depression. Snyder stated,

> Within the psychological makeup of troubled people, however extreme those persons may seem in their particular problems, there are balancing psychological assets that can be called upon for help. This latter belief reflects my roots in positive psychology, where strengths are considered along with the sole emphasis on weaknesses. I think that my positive psychology perspective rests on a fundamental belief in the power and pervasiveness of the balancing forces in human nature (and nature more generally). (p. 349)

Finally, Snyder believes it is the active process of hope that restores balance over time to individuals who are depressed, in essence serving as a light in a sea of darkness.

Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon (2002) redefined the construct of hope, building a more comprehensive construct from an older, more scholarly view. The purpose of their work was to include the construct of hope in the body of positive psychology research and practice, where hope provides an additional research framework for understanding and enhancing adaptive functioning—one very core goal of positive psychologists. In describing their definition of the construct of hope, the authors stated, "Simply put, hopeful thought reflects the belief that one can find pathways to desired goals and become motivated to use those pathways" (p. 257). Based on this hope theory, the authors suggested that hope drives the emotions and well-being of individuals. They stated that hope is a combination of goal-directed thinking (in which an individual formulates goals) and motivation, or agency (one's perceived capacity to create pathways to goal attainment). Goal-directed thinking called *pathways thinking* is then utilized together with motivation to move toward a goal.

Snyder et al. (2002) clearly presented hope as a cognitive process that results in the flow of positive emotion as opposed to an emotional construct. "We are proposing that goal-pursuit cognitions cause emotions" (p. 258). Ultimately, positive hope-driven cognitions play a role in greater human thriving. The authors cited previous studies that make a connection between hope and positive psychological adjustment, as well as hope and the process of forming meaning in one's life.

Feldman and Snyder (2005) noted that hopeful thinking is a common denominator in theories of meaning, and that meaning is related to lower levels of negative cognitions.

In comparing three major theories of meaning they stated, "Despite these differences, we have attempted to convey that all these theories share an important commonality—a reliance on the pursuit of personal goals" (p. 405). The authors suggested that pursuit of personal goals, specifically thinking pathways and agency are at the heart of the construct of hope. The remainder of their article was devoted to a study of the relationship between the constructs of meaning and hope. They found that hope is a component of a larger *life meaning* construct. They also found that both life meaning and hope are correlated with levels of anxiety. "We believe that hope helps to buffer against anxiety above and beyond traditional meaning variables because high hope, by definition, involves positive future expectations" (Feldman & Snyder, p. 417). The authors concluded that hope may play a very large role in understanding how individuals make meaning in their lives. This is a central concept of study for positive psychologists, and supports the idea that hope is an important aspect of individual thriving and psychological well-being.

> Hopeful thinking may be the process by which the bricks of meaning—goals—are assembled into a solid foundation of life meaning. Goals represent our aspirations for the future, and to the extent that we have achieved these goals, we have constructed a meaningful life. (p. 418)

Purim. Just as winter draws to a close, *Purim* reminds the Jewish people of more miracles in the search for freedom. If *Yom Kippur* is a holiday to take masks off, *Purim* is a time to put them on. It is a holiday of laughter and revelry. Excess, partying, and playfulness are all part of the fun. "…*Purim* became a Jewish version of the widespread human custom of a season for relaxing the rules, even for making fun of the most serious parts of life" (Waskow, 1982, p. 118). The spirit of *Purim* is one in which Jews laugh at themselves and don't take life too seriously. Similar to other Jewish holidays, there is a reminder that in order to have fun as a community, Jews must take care of fellow Jews

and ensure their ability to participate in the fun as well. There is an emphasis on giving to those less fortunate and a custom of sending goodies to loved ones and friends. *Purim* is an opportunity to let loose and indulge.

In spite of the revelry, *Purim* also contains a more serious message. The revelry and laughter of the holiday is the result of a fight against oppression, and liberation through honest self-revelation. During a holiday in which Jews wear masks and lose themselves in laughter and intoxication, it is actually the taking-off of masks, the self-revelation that ultimately saves the Jewish people from further oppression. In many ways, *Purim* foreshadows the upcoming holiday of *Passover* with shared themes of personal and communal freedom. *Purim* is about the experience of living as a member of a minority community. Symbolically, it also represents the self-exile that humans experience when they wear masks and refrain from revealing their true selves. Self-revelation requires taking a risk and it is an act of courage. *Purim* reminds Jews that personal freedom is gained by balancing the serious tasks of caring for each other and the world by fighting against oppression, with a joyful, light, laughter-inducing perspective that is a necessary part of life. And, succeeding in such a serious task requires both serious attention and humor. It requires consistent effort and celebrations of successes, small and large (Waskow, 1982). Greenberg (1998) stated:

> No wonder *Purim* speaks in the language of party, feast, and drinking. Celebrate the vulnerability of life. Eat, drink, and be merry, for today the good win! Tomorrow the turn of the wheel may endanger it all. Do not despair or sulk! Admit your vulnerability and share your wealth with the poor, your friends, your family. In this way, pleasure expresses religious value. The material embodies the spiritual hope and affirmation. (p. 253)

As reviewed in his chapter entitled, *Humor*, Lefcourt (2002) cited a long history of psychologists who support the notion of humor's positive psychological effects,

including McDougall, Freud, and more recently, Cousins and Dixon. Lefcourt looked at previous research and stated the following, "In brief, humor has most often been found to be associated with lessened dysphoric affects" (p. 624). While some humor does not have positive effects, such as humor that is aggressive or self-defeating, research suggests that humor that is self-enhancing has positive psychological benefits (Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsch, 2004). In their study, Kuiper, et. al (2004), broke down the construct of humor into multidimensions that reflect both positive and negative aspects of humor. They found clear distinctions in beneficial aspects of humor that impacted well-being.

> We began by ascertaining the extent to which the most well-established positive component of sense of humor, namely coping humor, was associated with our various indices of psychological well-being . . . higher levels of coping humor were linked with significantly lower levels of depression, anxiety and negative affect, as well as significantly higher levels of self-esteem (both global and social) and positive affect. (p. 154)

As a result of their study, the authors concluded that humor is a multidimensional construct, consisting of both adaptive and maladaptive components. Positive aspects of sense of humor are related to psychological well-being and negative aspects correlated to lower levels of well-being (Kuiper et al.). This study, as well as others looking at the benefits of humor, are of interest to positive psychologists, studying the many ways that humans can thrive.

Humor is also known to buffer against mental and physical illnesses resulting from the effects of stress, because humor is an effective stress moderator (Cann, Holt, & Calhoun, 1999; Martin & Lefcourt, 1983). In a study by Martin and Lefcourt (1983), individuals with high scores on both the Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ) and the Coping Humor Scale (CHS) exhibited lower mood disturbances in spite

of increases in negative life events. In other words, those employing humor as a coping strategy were less negatively impacted by the stress accompanying negative life events.

Humor is also shown to play an important role as a source for hope, and may effectively inhibit negative thoughts in favor of more positive ones (Vilaythong, Arnau, Rosen, & Mascaro, 2003). The study by Vilaythong et al. (2003) is consistent with Fredrickson's (2001) "broaden and build" model, suggesting that positive emotions, such as humor, may stimulate cognitive activity in such a way that elicits new thought-action paths, in lieu of the more rigid and narrow thought-action paths that typically accompany negative emotions. Vilaythong et al. suggested that if humor could lead to this type of thought-action expansion, then it could also lead to increased self-efficacy for handling life's stresses. In their study, humor was defined as a multidimensional construct consisting of humor production, humor as a coping strategy, attitudes toward humorous people, and attitudes about humor. The results indicated that humor can positively influence hopefulness because as a moderator of stress, humor enables individuals to feel less stress, and therefore more state hopefulness. Humor appears to be a powerful factor in coping with stress and ultimately contributing to better mental health.

Passover. Spring bursts with liberation and new life, mirroring the story of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. The season brings renewed hope, and through the retelling of the story of the Exodus, Jews are renewed. *Passover* focuses on moving out of narrow spaces, freedom, and redemption. "The feverish hilarity of early spring, of *Purim*, becomes a more directed, more devoted vigor" (Waskow, 1982, p. 133). Passover represents a striving for something better and a belief that people can change and improve.

The challenge is to make the Exodus experience vivid enough in an ongoing way to counter but not blot out the unredeemed experiences of life. The goal is not to flee from reality but to be motivated to perfect it. To cope with contradiction and not to yield easily, the memory must be a 'real' experience, something felt in one's bones, tasted in one's mouth. This is why much of Jewish religion consists of reliving the Exodus. 'Remember…all the days of your life,' says the Torah. (Greenberg, 1988, pp. 37-38)

Each year that the *Passover* story is retold through a traditional *seder* (the setting in which Jewish families and friends gather to relive the story), there is hope that Jews will experience the event of the Exodus through new lenses, with new perspective. The *seder* is designed for Jews to re-experience the Exodus as if they were there. The Babylonian Talmud, tractate Pesachim 116b, includes an explicit command for every Jew to feel as though he or she had gone forth from Egypt.

Just as the therapeutic process of re-examining events in one's life seeks to help individuals create new narratives and make meaning of their experiences, *Passover* is a yearly process to seek more light, celebrate personal and communal successes, and find freedom from darkness and distress, oppression and struggle. Most Jewish holidays encompass both a very personal, individual component and a community component, and Passover is no exception. This holiday, more than any other Jewish holiday, demands that Jews consider both realms vigorously. Empowerment is at the heart of the Jewish experience of survival and thriving, and Jews have a responsibility to ensure that other peoples throughout the world are not suffering the same oppression brought upon them during the times of Egyptian slavery. The holiday involves intense examination as Jews juxtapose their modern realities with the tumultuous and ultimately redemptive story of the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt. "To be fully realized, an Exodus must

include an inner voyage, not just a march on the road out of Egypt" (Greenberg, 1988, p. 47).

The *Passover Seder* involves a dynamic interplay between personal liberation and communal liberation. Self-empowerment is expressed in the *Haggadah* (the Passover story) as removing oneself from self-inflicted narrow spaces, and those constructed by community and society. And, in moving toward individual empowerment, Jews never forget that there are still countless others in the world oppressed, in need of support for liberation. Every ritual food item presented on the *seder* table, every element of the retelling of the story of redemption from Egypt is symbolic—symbolic of spring and renewal, and symbolic of the journey from slavery to empowerment. On the traditional *seder* plate on the Passover table appears the following items: hard-boiled egg, roasted shankbone, *charoset* (mixture of nuts, apples, and wine), bitter herbs, parsley, salt water, and *matzah* (unleavened bread). From the very beginning, Jews are reminded that many times throughout history, the Jewish people lived without freedom. By retelling the story, Jews are asked to keep the story alive and apply it in a modern day setting, both in terms of individual and community enslavement. The egg represents the spring, filled with new life, renewal, and the opportunity for new beginnings. The roasted shankbone is symbolic of the lamb sacrifice that was made during the days of the Holy Temple. It is also a reminder of how the angel of death "passed-over" Jewish homes during the 10th plague when the Jews were enslaved in Egypt. *Charoset* is symbolic of the mortar the Jews used to keep the stones together that comprised the pyramids they constructed for the Egyptians. The bitter herbs are a symbol of the bitterness of slavery. They are a reminder that there is still slavery and bitterness in the world and Jews should never forget. Parsley

is also symbolic of the spring and of renewal. Salt water is representative of the tears shed by the Jewish slaves and a reminder of the tears shed today by those in oppression around the world and by individuals experiencing self-enslavement and personal oppression. *Matzah* is eaten during Passover because when the Jews left Egypt they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise. It is a reminder that people are not always ready for the challenges that must be faced. Nevertheless, empowerment is possible and moving forward is a necessity.

From a psychological perspective, empowerment can be viewed on both an individual and community level (Zimmerman, 2000). Both are critical in Judaism and are highlighted by the holiday of *Passover*. According to Zimmerman, individual empowerment is a process by which individuals envision a pathway from their goals to achievement of these goals. On a community level, empowerment is about collective actions for change, interdependence, and interconnectedness. It is about unearthing positive change and social justice for disenfranchised, isolated, and oppressed communities around the world. It involves harnessing the strengths and resources of organizations and communities and it is a process that enables people lacking an equal share of resources to gain greater access to and control over those resources (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989). The holiday of *Passover* directs individuals to strive for self-empowerment while simultaneously seeking community or group empowerment to relieve the oppression that exists in the world. By participating in the Jewish community, and taking part in holidays such as *Passover*, individuals become aware of their socio-political environment, thus learning ways to collectively achieve desired social change in

the world. According to Zimmerman, individuals who are psychologically empowered are able to take action and exert control to change their environments.

Community or group empowerment is a theme that fits well under the rubric of positive psychology. One of the original pillars of positive psychology, as described by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) relates to positive institutions or a positive society. "At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic" (p. 5). Without empowerment, one might argue that the Jewish people would not have survived their experience in slavery and the Exodus through Egypt, eventually arriving in the Promised Land of Israel. And during *Passover*, despite the emphasis on individual empowerment, there is an acknowledgment that what can be accomplished on a community level is stronger than what any one individual contributes. Conversation focuses on converting individual contributions to global community and communal changes in the world.

Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) noted that empowerment represents beliefs about one's competence and efficacy, and a willingness to become involved in activities to exert control in the social and political environment. Consistent with positive psychology principles, the authors stated, "Empowerment theory, research, and intervention link individual well-being with the larger social and political environment. It compels us to think in terms of wellness instead of illness, competence versus deficits, and strength versus weakness" (pp. 569-570). They suggested that community empowerment is more than just a collection of empowered individuals; it involves collective action.

Rappaport's (1984) Ecological Theory of Empowerment states that empowering settings foster the psychological empowerment of members and foster community participation. These setting are built upon strength-based belief systems and activation of resources. Empowering communities foster psychological empowerment and these communities are able to impact larger societal changes.

Zimmerman (1995) asserted that psychological empowerment at an individual level is a necessary foundation for empowerment at organizational and community levels. While the Jewish holiday of *Passover* focuses on the external enslavement of the Jews in Egypt, "the inner meaning of the holiday metaphorically teaches us that we need to know to free ourselves from the enslavement of internal addictions of difficulties" (Mijares, 2003, p. 117). Psychological empowerment involves perceptions of personal control, taking a proactive approach to life, and an understanding of the existing sociopolitical environment (Zimmerman). In empowering situations, individuals see a closer correspondence between their goals and the avenues for achieving them. They experience a greater sense of access and control over their resources.

Zimmerman (1995) suggested that psychological empowerment at an individual level is a dynamic process that changes over time. The implication is that at any time individuals can develop a sense of empowerment, or may become even more empowered. Self-efficacy is one element of the construct of psychological empowerment. "When the world seems predictable and controllable, and when our behaviors, thoughts, and emotions seem within our control, we are better able to meet life's challenges, build healthy relationships, and achieve personal satisfaction and peace of mind" (Maddux, 2002, p. 280). Self-efficacy plays an important role in the lives of individuals. Without

self-efficacy, one can experience a sense of loss of personal control, a sense of personal

oppression and struggle. "Self-efficacy theory also maintains that these efficacy beliefs

play a crucial role in psychological adjustment, psychological problems, and physical

health, as well as professionally guided and self-guided behavioral change strategies"

(Maddux, p. 277). Self-efficacy is one important aspect of psychological empowerment.

Shavuot. Freedom rises to the moment of revelation, a time when the Jews stood

at Mt. Sinai and received all the wisdom of the *Torah*. It is also historically an

agricultural holiday, in which the Jews celebrated the fruits of the harvest and expressed

gratitude for their blessings.

> The sense that underlies both the first-fruits and Torah-giving aspects of the
> festival is the basic sense of *Shavuot* as the season of the maturing of a new
> identity to the point where it can enter a partnership with another. (Waskow,
> 1982, p. 202)

And, like a metaphor for the relationship between the Jewish people and God, *Shavuot* is

a time to look at partnerships between married couples, and alternatively with co-

workers, children, and friends. In covenantal relationships, as in the partnership between

the Jewish people and God, openness was the foundation for receiving the gifts of the

relationship.

> The goal is the completion of being, the full realization of humanness. It is not a
> utilitarian contract designed for useful ends so that if the advantage is lost, the
> agreement is dropped. The covenant is a commitment on the part of each partner
> to be the only one, to be unique to the other. It is a turning of the whole person to
> the other. The two are bound together in a wholeness that transcends all the
> particulars of interest and advantage. (Greenberg, 1988, pp. 86-87)

Positive psychologists could look at the concept of connection or

interconnectedness in relationships and describe the underlying essence as one of

meaning-making. Positive psychologists are studying what it is that helps humans

transcend the animal world and do something that is distinctly human, creating meaning in life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). They describe meaning as a way that humans find security in an ever-changing world. They describe marriage and committed relationships as one example of how individuals impose stability in an unstable world. Additionally, the authors describe meaning as a construct comprised of four important components: purpose, values, sense of efficacy, and finally, a basis for self-worth. They suggest that people who have satisfied all of these areas report meaningful lives, as opposed to those who have not satisfied all four components. These individuals report insufficient meaningfulness in their lives (Baumeister & Vohs).

Meaning-making is the active process through which individuals view the events in their lives in order to create meaning. "Researchers examining the mental and physical health effects of meaning-making consistently report that meaning-making is associated with positive health outcomes" (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002, p. 614). In addition, "Happiness, fulfillment, generativity, and other forms of positive well-being are the essential focus of positive psychology, and meaning is integral to all of them" (p. 616). Seligman (2003) described the meaningful life as, "the use of your strengths and virtues in the service of something much larger than you are" (p. 127). For Seligman, meaning was one important aspect of happiness, a construct he defined as comprised of meaning, engagement (in interpersonal relationships), and pleasure (Seligman et al., 2005). Victor Frankl (1986) based an entire therapy (logotherapy) on finding meaning and believed that the driving force in any person's life is a will to meaning.

While it is clear that meaning contributes to an overall sense of well-being and happiness (Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992), researchers are

also searching to uncover whether the inverse is true—whether positive emotions contribute directly to a sense of meaning in life, and thus directly impact psychological well-being. In a series of six studies, King, Hicks, Krull, and Del Gaiso (2006) looked at the connection between positive affect and meaning. They found that positive affect was related to enhanced meaning in life. However, in engaging in varying activities, even the subjects with positive affect differentiated between tasks that were meaningful and those that were meaningless. The authors concluded that hedonic pleasure does not equal meaning in life, and that if anything, positive affect may simply prime individuals to be more available to meaningful experiences. This may be due to the cognitive effects of positive affect, which include global focus, broadened mindset, and a capacity to make unusual and creative connections between elements. The authors suggested that positive mood may serve as a readiness for the experience of meaning (King et al., 2006).

Meaning in life has also shown to be a mediator between religiousness and psychological health (Pargament, 2002). This indicates that one of the reasons that religion is related to psychological well-being is that religion allows for the cultivation of meaning, just as the pursuit of positive mental health often includes the promotion of meaning.

> One function of religion is to provide individuals with the means through which they can experience purpose in their lives, and one of the core benefits of religious experience might be the extent to which religion gives people a sense of meaning and coherence about ultimate truths. (Steger & Frazier, 2005)

Stenger and Frazier encourage future research into ways that therapists may support their clients in their pursuit of psychological well-being through the fostering of meaning.

Tisha B'av. During the hot months of the summer, Jews mourn the loss of the Temple, mourn the great destruction brought upon Jews throughout history, and mourn

personal losses and exile. *Tisha B'av* focuses on loss, pain, suffering, and re-building.

The Talmud, which is a collection of writings of Babylonian rabbis in the first centuries

of the Common Era that form the basis for modern Jewish practice, says that on *Tisha*

B'av a person is obliged to observe all mourning rites which apply in the case of the

death of a next of kin. The holiday brings Jews to a vulnerable and raw state, and

anticipation of the New Year right around the corner helps to relieve the pain of the day.

It is significant that the holiday about loss directly precedes the new year, bringing new

life, new hope, and a chance to return to a fuller and more meaningful connection with

self and others (Knobel, 1983). Prager (2006) suggested that Tisha B'av precedes the

High Holy Days because from our most painful experiences lies the greatest potential. In

other words, it is through pain and suffering that one can most fully experience the

renewal and rebirth of a new year – the healing, comfort, and joy that accompanies a new

beginning.

> But we know that this moment of exhaustion and destruction is but a moment. We know that the earth passes safely through its too-hot exposure to the sun, that the crops coming to fruition in the fields do not burn up, that we will have a harvest and store the heat to keep us warm in winter. We know that our own eyes, blinded by the glare of the year's noonday, will once again be able to see clearly. We know that the Jewish people will harvest something new in exile, will harvest its shattered, scattered selves into a reunited holiness. But to do this we need to experience fully the moment of burn-out, the moment of fire and thirst. And this the tradition does with Tisha B'av – the ninth of the month of Av, the day that mourns for the destructions of the Temple. (Waskow, 1982, pp. 207-208)

A yearly return to mourning is one way in which Jews focus on being whole

versus living a fragmented existence as they did in exile, and during so many other

occasions throughout history. Although Jewish faith demands asking questions and

seeking answers through a theological lens, this is only part of the process. While

questioning loss and suffering is in the nature of Jews and it brings some comfort and

relief, an important element of moving forward lies in the construction of a path toward

healing (Olitzky, 2000).

Judaism emphasizes loss and suffering as vehicles for wholeness. In an example

in the book of Genesis in *Torah*, Jacob struggled terribly when he wrestled with an angel

one night as he crossed a river. He was victorious, but his struggle was dark and painful;

Jacob was left with a permanent reminder of his suffering.

> In the logic of the spiritual world, however, it is clear that in Jacob's woundedness
> he became whole. Jacob had to endure the physical pain of the struggle with the
> darkness and its result, but his spiritual suffering was over. (Olitzky, 2000, p.
> xxiv)

This story is a lesson to Jews about the healing and strength that can only ascend from

pain.

Positive psychology also looks at the role that loss, pain, and suffering plays in

the mental wholeness of individuals. "Loss is not an intrinsically positive event that will

necessarily build human strength. Yet, the experience of loss can become a profound

means for showcasing human strengths and potential" (Miller & Harvey, 2001, p. 313).

Losses that bring individuals to therapy are varied and can range from loss of a loved one

to divorce, loss of employment, victimization, loss of physical or psychological

functioning due to illness, and many other forms of loss. Regardless of the type of loss, it

is something that is inevitable for every person at different points in life.

Miller and Harvey (2001) acknowledged that while it seems paradoxical to

associate loss with positive psychology, coping with loss, adapting, and creating meaning

are actually profound strengths of humans displayed during these dark times. Davis,

Nolen-Hoeksema, and Larson (1998) suggested that there are two processes that facilitate

growth following a personal loss: making sense of loss contributes to healing in the short-

term (approximately up to 1 year after a loss) and finding something positive in the loss experience contributes in the long-term (at 13 and 18 months post-loss).

Nolen-Hoeksema and Davis (2002) stated that making sense of loss involves coming to an understanding of how the loss fits into one's view of the world (meaning-as-comprehensibility). Finding a benefit or something positive in a loss is an attempt to understand the value or worth of the loss to one's life (meaning-as-significance). "Perceiving some benefit to the loss, such as reporting a change in one's live perspective, can help to mitigate feelings of helplessness and grief and preserve the sense that one's own life has purpose, value, and worth" (p. 600). Loss can lead to a re-evaluation of assumptions about self and the world, a greater appreciation for life, or a shift in life goals and priorities, all of which represent human strength and may bring comfort to those experiencing loss (Miller & Harvey, 2001). Davis et al. (1998) found that bereaved people who were able to find something positive in their loss showed better adjustment on indicators of depressive symptoms, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and positive affect.

Positive psychologists do not suggest trying to put a "positive spin" on loss when working with bereaved individuals or those suffering a serious loss. Instead, interventions are proposed that may lead individuals to benefit from their losses. Nolen-Hoeksema and Davis (2002) suggest three interventions that build on their research about finding something positive in loss. For example, since many people who experience loss say that it leads to growth in character, supportive interventions may highlight this growth in an effort to enhance self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy. In addition, the authors suggest asking people about any changes in perspectives they've experienced since the loss, since

many who are bereaved report gaining new perspectives after loss. And finally, the authors recommend involving a support system of family or friends as much as possible in the life of the person experiencing loss because many bereaved individuals report a strengthening of relationships is an important benefit of loss.

> The impact of any of the interventions we have suggested may be small at first. But they can sow seeds that later lead bereaved persons to be better able to internalize the growth-promoting experiences that they have noted following loss. (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, p. 605)

Psychologists are increasingly trying to understand cases where profound growth follows a traumatic loss or other adverse situation facing an individual. Loss is an area likely experienced by every individual at some given time. A small but growing area of study called posttraumatic growth is gaining momentum among positive psychologists and those who study the effects of trauma in formulating treatments (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The phenomenon of posttraumatic growth is best defined as containing the following four elements: (a) occurring most distinctively in conditions of severe crisis, (b) often accompanied by transformative life changes, (c) growth is experienced as an outcome rather than a coping mechanism; and (d) it requires a shattering of basic assumptions about an individual's life (Tedeschi & Calhoun). Survivors of trauma often report experiencing the following positive changes: improved relationships, new possibilities in their lives, greater appreciation for life, greater sense of personal strength, and spiritual development (Tadeschi & Calhoun).

There are several paradoxes that accompany the concept of posttraumatic growth. Tadeschi and Calhoun (2004) outlined the following: loss produces something of value, individuals feel vulnerable, yet strengthened, and believe in their capacity to survive and prevail; trauma survivors become aware of the worst and best in others; a greater sense of

compassion for others who experience life difficulties is accessed; valuing the smaller things in life becomes more pervasive; individuals often report that their philosophies of life are more fully developed, satisfying, and meaningful to them. While these growth markers are impressive, the authors warn that posttraumatic growth does not equal lower levels of distress or an increase in levels of happiness. In fact, unpleasant reminders of the trauma and accompanying distress may even be a necessary component of fully experiencing the gains. Yet, although not carefree or happy, this growth is usually categorized by living life more deeply in terms of personal, interpersonal, and spiritual awareness (Tadeschi & Calhoun).

> An important way to think about this, which has implications for clinical practice, is that the traumatic events set in motion attempts to cope and that the struggle in the aftermath of the trauma, not the trauma itself, produces the posttraumatic growth. (Tadeschi & Calhoun, p. 408).

Conclusion

The psychological themes embedded in the Jewish calendar are abundant. Positive psychology offers just one approach for understanding how these holidays provide opportunities for personal integration and psychological growth. Future research in this area may serve to broaden and deepen this positive psychology approach to the Jewish holiday calendar by exploring additional themes relevant to each holiday. In addition, *Shabbat* is a central holiday in Judaism, one that is celebrated weekly. It was not included in this manual largely because the author chose to address the yearly cycle of the Jewish holiday calendar, as opposed to a weekly cycle. However, while the exploration of *Shabbat* is beyond the scope of this literature review and resource manual, it would certainly provide a rich foundation for future research in examining how positive psychology themes relate to Jewish holidays.

Small Group Process

Breadth and Types of Psychological Groups

Early research on group psychotherapy began in the 1940s, and since that time,

empirical research has served to broaden the simple definitions of group psychotherapy to

include the complexity and breadth of groups focused on the mental health of individuals

(Barlow, 2008). The mere mention of group therapy may elicit categorizations of types of

groups, including: psychoeducation, self-help, support, interpersonal, process, prevention,

or myriad others. According to Barlow group therapy is currently utilized for a range of

mental health services, including: prevention, guidance, counseling, and training.

> The very term 'group therapy' no longer evokes the traditional view of the long-
> term psychoanalytic group of yesteryear. As little as a decade ago this might have
> called to mind the traditional process group Yalom (1995) wrote about,
> sometimes caricatured in situation comedies on television. Today the term
> conjures up numerous models, an array of applications dealing with a host of
> human issues from medical 'self-help' groups to a more traditional psychotherapy
> groups for adults with problems in living. (Barlow, p. 240)

According to Barlow (2008), the way to understand the ties that bind the vast

diversity of groups common to the human experience is to consider that all groups have

leadership, develop norms, certain tasks, and move along developmental stages,

regardless of kinds of members, kinds of tasks, and goals. The author also noted that

group therapy encompasses a broad application of settings beyond a traditional clinical

setting, to include hospitals, schools, community centers, college campuses, and more.

This is accounted for in part by the multidisciplinary origins of group psychology and

group psychotherapy. In understanding the nature of groups in more depth, Barlow

described how group dynamics incorporate both interpersonal and intrapersonal factors.

> When members work in group psychotherapy, they are invited to address
> intrapersonal issues (as would happen in individual therapy) as well as the more

>potent interpersonal factors wherein the group becomes a laboratory for practicing new behaviors, receiving and giving feedback, learning vicariously, and so forth. (Barlow, p. 242)

Furr (2000) described a format for designing structured psychoeducation groups. In Furr's model, psychoeducation does not simply mean a didactic group. On the contrary, the term psychoeducation is a broad concept, comprised of didactic, experiential, and process components. The didactic component focuses on the information to be taught directly to participants, and can vary in length, depth, and focus. The experiential component allows the material to be encountered on a personal level. "To learn by doing rather than just by listening results in a deeper and more complex educational experience" (Furr, p. 36). Experiential learning allows participants to take responsibility for personalizing the concepts introduced in the group. The group leader can determine the direction of the experiential component, but the direction the discussion takes will look different in every group. Connecting the didactic and experiential components is the goal of the process component (Furr).

>Ultimately, the process component becomes the link between the group content and the participant's life outside of the group. Where the experiential component personalizes a concept for the participant, the process component integrates the new awareness with the individual's conceptual framework. (Furr, p. 37)

Experiential and process components of groups allow members to take ownership in a way that makes the experience meaningful and lasting.

Furr (2000) maintained that the amount of time devoted to each of the three components that comprise a psychoeducational model is dependent largely on the theoretical orientation that is utilized as the foundation for the group. For example, cognitive behavioral groups likely focus more on didactic components, whereas psychodynamic and existential groups demand more experiential focus with extensive

processing. "For the group design to have an impact, an appropriate balance of the three components of didactic, experiential, and processing is necessary or participants will not become fully involved with the group" (Furr, p. 38).

In the limited studies that have been conducted regarding characteristics of group treatments, such as length, format, and open versus closed settings, research suggests that there is no significant difference in the respective efficiency of closed versus open groups. While there are certain distinct advantages and disadvantages to both open and closed groups, both formats allow for group bonding, sharing, seeking social support, working through emotional difficulties or conflicts, and growth. A group facilitator should remain mindful of the differences in managing an open versus closed group to achieve maximum benefits to members (Douglas, 1991; Galinsky & Schopler, 1985; Mackenzie,1996; Tourigny & Hebert 2007).

Chapter 2

Research Methodology

This chapter presents methodology that was utilized in the development and

evaluation of a resource manual for psychologists working with Jewish community

members in synagogue settings. First, an overview of the development of this resource,

including methodological assumptions and limitations are described. A comprehensive

literature review supported the development of this resource manual by presenting

information about the current and historical intersection between psychology and

religion. Specifically, the literature review presented the ways in which positive

psychology can be used as a lens to explore the themes of the Jewish holiday calendar.

The themes that are common to both positive psychology and Jewish holidays formed the

foundation for building a small group manual of positive psychology groups/workshops

to be facilitated in a synagogue setting. Through the course of each group, the Jewish

holidays are considered from a positive psychological perspective with an overarching

goal of catalyzing the psychological growth and development of the congregants

participating in the groups. Second, data collection and analysis processes are reviewed.

Finally, the methods that were used for evaluating the manual are described.

The purpose of this resource manual is to provide psychologists with the

framework, information, and tools to work with Jewish congregants in synagogue

settings to explore their psychological development in a spiritual context. There is a large

continuum of mental health services and interventions utilized in the service of mental

health, and in this manual, the goal is to reach community members through small group

interventions. Additionally, the small groups are designed for flexibility to allow the

professionals facilitating the groups to make the groups their own. This resource manual provides guidance to psychologists and rabbis, but the specific direction that each group takes will vary based on the leaders, the composition of the groups, and the experiential and process elements unique to each group. The Jewish holidays serve as entry-points for learning, and by analyzing the Jewish texts and stories in an interactive group setting rooted in a positive psychology orientation, congregants are able to take a psychological look at Judaism in the context of their everyday lives. The groups are designed to explore the ways in which personal stories and growth are interwoven with both Judaism and positive psychology. The target audience for this resource manual includes psychologists and rabbis consulting or working within the Jewish community who may facilitate these groups. Discussion of the Divine as it may occur organically in group settings in response to exploration of positive psychology and Jewish holidays will be facilitated by the participating rabbis.

Overview of the Development of the Resource Manual

Strategies for Resource Development

The strategies that were used in the creation of this resource manual included an extensive literature search and review as well as consultations with experts in the field. The literature review focused broadly on scholarly information in the field of psychology related to the examination of religion. The review then narrowed to include aspects of positive psychology and Judaism. It also incorporated relevant Jewish texts and sources to shed light on aspects of psychological growth from a religious perspective. Further, the Jewish texts and resources served to guide and inform the themes related to each Jewish holiday, serving as the entry-point for a positive psychology analysis. When reviewing

the existing literature for this resource manual, both theoretical writings and empirical research provided the information that supported the development of the manual.

A database search of Psych INFO was conducted to examine the existing published literature in the areas of psychology and religion. A specialized and extensive section of the literature review was devoted to surveying the positive psychology literature, both from a comprehensive broad perspective and then related to themes gleaned from the Jewish holiday calendar. The results were used in the development of this resource manual, informing a psychological view of the Jewish holidays.

Following the initial Psych INFO search, a more comprehensive search was conducted utilizing numerous databases and Internet searches including: Academic Search Elite, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOHOST databases, and PsychARTICLES. Psychology textbooks, handbooks, and resources were utilized as well. Again, the focus of these literature searches was to examine the topics relevant to the development of the resource manual. A literature review is presented, including professional references dating from approximately 1985 to 2009, gathered from the sources described above. However, a few seminal writings that are directly relevant to this resource manual were completed prior to 1985 and also were included.

After the scholarly literature published in the field of psychology was reviewed, Jewish texts and resources were utilized to examine both the relationship between psychology and Judaism and the themes of the Jewish holiday calendar. Sources included traditional Jewish texts such as the *Torah* and the *Talmud* as well as books written by rabbis, religious scholars, and philosophers.

Relevant material from the literature were selected and included in the resource manual. To assist in the creation of the resource manual, clergy and psychologists who are expert in either Judaism or the area of positive psychology were contacted to provide informal consultation and feedback. Clergy helped inform the author about themes relevant to the Jewish holidays. Specifically, rabbis were asked to provide feedback in the selection of relevant themes prior to the development of the resource. In addition, they offered their opinions about what information and content areas would need to be addressed in creating a manual that would be accessible to Jewish congregants. This included information about the format, length, style, or content of the manual. Clergy were also asked to provide additional links to resources that would be relevant in reviewing the literature and creating the resource manual.

Psychologists in the field with an expertise in the area of positive psychology or psychology in a religious setting were also contacted to inform the development of the resource manual. They were asked to comment on issues related to the format, length, and style of a resource manual for psychologists working in the Jewish community. In addition, they were asked to provide supplemental resources and information relevant to the literature review and to help the author obtain a comprehensive understanding of the material related to the dissertation topic.

Consideration of Existing Similar Resources

At the time of developing the group, as well as during the writing of the manual, the author did not locate any published manuals which match the specific goals and content of the present resource (i.e., integration of positive psychology themes). However, many resource manuals exist in the Jewish community to support Jewish

professionals in their work with congregants and members of the community. Contained within many of these resource manuals are structured curricula for group leaders to utilize in facilitating programs or groups. The union of the Reform Jewish synagogues in the United States, The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), has published several resource manuals for use in synagogue settings. For example, one such manual is entitled "A Taste of Judaism: Are you Curious?" It is a program guide for rabbis to follow as they outreach to unaffiliated or uneducated Jews in the community interested in beginning to learn about Judaism. It is a very comprehensive resource that includes: program goals, program format, marketing and publicity suggestions, intake and registration materials and procedures, program administration guidelines, a full list of resources for each session, and a plethora of supplemental handouts for students. It also includes suggestions for a rabbis' welcome letter, course evaluation form, and follow-up study opportunities. A resource manual such as this is a wonderful example of what type of manual is in wide circulation in the Jewish community. There are other resources that have been published by the URJ as well, such as online curricula and additional resource manuals. While it is likely that there are books and articles in circulation in the Jewish community directly related to the Jewish holidays, the author is unaware of any that are rooted in a psychological perspective of the holidays, and more specifically, positive psychology.

Based on the paucity of small group resources for psychologists in the Jewish community utilizing positive psychology as a framework for examining the Jewish holidays, this dissertation has sought to develop a group intervention and associated resource manual to specifically address this need. The resource manual incorporates the latest research on positive psychology and the connection between religion and

psychology for the purpose of supplying psychologists and rabbis with relevant materials for conducting small groups in a synagogue setting. In addition to information gleaned from the literature review and experts in the fields of positive psychology and Judaism, the manual also incorporates relevant information from similar resources for the creation of this manual.

Integration of Resources

   Format, structure, and content. The group manual is 133 pages and consists of text as well as tables, and sample handouts that psychologists might utilize as resources for facilitating the small groups. The length is variable, but an attempt was made to only include what was initially deemed necessary and useful for providing guidance to psychologists and rabbis for each group. The published manual will be printed single-sided with color ink utilized for portions of the manual and black ink utilized for most of the content in the manual. The names of the authors who are quoted at the end of each group module will appear in blue ink. Tables will also appear in color ink. The initial planned structure included several elements. In addition to using grammatically correct, complete sentences and paragraphs with appropriate section headings for the text of the manual, bullet points, bold face type, abbreviations, numbers, and outlines were utilized as appropriate for guiding psychologists and rabbis through the small groups. The text was separated through the use of chapters, which provides the reader with a means to locate certain information in a quick and easy fashion, and differentiates where one section ends and the next section begins. In addition, a template format was utilized for each group module to help psychologists and rabbis facilitate each group in an organized, predictable way. Further, a table of contents follows the title page of this manual

depicting the starting page of each chapter, and is aimed at providing a sense of ease and clarity for the reader.

The content of the resource manual includes ten separate chapters based on the literature review and similar existing resources. Chapter one consists of the introduction containing broad information and rationale for offering positive psychology workshops to explore the Jewish holiday calendar in a synagogue setting. This overview provides psychologists with key terms that are essential for understanding the text of the manual, background and contextual information related to positive psychology and the Jewish holidays, and an overview of what they can anticipate in the subsequent chapters of the manual. In addition, chapter one includes information about the format and structure for facilitating positive psychology groups and any information that may be helpful to psychologists and rabbis in facilitating the sessions. Information about appropriate screening measures for congregants interested in attending the groups as well as information regarding program administration is included.

Chapter Two provides information to psychologists regarding relevant ethical issues related to facilitating psychological groups in a religious context. Again, the material is rooted in the literature review covering issues of religion and psychology, competency, multicultural considerations, and ethics.

The next eight chapters provide resources for psychologists to facilitate small groups in conjunction with the themes of many major Jewish holidays in the Jewish calendar, including: *Rosh Hashannah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hanukkah, Purim, Passover, Shavuot,* and *Tisha B'av*. There is a short introduction to these chapters outlining a suggested general framework of each particular group session, recommended length, and

any other issues relevant to the set-up and operation of the groups. Each "holiday" chapter includes historical information and modern practices regarding the holiday. Key terms related to the holiday are defined, and relevant literature from the review regarding the positive psychology theme and the Jewish holiday is incorporated. Each theme is explained with supporting Jewish texts and resources. Information regarding the connection between the theme of the holiday and key principles in positive psychology are provided, followed by basic guidelines for leading a small group discussion. The instructions for each group vary and often include: discussion questions, key points, group or individual exercises, worksheets, visual aids, handouts, and resources for psychologists to distribute to group members.

Specifically, Chapter Three focuses on the holiday of *Rosh Hashannah*, with the corresponding positive psychology theme of integrity highlighted in the manual. Chapter Four is devoted to the holy day of *Yom Kippur*, and the theme highlighted is forgiveness. Chapter Five focuses on the holiday of *Sukkot* and gratitude is the major theme explored. In Chapter Six, the holiday of *Hanukkah* is reviewed and the major theme is hope. Chapter Seven relates to the holiday of *Purim*, and humor is the theme. Chapter Eight focuses on Passover, and citizenship, self-empowerment and community empowerment are the themes. Chapter Nine examines the holiday of *Shavuot*, and focuses on the theme of spirituality/meaning-making. Chapter Ten focuses around issues of loss that are relevant during the holiday of *Tisha B'av* and the positive psychology theme of wisdom (perspective) is explored. Each of the themes addressed in the corresponding chapters are directly relevant to Jews as both religious themes gleaned from Jewish texts and positive psychological themes related to human development and growth.

Evaluation of the Resource

Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

Once the resource manual was completed, an evaluation process was initiated in order to gain feedback from both a psychologist and a rabbi who are expert in understanding the key issues and challenges that may impact the successful development and implementation of this group manual for use in the Jewish community. The scope of the evaluation was limited to the content of the resource manual and the feedback provided by the psychologist and rabbi for improving the effectiveness and utility of the manual.

Evaluation Design

Following approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, the manual was distributed to the selected rabbi and psychologist with an attachment, the Initial Manual Review Form (Appendix B) asking the rabbi and psychologist to provide written comments and suggestions regarding the content and format of the manual. Following the written feedback on the Initial Manual Review Form, the psychologist and rabbi were contacted to engage in individual semi-structured interviews with the author of the manual. Again, the purpose was to gain additional information relevant to the further development/editing of the resource manual. The author sought to gain impressions from both experts about the degree of effectiveness and usefulness of this manual for psychologists wishing to offer these positive psychology groups in synagogues across the country.

The design of the semi-structured interview was based on a core of structured questions, from which the author could probe to explore any areas in more depth with

additional questions (Appendix C). The semi-structured interview approach was chosen to allow the investigator to gain the desired information in a format that may allow for the opportunity to probe for underlying factors which could be easily missed in an interview that is too structured (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The goal of deviating from the initial interview questions through the use of probes was to elicit additional relevant information that may have been missed by the semi-structure interview questions. In addition, allowed the participating rabbi and psychologist the freedom to add any comments that they felt were relevant to the manual and outside the scope of the original semi-structure interview questions. The atmosphere for both interviews was fairly informal, open, and collaborative.

With the permission of the participating rabbi and psychologist, the interview was digitally taped so that the author could analyze the comments made by the participants in detail, pulling out relevant strengths and weakness that were highlighted in the responses. The interview also elicited suggestions and recommendations from the evaluators. These responses will be utilized by the author in a process of revising the resource manual accordingly.

Participants

The author was looking to utilize the expertise of one psychologist and one rabbi in evaluating the resource manual. The inclusion criteria for the psychologist were as follows: (a) a licensed psychologist; (b) someone who has an established expertise or at minimum, basic competence in treating psychological issues of Jewish clients whose connection to religion/spirituality enters the therapy realm; (c) experience with group therapy; d) a working knowledge of the Jewish community, including experience

consulting within the community or knowledge of ways in which psychologists participate in interfacing with members of the Jewish community within a religious setting; (e) self-reported comfort in relating principles of psychology to Judaism, through the use of the Jewish holidays.

The inclusion criteria for a participating rabbi were as follows: (a) a rabbi who is either currently working in a congregational setting or has worked in a congregation in the past; (b) someone who, in a professional capacity, has collaborated with mental health professionals, including psychologists; (c) someone who is familiar with group work/consultation within synagogue settings.

Recruitment Strategy and Procedures

In order to find a rabbi and a psychologist who met the appropriate inclusion criteria listed above and were willing to participate in evaluating this resource manual, the author contacted professionals from the Los Angeles Jewish community to gain recommendations for both psychologists and rabbis. Specifically, there are a few rabbis in Los Angeles who are also mental health professionals and have connections in both areas, including knowledge of professionals who likely meet the author's inclusion criteria. These rabbis were contacted to garner names of rabbis and psychologists who meet the inclusion criteria. In addition, the author is familiar with a few psychologists who are active members of local synagogues. These psychologists were contacted directly by the author to obtain suggestions for psychologists who meet the inclusion criteria.

Evaluation Strategy and Procedures

After identifying and securing the rabbi and psychologist, they were each contacted by phone and given the procedures for reviewing the manual. A copy of the manual, the manual review form, and the interview questions were made available to the evaluators electronically. Further, they were sent the Initial Manual Review form, in which they were asked to assemble written evaluative comments and then return the form electronically to the author of the manual. Participants were informed that the interview would take approximately 30-60 minutes and the author would schedule an appointment with them for the semi-structured interview. In addition, they were asked to provide consent to have their interview audio taped. A time and location was discussed for the interview and both the rabbi and psychologists asked to conduct the interview by phone from the offices in which they work. The author answered any remaining questions posed by the participants.

Analysis of Evaluation

After the interviews were audio tape-recorded, they were analyzed for common themes, relevant issues, suggestions, comments, and opinions that will contribute to the overall improvement and efficacy of the resource manual. The comments of the participants were placed within the context of the existing literature review with the purpose of uncovering relevant information that was inadvertently left out. Suggested changes were included in the discussion section that follows this section of the project.

Chapter 3

Results

This chapter provides a summary of the results of developing, creating, and

evaluating the positive psychology group manual. First, results of information obtained in

the development phase will be presented. This includes the comprehensive literature

review, review of similar resources, and results of the informal consultations with expert

psychologists and rabbis in the field that informed the development of the manual. Next,

the contents of the manual will be reviewed and summarized. Finally, feedback obtained

from evaluators who provided critical reviews of the manual based on its accuracy,

relevance, and potential impact will be presented.

Overview of Results from Resource Development Activities

As described in the previous chapter, the initial phase of the study included an

extensive review of literature of both theoretical writings and research studies to better

understand the intersection between positive psychology and Judaism. This review

informed the development of the group content in several ways. Positive psychology

emphasizes the cultivation of strengths and healthy psychological development through

either secular or spiritual pursuits, inviting the incorporation of Judaism as a valuable

pathway for achieving more optimal psychological health. The review highlighted many

of the similarities between positive psychology's emphasis on factors that allow

individuals to flourish and Judaism's emphasis on meaning and a spiritual connection that

in turn leads to a deeper sense of well-being and psychospiritual fulfillment. Based on

these similarities, the review provided broad support for the creation of a manual utilizing

the common overarching pursuits of both positive psychology and Judaism to further the psychospiritual development and optimal health of individuals.

The literature review also supported the use of the Jewish holiday calendar as a rich contextual source for exploring the positive psychology themes presented in the manual. Based on the themes gleaned from the Jewish holidays, specific positive psychology character strengths were paired with each holiday. For example, the positive psychology strengths of integrity, forgiveness, gratitude, hope, humor, citizenship, spirituality, and wisdom were paired with the major corresponding Jewish holidays of *Rosh Hashannah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hanukkah, Purim, Passover, Shavuot,* and *Tisha B'av*. Each of the pairings reflected themes common to both, and were informed by research and the literature review. These eight pairings formed the foundation for this manual and informed the content of a series of small group sessions/workshops to be offered in a synagogue setting.

Although a few resources focusing on promoting optimal mental health in a synagogue setting exist, none match the specific goals and content of the present resource, aimed at bringing positive psychology into the Jewish community. Therefore, based on the paucity of small group resources for psychologists working in the Jewish community, it was proposed that a group manual be developed that would utilize positive psychology as the foundation for psychospiritual exploration and growth. The purpose of this resource manual was to provide psychologists and rabbis with the framework, information, and tools to work with small groups in synagogue settings to explore their psychological development in a spiritual context.

Additional resources reviewed included a positive psychology small group intervention developed by Seligman and Parks, Jewish resource manuals created around mental health topics, and a review of the PPT literature. Together, these resources and the literature review informed the development of this positive psychology group manual. Finally, psychological literature was reviewed outlining a diversity of group approaches, including experiential and didactic groups. The benefits of various group approaches were investigated and then utilized to inform the size, structure, content, and format of groups for this manual.

In addition to the literature and existing related resources, input was obtained informally from four major sources: 1) rabbis (primarily reform rabbis, but not exclusively from the reform movement), 2) Jewish professionals at the URJ (working nationally to create and implement programs of learning and psychospiritual support for members of the Jewish community), 3) clinical psychologists, and 4) positive psychologists who are at the forefront of development, research, and implementation of positive psychology in a variety of settings. These professionals were utilized to gain information about the usefulness of the manual as well as for suggestions pertaining to content and execution. Informal data received from these sources is outlined in detail below.

First, through a series of email correspondence and web postings, rabbis across the country were contacted to help inform the author about themes relevant to the Jewish holidays. Some of the rabbis were known to the author through personal or professional affiliation. In addition, electronic inquiries were sent through several national Jewish community listservs, including those organized by rabbinic seminaries and Jewish

leadership development organizations. The listservs provide online communication and dialoging space for Jewish professionals, primarily clergy, affiliated with every movement in Judaism.

Rabbis were asked to provide feedback about the selection of positive psychology themes related to Jewish holidays, prior to the development of the resource. Also, they were asked about specific Jewish texts that would clearly support the selection of the themes, and would resonate across a broad spectrum of Jewish denominational identification. In addition, they were asked to comment on the relevance of this positive psychology manual for use with congregants in their communities. They were also asked to provide opinions about content areas that might be accessible and relevant to Jewish congregants. Further, in seeking Jewish stories based on the selected positive psychology themes, rabbis were asked to provide resources or examples of related stories. Finally, rabbis were asked informally to provide feedback about the format, length, style, and content of the proposed manual for accessibility and usefulness in a synagogue setting.

In response to the author's request for resources and informal feedback, most rabbis responded with both broad thoughts about the project as well as specific resources for texts and stories. For example, many rabbis cited texts to support the selection of certain positive psychology themes for specific Jewish holidays and some provided suggestions for Jewish story books or references to theme-specific Jewish stories. Overall, the feedback promoted the development of the resource manual and was helpful in focusing and defining the project. Many rabbis noted their interest in offering this positive psychology group model in their own synagogues and felt there would be an

interest among their congregants. They felt the groups would provide excellent

psychospiritual support and guidance for those who choose to participate in the process.

Next, the author contacted professionals at the URJ to elicit detailed information

about psychological programs currently offered on a national level to local synagogues.

Specifically, the author hoped to asses what programs might be similar in nature to this

manual, and to inquire about the need for this type of resource manual in the Jewish

community. An initial email was sent to several professionals who work in the

Department of Jewish Family Concerns, which seeks to support the psychospiritual needs

of members of synagogue communities. On their website, they list their aim as the

following:

> The work of the department of Jewish Family Concerns is based on a concept of
> the 'theology of relationships' that sees the creation of sacred relationships as the
> most powerful aspect of synagogue life. Upon this foundation of relationships,
> programs and resources are built that affirm the department's organizing principle
> of the synagogue as a 'caring community'. (Union of Reform Judaism, Department
> of Jewish Family Concerns)

In the correspondence, the author broadly outlined the purpose of the positive psychology

manual and asked the recipients to comment on the nature and scope of psychologists and

mental health workers currently utilized in the Jewish community. In addition, the author

asked for feedback regarding the relevance and need for a positive psychology manual

such as the one proposed as an additional resource in the Jewish community. Formal data

was requested to support the anecdotal information obtained by the author through

informal conversations with rabbis and Jewish professionals.

The response was generous and the author received several emails from a number

of Jewish and mental health professionals in the Department of Jewish Family Concerns

regarding the initial inquiry. A thorough outline of programs and initiatives offered

through the URJ were described. It became clear that the work of the URJ is present in hundreds of reform congregations across the country. In many cases, mental health professionals who are lay members of the congregations work collaboratively with clergy to implement programs that address psychospiritual needs. In some cases the mental health workers are comfortable and competent in handling the intersection between the spiritual and the psychological, but in other cases they are not. Sometimes local congregations partner with Jewish mental health agencies to develop and implement programs in synagogue settings. The respondents provided broad support for the creation of a positive psychology manual for rabbis and psychologists and also implicitly supported the project by clarifying that no such resource currently exists in the Jewish community. The information elicited from the emails with URJ professionals provided a good deal of additional information that was utilized in the creation of the manual.

Next, the author interfaced with several clinical psychologists primarily to gain insight about the nature of psychologically-oriented group processes. The author shared information about the small group process outlined in the manual and then informally questioned psychologists about ways to maximize the impact of these groups. Psychologists provided input about ideal size, closed-group/open-group format, as well as facilitation tips.

Psychologists who identify as positive psychologists and work in research, theory development, or as clinicians/coaches were contacted by email. Initially, a detailed email was sent to Dr. Martin Seligman, and Dr. Ben Dean, both of whom are pioneers in the creation and promotion of positive psychology. The author inquired about information that could guide the creation of a series of positive psychology groups, both in content

and process. Research about positive psychology as an orientation to group therapy was requested as well as advice for facilitation based on a positive psychology approach to group process. Dr. Seligman responded to the email with a multitude of resources and suggestions for facilitating positive psychology groups and stated he believed the project was a very good idea, providing there was a foundation of scholarship to support the creation of the resource manual. In addition, Dr. Seligman provided contact information for colleagues who are currently developing PPT. They were contacted and subsequently forwarded positive psychology manuals either in development or completed. These were utilized as resources in the development of this positive psychology manual for groups in a non-clinical setting.

Overall, the information gained informally from a breadth of psychologists, rabbis, and mental health professionals was enormously useful in providing additional resources, focusing the information in the manual, and giving the author clarity of vision. Those contacted were supportive of the creation of a positive psychology resource manual for synagogue settings and acted as informants and catalysts in focusing the project and moving the process forward.

Integration of Data

Data collected from the literature and informal consultations with rabbis, URJ professionals, clinical psychologists, and positive psychologists were compiled to inform the content of the manual. The integration of the two served to strengthen the foundation of the manual and specifically to inform content areas and overall structure. For example, positive psychologists suggested utilizing current PPT manuals as a means for conceptualizing a group positive psychology approach in a non-clinical setting.

Additionally, the information from the literature review that provided support for

utilizing Jewish texts as a method for understanding conceptual themes was then

integrated with specific texts recommended by rabbis. The content focus of the manual

included research and literature about positive psychology character strengths as they

relate to eight Jewish holidays in the Jewish holiday calendar.

Resource Manual

Design and Content of Manual

The manual, *Positive Psychology and the Jewish Holiday Calendar: A Resource

Manual for Small Groups* is 133-pages in length and presents primarily in black ink. The

manual contains a cover page, disclaimer, table of contents, overview of positive

psychology manual, ethical considerations, eight thematic content chapters, glossary of

terms, and a series of appendices.

Section I. Overview of Positive Psychology Resource Manual

The first section highlights the rationale for development of the manual and its

purpose, as well as introducing the fundamental theoretical assumptions that underlie the

approach to the manual. The basic framework for the groups is described and there is a

detailed explanation of the structure for each weekly group.

The information obtained from the literature review, as briefly described above,

provides support for the development of resources for psychologists and/or rabbis to

utilize in better meeting the psychospiritual needs of congregants within synagogue

settings. The research indicates that often Jews are looking for psychological and spiritual

support and sustenance through their synagogues and this need has not been adequately

addressed at the current time (Pargament et al., 1988; Weiss, 2000). This resource was

developed in large part out of this need to provide additional resources for psychological and spiritual growth within synagogue settings.

The theoretical basis for the resource manual is rooted in a combination of contemporary positive psychology research and applications, as well as humanistic and existential theories. Positive psychology has a rich history and while it was popularized in the late 1990's, the ideas of seeking and cultivating that which is good in life is rooted in a diversity of humanistic and existential theorists, particularly those focused on self-actualization, human potential, fulfillment, growth, wellness, meaning, and living a full existence. Positive psychologists sought to strengthen these ideas by providing substantial research to support and better understand these concepts. In addition, they helped bring together an extensive tradition of theories with more modern positive psychology approaches. The theoretical underpinnings of the manual are described and then applied as the approach to group facilitation for the 8-week group. Format, structure, goals, and specific content for each week flow from the positive psychology theoretical approach as described in the manual.

Section II. Ethical Considerations

In this section, ethical considerations such as issues of competency and multicultural awareness are discussed. The literature suggests that while the ethical guidelines of the APA advocate that no psychologist should practice outside his/her area of competence, there are no formal guidelines at this time for gaining competency in the area of positive psychology. Those identifying as positive psychologists come from a variety of psychological training and clinical backgrounds and should inform themselves of the nature and literature pertaining to positive psychology before facilitating the

groups outlined in this model. Further, psychologists should familiarize themselves with

the unique issues related to collaborating with clergy, and make note of specific areas of

related competency (McMinn et al., 2003). Finally, religious identity comprises an area

of multiculturalism and diversity, and psychologists should seek to understand the unique

development and worldview of participants (APA, 2002).

Sections III-XI. Jewish Holidays and Corresponding Positive Psychology Strengths

The next sections of the manual are the most extensive segments and include

content for eight weekly modules. The modules include specific material and

resources/suggestions for facilitators leading the groups. Each weekly module is rooted in

one major Jewish holiday and a corresponding positive psychology character strength

selected by the author of the manual. Each module is identical in structure and varies only

by content related to the Jewish holidays and the positive psychology themes. The Jewish

holidays included in the manual are as follows: *Rosh Hashannah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot,*

Hanukkah, Purim, Passover, Shavuot, and *Tisha B'av*. The corresponding positive

psychology character strengths are as follows: Integrity, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Hope,

Humor, Empowerment/Citizenship, Spirituality, Wisdom (Perspective).

Sections III-XI begin with an opening blessing designed to bring participants into

the present moment, connect them more fully with the spiritual/Divine, and set the tone

for a positive psychological approach to the group experience. After members complete a

brief check-in, in which they begin to explore their connection with the Jewish holiday,

the rabbi provides a brief explanation of the historical and spiritual significance of the

Jewish holiday, with an emphasis on the corresponding positive psychology character

strength. This is followed by the introduction of a Jewish text that provides support for

the positive psychology strength. Sample texts are provided by the author and range in source from the bible, to medieval rabbinic texts to modern commentaries. They were selected because of their relevance to the Jewish holidays as well as their explanation of the positive psychology character strengths. The primary purpose of introducing texts is to show that positive psychology concepts are easily found in the stories of the Jewish holidays, and therefore, Jews can utilize their personal and collective stories to explore the cultivation of greater internal strengths.

After a connection has been solidly established between the Jewish holiday and the positive psychology theme, the psychologist helps members explore the positive psychology theme in greater depth through a didactic teaching. This allows psychologists to present research and data about the nature of the character strength, how it is cultivated, and ways that the strength may benefit individuals in their quest for greater optimal functioning. The author provides the positive psychology data and research necessary for psychologists to present this information.

Following the didactic portion of the group there is a short break leading into an experiential group process. This process is where participants have the chance to experience the material in a personal and transformative way, sharing with one another through a group experience that is relatively unstructured and organic. In order to move the experience from one that is intellectual to one that is experiential, the rabbi is encouraged to open the group with a Jewish story that highlights the positive psychology character strength. Research shows that narrative is a powerful tool for individuals to understand themselves and their lives. In this group model, narrative also connects members to one another as Jews with a shared history and as participants with a shared

purpose of seeking greater well-being (Linley & Joseph, 2004). The experiential group process provides a space for members to actively participate in integrating positive psychology concepts in addition to providing tips and ideas for other group members. It is a shared process that will unfold differently in each group. The experiential group is based on a small group models, in which literature suggests that experiential groups allow members to take ownership in a way that makes the experience meaningful and lasting (Furr, 2000). The literature also provides support for the concept and benefits of a didactic group combined with an experiential or process component, such as that proposed in this model (Furr).

The final portion of the group is a closing ritual, which may vary slightly from group to group. The author provides facilitators with quotes related to the positive psychology character strengths so that participants may reflect on the themes as they leave the group to go home. Journaling is also suggested for members when they are away from the group as a tool for greater reflection and integration. The closing ritual is based on the prevalence of ritual both in Judaism and often in psychological groups, which helps frame an experience and deepen it.

Section XII. Glossary of Terms

The glossary is offered as a resource for psychologists and rabbis to understand the terminology that is rooted in either Judaism or the field of psychology. The terms defined in the glossary are used throughout the manual and may provide additional information for facilitators to access in feeling comfortable and literate in the content areas of the manual.

Section XIII. Appendices/Resources

The appendixes cover a variety of material that is supplemental yet relevant for the facilitation of the groups. Nine appendixes are provided to address aspects of the manual that may need elaboration. In addition, they provide resources for marketing, modifying, evaluating, and understanding concepts in the manual.

In the first appendix, sample marketing material is provided to guide synagogues in recruiting members. The next appendix is designed to account for modifications in facilitation that may be necessary in accommodating synagogues of varying sizes and degrees of clergy availability for facilitating groups. Evaluation forms are provided to help facilitators gather information midway through the group process and again at post-group to assess the quality and nature of the members' experiences. This should help facilitators make modifications as they proceed and to improve the groups for future participants.

The next appendix provides material elaborating on the use of a blessing at the beginning of each group. The role of prayers/blessings in Judaism is explored briefly and information is provided about the selection of the *Shehecheyanu*, which is recommended for use in this manual.

The next appendix provides a script for engaging participants in "positive introductions" (Parks & Seligman, 2007), as recommended for use in the groups. Next is an appendix that describes in detail the Values in Action Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) that serves as the resource for positive psychology character strengths utilized in the manual. This appendix also describes signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman). The next appendix presents

alternatives for positive psychology character strengths that may be used in place of the themes originally selected by the author of the manual. Additional strengths were chosen from Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification (Peterson & Seligman) and provide multiple empirically-based positive psychology themes to pair with Jewish holidays.

Next, an appendix provides numerous resources for Jewish stories that may be utilized by rabbis co-facilitating the groups. The final appendix describes group modifications and alternatives that address a variety of issues, including: application of differing positive psychology themes, changes to the 8-week time-line, ideas for follow-up groups, selection of Jewish holidays, and modifications to group setting.

Overview of Evaluators' Feedback

After the manual was completed, it was evaluated by two professionals with expertise in the content areas of the manual. The first is a clinical psychologist who has worked in the field for over 30 years. She works both in clinical private practice and as an author of books about couples therapy. In addition, she maintains a strong connection with Judaism through her own personal practice. She is familiar with positive psychology and its principles, expert in the field of clinical psychology, and knowledgeable about Judaism and the Jewish holiday calendar. The second evaluator is a rabbi who serves a large Reform Jewish congregation and has been in the rabbinate for almost 20 years. His training in practical rabbinics and pastoral counseling as well as his interest in helping congregants in their personal growth and spiritual journeys, led him to complete a doctorate in ministry. The focus of his dissertation was the nature of the soul from a Jewish perspective and the role of the rabbi in healing the soul.

Both evaluators were provided a copy of the manual, an evaluation form, and a written informed consent. Each evaluator read the manual and completed the written evaluation form in approximately two weeks. Next, each evaluator completed a telephone semi-structured interview facilitated by the researcher, lasting approximately 45 minutes. While the evaluators were provided with preliminary interview questions when the evaluation process began, the researcher utilized the phone interviews primarily to elicit additional information and encourage evaluators to elaborate and broaden the answers provided on the initial manual review form. At the completion of the evaluation, all research materials were returned to the researcher. The questions asked of the evaluators as well as their responses, both written and via the semi-structured phone interviews are presented in detail below.

Feedback and Results

Table 2

Evaluators' Feedback Question #1

Generally, what are your thoughts about the idea of psychologists and rabbis co-facilitating positive psychology groups in a synagogue?

Evaluator	Comment
Psychologist	"Either would suffice, and perhaps be better than having both. Would need to test this out." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comment
Rabbi	"I think it's brilliant and I think it's necessary. I feel that with the advent of modern psychology the role of the rabbi was dramatically changed. For a long time, people used the rabbi as a psychologist and I think in some ways, psychologists have neutered the spirituality out of psychotherapy (not all psychologists, but many psychologists) and that to bring psychologists and rabbis together offers real opportunity to open doors for growth for people in ways that they may not have perceived as possible and integrated in their own journeys." "I also think that the facilitation of these groups requires just the right psychologist and just the right rabbi. It's very specific. It can't be any rabbi or any psychologist, and both have to be willing to invest time into preparation – not preparation of specific materials, but preparation to really understand the goals and the objectives of sessions that they're sharing together. More specifically, time to understand the actual process that goes along with achieving the goals and objectives of the groups. I also feel that one of the inherent difficulties in psychology is that it is primarily a fee-for-service based profession, whereas someone's access to a rabbi is considered part of their membership in an institution. So, carefully thinking through the difference between someone who has a relationship with a fee-for-service professional versus a representative on staff of an institution to which one belongs, requires a lot of thought and also requires a clear understanding of the role of a psychologist within a temple setting." (personal communication, May 1, 2009)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comment
Rabbi	Follow-up comments from interview: "Understanding the role of the psychologist in a synagogue setting is about recognizing the limitations and boundaries of the psychologist, and that the role is different than if a client showed up in a therapist's office. For example, a psychologist needs to ask him/herself what level of confrontation is useful in a synagogue setting and what role does confrontation play in these groups? There need to be clear ground rules developed around participants' behavior during the groups as well as confidentiality. If confidentiality is part of the group, it needs to be recognized by everyone in the group and not just reflect the sentiment of the leaders. Since the groups are held in a synagogue, I believe participants will have a lot of expectations about ground rules that are typical for courses in a synagogue instead of ground rules for a more therapeutic group. I would recommend absolute clarity about the ground rules to address the assumptions that people come into the group with." (personal communication, May 5, 2009)

In the first question posed on the evaluation form, the evaluators responded quite differently. The psychologist commented specifically about the use of a rabbi and psychologist as co-facilitators, stating that she thought it might be sufficient to have either a rabbi or a psychologist facilitate the groups as opposed to co-facilitation. In contrast, the rabbi responded by commenting on the broader vision outlined in the manual, utilizing rabbis and psychologists as facilitators for positive psychology groups in a synagogue setting. He suggested the resource manual potentially opens the door for greater integration of psychological and spiritual growth for Jews within a synagogue setting. In addition, he suggested that rabbis and psychologists who partner to co-facilitate the groups should be maximally invested in preparing together for the groups, keeping in mind the overarching goals and objectives so that their individual and shared roles may be clear and effective. Understanding the differences in setting (synagogue versus therapy) and the assumptions that underlie these settings, from both a potential

participant's perspective as well as a facilitator's perspective is important to the overall

success of the group.

Table 3

Evaluators' Feedback Question #2

What do you consider the strengths of the manual?

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	"Gives good structure to the course." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)
Rabbi	"I thought that one of the great strengths of the manual is that it is totally self-explanatory. It is a stand-alone piece. While one could present the actual Jewish holiday sessions in a manual without the rationale, and while there may be some rabbis and psychologists who would read beyond the introduction and go right to the holidays, the significance of the work is the underlying values that play themselves out in the process that unfolds throughout the resource manual. And to me, the process is like a meta-process for the positive psychology. Positive psychology and Judaism seem to have great similarities, and so the manual has achieved the goal in itself. In addition, the quantity and specificity of the material is completely appropriate. It doesn't require someone to spend weeks studying a manual or a technique, but it clearly lays out the philosophy, the goals, and how to get there. It's very straight-forward. It's very clear. And, I also don't think it's pediatric. It's not infantilizing. It asks the rabbi and the psychologist to do what they do best by asking them to lead the group without then leaving it so open that it will never happen." (personal communication, May 1, 2009)

Based on comments, both evaluators seemed to agree that the manual is structured

well overall. In addition, the rabbi also felt the manual is clear and serves as a solid

representation of the experience of positive psychology.

Table 4

Evaluators' Feedback Question #3

What do you consider the weaknesses of the manual?

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	"Needs more Jewish sources, quotes, background info. Overall however it's excellent." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)

Follow-up comments from interview: "In regards to structure, format, and frame issues, I would recommend the following:

- Open the group to anyone who is interested. Don't screen anyone out. Let it be a process of self-selection. My experience in synagogue groups is that people who are not right for the group or who are more problematic will often drop out on their own – Do not make barriers to entry. To the contrary, get lots of people involved. It is the responsibility of the leaders to make sure that everyone in the group is constructive
- Set ground rules at the beginning of the process, including the following:
    - Expectation for positivity. Make sure that people get their fair share of time to speak. This is managed by the leaders and can be enforced during group and if necessary after or between groups. Psychologists must be willing to enforce the positive tone as a requirement for participation if a participant is not constructive or responding to encouragement.
    - It is the leaders' main role to monitor the process – make sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak, invite the quieter members to speak, don't let anyone dominate discussion, and keep the dialogue additive and not contradictory
    - Set up clear expectations for confidentiality – this can be done in a Jewish context by reviewing the rules about *Lashon hara* and relating them to confidentiality. In essence, it is ok for participants to talk with others about their own personal experiences in the group or the neutral experiences or comments of others. But, to relay any other personal information that was shared by another in the group is gossip and not permitted.

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	• Ask members to speak using "I" statements • When splitting up members in *chevruta* in a co-ed group, divide into groups of 3 to preserve modesty • In order to create a group process as opposed to a collective of individuals, it is helpful if participants begin speaking by picking up on something useful that was just stated by another participant. This way the group braids together thoughts in an interconnected way." (personal communication, May 4, 2009)
Rabbi	"One of the weaknesses of the manual is related to recruitment and screening of participants. I think there needs to be more attention paid to consideration of who is appropriate and not appropriate for the groups. I don't believe you can open the group to everyone, just as in therapy there are some people that shouldn't be in certain groups, to allow for the entire group to benefit from the process. I think it's a much more complicated process than you originally laid out in the manual and requires additional thoughtfulness and decision-making about inclusion criteria. And it is challenging because there is a psychotherapeutic process, an intentional process involved in making sure that the people included in the group are fully prepared, psychologically appropriate, and spiritually appropriate for the setting and the goals of the group. You want to make sure that the potential exists for all members to benefit from the experience." (personal communication, May 1, 2009) Follow-up comments from interview: "The screening process will impact the nature of the group. If the group is open to anyone, then it will be more like a class and therefore the chance for the psychologist to seize upon opportunities for individual growth may be fewer or less appropriate. Or vice-versa, if there is a commitment to interpersonal growth and growth of the group, then screening will need to take place. In essence, what is the nature of the group? Or, is it just a dozen individuals coming together at the same place for a class? In the groups you've outlined, you've got group ritual, group check-in, group sharing. You're working on the creation of an actual group."

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Rabbi	"I would suggest screening because I don't think everyone is appropriate for this group. There is some arrogance that we have in the healing profession that we can heal everyone. And yet, there is a *yesh gvul*, a boundary of what we're equipped to do and of what we're not equipped to do. And, in this group, there will be people who need different therapeutic help and may impede the group's growth if they are included. I would recommend that the potential participants meet with the psychologist for a 30-minute goal-setting session to determine whether or not their goals are appropriate for the group. And, if the person has a set of issues that are bigger than what can be considered, and the person needs a more focused therapeutic situation, then it would be up to the therapist to say, 'this isn't going to be the right group for you and I would recommend that you pursue this course of action…' Otherwise, it's a class, and if it's a class, then some of what you are proposing may not be appropriate. You may simply need to tell psychologists and rabbis that care needs to be given to make sure that the overall group experience is not diminished because of potential aberrant behavior of one of the group members. And, it is the responsibility of the rabbi and the psychologist to be the determiner of that."

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Rabbi	At synagogues, members generally sign a contract which states that they belong to the Temple and can participate in whatever they want to. But, I think there is a different contract for this type of group experience. I think there has to be some sort of agreement with ground rules. Group ground rules about cross-talk, etc. At this point, I don't think you've spelled out the ground rules and I think that you need to do that. I think that's among the most helpful things that you can do. That will address a lot of questions that people (participants, rabbis, psychologists) will have. These ground rules will help others to connect with the nature of the group. And perhaps this is part of the intake session with the psychologist, or even part of the first session. Maybe the first group session is not *Rosh Hashannah*, but *Elul* – How to get prepared for the group. Go over things like what is the group called, what is the contract, etc., a training session. *Cheshbon Hanefesh* could be used – taking an accounting of oneself and getting ready for something. You wouldn't have to follow the format of the other sessions for this introductory *Elul* session. It could serve a more administrative, orientation purpose. Once the ground rules are established it will also help rabbis and psychologists to know who should be recruited for this group. Ground rules could even be framed around Pirkei Avot: For example, 'if it shouldn't be heard, maybe you shouldn't say it.' Or think of using the great texts from Rabbi Yochanan about the 5 cycles of what one should pursue and avoid…seeing things through the lens of a good heart." (personal communication, May 5, 2009)

A tremendous amount of feedback was given in response to the weaknesses of the manual. While the comments about weaknesses themselves were relatively brief, suggestions for improving them were elaborated extensively by the evaluators. Together, they provided many relevant suggestions for strengthening the manual. Specifically, the psychologist commented that the manual needs a greater rooting in Jewish texts, sources, and quotes. She felt these additions would give the manual greater accessibility and credibility in a synagogue setting.

The greatest share of feedback from both evaluators related to issues of screening and recruitment, as well as group structure and framework. While the psychologist advocated for a self-selection process relative to participant make-up, the rabbi felt strongly that there should be an intentional, formal screening process which would aim to match the positive psychology goals of the group with the individual goals of potential participants. Both agreed that the tone of groups should feel positive and that the group should remain constructive throughout the process; however, the evaluators disagreed in their comments about ensuring or implementing these outcomes. For example, the psychologist felt that there should be no barriers to entry in the group and that over time, problematic or negative participants will likely drop out. If not, they can be managed by the group facilitators, whose primary role is to monitor the group process, keeping it positive and constructive. In contrast, the rabbi felt that some potential participants may not be psychologically or spiritually appropriate for this group model and may negatively impact the entire group process. Therefore they should be screened out prior to the beginning of the groups.

Both evaluators commented that creating and implementing clear ground rules is a necessary and vital part of the success of the group process, and currently missing from the manual. They provided numerous suggestions for specific ground rules, related to issues of confidentiality, promoting positive and healthy interactions in group, and suggestions for weaving a group process as opposed to a collective of individuals. The rabbi commented that the outcome of these screening, recruiting, and frame decisions will impact and clarify the nature of the group.

Utilizing a Jewish context to think about and communicate ground rules to participants was recommended by both evaluators. For example, the psychologist suggested using the concept of *Lashon hara* (the prohibition in Jewish law of telling gossip, which can be something negative or something not previously known to another person) as a basis for establishing and understanding confidentiality. The rabbi provided several suggestions, such as utilizing the concept of Elul (preparedness) and *Cheshbon Hanefesh* (taking an accounting of oneself or one's soul—a process of taking stock and introspection in regard to one's Divine service) as a model for orienting members to the group process and outlining the ground rules for future sessions.

Table 5

Evaluators' Feedback Question #4

What improvements could I make to enhance the positive psychology focus, either didactically or experientially?

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	"This part seemed fine." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	Follow-up comments from Interview: "Consider restructuring the manual so that the experiential element starts at the very beginning. The less talking, teaching, and explaining, the better. I would recommend just a very brief check-in followed by an experiential activity to get members into the experience of the theme. For example, guided imagery is a very effective way to elicit feelings, sensations, and experiences. For *Sukkot*, you could begin with a brief guided imagery where the psychologist asks participants to imagine they are sitting in a *sukkah*. Ask them to notice how they are feeling, what they are noticing, what comes to mind, etc. Now shift your focus to one of gratitude (the positive psychology theme for *Sukkot*) and notice how this informs your experience, your sensations, your thoughts, as you imagine sitting in the *sukkah*. Something brief like this can set a great tone for the remainder of the group. For Purim, you might start by telling a funny story. Ask participants to notice what changes they feel in their bodies when they laugh. Have them think about sitting with someone who is funny and how humor strengthens or warms the connection between two people. You could easily begin every session with a short guided imagery to help participants with the experience of the themes instead of intellectually talking about them."

"I would also recommend using a *chevruta* model to enhance the experiential nature of the groups. It's a very effective model. For example, give the group members a few texts about the positive psychology strengths and then break them into dyads or very small groups to discuss. Give them a few discussion questions to focus on and then if you want you can bring them back together to share with the larger group about their experiences and thoughts. I would also use a *chevruta* model for the positive psychology didactic. Give them the information to read in small groups with some discussion questions to personalize and bring to life the material." (personal communication, May 4, 2009) |

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Rabbi	"First, I think that the experience of positive psychology is achieved from beginning to end throughout the manual. The way in which the manual is written, the way in which the process is communicated, the tone of the language (overall), and just the way the manual reads, creates an experience of positive psychology. When I read it, my first response is, 'lets get a grant, lets do this.' It's how it makes you feel. It makes you feel positive. The manual itself elicits the feelings that lead you toward a positive response. So, the manual in itself meets the end goal of experiencing positive psychology. When I think about the congregants in my world, it addresses many of the ways that they are living, as highly reflective, thoughtful people, interested in integrating different aspects of their lives." "In regards to making sure that the positive psychology themes are threaded throughout each group from the moment the participants walk in the room, to the tone and atmosphere set by the facilitators, to the experience with one another and the material, I think the challenge for each specific session is to take the theme, the positive psychology theme, and integrate it more fully. So, for example, you take humor for *Purim*, and I think that the opening ritual, the set induction, and the atmosphere, has to reflect the theme of humor so that it is more fully integrated into the experience. And, that's really really hard. And, I'm not sure if you can necessarily lay it out for each positive psychology theme ahead of time because so much of it has to do with the specific rabbi and psychologist facilitating the group. However, here are some examples. In thinking about forgiveness for *Yom Kippur*, maybe that session needs to be held in the sanctuary with the lights turned down low, in front of the open arc, talking about what it means to look closely at oneself. After focusing on forgiveness, the session might end with each person getting the chance to go up in front of the open arc for their own moment of forgiveness, or even doing it all together as a group in silence. The goal is actually immersing oneself in the meta-message of forgiveness. So, for *Sukkot* the theme is gratitude. Maybe the beginning of the session starts by wrapping a gift and holding it throughout the session. At the end of the session the gift is given to oneself or someone in the group, even if there's nothing in it. It is a representation of holding gratitude, holding and giving gifts. I don't think these ideas need to be difficult. For *Rosh Hashannah*, the theme is integrity, and you put in the story of the Carob Tree. Lets go plant the tree together. It's not just telling the story, it's breathing life into the text."

Evaluator	Comments
Rabbi	"Additionally, I would argue that for most rabbis and many psychologists, the notion of positive psychology is new to them. Consequently, I'm not sure it's articulated clearly enough how to facilitate the experiential portion of the group. I understand technically what I'm supposed to do there. First we're supposed to talk about ways that the positive psychology theme strengthens us and we're supposed to facilitate that process, and then we're supposed to look at areas of potential growth, which is a positive way of seeing where am I lacking, and then supporting participants to help each other come up with ideas for how to do that. But, I'm not sure if that process is spelled out enough. If you look at some of the work of the *mussar* projects, you'll see they are forming these *chevruta* (Jewish learning/study partnerships). There is a lot of focus on what I am going to achieve in the process – setting goals for changed behavior or new behavior, creating pathways for reinforcing those changes, and really focusing on the action aspects of it, the behavioral aspects of these changes. And maybe I'm overlaying a different psychological model onto your process, but I do think that there's not enough of an outcome-based focus in your process. As a rabbi, and hypothetically as the participant, I want to know what my homework is, in a sense. And, if there is no homework, because of the therapeutic model, then as a rabbi, I might be pushing for some homework – and I don't mean a specific homework assignment for each group, but my own spiritual, psychological homework that I'm supposed to be thinking about. For example, maybe it's distilling the learning down to one core value and one core affirmation that I should be affirming on a regular basis. For the value of forgiveness, I'm not talking about just going home and forgiving one person, although that may be valuable too."

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Rabbi	"Finally, I notice that you use the words *but* and *although* many, many times throughout your document, which tends to negate what you wrote before. In putting forth a new model for positive psychology group work, you explain that it is not a therapy group. And, you explain the details of what it is, but you never specifically name what it is. Often, you refer to how positive psychology is different than traditional psychology. Part of an evolving definition of this newer psychological process requires one to create new definitions or re-define old concepts without neutering it by giving all of the power to the old definition. I think you have to identify clearly that one aspect of positive psychology is the use of new language and new reference points, and new evolving definitions of the subject. So, even in the word *group*, using the word *group* when you're defining the process…if it's not group therapy, tell the reader what it is. Give it a name and then define that name and be able to refer to that name throughout the manual. I think this would be really helpful." (personal communication, May 1, 2009) Follow-up comments from interview: "I think that people who come to Temple to learn are not interested in actual homework. However, I think they're interested in developing and growing and learning. I think there needs to be some sort of internal or external goal setting based on something that came out of the session. Concretizing or committing to applying one of the principles as you move forward. Almost active change versus passive change. But, I think this could be phase 2 to your project. Where you turn the process into more of a behavioral process from an interpersonal process. The *Mussar* work that people are doing requires a lot of homework, journaling and all sorts of stuff. You could even propose an alternative track for those people who are interested in actualizing what's been discussed. For example, the track could include: - Set of journaling questions given for each week - The creation of *chevruta*, a mentoring relationship, where participants take questions and between the group sessions commit to meeting over the phone and discussing a couple of quotes with some leading questions.

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Rabbi	To me, you could create a whole workbook that accompanies the sessions with exercises and additional reading material and thought-provoking questions and journaling questions and music to listen to and things to think about. But, the first stage is to publish this piece and then you could create a workbook around your project in phase 2. As you develop the course, it might be nice to develop these extra pieces." (personal communication, May 5, 2009)

Question 4 focused on ways to enhance the positive psychology focus in the manual, either didactically or experientially. Both evaluators had numerous comments and suggestions for creating a more experiential process from beginning to end. While the psychologist initially wrote on the evaluation that the positive psychology focus seemed fine, she elaborated with many suggestions during the follow-up interview. She recommended adding an activity near the beginning of each group to engage participants in the experience of the themes as opposed to an intellectual discussion of them. She recommended guided imagery as a tool for meeting this end and thought the topics could parallel the positive psychology themes for each group. In addition, she also suggested a model for experiencing the material in small groups, called *chevruta* (traditional Jewish process of learning with a partner). She recommended utilizing *chevruta* both for the positive psychology material and the Jewish texts as well.

The comments from the rabbi suggested he feels in some regard that the experience of positive psychology is threaded throughout the manual, from the language in which it is written to the way that it is communicated overall. However, he recommended the addition of an opening ritual or activity to infuse the positive psychology theme into the very experience of the group process from the beginning.

Suggestions included locating the group in front of an open ark for the forgiveness/*Yom Kippur* module, and wrapping and giving gifts to oneself and one another to experience gratitude more fully during the gratitude/*Sukkot* module.

Feedback from the rabbi also communicated the need for greater articulation of the role of facilitators in achieving the goals of the experiential portion of the group as initially described in the manual. Since many rabbis and even psychologists may be new to the ideas of positive psychology, he recommended more clearly outlining the facilitation of the experiential group process. Similar to the feedback from the psychologist, he also recommended *chevruta* study as one means for integrating material in an experiential way. Further, he commented on the role of homework in helping participants more actively change their lives and integrate the psychological and spiritual material. In the follow-up interview, he suggested homework through the eventual creation of a supplemental workbook for participants. He suggested this could be a useful and exciting addition to the current manual during a future phase of development.

Table 6

Evaluators' Feedback Question #5

What improvements could I make to the manual overall?

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	"Add more Jewish perspectives: on *midot*, on kabalistic way of categorizing positive personality traits, on sayings from our tradition." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)
	Follow-up comments from interview: "Consider giving structure to both the Jewish texts and the positive psychology didactics by providing a few discussion questions." (personal communication, May 4, 2009)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Rabbi	No comment

Feedback from the psychologist paralleled earlier feedback in which suggestions were provided to include additional Jewish perspectives and texts in the manual. The rabbi provided no comment on this question.

Table 7

Evaluators' Feedback Questions #6-13

Please rate the goodness of fit between the positive psychology themes and the holidays to which they are matched by circling a number below. At the bottom of each section is a space for optional additional comments.

Evaluator	Rating
Psychologist	6) Rosh Hashannah and Integrity

Poor   Fair   Strong

1   2   3   4   (5)

7) Forgiveness and Yom Kippur

Poor   Fair   Strong

1   2   (3)   4   5

8) Gratitude and Sukkot

Poor   Fair   Strong

1   2   3   4   (5)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Rating
Psychologist	

9) Hope and Hanukkah

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	④	5

10) Humor and Purim

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	④	5

11) Citizenship/Empowerment and Passover

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	④	5

12) Spirituality and Shavuot

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	④	5

13) Wisdom (perspective) and Tisha B'av

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	⑤

Comments:
"On Shavuot add emphasis on Law as well as Spirituality."

"On Passover emphasize community as well as 'citizenship'"

"On Rosh Hashannah add interpersonal dimensions of integrity: being open, taking responsibility for mistakes, non-judgmental listening to others' concerns or complaints…"

"On Purim add more on the importance of taking action: 'G-d will save us, but are you going to do your part?' Mordecai asks Esther"

"On Yom Kippur, the concept is Repentance (learning and growing from one's own mistakes) more than Forgiveness (which sounds like it's vis a vis others' mistakes, and sounds more Christian)." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Rating
Rabbi	6) Rosh Hashannah and Integrity

6) Rosh Hashannah and Integrity

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	(5)

7) Forgiveness and Yom Kippur

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	(5)

8) Gratitude and Sukkot

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	(5)

9) Hope and Hanukkah

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	(5)

10) Humor and Purim

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	(5)

11) Citizenship/Empowerment and Passover

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	(5)

12) Spirituality and Shavuot

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	(5)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Rating
Rabbi	13) Wisdom (perspective) and Tisha B'av

Poor   Fair   Strong

1   2   3   4   (5)

Comments:

Both evaluators rated the goodness of fit between the Jewish holidays and the corresponding positive psychology themes strongly, with the rabbi rating them slightly stronger overall. The comments provided about these ratings were offered by the psychologist, who suggested ways to strengthen the themes or add to them. For example, she suggested that the holiday of *Passover* emphasize the theme of community in addition to citizenship. She also commented that the theme of forgiveness for *Yom Kippur* was the weakest in terms of goodness-of-fit, sounding more Christian in nature than a more relevant Jewish theme of repentance.

Table 8

Evaluators' Feedback Question #14

Please rate the overall strength of the Jewish texts in providing support for the positive psychology themes.

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	Poor Fair Strong

1   2   3   (4)   5
Comments:
"I like what you have chosen, but would add more. Maybe double this part. Add quotes from Jewish sources on your quotes pages." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments				
Rabbi	Poor		Fair		Strong
	1	2	3	4	(5)
	Comments:				

Table 9

Evaluators' Feedback Question #15

Please rate the strength of the flyer as a tool for recruiting group members.

Evaluator	Comments				
Psychologist	Poor		Fair		Strong
	1	2	3	(4)	5
Rabbi	Poor		Fair		Strong
	1	2	3	4	(5)

Table 10

Evaluators' Feedback Question #16

Please rate the appropriateness of limiting the group to 8-12 participants.

Evaluator	Comments				
Psychologist	Not Appropriate	Appropriate			Very Appropriate
	1	2	3	4	(5)
	Comments: "It's a good idea though to start bigger, as people drop out. Also, if you are encouraging couples, that's only 4 to 6 couples. You could probably make it a bit larger." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)				

(table continues)

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	Comments from Interview: "In regards to which congregants this group may be appropriate for, I would recommend groups of people who are often disenfranchised in synagogue life – or to whom less programming resources are focused. For example, it would be great for singles, teens, seniors, parents with young children…make sure to offer babysitting. It would be excellent for any group within the synagogue, but a very good way to connect people who are often needing extra spiritual and psychological support." (personal communication, May 4, 2009)
Rabbi	Not Appropriate Appropriate Very Appropriate 1 2 3 4 (5) Comments:

Table 11

Evaluators' Feedback Question #17

Please rate the appropriateness of a closed-group format.

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	Not Appropriate Appropriate Very Appropriate 1 2 3 (4) 5
Rabbi	Not Appropriate Appropriate Very Appropriate 1 2 3 4 (5)

Table 12

Evaluators' Feedback Question #18

Please rate the length of time allotted for each session – 2 hours.

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	Not Good Good Very Good 1 2 3 (4) 5 Comments: "I'd recommend an hour and a half. That's plenty usually, especially for evening groups." (personal communication, April 20, 2009)
Rabbi	Not Good Good Very Good 1 2 3 4 (5)

Table 13

Evaluators' Feedback Question #19

Please rate the quality of the appendices.

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	Low Adequate High 1 2 3 (4) 5 Comments: "Add to Appendix F more on character strengths from Jewish sources: e.g., on Midot, or on kabalistic categories…" (personal communication, April 20, 2009)
Rabbi	Low Adequate High 1 2 3 4 (5)

Tables 9-13 addressed format, structure, and procedures outlined in the manual. Interestingly, the ratings in these areas from both evaluators were strong, with relatively few comments. However, much of the semi-structured phone interviews focused directly on these areas, and both evaluators had a great amount to say regarding issues of screening (including inclusion/exclusion criteria), ground rules for group process, and overall structure and format. Much of the feedback was missing from the written evaluation form, and this could be reflective of a deficiency in the selection of questions and ratings to address the complexity and depth of issues presented in this area. Most of the feedback was outlined in previous sections where the author presents the evaluators' comments about the weaknesses of the manual and ways to enhance the experiential aspects of the manual. However, in Table 10, the psychologist suggested that the size of the group should not be limited to 8-12 participants because some members will likely drop-out during the process. In addition, she suggested that while the group may be appropriate for most constituent groups within the synagogue, there are many congregants who are more often disenfranchised or not as often included in programming, and therefore, this resource manual could be very helpful as a tool for engaging these groups—for example, parents with young children, singles, teens, or seniors.

Table 14

Evaluators' Feedback Question #20

Please share any other comments or feedback below.

Evaluator	Comments
Psychologist	"EXCELLENT undertaking, done well. Very interesting project. Bravo and mazel tov!" (personal communication, April 20, 2009)
Rabbi	"This is a significant accomplishment. The strong (5) rating on 6. – 19. represents my specific response to each area and my general feeling about the entire project. I have spent time discussing this project with Ms. Krichiver from its inception. Her work is original and unique. It creates a new and much needed path for those who seek to grow psychologically and spiritually. Her work is detailed and considers in great depth the positive application of the values embedded in the Jewish Holiday cycle and utilizes these values in a positive therapeutic process. In addition Ms. Krichiver respects the autonomy and intellect of the reader, the psychologist, the rabbi, and the participant. Her work will be a gift to all who actualize this highly developed, beautifully articulated, and important contribution." (personal communication, May 1, 2009)

Chapter 4

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to develop a resource manual designed to provide the framework, information, and tools for rabbis and psychologists to co-facilitate positive psychology groups in a synagogue setting. The research tasks included an extensive review of the literature, the gathering of informal feedback and guidance from psychologists and rabbis, and a formal evaluation of the manual by an experienced rabbi and psychologist. The literature review began with a broad search of scholarly information in the field of psychology related to the examination of religion. This broad review was narrowed to include aspects of positive psychology and Judaism. It also included relevant Jewish texts and sources related to aspects of psychological growth from a religious perspective. In reviewing the existing literature for this resource manual, both theoretical writings and research studies were utilized in support of the development of the manual.

In addition, the author consulted informally with rabbis, Jewish professionals, and psychologists for feedback relevant to the creation of the manual. Upon completion of the manual, an expert psychologist and rabbi were recruited to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the manual. Both evaluators completed written review forms as well as semi-structured telephone interviews that were audio-taped and later transcribed to better capture their feedback.

Summary of Results

In order to provide psychologists and rabbis with the tools necessary to facilitate positive psychology groups within synagogue settings, the study focused on the

development of a resource manual. The goals of the manual included: (a) utilizing positive psychology to address psychospiritual needs within the Jewish community, (b) explicitly connecting positive psychology and Judaism through common themes, and (c) providing opportunities for psychological growth through active exploration/integration of positive psychology in a non-clinical setting. The manual, *Positive Psychology and the Jewish Holiday Calendar: A Resource Manual for Small Groups,* incorporates research, resources, and strategies to assist and guide psychologists and rabbis in understanding and promoting the psychospiritual health of Jews in a synagogue setting, utilizing the Jewish holidays as the context for exploration, and positive psychology as the mode for growth.

To better determine the usefulness, accuracy, and relevance of the manual, two formal evaluators, a rabbi and a psychologist, provided feedback on its content. Overall, both evaluators noted that the manual presents a useful, interesting, and beneficial resource to members of the Jewish community and to the rabbis and psychologists who may eventually facilitate the groups. They agreed that there is a natural connection between Judaism and positive psychology and that both psychological and spiritual needs can be addressed for participants engaged in the group process outlined in the manual. One evaluator indicated that to bring psychologists and rabbis together offers real opportunity to open doors for people in ways that may not have been previously perceived as possible. This evaluator commented that the manual is a comprehensive, stand-alone, self-explanatory guide for psychologists and rabbis. While specific areas of greatest or least relevance were not specifically identified by either evaluator, both found that the material gave good structure to the groups and would be useful to participants.

Strengths of the Manual

A significant strength of the manual is that it attends to the gap between the psychospiritual needs of members of the Jewish community and the resources available for trained professional to meet these needs, particularly through positive and engaging interventions. As noted in the literature review, there are no known positive psychology interventions specifically aimed at members of the Jewish community, co-facilitated by rabbis and psychologists. In addition, there is a paucity of resources available to mental health professionals to support the psychological and spiritual needs of non-clinical populations within the Jewish community. Often the programs are lay-driven with the support of a mental health professional who may or may not be comfortable or trained in the sphere where the spiritual meets the psychological. Providing rabbis and psychologists with the resources, guidance, and tools to bring their areas of expertise together in the service of the psychological wellness of congregants within a spiritual context will supplement and enhance what is currently available within the Jewish community.

Another strength of the manual is the specific use of positive psychology within a religious/spiritual, non-clinical setting. Positive psychology is a relevant and natural fit with themes in Judaism, specifically the Jewish holiday calendar, which contains themes of growth, reflection, hope, gratitude, humor, wisdom, and myriad other concepts that positive psychologist research shows promotes well-being and thriving. The manual provides foundational psychological research about these positive psychology strengths, and outlines empirically-supported interventions for cultivating these character strengths.

In addition, for Jewish congregants already engaged in psychological and spiritual development through their participation in synagogue life, the resource manual provides a unique opportunity for active personal integration of psychospiritual concepts through interpersonal, experiential, positive psychology groups.

Limitations and Recommendations for Program Development

Although the manual serves as a valuable resource to rabbis and psychologists in the Jewish community working to serve congregants, it also presents with limitations. One limitation is the lack of Jewish/rabbinic input from members of denominations outside the Reform Jewish community. While the literature reviewed encompassed studies from the Jewish community at large, and sources and texts were selected for applicability across Judaism's denominations, the input elicited informally and formally from rabbis and Jewish professionals came largely from members of the reform Jewish community. Future input and additional formal evaluations of the manual could represent a more diverse group of Jewish community professionals.

An additional limitation of the manual, as highlighted by the evaluators, is the lack of attention to issues of screening and recruitment, as well as the need for creation of formal ground rules for group process. These areas are related and speak to a complexity of issues addressing the formation and sustenance of a group that is positive in nature, with the aim of creating a safe environment for the exploration and integration of positive psychology themes in a deeply spiritual context. Screening procedures, inclusion/exclusion criteria, guidelines for group preparation, confidentiality, ground rules for group interactions, and the creation of a group experience in addition to an individual experience, are all critical in meeting the broader goals of the group. Finding

the balance between a true organic experiential process versus a more structured and proscribed process will be an important consideration for the future application and success of the manual.

One way to improve this is to create content addressing each of these areas of structure from a Jewish perspective, as recommended by both evaluators. For example, the Jewish concept of *Lashon hara* could be utilized to create an agreement about group confidentiality. The Jewish concept of *Cheshbon Hanefesh*, taking an accounting of oneself, could be utilized to set a positive and reflective tone in the early stages of the formation of the group. And beyond these specific areas, thought should be given to screening measures. One way to do this would be to obtain additional feedback from both rabbis and psychologists on the benefits and limitations of formal screening procedures versus a group that is more open and available to anyone in the community. In addition, it could be useful to elicit information about spiritually and psychologically appropriate ways to screen in a synagogue setting if this is the future direction of the manual.

In addition, the author could consider developing formal screening measures for the selection of appropriate rabbi/psychologist teams for the facilitation of the groups. Not only would inclusion criteria for psychologists be appropriate (based on experience level, clinical expertise, and other relevant factors), but guidelines for pairing rabbis with psychologists, based on consideration of their complementary styles and strengths would make the application of the manual more optimal.

An additional limitation of the manual, as noted by one evaluator, is the need for additional Jewish sources, texts, quotes, and background information to appeal to a

greater diversity of Jews and root the manual firmly in a Jewish context. This could be accomplished in the future through the expansion of the Jewish content.

Another significant limitation of the manual, as noted by both evaluators in different ways, is the need for additional thought and consideration of an experiential process that more effectively threads the positive psychology/Jewish holiday themes through the entirety of each group. For example, the positive psychology/Jewish holiday theme for *Hanukkah* is hope. The manual currently outlines a process in which hope is studied and expressed in a didactic, intellectual manner before introducing an experiential process to explore the concept. Both evaluators suggested finding ways to make the theme of hope present in an experiential way throughout the group session, allowing for greater integration through experience as opposed to through intellect. This presents a significant area of consideration for the future development of the manual in terms of addressing the effectiveness and utility of the model.

This particular limitation was addressed at length by the evaluators and many suggestions were provided for enhancing the experiential aspects of the groups. Some suggestions may be appropriate as the manual is developed further in the future. For example, one suggestion was to introduce both Jewish and positive psychology material through *chevruta* (small group learning), to engage participants more directly and meaningfully in an experience that is interactive and interpersonal, and not as formal and intellectual as a didactic presentation. Another possibility included utilizing experiential activities such as guided imagery. Changes to lighting, context, room set-up, and opening rituals may also be effective in striving to provide an experience of the positive psychology themes throughout the group. For example, as suggested by one evaluator,

offering the "forgiveness" group session in front of the open ark may be a small, yet powerful way to help participants experience the theme directly throughout the 2-hour group process. An additional consideration for meeting this limitation in the future involves contacting leading psychological researchers/theorists studying each of the 8 positive psychology concepts outlined in the manual to learn more about infusing each theme into the experience of the group process from beginning to end, based on the most current research in the area of the character strengths.

Conclusions and Implications

Research shows that there is a need for greater psychological resources in the Jewish community. This positive psychology manual provides a means for psychologists and rabbis to bring positive psychology to a non-clinical population within the Jewish community. It utilizes the results of numerous in-depth research studies and a body of psychological and Judaic knowledge to guide individuals toward greater psychological health and well-being, utilizing both positive psychology and Judaism as the context for exploration.

For those who participate in the 8-week group positive psychology process, the positive effects could be meaningful. Participants may experience a greater connection with Judaism through an 8-week journey into the Jewish holidays that engages members in an active and experiential process of integration. They may also make solid interpersonal connections with other group members, finding support for their growth and development. If the positive psychology character strengths are integrated more fully through the group process or cultivated as a result of the group experience, then participants may grow intrapersonally, developing a stronger sense of personal identity,

feeling nourished and strengthened throughout the process, and ultimately experiencing a deepening in their lives. These are all ways that this positive psychology resource manual may potentially contribute to the health and well-being of members of the Jewish community.

A few steps are recommended to enhance the current manual prior to utilizing it for its intended purpose. The steps involve gathering additional feedback and guidance from experts who have relevant knowledge and experience, broadening the content of the manual in certain areas, and potentially offering a series of pilot groups to field-test and improve the manual. More specific steps include continuing to develop the structure for the groups, including explicit ground rules for group sessions, screening measures, and recruitment suggestions.

In addition, the manual would be improved by greater attention to the experiential process, which is a significant component of applied positive psychology. Contacting leading positive psychology researchers to provide suggestions and ideas for threading the positive psychology themes in a powerfully experiential manner throughout the groups would be beneficial. Finally, more fully blending psychological principles with Jewish concepts would also enhance the manual. For example, utilizing Jewish concepts to meaningfully set the tone for the groups, for establishing ground rules for group process, and for preparing members for participation would enhance the relevance and utility of the manual.

In conclusion, this resource manual presents a new approach to psychological wellness in a non-clinical setting, providing psychologists and rabbis with the tools and information to facilitate positive psychology groups. The intersection of Judaism and

positive psychology lends itself to meaningful exploration of shared psychospiritual themes. Small group process as an avenue for encountering positive psychology allows for personal involvement and active participation in the creation of a fuller life. This positive psychology resource manual represents early stages of applying positive psychology to community settings and leaves room for greater advances in later phases of development. Future applications may include adapting and utilizing this group model for use in a diversity of non-clinical, religious community settings.

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APPENDIX A

Jewish Holidays

Rosh Hashanah: "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts" [Lev. 23:32]. "Rosh Hashanah (literally, "Head of the Year") refers to the celebration of the Jewish New Year. The holiday is observed on the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei (observed for the first two days of the month of Tishri in Israel and parts of the world), which usually falls in September or October, and marks the beginning of a ten-day period of prayer, self-examination and repentance, which culminate on the fast day of Yom Kippur. These ten days are referred to as *Yamim Noraim*, the Days of Awe, or the High Holy Days" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009a).

"While there are elements of joy and celebration, Rosh Hashanah is a deeply religious occasion. The customs and symbols of Rosh Hashanah reflect the holiday's dual emphasis, happiness and humility. Special customs observed on Rosh Hashanah include; the sounding of the shofar, using round challah, eating apples dipped in honey (and other sweet foods) for a sweet new year" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009a).

"There is also a customary service observed *before* Rosh Hashanah. *S'lichot*, meaning forgiveness, refers to the penitential prayers recited by Jews prior to the onset of the High Holiday season. It is a solemn and fitting preparation for ten days of reflection and self-examination" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009a).

Yom Kippur: "Yom Kippur is the 'Day of Atonement' and refers to the annual Jewish observance of fasting, prayer and repentance. This is considered to be the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Yom Kippur brings to a close the ten days of repentance begun with Rosh Hashannah. In three separate passages in the Torah, the Jewish people are told, 'the tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: You shall practice self-denial' (Leviticus 23:27). Fasting is seen as fulfilling this biblical commandment. The Yom Kippur fast also enables us to put aside our physical desires and to concentrate on our spiritual needs through prayer, repentance and self-improvement. It is customary in the days before Yom Kippur for Jews to seek out friends and family whom they have wronged and personally ask for their forgiveness" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009b).

Sukkot: "You shall live in huts seven days; all citizens of Israel shall live in huts, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in huts when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the Lord your God" [Lev. 23:42, 43]. "Booths" or "huts" in Hebrew, Sukkot is the final of the three harvest festivals. "It continues the story of the Israelites, which began with the Exodus from Egypt (Passover) and the giving of the Torah at Sinai (Shavuot) and now ends with the wandering in the desert" (Strassfeld, 1985, p. 125). It is the autumn festival commemorating the protection afforded the Israelites throughout their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness before

entering Israel. It is described in the Torah as the feast if ingathering at the end of the agricultural year. Ritually, during this holiday, Jews construct huts, Sukkahs, similar to those in which the Jews lived in the desert and then "dwell" in them for a week. "There are three mitzvot (commandments) concerning Sukkot found in the Torah: 1) living in the sukkah, 2) gathering together the four species, and 3) rejoicing during the holiday" (Strassfeld, p. 126).

Hanukkah: The post-biblical winter holiday is often called the Festival of Lights. "Chanukah, meaning 'dedication' in Hebrew, refers to the joyous eight-day celebration during which Jews commemorate the victory of the Macabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and 'rededication' of the Temple in Jerusalem. The modern home celebration of Chanukah centers around the lighting of the Chanukiah, a special menorah for Hanukkah; unique foods, latkes and jelly doughnuts; and special songs and games" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009c).

Purim: Meaning "lots," Purim is celebrated by the reading of the Scroll of Esther, known in Hebrew as the *Megillat Esther*, which relates the basic story of Purim. Under the rule of King Ahashuerus, Haman, the King's prime minister, plots to exterminate all of the Jews of Persia. His plan is foiled by Queen Esther and her uncle Mordechai, who ultimately save the Jews of the land from destruction. The reading of the megillah is typically a rowdy affair, which is punctuated by booing and noisemaking when Haman's name is read aloud. "Other mitzvoth/rituals include a festive meal on the afternoon of Purim, sending gifts of food to friends (mishloah manot), and giving money to the poor (mattanot le-evyonim). The day is also celebrated with costumes, masquerades, plays, parodies, and a heavy consumption of liquor. All of these activities are meant to make Purim a day when everything is topsy-turvy" Strassfeld, 1985, p. 187).

"Purim is an unusual holiday in many respects. First, Esther is the only Book of the Bible in which God is not mentioned. Second, Purim, like Chanukah, is viewed by tradition as a minor festival. The elevation of Purim to a major holiday was a result of the Jewish historical experience. Over the centuries, Haman became the embodiment of every anti-Semite in every land where Jews were oppressed" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009d).

Passover: "Pesach, known as Passover in English, is a major Jewish spring festival, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt over 3,000 years ago, and encompassing the major theme of liberation. The ritual observance of this holiday centers around a special home service called the seder (meaning 'order') and a festive meal; the prohibition of chametz (leaven); and the eating of matzah (an unleavened bread). On the eve of the fifteenth day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar, we read from a book called the *hagaddah*, meaning 'telling,' which contains the order of prayers, rituals, readings and songs for the Pesach seder. The Pesach seder is the only ritual meal in the Jewish calendar year for which such an order is prescribed, hence its name" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009e).

"The seder has a number of scriptural bases. Exodus 12:3-11 describes the meal of lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs which the Israelites ate just prior to the Exodus. In addition, three separate passages in Exodus (12:26-7, 13:8, 13:14) and one in

Deuteronomy (6:20-21) enunciate the duty of the parents to tell the story of the Exodus to their children. The seder plate contains various symbolic foods referred to in the seder itself" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009e).

Shavuot: "Shavuot is a Hebrew word meaning 'weeks' and refers to the Jewish festival marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Shavuot, like so many other Jewish holidays began as an ancient agricultural festival, marking the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. Shavuot was distinguished in ancient times by bringing crop offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009f).

Shavuot, also known as the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, dates from biblical times, and helps to explain the holiday's name, 'Weeks'. The Torah tells us it took precisely forty-nine days for our ancestors to travel from Egypt to the foot of Mount Sinai (the same number of days as the Counting of the Omer) where they were to receive the Torah. Thus, Leviticus 23:21 commands: 'And you shall proclaim that day (the fiftieth day) to be a holy convocation.' The name Shavuot, 'Weeks,' then symbolizes the completion of a seven-week journey" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009f).

"Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Torah, God's gift to the Jewish people, which is the guide for how we are to live in this world. Sinai is more than the receiving of the Torah – it is the experiencing of the Divine, an experience shared by all Jews of all time" (Strassfeld, 1985, p. 69).

Tisha B'av: "Tisha B'Av, which means the 'Ninth of Av', refers to a traditional day of mourning the destruction of both ancient Temples in Jerusalem" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009g). The day is marked by a major fast, beginning at sundown and continuing until sundown. It is also marked by strict mourning practices and the reading of the Book of Lamentations. "More recently, in Reform Judaism Tisha B'Av has been transformed into a day to remember *many* Jewish tragedies that have occurred throughout history" (Union For Reform Judaism, 2009g).

APPENDIX B

Initial Manual Review Form

Initial Manual Review Form

Thank you for taking the time to review this manual. **As you review the document, please consider areas of strength, weakness, and overall usefulness as guideposts for evaluation.** It will be helpful to peruse the 20 questions below **before** you read the manual so that you can keep them in mind during your review.

A. OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

1. Generally, what are your thoughts about the idea of psychologists and rabbis co-facilitating positive psychology groups in a synagogue?

2. What do you consider the strengths of the manual?

3. What do you consider the weaknesses of the manual?

4. What improvements could I make to enhance the positive psychology focus, either didactically or experientially?

5. What improvements could I make to the manual overall?

B. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THEMES AND JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Please rate the goodness of fit between the positive psychology themes and the holidays to which they are matched by circling a number below. At the bottom of each section is a space for optional additional comments.

6. Integrity and Rosh Hashannah

Poor   Fair   Strong
_____

1   2   3   4   5

7. Forgiveness and Yom Kippur

Poor   Fair   Strong
_____

1   2   3   4   5

8. Gratitude and Sukkot

Poor   Fair   Strong
_____

1   2   3   4   5

9. Hope and Hanukkah

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	5

10. Humor and Purim

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	5

11. Citizenship/Empowerment and Passover

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	5

12. Spirituality and Shavuot

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	5

13. Wisdom (Perspective) and Tisha B'av

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	5

Comments (Optional):

C. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THEMES AND JEWISH TEXTS

14. Please rate the overall strength of the Jewish texts in providing support for the positive psychology themes.

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	5

Comments (Optional):

D. FORMAT / STRUCTURE / PROCEDURES

15. Please rate the strength of the flyer as a tool for recruiting group members.

Poor		Fair		Strong
1	2	3	4	5

16. Please rate the appropriateness of limiting the group to 8-12 participants.

Not Appropriate		Appropriate		Very Appropriate
1	2	3	4	5

17. Please rate the appropriateness of a closed-group format.

Not Appropriate		Appropriate		Very Appropriate
1	2	3	4	5

18. Please rate the length of time allotted for each session – 2 hours.

Not Good   Good   Very Good
_____

1   2   3   4   5

19. Please rate the quality of the appendices.

Low   Adequate   High
_____

1   2   3   4   5

Comments (Optional):

20. Please share any other comments or feedback below:

APPENDIX C

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Flexible Interview Schedule

- How well do you think the resource manual directly addresses the stated purpose of the group?

- Does the manual provide clear guidelines and tools for psychologists and rabbis planning to utilize it?

- Is the manual accessible to and appropriate for congregants in the Reform Movement? Conservative Movement? Orthodox Movement?

- What factors would you consider in a decision to facilitate and use the manual yourself? Would you recommend it to others?

- Are there settings or situations where you think the groups would work best? Where you think they would not work well?

- Does the format and structure appear logical and effective? Do you have any suggestions for modifications?

- Overall, do you think the groups would be useful to congregants? How?

- Do you have any other comments or suggestions that you would like to share with me?

APPENDIX D

Cover Letter for Evaluators

April 15, 2009

Dear

I am extremely pleased and appreciative that you have agreed to serve as a formal evaluator for my dissertation project, a research manual utilizing the Jewish holiday calendar as the context for exploring positive psychology. In order to provide a helpful evaluation I have attached both an Initial Review Form and a list of follow-up interview questions that will guide our discussion by phone once the Initial Review Form has been completed and returned. I have also attached an Informed Consent. Please print, read, and sign the Informed Consent, and fax it to me at your earliest convenience at: (310) 943-1595.

Please take no more than two weeks to read the manual draft, provide feedback on the attached Initial Review Form, and return it to me electronically as an email attachment to: Tamisari@hotmail.com. The Initial Review Form should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. As your participation is voluntary, you are not required to provide feedback in all requested areas, and you have the right to refuse to answer any questions posed on the form. I will contact you shortly to schedule a time for the phone interview that will take approximately 30-45 minutes, following the completion of the Initial Review Form. Following the interview, your participation in my project will be complete.

The only foreseeable risk associated with participation in this project is the amount of time involved in your participation, which I hope will be reasonable.

Although you may not directly benefit, a potential benefit of participating is to provide information to help me put together a quality resource manual aimed at integrating psychology into Jewish community settings in a meaningful and relevant way.

In order to protect your privacy, you will not be asked to provide any information that can identify you, such as your name. Please do not write your name on the Initial Review Form. If the findings of the study are presented to professional audiences or published, no information that identifies you personally will be released.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding this dissertation project at (310) 428-3331 or Tamisari@hotmail.com. If you have further questions about my project, you may contact my dissertation chairperson, Shelly Harrell, Ph.D. at Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology, 6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 258-2844. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may contact Douglas Leigh, Ph.D., Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology, 6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 258-2845.

By signing the Informed Consent Form and completing the Initial Manual Review Form, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand what your study participation entails, and are consenting to participate in the study.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Tami Krichiver, M.A.
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
6100 Center Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90045

APPENDIX E

Evaluator Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Participant:

Principal Investigator: Tami Krichiver

Title of Project: Positive Psychology and the Jewish Holiday Calendar: A Resource Manual

1.   I, _____ , agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Tami Krichiver, M.A., under the direction of Shelly Harrell, Ph.D., dissertation chairperson.

2.   The overall purpose of this research is to:
Create a resource manual for rabbis and psychologists to utilize as the foundation for examining positive psychology and the Jewish holidays in small groups within a synagogue setting.

3.   My participation will involve the following:
1) Reading the Resource Manual
2) Filling out the Initial Manual Review Form and sending back to the researcher electronically
3) Participating in a short semi-structured interview over the phone, regarding feedback provided on the Initial Review Form.

4.   My participation in the study will take approximately 2 hours (45 minutes to read the manual and 1 hour 15 minutes to complete the review form and interview). The study shall be conducted in Los Angeles, California, and all contact will take place over the phone.

5.   I understand that the possible benefit to myself or society from this research is contributing relevant feedback to a manual that will serve members of the Jewish community by bringing psychology into a natural setting for the purpose of personal, psychological, and spiritual growth.

6.   I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include: Time imposition for the participant evaluator.

7.   I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.

8. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

9. I understand that the investigator(s) will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

10. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Tami Krichiver and Shelly Harrell, Ph.D. if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Douglas Leigh, Ph.D., Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology, 6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 258-2845.

11. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

_____

Participant's Signature

_____

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.
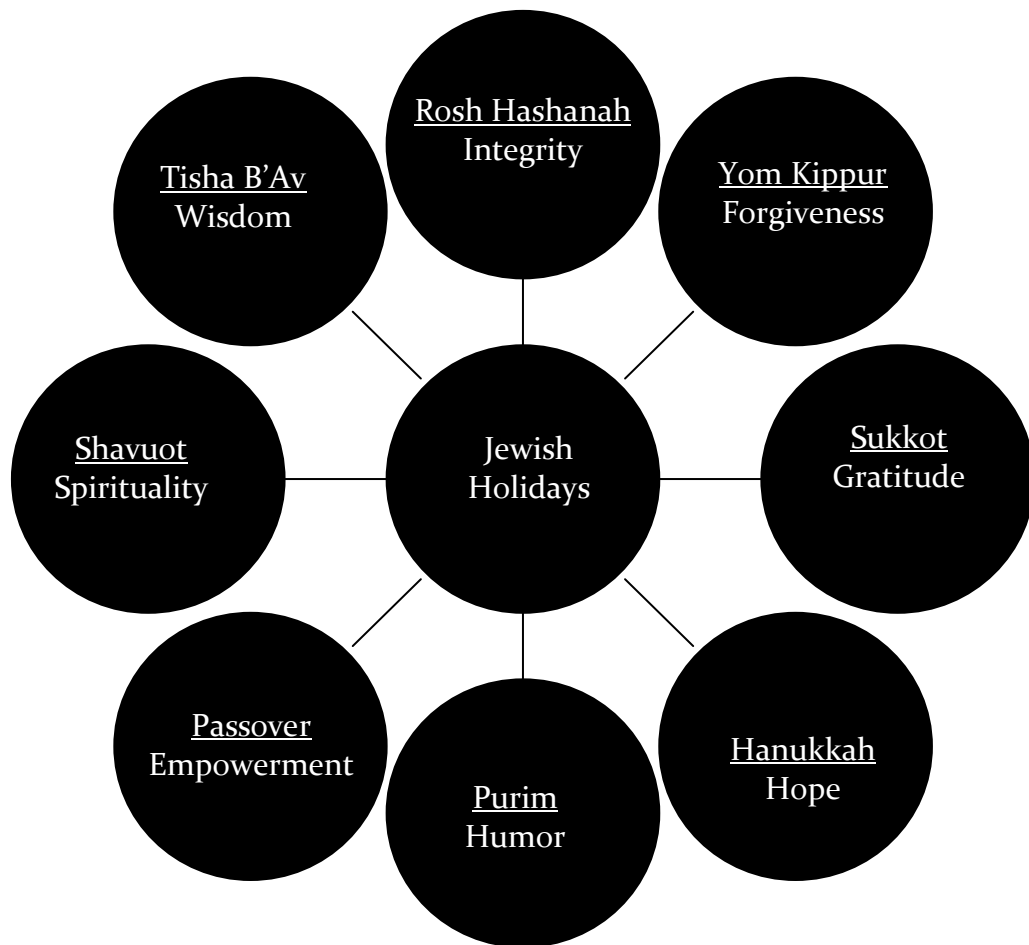
_____   _____

Principal Investigator   Date

APPENDIX F

Resource Manual

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND THE JEWISH HOLIDAY CALENDAR

A Resource Manual for Small Groups
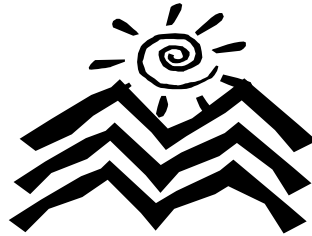
Tami Krichiver, M.A.
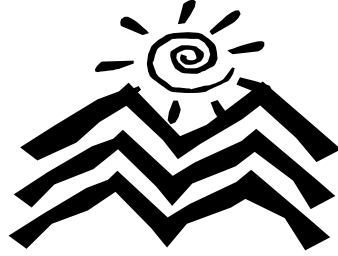
DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this manual, *Positive Psychology and the Jewish Holiday Calendar: A Resource for Small Groups,* is to provide information, tools, and resources to psychologists and rabbis facilitating small groups in a non-clinical, community setting. It is not intended for use in the psychological treatment of a clinical population.
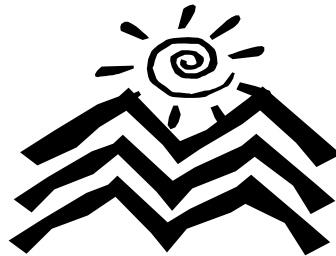
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CHAPTER 1

Overview of Resource Manual

Rationale

Jewish holidays are central for building Jewish identity and for psychospiritual growth. Their stories and array of characters provide a fertile landscape for exploration of relevant psychological themes. While many Jews come to the synagogue to nourish themselves spiritually, to study, learn, and grow within a Jewish context, many are also thirsting for additional ways to integrate their experiences into a meaningful and transformative personal narrative. Many are yearning to take a more active role in the deepening of their lives, their psychological growth, and their search for meaning. Subsequently, there is a need for psychologists who are expert in the field of psychology and intimately connected with the Jewish community to create opportunities for Jews to expand their development, actively participate in the personal integration of Jewish concepts and values, and to share with other members of the community during important moments and transitions in their lives. The Jewish holidays provide an accessible and powerful entry-point for Jews to make a personal connection between Judaism and their everyday lives.

Pairing Judaism with positive psychology is a natural fit. Perhaps the most central tenant of Judaism is contained in the biblical imperative to strive for the fundamentally positive in life, to see life as a series of choices between positive and negative, blessing and curse, life and death. In a passage from Deuteronomy 30:19-20, God urges the people Israel to choose life: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life in order that you may live." The rabbis too understood this command should lead them to study individual character strengths. An entire library of rabbinic literature known as *Mussar* explores these strengths and how to achieve them from the perspective of the rabbinic mind. In addition, for centuries Jews came together to study, learn, and contemplate ideals – to literally meditate on how to achieve a good life. However, with assimilation and oppression, communal gatherings for the enrichment and study of values became more difficult. In modern times, *havurot* (small study groups) and synagogue settings often provide a forum for Jews to come together to apply their values in the pursuit of a good life. This fundamentally Jewish

orientation to seek life's blessings, speaks directly to the aim of positive psychology. And through the utilization of positive psychology, the core values of Jewish tradition can be applied in a modern context to help Jews thrive.

Positive psychology has recently emerged seeking to understand the qualities that strengthen, build, and foster us. It is an approach that calls on therapists to instill hope, cultivate optimism, and help individuals identify and build upon their signature strengths.

> Positive psychology is the scientific study of what goes right in life, from birth to death and at all stops in between. Everyone's life has peaks and valleys, and positive psychology does not deny the valleys. Its signature premise is more nuanced but nonetheless important: What is good about life is as genuine as what is bad and therefore deserves equal attention from psychologists. It assumes that life entails more than avoiding or undoing problems and hassles. Positive psychology resides somewhere in that part of the human landscape that is metaphorically north of neutral. It is the study of what we are doing when we are not frittering life away. (Peterson, 2006, p. 4)

Positive psychology provides a relevant framework for looking at the psychological themes embedded in Judaism, and specifically, within the Jewish holidays. Concepts such as hope, gratitude, and humor, are just a few examples of character strengths from the field of positive psychology that exist within the very fabric of ancient Jewish stories. And, there are many other themes that overlap between positive psychology and Judaism that impact human development and personal thriving in both spiritual and psychological respects. Each Jewish holiday is rich with psychological themes that challenge and invite individuals into a cycle of reflection, month after month, year after year (Waskow, 1982).

In the group model proposed in this manual, positive psychology not only provides content for the small group sessions, but frames the entire group experience—from the tone set by the facilitators, to the focus of the experiential group process. Small groups provide an avenue for individuals to integrate both psychological and spiritual content areas. Groups also provide the experiential opportunity for individuals to move from a relatively passive role within the synagogue, to one in which they actively participate in the integration and deepening of their lives. The overarching goal of the group experience is for participants to leave with greater internal resources than when they began. In addition, the process may also enrich participants' connections with Judaism through exploration of the Jewish holidays.

Purpose

The purpose of this resource manual is to provide psychologists and rabbis with the framework, information, and tools to engage Jewish congregants in psychological work within a spiritual context. There is a large continuum of mental health services and interventions utilized in the service of mental health, and in this manual the goal is to reach community members through small group interventions. These small groups will create an explicit connection between many concepts in positive psychology and the

psychological themes rooted in the Jewish holidays. The small groups are designed for flexibility to allow psychologists and rabbis to make the groups their own. While this resource manual provides guidance to psychologists and rabbis, the specific direction of each group will vary based on the strengths of leaders, the composition of the groups, and the experiential and process elements unique to each group.

The Jewish holidays serve as entry-points for learning, and the context and inspiration for discussion about relevant positive psychology character strengths. A positive psychology orientation provides the theoretical basis for group exploration involving a combination of didactic and experiential components. By relating the themes to their lives, participants will take an active role in the integration of both the spiritual and the psychological, and uncover ways in which their personal narratives are interwoven with both Judaism and positive psychology. The ultimate goal of the positive psychology group experience is an increased likelihood that participants will more fully integrate positive psychology character strengths into their lives, leading to greater overall mental health and well-being.

Fundamental Assumptions

What is a positive psychology group? And, how does this synagogue-based group fit within the scope of positive psychology? One of the clinical off-springs of positive psychology is positive psychotherapy (PPT). PPT is a clinical approach to psychotherapy rooted in positive psychology. While this manual is not designed as a resource for group psychotherapy, PPT sheds light on the theoretical approach to this group model—non-clinical positive psychology groups offered in a synagogue setting. Consistent with the aims of positive psychology, PPT explicitly seeks to build positive emotions, character strengths, and meaning in individuals' lives to promote thriving. The fundamental assumption of PPT is that human beings have the capacity to flourish (Rashid & Anjum, 2008).

Building a successful group relies on both content and process, and both are imperative in this positive psychology group model. One well-researched positive psychology character strength (a character strength is a trait reflected in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors) is presented didactically and explored during each group session. This creates an opportunity for psychologists to expose participants to the constructs that comprise the character strengths. Existing research regarding the benefits of positive psychology character strengths is presented and facilitators may choose to use the empirical research to share tips or ideas for the cultivation or practice of character strengths. Regardless of whether participants already possess the character strengths or wish to cultivate them more fully in their lives, the didactic provides a broad explanation of the nature and scope of the character strengths. This comprises the content portion of the positive psychology group model.

In ultimately considering what anchors this group model in positive psychology, there is much more to consider than content alone, and this is where process is central essential. Fundamentally, the approach taken by facilitators provides an orientation that is positive

in nature and sets the tone for growth and optimal functioning. A positive psychology orientation seeks to help individuals cultivate the strengths to allow them to "break through the zero point" that is usually the focus of traditional psychology in order to live fuller lives (Peterson, 2000). In a positive psychology group, this is achieved largely by a clear emphasis on what the facilitators *think* more than what they *do*. Facilitators are co-travelers in the experiential process shaped by the participants. Witnessing an individual's deepest and most authentic psychological assets is foundational in positive psychology and can have profound effects (Rashid & Anjum, 2008).

Powerful research looking at what heals and transforms in therapy, indicates that the therapeutic alliance, forged largely through the genuine, warm, and empathic attitude of a therapist, is a robust curative factor in itself (Wampold, 2001). This genuine, warm, and empathic stance creates a positive and safe environment for participants to catalyze change in their lives. Attunement to strengths should inform the attitude of facilitating psychologists as they think about and interact with group participants. As psychologists attend to the strengths of participants and strive to foster positive alliances, a platform for change and growth is established.

The theoretical basis for the field of positive psychology, and subsequently for this manual, has a rich history. While positive psychology was popularized in the late 1990s, its roots came largely from humanistic and existential psychology. Some of the field's best known psychologists and theorists, such as Maslow (1971) and Rogers (1951), shared a common interest in self-actualization and human potential (Peterson, 2006).

Contemporary positive psychologists have added important dimensions of research and theory to these existing ideas and are building upon them. For example, positive psychologists have adopted and are vigorously researching a humanistic principle that individuals are intrinsically motivated to pursue a "good life," and that each person possesses an actualizing tendency. This implies that if individuals listen to their inner voice they will live in a way that supports their well-being, growth, and fulfillment. It's important to note that an environment of unconditional positive regard is necessary for individuals to self-actualize in a direction consistent with their actualizing tendency. Without unconditional positive regard, an individual's true inner voice may be obscured by external conditions of worth that have been imposed on them by their environment. This humanistic psychology concept lends itself to a profound experiential approach that helps individuals locate their innate directional force (Linley & Joseph, 2004).

Judaism resonates with these humanistic psychological ideas and Jews are reminded that it was in a still small voice that God was heard…not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in a still small voice (I Kings 19:11-12). Judaism emphasizes that in these single moments of deep listening and reflecting, individuals can gain clarity about their choices, their relationships, and pathways to thriving.

While positive psychology was influenced and shaped directly by humanistic psychology, other theoretical pillars also inform positive psychology. Existential psychology emphasizes an approach to growth where psychologists set aside their own

assumptions and allow individuals to express the constellations of meaning by which they relate to the world. In doing so, they are free to make choices about their future directions—choices about growth and change.

Positive psychologists have built on the foundation provided by humanistic and existential theorists, adding research that contributes to a more comprehensive positive psychology theoretical basis for this group model. For positive psychologists, a full life entails the following three ingredients: (a) pleasure (positive emotions and gratification), (b) engagement (work, interpersonal relationships, and leisure), and (c) meaning (a sense of purpose that includes an attachment and connection to something larger than oneself). Each of these is scientifically validated for promoting and enhancing well-being and contributing to "the good life" (Rashid & Anjum, 2008; Seligman, 2002).

Research in these three areas (pleasure, engagement, and meaning) is burgeoning and providing additional empirical support for the benefits of positive psychology. For example, a focus on building positive emotions (pleasure) actually changes one's mindset (Rashid & Anjum, 2008). Focusing on character strengths—an individual's deepest psychological resources—and finding opportunities to utilize these strengths supports engagement (Rashid & Anjum). And finally, providing narration deepens an individual's process of growth and encourages meaning-making in regard to life's experiences. Integrating meaning and purpose in one's life leads to a sense of satisfaction and a feeling of a life well-lived (Seligman & Peterson, 2003).

As an experiential group, no prescriptions are supplied for specific interventions, activities, techniques, or discussions that should be introduced by the facilitating psychologist or rabbi. The only formal guidepost is the introduction of one positive psychology character strength during each group session that is directly related to a Jewish holiday serving as the context for group exploration. While suggestions and resources are supplied for facilitators, the essential nature of each group will vary based on the participants and the unique experiential process that unfolds. **The primary task of the co-facilitating psychologist and rabbi is to facilitate the actualizing tendency of the participants so they become more attuned with their own inner voice. This hinges on co-facilitators creating an environment of collaboration, providing an orientation toward strengths, maintaining a belief that individuals know themselves and their experiences intimately, and letting the organic experience of the participants guide the journey. Warmth, genuine positive regard, and empathy should flow from the facilitators.**

Even through the use of more guided discussions or activities, care should be taken to direct the process toward strengths rather than deficits, to focus on the positive values that arise from strivings toward a good life. Facilitators should help group members focus on the internal motivations that shape their lives rather than the external forces that often direct away from maintaining contact with wise inner voices (Linley & Joseph, 2004). Facilitators should keep in mind that the ultimate responsibility for transformation lies with the participants, that they are the engineers of their change. Change is ultimately facilitated from within, not imposed from without. Facilitators influence the environment

and then serve as collaborators and co-creators as participants integrate the positive psychology character strengths through an experiential, small-group process. Taken together, these aspects define the fundamental assumptions of a positive psychology group in a synagogue setting, and provide a general approach for psychologists and rabbis in creating a small group process rooted in positive psychology.

Caution for psychologists in establishing group culture

As psychotherapists largely trained and practicing from traditions steeped in psychopathology, deficiencies, and problems, it is important to keep a therapeutic attitude focused on strengths, optimal functioning, and potentiality of group members. This will keep the tone of the group steeped in positive psychology and guide the process toward growth. **Distress, negative emotions, or negative experiences should not be dismissed; however, they should also not be the focus**. Psychologists should empathically listen to participants, keeping in mind that positive emotions and strengths are as authentic as weaknesses or psychological vulnerabilities. And, in building strengths, participants are in fact more equipped to cope with and overcome their negative states and distress. In order to establish a group culture where members as well as facilitators stay within a positive orientation, the facilitating psychologist should be primed to connect the personal ideas and stories shared by members with themes of becoming fully human and thriving. This attunement to strength should inform the facilitators' responses, discussion questions, and input elicited from participants.

One caveat—positive psychology promotes a balanced view of life experiences and human emotions. The central focus of positive psychology on those experiences that are deemed "north of neutral" are not a replacement nor a denial of the rich, deep, and often difficult emotions that comprise the authentic human experience. The attunement toward the positive is intended to enhance and develop a part of the psychological structure that is often left out, under-developed, and overlooked in the research and understanding of human experience. Facilitators should be sensitive to the range of emotions that this interpersonal, experiential group may elicit. In the event that exposure to these concepts doesn't produce the intended positive effects, and increases the psychological distress of a participant, facilitators should be prepared to recognize and acknowledge the experience of the participant and make an appropriate referral out of the group if necessary. Facilitators may also mention during the introductory session that individual reactions to the material can vary, and that while the focus of the groups is cultivating strengths, participants are encouraged to express any feelings that arise.

The Frame

- **Basic guidelines**: Synagogue-based positive psychology groups consist of eight 2-hour sessions offered across eight weeks. The only exception is the first group session, in which the time is extended to 2 hours 45 minutes to allow for a more comprehensive check-in and introduction to positive psychology. Groups are comprised of 8-12 adult congregants interested in an experiential and didactic positive psychology experience, utilizing the Jewish holidays as the context for

discussion. Group size may vary but should not exceed 12 in order to maximize the small group process. The group is facilitated by two facilitators, a psychologist and a rabbi of the congregation. The intervention is primarily discussion-based (experiential), however a didactic module is included. To maximize safety, openness to discussion, and interpersonal learning, groups are closed once the selection has taken place and limited in size. Participants are encouraged to attend all eight sessions.

- **Recruitment, Screening, and Informed Consent**: Group members are selected from the congregational membership. It is recommended that the group is advertised through the congregational bulletin as well as through any electronic newsletters or advertisements of the congregation (See Appendix A). Any adult member of the congregation is invited to participate. Participants should be informed that the group is not a therapy group, but does require interpersonal sharing and an interest in psychological growth. Interested participants should be comfortable with an experiential group format and should sign an informed consent prior to participating in the group.

- **Role of Psychologist and Rabbi**: The primary responsibilities of the psychologist include: introducing new didactic material highlighting positive psychology concepts, setting the tone for the group process so that it is relevant to positive psychology, and co-facilitating discussions during the experiential portion of the group. The role of the rabbi includes: describing the historical and spiritual significance of each Jewish holiday, introducing a text to provide support for the positive psychology character strength paired with each holiday, opening the experiential portion of the group with a Jewish story, and co-facilitating discussions. When possible, the psychologist should focus primarily on psychological aspects of discussion and the rabbi should attend to spiritual or religious aspects of discussion, although there will likely be significant overlap. There should be an attitude of collaboration among facilitating rabbis and psychologists, with a fluid leadership style shared by the two. Both the rabbi and the psychologist should be available to speak with individual group members about issues that arise during the eight-week group. Appendix B highlights modifications to the role of the rabbi based on a diversity of potential situations that may impact a rabbi's availability to participate fully in groups.

- **Evaluation**: In order to evaluate the resource manual and success of the group process, members are asked to fill out a brief evaluation at the mid-point of the group (after 4 weeks) and again at the completion of the eight weeks. The purpose of the evaluations is to attain feedback from members about their experiences in the group, both during and at the end of the process. The mid-group evaluation may be utilized to make immediate modifications that will positively impact the remainder of the groups, and the evaluation at the close of the 8 weeks will be utilized to modify the process for future groups (See Appendix C for sample evaluation forms).

Structure of Groups

All sessions follow a consistent format, with the exception of session 1, during which additional time is allotted for facilitators to present an overview of the 8-week group, provide a general introduction to positive psychology, and allow for participant introductions. The remainder of the group sessions follow a consistent format. Each session is divided roughly into two, 1-hour blocks. The first hour is comprised of check-in, information about the historical and spiritual nature of the Jewish holiday, introduction of the positive psychology theme, and a positive psychology didactic. After a short break, the second hour of the group is experiential in nature. It opens with a Jewish story or narrative used to illustrate the positive psychology theme, followed by an experiential small group process. The goal of the experiential process is to guide individuals to make personal connections between the positive psychology themes and their lives.

Below, a table presents the structure and content of the positive psychology groups. Since the first group session has additional components, it is represented in a separate column. A detailed description of each section of the groups follows the table.

Table 1

Structure and Content of Positive Psychology Groups

SESSION 1	TIME	SESSIONS 2 -8	TIME
Introduction of Facilitators	5 min	Opening Ritual – Blessing	1 min

Overview
    Positive Psychology Groups 1-8
    (agenda, content, and goals)
	5 min	Check-In
		    Brief Reflections from Group
		    Personal Connection to Holiday
			20 min

Opening Ritual – Blessing
    Intro to Blessing
    Reciting Blessing
	5 min	Description of Jewish Holiday	5 min

Check-In
    Name
    Interest in Participating in Group
    Positive Introductions
    Personal Connection to Holiday
	30 min	Jewish Text Supporting Theme	10 min

Introduction to Positive Psychology
    General Description
    How themes were selected
	15 min	Positive Psychology Didactic	15 min

Description of Jewish Holiday	5 min	BREAK	10 min
Jewish Text Supporting Theme	10 min	Jewish Story	5 min
Positive Psychology Didactic	15 min	Experiential Group Process	45 min
BREAK	10 min	Closing Ritual	10 min
Introduction to Experiential Process	5 min		
Jewish Story	5 min		
Experiential Group Process	45 min		
Closing Ritual	10 min		
	2 hrs 45 min		2 hrs

Introduction and Overview of Positive Psychology Groups (1st Session Only)

In session 1, facilitators begin by introducing themselves and providing an overview of the 8-week group. The general overview includes the following: (a) outlining the nature and goals of the group experience, (b) listing the Jewish holidays that will serve as the context for exploring positive psychology themes, (c) providing a basic introduction to positive psychology, (d) describing the purpose of reciting a blessing at the beginning of each group session, and (e) introducing the concept of check-in and describing how it will take place in sessions 1-8. This basic information allows participants to familiarize themselves with the goals of the group as well as the format and structure of each group.

Introduction to Reciting a Blessing (1st Session Only)

This section is facilitated by the rabbi and should take no more than 5 minutes. The rabbi provides a brief introduction of the role of blessings in the daily, weekly, and yearly rituals of Jews. The goal is to bring participants into awareness of the present moment while giving thanks and praise to God. This may contribute to a spiritual and positive tone as the group forms each week. The rabbi has full discretion to introduce the concept of blessings, and to provide a basis for utilizing the blessing to bring group members into the present moment. The *Shehecheyanu* is recommended by the author for use in this manual; however, if the facilitating rabbi finds another blessing more appropriate or moving, he/she has the discretion to make the selection each week. For example, the rabbi may choose blessings that have specific significance to the Jewish holidays explored weekly. (See Appendix D for a more extensive description of Jewish blessings and specific information about the *Shehecheyanu*).

Opening Ritual – Blessing

The facilitating rabbi invites the group to join together in reciting the *Shehecheyanu* (or alternative blessing). The rabbi is encouraged to translate the blessing and provide one or two sentences encouraging participants to utilize the meaning of the blessing for enhancing their personal and spiritual connection in the group that evening.

Check-in

Check-in is extended for the 1st session to allow for initial introductions of participants through the use of *positive introductions* (See Appendix E), and for basic sharing about what led individuals to join the positive psychology group. Participants have roughly 3-4 minutes each to complete the *positive introductions*. It may be helpful for the facilitator to provide a large visual list (perhaps butcher paper on the wall or a large white board) listing the 24 character strengths researched and outlined in Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), since these character strengths inform the group content and may guide participants through the *positive introductions* (See Appendix F for list of character strengths and virtues). Facilitators should discourage participants from modesty in relation to their signature strengths. Signature strengths are based on strengths of character and not achievements or

performances. Truth in exploration of signature strengths outweighs modesty in accomplishing this introductory task (Peterson, 2006).

For sessions 2-8, participants my utilize time during check-in to reflect on the prior week's group or to share their connections with the Jewish holiday introduced for the current session. This may include modern day observances or how they observed the holiday growing up. It may also include how they understand the holiday and its meaning and relevance to their lives. Each participant has roughly 2-3 minutes for check-in.

Introduction to Positive Psychology (1st Session Only)

As this group experience may be many participants' first contact with positive psychology, it is necessary for the facilitating psychologist to give a brief overview of positive psychology and describe how it is a natural fit with Judaism. After introducing positive psychology, the psychologist should describe how the positive psychology themes were selected to correspond with each Jewish holiday.

There is flexibility for the psychologist to present an overview of positive psychology in his/her own words. However, facilitators may also choose to use the general introduction below and modify it for style and authenticity.

> Positive psychology is an area of psychology that seeks to balance the scales of psychological inquiry by focusing on what makes life good and fulfilling in addition to the more traditional focus on human problems and how to relieve the suffering of those in pain. It seeks to build strengths that already exist within individuals, to increase fulfillment and meaning in the lives of healthy individuals, and to impact the very foundation of society by increasing the best of who we are in our relationships, our work, and our communities. Positive psychology seeks to shine a spotlight on the psychological 'good life' and positive psychologists are currently engaged in vigorous empirical research to understand people and the lives they lead to this end. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

> Further, positive psychology is a natural fit with Judaism, because positive psychology emphasizes a life of meaning that can be pursued in both spiritual and secular arenas. In positive psychology, there is a place for the psychology of religion that has rarely been a part of more traditional psychological approaches. (Peterson, 2006)

Prominent positive psychologists have researched and designed a system classifying and measuring character strengths and virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In their research, they identified twenty-four specific character strengths under six broad virtues that exist across culture and throughout history. Within this classification system, virtues are defined as "the core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence." Character strengths are defined as "the psychological ingredients—processes or mechanisms—that

define the virtues". In other words, character strengths create pathways to achieving virtues. While Peterson and Seligman's Classification only includes 24 strengths, there are undoubtedly many, many more. A natural question is what criteria, other than their cross-cultural application and salience throughout history, were utilized in the selection of the strengths. The developers of the classification utilized 10 specific criteria in the selection of the 24 character strengths, and they are listed in the table below (Peterson & Seligman). Note, not all 24 character strengths meet the full 10 criteria listed below, but all come very close.

Table 2

Selection Criteria for Positive Psychology Character Strengths

Criterion	Definition
Fulfilling	A strength contributes to various fulfillments that constitute the good life, for oneself and for others.
Morally valued	Although strengths can and do produce desirable outcomes, each strength is morally valued in its own right, even in the absence of obvious beneficial outcomes
Does not diminish others	The display of a strength by one person does not diminish other people in the vicinity
Nonfelicitious opposite	Being able to phrase the "opposite" of a putative strength in a felicitous way counts against regarding it as a character strength
Traitlike	A strength needs to be manifest in the range of an individual's behavior – thoughts, feelings, and/or actions – in such a way that it can be assessed. It should be traitlike in the sense of having a degree of generality across situations and stability across time
Distinctiveness	The strength is distinct from other positive traits in the classification and cannot be decomposed into them
Paragons	A character strength is embodied in consensual paragons
Prodigies	Although not applicable to all strengths, it is an additional criterion where sensible is the existence of prodigies with respect to the strength

(table continues)

Criterion	Definition
Selective absence	The existence of people who show – selectively—the total absence of a given strength
Institutions and rituals	As suggested by Erikson's (1963) discussion of psychosocial stages and the virtues that result from their satisfactory resolutions, the larger society provides institutions and associated rituals for cultivating strengths and virtues and then for sustaining their practice

(Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

The benefits of this type of positive classification are numerous, including setting the foundation for psychologists to help individuals cultivate these positive traits as they strive for "the good life."

It is from this classification of strengths and virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) that the author of this manual selected themes for use in the positive psychology groups. To some degree, the pairing positive psychology themes with specific Jewish holidays was somewhat arbitrary since there are numerous positive psychology themes that easily correspond with each Jewish holiday. In addition, Judaism is not a monolithic, and depending on ideology, there are multiple themes and concepts that can be related to each holiday. Therefore, the author selected positive psychology themes that closely correspond with major themes embedded in Jewish holiday texts. If a Jewish holiday has numerous texts supporting a particular theme, and that core theme is also a character strength researched in positive psychology, then it was likely selected.

For the future, psychologists should feel free to select various positive psychology themes to correspond with the Jewish holidays; however, based on the scope of this manual, one theme was selected to correspond with each Jewish holiday (see Appendix G for a larger list of Jewish holidays and related positive psychology themes). It is the author's intention that the themes selected cut across Judaism's denominations. In the figure below, each Jewish holiday is presented with its corresponding positive psychology theme.
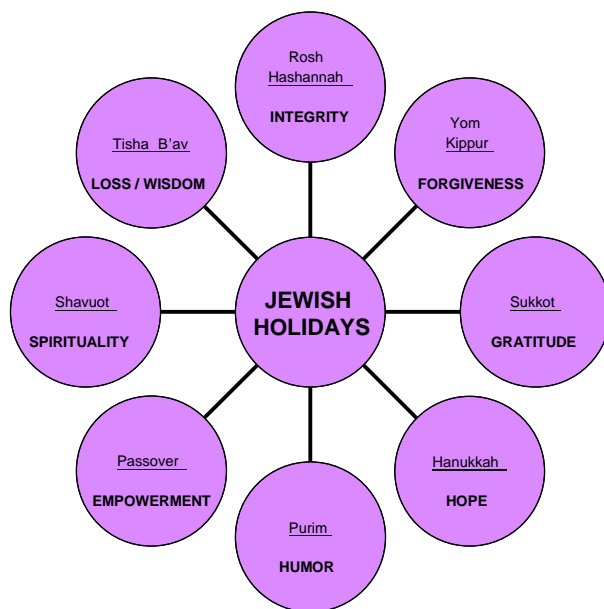
Figure 1. Jewish holidays with corresponding positive psychology themes.

Description of Holiday

Said the Mikolayever:

> In the same way that a tailor sketches the design and cuts away the extraneous material before making up a garment, so the preacher must first outline his subject of discussion, and with questions eliminate the non-essentials before he brings his analysis to a point. (The Hasidic Anthology, p. 348)

The description of the Jewish holiday is facilitated by the rabbi and should take no longer than 5 minutes. The goal in explaining each holiday is to make sure that every participant is refreshed about the basics. In describing the Jewish holiday, the rabbi should keep in mind the larger goal of focusing on the positive psychology theme paired with the holiday and describing how that theme fits into the history, ritual, or spiritual significance of the holiday. The facilitating rabbi has the discretion to select which historical, spiritual, and ritual elements of the holiday are relevant.

Jewish Text Supporting Theme

During this section, the rabbi continues by providing a Jewish text to supports the selection of the positive psychology theme. Approximately 10 minutes is allotted for introduction of this text. The author has provided one or two sample texts for each holiday, connecting the Jewish holiday with its related positive psychology theme. The texts provided cut across Judaism's denominations and provide relevant and accessible textual sources for the selection of the positive psychology themes. The texts represent a wide range of Jewish sources, from the bible, to medieval rabbinic texts, to modern commentaries.

It is important to note that while the description of the Jewish holiday and the introduction of the text is relatively brief, the goals are central in shaping the overall group experience. The Jewish holidays provide the backdrop for exploration of the positive psychology character strengths and they may also inspire participants to enhance their own personal narratives. The holiday descriptions and texts allow for participants to begin deepening their connection with the Jewish holidays and the positive psychology themes associated with them.

Positive Psychology Didactic

During this section, the facilitating psychologist elaborates via didactics about the positive psychology character strength. This may include research about the constructs that comprise the strength and how the character strength may be cultivated. The facilitating psychologist may provide handouts, visual aids, or other materials to highlight salient points. For example, the didactic information provided in the manual includes a sample "Tips" sheet for participants to take home. It includes tips for practicing and cultivating positive psychology character strengths. Psychologists may relay this information during groups or share it exclusively as a take-home handout. The tips provided are based primarily on research about the cultivation or practice of character strengths. Many of the tips selected come from lists generated by positive psychologists (Haidt, 2002; Rashid & Anjum, 2005). Several "Tips" sheets also highlight the benefits of utilizing the character strengths in one's life. Psychologist may use the "Tips" sheet provided in the manual and/or create other supplemental resources for participants.

In order to ground the groups in current positive psychology research, information for each positive psychology didactic is provided for psychologists in subsequent chapters of the manual. The didactic information provided is fairly academic. It was the author's intention to provide psychologists with relevant, thorough, and specific information regarding the positive psychology themes so they are equipped to teach, regardless of whether their clinical backgrounds are rooted in positive psychology. Please keep in mind that while the information provided is academic, the presentation should be accessible, and user-friendly. This is where handouts, visual aids, or experiential activities might make a difference in delivering the information. The time allotted for the positive psychology didactic is approximately 15 minutes.

BREAK (10 minutes)

Introduction to Experiential Group Process (1st Session Only)

In session 1, facilitators provide a basic introduction to the experiential group process. This introduction is brief because the basic nature of an experiential group promotes learning through experience and not through didactics. 5 minutes is allotted for this introduction.

The experiential component allows the material to be encountered on a personal level. "To learn by doing rather than just by listening results in a deeper and more complex educational experience" (Furr, 2000, p. 36). Experiential learning allows participants to take responsibility for personalizing the concepts introduced in the group. The group leader can determine the general direction of the experiential component, but the course of the discussion will look different in every group. Connecting the didactic and experiential components is one goal of the group process component. Another goal is to create a link between the group content and the participants' lives. Experiential and process components allow members to take ownership in a way that makes the experience meaningful and lasting.

Story

The author recommends the experiential portion of the group open with a story shared by the rabbi. Narrative is a powerful tool for exploring psychological themes and is a canvas for insight and growth. Life narratives provide a way for individuals to understand themselves and their lives. Stories give individuals the opportunity to grapple with life's events in new and more sophisticated ways (Linley & Joseph, 2004). Rabbi Cutter (1995) suggested that narratives serve the function of giving construction to reality.

> From that construction new meaning develops, and sometimes multiple meanings emerge. In this sense of speech, a partnership is always implicit between author, auditor or reader. And once these separate parties become partners, one must expect multiple interpretations. The language of the story and the particular situation of the auditor create different constructions of the same story and a different reality. (p. 71)

Jewish tradition values the knowledge of those who have already attained it and therefore it is a legitimate Jewish choice to use stories to connect personal narratives with Jewish narratives. Storytelling is a powerful medium for transmission of knowledge, wisdom, and values. The construction of personal meaning through stories is often a catalyst for psychological and spiritual growth. For example, the Torah, the holy book containing the account of the beginning of Jewish history and thought, contains both sacred literature and oral traditions. It is a living document that allows the reader to engage in the story of the Jewish people, becoming a part of a long tradition of others who listened to the stories and added their own. Stories serve to connect the past to the present. Cutter (1995) noted that stories serve to enrich the imagination of the listener and the storyteller, allowing each person to glean multiple meanings and even co-create meaning. In addition, stories allow individuals to exchange themselves for various characters in the story, making them exquisite tools for taking various perspectives.

One narrative example is included in the resource manual for each holiday. While these may be utilized by the facilitating rabbi, it is according to the preference and discretion of the rabbi to select a story that he/she finds most poignantly connected with each theme. An annotated bibliography of Jewish stories complied by Schram (2002) is presented in

Appendix H as a resource. 5 minutes is allotted for the telling of a Jewish story with a theme related to a positive psychology character strength.

Experiential Process

The experiential process is the heart of the group experience. This is the opportunity for participants to integrate their personal experiences with the themes present in the Jewish holidays and positive psychology. This is where discussion occurs, personal sharing, and where the process is transformed from largely passive learning into active integration. Setting the tone for this process and creating an atmosphere for sharing is the task of the facilitating psychologist and rabbi. The overarching goal of the experiential process is to encourage group collaboration and interpersonal sharing as the vehicle for exploring the positive psychology themes introduced in the group. Through exploration and sharing, group members begin to integrate the themes in a personal way, allowing for the cultivation of their unique strengths.

Specifically, the experiential process focuses on two major areas: (a) exploring significant experiences in the lives of the participants where the positive psychology theme helped them in the past (in doing so, participants will become more aware of their character strengths and the role that these strengths play in their lives), and (b) addressing areas in the lives of the participants where they feel the positive psychology themes could be strengthened. Group members are given the chance to help each other generate ideas for strengthening these themes in their daily lives. In doing so, members receive support for increasing strengths in their lives.

An example of the process follows. During group session 3, participants explore the positive psychology character strength of gratitude as related to the Jewish holiday of *Sukkot*. Participants will consider life events or experiences that were heightened or deepened by their feelings of gratitude. After sharing about their experiences and how they were impacted by gratitude, they will have the opportunity to reflect on their lives and discover where they need an extra dose of gratitude. Group members will help one other consider ways for increasing gratitude in their daily lives in meaningful ways that address the gaps introduced by each group member.

Discussion is the primary mode for the process. Psychologists can utilize various tools for enlivening and deepening discussion and creating a space for optimal sharing and connecting. Additional discussion questions may be posed to participants, or groups may break into dyads to wrestle with the themes, returning to the larger group setting to share insights. These types of decisions are made by the facilitating psychologists and may vary by group. The discussion questions provided in the manual are simply guideposts for creating an overall experiential framework for the group process. Each group will be unique and unfold in authentic and organic ways; therefore, the facilitating psychologist and rabbi should be flexible around the issues, topics, and discussions that arise naturally. 45 minutes is allotted for the experiential process group.

Closing

Ritual is a powerful and positive component of group process and also deeply embedded in Judaism. A brief ritual activity utilized consistently at the close of each group session can be a powerful tool for deepening the experience of group members. Below are suggestions for closing ritual ideas. There is flexibility for facilitating psychologists to add to this list or create their own closing ritual.

Reflections: Quotes related to each positive psychology character strength are provided in the manual. Participants can pull a quote from a basket passed around at the end of each group session and either share their quote out loud as a group closing ritual, or take them home for private reflection following the group.

Journaling: Participants are encouraged to reflect on their experiences in the group by journaling on their own time. It is preferable that journaling take place soon after the close of each group to increase recall of emotions and thoughts.

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CHAPTER 2

Ethical Considerations
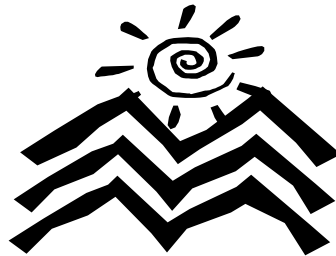
Competency

As a newly organized professional field, positive psychologists come from a variety of psychological backgrounds. Despite their diversity, positive psychologists share common professional interests in pursuing human thriving and well-being, as they acknowledge and continue to learn about human suffering and frailties (Peterson, 2006). Positive psychologists are trained in a multiplicity of established psychological fields, including social psychology, clinical psychology, organizational psychology, and counseling psychology, to name a few. And psychologists have been researching and practicing within these various psychological fields that ultimately fit beneath the umbrella of modern-day positive psychology for decades.

While there are increasing numbers of academic and professional programs that train individuals in the concepts of positive psychology, there are no specific guidelines to date required for psychologists to identify as positive psychologists. However, according to the ethical guidelines of the APA, no psychologist should practice outside of his/her areas of competence, based on education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional expertise (Richards & Bergin, 1997). And, in emerging areas in which generally recognized standards for preparatory training do not yet exist, psychologists should still take steps to ensure the competence of their work (APA, 2002). Therefore, appropriate training must be gained before moving into a new area of practice. In this case, while it is not necessary that "positive psychologists" facilitate the groups outlined in this manual, it is important for psychologists utilizing this positive psychology manual to gain familiarity with concepts of positive psychology and become comfortable with the material and basic theoretical orientation.

In addition to basic competence required for facilitating positive psychology groups, psychologists must make note of the specific competency required for working collaboratively with clergy to serve the best interests of the group members, potentially presenting with religious/spiritual needs in addition to psychological needs (McMinn, Aikins, & Lish, 2003). There must be a basic respect for clergy members as co-

professionals and respect for their unique expertise to serve participants in meaningful and helpful ways. Implicit is the idea that psychologists will not provide any services that are beyond their scope of expertise without additional training. Clergy-psychologist collaboration does not require complete agreement on fundamental worldviews, but rather respect and communication to work well together despite any differences. This includes recognizing that both psychologists and clergy members are interested in the well-being of participants both from a psychological and spiritual perspective (McMinn et al., 2003). It will be important for both the facilitating psychologist and facilitating rabbi to collaboratively guide discussions from their respective areas of expertise and competencies.

Multicultural Considerations

In considering the role of religion in psychology, the APA requires that psychologists consider religious identity as a primary element of multiculturalism and diversity in working with clients (APA, 2002). In other words, religious and spiritual identity is one way in which individuals express their unique development and worldview and therefore must be handled with care, competence, and consideration. By respecting and recognizing the values of Judaism as a religious practice and spiritual compass for participants in the positive psychology groups, facilitating psychologists acknowledge the collective and individual constructions meaningfully represented by group members.

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CHAPTER 3

Rosh Hashannah / Integrity

Introduction of Facilitators (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)

Overview of Positive Psychology Groups 1-8 (5 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Agenda, Content, Goals

Opening Ritual – Blessing (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Explanation of beginning weekly groups with a blessing
- ***Shehecheyanu***

Suggested Explanation
Jews deliberately and consistently recite blessings. Blessings are recited to thank God and acknowledge God's power. Blessings are uttered before performing *mitzvot* (commandments), to elevate our actions and make them holy. Blessings elevate individuals through gratitude. Blessings bring us into awareness of the present moment, and of God's presence in our lives. They bring us together as a community and serve as a ritual reminder of our unfolding Jewish narrative, both personal and communal, which we continue to write daily.

The *Shehecheyanu* is a well-known blessing that is recited anytime we engage in something for the first time. The words are as follows: *Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh* – Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

This *Shehecheyanu* brings us fully into the present moment, and allows us to experience our own potential for joy. This one blessing reminds us to cherish all our blessings. Not only is the *Shehecheyanu* recited to express appreciation for new or special experiences in our lives, it is traditionally recited at the beginning of Jewish holidays as well.

As we prepare to sit together and create increased joy and strengths in our lives, we thank God, who has brought us to this moment, allowing us to become more fully aware of ourselves, each other, and of God's presence in our lives.

Shehecheyanu
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Extended Check-in (30 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Name
- Interest in participating in positive psychology group
- Positive Introductions
- Personal connection with *Rosh Hashannah*
  - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
  - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Rosh Hashannah* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Rosh Hashannah* with focus on Integrity
- Introduction of *Rosh Hashannah* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Integrity (Authenticity, Honesty) (10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

Although it is a divine decree that we blow the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashannah,* a hint of the following idea is contained in the command. It is as if to say: 'Awake from your slumbers, ye who have fallen asleep in life, and reflect on your deeds. Remember your Creator. Be not of those who miss reality in the pursuit of shadows, and waste their years in seeking after vain things which neither profit nor save. Look well to your souls and improve your character. Forsake each of you his evil ways and thoughts.'

- Maimonides (Yad. Teshuvah 3:4)

Positive Psychology Didactic, Integrity (Authenticity, Honesty)
(15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

On *Rosh Hashannah*, Jews commit themselves to change through a return to the self and to God. This process of self-reflection, introspection, self-renewal, and turning inward is integrally related to the positive psychology character strength of integrity. Integrity is one character strength of several that comprise the virtue of courage, "which entails the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, either external or internal." (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 199). To have integrity is to be whole. Integrity is about speaking and behaving truthfully, taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions, and presenting oneself in a way that genuinely reflects oneself. Although practicing integrity is not always easy, as presenting and doing what is right and authentic often comes with a

cost, there are clear benefits. Authenticity, which is emotional genuineness and psychological depth, is a part of integrity, as is honesty, which refers to factual truthfulness and interpersonal sincerity. (Peterson & Seligman).

Individuals with the character strength of integrity would strongly endorse statements such as these: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 250)

- It is more important to be myself than to be popular
- When people keep telling the truth, things work out
- I would never lie just to get something I wanted from someone
- My life is guided and given meaning by my code of values
- It is important to me to be open and honest about my feelings
- I always follow through on my commitments, even when it costs me
- "To thine own self be true, and thou canst not then be false to any man."
- I dislike phonies who pretend to be what they are not
- People should always take into consideration evidence that goes against their beliefs
- Beliefs should always be revised in response to new evidence

Behaviors reflecting integrity would include the following: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 250)

- A regular pattern of behavior that is consistent with espoused values – practicing what one preaches
- Public justification of moral convictions, even if those convictions are not popular
- Treatment of others with care, as evident by helping those in need; sensitivity to the needs of others

Jung (1939) argued that there is an authentic self beneath outward personas, and the authentic self is capable of growth and a meaningful existence. Laing (1960) wrote about the confusion and destruction that results when individuals divorce their inner self from the self they project to the world, a gross inauthentic existence and lack of integrity. Rogers (1961) defined integrity by writing that "the feelings the person is experiencing are available to him, available to his awareness, and he is able to live these feelings, be them, and is able to communicate them if appropriate" (p. 61).

Psychological integrity refers to the extent that an individual's sense of self is accurately represented by his/her actual needs, emotions, and interests. Integrity occurs when a person strongly values discovering the truth of his or her internal experience and is willing and able to accept what he or she finds. Further, only authentic persons are able to engage fully in the process of becoming, fulfilling the human potential for personal growth and positive change (Rogers, 1961).

Research shows that humans have a need for integrity and therefore it correlates with well-being, broadly defined as positive mood, life satisfaction, openness to experience, empathy, self-actualization, and conscientiousness (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Creating goals for oneself that are authentic best prepare individuals for an upward spiral of growth and positive change.

<u>Tips for Cultivating Integrity</u>:
1. Practice meditation or forms of reflection that allow you to become aware of your self, in preparation for returning to your true self
2. Enlist a "coach," personal or professional, to encourage you to honor your true feelings and beliefs
3. Recognize that sometimes the truth is painful, yet it is still preferable for integrity and growth than self dishonesty
4. Recognize that choices are not entirely the result of external events, but internal states. Take responsibility and ownership for your personal choices and goals
5. Surround yourself with people around whom you feel most free to express an authentic and honest self
6. Set goals that are an authentic reflection of your internal desires and needs
7. Practice acknowledging your true beliefs and feelings
8. When in doubt about your authentic self, when it is elusive, look for red flags or signs that current behavior, attitudes, or actions, may be discordant with deeper feelings
9. Practice expressing what you believe, think, and feel, even in the face of pressure to express yourself differently
10. Consider your strengths and weakness in a balanced view of oneself
11. Ask yourself the following questions:
    - How does your honesty and integrity affect the way you feel about yourself?
    - What can you do to change how you behave, in terms of your integrity?
    - What would you change now if you were to honor your integrity and return to greater honesty in terms of who you are?

SAMPLE HANDOUT: INTEGRITY

TIPS FOR CULTIVATING INTEGRITY

- **Practice daily meditation or quiet self-reflection, listen for still small voice**

- **Practice speaking up for issues, decisions that reflect true beliefs or feelings**

- **Consider both your strengths and weaknesses in a balanced view of self**

- **When explaining your motives to someone, do so in a genuine and honest way**

- **Think about your most important values and do something everyday that is consistent with them**

- **Answer these questions:**
  - **What can you do today to act in a way that is more authentic?**
  - **What would you change now if you were to honor integrity more?**
  - **Who can you enlist to support you as you share a more authentic self?**

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Integrity (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
    (Honesty, Authenticity)

    ZUSIA
    Lying on his deathbed, Rabbi Zusia was surrounded by his devoted disciples.
    Suddenly his eyes opened wide and a look of great anguish flickered on his face.
    "Rebbe, rebbe, what is the matter?" his disciples cried.
    "I dreamed that I came before the throne of the Almighty," Zusia replied, in a
    stricken voice. "The Holy One did not say to me, 'Zusia! Why were you not
    Moses?' And he did not say to me, 'Zusia! Why were you not Jacob?' And he did
    not say to me, 'Why were you not the prophet Isaiah?'"
    The Rebbe looked piercingly into the eyes of his disciples. "What the Almighty
    said was, 'Zusia! Why were you not Zusia?'"
                                                 Melvin, J. Bukiet

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme
- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about integrity
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Integrity

"You are in integrity when the life you are living on the outside matches who you are on the inside."
> **Alan Cohen**

"A person is not given integrity. It results from the relentless pursuit of honesty at all times."
> **Source Unknown**

"I cannot find language of sufficient energy to convey my sense of the sacredness of private integrity."
> **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

"Integrity is what we do, what we say, and what we say we do."
> **Don Galer**

"If one is estranged from oneself, then one is estranged from others too. If one is out of touch with oneself, then one cannot touch others."
> **Anne Morrow Lindbergh**

"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self."
> **Aldous Huxley**

"Then, without realizing it, you try to improve yourself at the start of each new day; of course, you achieve quite a lot in the course of time. Anyone can do this, it costs nothing and is certainly very helpful. Whoever doesn't know it must learn and find by experience that a quiet conscience makes one strong."
> **Anne Frank**

"It is easier to live through someone else than to become complete yourself."
> **Betty Friedan**

"Through pride we are ever deceiving ourselves. But deep down below the surface of the average conscience a still, small voice says to us, 'Something is out of tune."
> **Carl Jung**

"I think we all have a little voice inside us that will guide us. It may be God, I don't know. But I think that if we shut out all the noise and clutter from our lives and listen to that voice, it will tell us the right thing to do."
Christopher Reeve

"To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right."
Confucius

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CHAPTER 4

Yom Kippur / Forgiveness

Opening Ritual – Blessing (1 minute, facilitated by rabbi)

Shehecheyanu
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu,
lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained
us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Check-in (20 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Reflections on last week's theme or experience
- Personal connection with *Yom Kippur*
  - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
  - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Yom Kippur* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Yom Kippur* with focus on <u>Forgiveness</u>
- Introduction of *Yom Kippur* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Forgiveness
(10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

According to the sages, the goat dispatched to Azazel as part of the Temple ritual on the
Day of Atonement served as atonement for all transgressions (Shev. 1:6). After the
destruction of the Temple, the Day itself is for atonement (Sifra, Aharei Mot 8:1).
However most of the sages are of the opinion that the Day only atones when
accompanied by repentance (Yoma 8:8–9; cf. Yad, Teshuvah 1:2–4). This is the source of
the custom of asking forgiveness of one another on the eve of the Day of Atonement. The
sages hold that the fate of every person, which has been left pending from Rosh ha-
Shanah, is finally determined on the Day of Atonement (Tosef., RH 1:13; cf. Yad,
Teshuvah 3:3), and hence one should repent during the Ten Days of Repentance, and
particularly on the Day of Atonement (*ibid.*, 2:7).

Positive Psychology Didactic, Forgiveness (15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

Virtues are viewed as the core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers, and character strengths such as forgiveness are the psychological ingredients of those virtues. Forgiveness is a character strength that falls under the broader virtue of temperance. Strengths of temperance protect us from excess. For example, forgiveness protects against hatred. Strengths of temperance are important because they provide immense positive returns leading to the psychological "good life", and therefore, it is no surprise that these strengths are included in nearly all philosophical and religious discussions of virtue. Interestingly, in mainstream United States, "strengths of temperance are infrequently endorsed and seldom praised" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 431).

Individuals with a strong disposition to forgive would endorse statements such as the following: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 446)
- When someone hurts my feelings, I manage to get over it fairly quickly
- I don't hold a grudge for very long
- When people make me angry, I am usually able to get over my bad feelings toward them
- Seeking revenge doesn't help people to solve their problems
- I think it is important to do what I can to mend my relationships with people who have hurt or betrayed me in the past
- I am not the type of person to harm someone simply because he or she harmed me
- I am not the type of person who spends hours thinking of how to get even with people who have done bad things to me

Forgiveness is both a psychological and spiritual phenomenon. It provides the potential for psychological benefits but also has a transcendent quality since it evokes religious and spiritual images, thoughts, and feelings (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). "To raise the issue of forgiveness is to beg questions about human fallibility and human vulnerability. The transcendent nature of forgiveness is profound, difficult to pin down" (p. 1142). Forgiveness has common elements, but is viewed slightly differently among major world religions. For Jews, forgiveness is inextricably linked with the idea of *teshuvah*, return. Forgiveness includes both forgiving others and asking for forgiveness, or atoning. Part of the *Kol Nidre* prayer, recited on the eve of *Yom Kippur* is as follows:

> *Kol Nidre* is a confession: we are all transgressors, all exiled from the Highest we know, all in need of the healing of forgiveness and reconciliation. For what we have done, for what we may yet do, we ask pardon; for rash words, broken pledges, insincere assurances, and foolish promises, may we find forgiveness. (Stern, 1989, p. 250)

Asking for forgiveness entails confessing or acknowledging acts of wrongdoing against others, self, and God, taking responsibility for the wrongdoing, and repenting.

Psychologically, forgiveness is both a trait (i.e. disposition toward forgiveness which may be related to agreeableness and emotional stability) (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and a strength that can be developed through the practice of empathy, perspective-taking, and development of reasoning about forgiveness (Enright et al., 1989; McCullough, Pargament, & Thorson, 2000). And, while research does not definitely show exactly how forgiveness leads to mental health well-being, there is certainly evidence that it makes a positive difference in our lives. According to Peterson and Seligman, forgiving others allows individuals to know they have done the right thing.

Once one has forgiven, basic feelings and actions toward the transgressor become more positive and less negative (more benevolent, kind, generous, and less malevolent, vengeful, avoidant) "Revenge can be very sweet, and grudges can have considerable staying power, but these are negative actions that often satisfy only deficiency motives—even when sated, they leave us empty" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 432). Forgiving people tend to experience lower levels of negative emotions, including: anger, anxiety, depression, and hostility (Berry et al., 2001). Additionally, research suggests that forgiveness is essential to subjective feelings of well-being (McCullough & Witvliet, 2002). In close relationships, forgiveness promotes relationship harmony (McCullough, 2000). In a global sense, if one follows the argument that forgiveness protects against or undoes hatred, then it can be said that forgiveness actually removes evil from the world (Peterson & Seligman).

Caution – forgiveness is not forgetting, and blind overabundant forgiving is forewarned in much the same way that almost too much of anything can be negative, especially if it ultimately conflicts with other highly regarded personal values. For example, too much forgiveness can conflict with notions of fairness. Forgiveness and punishment are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In other words, one who has been hurt or victimized can exact punishment for a transgression while still forgiving and letting go of negative emotions, thus wiping the slate clean (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

There are a few models of forgiveness which give us clues as to how we might cultivate forgiveness in our lives. Worthington's REACH model of forgiveness (2001) encourages us to think of forgiveness as a primarily intrapersonal experience, one in which the process of letting go is central to achieving the benefits of forgiveness. In Worthington's REACH model, there are five steps to forgiveness: (R) recall the hurt, (E) empathy, (A) altruism, (C) commit to forgiveness, and (H) hold on. In some ways, Worthington's model of forgiveness may be commensurate with Judaism's concept of *teshuvah*, which includes both taking responsibility for transgressions and a moral obligation to forgive another when the transgressor has repented. The crux of *teshuvah*, or returning, is about fixing relationships in an effort to ultimately let go and free oneself.

How to Practice Forgiveness:
1. Understand that forgiveness does not mean denial (unwillingness to perceive the injury), condoning (removing the offense and, therefore, the need for forgiveness), pardoning (can only be granted by a judge or representative of

society), forgetting (removing awareness of offense from consciousness, or even reconciliation (restoring the relationship) – although it can begin to facilitate the repair of a relationship

2. Make a decision to allow for more forgiveness in your life, for YOUR benefit – this includes both forgiving others and seeking forgiveness
3. Try not to ruminate about negative events on one's life; practice letting go
4. Allow your mind to imagine the circumstances and feelings that may have led another to transgress against you or hurt you
5. Consider the transgressor's intentions and whether this person knowingly intended to harm you; consider taking an altruistic attitude
6. Utilize apologies as sincere attempts to make amends and accept them fully
7. Forgiving yourself is often as difficult if not more difficult than forgiving others – practice forgiving self. If you find yourself unable to forgive yourself or others, seek help from a rabbi or therapist
8. Exercise and practice forgiveness freely as opposed to based on a sense of obligation – the benefits only apply when forgiveness is sought and given from free choice
9. Remember a time when you were forgiven. What did it mean to you?
10. Create a meditation about forgiveness and letting go – practice meditation daily
11. Set aside some time to answer the following questions:
    - What shapes your view of forgiveness?
    - What keeps you from asking for and giving forgiveness?
    - What would the world be like if there was no forgiveness?

SAMPLE HANDOUT: FORGIVENESS

FORGIVENESS

REMEMBER

Forgiveness <u>does not</u> mean:
- Denial (unwillingness to perceive the injury)
- Condoning (removing the offense and, therefore, the need for forgiveness)
- Pardoning (can only be granted by a judge or representative of society)
- Forgetting (removing awareness of offense from consciousness, or even reconciliation (restoring the relationship) – although it can begin to facilitate the repair of a relationship

BENEFITS OF FORGIVING

- **Forgiveness satisfies strength motives, leaving us with more positive emotions**
- **Forgiveness promotes lower levels of anger, anxiety, depression, hostility – increases feelings of well-being, self-esteem, hope, relationship adjustment and higher life satisfaction**
- **Forgiveness promotes relationship harmony in close relationships**
- **Forgiveness provides emotional satisfaction and relief related to letting go**

TIPS FOR PRACTICING FORGIVENESS
Reach Model (Worthington, 2001)

R	**Recall Hurt** –	Avoidance can lead to greater difficulty coping and overcoming
E	**Empathy** –	If possible, try to imagine the hurtful act from the perspective of the one who hurt you
A	**Altruism** –	Offering forgiveness is something you can do, a gift. Remember a time you hurt another and were forgiven. What did it mean to you?
C	**Commit to forgiveness** –	Make your intention to forgive public so that it is easier to follow-through
H	**Hold on** –	Hold onto the forgiveness, even when thoughts and feelings about the hurt resurface

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- **Let a grudge go**
- **When you feel annoyed, even with justification, take the high road and keep it to yourself**
- **Write a forgiveness letter; do *not* send it, buy do read it everyday for week**

** Practice forgiving yourself**

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Forgiveness (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN THE WORLD

Once upon a time, God spoke to an angel and said, "For this Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, bring me the most precious thing in the world." The angel bowed low to God and then winged her way to earth. Searching everywhere, she visited forests, mountaintops, and soft, green meadows. But although she saw bright butterflies and flowers, nothing seemed quite right. Then, peeking through a window, she saw a mother holding her baby. As she gazed down at her child, the mother's smile was full of love and tenderness. The angel thought, "This mother's smile must be the most precious thing in the world. I will take it to God." Gently, the angel took the mother's smile, but the mother didn't even notice; she had so many smiles left that she would never miss just one! With great excitement, the angel showed the smile to God, who answered, "This is indeed wonderful – the smile of love that a mother gives her child – but it is not the very most precious thing in the world."

So the angel went back to earth and searched again everywhere. One starry night, in the midst of a deep, dark forest, she heard exquisite music: it was the song of a solitary nightingale singing among trees. The song was so beautiful that the angel folded her wings and listened for many hours. Then she took the song to God. But, upon hearing the music, God answered, "This is indeed very special, but it is still not the most precious thing in the world!"

The angel was getting tired but she knew she could never give up, so again she flew back to earth. This time she arrived in the big city, where she saw crowds of people. They were all in a hurry to get somewhere. They pushed each other as they passed quickly in the streets. They waited impatiently in long lines at banks and supermarkets. They looked nervous and wary. Everywhere there were traffic jams and tired drivers honking angrily.

Standing at one busy intersection was an old man. He was waiting to cross the street, but there were so many cars that he didn't know when to try. People kept rushing past him, never pausing to notice his predicament. The old man felt dizzy and confused. Just then, a young girl came walking up to him. She had noticed him hesitating and looking ill and felt sorry for him. "Excuse me," she said to him shyly, "but may I help you cross the street and walk you home?" Gratefully he gazed into her kind eyes and answered, "Yes, thank you, young lady, I was feeling so tired and weak!" He took her offered arm and walked with her across the street. Slowly and steadily, they made their way to his apartment building, which was nearby.

Now the angel was watching all the time, although the old man and the young girl couldn't see her. The angel was so happy! "This really must be the most precious thing in the world—a kind deep, a mitzvah, a helping hand! It has many names, but it is the same everywhere. If we can help each other, we can have a peaceful world! So I will take the story of this kind deed to God. It must be what I have been looking for all the time!"

God heard the story of the kind deed and answered, "This is indeed important. A mitzvah is one of the most special things in the world – still, it is not quite what I have been waiting for. Go once more, dear angel. You are on the right track, and I feel sure that this time you will find what we seek. Look everywhere – the cities, forests, schools, and homes – but especially look into the hearts of people."
Sighing with disappointment, the angel again winged her way to earth. And she looked in so many places! Still, she could not find the precious thing. "Maybe I should give up! But how could I fail my God? There must be an answer or God would not have asked me to do this." Tired from her ceaseless searching, she sat dejected upon a rock, arresting and thinking. As she sat there, she heard something—the sound of someone crying! It was not a little child crying, but a grown man! He was walking through the woods with tears rolling down his cheeks. "Soon the High Holy Days will come, and I am thinking that I was cruel and mean to my dear brother! We had a fight about something unimportant. There were harsh words and now we haven't even spoken to each other in several weeks. Today, this very day, I will go to him and ask him to forgive me. Then I will pray to God to forgive me too, for I am truly sorry that my unthinking anger caused so much unhappiness." Another tear rolled down the man's cheek.
The angel felt that she had found the answer. Being an angel, she was invisible, so she flew up to the grieving man and gently caught one of the tears that were falling from his eyes. The man thought to himself, "What a soft and fragrant breeze is surrounding me! Suddenly I feel better. Perhaps this is a sign that all will be well!" The angel flew away; she flew away to God. In a small, tiny bottle, she held the one tear that she had collected. She held it up to God. And God…smiled upon the angel. The radiance of that smile filled the whole world like the sun coming out suddenly from behind dark clouds.

Then God spoke: "My faithful angel, this is indeed the most precious thing in the world—the tear of someone who is truly sorry. For it is a tear from the heart, and it will bring peace into the world. The two brothers will forgive each other, and they will enjoy a loving and happy New Year. My dear angel, I bless you for your good work. And may this story be told, so all who hear it can learn from it. L'Shana Tova – a sweet and happy New Year to everyone!"
<div style="text-align:right">Joan Sutton</div>

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme

- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about forgiveness
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Forgiveness

"True forgiveness is not an action after the fact, it is an attitude with which you enter each moment."
        David Ridge

"Forgiveness is the economy of the heart... forgiveness saves the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits."
        Hannah Moore

"Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it."
        Mark Twain

"Forgiveness is a funny thing. It warms the heart and cools the sting."
        William Arthur Ward

"Without forgiveness life is governed by an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation."
        Roberto Assagioli

"We achieve inner health only through forgiveness - the forgiveness not only of others but also of ourselves."
        Joshua Loth Liebman

"You don't have to accept the invitation to get angry. Instead, practice forgiveness, empathy and encouragement."
        Dan Fallon

"Forgiveness is the giving, and so the receiving, of life."
        George McDonald

"Forgiveness means letting go of the past."
        Gerald Jampolsky

"You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well."
        Lewis B. Smedes

"The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world."
        Marianne Williamson

"Life is an adventure in forgiveness."
        Norman Cousins

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CHAPTER 5

Sukkot / Gratitude

Opening Ritual – Blessing (1 minute, facilitated by rabbi)

Shehecheyanu
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Check-in (20 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Reflections on last week's theme or experience
- Personal connection with *Sukkot*
    - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
    - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Sukkot* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Sukkot* with focus on <u>Gratitude</u>
- Information about *Sukkot* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Gratitude
(10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

Sukkot celebrates the time of year when the earth is fulfilled and gratitude flows from this fulfillment. "We walk into the sukkah – the fragile field hut, open to the light of moon and stars, that our forebears lived in while they gathered in the grain. We dangle apples and onions, oranges and peppers, from its leafy roof. And we feel the joy that for a moment life is so safe, the world so loving, that we can live in these open-ended huts without fear (Waskow, 1982, p. 48). In gratitude for this moment of the full harvest, the gathering of food that will keep the people alive all year, Jews make offerings to God (Waskow).

Text 1:
On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Feast of Huts [Sukkot], seven days for the Lord. On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any menial work. Seven days you shall bring a fire-offering t the Lord…When you have gathered in the income of the land, you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. For seven days you shall dwell in huts; every citizen in Israel shall dwell in huts, so that your generations know that I made the children of Israel dwell in huts when I brought them out from the Land of Mitzrayim (Lev. 23:33-44).

Text 2:
After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Huts for seven days. You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow in your communities. You shall hold festival for the Lord your God seven days, in the place that the Lord will choose; for the Lord your God will bless you in all your income and all your handiwork, and you shall be fully joyful. Three times a year shall all your males let themselves be seen by the face of the Lord your God in the place that He will choose…and they shall not let themselves be seen empty-handed, but each shall come with a gift in his hand – depending on the blessing that the Lord your God has given you (Duet. 16:13-17).

Positive Psychology Didactic, Gratitude (15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

Transcendence is a virtue that allows individuals to connect to the larger universe and provide meaning. Gratitude is one of the character strengths that helps people connect with something greater than themselves. It connects individuals directly to goodness. A distinction can be made between two forms of gratitude, personal and transpersonal gratitude. Both are marked by a response to a gift, regardless of the nature of the gift, and produce the transcendent emotion of grace, the sense that one has benefited from the actions of another or a higher power. It is reflected by a sense of wonder and appreciation for life, a delight in the ordinary, and a sense of awe. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Individuals who possess the strength of gratitude would strongly endorse statements such as the following: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 554)
- It is important to appreciate each day that you are alive
- I often reflect on how much easier my life is because of the efforts of others
- For me, life is much more of a gift than it is a burden
- One of my favorite times of the year is Thanksgiving
- I am basically very thankful for the parenting that was provided to me
- I could not have gotten where I am today without the help of many people
- It seems like I can even find reasons to feel thankful for bad things that happen

- I have been so struck by the beauty or awe of something that I felt grateful in return

Psychologically, gratitude can be expressed as a trait (dispositional gratitude), an enduring thankfulness that is sustained across situations and over time. It can also be cultivated as a human strength. Dispositional gratitude can be further understood in terms of the following dimensions or facets: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 558)

- Gratitude intensity: the intensity of gratitude that one feels in response to an positive event
  - A person with a strong grateful disposition may feel gratitude more intensely than someone less disposed toward gratitude when faced with a positive experience
- Gratitude frequency: how easily one might be elicited to feel gratitude daily, based on simple favors, polite acts, or ordinary kindness
  - A person with a strong grateful disposition may feel grateful several times per day, or very often during a specified time period
- Gratitude span: number of life circumstances or aspects for which a person feels grateful at a given time
  - A person with a strong grateful disposition might be aware of feeling gratitude for many aspects of life, such as family, work, friends, health, life itself
- Gratitude density: the number of persons to whom one feels grateful for a single positive outcome or life circumstance
  - A person with a strong grateful disposition may feel grateful to a large number of others when accomplishing a goal

Research shows that those who endorse the character strength of gratitude feel better about their lives as a whole, are more optimistic about upcoming events, report higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness, and energy (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Grateful people report higher levels of positive emotions, like satisfaction, vitality, and optimism and lower levels of depression and stress (McCullough et al., 2002). Watkins, Woodard, Stone and Kolts (2003) showed that grateful thinking improves mood and found that grateful individuals report a greater sense of subjective well-being. In fact, these individuals appear to enjoy simple pleasures because their threshold for gratitude may be lower than those who are less predisposed to feelings of gratefulness. Interestingly, those who are connected in religious organizations are more likely to be grateful. Grateful individuals value material goods less, are less judgmental of self and others, and are more likely to share with others (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The regular practice of grateful thinking leads to enhanced psychological and social functioning.

Some may assume that those who are grateful are pollyannish or deny the pain in life. On the contrary, research shows that some individuals are able to extract good from difficult situation.

> Grateful individuals are not naively optimistic, nor are they under some illusion that suffering and pain are nonexistent. Rather, these persons have consciously taken control by choosing to extract benefits from adversity, with one of the major benefits being the perception of life as a gift. (Emmons & Shelton, 2002, p. 468)

How to Cultivate Gratitude:
1. Set aside time on a daily basis to recall moments of gratitude associated with mundane or ordinary events, one's personal attributes, or valued people one encounters
2. Keep a gratitude journal
3. Allow for an interior attitude of thankfulness regardless of life circumstances
4. Identify non-grateful thoughts and formulate gratitude-supporting thoughts to substitute for them
5. Translate inner feeling into outward action by finding a way to give back to others in response to gratitude felt – express this gratitude daily
6. Practice a daily gratitude stream in which you stream together thoughts about what you are grateful for in the past 24 hours

SAMPLE HANDOUT: GRATITUDE

GRATITUDE

TIPS

- **Keep a daily gratitude journal, including at least 3 things that went well each day and why they went well**

- **Keep track of how many times you say "thank you" during the day, and increase the number every day for a week**

- **Write and send a gratitude letter (exercise described below)**

- **At least every hour, interrupt your thoughts to practice a gratitude stream of thoughts about what you are grateful for**

- **Give back to others as an outward expression of gratitude**

- **Tell others regularly about the gratitude you feel for them**

- **Participate in events, activities, organizations in which gratitude is valued (i.e. synagogues or other Jewish community organizations!)**

BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE (feeling and expressing)

- **Better feelings toward lives as a whole**

- **Greater optimism about upcoming events**

- **Higher levels of enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy**

- **Higher levels of satisfaction, vitality, optimism**

- **Greater sense of subjective well-being**

- **Overall enhanced psychological and social functioning**

EXERCISE: GRATITUDE LETTER
Taken from Peterson (2006)

In this exercise, write a gratitude letter to one of the individuals – parents, friends, teachers, coaches, teammates, employers, etc. – who have been especially kind to you but have never heard you express your gratitude. Describe in concrete terms why you are grateful. Deliver it personally if possible, and have the person read the letter in your presence. Note: A gratitude letter is dramatic but not life-changing unless practiced regularly. The effects of a gratitude letter diminish after a few weeks, so if this exercise moves you, incorporate it into your life by utilizing this exercise regularly in the practice of gratitude. Ultimately, the habitually grateful are happier than those who are not.

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Gratitude (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

THE CAROB TREE

Throughout his life, a pious man named Honi was troubled by a line in Psam 126: "When the Lord brought us back to Zion, we were like dreamers." The exile, after all, had lasted seventy years – how was it possible, he asked himself, for a person to hold on to a dream for seventy years?

One day, as Honi was walking down the road, he came upon a man planting a carob tree.

"How long does it take the tree to bear fruit?" he asked.

"Seventy years," the man replied.

Honi was taken aback. "Are you so sure you'll still be alive in seventy years?" he asked incredulously.

The man responded, "I found carob trees heavy with fruit when I came into the world. I plant these for my children, just as my ancestors planted those for me."

<div align="right">Adapted from the Talmud (Ta'anit 23a)</div>

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme
- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Discussion: What life events contribute to your overall sense of gratitude

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about gratitude
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Gratitude

"When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude."
    G.K. Chesterton

"If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change."
    Buddha

"Joy is the simplest form of gratitude."
    Karl Barth

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."
    Albert Schweitzer

"Today is a most unusual day, because we have never lived it before; we will never live it again; it is the only day we have."
    William Arthur Ward

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."
    Melody Beattie

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."
    William Arthur Ward

"I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder."
    G.K. Chesterton

"Gratitude helps you to grow and expand; gratitude brings joy and laughter into your life and into the lives of those around you."
Eileen Caddy

"You've never met an ungrateful person who was happy, nor have you ever met a grateful person who was unhappy."
Zig Ziglar

**"If you want to feel rich, count all the things you have that money can't buy."**
Source Unknown

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CHAPTER 6

Hanukkah / Hope
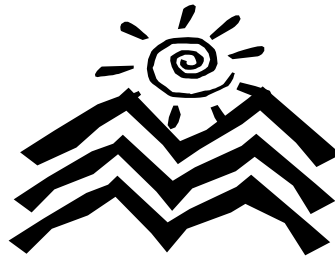
Opening Ritual – Blessing (1 minute, facilitated by rabbi)

Shehecheyanu
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Check-in (20 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Reflections on last week's theme or experience
- Personal connection with *Hanukkah*
    - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
    - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Hanukkah* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Hanukkah* with focus on Hope
- Information about *Hanukkah* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Hope
(10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

In the classic debate between 1st Century CE scholars Hillel and Shammai regarding the lighting of the *Hanukkah* candles, the following question was addressed: Should one light all eight *Hanukkah* candles the first night of *Hanukkah* and then one less candle each night thereafter, or should one light just one candle the first night of *Hanukkah* and then light additional candles each night thereafter? Essentially, the debate focused on whether light should shine its brightest the first night, diminishing night after night during *Hanukkah*, or conversely, increase each night of *Hanukkah* as additional candles are lit. Each scholar proposed an important philosophical and psychological position.

Shammai argued that the basic function of the candles was to re-enact the historical miracle of the oil which lasted for eight days. For eight days the oil dwindled from a full candelabra to nothing. Since the amount of light decreased each night with the decreasing oil, Jews should light 8 candles the first night and one fewer candle each night thereafter. Shammai argued this re-enactment parallels real human experience, where individuals often feel a peak of excitement around a new event and then experience a decrease to more stable levels as they adapt.

Conversely, Hillel argued that such a historical re-enactment and psychological parallel was besides the point, and that the real reason to light *Hanukkah* candles was to increase light in the world. His metaphor works as well today as it did in the 1st century. As Jews, we strive to better ourselves, to bring more light into the world with each night of *Hanukkah*, as reflected by lighting an additional candle each night. Hillel knew that lighting a candle in the darkness is an elemental human symbol of hope. He argued that, "in all matters of holiness, we increase [the number each day] and do not decrease." (BT Shabbat 21b). His position directs us that the point of lighting the candles is to increase the light (hope) in the world. And so, as Hillel suggested, the modern custom of Jews is to light one *Hanukkah* candle the first night, two the second night, and so on until on the 8th night of *Hanukkah*, all the candles of the Hanukkiah are lit, creating bright lights of hope.

Positive Psychology Didactic, Hope (15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

Hope is one of many character strengths that comprise the virtue of transcendence. Transcendence is a virtue that connects individuals with something greater than themselves and specifically, hope connects people directly to their dreamed-of future. It represents an essential stance toward the future and the goodness that it might hold. One of the most powerful positive effects of a hopeful orientation toward the future is that it sustains a cheerful attitude in the present and it intensifies goal-directed actions and behaviors. Whether focusing on *little optimism*, which includes specific expectations about positive outcomes for small events like finding a parking meter on a crowded street, or *big optimism*, which encompasses larger and less specific expectations (often more transcendent ideas such as a feeling of belief that people can end discrimination), the character strength of hope helps individuals to greater human thriving (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Hope represents more emotion than optimism, which is purely expectational. It includes thinking about the future, expecting that desired events and outcomes will occur, acting in ways believed to make them more likely, and feeling confident that these will ensue, given appropriate efforts. Hope often serves as a balancing force against negative and painful experiences.

Individuals who possess the strength of hope would strongly endorse statements such as the following: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 570)
- Despite challenges, I always remain hopeful about the future
- I always look on the bright side
- I am confident that my way of doing things will work out for the best
- I believe that good will always triumph over evil

- I expect the best
- I have a clear picture in my mind about what I want to happen in the future
- I have a plan for what I want to be doing 5 years from now
- I know that I will succeed with the goals I set for myself
- I never go into a game or competition expecting to lose
- If I get a bad grade or evaluation, I focus on the next opportunity and plan to do better

> We sometimes hear optimists dismissed as foolish – Pollyanniaish or Panglossian—but there is little empirical support for this characterization. Optimistic people are popular and successful. We certainly want our children to have hopes and dreams, our friends to be positive, our mates to believe in us, and our leaders to have a plan and a vision. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 527)

Psychologically, hope is traitlike and tends to be stable across decades and general in terms of its positive consequences for the individual (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Although a certain baseline disposition for hope may be heritable, it is not immutable and can be changed by life events and also by specific interventions or actions. Setting goals and then achieving them through motivation and agency are ways to increase hope. The belief or perception that one can find a pathway to desired goals is in itself hopeful.

> Hopeful thinking may be the process by which the bricks of meaning—goals—are assembled into a solid foundation of life meaning. Goals represent our aspirations for the future, and to the extent that we have achieved these goals, we have constructed a meaningful life. (Feldman & Snyder, 2005, p. 418)

Research shows that through positive expectations about the future hope contributes to healthy psychological functioning, a sense of well-being, good social relationships, freedom from anxiety and depression, and more desirable outcomes across personal, academic, and vocational domains.

Tips for Cultivating Hope:
1. Practice goal-directed thinking. Start by formulating goals you'd like to achieve
2. Practice agency: Create motivation for reaching goals by dividing tasks into small, manageable components that can be achieved
3. Consider times in your life when you were able to find light in the midst of darkness – reflect on your process
4. Modeling impacts hope, so teach and model hopeful attitudes and thoughts to your children
5. Participate in a religious organization – they tend to foster hope
6. Think back to and focus on singular events that positively impacted feelings of hope – these singular events have the power to increase hope over the lifespan and to be transformative
7. Ascribe new meanings to past events – change your thoughts about the cause of events, shaping them in a more optimistic direction by disputing negative and catastrophizing thoughts

SAMPLE HANDOUT: HOPE

HOPE

TIPS

- **Remember a time in your life you felt more hopeful; how would you have handled your present-day circumstances from that perspective**

- **Write down your goals for the next week, the next month, and the next year; then make concrete and manageable plans for accomplishing these goals – enlist the help of someone to help you stay accountable to yourself**

- **Speak with a few of the most hopeful individuals your know about their relationship to hope**

- **If you were teaching hope to your children, what would you say?**

- **Identify 3 doors that have closed in your life and 3 doors that then opened**

- **Attend synagogue services/classes/groups and listen for themes of hope – connect your story with those of our ancestors**

- **Hope can be positively impacted by single events – reflect on what those events have been in your life**

- **Practice ascribing new meanings to past events – utilize multiple perspectives to consider the causes and the meanings; stated differently, learn to dispute your pessimistic thoughts (seek help from a therapist if you need extra assistance)**

BENEFITS OF HOPE

- **A sense of well-being**

- **Freedom from impairing anxiety and depression**

- **Better social relationships**

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Hope (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

LIGHT A CANDLE

The students of the rabbi were quite distressed. They came to him and said, "Rabbi, when we go down to the cellar to bring up books for studying, there are corners that are so dark they make us afraid. We are so frightened that we are unable to study. How can we not be afraid of the dark so that we might collect the books we need for studying?" The rabbi responded, "Yes, my students, here is what you are to do. When you go down to the cellar, bring brooms with you, and sweep out in front of you as you walk, that you will not feel afraid in the dark." The students did as the rabbi advised and returned to the rabbi the following week even more distressed. "We went down to the cellar with brooms as you suggested, but we were so afraid of the dark that we were still unable to retrieve the books we need to study." "Well," said the rabbi, "perhaps you should try bringing a copy of the Siddur, the prayerbook, with you in order to pray for safety and comfort while you are in the dark." Again, the students followed the rabbi's advice with no success. They returned once again hopeless and afraid. "Rabbi, what are we to do?" The rabbi thought for a moment and said, "Aha, my students, there are many dark corners of this world that must be faced if we are to thrive. The next time you enter the cellar, bring a candle. It is better to light a candle to illuminate the darkness than curse and fear it. You see, there are many dangers to be faced in the dark corners of this world. If you remember to light a candle in the darkness, your path will be illuminated and you will not feel afraid." And, the students were hopeful.

Adapted by Rabbi Brett Krichiver

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme
- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about hope
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Hope

"Hope is the dream of a soul awake."
> **French proverb**

"Extreme hopes are born from extreme misery."
> **Bertrand Russell**

"May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, enough hope to make you happy."
> **Source unknown**

"Those who wish to sing always find a song."
> **Proverb**

"Hope is not a dream but a way of making dreams become reality."
> **Source unknown**

"Hope never abandons you; you abandon it."
> **George Weinberg**

"Hope is like a road in the country; there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence."
> **Lyn Yutang**

"Hope is the thing with feathers, that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without words, and never stops at all."
> **Emily Dickinson**

"Hope arouses, as nothing else can arouse, a passion for the possible."
> **William Sloan Coffin**

"Hope is the feeling that the feeling you have isn't permanent."
> **Jean Kerr**

"Hope is the power that gives us the power to step out and try."
> **Source unknown**

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CHAPTER 7

Purim / Humor

Opening Ritual – Blessing (1 minute, facilitated by rabbi)

Shehecheyanu
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu,
lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained
us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Check-in (20 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Reflections on last week's theme or experience
- Personal connection with *Purim*
  - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
  - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Purim* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Purim* with focus on Humor
- Information about *Purim* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Humor
(10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

Text 1:
Various parodies of sacred literature were produced for Purim, the best known of which,
Massekhet Purim, is a skillful parody of the Talmud with its main theme the obligation to
drink wine merrily and to abstain strictly from water. The institution of the Purim rabbi, a
kind of lord of misrule, who recites Purim Torah, the frivolous manipulation of sacred
texts, was the norm in many communities. Some have seen in all this an annual attempt to
find psychological relief from what otherwise might have become an intolerable burden
of loyalty to the Torah (Druyanow, *Reshumot*, 1 and 2). Under the influence of the Italian
carnival it became customary for people to dress up on Purim in fancy dress, men even
being permitted to dress as women and women as men. (Encyclopedia Judaica)

<u>Text 2</u>:
The Scroll of Esther lends itself to the belief that it was written for an already hilarious Purim, because it seems to clearly a literary joke: a mobilitzation of hilarity and humor to cure the soul of fear and to shatter the pompous pretensions of all tyranny.
-    Rabbi Arthur Waskow (Seasons of Our Joy)

Positive Psychology Didactic, Humor (15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

Purim is a holiday of laughter and revelry. Excess, partying, and playfulness are all part of the fun. *Purim* reminds Jews that personal freedom is gained by balancing the serious tasks of caring for each other and the world through fighting against oppression, with a joyful, light, laughter-inducing perspective that is a necessary part of life (Greenberg, 1998).

Humor is a character strength that fits under the virtue of transcendence, a virtue that allows individuals to connect to the larger universe and thereby experience meaning in their lives (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Humor is complex because it can be utilized in the service of raising the spirits of others and lightening difficult situations, but it can also be used in hurtful or mean-spirited ways. For example, mockery, ridicule, sarcasm, and at times, parody or practical jokes, can diminish others, which is not considered a character strength, even though it may make others laugh. However, it's important to consider all types of humor because they play a role in society and can serve some positive functions, such as making evildoing the butt of jokes, or building group cohesion (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Humor includes what is commonly called a sense of humor—the ability to perceive, interpret, enjoy, create, and relay incongruous communications. It is also the ability to sustain a good mood by seeing the lighter side of adversity or laugh at one's misfortunes or at one's own expense. And, of course, the ability to make others smile or laugh is an important component of humor (Peterson & Seligman).

Individuals with the character strength of humor would strongly endorse statements such as the following: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 584)
- Whenever my friends are in a gloomy mood, I try to tease them out of it
- I welcome the opportunity to brighten someone else's day with laughter
- Most people would say I am fun to be with
- I try to add some humor to whatever I do
- I never allow a gloomy situation to take away my sense of humor
- I can usually find something to laugh or joke about even in trying situations

Research shows that humor is most often associated with the positive benefits of good mood. However, there are additional benefits as well. Humor buffers the effects on mood of life stress and daily hassles (Martin, 1996, 2001; Ruch & Kohler, 1998). Humor is also known to buffer against mental and physical illnesses resulting from the effects of stress, because humor is an effective stress moderator (Cann, Holt, & Calhoun, 1999; Martin & Lefcourt, 1983). As a powerful factor in coping with stress, humor ultimately contributes to better mental health. Humor is also shown to play an important role as a source for hope (Vilaythong et al., 2003).

Tips for Practicing Humor:
1. Playfulness and a playful attitude form the foundation of humor; therefore, engage regularly in activities that foster play
2. Engage in joking relationships with friends and family members for the development of playfulness and humor
3. Read comics and watch comedy on television
4. Look for humorous aspects in everyday life
5. Try not to take yourself too seriously; laugh at yourself and find humor in stressful situations
6. Cultivate a humorous attitude by tolerating and ultimately forgiving the insufficiencies and shortcomings of life
7. Begin to recognize the role of humor in diffusing life's difficulties and elevating positive mood

SAMPLE HANDOUT: HUMOR

HUMOR

TIPS

- **Make at least one person smile or laugh daily**

- **Learn a magic trick and perform it for your friends**

- **Make light of yourself, if only by saying, "there I go again"**

- **Re-watch your favorite humorous movies or TV sitcoms**

- **Take time each day to play**

- **Read newspaper comics**

- **Practice using humor (appropriately) to diffuse tension with loved ones**

- **Go online and read jokes, daily**

- **Laugh at yourself**

- **Practice letting go and accepting your life circumstances**

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Humor (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

THE POWER OF LIGHTNESS

Long ago and far away there lived a king who ruled with a kind and joyous heart. His people loved and admired him, for unlike other kings they had known, he greeted them with a smile rather than a scowl. And when the king is happy, everyone is happy.

But the king began to feel lonely. His people all smiled back at him, but that was it. He rarely spent time with them. He rarely ate a meal with them. He rarely heard about their lives. They just smiled and waited for him to pass so they could go about their day. In time, this sense of loneliness turned into despair, and the King did not think it would ever pass. And in this kingdom, when the king was unhappy, everyone began to feel unhappy. The king canceled an important feast and a joyous festival, and the people began to wonder: what will happen to us if the king does not recover?

So the king's ministers set about the task of curing the king's sadness. One called in the town philosopher. Perhaps he could convince the king to change his perspective. After 10 hours in seclusion, the philosopher emerged and said, "I was unable to help the king see beyond his sadness." Another minister called in the town baker. Perhaps she could warm up the king's senses with irresistible delicacies. It took only a few moments for the baker to return from the king's chamber, declaring that "the king would not even taste my goods, he is just too sad."

The next day, the ministers called in the town jester. Surely his antics would charm the king and return a smile to his lips. As soon as the jester opened the door and bounded in, the king shouted at him to leave. But the jester insisted that the king listen to one story, the best he could offer. Just a week ago, the entire town had been chuckling at the jester's wit … but the king dismissed the jester as a fool, and he slipped away.

Sadly, the ministers announced to the gathered people of the kingdom that the king's mood would not change. The dark clouds of depression would remain over their land, and they had no choice but to leave and seek out a new home. The king watched out his window as his beloved people walked away, even sadder that he could do nothing to help them.

And then the king saw her. A child. Three years old, perhaps four. Shuffling along with her family, every head solemnly bowed. Except for the child, who noticed the king. Without warning, she eagerly placed one finger in each cheek, pulling her mouth open wide, and sticking her tongue out – right at the king!

"Wait!" The king's voice boomed from the castle, and all the people stopped. His ferocious tone caused them all to kneel down. Except for the child, who thought the entire scene was funny. She puffed out her cheeks this time, and opened her eyes wide to stare at the king. The king walked right up to her, and gently poked the girl's cheeks until the air escaped … and both the king and the girl began laughing hysterically.

One of the ministers approached and cautiously whispered, "Your Majesty? Are you all right?" The king turned, smiling, and said, "Yes, I am fine. We're all going to be fine." "But what happened?" The king looked around and told his people, "All this time, I have been suffocating for want of a joyous spirit. It wouldn't come from reason or good food. But as soon as I looked into the carefree eyes of this girl, a child who clearly did not care who I was or what was going on around her, I felt a lightness emerge from within. She wasn't even trying to help me, but her innocent humor and innate joy were the only medicine I needed."

It wasn't long before the town gathered together for a new festival. The king declared that every year, they would spend a week celebrating the importance of lightness and humor. Never again would any of them forget how a child's natural humor brought a smile back to their king … and to them all.

<div align="right">Rabbi Mark J. Miller</div>

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme
- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about humor
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Humor

"A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds balance to your steps as you walk the tightrope of life."
William Arthur Ward

"I realize that humor isn't for everyone. It's only for people who want to have fun, enjoy life, and feel alive."
Anne Wilson Schaef

"Humor is a whisper from the soul, imploring mind and body to relax, let go and be at peace again."
Source Unknown

"Above all things, and at all times, practice yourself in good humor."
Thomas Jefferson

"Warning: humor may be hazardous to your illness."
Ellie Katz

"Above all things, and at all times, practice yourself in good humor."
Thomas Jefferson

"Laughter rises out of tragedy, when you need it the most, and rewards you for your courage."
Erma Bombeck

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CHAPTER 8

Passover / Empowerment (Citizenship)

Opening Ritual – Blessing (1 minute, facilitated by rabbi)

<u>Shehecheyanu</u>
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Check-in (20 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Reflections on last week's theme or experience
- Personal connection with *Passover*
  - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
  - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Passover* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Passover* with focus on Empowerment/Citizenship
- Information about *Passover* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Empowerment/Citizenship (10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

<u>Text 1</u>:
…the eruption of a desire for freedom was so strong that it shattered their subjugation to the power of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Their desire for freedom was so intense those clan experienced the direct intrusion into their own life-histories of the awesome Power that lay at the root of all history and all new birth…
-   Rabbi Arthur Waskow (Seasons of Our Joy)

Text 2:

"… And Moses said to God: who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt? And God said: certainly I will be with you, and your strength shall be that I have sent you…" – Exodus 3:11-12
- Rabbi Arthur Waskow (Seasons of Our Joy)

Positive Psychology Didactic, Empowerment/Citizenship
(15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

Passover focuses on moving out of narrow spaces—freedom and redemption. The holiday represents a striving for better and a belief that people can change and improve (Waskow, 1982).

> The challenge is to make the Exodus experience vivid enough in an ongoing way to counter but not blot out the unredeemed experiences of life. The goal is not to flee from reality but to be motivated to perfect it. To cope with contradiction and not to yield easily, the memory must be a 'real' experience, something felt in one's bones, tasted in one's mouth. This is why much of Jewish religion consists of reliving the Exodus. 'Remember…all the days of your life,' says the Torah. (Greenberg, 1988, pp. 37-38)

Passover provides a yearly time to celebrate personal and communal successes, and find freedom from darkness and distress, oppression and struggle. This holiday, more than any other Jewish holiday, demands that Jews consider both personal and community empowerment vigorously. Jews have a responsibility to ensure that other peoples throughout the world are not suffering the same oppression that was brought upon them during the times of Egyptian slavery. *Matzah*, the flat bread that is eaten during *Passover*, reminds Jews that when they Jews left Egypt they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise. It essence, people are not always ready for the challenges that they face. Nevertheless, empowerment is possible and moving forward is often a necessity.

Empowerment is a powerful psychological and spiritual concept that is easily correlated with the positive psychology character strength of citizenship. Citizenship is one of the character strengths that fits under the broader virtue of justice, which emphasizes the optimal interaction between an individual and a group or community. Citizenship is identifying with an obligation to a common good, both personally and among the groups to which one is a member—family, friends, co-workers, those from a common ethnic background, or even the entire human race. "Those with the character strength of citizenship feel an internal drive for the common good, not one that is externally imposed" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 357). A sense of social responsibility, loyalty, and teamwork is prototypical of those with this character strength. The ability to cooperate and collaborate with others for a common purpose is representative of those who practice citizenship. It is a relational strength that allows one to thrive in the context of interpersonal and group relationships. Individuals with this strength often sacrifice immediate self-gratification for the longer-term interests of a group.

Individuals who possess the strength of citizenship would endorse statements such as the following: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 371)

- I have a responsibility to improve the world in which I live
- Everybody should give some of their time for the good of their town or country
- It is important to me personally that I work to correct social and economic inequalities
- It is important to me personally that I help others who are in difficulty
- It is important to me personally to be involved in programs to clean up the environment

Psychologically, the strength of citizenship reflects empathy for others as well as a high level of moral reasoning. Valuing one's bonds to others and cultivating those relationships is at the core of citizenship and reflects a self-transcendent as opposed to a self-enhancing orientation (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). According to Maslow (1970), commitment to community is a characteristic of self-actualizing people. Citizenship is closely related to empowerment, and psychologically, empowerment can be viewed on both an individual and community level (Zimmerman, 2000). According to Zimmerman, individual empowerment is a process by which individuals envision a pathway from their goals to achievement of these goals. And community or group empowerment fits within one of the original pillars of positive psychology, namely the building of positive institutions and positive societies (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). "At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic" (p. 5). On a community-level, empowerment is about collective actions for change, interdependence, and interconnectedness. It is about unearthing positive change and social justice for disenfranchised, isolated, and oppressed communities around the world. It involves harnessing the strengths and resources of organizations and communities and it is a process that enables people lacking an equal share of resources to gain greater access to and control over those resources (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989).

Research shows that those who are socially responsible have higher levels of social trust and a more positive view of human nature (Staub, 1978). Education correlates with civic participation and those involved in political or quasi-political activities are more tolerant (Avery, 1992).

How to Cultivate Citizenship:
1. Emphasize the needs of others and social responsibility in your family. These are values that require practice and are often rooted in the family
2. Teach your children empathy – learning how their actions impact others can lead to a sense of citizenship
3. In order to integrate the strength of citizenship into your identity, practice compassion, empathy, and social responsibility – once you identify with these ideas, they will become a more natural part of your identity
4. Decide what issues you are motivated to champion – attend a rally, give of your time, volunteer your services, etc.

5. Consider future generations as you fulfill your sense of generativity, or responsibility to others through family, work, or community service.
6. Psychological empowerment, personal and communal, is a dynamic process that changes over time; therefore, now is a perfect time to begin taking a more proactive approach to life
7. Read up on the existing sociopolitical environment in order to set goals and create steps for achieving them

SAMPLE HANDOUT: EMPOWERMENT / CITIZENSHIP

EMPOWERMENT / CITIZENSHIP

TIPS FOR EMPOWERMENT

- **Pick a cause you are passionate about – take steps to get involved**

- **Imagine yourself in the shoes of another, both in your community and around the world – what can you do to effect change?**

- **Pay it forward…when others are giving toward you, make sure you pass along the goodwill and give to others**

- **Reflect on what obstacles block you from becoming more empowered in your own personal life – seek help from a therapist or friend if this is challenging**

- **There will always be people who suffer more than you and less than you – recognize your responsibility in being proactive to alleviate the oppression and suffering of others**

- **Teach your children to care for others and seek justice by example**

- **Empowerment can develop at any time – NOW IS THE TIME**

- **You can get involved in large or small ways. Taking steps is the key**

- **Practice compassion and empathy in dealings with others**

- **REMEMBER: Helping to alleviate the oppression of others will also move you into greater lightness in your life**

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Empowerment / Citizenship (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

JUMPING IN
Newly freed from slavery, the Israelites are camped at the shores of the Sea when suddenly the rumbling of Pharaoh's approaching chariots fill the air.
Moses prays for deliverance.

"Tell the Israelites to go forward," God directs him. "Lift up your rod and hold out your arm over the sea and split it…"

The rod is lifted and nothing happens. He tries again, carefully rehearsing God's words to himself. And again, nothing. Panic wells up within him, he tries, again and again. The sea does not move. As the beads of perspiration break out on his forehead, the people renew their screams of terror, but Moses is powerless.

And then, suddenly, out of the crowd, comes one man, identified by the Midrash as Nachshon ben Aminadav, a prince of the tribe of Judah. To the astonishment of the people gathered on the shores of the Sea, Nachshon jumps into the water. "Are you crazy? What are you doing?" his family shouts.

But Nachshon knows exactly what he is doing. He understands, as did no one else, not even Moses, why the sea would not split. He understands that until this moment, all of redemption had been enacted by God: God had sent Moses to Pharaoh, God had sent the plagues that shattered the arrogance of Pharaoh, God had brought His people to the shores of the Sea…everything accomplished by God.

But now God was waiting…waiting to see if any one, just one, of the Israelites was wiling to take a risk for the sake of the promised freedom.

Realizing this, Nachshon jumps in. He wades out until the waters reach his waist. His family's screams fade, and his people stand in silence, watching in wonder. He wades out and the water reaches higher. The water covers his nostrils. And when it reaches the top of his head and his life is in peril, only then does the sea open. And then he is followed by the rest of the Israelites, who cross in safety.

This story isn't found in the Torah. It was inserted by the Rabbis. As much as they loved the Torah's exodus story, they sensed something was missing. The Rabbis believed that God can only create the conditions for the redemption of the world. But if redemption is truly to come, someone must jump into the water. Someone visionary and brave must be willing to put life on the line and jump into the waters of history to bring the rest of us out of slavery. In every generation, there are Nachshons willing to jump into the water.

                              Midrash, adapted by Rabbi Ed Feinstein

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme
- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Discussion: What life events contribute to your overall sense of Empowerment/Citizenship

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about Empowerment/Citizenship
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Empowerment/Citizenship

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."
>   **Anne Frank**

"If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other."
>   **Carl Shurz**

"Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them -- and then, the opportunity to choose."
>   **C. Wright Mills**

"You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom. You can only be free if I am free."
>   **Clarence Darrow**

"We seek peace knowing that peace is the climate of freedom."
>   **Dwight D. Eisenhower**

"Freedom is like taking a bath – you have to keep doing it every day."
>   **Florynce Kennedy**

"Freedom is what you do with what's been done to you."
>   **Jean-Paul Sartre**

"And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others."
>   **Marianne Williamson**

"Ultimately we know deeply that the other side of every fear is freedom."
>   **Marilyn Ferguson**

"Everything can be taken from a man but ... the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."
>   **Victor Frankl**

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CHAPTER 9

Shavuot / Spirituality

Opening Ritual – Blessing (1 minute, facilitated by rabbi)

<u>Shehecheyanu</u>
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Check-in (20 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Reflections on last week's theme or experience
- Personal connection with *Shavuot*
  - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
  - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Shavuot* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Shavuot* with focus on <u>Spirituality</u>
- Information about *Shavuot* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Spirituality
(10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

<u>Text 1</u>:
…for the rabbis, the process of their own wrestling with Torah was the way for them to meet with God. They were not priests…their sense of the Presence came only from engaging with God's Word. So powerful was their sense of the Torah as the contact point with God that they saw Sinai as the moment of a marriage between God and Israel, in which the Torah was the *ketubah*, the contract of the covenant.
- Arthur Waskow (Seasons of Our Joy)

Text 2:
 "…And Moses said to God: See, you tell me to bring this people out…now therefore, I pray, if I have found favor in Your sight, show me Your ways, that I may know You, so I may know that this nation is Your people…"
    – Exodus 33:13

Positive Psychology Didactic, Spirituality
(15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

Shavuot is a holiday in which the Jewish people rise to the ultimate moment of revelation, standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai receiving all the wisdom of the Torah. The full realization of humanness is embedded in revelation, and to experience wholeness, Jews strive to consider the meaning and purpose of their lives and its connection to a higher purpose. "Spirituality is a universal human strength, accessible to all humans, that allows individuals to consider the ultimate meaning of life and in turn be shaped by these beliefs" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 533). Spirituality, and specifically, meaning-making, encompasses the essence of the holiday of *Shavuot*.

Spirituality is often distinguished from religiousness by referring to the psychological experience and significance of ultimate beliefs (Allport & Ross, 1967). However, for many people, spirituality and religion coexist harmoniously. Both encompass a belief in the transcendent dimension of life. Meaning-making is aspect of spirituality, an active process through which individuals view the events in their lives in order to create meaning. "Researchers examining the mental and physical health effects of meaning-making consistently report that meaning-making is associated with positive health outcomes" (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002, p. 614). Seligman (2003) described the meaningful life as, "the use of your strengths and virtues in the service of something much larger than you are" (p. 127). Meaning contributes to an overall sense of well-being and happiness (Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992).

Individuals who possess the character strength of spirituality might endorse the following statements: (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 600)
- I believe there is a sacred force in all living things and that this force connects us to each other
- I believe that every life has a purpose
- I feel God's presence
- I look to God/a Higher Power for support, guidance, and strength
- My belief in God/a Higher Power helps me to understand my purpose in life
- My belief in God/a Higher Power helps me to understand the meaning of the things that I experience

Research shows that those who endorse the character strength of spirituality tend to promote more prosocial values, and engage in fewer antisocial and risky behaviors. These individuals also tend to be more empathic, and less antagonistic toward others (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Spirituality is also linked to forgiveness (Rye et al., 2000), kindness (Ellison, 1992), and compassion (Wuthnow, 1991). Spirituality is also

correlated positively with happiness, life purpose, and life satisfaction (Peterson & Seligman).

Meaning in life has also shown to be a mediator between religiousness and psychological health (Pargament, 2002). This indicates that one of the reasons that religion is related to psychological well-being is that religion allows for the cultivation of meaning, just as the pursuit of positive mental health often includes the promotion of meaning.

> One function of religion is to provide individuals with the means through which they can experience purpose in their lives, and one of the core benefits of religious experience might be the extent to which religion gives people a sense of meaning and coherence about ultimate truths. (Steger & Frazier, 2005)

Whether spirituality and religiousness are biologically heritable or transmitted through socialization or both, is up for debate.

How to Cultivate Spirituality:
1. Spirituality can be cultivated around stages in life where existential questions about loss, finitude, meaning, and purpose tend to surface
2. Form a closer relationship with someone who you consider spiritually connected. The emotional attachment can lead to a powerful emotional connection to the spiritual practices of that person
3. View the world as a manifestation of divinity. Use this as an opportunity to open yourself to grateful admiration of what you see
4. Join a club, group, or program that will help you to appreciate art, beauty, nature, music, or a range of experiences that foster spirituality.

SAMPLE HANDOUT: SPIRITUALITY

SPIRITUALITY

<u>TIPS</u>

- **Everyday, think about the purpose of your life**

- **Pray or meditate every day**

- **Join a club, group, or class that will help you appreciate art, beauty, nature, music, or other experiences that foster spirituality**

- **Engage in dialogue with someone you consider spiritually connected. Learn about their spiritual practices and connection with the Divine**

- **Notice how your sense of awe and gratitude increases if you open view the world as a manifestation of divinity**

- **Utilize existential events and crises as opportunities for cultivating spirituality through the search for meaning**

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Spirituality (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

LIFT YOUR EYES
When the people of Israel crossed through the Red Sea, they witnessed the Divine in the great miracle. Some say it was the greatest miracle that ever happened. On that day they saw a sight more awesome than all the visions of the prophets combined. The sea split and the waters stood like great walls, while Israel escaped to freedom on the distant shore. Awesome. But not for everyone.

Two people, Reuven and Shimon, hurried along among the crowd crossing through the sea. They never once looked up. They noticed only that the ground under their feet was still a little muddy – like a beach at low tide.

"Yucch!" said Reuven, "there's mud all over this place!"

"Bleech!" said Shimon, "I have muck all over my feet!"

"This is terrible," answered Reuven. "When we were slaves in Egypt, we had to make our bricks out of mud, just like this!"

"Yeah," said Shimon. There's no difference between being a slave in Egypt and being free here."

And so it went, Reuven and Shimon whining and complaining all the way to freedom. For them there was no miracle, no experience of the Divine. Only mud. Their eyes were closed. They might as well have been asleep.
<div align="right">Adapted from Midrash Raba (Shemot 24,1)</div>

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme
- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about spirituality
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Spirituality

"We are not merely human beings having a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience."
    Source Unknown

"Wherever we may come alive, that is the area in which we are spiritual."
    David Steindl-Rast

"The personal life deeply lived always expands into truths beyond itself."
    Anais Nin

"Sometimes people get the mistaken notion that spirituality is a separate department of life, the penthouse of existence. But rightly understood, it is a vital awareness that pervades all realms of our being."
    David Steindl-Rast

"Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love."
    Fyodor Dostoyevsky

"Spirituality is a domain of awareness."
    Deepak Chopra

"Life is not the number of breaths one takes, but the number of breaths one does not take upon seeing mountains, forests, and wonder."
    Source Unknown

"Knowledge of every aspect of human life, physical and spiritual, is plentiful today."
    Source Unknown

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CHAPTER 10

Tisha B'av / Wisdom (Perspective)

Opening Ritual – Blessing (1 minute, facilitated by rabbi)

<u>Shehecheyanu</u>
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh
Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Check-in (20 minutes, facilitated by rabbi and psychologist)
- Reflections on last week's theme or experience
- Personal connection with *Tisha B'av*
  - How you observe it now or observed it growing up
  - Holiday's personal meaning or relevance

Description of *Tisha B'av* (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)
- Historical/Spiritual account of *Tisha B'av* with focus on <u>Growth after loss/ perspective (wisdom)</u>
- Information about *Tisha B'av* is left to the discretion of each rabbi

Jewish Text supporting positive psychology theme of Growth after loss/ perspective (wisdom) (10 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

<u>Text 1</u>:
"We know that the Jewish people will harvest something new in exile, will harvest its shattered, scattered selves into a reunited holiness. But to do this we need to experience fully the moment of burn-out, the moment of fire and thirst. And this the tradition does with Tisha B'Av – the ninth of the month of Av, the day that mourns for the destruction of the Temple (and the day set aside for the birth of the Messiah, the beginning of redemption)."
- Rabbi Arthur Waskow (Seasons of Our Joy)

Text 2:
Cause us to return, O God, and we shall return. Renew our days as You did in days of old.
        -Text from Hashiveinu Liturgy

Text 3:
"God said: the fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth, shall become for the House of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love truth and peace…"
   -   Zechariah 8:19

Positive Psychology Didactic, Growth after loss/ perspective (wisdom)
(15 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)

Tisha B'av is a holiday in which Jews mourn the loss of the Temple, destruction brought upon Jews throughout history, and in some modern contexts, also mourn personal losses and exile. While the focus is on mourning and loss, the theme of growth and rebuilding is inherent in the texts. Judaism emphasizes loss and suffering as a vehicle for wholeness.

Positive psychologists are very interested in loss, and specifically in the role that loss, pain, and suffering play in mental "wholeness." "The experience of loss can become a profound means for showcasing human strengths and potential" (Miller & Harvey, 2001, p. 313). And while it may seem paradoxical to associate loss with positive psychology, coping with loss, adapting, and creating meaning are profound strengths of humans displayed during dark times (Miller & Harvey).

Loss can take many forms:
- Loss of a loved one
- Divorce
- Loss of employment
- Victimization
- Loss of physical or psychological functioning due to illness
- Loss of relationship
- Miscarriage
- Other forms

Some positive psychologists are particularly interested in cases in which profound growth follows a traumatic loss or other adverse situation facing an individual, termed posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The phenomenon of posttraumatic growth is best defined as containing these elements: (a) occurring most distinctively in conditions of severe crisis, (b) often accompanied by transformative life changes, (c) growth is experienced as an outcome rather than a coping mechanism; and (d) it requires a shattering of basic assumptions about an individual's life. Although not carefree or happy, this growth is usually categorized by living life more deeply in terms of personal, interpersonal, and spiritual awareness (Tedeschi & Calhoun).

Davis et al. (1998) suggested two processes that facilitate growth following a personal loss: making sense of loss (coming to an understanding of how the loss fits into one's worldview) and eventually, finding something positive in the loss experience (an attempt to understand the value or worth of the loss to one's life). "Perceiving some benefit to the loss, such as reporting a change in one's live perspective, can help to mitigate feelings of helplessness and grief and preserve the sense that one's own life has purpose, value, and worth" (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 2002, p. 600).

While posttraumatic growth is an area of interest for positive psychologists, it is not one of the character strengths outlined by Peterson and Seligman (2004) in their Classification of Values and Strengths. However, there is a character strength that follows from the kind of transformative growth that can follow significant loss. It likely plays a role in enabling transformative growth after loss, and also occurs as the result of successfully living and surviving life's difficulties—and this is the character strength of wisdom (more narrowly defined as perspective). "Perspective (wisdom) refers to the ability to take stock of life in large terms, in ways that make sense to oneself and others" (p. 106). It is the product of both knowledge and experience. Perspective (wisdom) allows individuals to address and then make sense of the difficult questions and experiences of life. How individuals respond to psychological and physical difficulties is important for determining who will develop wisdom. Wisdom is often regarded as a personality characteristic or part of personality structure. Further, it may be associated with other personality traits such as maturity, open-mindedness, even-temperedness, sociability, and social intelligence (Staudinger et al., 1997).

Individuals who possess the strength of perspective (wisdom) would strongly endorse statements such as the following (assuming modesty did not intrude): (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 182)
- I have self-knowledge
- I realize larger patterns of meaning or relationship
- I have a wider perspective
- I understand the limits of what I can know and do

Psychological wisdom and perspective may be acquired through successful resolution of crises and hardship (Ardelt, 1998).

> Wisdom seems to emerge as a dialectic that, on one pole, is bounded by the transcendence of limitations and, on the other, by their acceptance. Wisdom is tested by circumstances in which we have to decide what is changeable and what is not. (Birren & Fisher, 1990, p. 324)

Research into the benefits of the character strength of perspective (wisdom) show that loss can lead to a re-evaluation of assumptions about self and the world, a greater appreciation for life, or a shift in life goals and priorities, all of which represent human strength and may bring comfort to those experiencing loss (Miller & Harvey, 2001). In regards to posttraumatic growth, there are several paradoxes, including the following: (a) loss produces something of value, such as any of the positive changes listed above; (b)

individuals feel vulnerable, yet strengthened, and believe in their capacity to survive and prevail; (c) trauma survivors become aware of the worst and best in others; a greater sense of compassion for others who experience life difficulties is accessed; (d) valuing the smaller things in life becomes more pervasive; individuals often report that their philosophies of life are more fully developed, satisfying, and meaningful to them (Tadeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

How to Cultivate Growth after Loss:
1. Share your experiences of loss with others; rabbis, therapists, friends, mentors. Research shows that perspective and wisdom is often gained through a collective (interpersonal) approach to the cultivation of wisdom; gained through the sharing and processing of life's experiences with others
2. Expose yourself to classic works of literature, philosophy, and religion that may expose you to the "wisdom of the ages"
3. Join a support group to explore issues of loss and reflect on the process of finding meaning in your difficult experiences
4. Practice accepting the limits of what you can know and do

SAMPLE HANDOUT: LOSS / PERSPECTIVE (WISDOM)

LOSS/ PERSPECTIVE (WISDOM)

TIPS

- **Integrating loss and a healing perspective is an individual process – trust your pace! You will make sense of your loss in your own time**

- **Join a support group and speak with trusted family and friends about your loss**

- **Remember that vulnerability can lead to a sense of strengthening – grant yourself compassion for surviving loss**

- **Notice how your values may shift following a loss and honor these changes**

- **Attend synagogue or other groups where you may get help in achieving a healing perspective – ask your rabbi the difficult questions**

- **Remember times that you prevailed and survived other difficult losses**

- **Nurture yourself during a difficult time**

- **Think of the wisest person you know, and try to live one day as if you were that person**

- **Offer advice only if asked, but then do so as thoughtfully as you can**

BREAK (10 minutes)

Jewish Story about Perspective / Growth after Loss (5 minutes, facilitated by rabbi)

THE GARDEN
Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden of Eden. And they lived together east of Eden, tilling the earth, raising children, struggling to stay alive. After the years of struggle, when their children were grown, they decided to see the world. They journeyed from one corner of the world to the other. Wandering from place to place, in the course of their journeys, they discovered the entrance to the Garden of Eden, now guarded by an angel with a flaming sword. Frightened, they began to flee when suddenly God spoke to them:

"Adam and Eve, you have lived in exile these many many years. The punishment is complete. You may return now to the Garden."

As the words were spoken, the angel with his flaming sword disappeared and the gat to the Garden opened. "Come in, Adam. Come in , Eve." "Wait," Adam replied. "You know, it has been so many years. Remind me, what is it like in the Garden?"

"The Garden is paradise!" God responded. "In the Garden there is no work. Neither of you need ever struggle or toil again. There is no pain, no suffering. No death. Life goes on forever, day after day. Come, return to the Garden!"

Adam and Eve listened to God's words – no work, no struggle, no pain, no death. An endless life of perpetual ease. And then Adam turned and looked at Eve. He looked at the woman with whom he had struggled to make a life, to take bread from the earth, to raise children, to build a home. He thought of the tragedies they had overcome and the joys they cherished.

And Adam shook his head, "no, thank you, that's not for me…Come on Eve, let's go." Adam and Eve turned their backs on Paradise, and hand in hand, they walked home.

<div align="right">Rabbi Ed Feinstein</div>

Experiential Process (facilitated by psychologist and rabbi, 45 minutes)
- Significant experiences in the lives of the participants where they were helped by the awareness, integration of positive psychology theme
- Areas in daily lives of participants where they feel the positive psychology theme could be strengthened. Group members will provide support and ideas for the cultivation of the theme.

Closing (10 minutes, facilitated by psychologist)
- Closing quotes about growth after loss/ perspective (wisdom)
- Reflections

Suggested Quotes on Growth after Loss/ Perspective (Wisdom)

"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."
      Albert Einstein

 "In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."
      Albert Einstein

"Joy, sorrow, tears, lamentation, laughter -- to all these music gives voice, but in such a way that we are transported from the world of unrest to a world of peace, and see reality in a new way, as if we were sitting by a mountain lake and contemplating hills and woods and clouds in the tranquil and fathomless water."
      Albert Schweitzer

 "When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us."
      Alexander Graham Bell

"Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world."
      Arthur Schopenhauer

"There are as many nights as days, and the one is just as long as the other in the year's course. Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word 'happy' would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness."
      Carl Jung

"For everything there is a season,
And a time for every matter under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
A time to keep, and a time to throw away;
A time to tear, and a time to sew;
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate,
A time for war, and a time for peace."
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

"One's first step in wisdom is to question everything - and one's last is to come to terms with everything."
Georg C. Lichtenberg

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Psychological Terms

Abraham Maslow: American psychologist from the humanistic psychology field often regarded as the father of humanistic psychology. Often noted for his emphasis on self-actualization and the development of a theory about human motivation called Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Actualizing Tendency: The constructive, directional, developmental force that is believed to reside within every human being – the inherent tendency of individuals to make the most of their potential.

Carl Rogers: American psychologist, theorist, and researcher from the humanistic psychology field often noted for development of person-centered psychotherapy.

Didactics: The art or science of teaching.

Organismic Valuing Process: The ongoing valuing and choices that humans make throughout their lives, and the extent to which those values and choices accord with their intrinsic, organismic nature. Individuals' innate ability to know what is important to them and what is essential for a fulfilling life. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 356).

Person-Centered Approach: Developed by psychologist, Carl Rogers, it is a phenomenological approach that emphasizes the unique experience of the individual in working toward change. Central concepts include: unconditional positive regard, congruence, and empathy.

Positive Psychology: The scientific study of what goes right in life.

Positive Psychotherapy (PPT): Evolving from the broader field of positive psychology, which is the scientific study of positive emotions, positive individual traits, and the institutions that facilitate their development, PPT is positive psychology's therapeutic effort to broaden the scope of psychotherapy from the alleviation of suffering to

systematically enhancing happiness by building positive emotions, building character strengths, and finding meaning (Rashid & Anjum, 2008, p. 262).

Psychological Orientation: An approach or belief about human nature based on theoretical principles.

Judaic Terms

Ba'al Shem Tov: The founder of Hassidic Judaism. Since his death, he has become a legendary character in volumes of stories as a spiritual guide.

Hanukkah: The post-biblical winter holiday is often called the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah, meaning "dedication" in Hebrew, refers to the joyous eight-day celebration during which Jews commemorate the victory of the Macabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and "rededication" of the Temple in Jerusalem. The modern home celebration of Chanukah centers around the lighting of the Hanukkiah, a special menorah for Hanukkah; unique foods, latkes and jelly doughnuts; and special songs and games.

Hassidic: Ultra-orthodox branch of Judaism that originally emphasized a spiritual connection to the Divine.

Havurah: A small group of Jews that forms to study, facilitate Shabbat or Jewish holidays, share communal experiences such as lifecycle events, and learn together. Plural is *Havurot.*

Midrash Raba: The major collection of imaginative stories compiled by the rabbis in the 1st through 6th centuries.

Mussar: A collection of rabbinic literature based on an ethical, educational, and cultural movement in the 19th century. Included practices for moral and spiritual development and often included counseling practices as well. The movement emphasized cultivation of strengths.

Passover: Pesach, known as Passover in English, is a major Jewish spring festival, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt over 3,000 years ago. The ritual observance of this holiday centers around a special home service called the seder (meaning "order") and a festive meal; the prohibition of chametz (leaven); and the eating of matzah (an unleavened bread). On the eve of the fifteenth day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar, we read from a book called the *hagaddah*, meaning "telling," which contains the order of prayers, rituals, readings and songs for the Pesach seder. The Pesach seder is the only ritual meal in the Jewish calendar year for which such an order is prescribed, hence its name.

The seder has a number of scriptural bases. Exodus 12:3-11 describes the meal of lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs which the Israelites ate just prior to the Exodus. In addition, three separate passages in Exodus (12:26-7, 13:8, 13:14) and one in Deuteronomy (6:20-21) enunciate the duty of the parents to tell the story of the Exodus to their children. The seder plate contains various symbolic foods referred to in the seder itself.

Purim: Purim is celebrated by the reading of the Scroll of Esther, known in Hebrew as the *Megillat Esther*, which relates the basic story of Purim. Under the rule of King Ahashuerus, Haman, the King's prime minister, plots to exterminate all of the Jews of Persia. His plan is foiled by Queen Esther and her uncle Mordechai, who ultimately save the Jews of the land from destruction. The reading of the megillah is typically a rowdy affair, which is punctuated by booing and noisemaking when Haman's name is read aloud.

Purim is an unusual holiday in many respects. First, Esther is the only Book of the Bible in which God is not mentioned. Second, Purim, like Chanukah, is viewed by tradition as a minor festival. The elevation of Purim to a major holiday was a result of the Jewish historical experience. Over the centuries, Haman became the embodiment of every anti-Semite in every land where Jews were oppressed.

*Rosh Hashanah***:** Rosh Hashanah (literally, "Head of the Year") refers to the celebration of the Jewish New Year. The holiday is observed on the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, which usually falls in September or October, and marks the beginning of a ten-day period of prayer, self-examination and repentance, which culminate on the fast day of Yom Kippur. These ten days are referred to as *Yamim Noraim*, the Days of Awe, or the High Holy Days.

While there are elements of joy and celebration, Rosh Hashanah is a deeply religious occasion. The customs and symbols of Rosh Hashanah reflect the holiday's dual emphasis, happiness and humility. Special customs observed on Rosh Hashanah include; the sounding of the shofar, using round challah, eating apples and honey (and other sweet foods) for a sweet new year.

There is also a customary service observed *before* Rosh Hashanah. *S'lichot*, meaning forgiveness, refers to the penitential prayers recited by Jews prior to the onset of the High Holiday season. It is a solemn and fitting preparation for ten days of reflection and self-examination.

Shavuot: Shavuot is a Hebrew word meaning "weeks" and refers to the Jewish festival marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Shavuot, like so many other Jewish holidays began as an ancient agricultural festival, marking the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. Shavuot was distinguished in ancient times by bringing crop offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Shavuot, also known as the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, dates from biblical times, and helps to explain the holiday's name, "Weeks." The Torah tells us it took precisely forty-nine days for our ancestors to travel from Egypt to the foot of Mount Sinai (the same number of days as the Counting of the Omer) where they were to receive the Torah. Thus, Leviticus 23:21 commands: "And you shall proclaim that day (the fiftieth day) to be a holy convocation?" The name Shavuot, "Weeks," then symbolizes the completion of a seven-week journey.

Sukkot: "Booths" or "huts" in Hebrew, Sukkot is one of the three harvest festivals. It is the autumn festival commemorating the protection afforded the Israelites throughout their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness before entering Israel. It is described in the Torah as the feast if ingathering at the end of the agricultural year. Ritually, during this holiday, Jews construct huts, Sukkahs, similar to those in which the Jews lived in the desert and then "dwell" in them for a week.

Tisha B'av: Tisha B'Av, which means the "Ninth of Av", refers to a traditional day of mourning the destruction of both ancient Temples in Jerusalem. More recently, in Reform Judaism Tisha B'Av has been transformed into a day to remember *many* Jewish tragedies that have occurred throughout history.

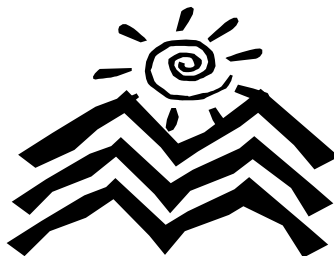*Torah:* Judaism's most sacred book, comprising the first 5 books of the Hebrew Bible.

Yesh Gvul: A Hebrew phrase often translated as, "there is a limit" or "a boundary exists."

Yom Kippur: Yom Kippur is the "Day of Atonement" and refers to the annual Jewish observance of fasting, prayer and repentance. This is considered to be the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. In three separate passages in the Torah, the Jewish people are told, "the tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: You shall practice self-denial"(Leviticus 23:27). Fasting is seen as fulfilling this biblical commandment. The Yom Kippur fast also enables us to put aside our physical desires and to concentrate on our spiritual needs through prayer, repentance and self-improvement. It is customary in the days before Yom Kippur for Jews to seek out friends and family whom they have wronged and personally ask for their forgiveness.

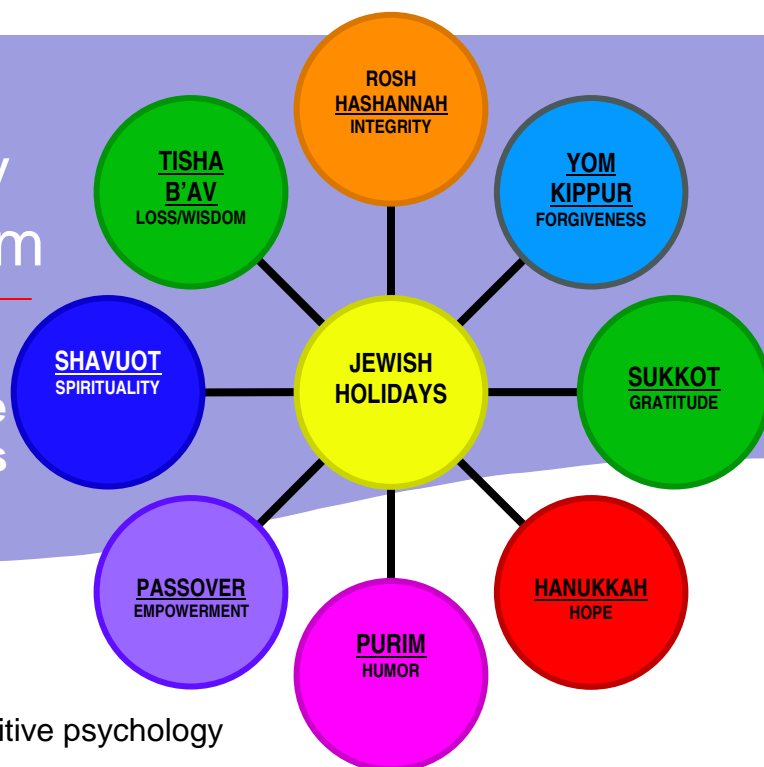***Jewish Holiday definitions taken directly from the Union of Reform Judaism website:* www.urj.org/holidays

APPENDIX A

Sample Flyer for Synagogue Bulletin

Positive Psychology and Judaism

A Personal Journey into the Jewish Holidays

ROSH HASHANNAH
INTEGRITY

TISHA B'AV
LOSS/WISDOM

YOM KIPPUR
FORGIVENESS

SHAVUOT
SPIRITUALITY

JEWISH HOLIDAYS

SUKKOT
GRATITUDE

PASSOVER
EMPOWERMENT

PURIM
HUMOR

HANUKKAH
HOPE

The aim of this 8-week group is to introduce positive psychology through experience. Jewish holidays will serve as the context for exploring positive psychology character strengths that enable individuals to thrive. Each week will focus on a positive psychology character strength related to a Jewish holiday. Come and deepen your Judaism while experiencing the personal benefits of positive psychology.

8-week positive psychology group Monday evenings, (date and time of first group)

Co-facilitated by Rabbi _____ and _____, Psy.D.

If you are interested in participating in this group, please contact Rabbi _____ for additional information and a brief screening process. This group is open to adult members of the congregation and will be limited to 8-10 participants.
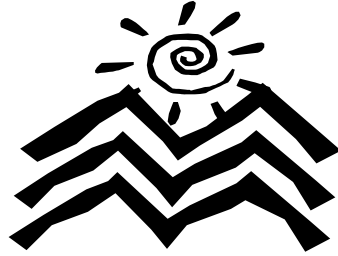
Contact information: (888) 888-8888

Name of Synagogue

Address
City, State, Zip
(888) 888-8888
www.website.com

APPENDIX B

Modifications in Group Facilitation

Modifications to Role of Rabbi

The reality of busy synagogue life is such that rabbis are often pulled in many directions with their time over-utilized. This manual was created with both a rabbi and psychologist in mind to serve as co-facilitators. However, in the event that a rabbi is not available for an 8-week group, or only partially available, modifications are suggested below.

Partial participation of rabbi

If the facilitating rabbi is available to participate in the group, but not the entire 2-hour group, the author suggests the rabbi co-facilitate portions of the 1st hour, in which the rabbi gives an overview of the Jewish holiday and presents a text in support of a positive psychology theme. In this case, the author recommends the rabbi refrain from participating in the experiential group process, which encompasses the 2nd hour of the group. Consistency and safety will positively impact the group process and could be hindered if the rabbi is not regularly available for these process groups.

No participation of rabbi

If small synagogues that do not employ a full-time rabbi are interested in offering this group experience, or if a rabbi is not available to facilitate, the author believes that the group can still be effective and facilitated by a psychologist alone. The manual provides sample Jewish texts, Jewish stories, and Jewish resources that can be utilized for the portions of groups that require Jewish knowledge. While this model melds both Judaism and positive psychology, the primary focus is on the development of positive psychology character strengths. While it is not ideal to run the groups without a rabbi, congregations that are lay-led or support themselves without a rabbi may still benefit from this program.

APPENDIX C

Sample Group Evaluation Forms (4 weeks / 8 weeks)

GROUP EVALUATION FORM (4 weeks)
Positive Psychology and the Jewish Holiday Calendar

What motivated you to participate in this group? Please be specific and include what you were hoping to learn/experience

Were you familiar with positive psychology before this group? If no, what were your expectations about positive psychology coming into the group? **If yes**, is the experience consistent with your prior knowledge?

Did the group flyer and the initial conversations with the facilitator(s) accurately reflect the experience that you are having in the group?

Are your expectations being met? If yes, how, and if no, what could be altered to better meet your needs?

Were you aware of your unique character strengths prior to participating in the group?

Have you become more aware of your character strengths as a result of participating in this group?

Are you finding yourself feeling connected with other group members in a shared experiential process? If yes, how has it been meaningful, and if no, what might contribute to a great sense of connection?

What has been the strongest aspect of this group experience that you would like more of in the remaining weeks?

Have you utilized your strengths more often or more meaningfully in your life as a result of participating in this group?

What are some of the strengths of the facilitating rabbi?

What are some of the strengths of the facilitating psychologist?

GROUP EVALUATION FORM (8 weeks)
Positive Psychology and the Jewish Holiday Calendar

Did you become more aware of your unique character strengths as a result of participating in this group?

Have you found new ways for integrating these strengths or found encouragement for increasing the use of these strengths in your daily life?

Would you be interested in participating in this group again if different and new positive psychology strengths were paired the Jewish holidays? If yes, why?

Would you be interested in attending follow-up group sessions during the year in close proximity to the Jewish holidays that were explored in this process, in order to reinforce the positive psychology themes and ultimately forge a deeper connection with each Jewish holiday? If so, please describe your interest.

What were the most positive and impactful elements of this group process for you?

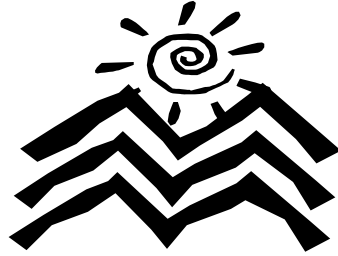# APPENDIX D

Jewish Blessings
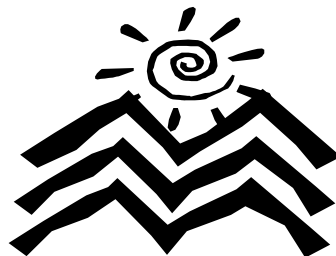
JEWISH BLESSINGS

Jews deliberately and consistently recite blessings. Blessings are recited to thank God and acknowledge God's power. Blessings are uttered before performing mitzvot (commandments), to elevate our actions and make them holy. Blessings elevate individuals through gratitude. Blessings bring us into awareness of the present moment, and of God's presence in our lives. They bring us together as a community and serve as a ritual reminder of our unfolding Jewish narrative, both personal and communal, which we continue to write daily.

The *Shehecheyanu* is a well-known blessing that is recited anytime we engage in something for the first time. The words are as follows: *Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh* – Praised are You, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

This *Shehecheyanu* brings us fully into the present moment, and allows us to experience our own potential for joy. This one blessing reminds us to cherish all our blessings. Not only is the *Shehecheyanu* recited to express appreciation for new or special experiences in our lives, it is traditionally recited at the beginning of Jewish holidays as well.

APPENDIX E

Positive Introductions

POSITIVE INTRODUCTIONS
(Parks and Seligman, 2007)

Positive Introductions help to set in motion a positive orientation to the group process. Psychologists may consider using the language suggested below, or feel flexible to amend it, add to it, or describe it in their own words

"We will begin by getting to know each other by way of what we call 'positive introductions.' Each person here will tell a story – a thoughtful narrative with a beginning, middle and end – that illustrates what is best about themselves. Because I know this may be an unfamiliar or difficult task, I will start by telling mine as an example and then open it up to you to share your own story. Keep in mind, that these stories are brief."

The exercise asks clients to describe themselves at their best. If participants have difficulty trying to describe themselves at their best, it can be helpful to encourage them to base their stories on concrete events from the previous week or month. If time allows, the psychologist may consider asking participants to summarize what is best about each storyteller, for example, what sort of character signature strengths it illustrates.

APPENDIX F

Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues
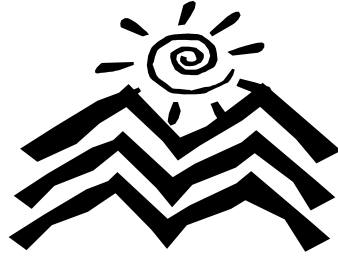
CLASSIFICATION OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS AND VIRTUES
Taken from the website of the VIA Institute of Character, www.viacharacter.org

Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge	Strengths of Courage	Strengths of Humanity	Strengths of Justice	Strengths of Temperance	Strengths of Transcendence
Creativity	Bravery	Love	Citizenship	Forgiveness and Mercy	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence
Curiosity	Persistence	Kindness	Fairness	Humility and Modesty	Gratitude
Open-Mindedness	Integrity	Social Intelligence	Leadership	Prudence	Hope
Love of Learning	Vitality			Self-Regulation	Humor
Perspective					Spirituality

Wisdom and Knowledge – Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

1. **Creativity** [originality, ingenuity]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it
2. **Curiosity** [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering
3. **Judgment & Open-Mindedness** [critical thinking]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly
4. **Love of Learning:** Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows
5. **Perspective** [wisdom]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people

Courage – Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

6. **Bravery** [valor]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it
7. **Perseverance** [persistence, industriousness]: Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; "getting it out the door"; taking pleasure in completing tasks
8. **Honesty** [authenticity, integrity]: Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions
9. **Zest** [vitality, enthusiasm, vigor, energy]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated

Humanity - Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others

10. **Capacity to Love and Be Loved:** Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people
11. **Kindness** [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "niceness"]: Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
12. **Social Intelligence** [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what

to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick

Justice - Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

13. **Teamwork** [citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share
14. **Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
15. **Leadership:** Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the time maintain time good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.

Temperance – Strengths that protect against excess

16. **Forgiveness & Mercy:** Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful
17. **Modesty & Humility:** Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is
18. **Prudence:** Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
19. **Self-Regulation** [self-control]: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions

Transcendence - Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

20. **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence** [awe, wonder, elevation]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience
21. **Gratitude:** Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks
22. **Hope** [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about
23. **Humor** [playfulness]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes
24. **Religiousness & Spirituality** [faith, purpose]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort

Signature Strengths: Similar to positive personality traits. Signature strengths are strengths of character that a person owns, celebrates, and frequently exercises. Possible criteria for signature strengths (taken from Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 18):

- A sense of ownership and authenticity ("this is the real me") vis-à-vis the strength
- A feeling of excitement while displaying it, particularly at first
- A rapid learning curve as themes are attached to the strength and practiced
- Continuous learning of new ways to enact the strength
- A sense of yearning to act in accordance with the strength
- A feeling of inevitability in using the strength, as if one cannot be stopped or dissuaded from its display
- The discovery of the strength as owned in an epiphany
- Invigoration rather than exhaustion when using the strength
- The creation and pursuit of fundamental projects that revolve around the strength
- Intrinsic motivation to use the strength

NOTE: For individuals who are unsure of their signature strengths or would like greater clarity, they can go online to: www.authentichappiness.org and take the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS; Peterson & Seligman, 2004), which is displayed online under Questionnaires as the VIA Signature Strength Questionnaire. It is a free, well-validated, 240 question test that identifies individuals' signature strengths. It may be helpful and useful for each group member to take this inventory on their own, even those who identify signature strengths easily.

APPENDIX G

Alternative Positive Psychology Themes
# For Jewish Holidays
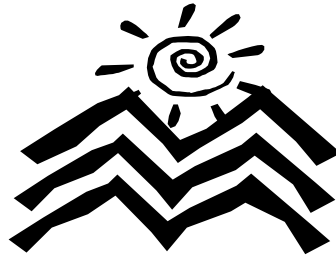
JEWISH HOLIDAY	POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THEMES
Shabbat	Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Love of Learning Self-Regulation Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder, Elevation) Gratitude Creativity
Rosh Hashannah	Integrity Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder, Elevation) Hope Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Perspective (Wisdom) Open-Mindedness Creativity
Yom Kippur	Forgiveness and Mercy Self-Regulation Integrity Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder, Elevation)
Sukkot	Gratitude Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Hope Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder, Elevation) Humility and Modesty Citizenship (Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork)
Simchat Torah	Love of Learning Perspective (Wisdom) Vitality (Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy) Gratitude Curiosity
Hanukkah	Hope Bravery Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Gratitude Leadership Fairness Citizenship (Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork) Integrity Persistence (Perseverance, Industriousness)

Tu Bishvat	Citizenship (Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork) Fairness Creativity Vitality (Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy) Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder, Elevation)
Purim	Humor Bravery Persistence (Perseverance, Industriousness) Leadership Fairness Citizenship (Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork)
Passover	Citizenship (Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork) Leadership Fairness Bravery Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Gratitude Persistence (Perseverance, Industriousness) Love of Learning
Shavuot	Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Love of Learning Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder, Elevation) Gratitude Hope Leadership Vitality (Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy) Perspective (Wisdom) Curiosity
Tisha B'av	Perspective (wisdom) Loss/Growth (posttraumatic growth) Bravery Persistence (Perseverance, Industriousness) Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) Hope

* All positive psychology themes are taken from Peterson and Seligman (2004) Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification

APPENDIX H

Resources for Jewish Stories
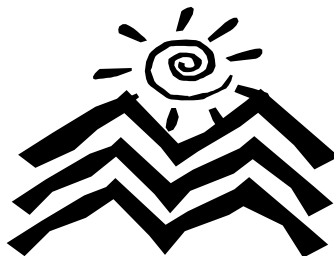
JEWISH STORIES
Annotated Bibliography
Compiled by Peninnah Schram, 2002

Ausubel, Nathan, ed. A Treasury of Jewish Folklore: The Stories, Traditions, Legends, Humor, and Wisdom of the Jewish People. NY: Crown Publishers, 1990

A comprehensive treasury containing 750 stories organized according to themes and characters with introductions which synthesize wide-ranging knowledge and scholarship of Jewish folklore and traditions. The book also includes humor, sayings, and 75 songs.

Bin Gorion, Micha Joseph. Mimekor Yisrael: Classical Jewish Folktales. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1 volume in abridged and annotated edition, 1990

This 512 page anthology "from the source of Israel" offers National, Religious Folktales, and Oriental stories culled by Dan Ben-Amos from the original monumental 3 volumes and with extensive headnotes to each tale and other annotations. There is also a 1-volume edition containing 113 of the most popular tales but without commentary.

Carlebach, Rabbi Shlomo and Susan Yael Mesinai. Shlomo's Stories: Selected Tales. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1994.

Stories from Reb Shlomo's vast repertoire of inspiring tales told in his inimitable style and rhythm. Hasidic wisdom and humor are intertwined with the voice of this minstrel-rabbi/storyteller. There are no given sources for the stories.

Citron, Sterna. Why the Baal Shem Tov Laughed: Fifty-two Stories about Our Great Chasidic Rabbis. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1994

52 retold tales based on the legends of the great Chasidic masters. Arranged in chronological order from the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chasidism, up to modern times with stories of the Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Frankel, Ellen. The Classic Tales: 4000 Years of Jewish Lore. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1989

A representative collection containing 300 Jewish tales which span 4,000 years of Jewish literature, from biblical to modern times. In addition to the introduction there are appendixes of sources, bibliography, glossary, and indexes.

Gaster, Moses. Ma'aseh Book: Book of Jewish Tales and Legends. (Translated from the Judeo-German) Philadelphia: JPS, 1981

A classic volume collection of 254 post-biblical popular tales, from an original Yiddish manuscript. The tales come from a variety of sources, including rabbinic literature and medieval books.

Gellman, Marc. Does God Have a Big Toe? Stories About Stories in the Bible.
Illustrated by Oscar de Mejo. NY: Harper & Row, 1989

20 original midrashim, based on Bible stories, created with humor and a modern perspective.

Gellman, Marc. God's Mailbox: More Stories about Stories in the Bible. Illustrated by Debbie Tilley. NY: Morrow Junior, 1996
Gold, Sharlya and Mishael Maswari Caspi. The Answered Prayer and Other Yemenite Folktales. Illustrated by Marjory Wunsch. Philadelphia: JPS, 1990.

Retold traditional tales brought by Jews arriving in Israel from Yemen via Operation Magic Carpet. Adapted for children, some of the tales are variants of Eastern European tales, while others deal specifically with Yemenite life. There is a glossary and a pronunciation guide.

Goldin, Barbara Diamond. A Child's Book of Midrash: 52 Jewish Stories from the Sages. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1990.

52 brief stories collected from the Talmud and other sources of midrashim, especially for children, that illuminate Jewish ethical and moral values. Included are an introduction to midrash, a glossary, and story sources.

Goldin, Barbara Diamond. While the Candles Burn: Eight Stories for Hanukkah.
Illustrated by Elaine Greenstein. NY: Viking, 1996

8 stories which include original and traditional tellings on Hanukkah themes. Tales range over many countries and centuries. An introduction to each story presents the source, themes, and customs of the holiday.

Goldin, Barbara Diamond. Ten Holiday Jewish Children's Stories. Illustrated by Jeffrey Allon. NY: Pitspopany Press, 2000

Each of the ten stories highlights various meanings of the holidays.

Goldreich, Gloria. Ten Traditional Jewish Children's Stories. Illustrated by Jeffrey Allon. Jerusalem and NY: Pitspopany Press, 1996.

10 well-known stories from 19th and 20th century Europe, including 2 Chelm stories, a trickster tale, and a Golem tale. There are "thought questions" at the end of each story.

Jaffe, Nina. The Uninvited Guest and Other Jewish Holiday Tales. Illustrated by Elivia Savadier. NY: Scholastic, Inc., 1993

Traditional folktales, a literary tale, and midrashim adapted for 7 major Jewish holidays, and Shabbat, some in new settings, for younger readers. In addition, there is an introduction about the Jewish calendar, a glossary, and a bibliography.

Jaffe, Nina. The Mysterious Visitor: Stories of the Prophet Elijah. Illustrated by Elivia Savadier. NY: Scholastic Press, 1997.

8 wonder tales of Elijah the Prophet who appears in many disguises as he travels to different places, but always bringing with him a message of peace. Includes glossary, endnotes and a bibliography.

Jaffe, Nina and Steven Zeitlin. While Standing on One Foot: Puzzle Stories and Wisdom Tales from the Jewish Tradition. Illustrated by John Segal. NY: Henry Holt, 1993

17 stories that challenge the young reader to solve a puzzle or dilemma or to answer a riddle. The traditional folklore endings are also given. Sources of each tale and a bibliography are included.

Jaffe, Nina and Steven Zeitlin. The Cow of No Color: Riddle Stories and Justice Tales from Around the World. Illustrated by Whitney Sherman. NY: Henry Holt, 1998

8 Jewish dilemma stories focusing on questions of justice. Each story includes a question the reader must try to solve. Sources/bibliography.

Kimmel, Eric A. Days of Awe: Stories for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Illustrated by Erika Weihs. NY: Viking, 1993

3 stories adapted from traditional sources with the High Holiday themes of repentance, prayer, and charity. Sources are described.

Kimmel, Eric A. The Spotted Pony: A Collection of Hanukkah Stories. Illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher. NY: Holiday House, 1992

8 adapted tales for families featuring fools of Chelm, rabbis, King Solomon, and that clever trickster, Herschel of Ostropol. Sources are given.

Kimmel, Eric A., ed. A Hanukkah Treasury. Illustrated by Emily Lisker. NY: Henry Holt, 1998

13 original and traditional folktales plus poems/songs for Hanukkah, with stories by Howard Schwartz, Peninnah Schram, and others.

Nagarajan, Nadia Grosser. Jewish Tales from Eastern Europe. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1999

60 legends and folktales specifically from Czech, Slovak, Polish, and Hungarian written and oral sources from several centuries. Included are many Golem stories, some humorous. Extensive annotations and sources.

Patai, Raphael, ed. Gates to the Old City. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1988

This reissued anthology is divided into 7 major genres: Bible, Apocrypha, Talmud, Midrash, Kabbala, Folktales, and Hasidic tales. There are introductions to each section and an excellent annotated bibliography and index.

Rush, Barbara. The Book of Jewish Women's Tales. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1994

74 women's tales spanning the life cycle, nature cycle, and aspects of strong Jewish women. A foreword by folklorist Dov Noy, introductory commentary to each story, and a bibliography and sources index add other dimensions to. the stories.

Rush, Barbara. The Jewish Year: Celebrating the Holidays. NY: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2001

This book offers more than 35 literary excerpts, ranging from folktales to modern writing, for 17 Jewish holidays, plus folk customs, religious laws, and color art reproductions. Many storytellers are represented in this collection.

Sadeh, Pinhas. Jewish Folktales. (Translated from Hebrew by Hillel Halkin) NY: Doubleday, 1989

This comprehensive anthology of over 250 diverse stories draws heavily on the Israel Folktale Archives and Eastern European literary sources. The foreword and afterword essays are enlightening along with the source credits. In some cases, there needs to be more specific attributions.

Sanfield, Steve. The Feather Merchants & Other Tales of the Fools of Chelm. Illustrated by Mikhail Margaril. NY: Orchard Books, 1991

13 brief and humorous stories collected on the author's travels to Poland. There is an afterword, a glossary, and a bibliography.

Schram, Peninnah. Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1987

64 wide-ranging stories and folktales culled from various Jewish oral and written traditions with source-filled introductions to each story and an index. The tales capture the oral style of this storyteller. Several stories incorporate music, such as a nigun or a lullaby. The foreword is by Elie Wiesel.

Schram, Peninnah and Steven M. Rosman. Eight Tales for Eight Nights: Stories for Chanukah. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1990

8 stories, in addition to the ancient legend, which reflect the holiday themes and traditions of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews. There are appendixes of Chanukah music, notes on the story, and a chapter on retrieving family stories. Two family stories told by the authors are also included.

Schram, Peninnah. Tales of Elijah the Prophet. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1991

36 stories of Elijah the Prophet, the master of miracles, gathered from various sources and centuries - with a major introduction and endnotes and written in an oral style. The foreword is by folklorist Dov Noy.

Schram, Peninnah, ed. Chosen Tales: Stories Told by Jewish Storytellers. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1995

A great variety of 68 favorite and meaningful stories chosen by Jewish storytellers and presented as if the book was a "literary storytelling festival". The tales are written to be heard and retold. Introductions accompany each story plus photographs and bios of the teller. Lists of books and recordings by contributors.

Schram, Peninnah. Ten Classic Jewish Children's Stories. Illustrated by Jeffrey Allon. NY: Pitspopany Press, 1998

Ten stories, all but one from Talmudic sources, including the debate of the sun and the moon, how Miriam's wisdom saved the Jewish people, and a love story of Akiva and Rachel.

Schram, Peninnah. Stories Within Stories: From the Jewish Oral Tradition. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2000

The fifty stories in this book, drawn from Talmudic and midrashic sources, medieval sources, and especially the Israel Folktale Archives, are frame narratives. Stories are embedded within stories. The intriguing stories range from witty tall tales to Hasidic tales. The foreword is by Howard Schwartz.

Schram, Peninnah. The Chanukah Blessing. Illustrated by Jeffrey Allon. NY: UAHC Press, 2000

This Elijah the Prophet story includes many folktale motifs with an original plot. Elijah visits a certain poor family because of their special menorah and brings the family blessings. Bibliography.

Schwartz, Cherie Karo. Circle Spinning: Jewish Turning and Returning Tales.
Illustrated by Lisa Rauchwerger. Denver, CO: Hamsa Publications, 2002

Divided into four sections, each section of the book represents the Four Worlds of Kabbalistic intent: spirit; intellect; emotion; and action. The creative midrashim, poems, and visual midrashim reflect these elements. Commentary at the end of stories presents biblical, Talmudic, or folklore sources as well as original adaptations of the author. There is also a Glossary and Index.

The following 4 anthologies by Howard Schwartz cover the 4 main genres of stories: fairytales, folktales, supernatural tales, and mystical tales. In each of these volumes, Schwartz has collected tales from talmudic and medieval sources, other collections of stories published throughout the centuries, as well as from the Israel Folktale Archives, and reworked these tales. The tales come from many countries. Always careful about documenting his tales, he includes extensive notes and bibliographies at the end of each volume in addition to a major introduction.

Schwartz, Howard. Elijah's Violin & Other Jewish Fairy Tales. Illustrated by Linda Heller. NY: Oxford University Press, 1994

36 Jewish fairy tales.

Schwartz, Howard. Miriam's Tambourine: Jewish Folktales from Around the World. Illustrated by Lloyd Bloom. NY: Oxford University Press, 1988

50 Jewish folktales from around the world. Foreword is by folklorist Dov Noy.

Schwartz, Howard. Lilith's Cave: Jewish Tales of the Supernatural. Illustrated by Uri Shulevitz. NY: Oxford University Press, 1991
Schwartz, Howard. Gabriel's Palace: Jewish Mystical Tales. NY: Oxford University Press, 1993

150 spellbinding tales recounting mystical experiences from sacred and secular sources.

Schwartz, Howard, ed. Gates to the New City. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1991

A reissued anthology which contains more than 180 tales in 7 divisions: Biblical themes, Aggadic themes, themes of Merkavah Mysticism, Kabbalistic themes, themes of Folklore, and Hasidic themes. The book includes a 105-page introduction with extensive notes on the stories, authors, and an index of stories, in addition to an invaluable 25-page selected bibliography.

Schwartz, Howard. Next Year in Jerusalem: 3000 Years of Jewish Stories. Illustrated by Neil Waldman. NY: Viking, 1996

11 stories ranging from midrash to Sephardic tales, folk and fairy tales - all about Jerusalem. Sidebars illuminate the stories with historical background of the stories, plus an introduction, glossary and source notes.

Schwartz, Howard, The Day the Rabbi Disappeared: Jewish Holiday Tales of Magic. Illustrated by Monique Passicot. NY: Viking, 2000

For each of the 12 holidays, there is a story featuring a magical feat by a wise rabbi for the benefit of the Jewish people. Sources given.

Schwartz, Howard, A Journey to Paradise and Other Jewish Tales. Illustrated by Giora Carmi. NY: Pitspopany Press, 2000

8 legendary Jewish tales of magic teaching us lessons. Sources given.

Schwartz, Howard and Barbara Rush. The Diamond Tree: Jewish Tales from Around the World. Illustrated by Uri Shulevitz. NY: HarperCollins, 1991

A children's book of 15 folktales drawn from the Midrash, medieval Jewish folklore, and from the Israel Folktale Archives, including East European and Middle Eastern tales. Notes on the stories are included.

Schwartz, Howard and Barbara Rush. The Wonder Child & Other Jewish Fairy Tales. Illustrated by Steven Fieser. NY: HarperCollins, 1996

A children's book of 8 retold Jewish fairy tales from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Sources and notes on the stories are given.

Schwartz, Howard and Barbara Rush. A Coat for the Moon and Other Jewish Tales. Illustrated by Michael Iofin. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1999

15 classic Jewish folktales from all over the world with each tale focusing on a Jewish value. Included are sources and notes.

Sperber, Daniel and Chana. Ten Best Jewish Children's Stories. Illustrated by Jeffrey Allon. Jerusalem, Israel: Pitspopany Press, 1995

10 classic Jewish stories from talmudic and midrashic and folk sources that highlight 10 key Jewish values, such as love of learning and Shabbat, respect for parents, performing mitzvot. Several probing questions are at the end of each story. Sources are given. Introduction by Peninnah Schram.

Staiman, Mordechai. Niggun: Stories Behind the Chasidic Songs that Inspire Jews. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1994

Each of the 38 stories describes a particular niggun, or melody, and the power it had in the lives of those who sang or heard it. Only one melody is transcribed in the book, but there is an extensive discography of Chasidic music and endnotes.

**Weinreich, Beatrice S. Yiddish Folktales.** (Translated by Leonard Wolf) NY: Pantheon, 1988

These wisdom-filled 178 brief Yiddish tales from the archives of the YIVO Institute are divided into 7 sections: allegorical tales, children's tales, wonder tales, pious tales, humorous tales, legends and supernatural tales. Excellent endnotes are supplied.

Zeitlin, Steve. Because God Loves: An Anthology of Jewish Storytelling. NY: Touchstone Books, 1997.
A treasury of Jewish stories and storytellers, from ancient tales and classics re-imagined to contemporary family stories, parables, and humor. There are also framed commentaries and stories by other storytellers that connect to the specific story as a form of dialogue.

APPENDIX I

Group Modifications and Alternatives
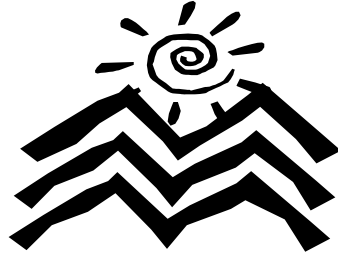
GROUP MODIFICATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

For the scope of this manual, the author outlines a model for applying positive psychology themes to Jewish holidays in an 8-week experiential group process in a synagogue setting. In this model, positive psychology themes that fit naturally with specific Jewish holidays were selected and paired with the holidays. The goal is to learn through didactics, experience, and ultimately, more fully integrate the positive psychology character strengths over the course of the 8 weeks, while simultaneously enhancing one's spiritual connection with each Jewish holiday.

Application of alternative positive psychology themes
There are several modifications that can be made to this model to allow for the expansion of and greater application of this original model. First, modifications could be made to allow for an expanded use of positive psychology themes for the Jewish holidays. For example, while the author selected one theme for each holiday, there are invariably numerous positive psychology themes that could easily pair with each Jewish holiday. Facilitating psychologists and rabbis may choose to select different positive psychology themes for their groups according to their preference, or as a way to offer additional 8-week group sessions beyond the first application of the model.

Alternative time-line for offering 8 group workshops
In addition, the author chose to construct this manual for use as an 8-week group process. This was conceptualized to allow for maximum group coherence, safety, and potential for sharing and connecting. However, an alteration to this model could include offering each of the 8 groups throughout the Jewish calendar year to correspond with the timing of the Jewish holidays. While this could present a challenge in group cohesion, conversely, there could be the added benefit of a stronger connection with the positive psychology themes since the participants are directly engaged with the Jewish holidays while participating in the group process.

Offering additional groups beyond the initial 8-week model
Another important consideration that is beyond the scope of this manual relates to the process of group members beyond the initial 8-week experience. Facilitating psychologists and rabbis may choose to bring group members back together for one additional group experience at the time of each Jewish holiday in order to connect their experience in the 8-week group process more directly with the Jewish holidays as they occur throughout the year. The author would recommend a structure in which each of these "reconnecting" sessions are experiential in nature and aimed at deepening the integration of the positive psychology theme that was discussed during the original groups. In addition, the author believes this would also serve to connect members more deeply with the Jewish holidays throughout the year, with a particular focus on the positive psychology themes that were discussed earlier.

Modification to selection of Jewish holidays
Additionally, the author selected 8 major Jewish holidays as the context for this manual. However, there are other Jewish holidays that were not selected: Shabbat, Shemini

Atzeret, Simchat Torah, Tu B'shvat, Lag B'omer. These are all holidays that could be applied to this model, in which positive psychology themes would be applied to each holiday with a similar framework and process as outlined in this manual. Shabbat is a bit unique since it is not a yearly holiday, but instead a holiday that is celebrated weekly. It is conceivable that Shabbat alone could serve as the context for an 8-week group in which 8 positive psychology themes could be applied to the different aspects of the holiday and discussed over the course of several weeks.

Modification to synagogue setting for group facilitation
Finally, it is important to note that modifications in setting may be appropriate for this model and equally effective. The author conceived of this model in a synagogue setting because it is a fitting setting for a rabbi and psychologist to co-lead groups where community, structure, and safety already exist to a certain extent. In addition, a synagogue is the place where many Jews celebrate and contemplate the Jewish holidays in addition to doing so at home with their families. However, there are other settings that also meet the criteria listed above, and would be excellent places for the facilitation of these positive psychology groups. For example, many campus Hillels employ or are connected with a rabbi who could co-facilitate these groups. Jewish college students on many campuses utilize their campus Hillel in much the same way they would their local synagogues, attending services, connecting with a Jewish community, socializing, and seeking the support and services of a rabbi. In essence, Hillel often serves as a synagogue away from home during the years that students are attending college. Hillel would be an excellent fit for this model. In addition, many Jewish community centers meet the needs of Jewish members seeking connection, learning, and spiritual growth. This may also be an appropriate setting to offer these positive psychology groups. Jewish summer camps would also be an ideal place to lead these groups with the staff over the course of the summer. And finally, while this is not an exhaustive list, many Jewish communities offer adult study classes and workshops, often led by many rabbis and teachers from the community. For example, the Melton 2-year adult study program is the type of setting that could be a nice fit for the application of this model. There are likely many other settings in which Jews may be interested in these groups and could benefit from a experience with both Judaism and positive psychology.