

HOW DO YOU RECHARGE?

A GUIDED CONVERSATION



WELCOME

Before we begin, let's review the brit—the covenant—that animates our time together:

1. **Accountability:** I'll show up to our agreed-upon meetings. I'll let the host know the (good) reason I will be absent. I will also be punctual and respect everyone's time.
2. **Presence:** When we're together, I'll be present and mindful. I will listen and share. Life (and our mobile devices) offer many distractions, but I will stay present and engaged.
3. **Double Confidentiality:** What I hear and say stays here. If I see another group member in a different context, I will not bring up anything they said here unless they do first.
4. **Vulnerability:** I'll stretch myself to be as open and honest as possible with my perspectives and experiences in order to create a safe environment that might encourage others to take risks as well.
5. **Respect:** I will remember that all of us are here for a common purpose and I will respect and acknowledge everyone in my group.
6. **No Fixing, Advising, Saving or Setting Straight:** I will give each person the gift of true attention without trying to "solve their problem." No advice unless it's asked.
7. **Stepping Up & Stepping Back:** I understand that some of us are natural talkers while others are quieter. I'll pay attention to how much I am contributing, and will seek to balance how much I am talking with how much I'm listening.
8. **Curiosity:** Judaism is a religion of exploration; of big questions more than answers. I will get the most out of my group by being open to our discussions and the people around me.
9. **Ownership:** This is our community to create. While we have guidelines and suggestions, it is ours to shape and form. We will get out of it what we put into it.

ASK & SHARE

Welcome, and thank you for joining our conversation. Please think of one thing that helps you refill your sense of joy, restfulness and energy when you feel depleted or run-down. What helps you feel recharged? Take a moment to think about this question, and then we'll share our responses.

You can use the space below to make some notes to yourself.

LEARN

Jewish tradition has had a designated rest time since, well, the very beginning. In the Torah, the story of the creation of the world ends with a day of rest—a set-apart time. Later descriptions of Shabbat, the Sabbath day, make it clear that everyone in the community is meant to rest—not only those with privilege, but workers, the stranger passing through, and even the animals! Judaism considers it an important activity; elsewhere, the Torah talks about the act of shabbat v'yinafash, resting and restoring oneself. Nefesh means “soul” in Hebrew, so this kind of resting is a sort of a re-souling, a recharging of one’s soul, or spirit. Many believe that doing so is indispensable; the secular Zionist essayist Ahad Ha-Am once wrote, “More than the Jewish people have preserved Shabbat, Shabbat has preserved the Jewish people.”

Consider this quote from 20th century theologian Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel from his landmark book, *The Sabbath*.

To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence from external obligations, a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization, a day on which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow men and the forces of nature—is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for man’s progress than the Sabbath?

An organization called Reboot put together a “Sabbath Manifesto,” (sabbathmanifesto.org) with ten key principles designed to help people slow down and bring the spirit of Shabbat into their lives. The ten principles are:

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Avoid technology | 6. Light candles |
| 2. Connect with loved ones | 7. Drink wine |
| 3. Nurture your health | 8. Eat bread |
| 4. Get outside | 9. Find silence |
| 5. Avoid commerce | 10. Give back |

Please read through the above list twice.

As we reflect on this text, here are a few questions to consider:

Interpretive Questions

- What relationship do you see between Heschel's vision of the Sabbath and Reboot's Sabbath Manifesto?
- Do you see any patterns emerging from the items on the Sabbath Manifesto? Are there one or more unifying principles?
- What sort of experience(s) do these actions seem to encourage?
- Which of these actions seem communal? Solitary?

Reflective Questions

- Which of the principles from the Reboot list or described by Heschel are you most drawn to? Why?
- Do any of them challenge you or make you feel uncomfortable? If so, what makes them uncomfortable or challenging?
- Which item on the Reboot list would be easiest to adopt? Which would be hardest?
- Is there something missing from the list that you think should be there?
- When do you feel that you need to recharge?

Use the space below to write some notes to yourself.

DO

As we conclude the conversation, here are a few final questions to consider.

- What's one insight that you've gained from this conversation?
- What is one action you might take, or practice you might try, before we meet next time, based on what you're taking from this conversation?
- What's one obstacle to taking that action? How can you overcome it? Who might you need help from in order to do so?
- What could we do together as a community based on what we talked about today?

Please take a moment to think about these questions, and if you'd like, to share them with the group.

Thank you for being part of this conversation.

Portions of this guide were originally developed by Rabbi Nicole Auerbach for Central Synagogue.



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Ask Big Questions was developed, launched, and scaled by Hillel International: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. Ask Big Questions is a national initiative to help people deepen understanding, strengthen community, and build trust through reflective conversation. Visit AskBigQuestions.org to learn more.

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