

VIRTUE: RESOLVE

קִשָּׁה עֲרָף

Kh-shay oref / resolve

verb/ re•solve \ri-'zälv, -'zölv also -'zäv or -'zöv\
to make a definite and serious decision to do something

Guide for Your Group

1 WELCOME

Ask each person to introduce themselves and to share with the group a part of their day or week they would like to bring with them as they begin this conversation, and/or a part of their day or week they would like to leave behind.

As we gather in our Sh'ma group, may we honor the values of our Jewish tradition. May we bring compassion, insight, and wisdom to our learning and conversation. May we recognize the Divine Image in one another, and let that awareness be reflected in our words and actions.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, חוֹנֵן הַדָּעַת

Baruch atah Adonai chonein ha'daat.
Blessed are You, Adonai,
who grants us wisdom and awareness.

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

- **Accountability:** I'll show up to our agreed upon times. I'll let the guide(s) know the (good) reason I will be absent. I will also be punctual and respect everyone's time.
- **Presence:** When we're together, I'll be present and mindful. I will listen and share. Life (and our mobile devices) offers many distractions, but I will stay present and engaged.
- **Double Confidentiality:** I'll maintain complete confidentiality. What I hear and say stays here. It means that even when I see group members in another context, like at Temple or in the neighborhood, I will not initiate a conversation on what has been shared.
- **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.

- **Respect:** I will remember that all of us are here for a common purpose and I will respect and acknowledge everyone in my group.
- **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.
- **Listening:** I understand that some of us are talkers, while some of us are quieter. I'll be aware not to dominate discussions and to balance how much I'm talking with how much I'm listening.
- **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.
- **Ownership:** This is our Sh'ma Group. 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.

2 REFLECT ON LAST MONTH'S DISCUSSION/ CONVERSATION

What challenges did you face in pursuing last month's virtue? What are you still thinking about from your last discussion?

3 TODAY'S DISCUSSION/CONVERSATION

Compare Ben Franklin's definition of the virtue with the passage from Pirkei Avot. Use the questions below to help guide the conversation.

4 MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT

Before your meeting ends, set a goal for yourself for how you can better live that month's virtue. Share it with the group and plan to follow up on how you did at your next meeting.

Example: For resolution, could you decide to concentrate on one task every day for as long it takes to finish as opposed to multi-tasking or being distracted?

Side-By-Side: Ben Franklin and Pirkei Avot

BEN FRANKLIN'S DEFINITION

Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve.

PIRKEI AVOT

(PA 2:14)

Hillel said, Do not set yourself apart from the community; do not be sure of yourself until the day of your death; do not judge your fellow man until you have been in his position; do not say of any word that it cannot possibly be heard, for in the end it will be heard. And do not say, When I shall have leisure I shall have study, for you may never have leisure.

(PA 1:15)

Shammai says, "Make your Torah fixed, say little and do much, and receive every person with a pleasant countenance."

Questions To Discuss

- Both Pirkei Avot passages speak to the idea of procrastination. How does this relate to Ben Franklin's definition? Though Hillel and Shammai often disagree, are they saying something similar here?
- Is resolution a difficult virtue for you? Why or why not?
- What is a resolution you have been proud of keeping?
- What kind of resolution would you like to create regarding Jewish life?
- Resolution has a personal and communal aspect: you should have resolution in your own affairs, but also in your affairs with others, like in keeping appointments and promises. Why is it important to keep your word to others? How might this improve society?