Memo

From: Rabbi Vivie Mayer
Date: August 1, 2018
Re: Preparation for our first session on "How To Forgive"

I welcome you to the work and study of forgiveness.

As I mentioned in the introductory video clip, we will be using three modes of classical Jewish literature to examine the topic: narrative, prayer, and codes of practice. For those who would like to prepare the ground before our session on August 8, here is some information in conjunction with the source sheet that accompanies the session.

Narrative:
Please read The Joseph Story, Genesis 37 – 50:26. Familiarize yourself with the plot, focusing on the interactions between the brothers. Track the emotional narrative—explicit or implicit – for father and sons, victim(s) and perpetrators, through the assault, the lie, and the years of guilt. During our time together we will be pay close attention to the confrontation between Judah and Joseph, which is the prelude to the story's climax of forgiveness; Genesis 44:18 – 45:15.

Practice:
We will be referencing Maimonides' _Hilkhot Teshuva_, Ways of Repentance, which is part of his grand opus, The Mishneh Torah. To learn about this Jewish classic and its historical context, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishneh_Torah. If you are interested in reading this work in its entirety, it is available on line at
https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/911887/jewish/Teshuvah.htm
In our first session, we will be closely reading chapter 2 halakha 9. This passage describes the perseverance that is part of asking for forgiveness. It also introduces the notion of ritual to the choreography of forgiveness.

We will also be looking at Pirkei Avot, a tractate of transmission of ethics, (learn about it on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pirkei_Avot). 4:18 teaches about the element of appropriate _timing_ that is a crucial element of interpersonal work.

Prayer:
We will be taking in a phrase from the morning liturgy from the blessing of Love, which precedes the Shema.

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