

Six Jewish Strategies for Spiritual Growth

By Sara Debbie Gutfreund

A daily regimen for building your spiritual muscles.

1. Make gratitude a habit. By praying three times a day you start your day saying thank You, you stop in the middle of the afternoon to recognize the Source of our blessings, and you think about all your gifts before going to sleep.
2. Elevate the physical world. Through Jewish practice you channel the material for a higher purpose. Blessings over food transform eating into a spiritual act. You sanctify Shabbat by making kiddush over wine.
3. Be kind to others. Give others the benefit of doubt and don't judge them for their weaknesses. Practice daily kindness even if you don't feel like it.
4. Count each day. Every day has a purpose, whether you're working or on vacation. Know your goals and make each day count.
5. Pick yourself up often. King Solomon said, "A righteous person falls seven times and gets up." Don't let the fear of failure get in the way. Keep trying; the effort itself is significant.

6. Prioritize rest. Muscles don't grow during a workout; they grow at rest during recovery time. Souls also need recovery time. Shabbat gives our souls the chance to strengthen and grow by granting us this precious "recovery" time each week.