



November 1, 2019

Dear friends of Hillcrest Jewish Center:

How can we aim to retain the spiritual energy generated by the High Holy Days, now that they are over? Should we wait until next September to ask again life's important questions? Is there anything we can do to maintain the momentum of the holidays as we enter another work and study year with its foreseeable routine?

I would like to share with you a very interesting piece – *The 15 Most Important Questions You Must Ask Yourself Right Now*, written by Marissa Levin, founder and CEO of Successful Culture, a leadership team that helps organizations build exceptional cultures. While the piece was written mainly for the corporate world, the *15 Most Important Questions* are applicable to every person's life.

I invite you to take a piece of paper and try to answer these questions in writing. Putting things in writing can be very helpful when you wish to generate change. After you work on this exercise, if you wish, I will be happy to sit down with you, talk about the experience, and plan a few modest but concrete steps to take towards changes that will make our lives more meaningful.

From my heart,

Rabbi Manes Kogan

The 15 Most Important Questions You Must Ask Yourself Right Now

"He who asks a question remains a fool for 5 minutes. He who does not ask remains a fool forever." ~Chinese Proverb.

By Marissa Levin

Founder and CEO, Successful Culture

September begins a time of transition. Students return to school, the weather turns cooler, the sun sets a little earlier, the leaves begin to fall.

As you look inward to discover your roadblocks to living your most fulfilling life, here are 15 of the most important questions to ask yourself.

1: What are my values?

What matters to you most in this world? What will you passionately fight for?

2: Am I living my values?

Is there congruence between what you say is important, and what you are doing? Is there any aspect of your life where you are not being true to yourself, or not living in authenticity?

3: In looking back over the last 1-5 years, where did I go right?

Especially in times of difficulty, it's hard to recognize our good decisions, and our wins. Acknowledging them as we intentionally move into the future empowers us to seek out people and experiences that set us up for success.

4: In looking back over the last 1-5 years, where did I go wrong?

Similarly, where did you experience setbacks? Recognizing these setbacks, in the totality of all of your experiences, empowers you to avoid these mistakes in the future.

5: What scares me or causes me to procrastinate?

What is holding you back from making an important decision or taking a risk? What circumstance is causing you to stay in a comfort zone, impeding you to embrace a calling or chase a dream?

6: How can I take better care of myself?

Good health is true wealth. What health habits can you drop or add to your daily lifestyle to improve your condition, and minimize your risk for getting sick or requiring medication?

7: Do I have the right people around me?

We are the average of the 5-10 people closest to us. Are your closest friends a reflection of your value system and your goals for your life?

8: How am I improving life for others?

How are you contributing, even in a small way, to making life better for others? How are you living your life in such a way that it is not all about your own personal gain? Service to others is the easiest way to cultivate an attitude of gratitude, which is directly linked to happiness.

9: To whom do I need to apologize?

Is there someone in your life you have wronged? If yes, then that is an open wound for both parties. Can you step forward to apologize and to find closure before you turn the calendar?

10: Who must I thank, either for forgiveness, or for making a positive difference in my life or in the life of someone I love?

Who in your life deserves your appreciation? If someone has measurably impacted your life in a positive way, it is a gift to both of you to share your gratefulness.

11: For what must I forgive myself?

How have you been punishing yourself? Can you reach a place of self-forgiveness through self-compassion? Can you create a clean slate of self-acceptance?

12: What do I finally need to accept and embrace about myself, rather than seeing it as a weakness?

We are all our own worst critics. This inner critic never serves us. What can you finally accept about yourself, and perhaps even come to love and appreciate? Can you start now?

13: What is one quantum leap forward I have achieved since this time last year?

What have you overcome? What have you concluded? What recognition have you earned as a result of hard work? What goal did you meet?

14: What is one accomplished quantum leap forward I will be able to name at this time next year, when I reflect back?

How will you make your mark in the next year?

15: Finally, what is worth smiling about right now, at this precise moment in time?

Right now... at this VERY moment, what three things in your life bring a smile to your face? Now, pause and say thank-you.