

Sharsheret's Shalom, Shabbat!

National Webinar Transcript

May 22, 2020

Presented by:



This webinar was made possible with support by:

The Siegmund and Edith Blumenthal Memorial Fund



Sharsheret's Shalom, Shabbat!

Melissa Rosen:

Welcome to Sharsheret's *Shalom, Shabbat!* Program. My name is Melissa Rosen and I serve as the Director of Community Education for Sharsheret, but many of my colleagues have worked on this project and are on the Zoom call now to make sure it runs seamlessly. And so thank you to everyone on the team. This type of program is actually relatively new for Sharsheret. Although we are always grateful for an opportunity to reconnect and to re-center, we have found, and I'm sure you have too, that as we deal with this unprecedented physical isolation, these opportunities are more important than ever. So thank you for joining us today. You are all on mute now and automatically muted as you enter today's program. If somebody accidentally unmutes, we will be muting you so that there's no interference with the program. To mute yourself, there is on the bottom left hand side of your screen an opportunity to do that.

Melissa Rosen:

This program will be recorded. If you do not want your image on the recording, you can choose to turn off your video in the same place that you can mute yourself. You can also choose to rename yourself. If you prefer to remain anonymous, you can do that by clicking on the three dots on the top right hand side of your photo's square. We recommend that you choose speaker view that will allow you to focus on each presenter. And when you do that, the participants images will become small thumbnails on the top or side of your screen. You can do that in the top right hand corner, now that we've gotten some of the zoom etiquette out of the way, let's dive right into our program. However you celebrate, and whatever your experience with Shabbat is, or has been, we can all use an opportunity to recenter ourselves in the midst of treatment, survivorship, COVID-19 or honestly just the normal chaos of a life well lived.

Melissa Rosen:

And that's what today is about. Together, we'll enjoy some music, explore gratitude, and come away with a bit of inspiration for the week ahead. There is always some level of chaos in life, work, and family, volunteer commitments. And of course, for those of us who have faced cancer and are dealing with survivorship or who are currently facing cancer, there is even more chaos, physical, emotional, even spiritual. We all need a break. We need an opportunity to take a breath, a deep breath. It is absolutely necessary for our health and happiness. Where we are today with the addition of the pandemic simply adds to that chaos. And yet, in addition to the chaos, it's also given the world a mandatory pause. By the way, mental health professionals recommend taking time to pause on a regular basis for our health. Ideally though the pauses we take for our own health would be shorter than the pandemic isolation, and maybe spaced out with some level of regularity.

Melissa Rosen:

You see where I'm going here? Our tradition gives us just that, a weekly pause, simply an opportunity to rest and regroup each week to focus on what's important. What gives our lives meaning. And of course, that is different for each one of us, our health, our family, other things, and how we experienced that pause is also different for each of us. Some of us celebrate Shabbat traditionally. Others have found innovative ways to make Shabbat meaningful. While some may prepare elaborate meals, others choose to take out pizza as a break from cooking.

Melissa Rosen:

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Some may attend services when we're not in mandatory isolation, but others find spending time in nature to be meaningful. The truth is that each person can celebrate in a way that is meaningful to them, but I want to encourage every person to celebrate. Whether you have always marked Shabbat or are just considering it now, our lives deserve that pause that Shabbat provides. So take time each week to make the important things in life, including you, priorities our lives, even as the pandemic passes, even as cancer grows distant in the rear view mirror. Even happy chaos has an impact. I encourage you to give yourself the gift of a dedicated time for renewal.

Melissa Rosen:

Music is such a source of joy for people. I want to take the time now to welcome Sharsheret friend Cantor Toby Schwartz. She serves as the b'nai mitzvah coordinator at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California, and is also a cancer survivor, breast cancer. She will be singing Lecha Dodi. Please note the words and translation will be on your screen. If you'd like, please join by singing in your own home.

Cantor Toby Schwartz:

Thank you, Melissa. I'm so honored that you asked me to join. Lecha Dodi is our way of welcoming the Shabbat that you spoke so beautifully of giving us this break and also to welcome the mystical Shabbat queen, the Shabbat Kallah. So it's tradition to rise at the last verse. And today you have the sheet that I think someone's going to put up with the words. Excellent. Excellent. And we're going to sing first one and verse nine. And I'll ask you if you are able please, to rise and join with me as we welcomed the Sabbath queen for verse nine and face your doorway, if you are able and we'll bow to welcome to Sabbath queen.

Melissa Rosen:

Thank you so much, Toby. That was absolutely beautiful. I now want to introduce a long time Sharsheret friend, Melanie Grunewald. Melanie first connected with Sharsheret as a marathoner with Team Sharsheret. Her plans to run the New York City marathon changed when she herself was diagnosed with breast cancer. Instead, she ran a local marathon in Denver where she educated the community about Sharsheret and encouraged their support. Melanie currently serves as the Executive Director of the Kabbalah Experience in Denver, and she will be sharing a bit of her story and about gratitude. As she speaks. I want to encourage you to give some thought to something or things you are grateful for at this time and if you're comfortable type them into the chat box so that we can share them as a thoughtful way to enter Shabbat. You can find your chat box on the bottom of your screen, simply hover over it and click the word chat. Thank you, Melanie.

Melanie Grunewald:

Thank you. I'm so honored to have the opportunity to be with you today. Sharsheret is near and dear to my heart. And even after my diagnosis, my mom, who lives in New Jersey, started volunteering in the Sharsheret office on a regular basis and she's been doing that for almost five years. So as Sharsheret is a link for all of us. It's been an important link for our family as well. So thank you for all you do. So I'm going to share my screen with you. Today we are discussing gratitude. This is a mix of what I've been teaching in Kabbalah but also what I've learned from Brene Brown and The Gifts of Imperfection, if anybody's read that. And one of the most important messages that I got from her book is the idea that gratitude is about practice. Just like yoga is different than a mindset. Gratitude isn't just a mindset. It takes active engagement. Is something that we need to be doing to engage in on a daily basis.

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Melanie Grunewald:

I have two quotes that I wanted to share with you. One is *It's not joy that makes us grateful, it's gratitude that makes us joyful*. And the other is *Who is rich?* Like from Pirkei Avot the teachings of our fathers. Who is rich, is one who is happy with their lives. Now, I don't know if we can do this with such a large group, but I'd love to hear from you a little bit about what these quotes might mean to you.

Melanie Grunewald:

What resonates for you? What does it mean that it's not joy that makes us grateful, but it's gratitude that makes us joyful? How does that play out in your lives? And you could maybe raise your hand or I see people on the chat as well. All right.

Melanie Grunewald:

Some of you have shared: I'm grateful for the family that was able to join us for Sarah Rose's graduation. I'm grateful that I'm a survivor. And I just completed my five years of Tamoxifen. I'm grateful for my new grandson, and all my children. Graduations, all the things that happen to life, continue to happen in life. Despite us, in spite of us, even when we're stuck at home, life is still happening and there are things to be grateful for. And the more that we're able to recognize gratitude, the more that we're able to practice this gratitude, the more we're able to open up our hearts, right? And experience the joy in our life. Even as our forefathers said thousands of years ago, right. *Who is rich? One who's happy with their lot*. Recognizing that what we have can bring us joy.

Melanie Grunewald:

Questions arise. Like how realistic is it always to be grateful for the good things in your life? What gets in the way of gratitude? Is there a difference between simply recognizing what you have and being grateful for what you have? If so, what is the nature of the difference? What are the benefits of acknowledging the good things in your life more frequently? I know often times, especially as we're dealing with a cancer diagnosis, it's hard to recognize what's going on around us is something to be grateful for. Soon after I finished my cancer treatment, I was diagnosed in August of 2015. I had my mastectomy in October and started chemo in November. My last treatment was in February of 2016. And in March of 2016, my son was diagnosed with cancer. And the first thing I remember hearing when he had his diagnosis ... The first thing I could think of when my husband said it's a tumor, was well, he can't, my son can't get cancer.

Melanie Grunewald:

Right? Like I just took that one for the team. All right. We're on these journeys that it's so hard sometimes to recognize, what do we have to be grateful for at this moment, especially when we're struggling, especially when we're on journeys that we can't understand. And we can't be grateful for everything that shows up in our life, right? Sometimes the tough times, overwhelm us. Sometimes we need to pull back, but are there ways to just say well the grass is green? The sky is blue, right? Something that my son Coby taught us all was that there's always light and darkness, right? That we can, and ... Coby and Leonard Cohen, right? Cut from the same cloth, Leonard Cohen would say, there's a crack in everything. That's where the light gets in. That if we don't have the moments of darkness, where the moment ... sometimes it's a moments of darkness that help us find the light.

Melanie Grunewald:

Right. See the light most intimately that we, sometimes we need to struggle in order to understand what's happening. I think oftentimes what I teach in Kabbalah is that the light, the energy that ties us all together sometimes is, the light is hidden in plain sight, right? What does mean like when our bodies are functioning, when things are going the way they're supposed to be going, we often don't even notice, right? We just take it for granted. But when we have a diagnosis, when we have a struggle, that's when we recognize what we're missing. Like even now my son was saying, I was driving with him this morning to deliver teacher signs, to his school, putting yard signs of gratitude to his day school teachers. And he said, I think I know what I'm going to talk about for my bar mitzvah.

Melanie Grunewald:

He said, for every uphill, there's the depth, every uphill, which is hard, right? There's a downhill, which is easy. Even when we're climbing up the mountains together, they're moments that we get smooth sailing. And that we have to remember that even in this toughest moments, there's always something that we can tap into to find that it's going to be easier. And other time we are going to find joy once we get to the top of this hill. And when we can acknowledge the good things in our lives more frequently, that also helps us recognize the little things. And we don't get stuck in the things that aren't working. You could focus on the things that are working. My aunt was actually in one of my classes the other day. And she had an aunt that she used to go for walks with.

Melanie Grunewald:

And she said, "I'd walk with aunt Molly." And she would say, "Look at that tree. It's so green, right?" And she said, "I'm affecting my energy by noticing the little things around us." And the more that we can tap into the beauty and the tiny things that we can be grateful, the more that I believe we're practicing that gratitude, right? That becomes a more of a natural point of our joy and our ability to manifest joy and notice little things in our life, right? When things are tough, it doesn't mean that we're happy all the time. We could still be grateful when we're struggling. We can still be grateful when we're going through the harder times in life. And, feel free to respond to these questions in the chat as well. What does it look like when you're joyful and grateful, but not happy?

Melanie Grunewald:

Right? Sometimes we're afraid, right? Being joyful. Brene Brown teaches that joy is actually, one of the most vulnerable feelings that we have, right? We're afraid to feel joy because we're afraid the other shoe is going to drop. And but if we don't allow ourselves to experience the joy, if we don't allow ourselves to experience the gratitude, we're not allowing ourselves to live most fully. And what does it look like when we're joyful and grateful for it, but not happy, right? When there are times in our lives that we are struggle, but we can still recognize the gratitude and the conversation about joy and happiness. That's a whole nother conversation. The difference between joy and joy and happiness. To me, on one foot, happiness is what I get when I eat a chocolate bar, right? That's that moment. And joy is something that we carry, right?

Melanie Grunewald:

It's a sense of spirits, it's a sense of energy. It's what we carry as a sort of intention, right? As Jennifer says, I think fear of choice, a little part of our culture. It's a kind of horror, right? We can't experience too much. We're afraid that something's going to crack, right? It's part of our DNA. But if we can tap into the gratitude, I think that could manifest more of the joy in our lives. Now Jewish tradition teaches us Hakarat HaTov, which means recognizing the good and practicing gratitude means recognizing the good

that is already yours. How do we start to practice gratitude in our lives? Does it mean like keeping a journal, does it mean creating a gratitude jar? Does it mean posting on Facebook? Something you're grateful for every day? How do we carry that gratitude? Even when we're living in moment of fear, right?

Melanie Grunewald:

As a participant today just said, it's the fear of when the second shoe will drop and how bad will it be? And then recognizing that we'll get through that too, right? When my son was in the hospital, there was a family of Mennonites, this big Mennonite community here in Denver. And sometimes I would take a break from the ICU and hang out in the waiting room and they would all be singing hymns together. And I remember having this moment of connection with the mother and she said, "God only gives you what you can handle at this very moment. And then you're going to get to your next moment. And you're going to be able to handle that too." Right? So whether it's diagnosis saying, well, I can survive this, but I don't know what's going to come after, right? Whether it's for me or the people in my innermost circles, we learned that we just have to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

Melanie Grunewald:

And that's how we're going to get past. That's how we're going to get through. And if we can find the moments of gratitude then we can live more intentionally and more joyfully in our day to day lives. So this is how, if you haven't experienced Brene Brown, this is how she frames the end of every chapter, right? So she talks about digging deep, deliberate, inspired, and gut going. All right. So you can say it out loud, say it out loud right now. like I'm feeling vulnerable. That's okay. I'm so grateful for connecting with my friend on Sharsheret today. I'm so grateful that my mom is here. That Jessica who I've known since 1996, right? Is working for Sharsheret. And all of a sudden our lives are intertwining again. It's amazing, right? The more that we can experience those moments of gratitude, the simple things of what's right in front of us.

Melanie Grunewald:

And I'm grateful. I have a roof over my head and food on my table, and I don't have to worry about what I'm going to feed my children tonight. We're so blessed. Even if we're stuck at home, right? That it's not an either or it's a yes and. Now how do we get inspired? How do we acknowledge daily doses of joy in ordinary moments? How do we, sorry, how do we mark the conversations that we have with people that we love and that we care about? The fact that my son could recognize that for every uphill bike ride, there's going to be a downhill, smooth sailing. A kid who's gone, who's lost his older brother, right? That he's been able to survive and experience and demonstrate resilience through the toughest things a child can imagine, right? How do we get going, right?

Melanie Grunewald:

Don't just think about it, but do it. This isn't just what's happening on our screen and this period of time together. But now we have to think about getting going, what are we going to take? And as Melissa said, I think it was Melissa that was saying, while I was heading in, right? How are we going to take this practice from this moment and turn it, like this intention from this moment and turn it into a practice of something that we'll bring into our week and bring it to our lives. What do you think that we can do to create more gratitude, more and practice our gratituding in our day to day lives? So I hope this can give a framework and give us an opportunity to have conversation about what gratitude can be for us as we move forward in our day to day lives. Thank you.

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Melissa Rosen:

Thank you so much, Melanie. That was so insightful. It gave me personally, I'm sure all of us so much to think about. I know that Melanie, as you were speaking, you were going through some of the chats, but I'm wondering if my colleague Jessica would share some of the other things that people were grateful for, because I think it's sometimes when we hear what other people are grateful for, it reminds us of all we have ourselves.

Jessica:

People shared they are grateful for her family and friends, as well as doctors. Grateful for her son's college graduation. It wasn't what we hoped for, but it was very meaningful nonetheless. Grateful for her new grandson and for all of her children who have moved back in with her. Grateful for the family that was able to join us for their youngest daughter's virtual college graduation yesterday, Sarah Rose from TCNJ and through their tears they realized that they had family from all over the country coming to join us. And that would not have happened without Zoom and so she's very grateful. Grateful that she's a survivor and completed her five years of Tamoxifen. Grateful for the beautiful sunshine and spring warmth. Grateful to God and her medical team for her recovery. Grateful for being at home with her children and staying healthy.

Jessica:

Someone notes you can get more joy from giving them from getting and she finds strength in helping others and is so grateful to have Sharsheret in her life for this reason. Someone else says in my recovery, I realized when I was grateful, I was more aware of what I had that brought me joy. Someone else shared that she is also grateful for her son's college graduation. And more than that, she's profoundly grateful for her health and the love of her family.

Jessica:

More than one person is worried about a recurrence, but someone noted, she thinks fear of joy is a little bit part of our culture and someone said when the fear ... it's the fear of when the second shoe drops, but Brene Brown's book has turned her head around and thank you. Someone shared that she loves the idea of gratitude as an active verb 'gratituding'.

Jessica:

Someone is grateful that the whole world understands that cancer made her realize that she's not alone. Somebody else says she's grateful for all of Sharsheret and her children. Another person shared some fears of stopping the Tamoxifen. A person is grateful for the opportunity to get into treatments now. And finally, it was shared that someone grateful that she celebrated her birthday at a distance with her son and daughters, family, and grandkids. So thank you for everyone for sharing.

Melissa Rosen:

Thank you for sharing those Jessica. It is really wonderful to hear so many things that we're grateful for. As we move forward in the program, there are many rituals that accompany Shabbat that we can find, meaning in. My colleague, Rachael Teicher who serves as Sharsheret Support Program Coordinator has agreed to speak briefly about one that holds special meaning for her.

Rachel:

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Hi, everyone. As Melissa said, I'm one of the social workers and Program Coordinators at Sharsheret. It's a pleasure to see all of you here. It's so wonderful. And like she said earlier on, Shabbat really is all about tradition and making it your own. And it really means something different for each of us. So one of the many traditions that comes along with Shabbat for many people is eating challah. So it happens to me that that's really one of my favorite traditions as well, because there's so much you can do with it. You can make different flavors and you can make it savory or sweet. And if you enjoy baking, it's an activity you can do either yourself, if it's something relaxing to you, or with others around you share recipes and you can really make it something special for you. Also, the smell of it in your home brings this nice comforting feeling.

Rachel:

And that totally goes for whether you're baking it on your own or buying it from the store and heating it up in the oven. You're going to get that awesome smell no matter what. So that's really also why I love doing that. Because you can go either way with it. So pick the one that makes you most relaxed. That's what this is all about. So make sure you do the big what's best for you. So back to the tradition aspect of it, one of the traditions that for many of us come along with eating the challah bread on Friday or Saturday during the Shabbat is dipping after making the blessing and eating it as dipping it in salt. Before we take that first bite and it's there to kind of say, listen, "Challah, you are sweet and wonderful and have this comforting, delicious flavor," but that little drop of salt is also there to say, but just remember, there is still some craziness going on in the world and some sadness going on and things that, we're all sitting here and thinking about everything's not perfect.

Rachel:

So it's just that little reminder to keep in the back of our minds to still of course be grateful, but think about the things that, we yearn for and want for others in our life as well. And I think right now that is just so oddly fitting as well in these crazy times and something that really, obviously we all have a lot to think about in the, with what's going on around us. So that actually leads into what is my most favorite custom of a challah is that there's a tradition that I grew up with and I know many people who did this as well. If you've never done this, please feel free to adapt it. And if you have, awesome, you know why I love it. So it's all about adding extra sweetness in at certain times in your life, certain big life events or certain times of the year. Like during the high holidays for Rosh Hashanah the Jewish new year.

Rachel:

So there's a tradition that instead of dipping your challah in salt, you use honey or sugar and that's to make sure you're fully engulfing yourself in sweetness because you only want to feel that happiness, that greatness. And it's a moment to go, okay, you know what? There might be saltiness around us, but I'm not letting that in right now. I mean I'm fully enjoying the happiness and the great things. And so the last few weeks I've been really thinking about it and practicing it. I'm eating lots of challah and honey. So it's wonderful.

Rachel:

And I think that it's just a nice tradition to add in knowing that in these crazy times, whether it be life in general and, going through treatment, a new diagnosis, an old diagnosis, being in survivorship, having any of those fears that many of you shared, just getting through the day to days of life in general, and especially now with COVID and everything going on, just a nice little touch of sweetness and an extra really sweet tradition to think about. And so going with the theme of gratitude, I'm going to say the

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blessing that we traditionally make over the challah bread. And it's all about being thankful to God for the fact that he is able to give us this bread. So he's upped on the screen. Please feel free to join me in saying it. Okay. So I'll first say it in Hebrew and then English. *Baruch ata Adonai, elohaynu melach haalom, hamotzi lechem min haaretz*. Blessed are you our God ruler of the universe who causes bread to come.

Melissa Rosen:

Thank you so much, Rachel, you have made me very excited about tonight's challah. We only have a few more moments left together. As we get ready to conclude, we'll finish by welcoming Toby Schwartz back to lead us in Oseh Shalom, a song that asks for peace, the perfect way to welcome a chance to reset and rest. Although we are all in our own homes, with the words on the screen, please feel free to join in. And then we'll gather for another second or two, just to have a couple of concluding thoughts.

Cantor Toby Schwartz:

Perfect. So look at the English words for just a moment. We're going to be singing the Hebrew, may the one who creates peace on high, bring peace to us and to all Israel. And we say amen, there is no other way to welcome Shabbat and participate in Shabbat. So please join me if you know Debbie Friedman's melody.

Melissa Rosen:

Absolutely beautiful. Thank you so much. As we conclude, I want to remind you that Sharsheret continues to be there for you in these unprecedented times, we continue to offer online content once or twice a week, and you can always go to our website to view webinars you may have missed. The link to those posted in the chat box, please. And of course our wonderful, dedicated team of social workers and our genetic counselor are there to help you manage your concerns.

Melissa Rosen:

Sharsheret has been providing telehealth services to Jewish breast and ovarian cancer community for close to 20 years now. And although we could never have imagined the world the way it is at the moment, through our services, we have been preparing for this moment to continue to be there for each and every one of you please do not hesitate to reach out. You can contact us by reaching out to [info](mailto:info@sharsheret.org) or clinical@sharsheret.org. I want to thank each and every one of you for joining today and wish you a Shabbat filled with quiet, with joy and with comfort, a Shabbat filled with Shalom. Thank you so much. And Shabbat Shalom. Bye-bye.

About Sharsheret

Sharsheret, Hebrew for "chain", is a national non-profit organization, improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for breast or ovarian cancer through personalized support and saves lives through educational outreach.

With four offices (California, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey), Sharsheret serves 150,000 women, families, health care professionals, community leaders, and students, in all 50 states. Sharsheret creates a safe community for women facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer and their families at every stage of life and at every stage of cancer - from before diagnosis, during treatment and into the survivorship years. While our expertise is focused on young women and Jewish families, more than 15% of those we serve are not Jewish. All Sharsheret programs serve all women and men.

As a premier organization for psychosocial support, Sharsheret's Executive Director chairs the Federal Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, Sharsheret works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and participates in psychosocial research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers, including Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Sharsheret is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for four consecutive years.

Sharsheret offers the following national programs:

The Link Program

- Peer Support Network, connecting women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer one-on-one with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences
- Embrace™, supporting women living with advanced breast cancer • Genetics for Life®, addressing hereditary breast and ovarian cancer
- Thriving Again®, providing individualized support, education, and survivorship plans for young breast cancer survivors • Busy Box®, for young parents facing breast cancer
- Best Face Forward®, addressing the cosmetic side effects of treatment
- Family Focus®, providing resources and support for caregivers and family members
- Ovarian Cancer Program, tailored resources and support for young Jewish women and families facing ovarian cancer • Sharsheret Supports™, developing local support groups and programs

Education and Outreach Programs

- Health Care Symposia, on issues unique to younger women facing breast cancer
- Sharsheret on Campus, outreach and education to students on campus
- Sharsheret Educational Resource Booklet Series, culturally-relevant publications for Jewish women and their families and healthcare Professionals

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