

joy is Central

**A Journal for Our
Season of Rejoicing**

“I’ve come to know that there is nothing better for a person than to rejoice and do good while they live.”

(From Ecclesiastes 3:12, the scroll traditionally read on Sukkot)

Our tradition teaches us that joy is not an optional extra for a spiritual life – it is fundamental. During Sukkot, known as *Z’man Simchateinu*, the Season of our Rejoicing, we are *commanded* to rejoice. I suggest three exercises, based on three traditional Sukkot mitzvot, that are proven (by science and 3000 years of tradition) to make you feel more joy. Please challenge yourself to do all or some of them, consistently, for the week of Sukkot, September 24-30, and perhaps beyond. Keep a record on the pages that follow. May you spread more joy to others, and cultivate joy for yourself, in this Season of our Rejoicing.

1 Person: Connect to one person you haven’t seen for a while

Ushpizin is the Sukkot custom of bringing seven honored “guests” into your sukkah. Traditionally these were biblical figures like Abraham and Jacob. Think of seven people you would want to “invite in” this Sukkot; it may be a long-lost friend, old college professor, coach, piano teacher, or relative. Write or call one each day. Connection brings joy.

2 Gratuities: Write down two things you are grateful for each night

Sukkot is the original Thanksgiving! Set during the harvest season when our bounty was at its most abundant. Each night, name two things that make you grateful. Find new things, big or small, for each night. This Sukkot recognize your abundance and offer thanks.

3 Acts of Kindness: Do three acts of kindness each day and record

On Sukkot we are commanded to sit in temporary outdoor booths to remember our vulnerability and the capriciousness of life. Today we may have abundance, tomorrow famine. We never know when we might be reliant on the kindness or generosity of strangers. Consciously, do three random acts of kindness a day – buy someone a coffee, let someone cut you in line, swipe someone in on the subway, hold a door open. Then write it down. You will be amazed how much this kindles happiness and gratitude. Kindness is joyfully contagious.

