

# KICK-ASS ROSH HASHANAH HOMEWORK

[Email the following to anyone you're inviting to Rosh Hashanah.]

Dear Friends and Family,

We're looking forward to see you all on [Insert date and time, and address if necessary] for Rosh Hashanah lunch! To help us kick off the New Year, here are some inspirational quotations, videos, and yes, a little homework assignment. Please don't stress about the homework! It's only a short assignment, and you can't get it wrong.

Much love,

[Insert Your Name Here]

## HOMEWORK

### 1. BRING A QUOTE TO SHARE

We all have quotes and sayings that touch us. Bring yours to share! We'll tape them to the wall. If nothing comes to mind, you can just google quotes for the New Year or inspirational quotes. Here are some to get your juices flowing:

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it." -**ELEANOR ROOSEVELT**

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go." -**OSCAR WILDE**

"Read the directions, even if you don't follow them." -**KURT VONNEGUT**

"Bad habits are easier to abandon today than tomorrow." -**YIDDISH PROVERB**

"You are never too old to become younger." -**MAE WEST**

"In some families, 'please' is described as the magic word. In our house, however, it was 'sorry.'"  
-**MARGARET LAURENCE**

"Making the decision to have a child — it's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking outside your body." -**ELIZABETH STONE**

"Having children makes you no more a parent than having a piano makes you a pianist."  
-**MICHAEL LEVINE**

"Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts." -**DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN**

"Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors and let each New Year find you a better man." -**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

"The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen all at once." -**ALBERT EINSTEIN**

"If you are depressed, you are living in the past. If you are anxious, you are living in the future. If you are at peace, you are living in the present." -**LAO TZU**

## 2. ASKING YOURSELF EXISTENTIAL LIFE QUESTIONS

is one effective way to move your life forward. The traditional time to do this is around Rosh Hashanah. For homework, please bring one or two questions and answers that you can share with everyone.

**-ADAPTED FROM "ROSH HASHANAH/YOM KIPPUR SURVIVAL KIT" BY RABBI SHIMON APISDORF**

- 1) When do I feel that my life is most meaningful?
- 2) What would bring me more happiness than anything else in the world?
- 3) What are my three most significant achievements in the past year?
- 4) What are my biggest mistakes in the past year?
- 5) What project or goal, if left undone, will I most regret a year from now?
- 6) If I knew I couldn't fail, what would I undertake to accomplish?
- 7) What are my three major goals in life? What practical steps can I take in the next two months toward these goals?
- 8) What is the most important decision I need to make this year?
- 9) What important decision did I avoid making last year?
- 10) What kind of person do I want to be one year from now?
- 11) What kind of person do I want to be five years from now?
- 12) Over the last year, did my most important relationships become closer and deeper, or was there a sense of stagnation and drifting?
- 13) What can I do to nurture those relationships this year?
- 14) If I could change only one thing about myself, what would it be?
- 15) Are there any ideals I would be willing to die for?
- 16) If I could live my life over, what would I change?
- 17) What do I want written on my tombstone? And how do I begin living that way now?

## 3. CHECK OUT THESE HIGH HOLIDAY VIDEO LINKS

- 1) Pause Before You Post
- 2) I Forgive You
- 3) Street Shofar
- 4) All We Are Saying
- 5) The Chinese Bamboo
- 6) The Maccabeats - Book of Good Life

## 4. AND SOME READING JUST FOR FUN!

### “THE RULES OF IMPROVISATION THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE”

*Excerpted from Tina Fey's Bossy Pants.*

The first rule of improvisation is AGREE. Always agree and SAY YES. When you're improvising, this means you are required to agree with whatever your partner has created. So if we're improvising and I say, “Freeze, I have a gun,” and you say, “That's not a gun. It's your finger. You're pointing your finger at me,” our improvised scene has ground to a halt. But if I say, “Freeze, I have a gun!” and you say, “The gun I gave you for Christmas! You bastard!” then we have started a scene because we have AGREED that my finger is in fact a Christmas gun.

Now, obviously in real life you're not always going to agree with everything everyone says. But the Rule of Agreement reminds you to “respect what your partner has created” and to at least start from an open-minded place. Start with a YES and see where that takes you.

As an improviser, I always find it jarring when I meet someone in real life whose first answer is no. “No, we can't do that” “No, that's not in the budget.” “No, I will not hold your hand for a dollar.” What kind of way is that to live?

The second rule of improvisation is not only to say yes, but YES, AND. You are supposed to agree and then add something of your own. If I start a scene with “I can't believe it's so hot in here,” and you just say, “Yeah...” we're kind of at a standstill. But if I say, “I can't believe it's so hot in here,” and you say, “What did you expect? We're in hell.” Or if I say, “I can't believe it's so hot in here,” and you say, “Yes, this can't be good for the wax figures.” Or if I say, “I can't believe it's so hot in here,” and you say “I told you we shouldn't have crawled into this dog's mouth,” now we're getting somewhere.

To me YES, AND means don't be afraid to contribute. It's your responsibility to contribute. Always make sure you're adding something to the discussion. Your initiations are worthwhile.

The next rule is MAKE STATEMENTS. This is a positive way of saying “Don't ask questions all the time.” If we're in a scene and I say, “Who are you? Where are we? What are we doing here? What's in that box?” I'm putting pressure on you to come up with all the answers.

In other words: Whatever the problem, be part of the solution. Don't just sit around raising questions and pointing out obstacles. We've all worked with that person. That person is a drag. It's usually the same person around the office who says things like “There's no calories in it if you eat it standing up!” and “I felt menaced when Terry raised her voice.”

MAKE STATEMENTS also applies to us women: Speak in statements instead of apologetic questions. No one wants to go to a doctor who says, “I'm going to be a surgeon? I'm here to talk to you about your procedure? I was first in my class at Johns Hopkins, so?” Make statements, with your actions and your voice.

Instead of saying “Where are we?” make a statement like “Here we are in Spain, Dracula.” Okay, “Here we are in Spain, Dracula” may seem like a terrible start to a scene, but this leads us to the best rule:

THERE ARE NO MISTAKES, only opportunities. If I start a scene as what I think is very clearly a cop riding a bicycle, but you think I am a hamster in a hamster wheel, guess what? Now I'm a hamster in a hamster wheel. I'm not going to stop everything to explain that it was really supposed to be a bike. Who knows? Maybe I'll end up being a police hamster who's been put on “hamster wheel” duty because I'm “too much of a loose cannon” in the field. In improv there are no mistakes, only beautiful happy accidents. I mean, look at the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, or Botox.

\*Improv will not reduce belly fat