

Take the Elul Mitzvah Challenge – Pay a Kindness

Traditionally, the month of Elul is a time when we prepare ourselves for the impending [High Holy Days](#). It is a time for spiritual reflection and an opportunity to get our “accounts” in order before we stand before God in judgment between [Rosh HaShanah](#) and [Yom Kippur](#). With this in mind, our Temple Am Echad community will be participating in the Elul Mitzvah Challenge as an opportunity for *mitzvot* (good deeds) to go viral.

Moses Maimonides, known as the Rambam, taught that we should all see the world as though it is a scale held in the balance, with one *mitzvah* capable of tipping the scale for the good. With the Elul Mitzvah Challenge, we have the chance to join together as a community and tip that scale. We hope you will join us. ^[1]

Some Easy “Pay a Kindness” Ideas ^[2]

- Pay it Backward: buy coffee for the person behind you in line, or the drive-up car behind you at a drive-up location.
- Compliment the first three people you talk to today.
- Send a positive text message to five different people right now.
- Buy extra groceries when at the store and drop them off at a food pantry on the way home.
- Donate old towels or blankets to an animal shelter.
- Surprise a neighbor with freshly baked cookies or treats!
- Let someone go in front of you in line who only has a few items.
- Leave a gas gift card at a gas pump.
- Have a LinkedIn account? Write a recommendation for coworker or connection.
- Leave quarters at the laundromat.
- Encounter someone in customer service who is especially kind? Take an extra five minutes to tell their manager.
- Leave unused coupons next to corresponding products in the grocery store.
- Leave a note on someone’s car telling them how awesome they parked.
- Try to make sure every person in a group conversation feels included.
- Engage in a communal religious act of kindness, like attending a worship service, making a shiva call, or offering a prayer of healing on someone’s behalf.
- Write a kind message on your mirror with a dry erase marker for your significant other or a family member.
- Place positive body image notes in jeans pockets at a department store.
- Smile at five strangers – say hello.
- Set an alarm on your phone to go off at three different times during the day. In those moments, do something kind for someone else.
- Send a gratitude email to a coworker who deserves more recognition.
- Give away stuff for free on Craig’s List.
- Write a gratitude list in the morning and again in the evening, or incorporate a gratitude list into your morning and evening prayers.
- Hold up positive signs in a park for people exercising outside!

- Buy a plant. Put it in a terracotta pot. Write positive words that describe a friend on the pot. Give it to that friend!
- Write a positive comment on your favorite blog, website, or a friend's social media account.
- Have a socially-distanced clean up party at a beach or park.
- While you're out, compliment a parent on how well-behaved their child is.
- Leave a kind server the biggest tip you can afford.
- When you're throwing something away on the street, use a gloved hand to pick up any litter around you and put that in the trash too.
- Pay the toll for the person behind you.
- Put 50 paper hearts in a box. On each cutout write something that is special about your partner or a friend. Give them the box and tell them to pull out a heart anytime they need a pick-me-up.
- Everyone is important. Learn the names of your office security guard, the person at the front desk and other people you see every day. Greet them by name. Also say "hello" to strangers and smile. These acts of kindness are so easy, and they almost always make people smile.
- Write your partner a list of things you love about them.
- Purchase extra dog or cat food and bring it to an animal shelter.
- Find opportunities to give compliments. It costs nothing, takes no time, and could make someone's entire day. Don't just think it. Say it.
- Take flowers or treats to the nurses' station at your nearest hospital or skilled nursing facility.
- Keep an extra umbrella at work, so you can lend it out when it rains.
- Send a 'Thank you' card or note to the officers at your local police or fire station.
- Run an errand for a family member who is busy.
- Leave a thank you note in your mailbox for your mail carrier.
- Put your phone away while in the company of others.
- Email or write to a former teacher who made a difference in your life.
- When you hear that discouraging voice in your head, tell yourself something positive — you deserve kindness too!

Please join us in our Elul Mitzvah Challenge by doing any or all of the mitzvot listed above, or others, and share with us what you have done either on the [Temple Am Echad website](#) or [Facebook page](#). Let's inspire one another to bring more acts of kindness into our daily lives. In so doing may we each better prepare ourselves for the upcoming Days of Awe.

[1] From "The Elul Mitzvah Challenge" by Rabbi Danny Burkeman, www.urj.org

[2] From "50 Ideas to Celebrate Pay It Forward Day", www.randomactsofkindness.org