5 Points for Self-Care During these Times

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We have learned important lessons from past moments of national tragedy, such as 9/11. Our goal is to suggest strategies to help cope in this overwhelming time. We are at the beginning of a situation that is still developing and will be evolving for a long time. It is important that we take care of ourselves so we can sustain our health and also care for others.

Five points to consider:

1. **Curate your news intake and especially visual images.** Decide what you will and will not read and watch and keep to that rule. You are not doing a service to victims by traumatizing yourself. Viewing disturbing images and videos will not help you, and may be a desecration of victims' dignity. Protect your children from images and conversations and social media that will feel overwhelming to them.

2. **This is a long term situation.** We have been glued to our phones, writing to people in Israel, going to gatherings, demonstrations, sending money and saying Tehillim. We need to plan for how to sustain our caring over the long-haul. We must ask ourselves: How can we continue our daily lives and maintain regular contact with people in Israel who are incredibly grateful for support?

3. **Decide on regular actions and stick with them.**

    - Commit to once/twice a week contact with people in Israel, and plan to do this by putting specific times to reach out on your calendar. Reaching out can be sending a video greeting or voice recording, or making an actual call. Send

photos. The recipients will appreciate your consistency, and you will feel fulfilled knowing you are doing something concrete for them.

- Commit to a specific organization – staying in touch with that organization as the situation unfolds and responding to its needs, be they monetary or specific action items, such as contacting politicians, signing petitions or collecting specific items that are needed.
- If you are so inclined, establish a regular, sustainable religious practice, such as an additional prayer you say every day in honor of the hostages.

4. **Plan ahead for difficult conversations.** Whatever your views and your politics may be, you are likely to have friends, family and colleagues who feel differently. You may hear comments that disturb you because they suggest that Hamas' despicable actions were justifiable in some twisted way. You may also hear statements condemning all Muslims. Decide if a conversation is worth having, and you need to be prepared for that conversation. Here are some basic items to consider:

   - LISTEN. Do not interrupt or talk over others.
   - Try and UNDERSTAND how they feel where they are coming from.
   - Stay CALM. When you feel your emotional temperature rising, pause for a few seconds.
   - Know if and when you need to END a conversation. Calmly say "I'm glad we spoke and I need to stop now."

5. **Continue to enjoy daily life.** There are still weddings, birthdays and other celebrations. We need to go on in order to be effective, to bring positivity and solidarity forward.