

FROST BEFORE THE FRUIT

THIS IS THE TIME FOR REINVIGORATION

BY ESTI ASHER, MS, RDN, LD

At first glance, it seems out of place, even jarring, to celebrate Tu B'Shevat—which is centered on the trees—in the wintertime. In cold climates across the globe, this is the season when snow and frost cover barren trees; there are no beautifully blossomed plants full of fruit and life gracing the streets. But we do celebrate now because around this time, the sap of the tree begins to flow—which means we're celebrating the *potential* within the trees.

Throughout life, we each experience our own tests, whether physical or spiritual, personal or communal, hidden or obvious, or all of the above. At this time of year, we may feel very worn out. We may be experiencing burnout, or we may feel we've failed personal tests that should have been opportunities for growth. We may be feeling very much like those barren trees, full of frost.

What a beautiful opportunity and timing for us to celebrate Tu B'Shevat, keeping in mind the message of celebrating our potential. Even if we feel like a frosted tree in the middle of winter, it is important for us to remember that we're full of potential—and to celebrate that. Let's take this opportunity to reinvigorate ourselves, both spiritually and physically. We each have our own goals, our own challenges to overcome, our own foliage to actualize and bring to life. With optimism and positivity—the figurative water and sunlight—we can nurture the soil of our inner potential.

Spiritual reinvigoration is incredibly personal. It looks different for everyone, but we need an anchor—a means to connect with Hashem in the way that feels most genuine to us. What works for one person may not work for another.

As far as reinvigorating ourselves physically, diet and nutrition is the ultimate form of self-care. In order to reach our potential, we need to meet our basic physical needs and optimize our nutrition.





HERE ARE 6 WAYS TO KICKSTART YOUR NUTRITION TRANSFORMATION:

1 Think about and focus on your why.

The food choices we make are very important when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. However, one of the most important tools for success (and an important factor to include within a “kickstart”) is considering your “why.” This is an understanding of what is motivating you to succeed in your goals. Each individual’s “why” is unique and specific to her current situation; it changes and evolves and helps keep things in perspective, propelling her to continue toward success. Your “why” compels you to think beyond the number on the scale or the lab value from the blood test.

2 Plan a menu.

The excitement of including delicious food within our day is much more enjoyable and sustainable than the dread and focus on what *not* to include. Hashem gave us tastebuds for a reason, and we’re supposed to enjoy food! Seize the opportunity of a kickstart to browse through cookbooks or recipe indexes and gather ideas you’d love to include in the coming days or weeks. This will help with planning out your menu and also foster positivity, excitement, variety, and momentum.

3 Accountability.

To take your kickstart to the next level, consider adding a layer of accountability. This will help further your momentum and increase your likelihood of success. Enlist the support of a friend (with similar goals so you can act as a team) or a professional such as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. Make sure that whoever is holding you accountable is also kind, patient—and rooting for your long-lasting success.

4 Drink enough water.

Hydration is incredibly important and often neglected. While it is easy to do and seems so obvious, most of us are not properly hydrated, especially in the winter months when there’s no scorching sun to serve as our reminder. Aim to drink half of your weight (in pounds) in ounces of water per day. Adequate hydration may increase your focus and energy level, improve your mood, and eliminate toxins, among a myriad of other health benefits.

5 Be mindful to eat throughout the day.

On busy days, it’s common to go a long period of time without eating during the day, and then in the quiet night (read: after the kids’ bedtime) to overconsume. Be mindful to listen to your body throughout the day and eat when you are hungry. Food gives us fuel and it’s important to eat nourishing foods as needed to be most productive and efficient.

6 Incorporate balance, moderation, and variety.

A balanced diet typically ensures the presence of essential nutrients that are needed for our body to function optimally. Aim to include a variety of foods along with colorful produce. Different colors increase the visual appeal of food, and as a bonus also represent a plethora of vitamins and minerals. Balance, moderation, and variety are a few key components to a sustainable healthy eating approach. ♡

Esti Asher, MS, RDN, LD, offers nutrition counseling services, in addition to a variety of nutrition presentations. “How to Speak with Your Children About Nutrition, Health, and Body Image” is a live webinar presentation for parents offered to schools. If you are interested in learning more about this presentation and how to offer it at your school, or to contact Esti with feedback or inquiries regarding her nutritional services, please email her at esti@estiashernutrition.com or visit estiashernutrition.com.