Recovering Judaism for Educators

As a Jewish addiction treatment center, Beit T’Shuvah has been immersed in a 30-year study of what we call human brokenness – the inherent inner human dilemma wherein we live in an uncertain world with uncertain meaning and an uncertain future. Our teachers have been those in our community who are most acutely broken: the junkies, criminals, alcoholics, gamblers and thieves, who no longer able to deny their inner scission.

What we have found is that the destructive behavior of addiction and crime are truly the most severe symptoms of a deeper brokenness, the inability to integrate our contradictory selves. We have found at Beit T’Shuvah that the antidote to this human dilemma is contained in a deeply personal and relevant Judaism. It is a Judaism that understands the Torah as a guide to living as complete human beings – as both holy souls and imperfect beings that make mistakes. The Elaine Breslow Institute at Beit T’Shuvah has been created to transmit and share these Torah lessons of redemption and how they can lead each one of us on a path toward wholeness.

This immersion program at the Elaine Breslow Institute is designed for Jewish educators, clergy, and graduate students who are open and willing to explore the brokenness that exists within every human heart, including their own.

We will study Jewish texts, liturgy, and spiritual practices through the lens of brokenness as a means to uncover their healing potential. We will address addiction in the broadest sense, exploring its roots and how it becomes manifest. We will engage with Beit T’Shuvah residents, teachers, and leaders who work and live in a community dedicated to spiritual practice of daily t’shuvah – the spiritual means to restoring wholeness to the broken. And we will examine ourselves as Jewish spiritual leaders and our capacity to confront, counsel, and teach those most severely fractured through the place where our hearts, souls, and the Jewish tradition meet.

The Immersion Program

What: A 3-5 Day educational and spiritual immersion program with a cohort of colleagues. 1-Day Trainings (half or full day) are available as well.

Who: Jewish educators, clergy, and graduate students. These participants will learn with a diverse group of Beit T’Shuvah leaders, including clergy and therapists, as well as residents and alumni of Beit T’Shuvah.

Where: Beit T'Shuvah campus in Los Angeles, California. (Hotel Accommodations nearby).

Why: During their stay, the cohort will work to:

* Engage and learn about the broad spectrum of existential brokenness and the challenges of living well in body, mind, and spirit.
* Enhance their own knowledge, skills, and confidence as they pertain to educating on brokenness, responding and counseling about it, and minimizing its consequences for individuals and families.
* Understand the role the Jewish tradition can play for individuals and families as a wise approach to living well.
* Personalize relevant Jewish texts and spiritual practices, relating it to their professional practice and context, as well as their own lives.
* Immerse in the culture, language, and vision of a uniquely Jewish addiction residential treatment center and synagogue community.
* Collaborate and learn from one another and the facilitators in a safe, open environment of trust.

Common Topics for Immersion and Trainings

- Seeing Your own Brokenness Through Torah
- You Don’t Have to be an Addict to be in Recovery
- T’Shuvah as a Way of Life
- Prayer, Meditation, and the Role of Spiritual Practice
- Navigating the Broken Family
- The Medical Model of Addiction
- The Rabbinic/Jewish Educator’s Role in Addressing Brokenness
- The Trauma of Privilege
Providing immersive and experiential learning that inspires a relevant Jewish approach for the challenge of human brokenness.

What our participants are saying:

"Many [students] told us that this experience was the single most important one in their rabbinic training to date...I know that the ability to achieve these goals requires true understanding, connection, and expertise. Beit T'shuvah has the program and people to make that happen."
- Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, Associate Dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies

"I am confident that our students have come closer to being able to provide essential leadership and care to people who are hungry for Torah wisdom, connection and healing community."
- Rabbi Mychal Springer, Director of the Center for Pastoral Education, Jewish Theological Seminary

"Our educator’s immersion training at Beit T'Shuvah and continued conversations throughout the year has been one of the most powerful personal and professional learning experiences I have ever had. Deeply grounded in text learning, we addressed deep and profound questions about gratitude, joy, responsibility, humility, the gifts of imperfection and ultimately the meaning and purpose of living a rich Jewish life. We learned with and from wonderful people struggling with these questions and understood the bonds that connect us all."
- Dr. Evie Rotstein, Director of the New York School of Education, HUC-JIR

"My immersion in Beit T'Shuvah with the Elaine Breslow Institute has been game changing – for me and for my congregation. For my work, my school and my congregation I discovered new pathways to prayer and Torah study. Personally, I found myself digging deep into places I had not realized I had, seeing where I had chosen to be oblivious to things which hold me back."
- Ira J. Wise, Temple Educator, Congregation Beth Israel, Bridgeport, CT

"Everyone should be forced to do this before getting ordained!"
- Rabbinic Student

To further your capacity of combining soul and your role as a compassionate, understanding, and effective Jewish leader, please inquire today about our immersion programs.

For more information:
Contact Rabbi Paul Steinberg at psteinberg@beittshuvah.org; 310-204-5200 ext. 240

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