

Tikkun Olam



the elul project

By the time our daughter was three years old she had lived in South Africa, immigrated to Israel, spent a month in America and relocated to Australia. Our second child had lived on three continents before she celebrated her first birthday. We arrived in Australia without jobs, sight unseen and having sold most of our possessions to pay for the flights.

On this journey of uncertainty, and isolated from family and friends, a relationship with one of my (current) Mum for Mum volunteers, with their skills in active listening, non-judgement and their role of delighting in me and my children, would have been life-changing. Someone who would have listened to my fears and helped me find my voice when I was so insecure.

These experiences now inform my dedication and passion for the continued growth of this unique program. The impact of the quality relationships that Mum for Mum (Caring Mums in Melbourne) provides with highly trained and supervised volunteers engaging with pregnant and new mothers facing challenges in the first year of their baby's life, contributes significantly towards a resilient and healthy community.

Witnessing the ripple effect of a mother who is able to better parent her child, and manage her emotions and her relationships; plus a volunteer who through her participation in the program develop a sense of meaning, growth and connection is the ultimate reward. And this is multiplied by 130 active volunteers in Sydney supporting approximately 200 families in a year.

During the period of Rosh Hashanah we are encouraged to be reflective, to be self-aware and to be constantly curious about what the best practise in each situation should be, living with integrity and honesty. This spirit of reflection and adopting a model of discovery rather than of perfection is something that I live my life by and on which our Mum for Mum program is based.

I strive to live mindfully – best described by neuroscientist Daniel Siegel using the Acronym COAL; with Curiosity, Openess, Acceptance and Love. It is a path that requires regular practise. I strive to be assertive rather than arrogant, and humble rather than timid and to trust “in the rightness of the moment,” to interpret my challenges as opportunities for growth and for deepened empathy and understanding.

To quote one of my sources of inspiration, therapist, doctor and author of My Grandfather's Blessings: Rachel Naomi Remen:

“Seeing yourself as a fixer may cause you to see brokenness everywhere, to sit in judgement of life itself. When we fix others, we may not see their hidden wholeness or trust the integrity of the life in them. Fixers trust their own expertise. When we serve, we see the unborn wholeness in others, we collaborate with it and strengthen it. Others may be able to see their wholeness for themselves for the first time.”

This is what I aspire to in my journey towards Tikkun Olam.



NADENE ALHADEFF

Nadene Alhadeff is the CEO of Mum for Mum NCJWA. She has a background in corporate and relationships training, counselling and early childhood. She serves on the global Women's Health Advocacy board, and the Jewish Suicide Prevention board.

ABOUT THE ELUL PROJECT

An initiative aiming to share stories and teachings from Jewish women leaders in our community. Whilst many of us are stuck at home, or isolated from family over Elul and the High Holy Days, we hope this project will serve to inspire, nurture, and uplift during this difficult time.