

# What Matters Most



# the elul project

During these uncertain times of COVID-19 it has been easy to feel overwhelmed by the unprecedented health, social and economic upheaval surrounding us. However, it has also provided us with a unique opportunity to focus on what is really important to us, what matters most, and where our priorities lie.

We all have busy lives as we rush around from one commitment to another, often not taking the time to appreciate the things or the people around us, and as cliché as it may sound, not finding the time to smell the roses...

The lockdown has forced us to slow down and has given us the time to reconnect and to fall in love with some of life's simple pleasures. Many of us rediscovered the value of things we had long taken for granted, those which had not provided the consideration they deserved.

I have been trying my utmost to focus on the more positive aspects of the lockdown. Family dinners often played second fiddle, interrupted by different family members dashing off to sporting or other commitments, and weekends would be filled with a sense of achievement if we managed to successfully juggle our children's activities with our own. Now we eat as a family every night and spend quality time together, connecting in a way that provides us such contentment and an element of gratitude for the simple and profoundly important pleasures.

There has been more opportunity for family board games, communal cooking and walks in the park, coinciding with uninterrupted conversation.

When we stop to take in these moments, rather than letting them rush by, we see a shift in our perspective, which provides an opportunity to reframe our circumstances in a more positive light.

I have also been inspired by the rejuvenated sense of community and social cohesion that the pandemic has re-ignited. Do you recall seeing the Italians leaning out of their windows breaking out into song to lift their neighbour's spirits? Or the New Yorkers lining the streets and erupting in loud applause to show gratitude for their health care workers?

Philanthropists have donated money to assist scientists develop a vaccine and communities have given care packages to their neighbours in need. These small acts of kindness can seem so insignificant but provide such comfort.

To lift my spirits I try to focus on other COVID-19 outcomes that could have a long-term positive impact on the planet and humanity. Carbon emissions are down globally and the planet has had a chance to rejuvenate. The United Nations have called for an end to all wars in the face of the pandemic as the world combats a common challenge. There has been a massive transformation in education through the digitalisation of the classroom and we have seen a new wave of corporate social responsibility.

One of the gifts that COVID-19 has given me is a heightened sense of appreciation and gratitude. When I go to sleep at night, I now consciously reflect on three things in my life that I am grateful for, and whilst this strategy may seem naive or even childish, it has positively contributed to a genuine feeling of optimism and a deep sense of contentment.

No doubt there may be moments when one feels totally overwhelmed and it's during these times that we should look to reach out, as there are so many in our community who are able to offer support. Let's come together and be here for each other during these challenging times and strengthen our sense of community and belonging.

Wishing  
our precious community Shana Tova Umetukah



**KATE  
BEACONSFIELD**

Kate Beaconsfield is President of the Bialik College School Council and is a passionate believer in the power of social causes. She is Co-Founder and Managing Director of Ripe Maternity.

## 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.