

Lighting our way: Mussar Methods for revealing our unique selves



In this series you will have the opportunity to explore and improve your character traits through a Jewish lens. The Torah says that our purpose in life is to manifest our pure souls. As we all are aware, this is not so easy. Knowing the right things to do doesn't always mean that our hearts and behaviors will manifest that knowledge. Mussar, a centuries old practice of spiritual examination, provides guidance in uncovering our pure souls, which are often obscured by extremes of emotion, desire, and bad habits. How? By exploring character traits (*middot*) which are off-balance so we can see ourselves in new ways, and learning practical structures to make lasting changes. We'll do text study of five *middot* (patience, compassion, truth, responsibility, and equanimity), discover some surprising ways of understanding these traits, and learn traditional practices for change, such as journaling, meditation, self-designed challenges, and chanting. The group process is akin to the traditional Mussar "*va'ad*" in which members share their personal reflections and help each other with their soul work. We'll use *Everyday Holiness* written by Alan Morinis of The Mussar Institute, and excerpts from traditional texts.

This series will be 7 sessions spread over 11 weeks. In the intervening weeks each participant will meet with another group member to engage in the traditional Jewish practice of *chevruta* learning.

Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:30 pm

\$125 per person, plus purchase of the book. Group size is limited.

Location: home of Shirah Bell 6538 39th AV NE, Seattle WA

Dates: March 1, 8, 29; April 5, 19; May 3, 17 - 2012

Dr. Shirah Bell will guide the process. She is a teacher and serious student of Mussar, as well as collaborator with Dr. Alan Morinis. Shirah is a Certified Spiritual Director, directs The Mussar Institute's introductory-level educational offering, *Everyday Holiness*: the course, and teaches classes and mentors individuals in Mussar and Spirituality. She is a member of Congregation Beth Shalom in Seattle, WA.