

# The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend our Broken Hearts and World

## Chapter 5 Grieve and Live

### 1. Threshold Moments

**Purpose:** *Mark the transition from daily life to sacred encounter.*

- Greet people with soft music, low lighting, and a visual centerpiece a photo of your loved ones on a table next to a lit candle.
- Opening prayer: *Let us pray.*  
*Loving God,*  
*Help us to hold space for both grief and joy.*  
*Teach us to show up for one another—not to fix, but to be present.*  
*Give us the grace to grieve fully and the courage to live deeply.*  
*May our presence reflect Your love.*  
*Amen.. Amen*

### 2. Sacred Sparks

**Purpose:** *Create curiosity and open hearts.*

- Pose this provocative question.
- Early in this chapter, Rabbi Brous describes a powerful moment in the Yom Kippur service when the congregation hears the words, “*Who will live and who will die.*” It’s a stark reminder that not everyone gathered this year will be here next year. She emphasizes that this reflection isn’t meant to punish or frighten us, but to awaken us—to give us clarity about what truly matters when we face our own vulnerability. *When have you felt your own vulnerability? How did it shape what you value or how you live?*
- Have people whip around the circle with their answers.

### 3. Chambers of the Spirit

**Purpose:** *Share lived faith experiences in sacred listening circle.*

Invite everyone to share the answer to one or more questions.

1. If you were Jewish and observing Yom Kippur, who would you be wearing white for?

2. Describe an *anastrophe* (p. 89) in your life—a moment when everything turned upside down.
3. What has been your personal or communal *hurban*—your great catastrophe or moment of profound loss?
4. Was there a social issue that ever made you feel like giving up on the world? What was it, and why?
5. There's a tension between grieving and living. How have you come to understand this tension through your own *anastrophe*?
6. Rabbi Yehoshua reminds us that even in joyful moments, we carry the memory of our losses. How have you learned to hold both grief and joy at once?
7. Rabbi Brous talks about beginning to plan her son's bar mitzvah just minutes after his birth. Have you ever experienced a moment like that—imagining a future milestone in the midst of a beginning?
8. Rabbi Brous reflects on the two sets of tablets in the Ark of the Covenant—whole and broken—and says, "It's the broken pieces that tell a story of loss and failure, rage and redemption." Has this been true in your life? What broken pieces tell your story?
9. Rabbi Brous says we don't promise our children a life free of pain, but we bless them with a life of purpose. How have you supported or surrounded those you love as they search for or live out their purpose?

#### **4. Intentional Sending**

***Purpose:*** *Leave inspired and committed to live the faith.*

- Use a ritual action:
  - Relight the candle
  - Invite everyone to share the one word or phrase they would like to take into the next week/month (depending how often you are meeting).
- Close with a prayer of sending... Loving God, Thank you for being with us in both sorrow and joy. Help us to honor our grief without fear and to embrace life with open hearts. May we leave here with courage—to show up, to feel deeply, and to live fully. Amen.