

# TEENS SPEAK THEIR TRUTH

Make a statement for the books



**Peer pressure. Academic expectations. Family dynamics. Digital overload. Identity exploration. Uncertainty about the future.**

As if being a teen wasn't hard enough.

Add to this being Jewish in the midst of a divisive war, especially in a space where you may be one of only a few Jews. It's fair to assume that most people have felt a broken heart at some point during this period. That may be a reflection of loss, confusion or despair, but can certainly be channeled to strength, hope and faith .

- ◆ Hanan Ben Ari's song Broken Hearts – שבורי לב captures some of those feelings and may strike a chord as you consider the magnitude of this moment. Keep it on in the background as you continue with this resource.

*Lyrics can be found at the end of this resource.*



## READ BETWEEN THE LINES

The title of a recent article published by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) says it all. Click the headline to read the article:

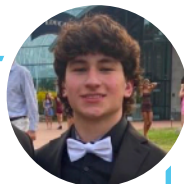


### [Sad, scared, proud, alone: How US Jewish teens are feeling amid the Israel-Hamas war.](#)

- ◆ Here are four excerpts among over a dozen reflections that appear in the piece. Underneath each quote, you'll notice a hashtag that can capture the essence of that teen's experience.

I'm trying my best to show my pride at being Jewish. Just trying to wear my Star of David to school and in public and anywhere I go.

- Jacob Abowitz, 17



**#PROUD**

Most people around me are not discussing the war, which feels really lonely. I understand that it is a difficult topic to talk about, but it has to be discussed, and ignoring it makes my Jewish peers and me feel alone.

- Elsie Cohen, 17



**#LONELY**





When talking about the whole situation in Israel with my peers, there has been a lot of frustration and sadness. Everyone is worried, really worried. We are making sure we are praying and donating to the IDF. It's a very difficult situation. It puts a strain on everything. Making sure we are contributing and praying – it's pretty much all we can do.

- Deborah Haspel, 16

**#FRUSTRATED**



I see a lot of things on Instagram, talking about how many Israelis got killed, and the situation happening. And it's really making me feel like our world has gone horribly wrong. I was kind of in a crisis with all the events going on. I've always showed my Judaism. I'm not afraid to tell anyone and especially now you should have more pride in it being Jewish. Because if you try to hide it now, that gives Hamas what they want.

- Sam Pressman, 16

**#CHARGED**

## UNIQUE BUT NOT ALONE

- ◆ Take a few minutes to read through the article in its entirety and interpret the teen experiences in one word similar to the hashtags above.

**PROUD**

**CHARGED**

**FRUSTRATED**

**LONELY**

- ◆ Review the list of words that were generated and highlight three that stand out. Some may resonate more than others because they reflect something you're feeling, while others may expose pieces of yourself you may not want to reckon with.



## SPEAK YOUR TRUTH



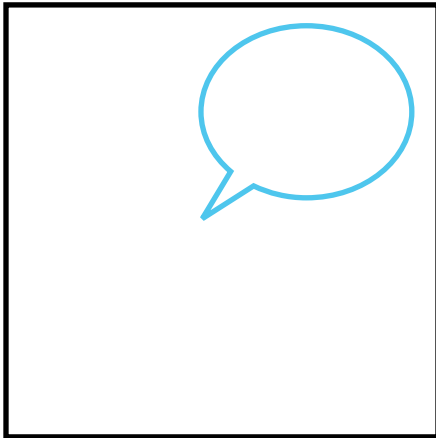
The cover image from the JTA article is powerful for a number of reasons. One element that stands out is the quote above each person's head. The message is important, but the artistic choice to choose a speech bubble instead of a thought bubble is significant. These teens haven't just formulated their thoughts; they're speaking their truth.

- ◆ Review the words you highlighted above and compose a brief statement capturing your truth of the moment. In other words, if you were featured in this article, what would you say?

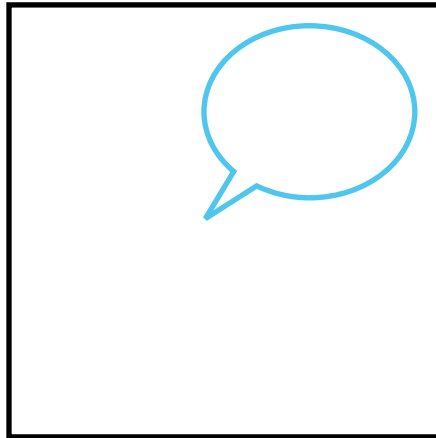


The statement you just articulated can inform the way you show up in various settings. It's possible that the message might change depending on who you're sharing it with. Speaking among friends or family might feel safer while sharing your perspective in a public setting comes with greater risk.

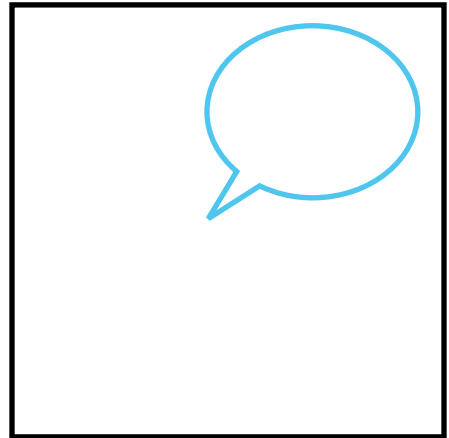
- ◆ In the space below, capture how you'll speak about your experience, given the fact it might change based on the context.



Alone in front of a mirror



Among friends or family



In public

## YOUR PAGE IN THE STORY

The way that you navigate these extremely trying times may become a central part of your story.

"Imagine that while browsing a library, you come across one book unlike the rest, which catches your eye because on its spine is written the name of your family. Intrigued, you open it and see many pages written by different hands in many languages. You start reading it, and gradually you begin to understand what it is. It is the story each generation of your ancestors has told for the sake of the next, so that everyone born into this family can learn where they came from, what happened to them, what they lived for and why... **As you turn the pages, you reach the last page which carries no entry but a heading. It bears your name.**"

- Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

- ◆ If the statement you articulated above appeared on your page in this book, will it make you proud? If not, what would it take to turn your experience into one of Jewish pride?



## BROKEN HEARTS / HANAN BEN ARI

Who knows every pain  
Who can heal the broken heart  
Creates light and darkness  
Makes peace and warfare

Who sits on the judgment seat  
Clothes himself in mercy  
Pardons and forgives  
He knows all, and all he sees

And who? Who will heal my heart  
For whom do I long  
Like a sea that has no shore  
Just tell me who  
Will embrace me and ensure  
That I will not give up in the end...

Who was, and is, and will be  
Puts to death and brings to life  
Opens arms  
Sprouts wings

And who will heal my heart  
For whom am I longing  
Like a sea that has no shore  
Just tell me who  
Who will embrace me and ensure  
That I will not give up in the end

Who  
For whom do I long  
Like a sea that has no shore  
Just tell me who  
Will embrace me and ensure  
That I will not give up in the end...  
That I will not give up in the end...  
That I will not give up in the end...

## שבורי לב / חנן בן ארי

מי יודע כל כאב  
מי רופא לשבורי לב  
יוצר אור וחושך  
עושה שלום ומלחמה

מי יושב על כיסא דין  
מתכסה ברחמים  
מוחל וסולח  
מביט ויודע

ומי...ירפא ליבי  
אל מי אני מתגעגע  
כמו ים שאין לו חוף  
רק תגיד לי מי  
מי יחבק אותי  
ויבטיח שאני לא אכנע בסוף

מי היה הווה ויהיה  
מי ממית ומחיה  
פותח ידיים  
מצמיח כנפיים

ומי...ירפא ליבי  
אל מי אני מתגעגע  
כמו ים שאין לו חוף  
רק תגיד לי מי  
מי יחבק אותי  
ויבטיח שאני לא אכנע בסוף

מי  
אל מי אני מתגעגע  
כמו ים שאין לו חוף  
רק תגיד לי מי  
מי יחבק אותי  
ויבטיח שאני לא אכנע בסוף  
שאני לא אכנע בסוף  
שאני לא אכנע בסוף

