



## Poem for Courage to Act Honestly and Compassionately in Repentance

Recognizing our wrongdoings is important for *teshuva*, repentance, but it doesn't complete the process. Maimonides explains: "What is complete repentance? One who once more had in their power to repeat a transgression, but separated themselves from it, and did not do it because of repentance—not out of fear or lack of strength."<sup>1</sup> Such transformative repentance doesn't happen without preparation for potential future pitfalls. Rabbi Jill Zimmerman's poem and prayer offer an intention and framework for the process of transformation, holding both the recognition of the harm that was done and the hope for change. The poem sets forth intentions that include embracing our humility by asking for help, whether divine or communal, and for strength to see through our shortcomings and surmount them.

This poem was published on November 9, 2017 by [Rabbi Jill Zimmerman](#) and republished with permission of [the website](#).

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### PRAYER-POEM #METOO

Blessed are those who reveal painful truths,  
and blessed are those who bear witness.  
Blessed are those whose unspoken story  
simmers underneath,

affecting some parts of life,  
or coloring everything.

May our hearts be large enough to hold them all.

Let us make each community a tapestry woven  
with honesty,  
a safe space filled with deep trust  
so that wounds needing healing  
are gently, patiently, urgently held,  
where shame is unraveled,  
and the fabric of our souls can be rewoven  
in wholeness, once again.

Let us not hide from what is difficult.  
Help us when we are afraid to keep opening,  
knowing that we, our community, our sisterhood, our loved ones  
will hold us in the warm folds  
of an embrace knitted with love.

Embolden our community to take account of itself.  
Give us strength to shine the light  
on every dark place where power is or can be abused.  
Give us the courage to break apart  
the structures that keep secrets hidden.

May we commit to holiness in every relationship,  
May we truly learn to see the Divine in each other's faces,  
valuing the right of each person to say yes or say no, or not yet –  
please help us understand how to respect sacred boundaries:  
My body, My consent, My dignity.

May this uncovering and revealing and working through  
transform our stories and our pain into holy wisdom  
that repairs and lifts up, that blesses and heals.

## Questions for Reflection

1. What sentiments are reflected in this poem?
2. How is the sacredness of repair expressed in the poem?
3. Inspired by this poem, how can a community embrace the vulnerability of the healing process?

## Endnotes

1. Laws of Repentance, *Mishneh Torah*.

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*This piece is part of the Respect & Responsibility: A Jewish Ethics Study Guide that is a joint project of Sacred Spaces and the Center for Jewish Ethics. Learn more at [www.jewishsacredspaces.org](http://www.jewishsacredspaces.org).*