

Seeking Safety in Shabbat

Gen Z Tells OneTable What They Need





“More than the Jews have kept
Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews.”

AHAD HA'AM (1856-1927)

Seeking People I Can Trust...

OneTable's Gen Z participants (born after 1997, oldest are 27 in 2024) report decreasing social circles and increasing interest in in-person events. They seek safe spaces, nuanced and specific conversations, and an oasis from the antisemitism and divisiveness they are experiencing in their physical and digital lives.

OneTable has seen this longing for spaces in which they can feel comfortable tackling tough conversations. There's a hunger for trusted OneTable resources, and a yearning for an expanded concept of "peer-led Shabbat" to include OneTable professionals as local hosts.

In turbulent times, OneTable's Gen Z participants are leaning into Shabbat dinner — another generation discovering that more than they keep Shabbat, the oasis of Shabbat keeps them.

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Letter from the CEO

When we founded OneTable in 2014, it was to address parallel trends of Jewish young adults disassociating from traditional Judaism¹ while at the same time facing rampant loneliness, social isolation, and addiction to technology.² At the time, young adults were Millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996. Ten years later, our population has shifted and now close to half are members of Gen Z, born in 1997 or after.

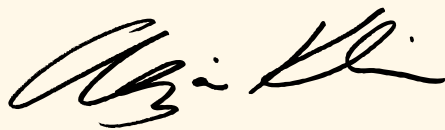
It's not just demographics that have changed since our founding, the world has changed. We've lived through a global COVID-19 pandemic, a national epidemic of loneliness and isolation about which the Surgeon General issued [a 2023 advisory](#), and of course October 7. **In the 12 months since October 7, 2023**, almost **90,000 people** gathered at one or more of **34,000 events** posted on OneTable platforms — demonstrating the power of community during difficult times. That's **nearly one-third of ALL OneTable participants** over the last 10 years.

OneTable's unique ability to serve young adults seeking Jewish joy, connection, and grounding is now needed like never before. This study was our first investigation into the unique needs of our youngest participants and, while not representative of the whole generation, the results to be generalizable across the whole generation, offers many meaningful insights.

The following pages represent a summary of the study, undertaken with generous support from The Jim Joseph Foundation, and both findings and opportunities that we believe will be helpful to the field. I am especially grateful to the skillful leadership of OneTable's Research Advisory Board, Julia Logan Labow, Senior Director of Impact and Learning, and Jamie Betesh Carter, a long-time research consultant and thought partner for OneTable.

We look forward to speaking with you about how to apply these findings to your work.

L'Shalom,



Aliza Kline
OneTable Founding CEO
October 30, 2024

1. Mitchell, Travis. "Jewish Americans in 2020." Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 11 May 2021, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/.

2. In 2023, the United States Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, raised the alarm about the devastating impacts of this epidemic on all ages. Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation, www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

Gen Z's Time to Shine

When OneTable was founded in 2014, it was created specifically to engage those in their 20s and 30s — at the time, Millennials (born 1981-1996). We used a human-centered design approach that baked participant research right into our development so that we could offer the most impactful programming for this group.

Ten years later, the population has shifted and now **42% of our most active participants are part of Gen Z** (born 1997-2012). When we analyze their participation, dinner descriptions, and even their table decorations, we see distinct preferences that separate them from the Millennials. To continue to offer the best programming we can, we knew we needed to find out more about Gen Z's motivations, needs, concerns, and the ways they relate to being Jewish.

We saw in our 2021 impact study, [Craving Connection](#), that Gen Z's day-to-day life experiences have notable differences from Millennials. This aligns with Pew research.³

For example, Gen Z places importance on wearing Jewish symbols and cooking and eating Jewish foods.

They are also *more concerned* about global issues like racism and social justice, climate change, and conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

3. Mitchell, Travis. "Jewish Americans in 2020." Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 11 May 2021, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/.

A Note About Timing

Originally, we planned to field this research in fall 2023, but with the attacks on October 7 we postponed and instead doubled-down on weekly participation surveys and one-to-one interviews with active participants to find out about their needs and concerns. During this time, external research like [polls from Hillel](#)⁴ and [NPR](#)⁵ mirrored what we were hearing: October 7 marked a pivotal shift in participants' lives. It was a defining moment for them, and much like we saw previously with September 11 and again with the global COVID-19 pandemic, there is now a ***defined before and after***.

With support from The Jim Joseph Foundation, in May 2024 we began the research process: analyzing existing data, interviewing OneTable staff and key participants, and reviewing related research questions from the field. We conducted the survey from May-June 2024, and subsequent focus groups from June-July, 2024.

4. Hillel International. "Majority of Jewish College Students Say They Feel Less Safe Due to Encampments; 61% Report Antisemitism during Campus Protests." Hillel International, 13 May 2024, www.hillel.org/majority-of-jewish-college-students-say-they-feel-less-safe-due-to-encampments-61-report-antisemitism-during-campus-protests/.

5. Montanaro, Domenico. "Americans Are Split over Israel's Response in Its War with Hamas." NPR, NPR, 15 Nov. 2023, www.npr.org/2023/11/15/1212913674/poll-israel-hamas-war-biden-democrats-republicans.

Background + Methodology

Our Survey...

Fielded May 24 - June 19, 2024

GOAL WAS 200-300
RESPONSES.
COLLECTED

306

RESPONSES.⁷

While not representative of the whole generation, all OneTable users, or all Jewish Gen Z, we do find meaningful insights that inform our work.

SENT VIA EMAIL
TO 18,374 ONETABLE
PARTICIPANTS BORN
AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1996
AND WHO HAD ATTENDED
AT LEAST ONE ONETABLE
DINNER SINCE
JANUARY 1, 2023

INCENTIVIZED:

\$10/\$20

\$10 TO THE EARLIEST
HOST RESPONDENTS +
\$20 TO THE EARLIEST
GUEST RESPONDENTS⁶

6. Typically guests have a lower response rate, thus the increased incentive

7. Throughout this report we will call out where the 306 are similar to, or different from, the Gen Z respondents in our 2021 impact study (N=1,938). OneTable collects more demographic data from volunteer hosts than guests (required in every host application), therefore throughout this report, we will also make comparisons, when appropriate, to Gen Z hosts who did not complete the survey, (N=2,083)

Our survey intentionally repeated select questions from:

- [OneTable's 2021 impact study](#);⁸
- Atlantic 57's 2017 [Unlocking the Future of Jewish Engagement survey](#);⁹
- [Dr. Eitan Hersh](#)¹⁰ who recently studied [Gen Z college students + the impact of the war in Israel](#);¹¹
- [Pew Research Center](#).¹²

This use of validated measures (those already tested) helped ensure that we would produce reliable, valid, comparable, and credible results.

What was going on June - July 2024, while we were in the field with this research...

Polarizing US Presidential Election

- **President Biden was still the Democratic party candidate**
- **June 24: Debate between presidential candidates Trump and Biden**
- **July 13: Assassination attempt on former President Trump**

Ongoing War in Israel and Middle East

- **June 8: Hostages Noa Argamani, Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov and Shlomi Ziv rescued from Nuseirat**
- **July 27: Hezbollah rocket strikes a playground in Majdal Shams, killing 12 children and beginning broader Middle East involvement in the conflict**

Pop Culture

- **Bon Appetit magazine covers meal-centered apps and organizations like ["Bestie Brunch"](#),¹³ ["The Dinner Party Project"](#),¹⁴ and ["Aperitivo Society"](#)¹⁵**
- **"My Spotify" is released, including deeply personal insights rooted in the platform's data**
- **New music was dropped by Billie Eilish, Lil Nas X, and Charlie XCX whose "Brat" kicked off a global "brat summer"**

13. www.instagram.com/bestiebrunchinc/

14. <https://www.thedinnerpartyproject.co/>

15. <https://www.theaperitivosociety.com/>

8. OneTable. "2021 Impact Report." Issuu, 10 June 2022, issuu.com/onetableshabbat/docs/bsg_onetable_impact_study_external_report_6.9.22.

9. Atlantic57. *Unlocking the Future of Jewish Engagement*, Mar. 2020, www.bjpa.org/content/upload/bjpa/Unlocking_the_Future_-_Full_Report.pdf.

10. Jim Joseph Foundation. "U.S. College Students and the War in Israel: Jewish Engagement and Social Tension on Campus." Jim Joseph Foundation, 30 Sept. 2024, jimjosephfoundation.org/learning-resources/u-s-college-students-and-the-war-in-israel-jewish-engagement-and-social-tension-on-campus/.

11. BoundlessIsrael.Org, boundlessisrael.org/opinion-polling. Accessed 22 Oct. 2024.

12. Silver, Laura. "Younger Americans Stand out in Their Views of the Israel-Hamas War." Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 2 Apr. 2024, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/.

Focus Groups

The 306 survey responses we collected provided substantial data to generate four unique focus groups. These were facilitated by external market research consultant Jamie Betesh Carter of Designing Empathy in June and July 2024.

FOCUS GROUP 1
OLDER GEN Z
(BORN 1997-1999)
(8 RESPONDENTS)

FOCUS GROUP 3
SELF-IDENTIFIED AS NOT
CURRENTLY FEELING CLOSE
TO JEWISH COMMUNITY
(7 RESPONDENTS)

FOCUS GROUP 2
YOUNGER GEN Z
(BORN 2000-2003)
(7 RESPONDENTS)

FOCUS GROUP 4
SELF-IDENTIFIED AS
CURRENTLY FEELING CLOSE
TO JEWISH COMMUNITY
(6 RESPONDENTS)

In each group, we discussed topics including what participants felt ***defines Gen Z***, what ***misconceptions*** they felt people have about Gen Z, and how they'd describe their ***identities and Jewish identities*** (including Shabbat dinner and OneTable) at this lifestage. We also discussed the current ***conflict in the Middle East***, and dove into how their Jewish identities have been affected by it. Additionally, we spoke about what they ***want and need from OneTable*** in order to navigate the current times.

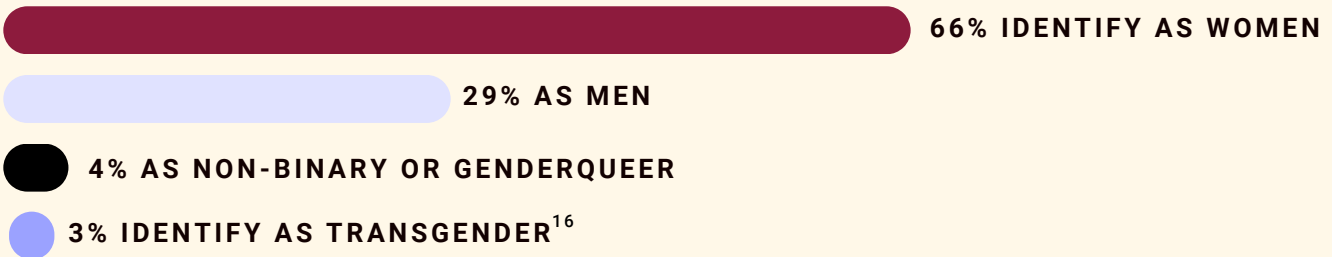
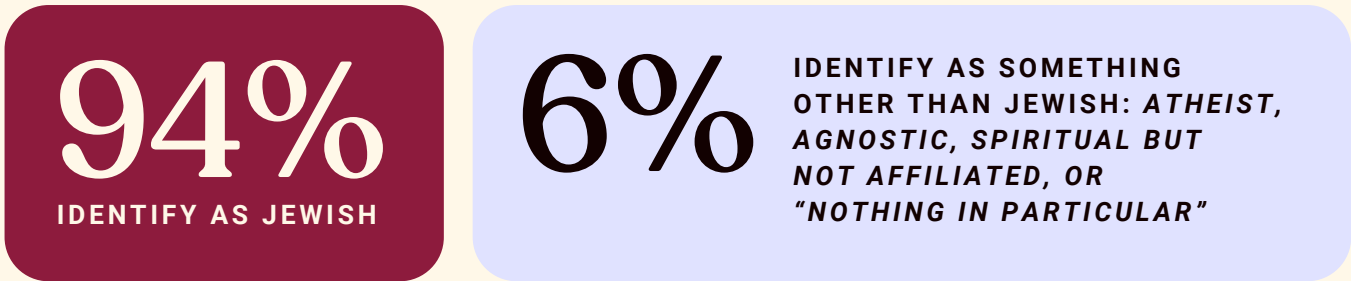
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

As we analyzed data from the focus groups, we took a dynamic approach that factored in variations of opinions, life experiences, behaviors, and attitudes in order to understand very complex thoughts and emotions. We used coding to identify larger themes shared across multiple respondents, as well as left room for nuanced, specific thoughts and opinions.

WHO THEY ARE

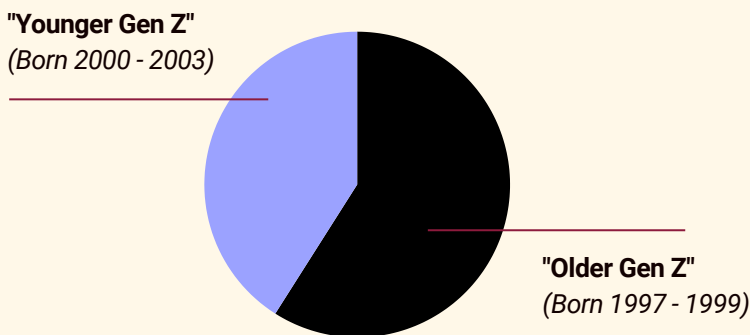
Gen Z Respondents

Reflect a range of Jewish identities and backgrounds (full breakdown in Appendix). N=306



16. According to a [Gallup poll released in March 2024](#), 2.8% of the Gen Z overall population identifies as transgender. In this study, respondents could report as being in more than one category. For example, transgender as a subset of non-binary.

Birth Year (1997-2003)



26%
IDENTIFY WITH A RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND OTHER THAN "WHITE ONLY"

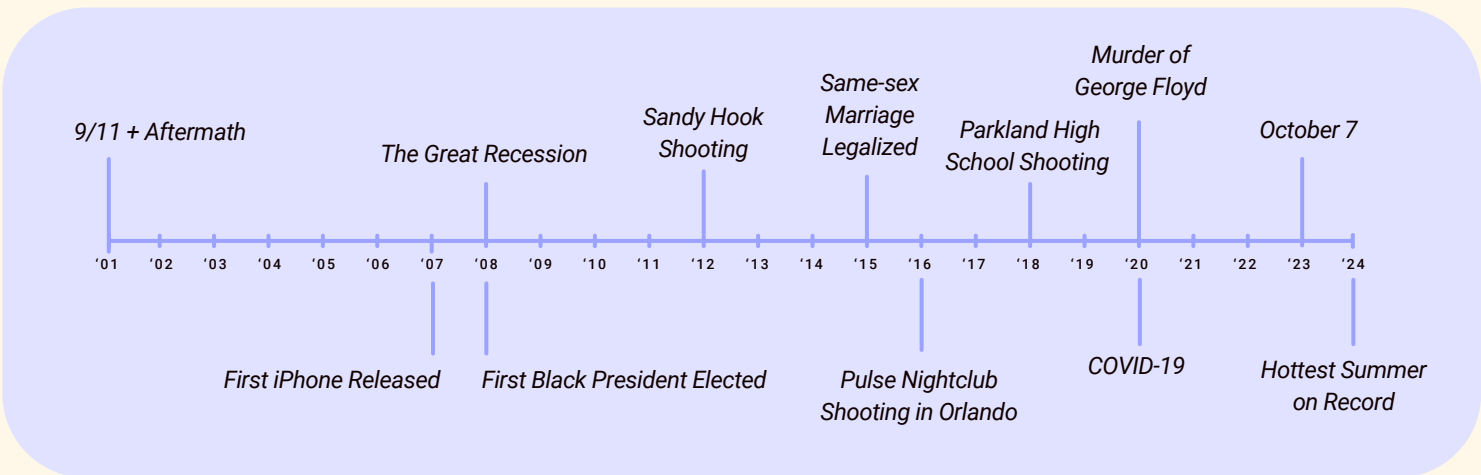


FORMATIVE JEWISH EXPERIENCES

By and large, these 306 respondents have been **active participants in Jewish life**. This may be attributed to a number of factors: proximity to college, current events driving participation, successful Jewish community interventions, and a self-selecting audience of active OneTable participants.

- 76% had a bar or bat mitzvah.
- 73% have traveled to Israel, with
 - 42% having gone on Birthright Israel.
- 70% participated in Hillel.
- 62% went to Jewish summer camp.
- 55% attended Hebrew school.
- 50% participated in Chabad.
- 41% participated in Jewish youth group (BBYO, NFTY, USY).
- 39% attended Jewish day school.
- 9% came from interfaith homes.
- 6% converted to Judaism.

BEYOND UNIQUELY JEWISH EXPERIENCES,
GEN Z IS DEFINED BY A SERIES OF MILESTONE EVENTS:



Misconceptions of Gen Z

Qualitative responses highlighted their beliefs that others hold misconceptions of Gen Z as **lazy, unmotivated, and not willing to work hard**.¹⁷ This theme is recurrent, with various mentions of **laziness, entitlement, and lack of ambition**, contrasting with claims that Gen Z values a healthy work-life balance and seeks meaningful work.

Respondents also mentioned a **lack of mentorship** as a result of post-COVID work environments, and a feeling **the world is not setting them up for success** in the way it did for other generations as contributing to these misperceptions.¹⁸

*“I think our generation might be the first to really prioritize our happiness and fulfillment rather than just making money and trying to get by, which I feel is more like our parents' generation. **Most of my friends are all more focused on what's going to make them happy rather than their paycheck or where they're working.** And I think that's obviously such a privilege, but we won't stick around a job that we don't like or if we're not feeling fulfilled.”*

17. Royle, Orianna Rosa. “Gen Z Are over Having Their Work Ethic Questioned: ‘Most Boomers Don’t Know What It’s like to Work 40+ Hours a Week and Still Not Be Able to Afford a House’.” *Fortune*, Fortune, 26 Jan. 2024, fortune.com/2024/01/26/gen-z-over-having-work-ethic-questioned-most-boomers-dont-know-work-40-hours-week-not-afford-house/.

18. Bhaimiya, Sawdah. “Gen Z Workers Change Jobs More Often than Any Other Generation Because They’re Prioritizing Happiness, High Expectations, and Raises.” *Business Insider*, Business Insider, www.businessinsider.com/gen-z-spends-less-time-in-jobs-than-earlier-generations-2021-11. Accessed 22 Oct. 2024.

Gen Z Hot Topics

The following is culled from quantitative data, the qualitative data collected in focus groups, as well as 159 responses to free-form questions from survey respondents; percentages reflect both qualitative and quantitative data.

THEY FEEL ADDICTED TO TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Respondents reported that while technology has had both positive and negative impacts on their lives; nearly 30% of answers focused on an **over dependence on their phones and social media**. They reported feeling “**glued to their screens,**” **not socializing in person as often**, and frequently **prioritizing online interactions over real-life connections**.

THEY FEEL MISUNDERSTOOD

Responses indicated that Gen Z is often mischaracterized regarding their values and priorities. This includes misunderstandings about their **commitment to work, financial literacy, political views, and social behavior**. Many respondents felt that **Gen Z is unfairly judged based on stereotypes and generalizations** that don't reflect the diverse experiences and attitudes within the generation.

THEY FEEL ALIENATED BECAUSE OF REACTIONS TO THE ONGOING WAR AND ANTISEMITISM

The Israel-Hamas War and the global rise of antisemitism have deeply affected the Gen Z respondents' sense of security and Jewish identity. Respondents reported **feeling alienated from friends, social circles, and even Jewish institutions** due to differing views on the conflict. Respondents also reported **increased monetary donations**. Responses also highlighted **feelings of discomfort, fear, and anxiety**, particularly about attending events, participating in discussions, or even **being visibly Jewish**. This discomfort stems from concerns about antisemitism, unwanted conversations, and the overall tense climate regarding the Israel-Hamas War, and there is a strong sense of **frustration and alienation due to differing views**. Respondents expressed **concerns about being misunderstood, misrepresented, or ostracized** because of their positions on the conflict. This included feelings of **alienation within Jewish communities and broader social circles**.

THEY ARE SEARCHING FOR NUANCED DIALOGUE AND EMPATHY

In their open-ended responses, many emphasized the **need for more nuanced, empathetic discussions about the Israel-Hamas War**. Many respondents expressed a **desire for safe spaces where different perspectives can be heard** and understood without hostility or black-and-white thinking. There is a **call for dialogue** that respects the complexity of the situation and prioritizes human values and empathy.

THEY ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT WITH JEWISH COMMUNITY

The top three responses as to where all respondents were finding meaning in Judaism these days were **1) Shabbat dinner, 2) spending time with Jewish friends, and 3) being part of Jewish community**.

Respondents are **increasingly turning towards Jewish community events and gatherings for support** even as they disengage online or from certain relationships. For example, *57% of respondents are more inclined to attend events associated with Jewish organizations*. This suggests that in times of heightened tension and fear, many Gen Z participants are seeking solace within a tighter version of their Jewish community.

Many respondents are **turning away from social media due to the overwhelming presence of antisemitism and the divisive nature of online discourse**. Instead, they are finding more value in in-person interactions within their Jewish communities. This shift highlights a desire for deeper, more meaningful connections that are often lost in the noise of social media, and a preference for environments in which they can feel safe and supported in their identities.

Findings that respondents are **turning away from social media in favor of in-person community interactions** are consistent with research suggesting that Gen Z is increasingly aware of the negative impacts of social media¹⁹ and is seeking out more authentic, less toxic forms of interaction. This shift towards offline engagement is seen as a way to reclaim control over their social environments and mental health.

Shabbat dinners, **particularly those hosted through OneTable**, have become a crucial means for respondents to find connection and community. A full 50% reported being more inclined to attend OneTable dinners in the face of antisemitism. These gatherings provide an oasis from the stress and negativity associated with current events, allowing participants to experience Jewish joy and create safe spaces in which they feel understood and supported. Respondents feel empowered to explore and create their own Jewish practices, especially in the wake of the recent conflicts.

19. While social media has been a critical tool for activism and identity exploration, it has also been associated with increased anxiety, loneliness, and exposure to harmful content, including antisemitism.

HOW THEY FEEL

There is a strong emphasis on **seeking comfort and support within the Jewish community**. Respondents mentioned engaging in Jewish activities, attending Shabbat dinners, and finding solace in connecting with other Jews who understand their experiences and challenges. This theme highlights **the importance of solidarity and mutual support in times of heightened antisemitism**.

THEY FEEL A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING IN SELECTIVE SETTINGS

As we saw in our 2021 impact survey, **respondents continue to feel a strong sense of belonging**, with a significant majority reporting feelings of **inclusion, connection, and acceptance** within the social groups and at the social events of their choosing. Over 90% of respondents agreed with statements reflecting a strong sense of belonging, such as feeling included, having close bonds with family and friends, and feeling connected with others.

Building on research by Tufts University professor Dr. Eitan Hersh, we asked participants about **how the Israel-Hamas War has impacted their mental health**. We saw “both/and” responses:

- Feeling alienated from some peers AND feeling closer to family or friends
- Disconnecting from social circles due to the war AND reflecting on personal beliefs and values, leading to a reinforced sense of identity

SOME DO NOT FEEL CLOSE TO JEWISH COMMUNITY RIGHT NOW

A minority of respondents, 13%, shared that they **did not feel close to Jewish community right now**. While notably different in how they responded to many of the questions, they **are still finding meaning in Judaism** – through celebrating Passover (59%) and cooking and eating Jewish foods (59%). This group **feels more alienated from Jewish institutions** as a result of the Israel-Hamas War than overall respondents.

*“I get antisemitism at school, at work, with patients, with people I thought were my friends, and even with distant family members. It can be overwhelming and it's hard to find space in my mind for other stuff. I am trying to **prioritize moments of Jewish joy** as much as I can.”*

*“It's honestly nice knowing that there's an organization that's here for us and here to foster inclusion in the Jewish community. I was raised very reformed [sic], and moving to Miami where there's a strong conservative/orthodox population, **I could not blend in for the life of me**, and I could not find anywhere that accepted me. With some of the OneTable events I went to, I still couldn't find unity but even when I couldn't, I could at least make it, which was nice.”*

THEY FEEL DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES

Gen Z respondents expressed **significant concerns about the future**, including the 2024 U.S. presidential election and issues of racism, social justice, climate change, and mental health. The rates of concern are similar to those reported in 2021.

THEY STILL FEEL IMPACT OF GROWING UP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Although most public attention has shifted to more recent jarring events, Gen Z participants still very much feel the effects of COVID-19 and the hole it created in their development. The pandemic has left a **lasting impact on their outlook on life and long-term goals**, with many reporting changes in their career and educational plans.²⁰⁻²¹

20. Nguyen, Terry. “Gen Z Does Not Dream of Labor.” Vox, 11 Apr. 2022, www.vox.com/the-highlight/22977663/gen-z-antiwork-capitalism.

21. Dazed. “The Death of the College-to-Corporate Pipeline.” Dazed, 19 July 2024, www.dazeddigital.com/life-culture/article/63166/1/the-death-of-the-college-to-corporate-job-pipeline-dream-job-work-ambition.

Gen Z Respondents' Views of OneTable

SHABBAT AS AN OASIS

Respondents highlighted Shabbat dinners as not only a way to **connect to Judaism**, but as **an oasis from the hardships** they encounter during the week.

*“For me, hosting and attending OneTable Shabbat dinners have been a distraction from the Israel-Hamas War and the rise of antisemitism. The **social and celebratory atmosphere is a nice change of pace** to the constant discussion and hardship of everything else.”*

SIGNIFICANT EMPOWERMENT TOOL

Respondents identified OneTable, with its emphasis on peer-led engagement, as a significant tool for **feeling empowered to explore their role in creating Jewish practice**.

*“OneTable makes me feel **empowered to host**. I think moving so far away from family, being the only one on the West Coast, I never felt adequate enough to be the person who brings everyone together and to properly do the traditions. Then, OneTable really helped me feel empowered to do that, and there was an audience for it — other people my age who were also figuring that out.”*

CREATING SAFE JEWISH SPACES

OneTable is helping respondents **find and create safe Jewish spaces** where participants can be themselves — specifically since October 7, 2023.

*“(OneTable) gave me the opportunity to **meet other Jewish people** in the city that I'm living in, and to feel **comfortable and safe** with them. It doesn't feel safe to be Jewish in Washington, D.C. And so to be able to have people who I can trust and actually be able to say, ‘Hey, this is how I'm feeling,’ and they understand it, it's a very **powerful experience** to have.”*



Opportunities for the Future

For Gen Z, having grown up in a world marked by economic instability, political polarization, and now, the Israel-Hamas War, **rituals like Shabbat dinner** offer a stable and familiar way to connect with others, reaffirm their identities, and feel safe in a divided society and world full of conflict. This offers us a variety of opportunities to best serve this generation in the future.

DIY+: EXPAND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF PEER-LED COMMUNITY

Throughout OneTable's years of conducting research, we've consistently heard that participants appreciate **the freedom and creativity that the peer-led model allows** while also **leaning on, and trusting, OneTable to provide inspiration and support** in creating Shabbat dinners that strengthen their connection to Judaism and help them create their own community. Right now, due to shrinking social circles, heightened awareness of different beliefs, values, and opinions, Gen Z respondents are **looking to OneTable to lead them more than participants have in the past**, particularly in creating community.

*“...I honestly wonder if OneTable could just put on an event themselves in each of these different cities. I think people are hesitant to go to a random person's house, but **if OneTable was to put on a Shabbat, then I think more people would come together.** And this is a way to create a domino effect where people start to meet each other at this event and then would feel more willing to put together their own Shabbat dinners.”*

Creating **open events or regular Shabbat dinners** at which individuals can meet others with similar values and interests will allow participants to form meaningful connections and establish a sense of community. This is particularly important in the post-October 7 context, with the hunger shown by Gen Z participants for safe spaces.

*“It could be every so often. So you go to something, you meet people and then you can make your small more intimate dinners. I think a lot of us are in the same networks. Once we meet the people it's like I now know everyone I know and it's like **how do I get to know more people?**”*

CREATE RESOURCES TO KEEP PARTICIPANTS AT THE TABLE

The theme of shrinking social circles among Gen Z respondents offers a valuable opportunity to help them **sustain relationships**, and to keep the 13% of respondents who do not feel connected to the Jewish community at the Shabbat table. Providing **resources** — educational materials, discussion guides, etc. — to help participants **navigate complex topics** and **engage in nuanced conversations** rooted in empathy, as well as **rituals and connections** to stay engaged, will help fulfill their needs. **Facilitated, in person discussions** such as OneTable Conversations will also create safe spaces for participants to engage with each other and create community.

PROVIDE MENTORSHIP FOR SHABBAT AND MORE

Respondents noted a **lack of mentorship in the workplace** as a hindrance to their long-term plans and goals, which is an opportunity for OneTable to create such a system for Shabbat. **We might experiment with multigenerational pairings of slightly older members of the participant community and Gen Z participants** to help the younger participants **navigate their Jewish identity and community involvement**, and give them **trusted resources** throughout.

CURATE FOR GEN Z

Our Gen Z respondents' preference for **safe, comfortable spaces in which nuanced discussions can take place** provides options for how to move ahead with curating for Gen Z. This atmosphere tends to flourish in smaller dinners where participants are comfortable. Incentivizing larger dinners would be one way to encourage hosts to move beyond their typical guest list and help guests create broader social networks while feeling safe, while leaning into the smaller size and incentivizing guests to become hosts to increase the overall number of dinners would be another. Continuing to track Gen Z dinner behaviors will no doubt shed light on what the population prefers, and provide insight into encouraging new behaviors.

CONTINUE WHAT'S WORKING: HOST SUPPORT AND SAFE SPACES

OneTable is seen as a valuable tool in empowering Gen Z participants to explore and create their Jewish practices. We will continue to **provide support for those who want to host Shabbat dinners**, helping them feel confident and capable of leading these gatherings, especially as some feel wary about opening up their homes to those with differing views on sensitive topics.

In response to the rising antisemitism and the challenges brought about by the Israel-Hamas War, it is important to offer safe Jewish spaces in which participants can feel comfortable being themselves. This includes **fostering environments that are inclusive, supportive, and aligned with the participants' values**, offering them a refuge from the hostility they may encounter in other areas of their lives.



Conclusion

This study was OneTable's first commissioned foray into learning more about our Gen Z population, which is now almost half of the young adults participating in our Shabbat dinners. This group has its own unique wants and needs, all of which have been greatly influenced by October 7 and the continuing Israel-Hamas War. Safe spaces, trusted resources, community and connections, and Jewish joy are all reasons that Gen Z leans into OneTable and Shabbat dinner, meaning that OneTable continues to be the leading intervention bringing Jewish young adults to the Shabbat table.

Our exploration of Gen Z participants, while not representative of the whole generation, provides us with meaningful insights into how to continue to serve them with our DIY, human-centered model rooted in our core values of joy, welcoming, and elevation. It continues to validate the intention and success of OneTable, both of which are critical to the well-being of Jewish young adults since October 7, 2023 as evidenced by the almost 90,000 that have gathered at OneTable Shabbat dinners in the 12 months following.

We invite you to join us in continuing to meet the needs of our growing OneTable family. Only with your support will we be able to meet the increased demand for OneTable Shabbat, Jewish joy, and true community.



Appendix

Demographics of Survey Respondents

JEWISH HERITAGE

- 94% identify as Jewish
 - 79% identify as Ashkenazi only
 - 13% identify as Sephardi
 - 6% identify as Mizrahi
 - 2% identify as “I am just Jewish,” “Other,” or “Not sure”
- 6% identify as something other than Jewish, atheist, agnostic, spiritual but not affiliated with a religion, or “nothing in particular”

BIRTH YEAR

- 21% born in 1997
- 19% born in 1998
- 19% born in 1999
- 24% born in 2000
- 12% born in 2001
- 4% born in 2002 or later

GENDER

- 66% identify as women
- 29% identify as men
- 4% identify as non-binary or genderqueer
 - 3% identify as transgender

RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND

- 75% identify as white
- 25% identify as other than “white only”
 - 9% Other
 - 8% Middle Eastern or North African
 - 6% Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish Origin
 - 1% American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1% Asian

ONETABLE PARTICIPATION

- Host/Guest
 - 59% hosted dinners
 - 39% of which also attended dinners as guests
 - 41% attended dinners as guests (i.e. not hosts)
- Dinner Participation
 - 34% have been to 1-3 dinners
 - 14% have been to 4-6 dinners
 - 7% have been to 7-9 dinners
 - 45% have been to 10+ dinners

JEWISH EXPERIENCES

“PART OF YOUR JEWISH JOURNEY”

- 76% had a bar or bat mitzvah
- 73% have traveled to Israel with
 - 42% having gone on Birthright Israel
- 70% participated in Hillel
- 62% went to Jewish summer camp
- 55% attended Hebrew school
- 50% participated in Chabad
- 41% participated in Jewish youth group
 - BBYO, NFTY, USY
- 39% went to Jewish day school
- 9% came from interfaith homes
- 6% converted to Judaism

CONNECTION TO JEWISH COMMUNITY*

- 48% felt very close
- 39% felt somewhat close
- 10% felt not very close
- 3% felt not at all close

** Question repeated from 2017 Unlocking the Future of Jewish Engagement survey about how close respondents felt to Jewish community right now.*

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QUESTIONS?

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