

# Positive Rabbi Experiences

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Most positive experiences with rabbis occur in formal settings like synagogue or services, but informal interactions cannot be overlooked as they are equally meaningful.

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Rabbis have a critical role to play in helping young Jews feel more comfortable with their Jewishness: positive experiences make them feel more accepted and more comfortable being Jewish.

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A positive experience with a rabbi can have a lasting impact on young Jews' involvement in the community, connection to their religion and interest in learning more moving forward.

## Positive experiences with rabbis mainly occur during major life events, in school settings, in temple/synagogue or when receiving guidance

Most positive experiences occur in temples or synagogues, in academic settings, during major life events, particularly weddings or B'nei Mitzvahs, or when receiving guidance (either religious/spiritual or general guidance). Casual and social interactions have an impact as well. For most people, these experiences took place in the last 5 years, with 1-in-5 saying it happened during the past year. Notably, younger respondents were more likely to say they had a positive experience with a rabbi in the past year.

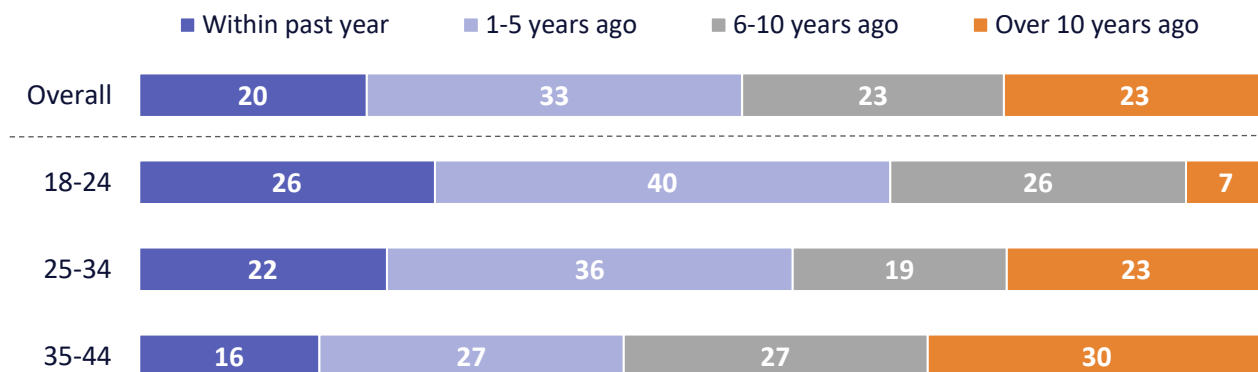
### Please select all of the situations where you have had a positive experience with a rabbi.

*Asked among those who had a positive or mixed experience (54%), Multiple responses accepted*

		% MOST POS EXPERIENCE
Services at a temple or synagogue	44	8
A casual interaction or social situation	41	7
At a Hebrew school, Jewish preschool, day school or Hebrew high school	39	9
A Shabbat dinner or other social holiday event	38	5
A B'nei Mitzvah service	32	9
A funeral service	32	5
Looking for personal, spiritual or religious guidance	32	8
A wedding ceremony	31	9
Looking for general guidance/advice for your life	30	8
A family meeting preparing for a funeral	26	2
A shiva	24	3
On a trip to Israel, March of the Living trip, other immersive Jewish travel	24	5
At a Jewish summer camp	24	5
In an academic or intellectual setting such as in a class or on a panel	23	3
In an online setting, such as on Zoom or on social media	22	4
A rabbi reaching out to you on the street or in a public place	21	4
As a guide or participant in a conversion/affirmation process	21	3
A baby naming or a bris	20	2
On a college campus	19	3

### Roughly how long ago did this positive experience or interaction with a rabbi occur?

*Asked among those who had a positive or mixed experience (54%)*

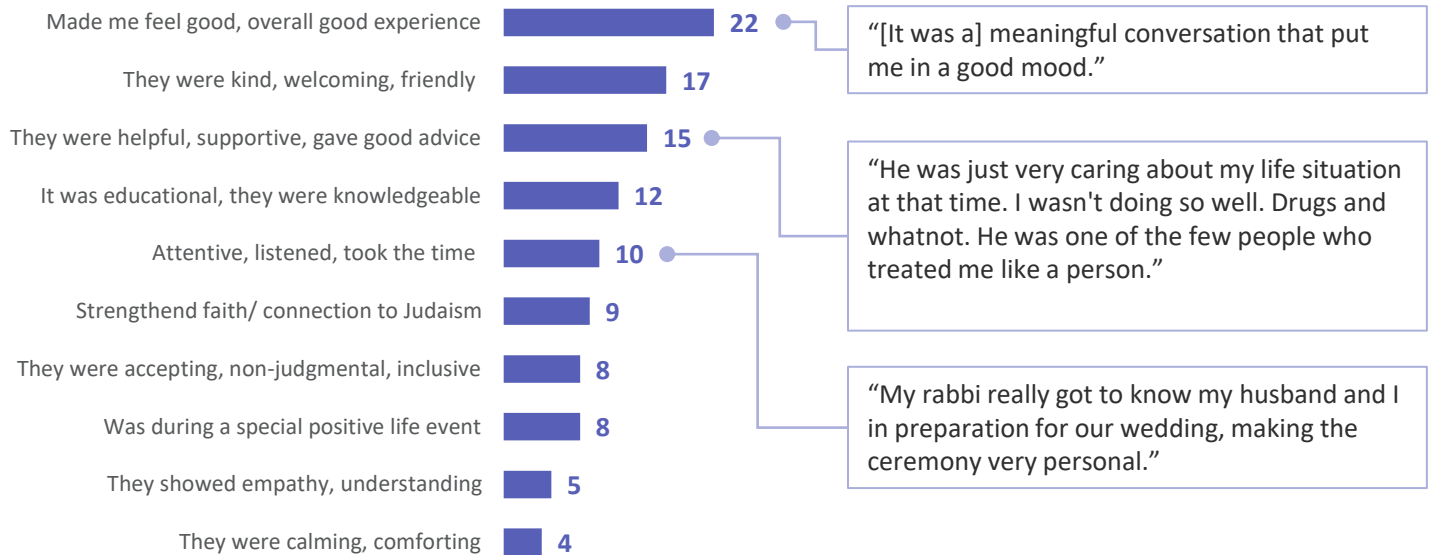


## A common thread across positive experiences are that they leave young Jews feeling more connected and accepted

Among those who've had a positive experience, on an open-ended basis, they were most likely to mention that it made them feel good, that the rabbi was kind, welcoming or friendly, and that they were helpful and supportive.

### What specifically made this a positive experience? Open End

Showing responses above 3%



For a majority of those who had a positive experience, it left them feeling accepted. Women were more likely than men to say these positive experiences made them feel at ease and connected. Notably, the type of positive experience does not affect how people feel – regardless of the experience, whether it was a life cycle event or something else, the top feelings of acceptance, gratitude, feeling at ease, connection and happiness remain.

### How did this positive experience make you feel? Please select all that apply.

Asked among those who had a positive or mixed experience (54%), Multiple responses accepted

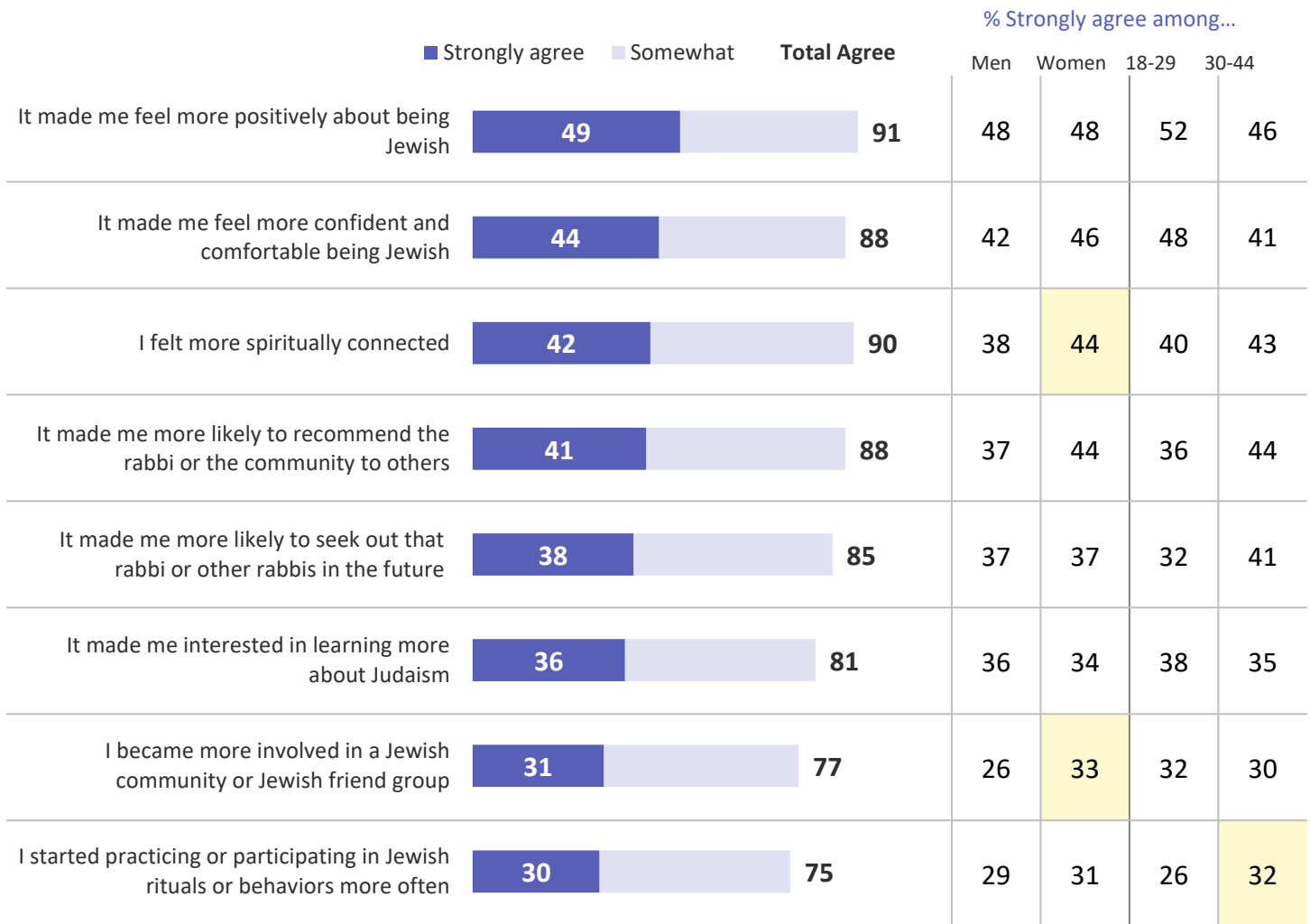
	Men	Women
Accepted	58	49
Grateful	44	46
At ease	36	50
Connected	33	51
Happy	44	42
Excited	37	35
Safe	35	35
Capable / competent to engage in Jewish things	27	37
Included	30	36
Proud	28	35
Fulfilled	25	37
Spiritually engaged	24	38
Satisfied	32	23
Informed	24	26
Understood	23	24
None of the above	1	1

## Positive experiences lead to stronger connections with Jewish identity and faith

Positive rabbi experiences have a profound impact. First, these experiences do the best job at strengthening internal feelings of Jewishness and connection, namely feeling more positive, confident and comfortable being Jewish, in addition to feeling more spiritually connected. Second, these experiences help with future engagement with and recommendation of that rabbi. While there isn't overwhelming indication of behavior change in terms of becoming more involved with a Jewish friend group or participating in more Jewish rituals or practices, there is still positive improvement, particularly among women and 30-44-year-olds.

### Impact of their positive rabbi experience

Asked among those who had a positive or mixed experience (54%)



For most types of positive rabbi interaction, the outcomes tend to be similar and ranked in a similar order, regardless of what the interaction is, whether it's a life cycle event, services, or an educational/ school experience. The one exception is instances where the positive experience was a rabbi providing spiritual, religious or general guidance to someone. In those cases, the outcomes are significantly more positive (higher numbers across the board on the chart above), particularly for practicing or participating in Jewish rituals or behaviors more often (13 points higher than total in strongly agree) and feeling more spiritually connected (11 points higher).