

President's Message November 2006

How well do you handle disappointments? As far as showing character goes, I think how you handle disappointments show more about the real you than how you handle success. When things have gone wrong, how do you respond? Do you go into a shell and wait for the funk to go away? Do you think that maybe you did something wrong and are being punished? Do you get angry and lash out at people or things? Do you go on a binge of self-destructive behavior? Do you go out and do something for someone else?

I think I have handled disappointments and frustrations in each of those manners at some point in my life. As I get older, I tend to take notice of what makes me feel better. Going into a shell and waiting for things to get better has seemed to always take the longest to get back to feeling good again. Blaming myself and trying to figure out what I did wrong rarely works, because much of the time, what happened was way beyond my control. If it was something that I could control, then I would try to figure out what I did wrong and how to make things better. Getting angry has never worked for me. When I do get angry, I then tend to beat myself up for not being able to act in the way that I wanted to act. The one thing I really try to do is to keep control of who I am and how I react to others. Binging, such as overeating, overdrinking or even over shopping is a quick fix that can make you feel better for a short time, but tends to create more problems in the long run.

That leaves me with only one viable solution — that is to go out and do something for someone else. The more selfless the act, the more it makes you feel better. As Rabbi Lewis has said many times, the act comes before the feeling. I take this to mean that especially when you don't have the desire to go out and do something for someone else, it is more imperative to do it at that time. The desire to do this may not come until after you have done your Mitzvah.

May all of your Mitzvot be done with joy in your heart.

Howie