

President's Message November 2010

This month I want to quote a couple of passages from Pirke Avot, the ethics of the fathers. This book has been the basis of the [adult education class](#) for years. The first quote is from Ben Zoma, who says, "Who is rich? He who is happy with what he has." This is a wonderful definition of what it means to be satisfied with what one has in life. And Hillel says "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I?"

My impression of these two quotes is the following: While it is acceptable to be satisfied with what you have in life, it is not acceptable to not give back and help out those who are less fortunate than you. And no matter how bad you think things are going for you at the moment, there are folks out there who have far less than you do. And also, unless your name is Bill Gates, there is someone with more material wealth than you have. So that puts us all somewhere in the middle between rich and poor. The one thing that you do have control of in your life is your attitude. So when you wake up in the morning, think about how you can improve the life of someone else that day. To quote the Boy Scout Slogan, "Do a good turn daily".

As your president, I ask you to commit yourself for one week this month to do something nice for someone else, whether it is someone in your family, someone at your workplace, someone in your class, your coach or teammate, or a stranger on the street. Smile at someone as you pass them. Offer to assist someone who looks like they could use a hand. Work in a soup kitchen. Deliver a meal to someone who is ill. Phone a friend or family member that you have lost touch with. Or something else that is meaningful to you. Remember that a simple random act of kindness spreads like wildfire.

I think that as you do things for other people, you will end up helping yourself. Let's be part of the world that we can truly be proud of.

So to return to the initial quotes, enjoy what you have, kvell with your family and friends and reach out to others.

Shalom.

Love,
Howie Hirsch