

## President's Summer Message 2011

Last month I wrote my message from New Zealand after spending Shabbat on the Great Barrier Reef. Now I will talk about the subject of trust.

There are sometimes in your life that you turn over your life to someone else or maybe even a higher power. While touring New Zealand, my cousins, Iris, Caitlin and I found ourselves spending a couple of days on the western shore of New Zealand to visit the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers. On our ride towards the glaciers, Caitlin was getting very excited that she might get to go skydiving. It has been something that she has wanted to do for a few years now and thought that skydiving over the glaciers would be an interesting way to do this. As we looked at the brochures, the sight of the glaciers from the air intrigued me and got me thinking that maybe I would do this with her. The more I thought about it, the more I thought I would like to try it. So in the morning, we called up the skydiving place (after checking out their safety record) and booked a jump for the two of us.

When we arrived at the hangar, we were put into jump suits and harnesses and then driven to the airplane. The hardest part for me was walking on the plane, as this was the only place, I had control, in case I wanted to back out. While on the plane, I sat in the lap of my parachutist, Mike, who had made around 800 jumps. While we were ascending to 12,000 feet and climbing above the clouds to see the majesty of Mt. Cook and Mt Tasman in front of an azure blue sky, Mike was attaching himself to me.

There was a lot of chatter about how cool this was and how much fun we were having. When we hit 11,500 feet, they opened the door to the plane, and we rose to 12,000 feet. When we hit 12,000 feet, Caitlin and Matt, her parachutist, jumped out. That was the scariest part of the whole trip for me. Thirty seconds later it was my turn. I did not hesitate and went and hung my legs over the ledge and Mike jumped with me attached. As I said, the point of my story is about complete trust. Since I walked onto the plane unattached from Mike, and could not see what he was doing behind me, when he said to get ready to jump, I had to have 100% faith that he had done his job correctly, as MY LIFE depended on it.

So when you are having a bad time in your life, maybe it is a good idea to turn over control of your life to a higher power. Maybe it will be Mike or maybe it will be something else. One option you have is our wonderful community, which is here to help you if you let them. This is an incredibly caring congregation, and I am so proud to serve as your president. I love you all very much and wish you a wonderful summer filled with good health, wonderful adventures and the love of your family and friends.

In a completely different thought, I want to send a **HUGE THANK YOU to Abby Bauer**, who two years ago stepped up to be our newsletter editor. She has upgraded the newsletter with her talent and passion. Abby, you have done a wonderful job and you leave big shoes to fill. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Shalom and Love,  
Howie Hirsch

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