

Rabbi Lewis' Message for December, 2012

Top Ten Things I wouldn't have known if not for Hurricane Sandy

10. It takes 20 minutes to boil water on a gas grill.
9. Telephone poles can snap like twigs when the winds climb over 50 miles per hour.
8. Pine cones can blow all the way from the back of my yard onto the deck at the back of my house (see note on wind speed above).
7. Neighbors who had never acted like neighbors can become your new best friends.
6. In a crisis, bad drivers are still bad drivers, but in a crisis, good drivers can become bad drivers.
5. The iPhone I always considered a luxury turned out to be a godsend.
4. Also under the category of godsend a contractor who climbs up onto your roof, puts a tarp over the leak and then comes by to repair it the next day.
3. It feels fine if I volunteer, "I was lucky, the tree could have fallen on my house," but it doesn't feel sufficiently sympathetic if you tell me, "Aren't you lucky, the tree could have fallen on your house."
2. My Catholic neighbors (who blessedly invited me over to coffee in the mornings after the storm) buy yahrzeit candles at Shoprite and use them in their Christmas luminarias (and were worried they were doing something sacrilegious).
1. I didn't think I could feel more grateful than I did the day before the hurricane, but I could.

Last month, I wrote about the mitzvah of *hakarat ha tov*, being grateful for all the good that happens to us and expressing it by voting. In all my years writing these messages, I don't think I have written two messages in a row about gratitude, but Sandy was a reminder that I could write one every month.

Our daily prayers remind us to be aware of our blessings every day. They also remind us that feeling grateful is no substitute for expressing our gratitude. We show our gratitude by giving President's message tzedakah and performing meaningful action. The temple's (aka [Team Mike](#)) walking in support of [Voices Against Brain Cancer](#) is

one way of our expressing both our appreciation of Mike and also our gratitude for those doctors who are researching a cure for brain cancer.

May the strength of that feeling remind us to be grateful for our freedoms on Chanukah and to be appreciative every day for the gifts we have been given.

Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis