

## **April 2018 Message from President Howie Hirsch**

How can working for your temple benefit you?

This month's message will discuss how being a member of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey has affected my professional life.

For most of my professional life, I was a computer nerd. I sat behind a desk and either coded and tested programs, or I learned how databases worked and used that information to assist programmers and systems analysts on how to best use the database and its features to make their jobs easier. To do this, I sat behind a desk and while I would talk to a lot of people (shocking, isn't it), I never really did any public speaking.

Then one day, I was asked to join the temple's finance committee. Little did I know how much that would change my life. I went from being on the committee, to becoming the Treasurer three years later. One of my duties as Treasurer was to make the Yom Kippur appeal. To say that I was frightened to do this is an understatement. To ease my fears and to hope to put the congregation at ease, I started with a joke, as I have always loved telling jokes. The joke was "According to Seinfeld, the number one fear of people is public speaking and the number two fear is death. Which means, that if you are at a funeral, more people would rather be in the casket than giving the eulogy."

I got over my fear and was able to get up in front of the congregation to do announcements and subsequent appeals, as well as presentations to the B'Nai Mitzvah students, which gave me more confidence to speak in front of crowds. About 11 years ago, I could see that my current position would be phased out shortly. At that time, a friend of mine told me about a position, where the bulk of the work was public speaking. With my new-found confidence gained from my temple background, I was able to land my current position of technical sales, where I get to travel the country (not always as glamorous as it sounds), meet with many different people and make many new relationships.

Being in a small congregation gives you the opportunity to stretch yourself by learning new skills with a very supportive group of people to help you grow. I urge you to take the opportunity to stretch yourself, get involved and make a difference in our temple and our community.

Love, Howie

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