



## **“Are you a Thermometer or a Thermostat ”**

**February 2025**

Recently on a cold morning in the wee hours, I was parked in front of my local Dunkin Donuts getting ready to order my morning coffee and I noticed a big sign on the front window, "Breakfast special two ninety-nine", get your coffee and a donut, the weekly special. I really didn't pay any particular attention to it. I go in, get in line with quite a number of people ahead of me. Right behind me, walk in 2 of our members. After a few moments of chatting, one of them says to his partner, I think there is some trouble up at the counter. Seems that one of the local homeless elderly street women we're arguing with the young salesperson behind the counter regarding the cost of the coffee and the donut. The voices were getting louder and the situation looked like it was escalating. The homeless lady had only two dollars and asked for the morning special, while the young salesperson said, " look, the morning special is three dollars, either pay up or move out of the line". In a quick moment, our officer assessed the situation. He reached into his pocket, took out a dollar, put it on the counter and told the homeless woman, enjoy your breakfast. Situation resolved, and the homeless person said "thank you, sir, you are a G-d sent, you are an angle thank you; I appreciate you".

The young inexperienced counter person apologized to the officer and said, "I should have thought for a moment before I let it escalate". We got our coffee and, on the way out, I thanked the officer for his kind heart, generosity and street smarts, he made us all proud that morning. The officer says "Rabbi, we always have to be mindful of the metaphor", "Are you a Thermometer or a Thermostat", let me explain A Thermostat verses a Thermometer, which one are you? Obviously, I am not speaking literally. Both of these devices are inanimate objects and could not be reading this article. In a more figurative sense, each one of us is either a Thermostat or a Thermometer. Usually, we are a little bit of both. In order to better understand what I mean let us look at each device and the service they perform.

We will start with a Thermometer. What is the function of a Thermometer? It matters little difference if it is used for meat or medicine or on a human. The main purpose of a Thermometer is to measure the temperature of its surroundings and read accordingly. It is what we would call a reactionary device. If the temperature is hot the Thermometer will read accordingly. If the temperature is cold, it will show that. The Thermometer has little effect, if any, on what is measuring. We all know people like this, don't we? If they find themselves in a room full of people who are productive and happy, they will be productive and happy. If they are in a room full of people who would rather stand around complaining and gossip rather than work, that is what they will tend to do. These people, much like a Thermometer, have little or any impact on their surroundings. If you are looking for someone to look up to and inspired by, you would not want a thermometer. If you are looking to be productive you would not want to rely on a Thermometer.

This is not to say there are not times when adapting your behavior to the situation is appropriate. You certainly would not want to wear a tuxedo to the corner restaurant any more than you would want to show up at the opera in ripped jeans and a flannel shirt. There is a big difference between adjusting to the current social situation and changing the very essence of who you are. Let us look at our above example of being in a room filled with individuals more content to discuss the actions of others than to take any action themselves. In this case it would not be a good idea to adopt the current culture. What should we do if we find ourselves in just such a situation? That will bring us to our next point.

A Thermostat. That funny shaped device on the wall that regulates our inner environment. How does a Thermostat work? Simply put, if we set a desired temperature, it will utilize the heating and cooling systems to achieve that temperature. Should the room drop too far below the set temperature the Thermostat will engage the heating systems to warm the room to the desired condition. Should the temperature rise too far above the set number it will utilize the air-conditioning to bring it back down. The Thermostat not only has a great impact on its environment, it actually sets the environment.

We all know people like this too, don't we? There are people who can light up a room as soon as they walk in. There are also those people who can bring everyone down with a simple conversation. In other words, these people set their environments. We all know people who never seem to have a bad day. We ask them "what is your secret" and they answer quite simply, "I just decide to have a good day." Much like the Thermostat, they adjust as the day goes along. If things start to go bad, they kick in their 'heating system' to bring the level of joy up. If they find themselves getting upset over traffic, the acts of a rude coworker or anything else they turn on their 'air-conditioning' to relax and cool themselves down. Thermostat people are action people. If they see a situation that does not suite them, they take actions to change the situation.

Ask yourself today if you are a Thermostat controlling your environment or are you a Thermometer just reacting to whatever the world is handing you. If the sun is out and traffic is great you are happy. If it is raining and the car won't start you are unhappy. Why put control of your emotional well-being in the hands of other people and things. Be like our friend and decide to have a good day. If challenges do come up as they always will, ask yourself two very important questions, "What else can this situation mean?" and "Is it in my power to change? and if I can't change the situation, please Lord guide me through it". These two questions will allow you to be in control to be able to ask yourself today "am I going to be a Thermostat or Thermometer".....What a great metaphor!

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"Think Before You Judge"

A 24-year-old boy seeing out from the train's window shouted "Dad, look the trees are going behind, look the trees are green!

Dad smiled and a young couple sitting nearby looked at the 24-year-old childish behavior with pity.

Suddenly he again exclaimed "Dad, look the clouds are running with us!"

The couple couldn't resist and said to the old man "Why don't you take your son to a good doctor?"

The old man smiled and said "I did and we are just coming from the hospital, my son was blind from birth, he just got his eyes today..."

Every single person on the planet has a story. Don't judge people before you truly know them, their story and their challenges, the truth might surprise you...

And before we close, a little humor from the "Moshe Files" to keep you smiling:

"The Miracle Doctor"

Doctor Brown who was known for miraculous cures for arthritis and other ailments, had waiting room full of people when a little old lady, completely bent over in half. She shuffled in slowly, leaning on her cane. When her turn came, she went into the doctor's office, and, amazingly, emerged within half an hour walking completely erect with her head held high. A woman in the waiting room who had seen all this, walked up to the little old lady and said, "Wow, It's a miracle! You walked in bent in half and now you're walking erect. What did that doctor do?" She answered, "Miracles, shmiracles. . . the Doctor gave me a longer cane.".... LOL

On behalf of ALL your Chaplains, Thanks to each of you, for going out every day to do the HOLY work that you do. We thank you and appreciate you. May G-d bless you keep you safe and always keep you in His loving care. Should you need a shoulder to lean on, an ear to listen, or perhaps have some good humor to share don't hesitate to give us a call. All of our information is available in your FOP books and on the CPD Chaplains website: [www.chicagopcm.org](http://www.chicagopcm.org),,,,,look us up.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

Rabbi Moshe Wolf 773-463-4780 or e-mail: [moshewolf@hotmail.com](mailto:moshewolf@hotmail.com)