

" Life's Lessons We Can All Use "

February 2014



Over the Holiday season your Department Chaplains were honored and privileged to attend the various Unit Holiday parties and to accommodate the many request for assistance that came over the phone lines. Remember your Chaplains are here for you 24/7 with an open ear and a "shoulder" to lean on, never hesitate to pick up the phone.

All our contact information is available on the Police Chaplains Ministry website.

Thanks for the humor, the laughs, and lessons of life that you shared with us. The words of our sages echoed in my head, "I came to give comfort and left comforted, I came to give strength and left strengthened, I came to share laughs and left laughing.

Let me share with you, two of the lessons you shared with us.

Lesson #1 "Learning to Forgive"

While I was in college, one of my professors had each one of us bring a clear plastic bag and a sack of potatoes to class. For every person we'd refuse to forgive in our life, we were told to choose a potato, write on it the name of the person, date, one sentence of incident, and put it in the plastic bag. At the end of the exercise some of our bags, as you can imagine, were quite heavy. We were then told to carry this bag with us everywhere we went for one month, putting it beside our bed at night, on the car seat when driving, and keep it next to our desk at work. The hassle of lugging this around with us made it clear what a weight we were carrying spiritually, physically and emotionally. How we had to pay attention to it all the time to not forget, and keep leaving it in the most embarrassing places. Naturally, as time wore on, the condition of the potatoes deteriorated and turned into a nasty slime. This was a great metaphor for the price we pay for keeping our pain, heavy negativity and senseless hate toward others. At times we don't even remember why we are carrying the grudge. There is no better time than now to put the bag down, try to forgive and ease burden.

Too often we think of forgiveness as a gift to the other person, and while that's true, it clearly is also one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves!

Lesson #2 "I Can Make It Better"

A man and his girlfriend were married. It was a large, beautiful celebration. All of their friends and family came to see the lovely ceremony and to partake of the festivities and celebrations. A wonderful time was had by all. The bride was gorgeous in her white wedding gown and the groom was very dashing in his black tuxedo. Everyone could tell that the love they had for each other was true. A few months later, the wife comes to the husband with a proposal.

"I read in a magazine, a while ago, about how we can strengthen our marriage," she offered. "Each of us will write a list of the things that we find a bit annoying with the other person. Then, we can talk about how we can fix them together and make our lives happier together." The husband agreed. So each of them went to a separate room in the house and thought of the things that annoyed them about the other. They thought about this question for the rest of the day and wrote down what they came up with.

The next morning, at the breakfast table, they decided that they would go over their lists. "I'll start," offered the wife. She took out her list. It had many items on it. Enough to fill three pages, in fact. As she started reading the list of the little annoyances, she noticed that tears were starting to appear in her husband's eyes. "What's wrong?" she asked. "Nothing," the husband replied, "keep reading your list." The wife continued to read until she had read all three pages to her husband. She neatly placed her list on the table and folded her hands over it. "Now, you read your list, and then we'll talk about the things on both of our lists," she said happily. Quietly the husband stated, "I don't have anything on my list. I think that you are perfect the way that you are. I don't want you to change anything for me. You are lovely and wonderful and I wouldn't want to try and change anything about you." The wife, touched by his honesty and the depth of his love for her and his acceptance of her, turned her head and wept.

Moral of the story. In life, there are enough times when we are disappointed, depressed and annoyed. We don't really have to go looking for them. We have a wonderful world that is full of beauty, light and promise. Why waste time in this world looking for the bad, disappointing or annoying when we can look around us and see the wondrous things before us?

I believe that WE ARE HAPPIEST WHEN we see and praise the good and try our best to forget the bad. Nobody's perfect but we can find the perfectness in them by changing the way WE see them.

More to come in future articles.

Thanks so much for the Holy and noble work you do every day, each of you in your own way help make the big picture, and for that our city is grateful to you.

If you have any good stories or good humor to share, don't hesitate to send an e-mail.

Thanks.

May G-d bless you, keep you safe and always keep you in His loving care.
Compliments of your Police Chaplain
Rabbi Moshe Wolf, 773-463-4780 or e-mail:moshewolf@hotmail.com