

SYNAGOGUES & CONGREGATIONS

Bold Thoughts for the Bowl

By Rabbi Chanoch Oppenheim,
Charlotte Torah Center

We all know that the Jewish New Year is Rosh Hashanah but as my wise wife once pointed out, January 1 is an opportunity to review the thoughts we had during the High Holiday season. For some it was family, for others it was living a healthier lifestyle that included a concentration on nutrition and exercise, for others it was committing to call a parent once a week; whatever one's thought of then, now is an opportune time to think about them. That being said, there might have been a few things we didn't get a chance to think about then; here are a few suggestions.

(1) "Do not put a stumbling block before the blind" (Leviticus 19:14). It's hard enough to stick to a new regimen; it's counterproductive to surround ourselves



with temptations that might sabotage our new resolutions. Whatever behavior we are trying to affect, it's easier when we remove ourselves from challenging situations.

(2) "Provide a teacher for yourself and get yourself a friend" (Pirkei Avot 1:6). Attaching ourselves to people and communities whose behaviors model what we want for ourselves are essential in allowing us to move closer to our goals.

(3) Connect with God. There are times when we feel helpless in solving the demanding circumstances that have been thrust into our lives. We have been able to be successful in almost everything in life we have chosen to focus on but now we are confronted with a challenge for which we have no solution. Over the past year I was called on to participate in situations in which the people realized that the circumstance was beyond their control. One case was call at night when the mother of a UNCC student needed emergency cardiac surgery. Another was a conversation with a guy who got his non-Jewish devoutly religious girlfriend pregnant and the lives of many people will be forever changed. Another case involved a teenage girl addicted to cocaine whose parents were powerless in helping her and yet another was a teenage bulimic whose parents felt helpless in finding a solution to her years of pain. Two parents had the following challenge: their eighth grade son accidentally left a note from his girlfriend in the family room that was so sexually explicit and crude that when his mother accidentally found it she blushed when relating its contents to her husband. A simple talk with "positive communication" would not be the end of this. These and

many other scenarios are complicated; those involved realized that "as long as we set our minds on it we'll find an answer" is not always a strategy to remove life's vicissitudes.

Three thousand years ago, King David grasped the truth that there were certain things — a father-in-law and later a son who sought to murder him, among other things — that, although he did everything in his control to squelch, he was powerless over. Did he simply resign himself to his fate or give up? No, he realized his only chance to succeed was appealing to God and penned words that have guided Jews ever since: "From the depths have I called to You, God" (Psalm 130:1).

When the going gets tough, try opening a dialogue with God. This can be as formal or informal as you like. Get used the idea of asking God for help with your resolutions. This dialogue can help one clarify exactly what it is s/he is trying to achieve and why, and will also be a source of energy and spiritual sustenance to succeed in our goals.

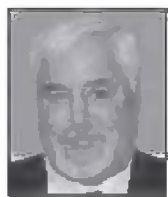
Dr. Abraham Twerski is a veteran psychiatrist and expert in the field of substance abuse. In his book *Addictive Thinking* he recorded a conversation he had with an alcoholic patient he suggested should go to AA meetings. "I can't," said the patient.

"Why not?"
"They talk a lot about God and I don't believe in God."

"You're mistaken; you do believe in God, you just believe that you are God."

This year, whether you're watching the Peach, Fiesta, Orange, Cotton, Sugar, or Rose Bowl, give a moment's thought to avoiding one or more of the daily stumbling blocks that prevent you from being the person you want to be and look for a friend and teacher to help you become that person. Most importantly don't forget about God, and that you're not Him. ✪

Help When You Need It The Most!



Mike Littauer
Principal

2013 Five Star
Home & Auto Insurance
Professional

704-496-2777
mike@littauerinsurance.com

5960 Fairview Rd
Suite 400
Charlotte, NC 28210

www.charlottelittauerinsurance.com



Navigating today's insurance environment can be confusing, time consuming, and frustrating. That's why our clients come to us and stay with us.

Our newest Comparator Software allows us to compare rates and coverage from six different companies at once. Our award winning service includes total claims analysis, processing, and follow-up.

We take the confusion, wasted time and frustration out of the process.

Call us today and let us help!



Auto - Home - Business - Life



kw SOUTH PARK

KELLERWILLIAMS

Smartphone Scan

Lonnie Hand
REALTOR®/Broker
LonnieHand@kw.com
980.253.3861 Cell 704.602.0400 Office
www.HandsOnCharlotteRealEstate.com

SMALL SCHOOL. BIG WORLD.

Charlotte Prep, where opportunity knows no boundaries.

WWW.CHARLOTTEPREP.ORG

CHARLOTTE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

OPEN HOUSE (PRE-K-8TH GRADE)
Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.
RSVP: www.charlotteprep.org/openhouse

Temple Beth El's 5th and 6th grade collected nearly 1,000 canned goods to donate to Jewish Family Services this Hanukkah season.



The 6th grade late session with their Hanukkah "CAN"dleabra.