

A woman breathlessly remarked to me, just a few weeks ago on Simchat Torah: “Rabbi, this is the first time ever that I’ve held a Torah!” I told her that I was delighted that she had had that experience, but that I was even more pleased for her young daughter who was holding on to her skirt, as mom marched around during hakafot – the Torah procession. “Imagine,” I said to her, “what a powerful childhood memory you have created for your daughter – someday, when she’s an adult, she’ll be able to tell her daughter about the time she remembers grandma carrying a Torah in synagogue!”

It’s interesting to note, which of the many mitzvot we observe without our children or grandchildren noticing, and which we send our children as our proxies to practice.

It is always moving to me to see small children accompany their parents to the bimah when the parents (or grandparents) have an aliya.

At B’nai Mitzvah – I am often moved when I see adult children stand in their places as their parent goes up to the Torah.

What are other examples of Jewish practices we do with our children – practices that can yield childhood memories for them of their parents or grandparents (us) observing?

Let’s see – Every Bar or Bat Mitzvah gets a Kiddush cup – Wouldn’t it be great to give our children the memory of pa or grandpa or bubbe saying Kiddush together with us?

How about lighting candles? Could this be something that mom and daughter could do together?

Maybe we could tell our children about the Jewish books we are reading, and maybe we could read the same book they are reading! Maybe we could even study with them a little of the parsha they are learning in Torah class!

Let’s go out on the edge a little more: Year –end is coming up. How about if we called our children over as we were writing our checks out to the shul and the Federation, and the other tzedakas to which we are contributing, and said to them as we were writing -: “Look, I don’t want you to tell your friends, because it’s not a competition about who gives more, everyone gives what they can, but I am writing out a check now for \$5000 to the synagogue – I want you to watch me do it – it’s a lot of money, and I wish I could give more, but that’s what I can give right now, and I want you next to me as I write this check, because someday you will write a big check to your shul or your federation, or JNF or Magen David Adom, and I want you to remember that we did this together.” Whew! What a childhood memory that would create!

Putting up the sukka together. Baking challah together. Frying latkes together. Reading articles about Israel in the newspaper, together. Visiting Israel, and going to the kotel together. Putting on talis and tefillin together, and taking a picture of that, and putting it up on the fridge. Visiting the sick, comforting the mourners, bringing a meal to a shut-in together. Being a *shomer* – sitting with a body, on the *chevra kadisha* together.

I cannot tell you how many times adults in their 60’s tell me that they have memories of their parents doing these things with them, when they were young. These acts – these Jewish practices, with young and old, parent and child, together, create powerful bonds, and powerful memories. And those

memories create the possibility, and perhaps even the desire, for imitation, and continuity of tradition, from one generation to another.

The midrash tells us that Yitzchak, Isaac, resembled his father Abraham in every way. That may be too much for most of us parents and children. We want our children and grandchildren to develop their own personalities and characteristics. But at the same time, we do want them to learn from us the best of our Jewish and human behaviors.

And the best way for them to learn those behaviors from us, is for us to practice those behaviors with them. So, what are we waiting for.... Let's start practicing!

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