

It Is Hard To Be Positive And Grateful Marge Goldin

Every day I strive to be positive and grateful, usually considered important buffers against ill feelings that can threaten to overwhelm us. Even in the best of times this is no easy task. We take things for granted and we don't count our blessings like we should. But this year, not entirely unexpectedly, I have learned just how hard it is to be positive and grateful.

Last January we were in California visiting the family in what became our last visit before COVID-19 slammed into us and future visits had to be cancelled. When your grandchildren are a plane ride away you learn to be OK with the long gaps between visits, but we began to sense this would be different. Early on we felt virtuous - focusing on staying healthy, learning to work from home, meeting the challenges of dealing with being quarantined. In our case we had a long stretch of worrying when our son Brian was sick, and then recovered from the virus. We learned to Zoom. We had Passover Zoom Seders and we decided that they were good. Maybe better than we were thinking they would be. But then we turned off the computer and ate by ourselves and felt a little deflated. The cabin fever set in. The time dragged on. There was no way to plan a trip to see the family. We learned how hard it is to be positive and grateful.



Then in June our grandson elected to do his Bar Mitzvah by Zoom. Having gone through Bar Mitzvah prep with his dad we understood his decision and his desire to have it behind him. As with Passover we convinced ourselves that it would be fine and of course we were happy and proud. But then after the service we turned off the computer, ate by ourselves and felt a little deflated. It's not the same joyousness you feel when you can hug the Bar Mitzvah boy, actually pass him the Torah and dance at the celebration after. Facetime and Zoom are better than just a phone call but it's not a "real" visit. This year it has been hard to be positive and grateful.

From this demoralized state of mind Steve and I pledged \$250,000 to FREE to establish a matching "Double Up" campaign to raise money for PPE and other expensive lifesaving measures needed to keep differently abled people like our son Brian safe. Sometimes in fits and starts but steadily donations came in both big and small and the \$500,000 goal is almost met. Rabbi Susie was one of the early donors and then helped get our story out to the TBT community as a Mitzvah Monday family. Slowly I recognized something inside myself - I felt positive and grateful.

The pandemic has thrown us all into an emotional brick wall as lots of things in life are capable of doing. But here's the thing - if you do the work of keeping yourself open to it why then yes, you can feel positive and grateful. But this year? This year it has been hard.

Dr. Marge Goldin and her husband Steve have been members of Temple Beth Torah for over 30 years. She is a retired psychotherapist and school social worker who keeps busy these days rescuing cats and kittens from the streets of Long Island.