ELUL STORIES
Sharing our stories, sharing lives, creating community

Elul is the month leading up to Rosh HaShanah. Each day during the month, a different Temple Beth Torah congregant will share an Ethical Will or portion of one in order to help us prepare for this season of self reflection and personal growth.

Heart and Soul
Steve Schlansky

For me so much comes down to understanding how my father lived his life and the values that he had. He spent 3 1/2 years of his life, from 18 to 21 1/2 fighting WWII. He endured walking pneumonia, a shattered larynx and wrist, liberating a concentration camp and spending the rest of his life living with the odor in his nose. When he got back he took advantage of the GI bill to buy a house, but not for himself; he bought it for his parents who were going through a tough time. He never ended up owning a house. He worked two jobs for the rest of his life to support my family and we lost him way too early at the age of 64 in 1987 only 3 months after my wife Cindy met him. Their walk together down the hospital corridor is an indelible memory for me - a most treasured moment. When my grandfather died in 1972 he left all he had (which wasn't much) to my Dad and nothing to his two other sons. We always felt that was not at all a punishment for them but recognition for the things my Dad had done for his parents. My Father, being who he was, split it in three and took care of his two older brothers. The people who knew and loved my Father always talked about two of his traits - his great laugh and sense of humor and more importantly, his GREAT hugs. That my wife and sons, Benjamin and Daniel, have not been blessed experiencing these is a great sadness for me. I think of my Dad most everyday and the way he lived his life. I don't know if I measure up - but I tell my sons about him and the way he loved and lived and hope they grow up having a little of him in their hearts and souls.

Steve Schlansky is a board member of Temple Beth Torah. Steve and his wife Cindy have two terrific children, Benjamin and Daniel.
Would you like to share your Elul Story? Write an ethical will, in the form of a letter, a story or a collections of sayings. Include the "gifts" you would like to leave to your family focusing on the values and character traits which you feel are most important. Send it in its entirety or send a section of it to: ravsusie@gmail.com. If you missed any of the previous Elul Stories you can go to www.tbtny.org (media galleries/elul stories).

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