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.

My Father Taught Us...
Zelda Miller

I have truly enjoyed reading the ELUL stories these past 2 years. They have brought smiles to my face and given me insights into TBT congregants - some I have known for MANY years, while others only fleetingly.

My dad, Josef Bochlin, will be gone 5 years this October. He was one of the shining stars of the Jewish people - one of the "survivors." These special people whose numbers are rapidly disappearing will soon be only a memory.

I realized this morning that the eulogy that I gave at his funeral was actually an ethical that I had hoped to leave his grandchildren and great-grandchildren (he had the joy of knowing Alexandra and Jake - Taylor born just 4 months ago will hear the stories.)

"My Dad was a man of strength and courage - left completely alone at the age of 15 when his entire family was exterminated - he spent 5 years in various camps before being liberated on a death march to Dachau. While Hitler did not take my fathers life, he took a piece of his heart that never recovered. For the next 70 years a part of him never stopped mourning the loss of his family and townspeople - and when his health failed and affected his hold on reality, it was memories of the camps that flashed back to him.

But, what I want you to know about my Dad today is all he taught my brother and I - and all he stood for.
• My father taught us that NOTHING is more important than your family. He loved my brother and I unconditionally - through words and actions. My father always placed HIS needs behind those of his family.

• My father taught us to show people you loved and respected them while THEY were alive - and if you are fortunate enough to be able to help your children - do so while YOU are still with them and can have the joy of seeing it and sharing it.

• My father taught us that if you're going to do a job - give it 110% - people deserve your best.

• My father taught us that everyone deserves your respect - whether they're your doctor, your gardener, your lawyer, your building super or your plumber.

• My father taught us that in order to have a friend you have to be a friend - and that meant being there and extending yourself to those you care about.

• My father taught us (politics aside) that this country we live in is the most incredible one on earth - where you truly can have a dream - work hard - and achieve it"

I can only hope that I have done his memory justice and have taken these lessons and values and instilled them into my children and grandchildren.

Zelda Miller was the Nursery School Director at Temple Beth Torah for close to 20 years. She and her husband, Alan, are enjoying spending time with Jessica and Michael and Dara; and their grandchildren Alex, Jake and Taylor.

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.tbnty.org (media galleries/elul stories).