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 respond to the question: What is the best gift you have ever received?*

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**Who Decides**
Eliot Lebenhart

The greatest gift I received was from my Dad, even though he did not know it. You see my Dad was put on the Kinder train from Prague by his family. 16 years old and he went from Prague to England and finally to the United States. With the exception of one cousin all of his family was killed in the Holocaust. He was a survivor, but lived with that guilt his whole life.

Fast forward to later in life, he was a successful Mechanical Engineer, but always worked for some company as their Chief Project Engineer. He helped design the Electric Toothbrush, Knife and George Forman Grill, but as been a salaried employee we were very comfortable but he never reaped the true benefits.

The lesson learned here is to take control of your life and reap the benefits. His family put him on the train. He really had no control, being the youngest member of his family. Great decision by the family, which kept the name alive by me, my son and now grandson. But a decision that racked my father with guilt mostly because this was not his decision.

From this his gift to me was to take control of your life. That is why for 30 plus years I had my own CPA firm so I could control my life, answer to only my wife, and together we reaped the benefits. Jane and I have taught this to our children and they are both very successful in their family and career lives.

So thanks Dad for the gift which you taught me and my family.
Eliot and Jane have been members of TBT for 29 years. Eliot has served on the board and on Budget and Finance for many years. He is enjoying life as a grandpa.

Would you like to share your Elul Story? Answer the question: What is the best gift you have ever received? You can interpret the word gift very liberally- a moment, a thing, a find, advice, a surprise. Send it to me at: ravsusie@gmail.com.
If you missed any of the previous Elul Stories you can go to www.tbtny.org (media galleries/elul stories).