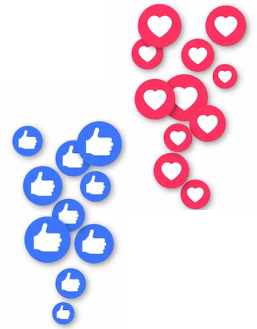


THE POWER OF “THINKING OF YOU”

A few days ago I received a Facebook Message from someone I haven't spoken to in-person in over 25 years. We've communicated via Facebook a few times in the last 10 years with short messages, comments, or likes on each other's posts. While in high school we spent A LOT of time together through our mutual love of musical theater, we didn't stay in touch.



I was delighted to receive her message telling me that her daughter recently started classes at the same theater school where we spent hours dancing, singing, and acting. Being at the school and talking with the director made her think of me. That happens to us all at times - an encounter or experience that triggers nostalgic thoughts, but what makes this story special is that she then took the time to send me a note and to let me know that she was thinking of me. Her message buoyed my spirit all day.



My reaction to this message made me think of the This I Believe essay “The Power of Hello” by Howard White. It's a heart-warming and poignant reminder about the ability of one word to impact how someone feels. As

White says, “I believe that every person deserves to feel someone acknowledge their presence, no matter how humble they may be or even how important....The day you speak to someone who has their head down but lifts it up and smiles, you realize how powerful it is just to open your mouth and say, ‘Hello.’” (To hear the whole essay, visit <https://thisibelieve.org>)

Just as with saying hello, the power of an “I'm thinking of you” can have a significant impact. When someone makes the effort to let you know they've been thinking of you, you feel remembered and valued. Each of us has the power to give those feelings to others.

How can we extend that feeling to all the members of our community, be it a synagogue, school, or community organization? The answer won't be the same everywhere. In fact, it shouldn't be the same everywhere because the answer of "how" needs to match the culture of the community itself. For some communities, the answer could be having board members each take a few names of community members and call or send a note to say "We're thinking of you." For other communities, the answer could be inviting each member to a small group online meet-up led by a community leader, so that members have a chance to check-in with each other. There may be communities who decide to highlight the artwork of the students/children of the community and have "original artwork" (or copies) sent to each member with a note saying "The Children of Our Community are Thinking of You." Perhaps one of these ideas matches your community's culture or sparks ideas of something that is an even better match. Whatever you decide to do, the key is to give your community members that special moment of being told they are remembered and valued.

If you want to implement "The Power of Thinking of You" in your community and need some help with the details, please be in touch.



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Tami is also a Jewish educator, an engaged volunteer, and an active clergy spouse for over 20 years. She lives in Mamaroneck, NY with her husband, Rabbi Jeffrey Arnowitz, their 4 boys and 2 dogs.

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