

Don't put off 'till tomorrow

By: Dr. Leah Adams

The following is a true story. The names have not been changed to protect the innocent because I'm the guilty party! Uncle Moishy has some powerful lessons in his cute little songs. In particular, I love his song "Z'rizim Makdimim Li'mitzvos, all good deeds must be done right away. . . . don't put off 'till tomorrow something you can do today!" Oh no, now I'm torn. I'd like for you to finish reading this article, but to do that you might be putting off doing something important. On the other hand, if you stop to read this then you might become inspired to finish other things!

Here's how it all started. My son's Ear, Nose and Throat doctor is in Englewood NJ, not far from where my brother and sister-in-law live. We've developed a minhag of sorts where we stop in to visit at their home whenever we go to the doctor (which is several times a year). My sister-in-law is a party planner and designs her own centerpieces, invitations, room set ups, place card holders, etc. and she is always surrounded by a menagerie of creative, colorful, exciting and gorgeous projects when we get there. On our last visit, back before Chanuka, she offered me two boxes of tchotchkes and little toys to be given away. Several months ago I had Esti Goldshmidt from Chai Lifeline on my talk show and still had her number saved on my phone. I called her on the spot (there I was a zariz) to offer her the donations. Esti was happy to accept the items and suggested that I bring the boxes back to Monsey to drop them off at the house of a particular volunteer. She texted me the information. I felt so good. Wouldn't it be nice for Chai Lifeline to be able to distribute these goodies lichavod Chanuka?

On the way home I called the volunteer but no one answered. I left the boxes in the trunk of my car figuring that "someday" I'd get them over to her. The catch with leaving things in the trunk is that "out of sight out of mind". About a month later (yes, that's 30 days of missed opportunities) one of my sons went to Israel. When we opened the trunk to put in his luggage, we saw the boxes! We moved them out of the trunk and put them into a closet in the guest

room. I left them there because I knew that we'd have some other shlepping to do the next week and would need the space in the trunk.

Again, the toys sat. If you think that things left in the trunk get forgotten, I assure you that items left in an unused closet don't even stand a chance. One day, I went into the closet to put some items aside for the married kids. To my surprise, there were two boxes of toys sitting there! Well, now I needed the space in the closet and so I put the boxes. . . back in the trunk! I really did have the INTENTION to bring the items to the right place. Intention is 9/10 of the law, isn't it? Oh wait, actually that's "possession is 9/10 of the law". Well, the items were definitely still in my possession but they were also part of my intention. After all, even though I periodically delete old text messages from my phone, I left the one with the drop off information because "someday" I was going to deliver the items.

By this point it was nearing Tu Bishvat when I have the zechus to go to Israel for my Father's yahrzeit. I told myself that before I left I'd make the delivery. Wouldn't it be nice for Chai Lifeline to be able to distribute these goodies lichavod TuBishvat? How difficult could it be? We're only talking about a distance of a few miles. Needless to say I got "busy" preparing my home, family and suitcases for the trip and did not make the drop off. At this point we needed the space in my trunk to carry my luggage and so we moved the boxes . . . back to the guest closet!

As soon as I arrived back from Israel, it was time for costume gemach hours. Morning, noon and night "customers" came. We filled so many people's dreams during those weeks. Kids and adults entered as ordinary people and left as cowboys, doctors, cheerleaders, Esthers, astronauts, everything imaginable. I knew that Chai Lifeline makes a Purim event and kept checking that I still had the donation address, planning. . . Wouldn't it be nice for Chai Lifeline to be able to distribute these goodies lichavod Purim?

By now Purim was finished. After spending hours taking in costume returns it was time to clean for Pesach. Pesach cleaning is always a good excuse for Spring cleaning-which has nothing to do with chametz but makes us feel good anyway. A big job is always reorganizing the way I use space in various closets. As I worked on the guest room and opened the closet I encountered my friends, the boxes. This time I moved them to the garage. I didn't put them in the trunk yet because first I wanted to clean the car for Pesach. Then, I was going to bring the boxes to their rightful spot. After all, wouldn't it be nice for Chai Lifeline to be able to distribute these toys lichavod Pesach?

Pesach came and went. The boxes were no longer out of sight, as a matter of fact, they were actually quite inconvenient because I had to squeeze past them every time I got in and out of my car. I was determined not to move them back into the closet. I even called the contact number at one point. The sweet woman who generously donates part of her home to this collection told me that she had recently had a baby, but I could leave the items outside of her house. I don't know what happened that day, but I do know that the boxes remained in their spot.

Isru Chag came. Now was my chance. I purposely did not schedule any clients that day so that I could get the house back in order. Well, despite all of the time spent De-Pesachafying the house Wednesday night, Thursday night and Friday were still spent finding all of the hidden chametzdik items that we needed for Shabbos. Sunday after Pesach seemed like the most glorious day. There was no snow, no preparations for trips, Purim, Pesach, or company, the post Yom Tov laundry was all done, in short, I was out of excuses. My daughter not only helped me load the boxes for Chai Lifeline into my trunk, but we even loaded boxes for Kupath Ezra (which had been sitting in the guest closet in the spot previously occupied by the other boxes) into the trunk as well. I called the volunteer and she told me they'd be home all day. Armed with my packages, I triumphantly headed out.

Kupath Ezra was easy to get to. I've been there hundreds of times. I even picked up a nice jacket while I was there to make donations. Now, onto the Chai

Lifeline destination. Finding the street was easy. My daughter and I travelled along excitedly scanning addresses. As we neared the end of the road, literally, I started to get disappointed. We had not reached the address and the street ended at the next corner. I was sure that the text contained the wrong address. As I was about to pull over and make a call my daughter yelled out, "there it is!". Sure enough, the last driveway of the street was where we needed to go! I pulled into the driveway and was met by some friendly children and their father who welcomed me and helped me unload my wares. The volunteer told me that I had come at just the right time because Chai Lifeline was scheduled to come just this week to clear out the items stored in his garage.

As I left, I checked the original text correspondence that I had had with Esti Goldshmidt on the day that I first picked up the items. It was four months to the day before this article hits the stands! I clocked the trip home and am embarrassed to tell you how few miles it was. I laugh because I spend my professional and personal life helping clients and family members better organize their time to alleviate stress in their lives. Here it took me four months to make a delivery that was about four miles away. The lessons? "Don't put off 'till tomorrow something you can do today!" and, if you don't get that part right, be willing to laugh at yourself!

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