

Four Questions of organ and tissue donation: A Jewish response

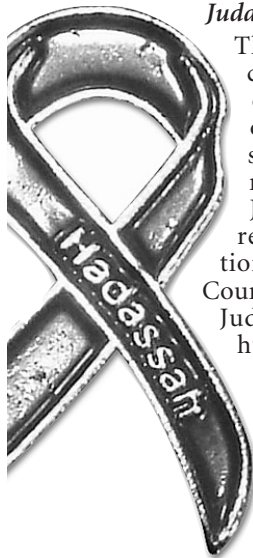
From Hadassah.org

Here is a slightly offbeat version of the Four Questions. However, if there is someone around the seder table who has a need for an organ or tissue donation, the answers could be lifesaving.

WHAT is organ and tissue donation?

It is a unique opportunity to participate in the mitzva of *pikuah nefesh*, the saving of life. Each year, tens of thousands of people receive transplants. You probably already know somebody who has benefited from a transplant. In fact, you or someone close to you may need a transplant someday, because organ failure can happen to anyone at any age.

WHAT is the myth about Jewish views on organ and tissue donation and what does Judaism really say?



The myth is that Judaism discourages organ and tissue donation. In fact, all Jewish denominations encourage such consideration. The major movements within Judaism have drafted official responses advocating donations. In 1991, the Rabbinical Council, affiliated with Orthodox Judaism, declared, "When human life can be saved, it must be saved.... The Halacha (Jewish law) therefore looks with great favor on those who facilitate the procurement of life-saving organ donations."

WHY is it important to donate organs and tissue?

Organ and tissue transplantation is one of our era's medical triumphs. It can dramatically save or improve the lives of those suffering from organ failure or those suffering from eye and tissue disease or trauma-related disabilities. The need for transplants overwhelms the availability. Over 90,000 Americans are awaiting organ transplants today. Typically, 17 such patients die each day.

HOW does one become a donor?

Becoming a donor is an important decision. Talk to your family and friends about why you are thinking about becoming a donor. Let them express how they feel about organ and tissue donation. Keep in mind that:

- Becoming a donor will not interfere with your health care — you will receive the same care that a non-donor receives.
- The body of an organ donor or tissue donor is always treated with care and respect.
- There is no charge to the donor or the family. The procurement agency pays the costs associated with recovery of organs and tissues.
- The donation of organs and tissues is often comforting to family members — a symbolic way for life to continue.

In response to this vital issue, Hadassah has created *Pikuah Nefesh*, a national program designed to educate communities about the importance of organ and tissue donation and promote awareness of these issues. For more information, visit Hadassah.org and click on *Pikuah Nefesh* located within the "Health and Medicine" link.

Turning points with life coach Randy Nathan

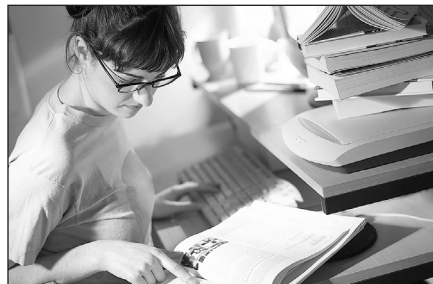
Dear Coach Randy, I'm a college freshman and my parents want me to come home for Passover. However, they are not aware that I am not doing well in school and cannot afford to miss class. How can I assure my parents that I will observe the holiday here at school without telling them about my grades?

Not Making the Grade

Dear Not Making the Grade, It seems you are in a tricky situation. The good part, however, is that you do have a choice in the matter. The hard part is coming up with the one that truly resolves this dilemma.

One of the most effective ways to generate ideas to solve problems is brainstorming. Either alone or with some friends, list as many solutions as possible without making judgments. As the ideas begin to evolve, elaborate and allow your subconscious to flow freely. Once you have generated a significant number of possibilities, immediately eliminate those ideas that simply will not work. Then spend some time on the remaining options and identify the two or three solutions that seem to be the most reasonable and effective.

Most great ideas do not arrive suddenly. Be true to yourself, and the best solution for you will become clear.



Dear Coach Randy, I have been accepted to my first-choice college, but my parents want me to attend a college closer to home. I don't want to upset them, but I really want to go to this school. What should I do?

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Dear Between, First, congratulations on being accepted into your first-choice college. What an incredible accomplishment! I'm sure you are very excited about this opportunity and look forward to this next chapter in your life. There is

no doubt about your love and appreciation for your parents; however, what is important is that you make the right choice for you.

An exercise that may be helpful to you in this situation is spending time identifying the characteristics that make your first-choice college so appealing. Do the same for the college your parents want you to attend. Then identify the top five priorities you want from your college experience. Finally, take the time to rate both of the colleges to see which lives up to your expectations.

You may not uncover a clear-cut answer, but you may be surprised to find that you and your parents are not too far apart. Good luck.

Randy Nathan, MSW is a certified empowerment coach who works exclusively with high school and college-age students. Through the coaching process, he empowers and motivates young people to face the major challenges, transitions, and opportunities in their lives. For further information, visit www.yppoach.com.

Have a question for Coach Randy? High school and college age people can contact him by writing to RealLife@njewishnews.com.

Web source of the week

Telling on-line bedtime stories

(www.the-office.com/bedtime-story/indexmain.htm#stories)

Millions of businesspeople all over the world share a commonality: children. Since we rarely have the opportunity to spend as much time with them as we'd like, The-Office.com offers a unique way for the busy business-parent to stay connected.

The concept is especially nice when a parent is traveling. All you have to do is pull up one of dozens of stories on

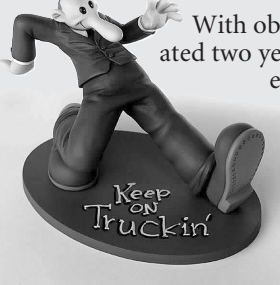
your computer and read it aloud over the phone. It will still be "special time" together with your child.

Stories are added regularly and divided into general categories, such as kids and animals, friendly monsters, or "Whimsical, Magical, Humorous, or simply Wonderfully Imaginative," according to the Web site. There are also some classics like *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Owl and the Pussycat*, with more on the way.

Each story has a link offering a brief synopsis, age appropriateness, and approximate reading time. Some take as little as four minutes to read; others, like the longer classics, are divided into chapters, each taking 20 minutes or so.



Don't forget — National Walk to Work Day



With obesity and sedentary lifestyles increasing at an alarming rate, National Walk to Work Day was initiated two years ago to bring attention to this worsening situation. On the first Friday of April, Americans are encouraged to get up, get out, and get into shape. If walking to work isn't feasible, try taking a stroll during lunch time or at another time of the day.

Health officials and medical agencies agree that a 30-minute walk can significantly improve your health. In addition to reducing weight, exercise can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other ailments, not to mention the emotional and mental benefits.

Best of all, walking is free — no need for special cloths or expensive gadgetry. That means no excuses!

Source: Holidayinsights.com

Torah haiku by Ron Kaplan

Tzav
Moses gets the word
on sacrifice protocol:
Leave no meat behind.

Your Turn

Real Life welcomes guest columnists. If you'd like to share your experiences, your outlook, or a moment in your life, e-mail reallife@njewishnews.com for column guidelines. Real Life is edited by Ron Kaplan.