

## Turning points with life coach Randy Nathan

Dear Coach Randy,

I just received a job at a summer day camp, but my parents feel it's more important for me to get an internship to help me get into a good college. What should I do?

Confused

Dear Confused,

Sounds like you're facing an interesting dilemma. I'm curious to know whether you knew your parents' desire before or after you received the job? Nonetheless, you face a nice challenge with this decision.

How about creating your "ideal" summer? On a piece of paper, number one through three from the top to the bottom. Under number one, list all of the qualities, beliefs, behaviors, and other characteristics you can think of that describe your ideal summer. Under number two, identify the top 10 qualities from number one and prioritize them from the most to the least important. Under number three, take your top five qualities/beliefs and match them up against your job at camp and getting an internship. You should now have a nice picture of which experience will come closest to your ideal summer experience.

Once you've finished, you may want to approach your parents and do this activity together. You may be surprised how close each of your ideals may be. Good luck.



Dear Coach Randy,

I just finished my first year of college and recently returned home. Now that I'm back I can't wait to return. My parents nag me and are driving me crazy. Why don't they just let me be?

Going Nuts

Dear Going Nuts,

Welcome back from your first year away. I imagine it went by much quicker than anticipated.

You are probably also discovering that even though you've gone through changes, things at home may still be very much the same. What this sounds like is that your parents are pushing some of your "freedom" hot buttons. You've spent the entire year being independent, making decisions and choices on your own, and now your parents seem to be challenging that sense of freedom. It sounds like your parents may be treating you as they did before you left for college. Here is an approach that you can try with them.

What other people do and say is always about them. But how we interpret what they say and how we react to it is all about us. Therefore, reflect on your interpretation of the situations when your parents push your buttons. Imagine for a moment being your parents and come up with a rational reason why they may be asking or doing a particular thing. Now, look at your reaction to their reasoning. How appropriate is your behavior now? What's it like for your parents now that you're back? What type of adjustments do they need to consider now that you're home?

When you notice your button being pushed try this: Stop, breathe, and ask yourself, "How appropriate is my reaction?" When you master this, you'll be able to have a much healthier approach to many situations.

**Randy Nathan, MSW**, is a certified empowerment coach who works exclusively with high school and college-aged students. Through the coaching process, he empowers and motivates young people to face major challenges, transitions, and opportunities. For further information, visit [www.yppoach.com](http://www.yppoach.com).

Have a question for Coach Randy? High school and college-age people can contact him by writing to [RealLife@njewishnews.com](mailto:RealLife@njewishnews.com).

## Oh, that 50 feeling!

by Frank Jaffe  
from AISH.com

Last week, I received an unwelcome invitation in the mail: The American Association of Retired Persons is soliciting my membership. More than 20 benefits for only \$12.50 a year! Savings on travel, auto rentals, and all kinds of insurance!

But I discerned much more written between the lines:

*Frank Jaffe, welcome to Geezerhood! The Youth Culture has passed you by, but your dollars are still highly valued. Let us remind you of your mortality, in case you've forgotten. (Images of Geritol and retired persons in Florida lining up for the early-bird special dance through my head.) Since you're on your way down the mountain, you might as well get a discount at the movies.*

The passage of time and years is a strange and subjective sensation. One feels them moving more quickly as the decades roll by. At 20, life looms ahead like an endless journey, by 30 one is starting to pick up steam, and by 40 things are chugging along.

By 50, the echoes of eternity beat softly in the background like a distant drum. Yet 50 towers erect and important: a right of passage to be wrestled with, a door to pass through. A great mystery beckons on the other side.

The Torah has interesting applications of the number 50:

Every 50 years, following seven Sabbatical cycles, the shofar of freedom is sounded in the Land of Israel. On the 50th year, everything returns to its rightful place in the world. Servants return to freedom. Land that has been purchased



returns to its original owner.

Another application of 50: We count the omer, marking 50 days from Passover until the giving of the Torah on Shavuot.

On Shavuot, we celebrate a different kind of "return to one's place": The Torah itself returns to its rightful place in the soul of every Jew.

With this I can appreciate the call of the AARP:

*Frank Jaffe, you've passed 50 years on this earth. It's time to go back to who you really are. Self-knowledge. A spiritual connection. The joy of jubilee is knowing your place in the world. Your role in the divine plan. Discover it, Frank! Embrace it! Achieve true peace of mind!*

Yet how does one know and identify this elusive self? Where is it hiding?

By 50, most of us have abandoned the grandiose and magical dreams of young adulthood and have begun to refocus on the road that doesn't stretch out forever in

this world. Fifty years of life experience teaches us to identify our unique attributes and unique challenges. We begin to look for the eternal in the mundane, to capture the beauty of every moment.

Jewish thought says that each of us has our own "letter in the Torah." Maybe it takes 50 years to locate that letter and to discover what God's Torah is writing on your soul.

So I've decided to make my 50th birthday a "rebirth," a new crack at life. I still have six months to sort things out and figure out who I really am. With no illusions, I will embrace that person, with all his defects and limitations. And with that clarity, I'll forge a terrific plan for the next glorious stage of life.

And if all else fails, at least AARP will make sure I get a discount at the movies.

New Jersey resident **Frank Jaffe** studied at Aish in Jerusalem. Reprinted from AISH.com.

## Speaking of AARP...

According to its mission statement:

"AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people age 50 and over...dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all as we age. We lead positive social change and deliver value to members

through information, advocacy and service. The organization, which consists of some 36 million members, provides a wide range of unique benefits, special products, and services for our members, including access to 'members-only' por-

tions of the Web site at [AARP.org](http://AARP.org); *AARP The Magazine* and the monthly *AARP Bulletin*, and a Spanish-language newspaper, *Segunda Juventud*. As well as myriad discounts.

"AARP celebrates the attitude that age is just a number and life is what you make it."

### 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](mailto:reallife@njewishnews.com) for column guidelines. Real Life is edited by Ron Kaplan.

### Torah haiku

by Ron Kaplan

### Beha'alotcha

Moses tells the Lord:  
"I'm beat. You deal with the kids.  
All they do is kvetch."