

Kehillah: Being a Truly Welcoming Community

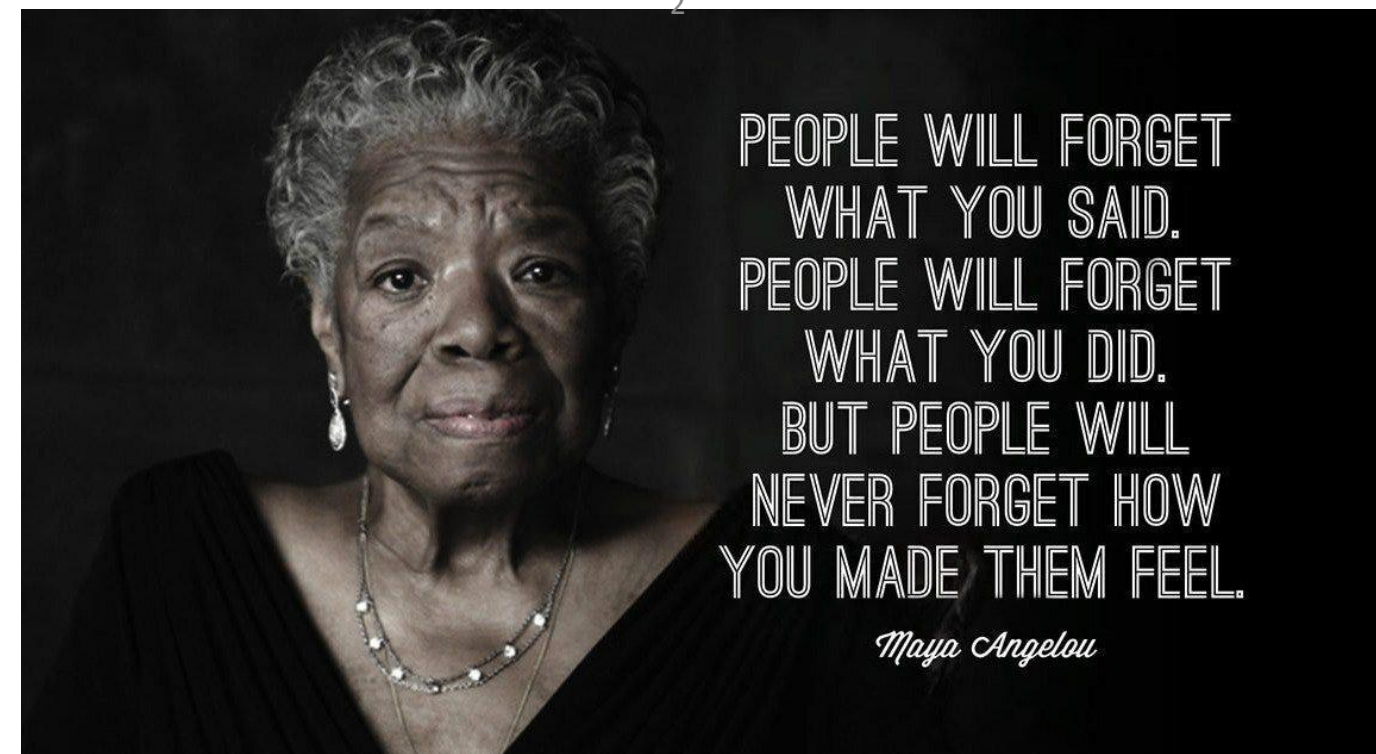
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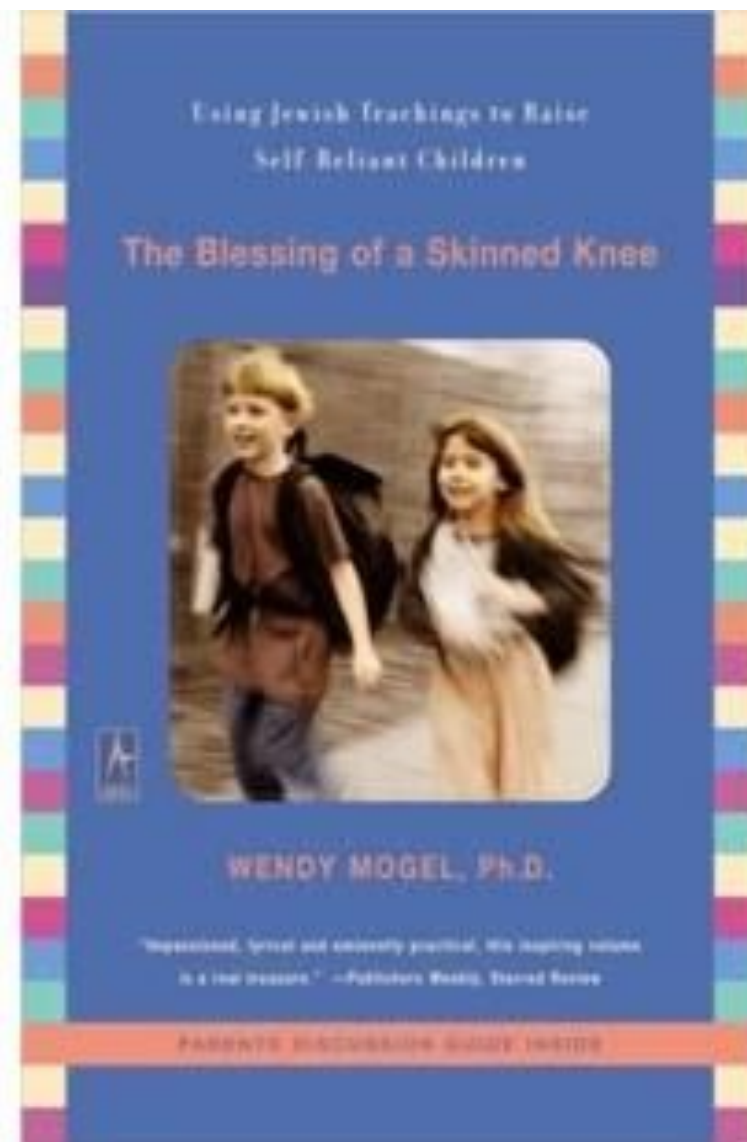
Being Welcoming and Inclusive

- **There is a pandemic of loneliness in this country.**
Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community (2023, 82 pages).
- **Share with the person next to you, either:.**
 - An experience where you felt very welcomed.
 - An experience where you felt a sense of belonging.
 - Your best welcoming hack/tip/that you like to practice.
- When someone asked Rabbi Hillel to teach the entire Torah while his listener stood on one foot, Rabbi Hillel famously answered, **“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the entire Torah, and the rest is commentary. Now go and study.”**



Abraham and Sarah:

Role Model of Welcoming



- Abraham's and Sarah's tent was open on all four sides.
- Welcoming with your feet:
 - Abraham went to greet everyone when they arrived and when they left.
- Wendy Mogel in *Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, applied this to playdates:
 - Families should greet their guests at the door and walk them out when they leave.
- Tabling, Events, Relationship building:
 - Parenting with your feet: Welcoming with your feet
 - Dr. Erica Brown- no welcoming committee, everyone is on the welcoming committee.
 - Create a culture where everyone in your organization (staff and participants greet each other and have purpose/roles/belonging).
 - Welcome, be kind to your own staff and colleagues.



Greeting another person

Mishna and Pirkei Avot



Sever

סבר

Thought; notice. Everyone is created in the image of G-d just as you are. Concentrate and appreciate.

Panim

פנים

Face: Turn your face, not your ear to greet a person

Yafot

יפות

Not just your face, give them a pleasant, cheerful face. Your best smile. You are happy to see them.



“A smile costs nothing, but gives much. It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.”

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch



Harvard Happiness Study

The [Harvard Study of Adult Development](#) is a longitudinal study that was started in 1938 and continues to this day. It has followed thousands of individuals for decades.

The study reveals that:

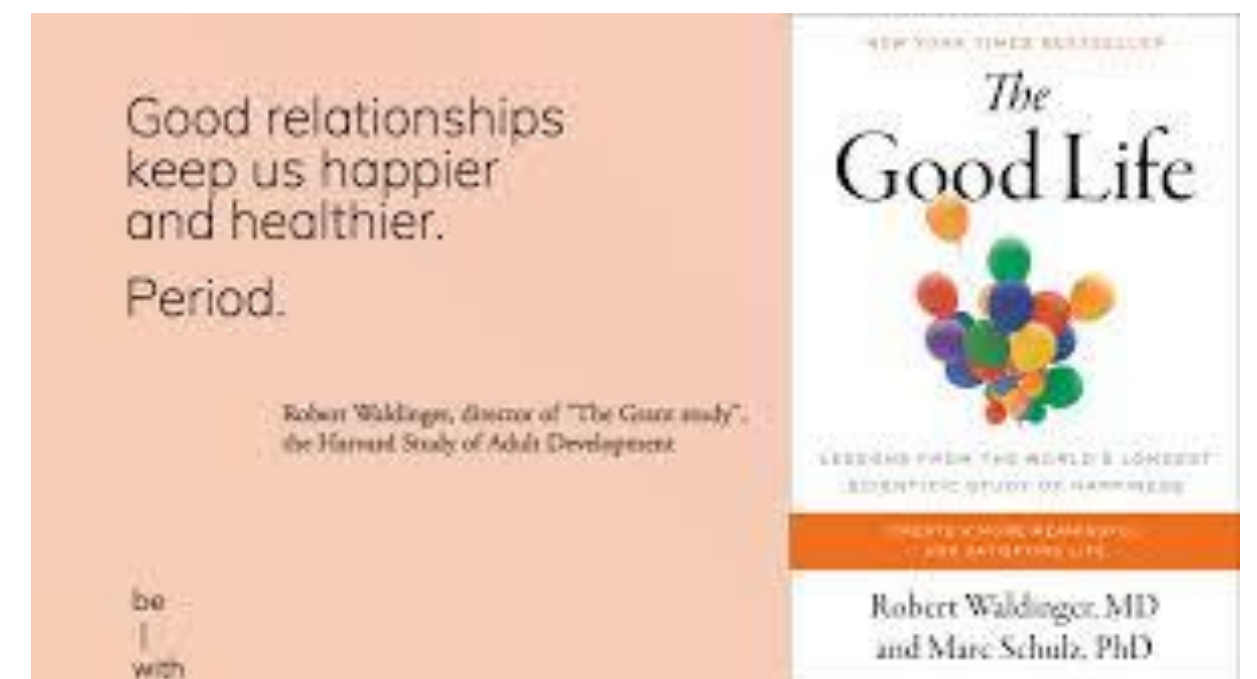
- Close relationships are the most important factor in achieving a happy and fulfilling life.
- Individuals with strong social connections tend to be happier, healthier, and live longer.

Let's help build a strong community. Not just welcoming, a sense of belonging

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Harvard Happiness Study:

- According to the study, there are two things one can do to raise happy and successful kids. Guesses?
- How can we apply that here?
- Share with the person next to you.

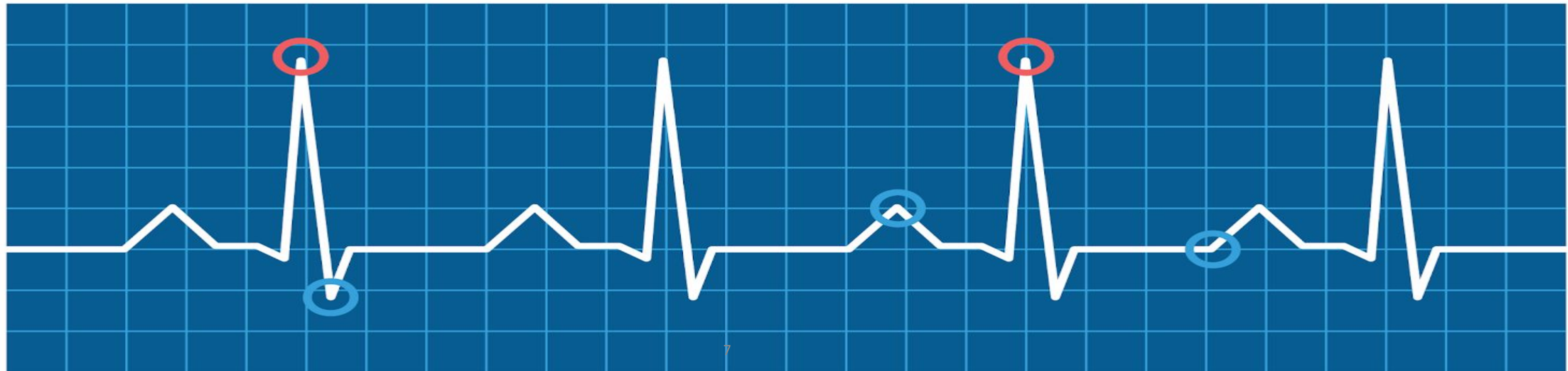


Heartbeat Engagement Model (GatherDC)

<https://gatherdc.org/2020/05/08/relational-engagement-during-a-pandemic-gatherdcs-heartbeat-model/>

https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/relational-engagement-during-a-pandemic-gatherdcs-heartbeat-model/?fbclid=IwAR3Ao4_PjgSHq9A9Hp44YgL1kiZXJ1n0csfAxf76WFAhOpI3SXOEL51EsM

Heartbeat Engagement Model



Larger experiences and planned gatherings

These can also be “relationalized” and deepen engagement and belonging



Relational work that happens in between programmatic offerings

Lasts longer—more ongoing and connects larger experiences to one another

Large Beats and Small Beats

<https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/dont-leave-relationship-building-to-chance-using-the-heartbeat-model-of-engagement/>

“The large beats, indicated in red, reflect programmatic offerings— immersive experiences and planned gatherings we may often refer to as “programs” — that are critical opportunities for people to deepen their relationships and explore their Jewish identity in a group. Large beats look different for a JCC, a synagogue or a nonprofit, and may include: Shabbat and prayer services; holiday gatherings like Passover seders, Purim carnivals, or High Holy Day services; educational programs like religious school or adult classes; and social gatherings like happy hours, hikes and trivia nights.

The small beats, indicated in blue, represent the relational work that happens *in between* programmatic offerings. Small beats are the connective tissue that helps cultivate a sense of welcome and belonging, ensuring that people want to return to our spaces and continue engaging in our communities. Though they’ll likely differ for each organization, small beats can include meeting one on one for a coffee or walk; acknowledging pivotal moments in our community members’ lives with a text, call or gift; making introductions between people; sharing articles (like this one!) that remind you of the person; and sending⁸ personalized invitations and follow-ups from large beats. These types of connections build an ongoing relationship and connect the distinct “large beat” experiences to one another.

Both small beats and large beats are equally necessary — and neither can exist without the other. Our goal as community leaders should be to cultivate a healthy heartbeat that balances the large beats with the small. To do this, we need to focus time and energy on the small beats.”

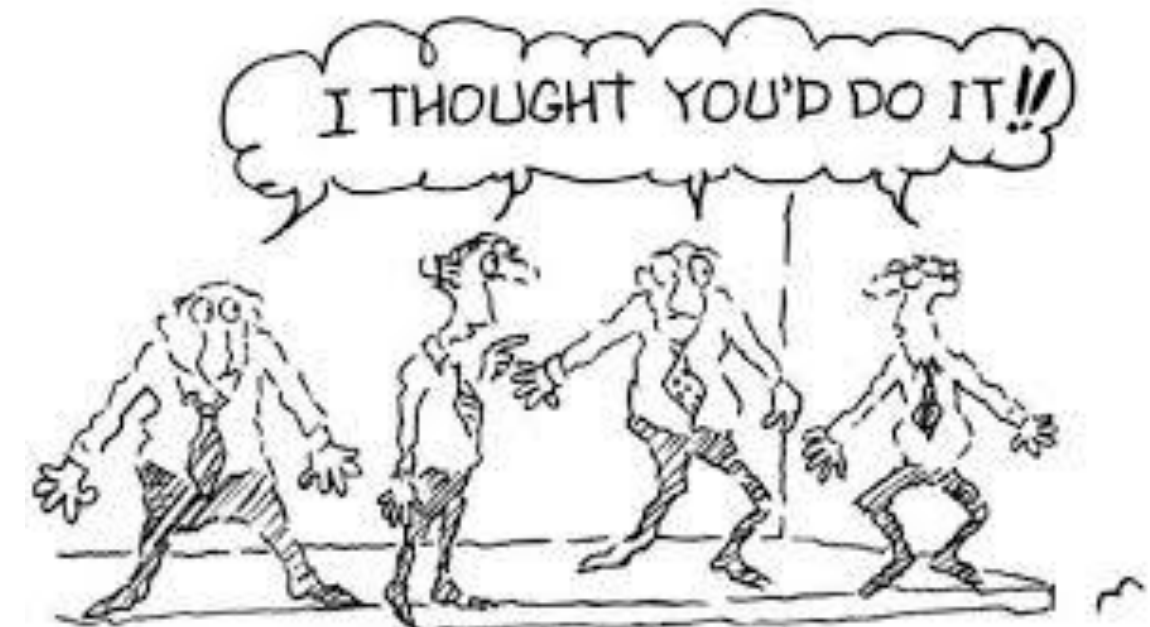


Diffusion of Group Responsibility

Sharing about Kitty Genovese, 1964. She was 28 years old.

- Bystander effect (people are less likely to help the greater the number of bystanders), and diffusion of group responsibility.

- When planning an event with your own organization or with partners:
 - In addition to creating timelines, **assign everyone roles** so that nothing falls through the cracks and every role is covered (nobody thinks someone else is doing it).
- Pre-event, event, post event, and in between roles:
 - Wendy Mogel shared: According to Jewish thought, parents should not expect their children to be anyone other than who they are. A Hasidic teaching says, “If your child has a talent to be a baker, don’t tell him to be a doctor.”
- When assigning roles to staff, **assign them the role that fits them**. There will be some who will welcome with their feet, and others who will have different welcoming roles.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Physiological: Basic needs for survival, like food, water, shelter, and sleep

Safety: Security of body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, and property

Love and belonging: Friendship, family, intimacy, and a sense of connection

Esteem: Respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, and freedom

Self-actualization: The desire to become the best that one can be



Checklist

Welcoming starts *before* the program:

- **Before a program:**

- Invite- group and personal outreach (social media should be a reminder of an invitation, not the invitation).
- Send “See you on Sunday” email:
 - Include date, time and location, and here is what to expect.

- **During the program:**

- Assign staff roles (avoid diffusion of group responsibility).
- Arrive early to set up so you are present when people arrive.
- Greet everyone with a smile (Mishna; Pirkei Avot 1:15).
- Things one can say:
 - “I am so happy to see you!” or “So nice to see you!” (not, it’s nice to meet you.)
 - If someone is late and if appropriate: “You got here at the perfect time.”
- Use name tags (benefits everyone).
- Greet by name (Dale Carnegie “Remember that a person’s name is to that person, the sweetest and most important sound in any language.”)



Checklist Continued

- **During the program continued:**
 - Welcome everyone as a group and make introductions as needed.
 - Walk over to families and talk to them like Abraham and Sarah (wear comfortable shoes :)
 - Ask them about themselves.
 - Design the program to meet Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (provide food; kids can have snacks during storytime).
 - Design time in the program for families to connect with each other (PJ Library; Harvard Happiness Study).
 - Introduce families to each other (combatting the pandemic of loneliness).
 - Give them a job if appropriate (committee, or at the time of the event).
 - Thank everyone for coming and that you look forward to seeing them again! Invite them to the next thing.
- **After the program:**
 - Send thank you email, with an invitation to what's next!
- **Connect in between programs:**
 - Implement the Heartbeat Model (add "small beats" such as coffee dates, phone calls, Shabbat dinners, checking in texts, PJ Library Get Togethers etc.)



Reach out to either of us anytime!
We look forward to
continuing the conversation.

Thank you!

¹³

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