



Out of a Job? Don't Give Up!

The Power of Positive Thinking

Losing the ability to support one's family is one of the greatest stresses one can experience. However, one who lost his job must be careful to avoid complicating matters by succumbing to despair or feelings of unworthiness.

Upon losing a job she had held for more than a decade, a woman I know lamented, "Without a job, who am I?" True, a job is of crucial importance, but

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the job is not the person. It is certainly awful to lose one's job, but it is worse to lose one's self.

An acquaintance of mine worshipped at a certain shul for twenty years; when he lost his job, he switched to another shul. He felt an overwhelming sense of shame at his inability to donate money to the shul. "Whenever I used to have an *aliyah*," he said, "I would donate a hundred dollars. Now it is difficult for me to donate ten dollars." Why the shame? Because he defined himself solely in terms of how much money he makes. This is a terrible mistake.

Losing one's job during a recession is not one's fault, and one should not act as though he is responsible for it.

An individual in my community confided to me that since he lost his job, he's feeling guilty that he can't provide for all of his children in the same way.

"My two older daughters went to seminary in Israel," he said. "My youngest daughter was planning to go with her friends, but I can't afford it. I feel that I have let her down." It is bad enough that his daughter lost the opportunity to study in Israel, but it is truly tragic if his daughter ends up also losing the moral support of her father because he is too busy wallowing in unjustified guilt.

Looking for the Silver Lining

Despair is counterproductive. While it is extremely frustrating to be unable to find work, whatever employment opportunities may exist can be lost if one has an attitude of despair. If one feels hopeless, he may not even look for other opportunities, thinking, "What's the use? I'll never find anything anyway."

Judaism is a religion of optimism, and it teaches us that we must look for the silver lining in every situation. In fact, oftentimes people do not look for new vistas as long as they are gainfully employed. If one can avoid the feeling of hopelessness, he may actually discover new and exciting opportunities that he would have never discovered otherwise. Grandma Moses' paintings today sell for thousands of dollars. But she did not begin painting until she was in her 70s, when her arthritis precluded her from doing needlework. Her artistic talents were dormant and came to the fore only because she became disabled by arthritis.

A helpful tip: Try "creative visualization," i.e., seeing yourself happily employed in a desirable job. Some of you might say, "Wishful thinking does not put food on the table." True, but neither does brooding. Others may contend that they simply "can't meditate." However, if one is ruminating over one's circumstances due to the loss of one's job, one is, in fact, meditating. So instead of negative meditation, meditate on positive things.

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Believing in Ourselves

It is easy to preach about *bitachon* (trust in God), but having *bitachon* when one is in dire straits is not a simple achievement. I once attended an Alcoholics Anonymous “gratitude meeting,” where each participant expressed gratitude for the gains he made in his sobriety. One man said, “I’ve been sober four years, and I wish I could tell you that they’ve been good. My company downsized and I haven’t been able to find a job. My wife divorced me and took custody of the kids. I could not pay my mortgage and they foreclosed on my house, and last week, my car was repossessed. But I can’t believe that God has brought me all this way, only to walk out on me now.” This non-Jewish man’s attitude epitomizes *bitachon*, the belief that Hashem is guiding one and that all that He does is ultimately for the best.

We need to believe in God, but we also need to believe in ourselves. When we believe in ourselves, God believes in us as well. The word “*emunah*” means “belief,” but it can also mean “to raise” (Megillat Esther 2:7), in the sense of bringing something about. Rashi says that Noach did not exhibit a firm belief that there would be a flood (Genesis 7:7). Ohev Yisrael comments that Noach was only reluctant to believe in the catastrophic event because he was afraid that believing in it could actually hasten it. Thus, the notion of self-fulfilling prophecy—that belief can influence events—does exist within the Torah. With *emunah*, one can make things happen. “Hashem will bless you in all that you do” (Deuteronomy 15:18). When you have *emunah* in yourself and initiate action, it may actually bring about that which you desire, and Hashem will bless it with fruition.

The key is perseverance. My first book was rejected by eighteen publishers, but was accepted by the nineteenth. That provided the momentum to write sixty-three more books!

Of course, some people may not be able to control their depression. It is important to be aware that severe stress can cause a chemical imbalance, resulting in a depression that may require medical treatment.

When things go sour, you may feel like giving up. But think for a moment. Just what do you plan to do if you give up? In the “Peanuts” comic strip, Lucy says, “I can’t take it any more. I give up!” Charlie Brown responds, “Where do you go to give up?” So, don’t give up, because there’s no place to go to for giving up. We have to do our utmost to keep going when the chips are down, because giving up is simply not an option. ■



Remember

- Reality may be disappointing, *but one should never despair*
- Don’t look to blame anyone, and especially do not blame yourself
- Brooding is meditating, so you might as well meditate on a positive future
- With an upbeat attitude you may discover new opportunities
- You are always a valuable parent, spouse, friend and community member, irrespective of your having a job
- Don’t rate yourself according to how much you earn

A Piece of Jerusalem in Your Community

Jerusalem Stone at the Levy Chapel

The Commodore Uriah P. Levy Center and Jewish Chapel is the synagogue at the United States Naval Academy, in Annapolis, Maryland.

The Chapel was designed by Maryland architect Joseph Boggs, who used the Jerusalem Stone line supplied by Jerusalem Gardens Stone Works in Israel (JGSW) for the Chapel’s interior design.

The Ark wall imitates the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, using stones from the Jerusalem Stone Gold collection in various shades of gold and white, with a special antique finish. This wall is one of the most unique designs in the US utilizing Jerusalem Stone.

Jerusalem Stone decorated the entire Chapel – the orbicular mosaic ceiling, the special mosaic floor, interior wall cladding, special flooring, engraved stone, benches, Ark beam, stairs and special elements which provide the congregation with a piece of Jerusalem at home.

For the last 15 years, Jerusalem Gardens has manufactured and supplied high standard Jerusalem Stone to projects in the US. The Company offers one-stop-shopping for all aspects of the stone works: architectural services, stone details, supply and installation. JGSW is known for its extensive experience in the stone market since 1980.

Among JGSW’s projects are: the Edmund Safra Synagogue in Manhattan; the Simon Wiesenthal Center & Museum in Los Angeles, CA; the JCC’s of Staten Island, NY and of Old Westbury, NY; Congregation Torat Emet, Columbus, OH; Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, and many more.

JGSW also supplies Jerusalem stone to hotels, commercial projects, residential projects, infrastructures, high-rise buildings, educational institutions, and many other projects.

The JGSW Team will be happy to take part in your future project and bring a piece of Jerusalem to *your* community.