

Looking For Schach- Rabbi Barbara Penzner

While driving around looking for schach to cover the sukkah, I realized some important lessons about looking for important things in life. Of course, it is possible to save oneself a lot of trouble and buy "ready made" bamboo mats or have the schach delivered. But often, the most fruitful search comes from the devotion one puts into it. Here are ten basic steps to follow when looking for schach:

1. Know what you are looking for Once you have figured out what it is that you want, it will be easier to find. When you don't know what you are seeking the search will be much more difficult. The universe tends to respond to a clear request.
2. Don't forget to look in your own backyard! What you want may not be as far away as you think.
3. Bring an extra pair of eyes along, if possible! It never hurts to ask for help, especially when you are looking for something important. Often, others can see with clearer eyes and less distraction than you can
4. Be willing to spend time and travel along circuitous routes! Schach will not simply appear on main roads or jump out to greet you. The pursuit of anything worthwhile takes time. 5. Trust your instincts! You may have to do something that counters the conventional wisdom. Deviations from a plan may offer unsuspected and surprising results.
6. Keep your eyes on the road, even while you are actively looking for schach! While the search is important, so is driving the car! Driving carefully comes first, and while getting lost may help find what you are seeking, you also need to be able to return home
7. Don't stop short in traffic! If something seems good enough to stop for, it is worth going around the block to have a second look. Remember, other people around you are also looking and your actions affect them as well.
8. Don't take anything that belongs to someone else! It may be tempting to snip some branches off the evergreen tree that hangs over the road, but don't do it. Respect other people's property, even if you might think they are willing to part with it . When in doubt, ask!
9. Be ready to get your clothes and car dirty and to lift heavy branches! If you need something, you must be willing to make the necessary sacrifices for it.
10. Rejoice when your search has been successful! Anything that took a lot of effort to attain is worth celebrating. You can express gratitude in a multitude of ways, including thanking all those who helped, giving tsedaka, arranging a celebration, or simply saying a blessing.