

The theme of my last bulletin article was the marriage of grief and gratitude. Less than a week after it was delivered to your mailbox, my father-in-law passed away from COVID-19.

Never had I so personally felt the tangle of grief and gratitude than at this moment. The void of losing our patriarch is painful, yet the pain is filled with wonderful memories and the support and love of our community. We are grateful.

So many of you reached out and every one of your messages resonated with Susie, Harrison and me. Most of your messages ended with the traditional words, "May his memory be for a blessing." As we were exploring a lifetime of pictures, I took to heart the meaning of memories being a blessing. I took a lot of time to meditate on the creation of memories, fanning through mental images of our time together, his stories, his facial expressions, his laugh, his mannerisms, his frustrations, his pride, his confidence, his meticulous nature, his love for us.

In our sanctuary, Rabbi Jay encourages us to leave the photo taking devices in their place and asks us to record mental images instead. Cell phones and videos serve as barriers to being wholly present and allowing an experience to fully wash over you. I am thankful that the mental snapshots of my father-in-law aren't clouded with obfuscation, as he was old school and didn't have the patience for a lot of picture taking. His presence demanded our being present. As my family works through the grieving process with the love and support of our Temple Sinai family, one of the best ways I can honor him is to be fully present for our congregation, advance our culture of connectedness and help create meaningful memories. There is no greater blessing.

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