



**Rosh Hashanah 2007 – Discussion Topic**

**“REGRETS, DO-OVERS, LOOKING AHEAD”**

**Reflections**  
**by Stefni Bogard**

Will I regret giving this brief speech? Yet, did I have much choice when approached by the rabbi? Truthfully, it was a great exercise, allowing me to reflect and think about the future.

We’ve all heard the phrase LIFE IS A JOURNEY NOT A DESTINATION and as we know timing is everything.

So, if I hadn’t decided to return one last time to summer camp in 1975, I would not have met David, and if several years later I hadn’t procrastinated writing a paper in graduate school, therefore running frantically to my professor’s office I would not have re-met David in the elevator. That’s probably the only time procrastination paid off.

Speaking of procrastination, Don’t! Take risks! Is it ever a good time? No, so just do it! After living in Virginia for several years, we had thought about moving back to New York to be closer to friends, family and to fulfill a dream to live at the beach. Life was good, so why change? Then, one morning, reading the NY Times we learned that Jay Monahan (lawyer, husband of Katie Couric) had died of colon cancer at age 42 after only being diagnosed several months earlier. We both said “Life is too short.” What are we waiting for? Let’s move now! Although we knew it was crazy, six months later we were living at the beach, back in New York.

Yes, my journey would have been different, but I believe I would still be the same person and would have pursued the same career in health care and teaching. Ok, so a household with less testosterone and sarcasm might have been slightly more tolerable.

Do I have regrets? Don’t we all? So here are my Top Ten Regrets.

#10 Never pursuing my Ph.D

#9 Never becoming fluent in another language

#8 Picking up Tennis as an adult, therefore lacking the graceful, beautiful strokes and game my boys possess.

#7 Not pursuing a singing career, which would have been difficult since I can’t sing.

#6 As a nurse, not being able to respond to disasters such as Hurricane Katrina or the Tsunami.

#5 Having a touch of the Jewish worry gene and taking things too seriously at times.

#4 Never learning to cook (my family regrets this one too!)

#3 Not getting to travel to exotic and interesting places and experiencing different cultures.

#2 Not spending more quality time with family and friends

AND the # 1 regret is.....well, I guess I don't really have one.

There isn't really a whole lot there. When I put this in perspective, I realize my regrets are minimal and that I'm extremely fortunate.

Many years ago, a colleague bought me a T-shirt with just one word printed on the back:

“ATTITUDE”

That one word says so much. Attitude, to me, is more important than education, than money, than circumstances, then failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a congregation...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.

It amazes me that often people with tremendous hardships and illnesses are the happiest people. I see this with my patients. I am in awe when you see the soldiers returning from Iraq with life altering injuries so appreciative of life. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our Attitudes.

So looking ahead...I hope over the next year I will live well, laugh often, worry less, love much, learn more, give lots, experience new things, appreciate life and take charge of my attitude.

L'shana Tovah!