

Joy

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

This past Monday, I went to synagogue twice. The morning was a somber occasion, honoring my dad who passed away in January of 2021. The Yizkor service is conducted four times per year: Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret (This past Monday), Passover and Shavuot. Yizkor means “Remember” in Hebrew and it is the first word of the prayer recited. Remembering is the theme of Yizkor as well. We remember our immediate relatives who have died and ask G-d to remember the Neshamot (souls) of all of our relatives and friends who have passed on. That evening was for dancing, happiness and celebration for the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah when we celebrate finishing reading the Torah (the 5 books of Moses) and begin again.

How can one day start out so sad and reflective and end on such a happy note? I realized that the two occasions are linked. Whenever I think about my dad, initially there are tears. Why did we lose him so soon - no life of a loved one is EVER long enough. Why won't he be around to see my daughters grow up and get married? Why won't he be a great grandpa? But when I am remembering him, the flashbacks of the big smiles, the sarcastic jokes (I have mentioned that I grew up in New York, right?) His laughter and kindness, these are what replace those sad thoughts and bring me joy. What would he have been doing right now? What would he think about what I am doing now? And those two emotions are inextricably linked for me, now, when I remember him.

What brings you joy? Is it a sunset filled with reds, oranges, peaches, pinks? Is it the sunrise encompassing the same color scheme? Are you filled with joy when your child laughs? Do you have memories that bring that smile to your face? Or maybe it is more personal. A job well done? A task completed?



For me, I look for joy. I actively search out times, places, occasions, events and find the joy in the smallest things. An Interaction with a parent - success and joy! My daughters giggling over something they see on social media - joy (not about the social media part though... but that is a topic for another WOW). I find that more and more those moments of joy, the silver linings, the beauty is all right under the surface and it is our job and my mission to find it, always.

I would love to hear from you and what brings you joy. Send me an email at pam@evjcc.org. Hearing about your joy would bring me happiness!

Shabbat Shalom.