



What Happens Next?

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

Every morning when I wake up during the week, I have a routine to get me ready for my day. Details aren't important but what is, what keeps me grounded is knowing what steps I need to take to make sure I am prepared for what comes next. Even the weekend has a routine but it is definitely a bit more relaxed and often the time frame isn't quite so rigid.

No one tells me what I need to do. This is something I set up for myself. Especially if I am not 100%, the routine is rote; no thinking is required in order for me to be successful. My children also have set up their routines, both for school or work days and for non-work days. From the outside you can see that even when they aren't fully awake, which often happens on the school and work days, having a set schedule to follow helps them put one foot in front of the other and get everything done in a timely manner.

Why is it important?

What do you think? I suppose I should start my question with, "Do you think this is important?" My question is, perhaps, a bit leading. Obviously, I think it is. Not everyone does and I respect your position. But going with the idea that there is importance to this schedule, why would that be?

Comfort

Knowing what comes next can be very comforting. Knowing that you have that safe space to go through your day, feeling reassured of steps that need to be taken to be successful, helps. Some are helped more than others. There are those that can fly by the seat of their pants. Ones that thrive on chaos, in my opinion, not knowing what comes next. That isn't me and I am sure that I am in the process of raising three girls who are the same. Now, that is not to say that I can't handle something new being thrown at me. However, that is just not where my comfort lies.



Stress & Anxiety

When I don't know what is coming next, "the unknown," I start to feel anxious. The unknown is actually one of my biggest fears. It comes from my need to try and control what is happening. I may not appear this way, but I am definitely a closeted Type A personality. My children might disagree about the closeted part, but humor me.

I try to go with the flow, I try to be grounded, and ultimately I know that I am not G-d and can't control the outcome of anything. That is the reality. Which is why, I think, that when I have a schedule to follow, not only does it keep me grounded, that safety allows my stress and anxiety to dissipate so that I can handle anything that comes my way. Creating the schedule often helps me to stay grounded. It is all a mixed up puzzle but the outcomes are usually positive.

Children

Which leads me to the importance of a schedule for children. Imagine being a little human being, having little or no control over what your day looks like. Imagine how scary that might be. I believe that children thrive on a schedule. Some more than others. But when there is a schedule in place, it usually provides that safety and security for them to branch out and explore or take a "surprise" in stride. I saw this as a teacher and as a mom. Days where children knew what came first, second, third seemed happier (do I really know except what they show me?) seemed more content, were more engaged. I felt that the more days there where they knew what was coming next, helped them navigate when it wasn't like that.

Not in Control

So I have to preface all of this with the declaration that I know that I am not G-d. Obviously things happen that are out of our control. I can't know what the outcome will be with any activity that I do, even if it is planned. Ultimately, HaShem is truly in control and knows what comes next. But, having a plan in place helps me to feel grounded and to take those random incidences in stride when they happen. I feel comforted in giving the ultimate control to HaShem, to G-d, and planning as much as I can all along the way.

Shabbat Shalom!