

“Teach Your Children Well”

March 8, 2014

In a recent 11/12th grade Chaverim discussion the students acknowledged that all of the efforts their parents, grandparents and Jewish community members have indeed succeeded in creating a unique and safe Jewish space for them and their fellow Jewish teens. How have they experienced that?

- With conversations about how we live and act that make a difference in our decisions.
- By sitting in safe and inclusive shared tribal community.
- By learning from the lessons of the past.
- By believing that in spite of what feels like a troubled world, idealism and optimism can still thrive, as they should in the life of a young person.
- That truth, and compassion and seeing the other matters as much as being seen.
- That gratitude and giving are the remedies for the entitlement that inhabits our culture.
- That we are here for a purpose and that purpose is essential, meaningful and even holy.

At seventeen I agreed to shoulder my own personal yoke (of Jewish responsibility) which for me was teaching and working with young people. I have cherished this work, and intend to never stop growing!

From our Talmud we are given a great old saying:

“Above each and every blade of grass hovers an angel whispering “grow, grow”

My Angels, the people who taught me to be me who are still here on earth,
But for their presence, where would I be now?
You cannot see them, but they are forever there.
“Above each and every blade of grass hovers an angel whispering “grow, grow.”
On our sides, and behind us are the countless teachers we have known.
The only thing we know for sure is that change will happen.
It’s never too late to grow.

Idols come and go without a message and disappear.
Angels leave a part of them in us, chase away our fear.
Heroes leave their mark on every blessed deed we do.
Idols come and go while angels are forever coming through.

Angels come disguised as, parents, coaches, counselors and teachers
Rooting us on from invisible bleachers,
Aunts and uncles, sisters, brothers
Holding us like no others.
Doubt and rage, block the portals
That angels need to help their mortals.

Don’t forget to take along the folks that got you there.
They gave you all the tools you used to help you pay your fare.
In front, behind and found on either side
You can always call on them to be your guide.

And then, there are the angels that come and go at night.

They hover right above you, hold you tight.
You cannot see, or touch, or hear them,
You know they are there,
A gentle, subtle wisp in the air.
Hovering over each blade of grass, whispering "grow, grow!"

So salute your heroes, the ones still near,
And remember your mentors who are no longer here.
Their word and lessons, will forever last.
Just like the angel that hovers over each blade of grass.
The tiny essence of the divine that falls on every one of us,
Whispering "grow, grow."

c. Rick Concoff 2014