

Dear haverim,

I trust you and your family have enjoyed a wonderful festival of Hanukah. As we prepare to kindle the eighth candle this evening our homes will be filled with the presence of light. May that physical expression of light cast a glowing light on everyone's spiritual well-being. May the glow of our hanukkiah provide us with the inspiration needed to overcome obstacles, to find faith when it seems unobtainable, to replace a frown with the smile of promise, and remind us all of the many things we take for granted and for which we never say "thank you."

As we recall the many messages of this Hanukkah festival, I pray our world will find the courage to bond together to confront all expressions of bigotry and terror, that Israel's illusive dream of peace will be realized, that our country will find the ability to move beyond the issues of race that threaten so many communities and college campuses across our country, and we will be able to embrace a time in the near future when oppression will cease and the message of the Maccabees will be experienced by all.

Please enjoy this final reflection for the eighth night of Hanukah that I like to distribute to the congregation each year. It reminds us that the most valuable things in life are "priceless."

EIGHT GIFTS THAT DON'T COST A CENT

This simple checklist can help us measure how we are nurturing our relationships. The author of these thoughts is unknown, but deeply appreciated.

The Gift of Listening

But you must really listen. Don't interrupt, don't daydream, don't plan your response. Just listen.

The Gift of Affection

Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

The Gift of Laughter

Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

The Gift of Solitude

There are times when we want nothing more than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.

The Gift of a Favor

Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

The Gift of a Written Note

It can be a simple "Thanks for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime.

The Gift of a Compliment

A simple and sincere, “You look great in red,” “You did a super job,” or “That was a wonderful meal” can make someone’s day.

The Gift of a Cheerful Disposition

The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone.

These are eight important ways we can contribute toward whole and healthy relationships. They cost nothing yet they may be the most valuable gifts we can offer to each other.

Once again, Talia and Rabbi Kushnick, Nadav and Levi, join Wende, Danielle and Gilad, Jordana, Adina and me in extending our warmest regards to you and your family for a meaningful and uplifting final day of Hanukkah.

Hag Urim Sameah,

Rabbi Stefan J Weinberg