

CHESHVAN

A Different Kind of Bequest

In her Cheshvan reading, Wellness and Learning Chair) Dr. Barbara Levin addresses the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and adult health. While it is a relatively new area of medical research, there is much data to support this conclusion.

Long ago, the prophet Jeremiah reflected on this same concept when he wrote that “*in those days [they shall no longer say] Parents have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are blunted*’ (31:29). In other words, children should not be punished for the sins of their parents.

Yet, it seems they are. Levin cites a number of the ten significant factors such as abuse (both physical and emotional), neglect, family dysfunction and disharmony, and absentee parents that can be accurate predictors of future health.

So, imagine if we applied this medical knowledge to a meaningful Jewish tradition, that of the ethical will, and bequeathed gifts to our family members – not sterling silver or real estate – but hopes and dreams for our children and grandchildren’s lives that would ensure a vital and emotionally stable adulthood.



For you, my

May you go to sleep every night feeling safe and protected.

May you always have a sense of curiosity and wonder.

May you be creative.

May you take joy in Jewish learning and tradition.

May you choose friends who are loving and supportive.

May you always be accepted and accepting of others.

May you be playful, poetic and resourceful.

May you listen wisely.

May you find a community that supports you religiously and spiritually.

May you be resilient when difficulties arise,

Try creating one of your own.

The transmission of values is a meaningful gift. We accept the healthful properties of diet, exercise, immunizations, etc. But we now also must appreciate that other factors such as creativity, community and resilience are also medical prescriptions.