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ASKABIGAIL

Newsletter

OVERCOMING CRISIS: RESILIENCE THROUGH FAITH AND COMMUNITY

Dear friends,

I am happy to share that Montreal has transitioned from the "red" to the "orange" zone, meaning the curfew has been lifted, and restaurant terraces have reopened. Yesterday, I received my second vaccine dose, which I see as a turning point. Finally, things are looking up!

During the lockdown, I focused on doubling down on my existing routines and adapting them to a homebound and solitary setting. I received invaluable support from friends and virtual connections via Zoom. Prioritizing my physical well-being became paramount, with a renewed focus on essentials like food, shelter, and health. In this journey, the advice from an '80s self-help classic, "How to be Your Own Best Friend," resonated deeply: "The best friend you will ever find is you. You must love yourself with joy to fill your heart with bliss and happiness."

This quote helped me stay focused as I went about my daily activities, from buying groceries to cooking and cleaning, while confronting my shortcomings head-on. Although I did gain some weight, I also learned to prioritize getting enough sleep, eating regular meals, and connecting with loved ones virtually across different time zones, all while listening to CBC radio for comfort.

I found immense solace in my religious practices during these challenging times. Despite the difficulties, I continued attending weekly Torah study classes from Montreal and Jerusalem, complemented by insightful talks and Zoom services led by Rabbis Whitman and Schier. Even as I adjusted to a new normal, observing the Sabbath provided me a much-needed respite. During this time, I disconnected from electronics and pre-prepared meals, allowing myself moments of rest and reflection.

In my professional field, I've discovered the purpose of analyzing current events and writing newsletters. It's a cathartic outlet that helps me preserve my sanity.



In my latest blog, '[Lessons from Shavuot](#),' I explore the spiritual and moral teachings of Shavuot and reflect on its relevance in today's world.



Additionally, I tackle the pressing issue of antisemitism in '[Does Antisemitism Matter?](#)', examining its origins and impact, particularly amidst the Gaza-Israel conflict, while drawing upon Jewish wisdom and tradition for guidance.



Finding meaning and connection within ourselves, our community and our traditions is essential during difficult times. As I navigate these turbulent waters, I find comfort in the resilience of the human spirit and the wisdom that comes from faith and practice. You can learn more about '[Navigating Antisemitism Through Jewish Wisdom and Tradition](#).'

With gratitude for the journey thus far and optimism for the road ahead,

Abigail