

Dear Friends of Hillcrest Jewish Center:

It is Yom Kippur and the rabbi of a suburban shul approaches the bimah to deliver his sermon.

"Today I am going to talk about sex appeal," he says.

Mrs. Goldstein in the 3<sup>rd</sup> row says, "Please don't, rabbi."

The rabbi is taken aback and says, "Mrs. Goldstein, sex is a very common topic today."

Mrs. Goldstein replies, "I am OK with the sex part. I just cannot take any more appeals."

This joke (it was a joke) reflects on the fact that the High Holy Days were chosen -due to the larger number of members attending services- as the *par-excellence* time to make appeals for financial contributions to support the synagogue and its many activities and programs.

Our shul, as you know, is not the exception, and the *Kol Nidrei Campaign* is Hillcrest Jewish Center's annual appeal and one of its main sources of revenue. I am sure you heard about the Kol Nidrei Campaign and if you haven't, you will.

Those of us involved in running the campaign, by writing letters, emails, making calls, and soliciting people in person, often reflect on what makes people give to Hillcrest Jewish Center in particular, or to any other cause in general.

Let me say it up front: experts in fundraising discovered a long time ago that one of the main reasons people give to a particular organization is because they are asked to. This is why the work lay leaders, clergy and office staff do towards a successful campaign is so important. So, if you get a letter, email or call, please know that behind that letter, email or call, there is an individual who cares for Hillcrest Jewish Center. Be kind, thoughtful, and if you can and your heart moves you, please give and give generously.

Last but not least, the same experts found out that the second main reason people give, and give generously to a particular organization, is because they want to give and because they are invested in the organization. In other words, the size of a gift is not proportional to the size of the wallet (as many people mistakenly think), but to the size of the heart of the giver and to the connection he or she feels with the organization.

The good news for Hillcrest Jewish Center is that we have many generous givers, who feel connected with our beloved shul. Just to share with you an inspiring story (I won't mention the name but she will know who she is when she reads these lines), a couple of weeks ago, I thanked a congregant who generously doubled her gift to the Kol Nidrei Campaign from last year (which was already generous). She told me:

"Rabbi, this year I couldn't go anywhere on vacation, so I decided to use the extra money to help the shul."

An inspiring story, indeed.

On our end, lay leaders, clergy and staff, are working tirelessly to provide as many opportunities for connection as possible to all of our members. Yes, we can do better, and God willing, and with your help, we will.

On your end, everybody deep inside wishes to be a giver. Givers make a difference and feel good about it. The only way to get the feeling, though, is to become a giver.

So, here is my final appeal. If you have made your gift to the Kol Nidrei Campaign, we thank you. If you want and can up your gift, please do so. If you haven't contributed yet, please make your gift and be generous if you can. It is going to go a long way. We aim for 100% participation and we count on each of you.

Wishing all of you a healthy, prosperous, and sweet year!

Rabbi Manes Kogan