

## A big-picture blueprint for coping

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SHMUEL GREENBAUM, THE JERUSALEM POST

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Kindness has been my personal response to terror. My wife, Shoshana, was murdered by a suicide bomber. She was one of over 100 victims who were killed or wounded on August 9, 2001 at the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem.

Sometimes I wonder whether telling my story can really help others. Since the way I am coping with my tragedy is so different from the norm, would anyone else understand it?

Many of the rabbis who came to visit me after it happened told me a story about a carpet.

"Sometimes you only see the knots on the back," they said. "Only later do you see the beautiful design on the front." I thanked them for coming, and explained that I could already see the beautiful design - the "big picture."

I have always been interested in the big picture - in how to make the world better. Ever since I was a kid I have always liked to tackle big problems by assembling a group of experts to solve them. As a teenager I designed a system to tap hydroelectric power from the wastewater of apartment buildings. I contacted a local engineering school and assembled a team of academics to prepare the plan for the US Department of Energy.

AFTER MY wife's violent murder I began a project to teach people how to be kinder. The project has just started to take off. At the moment we have more than 40,000 subscribers on six continents to our "Daily Dose of Kindness" e-mail. Everyone who signs up for this e-mail list is also automatically signed up as a "Kindness adviser." I like having many advisers. Right now, I have over 40,000 of them.

Last week one of my Kindness advisers sent me a link to an article in The New York Times which described how medical researchers have found that acts of kindness stimulate the brain in the same place physical pleasures do. So now it has been shown that doing kindness causes enjoyment. And I do indeed receive tremendous pleasure by promoting kindness. This is one way I cope with tragedy.

MY FAVORITE author on kindness is Zelig Pliskin. In his book Kindness, he presents 85 techniques to find new opportunities to do kindness by improving yourself and improving the world around you.

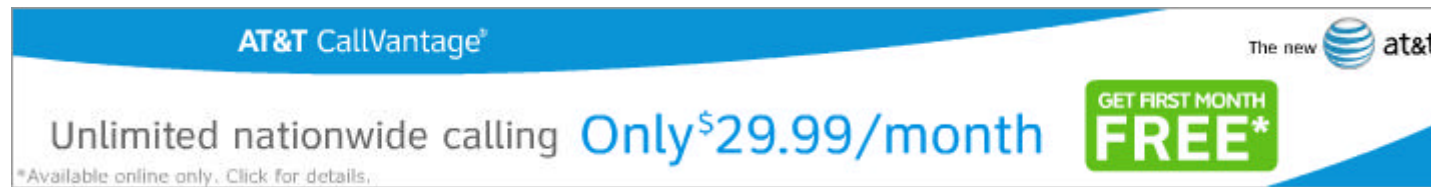
In one chapter he explains how you can feel the thrill of an international sports victory every day if you visualize 100,000 people applauding for you, cheering you on when you do an act of kindness. Studies have shown that even though this "victory" is a figment of our imaginations, our hormonal system produces real biochemical responses.

Shortly after my wife's death I prayed with great intensity to God, asking Him to help me make the world better. From the feedback I am getting from my kindness projects, it is clear that my prayers are being


answered and that I am helping to make the world a little kinder - one person at a time. This feeling of Divine assistance, combined with the biochemical responses to my imagined victory, has given me tremendous emotional strength.

*The writer is a computer specialist living in New York. (www.PartnersInKindness.org)*

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