

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A True Random Act of Kindness

On a Friday night in August, after Shabbat services, while most of the worshippers were enjoying the refreshments, I was in my office tutoring a Bat Mitzvah student. Hy Penn knocked and came into the office. "These were left at our door," he told me. After hearing of incidents of Anti-Semitic literature and vandalism at synagogues both in Houston and around the country, I was concerned. That is, until I saw what was in his hand: a bouquet with several sprigs of multi-colored daisies. When I looked more closely, I saw that each sprig had several daisies as well as a hand-written index card tied to the stem that said, "I am grateful to share the planet with you." Since there were several daisies as well as several notes, Hy and I figured it was meant to go to several households. He distributed the flowers to everyone who was still present at the Oneg.

My heart warmed. Who could have perpetrated this? Hy remembered seeing some people outside the temple before services, a teenaged girl and an adult, presumably mother and daughter. He thought they were coming into the temple, so didn't think much of it. My thoughts went to all the incidents of hateful rhetoric I had heard in the past, and realized that there **are** people who go out of their way to be kind. Those who seek attention for negative actions often get noticed; the kinder actions?...not so much. If acts of kindness were made as well-known as acts of hatred, perhaps more people would understand that open hearts and open minds are the norm, and ignorance is the exception. It gives me hope.

At the end of the evening, all the flowers had gone to the various homes, and I realized I didn't take one for myself to bring home to my wife. I decided to take picture with my phone, and said, "I guess Loren will have to be satisfied with a picture of a flower instead of the real thing." But when I got to my car, there was one sprig left on my windshield, with the same note. Whoever you are: I'm grateful to share the planet with you, too!

B'shalom,

Rabbi Dan Gordon

