

Blog Post February 2019

What Men (and Women) Want

I haven't seen either of the recent movies [What Women Want](#) (starring Mel Gibson, 2001) and [What Men Want](#) (starring Taraji P. Henson, 2019). Both movies are about a person who acquires the ability to read people's minds, and comedy ensues.

Do we really need to read people's minds to understand what people want? I hope not. It should be obvious...if you think about it. One [survey](#) tells us that people want happiness, money, freedom, peace, joy, balance, fulfillment, confidence, and passion. Some researchers [say](#) that people want experiences, not things, because experiences foster social connection, broaden our outlook, resist comparisons with others, and promote gratitude. Others say that people really want connection: closeness with others, belonging, community.

Whatever ultimate "want" is on your list, I think most people can agree that the above list is a good starting point. If we [start with "why,"](#) then our actions should follow. If you know that you want connection, then it's probably a good idea to devote time in your day/week/month to getting closer with others: partner, family, friends, colleagues, and your Kol Shalom community.

We are fortunate to have our Kol Shalom community. Sure, we have family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, and people who share our interests (exercise, sports, knitting, model trains, cooking, and so on). I have been referring to our community as a *kehillah k'dosha*, a sacred community. It's quite special to be in a community of people focused on connecting with our Jewish heritage and continuing to learn and remind ourselves of how to treat others. Jews have a mission to teach the world merciful justice and loving kindness. Kol Shalom reminds us of our mission and helps us to do that mission.

So, our relationships within this *kehillah k'dosha*, this sacred community, are a bit different from other relationships and communities.

My question is: if people want happiness, money, freedom, peace, joy, balance, fulfillment, confidence, and passion, what is Kol Shalom's role in helping people to get what they want?

My view is: yes, Kol Shalom should be and is helping people to get happiness, peace, fulfillment, and these other things. OK, so maybe not money.

The 2017 DC Jewish Community Demographic [Study](#) sponsored by Federation found that nearly 300,000 Jews live in the DC area (37% more Jews than the 2003 study). Roughly 1/3 (31%) are members of a synagogue, a smaller percentage than the national average (39%).

So, 2/3 of Washington-area Jews aren't getting the wonderful inspiration and relationships that we have in our *kehillah k'dosha*. Yet they must want happiness, peace, joy, balance, fulfillment, confidence, and passion.

Our congregational leadership – clergy, staff, and lay leaders – are spending time thinking about how to increase engagement. So many of us feel connected with our Jewish heritage and find meaning in all or selected aspects: food, prayer, humor, learning, films, serving others, family, you name it. I believe that we need to continue trying, experimenting, refining, all in an effort to find ways to serve our congregants and help them connect with Jewish life in ways meaningful to each person.

My #1 goal as a lay leader is for our congregation to help every Kol Shalom member along in their Jewish journey. I have my own journey, and it takes thought and reading and remembering and effort, and all of it is a joy. I want Kol Shalom to help you on your journey.

How do we make choices in our own lives to add sacredness in our daily/weekly routines? How can we take steps to help our children, our congregants, to feel deeply connected with our Jewish heritage?

I want to be in dialogue with you. You can click [here](#) to send me a message, or you can email me at mplieber@ymail.com. I am thrilled to hear from you, to get to know you better, and to hear your suggestions on continuing Kol Shalom's growth and value to you.

Thank you for your help and for your part in our *kehillah k'dosha*, our sacred community!

Marc Lieber, President