

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

A Single Good Deed

The Unexpected Power of a Single Good Deed

By Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger



Have you ever wondered why some people seem to coast through life on what feels like stored-up good karma? Maybe it's that neighbor who always gets "lucky breaks" but also happens to be the first person to help when someone's car doesn't start. Or perhaps it's your aunt who seems blessed with endless good fortune yet never fails to volunteer at the local food bank.

I've been thinking about this lately, watching how small acts of kindness seem to echo through time, creating ripples we can't possibly predict. Take my friend Jack, for instance. Twenty years ago, he stopped to help a stranded motorist on I-95 during a snowstorm. He didn't think much of it at the time – just jumped her car battery and went on his way. Fast forward fifteen years and that same woman turned out to be on the hiring committee when Jack's daughter interviewed for her dream job. The woman remembered him instantly.

These kinds of coincidences happen more often than we might think, weaving through our lives in ways that often go unnoticed until we take a step back to observe the patterns. Sometimes, the most unexpected acts of kindness – even those done without pure intentions – can have the most profound and lasting effects.

But perhaps one of the most fascinating examples of how a single act can reverberate through generations comes from an ancient tale that has survived millennia. It's the story of Og, a figure from the Hebrew scriptures whose one good deed – despite ignoble motives – earned him an unusual place in history.

Picture this: Moses, one of history's most fearless leaders, had faced down mighty armies and powerful rulers without so much as a tremor of doubt. Yet when it came to confronting Og, the king of Bashan, something extraordinary happened – for the first time, Moses felt fear. The source of this unprecedented anxiety? A single act of kindness performed generations before.

Years earlier, Og had informed Abraham that his nephew Lot had been kidnapped. This tip-off allowed Abraham to mount a successful rescue mission. But here's the twist – Og's motives were far from pure. He had actually hoped Abraham would die in the rescue attempt, leaving Abraham's wife available for Og to pursue. What's remarkable is that Abraham, though fully aware of Og's devious intentions, still considered it a favor and remained genuinely grateful for the information that helped save his nephew's life.

This simple act of delivering information, despite its self-serving motivation, carried such weight that when Moses later faced Og in battle, he worried that Abraham's gratitude and this long-ago favor might somehow protect his adversary. It took divine reassurance to convince Moses to proceed with the battle, which he then won decisively.

Think about that for a moment. One action, even one performed with mixed motives, held such power that it concerned a leader who had already faced down emperors and armies. It's like finding out that helping someone with their groceries thirty years ago somehow earned you a lifetime of protection – even if you only did it because you were trying to impress your date.

This concept resonates particularly well with those of us who've been around long enough to see how life has a way of bringing things full circle. Remember when we used to dismiss our parents' advice about "what goes around comes around?" Well, after several decades of living, we've probably all had enough experiences to make us think twice about those old sayings.

Consider the business world, where we've all witnessed how a single act of integrity or kindness can unexpectedly pay dividends years later. Maybe it's the entry-level employee you mentored two decades ago who's now become a key industry contact. Or perhaps it's the client whose small account you treated with respect when others wouldn't give them the time of day – the same client whose business has since grown exponentially.

The beauty of kindness is that it doesn't require grand gestures or perfect motivation. Sometimes, the smallest actions – holding the door for someone struggling with packages, letting someone merge in heavy traffic, or simply offering a genuine compliment – can set in motion a chain of events we couldn't possibly predict.

As we navigate our increasingly complex world, this ancient wisdom is profoundly comforting. It suggests that our actions, however small they might seem, carry weight and meaning beyond their immediate impact. In an age when we're often overwhelmed by global issues that feel beyond our control, it's reassuring to know that simple acts of kindness still have the power to shape our world and protect us in ways we might never anticipate.

So, the next time you have the opportunity to help someone – even if you're not feeling particularly altruistic at the moment – remember Og's story. That simple gesture might create ripples that will travel further and last longer than you could ever imagine. After all, if a self-serving act from thousands of years ago could carry such weight, imagine the potential impact of genuine kindness freely given.

Yonatan Hamburger is a rabbi and writer dedicated to serving spiritual seekers of all backgrounds on behalf of Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer who supports communities throughout the regional South. You can contact them at y@tasteoforah.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:
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Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.



Miss Floss

My Third-Grade Teacher, Mrs. Foote, was the nicest lady you would ever want to meet. But, at the age of 35, in my mind she was ancient. My perspective has now changed. In my opinion, 65 is not old and 70 is not sounding so bad. I have the same opinion in regard to tractors. I have known a lot of tractors in my time, and over the years some of them, because of my sentimentality, developed names.

Miss Floss was an elderly lady known by my grandfather when he was a boy. She could be cantankerous and stubborn; however, she had a heart of gold. But, the one thing she was known for was being bossy. This lady was Papa's Sunday School Teacher for 10 years. After each Sunday School lesson Papa said she would bark out orders to her class in an effort to get the front of the small church house organized and ready for preaching. Her bossy behavior was accepted by the young people. But, the men of the church took offense when she started on them and so they began poking fun at her by calling her Bossy Flossie.

One particular Sunday Papa told me that Flossie showed herself at church. "She took a fit," Papa said. It seems that Flossie was overwhelmed by the spirit and began to buck dance, and she laid down on the floor of the church. Somehow she rolled over on her belly while her legs were kicking and her arms were waving. All of this activity caused her dress to roll up over her head, and there for all to see were written across her rear end the words, "Martha's Finest Self-Rising." The word flour was missing. Apparently, Miss Floss had made her underwear from a Martha White Flour sack.

This story was handed down through four generations in my family. The story became intertwined in the actions of my family. For example, when I was a young boy Papa had an old Ayrshire milk cow. This old cow was the boss and she let the other cows on the farm know it. She was always the first to feed, and the other cows would not attempt to eat the feed until old "Floss" was finished. Nobody in the family remembers who the person was that gave the old cow the name of Floss. But, we all agreed the cow reminded us of Papa's old Sunday School Teacher.

In 1963 Papa bought an old Farmall tractor. He used that old red tractor until the late 1960s when he purchased a blue Ford tractor. I learned to plow using that old tractor and it was the first tractor my sons ever rode. It was dependable, even in cold weather. Just like Miss Floss was there for Sunday School, the old Ford tractor was always ready to work. Is it any wonder then that the tractor picked up the name, "Miss Floss?"

About 30 years ago Papa called me with some news. The first words from his mouth were, "I baptized Miss Floss yesterday." Papa had taken the old tractor down by the lake to clear out some brush. He set the parking brake and got off the tractor to close a gate he had driven through. Somehow the brake loosened and papa watched helplessly as the old tractor rolled into and disappeared under the waters of Bear Creek Lake. I actually shed a tear for a tractor that day.

As you can see I have always been partial to red milk cows, Martha White Flour and blue tractors. Papa has been gone for a while now and even Mom and Dad are gone. We no longer have a milk cow around the place, and now we use White Lily Flour to make our biscuits. I now have recently purchased an orange tractor instead of a blue one. But, each time I start it up to do some work around the house my mind is flooded with memories provided to me by all the stories I received from my grandparents. And as I get older my concept of the word "old" keeps changing. Sixty-five is no longer old in my mind.

Seventy does not bother me either. Maybe old is way into the future!

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Raised Beds Soils

Last week I talked about the different materials that can be used to construct a raised bed. This week I want to talk about what we put in the raised beds. There are many different options out there, some are better than others are, and some are cheaper than others are. So let's talk through some options for soil in your raised garden bed.

UGA extension
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Jacob Williams



Before filling up your raised garden bed figure out how many cubic feet of soil you will need. This is a simple calculation of multiplying length by width by height. Let's use the dimensions 8 feet X 4 feet X 10 inches. In this case, we would multiply 8x4x0.833 because 10 inches is 0.833 feet. The answer is 26.66 cubic feet. If we

wanted to convert cubic feet to a cubic yard, we would divide our cubic feet by 27. This means that we have close to one cubic yard of volume.

Now that we have the math out of the way and know how much material we need let's talk about what materials can be used. Obviously, you can use top soil to fill the raised bed. If you have extra top soil nearby this might make sense for you. Otherwise, I don't think that it's a great option. Top soil is not regulated in terms of what is in it. So you might have many chunks of bark that haven't started decomposing. If you don't know the source of top soil, it will also contain weed seeds that will grow and compete with your plants.

Another option would be to go to the store and buy bags of soil that are made for raised beds. This would give you quality soil in the beds. The flip side is that you're going to spend a lot of money doing it. You could easily spend \$\$\$ for soil using the dimensions I talked about earlier. If the money is not a problem, this is a quick and easy solution.

Compost is a great way to fill your raised beds. However, beds shouldn't be 100% compost, they need some soil in their too. Compost that has completely composted will provide many nutrients to the soil. If you have your own compost you can use that, or you can buy compost in bulk. Some companies will deliver or if you have a pickup truck, you can use that. You can also buy compost in bags. A product like Black Kow is an example. Buying bags will be more expensive. One drawback to using compost is that the pH will most likely be high. This can lead to some nutrient shortages. Another thing to keep in mind with compost is that it will continue to decompose. This means that the amount you have will decrease and more will need to be added periodically.

The lasagna method is a popular way to fill raised beds. You alternate layers of brown and green material. Brown material is dry leaves, shredded newspaper, peat, and pine needles. Green materials are vegetable scraps, garden trimmings, and grass clippings. The green materials contain nitrogen and the brown materials contain carbon. Make the brown layers twice as thick as the green layers and it will compost down into a good material into which you can plant.

If you have beds that are very deep another option is the put branches in the bottom to fill up space. The branches will break down over time, giving you good material in which to grow. My preference is to use a third native soil, third bagged soil, and a third compost to fill up the raised bed.

If you have questions about filling your raised bed contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Letters to the Editor

Working Across the Aisle

Dear Editor,

Andrew Clyde, U.S. Representative for Georgia's 9th Congressional District, continues to use his bully pulpit to sow fear and division among his constituents in the 9th District. In a recent op-ed in this newspaper, he focused on the horrific death of Laken Riley of Athens, Georgia, who was murdered by an illegal alien from Venezuela. He reports that a bipartisan bill, designed to give ICE more authority to detain illegal aliens who commit crimes in this country, is in process of passing Congress. The disturbing part of Clyde's op-ed is his open attempt to further divide by placing unjustified blame on one political party. To state that "the murderer ... accepted Joe Biden's invitation to illegally cross the southern border" is pure inflammatory rhetoric. Finger-pointing and name-calling does not solve problems.

Our country is at a crossroads, and it will demand that our leaders act from positions of truth and integrity. Illegal immigration must be confronted as well as "kitchen table" issues such as grocery prices, housing costs, childcare costs, medical expenses, utility prices, rising insurance rates, women's health care and climate-caused natural disasters. This is a big agenda that will need bipartisan support and action. We must demand that our representatives work across the aisle. They are in Congress to solve problems, which is far more demanding than pointing fingers.

Jennifer Cordier

Prayer Service

Dear Editor,

On Tuesday, Jan. 21, President Trump and Vice President Vance, as part of their first full day following inauguration, attended a prayer service at the National Cathedral led by Episcopal Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde. In her remarks, the reverend said, "In the name of our God, I ask you (President Trump) to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now. There are gay, lesbian, and transgender children in Democratic, Republican, and independent families – some who fear for their lives." She also went on to defend illegal immigration by twisting God's Word in order to justify her remarks. Neither the President, Vice President, nor the worshippers ever heard a prayer of blessing, a word of encouragement or anything that would draw them closer to God. Rev. Budde is a classic example of what's wrong with many American churches in the U.S. today.

Tim Groza

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Guest Columns

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper.

If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month: School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday: Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month: Hiaw. City Council... City Hall YH City Council... YH City Hall	6 pm 6:30 pm
Second Wednesday of each month: Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month: Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month: Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse City of Young Harris Planning Commission... Meeting Room in City Hall TC Water Authority Board Meeting	5:30 pm 5 pm 6 pm

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