

June 23, 2022

Waiting Isn't Easy

One of my children's favorite books is Piggy and Elephant "Waiting Is Not Easy." In this book, Piggy wants to share a surprise with Elephant, but Elephant must wait to receive it. This is very difficult for Elephant, who wants to give up many times. At the end, Elephant sees that the surprise is the nighttime sky filled with stars, and says "this was worth the wait." In the current age of instant gratification - streaming television shows to binge watch in one weekend, next day delivery through amazon prime, and instacart - it is difficult to teach our children (and ourselves) that sometimes, things are worth the wait. It is even more difficult to teach that sometimes, regardless of your patience and ability to wait, your wait may not be rewarded with results.

This past Saturday, I rejoined many Sharing Shabbat families to harvest our mitzvah garden. We began by reflecting on the growth we had personally experienced during the passage of time between now and when we had planted the garden. Next, we checked our garden to determine whether the passage of time (coupled with sun, fertilizer, and watering of course) had yielded a positive crop. The answer was yes and no. We were able to harvest some of the kale, chives, and edible flowers. But the beets and radishes were not yet ready and needed more time. So after waiting, and being rewarded with a small sampling of the harvest, we were being asked to wait again.

Gardening is unpredictable, and somewhat out of our control. Fortunately, sometimes we can prepare for the unpredictable with additional planning. You may recall that we planted the garden in celebration of Earth Day and in order to donate the harvest to HOPE Community Services to provide more fresh produce. In case the harvest did not yield enough vegetables, Cantor Rodnizki and I had asked the Sharing Shabbat families to bring clementine with them that day. And after sampling our harvest, we joined together under the WRT tent to make sandwiches and pack sandwich bags, including the clementine, for donation to HOPE Community Services.

While we were packing the sandwiches, I was asked by one of the children, well under three years old, "Who's hungry?" At first, I thought he was referring to the *oneg* being laid out, and I began to explain about waiting, even trying to refer back to the vegetables that were not yet ready to be picked. He looked at me confused, until I realized my mistake. He was asking who all the sandwiches and snacks were being packed for. Whereas I was still waiting for the next thing, he was present in the moment.

After packing 350 sandwich bags, the time did come for us to relax, chat, and eat a meal together. We talked about the wonderful morning spent together, and our individual plans for the upcoming summer. We would wait for the mitzvah garden to finish growing in its own time, while we enjoyed the here and now.

