

My father passed away on August 20, a Wednesday. We shouldn't have been surprised as he told us that was what was going to happen. His funeral was on Thursday. Howard led services on Thursday and Friday night in the apartment as we had more than a minyan with just our families. We woke up Saturday morning and I wanted to go to services to say Kaddish. So we went online, found the services that started the latest, and Howard and I went. It was strange to be in a place that wasn't familiar. There was a bar-mitzvah and it was very crowded. But we found two seats together and waited until it was time for mourners kaddish. Howard made the first time I said Kaddish "in public" easier for me by standing with me and holding my hand. We returned to Lexington & Sunday morning we were at minyan. Howard and I were at morning minyan the rest of the week. And when shiva ended, I decided to continue to attend morning and evening minyan for the rest of the 30 days. Howard was with me every night. Morning minyan would definitely need to start a little later for him to be here-7 is a little too early for him. At the end of shloshim I could not decide which minyan to attend, so I continued to attend both morning and night until January, when I got a horrible cold and wasn't sleeping, so morning minyan was out. And those of you who have been at services with us over the past 7 1/2 months know that Howard has been there with me every night-holding my hand and supporting me while I say kaddish. And I plan to start coming mornings again. I miss it, and the people.

But Kathy-here is my true minyan story. Howard and I have been members of Temple Emunah for almost thirty years. And in all that time the only times I have felt like part of a community was when my kids were in preschool here and when I was in the Adult bat mitzvah class. That's not to say that I didn't know people and talk to them. But I never felt like part of something. Until now.

I miss my father every day. There have been many times that I wanted to tell him a joke I heard; or ask him a question that I thought only he could answer. But instead of being able to do that I focus more on the gift that my father has given me-the new community I have found at minyan. The reason that I cannot decide which to attend is that each has its own identity. It's own "feel." Let me explain. Monday morning Donna Jauvtis leads the service. I have known Donna since we moved to Lexington as

we live on the same street-and our daughters went thru school together. But I never knew that she came to minyan everyday, or led the service and now wraps tefillin in the morning. Now we talk more-about everyday stuff, our kids. And that wouldn't have happened if I was not coming to minyan. I

My seat at morning minyan is on the left side as you come in, right under the first lucite frame. And right behind Mike Abelove. I had never met him before. But he welcomed me and made me feel comfortable. And when he stopped saying kaddish I missed standing next to him as I said kaddish. David Landis' dad passed away within a day or two of my father. I knew David, but now we have spent more time together and I know him a little better. And I met his mom, who belongs to the shul Howard's brother does and my sister's sister-in-law does. Small world. Thank you dad for these new friends.

I started attending the Wednesday morning breakfast and learning after minyan. Kathy and Beth Levine do a fabulous job getting the breakfasts sponsored and getting volunteers to set-up and clean-up. And I have met people that only come on Wednesday's to minyan so that they can learn. As we introduce ourselves every week and share if we have something we wish to share I learn more about the people I pray with. And I cannot forget my favorite day-Tuesday. That's when Nadav brings his dad to minyan. It has been great to watch him grow up and it's a fabulous way to start the day. And it's nice to see you too, Rabbi Fel. Sharon Kalus has a marvelous voice as she leads Tuesday morning. Thank you dad for giving me the chance to become Nadav's friend.

And Friday is David Ezekial's morning. I have known David since we joined the synagogue. I believe he was a USY adviser back then. I knew his mom, Bessie, and have now gotten to know Fred a lot better as I see him almost every night. Fred convinced me to have a theme minyan for handwork. A new community for me was formed and the handwork group meets the first Wednesday of every month. Come join us on May 6. It doesn't seem like Friday if David has to miss because he is out of town.

Each of the leaders has their own way of leading the service. Some add additional songs and sections. You should all come and try it.

And Sunday morning is extra special for me. Mike Rosenberg leads. I like that we sing together the third paragraph of the shema. I can now do that myself-I couldn't before this. And most important, I have become friends with Denise Forbes. I knew her, we spoke. But now it's different. She joined us for the first seder and got to meet my crazy family. I wouldn't have invited her before this year because we weren't buddies. And I have made a wonderful new friend from attending minyan. Jane Aronson and I have become friends. I don't remember ever seeing her before I started coming Sunday mornings. And now we are knitting buddies. Thank you dad for all of these new friends.

Evening minyan has been a wonderful place for me and for Howard. We have met fabulous people-those that were saying kaddish and those that are there for themselves or have committed to attending on a specific night of the week. Buzz Hausner has made Howard the Tuesday night leader. Marilyn and Michael & Elizabeth Tracey were always there when we got there at night. What warm loving people they are. We started sitting next to them, so my evening minyan seat is on the right when you come in. When Howard went to Japan to see Wendy graduate, both Denise & Marilyn invited me to go out to dinner. I was so touched that they were worried about me being alone. Thank you dad for these new friends.

Ellie and her parents, Lauren and Dave Feldman, her cousin Sophie, her aunt Miriam and her uncles Steven and Jeremy and her grandmother Caron Bleich unfortunately joined the evening minyan. We welcomed them with open arms, hugs, and support. What a wonderful family they are, and I feel so honored to be able to call them my friends.

And Saturday mincha/maariv with a little teaching on the side is a whole different minyan. The Wissokers are there every week & lead the service. I have known the Wissokers for years. Dick in the preschool. Barbara and I have done some craft fairs here together. But now we go out to dinner together after minyan. I know about their kids and their grandchildren. We talk about Wendy and Michael. And they invited me for Shabbat dinner while Howard was away, and pushed back the time so that I could go to Friday night services. Thank you dad for all of these people. You should all try and come to Saturday evening services-it's a nice group of regulars and we can always make room for more!

I could go on and on about the people I have met and re-met and gotten to know better in the time that I have been saying Kaddish. But I think that you get the idea. Minyan is a community that I feel a part of. It's a great feeling when I walk in and I am "not 10." What a good feeling to know that I am making it possible for someone else to say kaddish. And I know that when my 11 months are up on July 10 I will continue to attend minyan. I want to be there for the people who need a "not 10" so that they can say kaddish. People have been there for me, and I will be there for them, especially in the summer. But I might miss some evenings so that I can attend some of the things I have missed this past year by choosing to be here.

Before I wrap this up, there are two things I need to say. The first is that I had set some goals for myself if I was going to be at minyan everyday. I wanted to be able to read the second paragraph of the shema & the third & finish with everyone else. Not there yet. The other part of that was to be able to read the long paragraph of Aleinu and be ready to finish along with the leader. Also not there yet, especially if the rabbis are leading.

The second thing I need to do is to thank Howard for being with me every night at minyan. Often we are there in two cars-and sometimes three if Michael joins us. He has been nothing less than wonderful over the last few months. Thank you Howard for your love and support.

My father died. And it is a loss that I will feel always. We did things together. I worked with him for many summers, driving back and forth to NYC from the island every day. I used to test him on who was singing on the radio. He got me started collecting stamps when i was a kid. And now I miss going in and buying him plates of the new stamps as they come out. And I am really sorry that he did not get to meet our new dog. He would have loved Toby. I can visualize my dad holding Toby and Toby falling asleep in his arms. But if I only think about what I am missing I will not be able to move forward. So I will continue to think about the gift that my dad's death gave me---the gift of community here at Temple Emunah. And for those of you I did not specifically name who attend minyan regularly, thank you for being there for me. I hope that if you need me, I can be there for you. Shabbat Shalom.

