



In Memory of Bob Feldman
1932-2010
from
Temple Beth El Great Neck Bulletin
April 2010

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One hundred sixty-nine times, we are commanded to remember. It's been said that for Jews, to believe is to remember. Yitgadal, v'yitkadash sh'mei raba. "May this precious name become greater and more sanctified." The kaddish is a distinctly Jewish way of remembering.

My dad was the only son to his parents. He was their "kaddish," the one who would say kaddish for his mom. (His dad died when he was five.) My dad strongly disagreed with the notion that only a son could fulfill the duty of reciting kaddish. But he believed deeply in the value and importance of reciting kaddish. Today, we are thankful to know that a daughter reciting kaddish is as holy and important as a son.

I have begun reciting kaddish daily. I'm certain my dad would be grateful that I am remembering him in this way. My connection to the kaddish prayer has deepened in my first week after shiva. It is generally understood as a prayer that sanctifies God's name through 10 one-line expressions. Yitgadal, may the name be great; yitkadash, may the name be sanctified; yitbarach, blessed; yishtabach, praised; yitpaar, beautified; yitromam, exalted; yitnasei, extolled; yit'hadar, honored; yitaleh, adored, yit'halal, lauded.

I am growing into a completely new understanding of kaddish. God's name is sanctified-made great-when we sanctify the honor and dignity of other human beings. I now realize that in reciting the kaddish we are meant to elevate the name and life of our loved ones.

I'm thinking about sanctifying Reuven Meir ben Yehuda v'Chaya Leah's name. Quite a few Beth-El members have asked me to share my dad's pithy one-liners. Below, you will find his top 10. By sharing Bob Feldman's one-liners, my hope is that all of us will reflect more consciously on the important insights of our loved ones. Furthermore, I hope we will become ever more intentional in the way we communicate with one another.

Yit'gadal—"I want the ball in your hands." Despite my many moments of mediocrity, he never lost faith in me. On the basketball court and way beyond, as coach and son who won four championships together, my dad had so much confidence in his little pisher son, pisher - that's what he and others called me. He never stopped believing I could do something great - yi'tgadal. Yit'kadash - **"Call your sibs."** Our lives will be sanctified, my dad believed, by my brother and sister and I taking care of each other, by our regular and caring contact. Yit'barach - **"Find something you love."** Creating a blessed life requires that we find something we love, a cause that it is worthy of our constant energy and devotion. To become blessed requires that we devote ourselves intensely to something beyond our family. Yish'tabach - "Learn. **The most powerful muscle is between your shoulders dummy.**" Your ability to lead will grow with your



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learning. Learn from everyone, from all stripes. Never stop filling your mind with knowledge.

Yitpaar – **“Be good to yourself.”** Judge yourself with a generous heart. “Have fun,” he’d say when I was experiencing a significant professional or personal challenge.
Yitromam - **“Be good to each other.”** At the end of every visit, dad would whisper this into my ear and separately into Tara’s ear. Life, marriage, family can be so challenging. Our joy and fulfillment depends entirely on how well we take care of each other.
Yitnasei - **“Nothing really worthwhile comes without a risk or sacrifice.”** Raising ourselves up in life takes unbelievably hard work and some amount of risk. Embrace both. Don't run away from either. Yit'hadar - **“don't wait for the funeral.”** Too often, we delay our expressions of kindness until they're too late to matter. Say what needs to be said. Don't be afraid. Don't wait until it's too late. Yitaleh - **“Make 'em Jewish.”** Don't miss an opportunity to create a distinctly Jewish way of understanding an experience. Every moment offers the opportunity to grow Jewishly. Every Jew should be filled with joy and pride. Yit'halal - **“I Love you.”** Hellos should include a hug and a kiss. Goodbyes should suggest, “My admiration, pride and love for you are beyond words. Keep finding that place of sweetness, kindness, warmth and wisdom.”

I will close with two requests. First, I want to create a huge collection of one-liners. Please send me a list of pithy 1-liners from your loved one(s). Second, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, beginning March 23, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., we will have a short morning service that will conclude with kaddish. Anyone who would like an opportunity to recite kaddish is welcome - no - encouraged to contribute your prayers and love. A Jerusalem friend used to say to me, “I go to services because my presence might enable someone else to have a meaningful experience.” Please do not underestimate how great a gift you give by showing up.