

Presidential Message

February 2019

The Anti-Social Network

I try to use my space in the bulletin to keep you all informed on the goings on at the Temple, or to share a story from my life that I think relates to our community experience. However, when you sit on the bima week in and week out, listening to Rabbi Marc's weekly d'var Torah, you eventually, get the urge to prepare a sermon every now and then. This month I wanted to talk about how I'm trying to kick the Facebook habit.

I'm my family's Corresponding Secretary. I used to be the one to put together the holiday greeting cards. When the kids were little, I would put together the annual holiday bulletin bragging about all of our accomplishments. Then, I discovered the world-wide-web, and I started a family web site where friends could see our pictures more often.

Then... along came Facebook. What a wonderful idea. I could post pictures without having to program a web site. It was fun! I could reunite with old friends. I could see what was going on with people I knew. I could share jokes. Like many of you, I could lose myself on Facebook for hours at a time. THEN... along came my smart phone and it's Facebook app! Now I could Facebook wherever I was. It's been several years now, and boy, do I check Facebook wherever I am.

I'm glad that I'm not addicted to nicotine, alcohol, or another drug. But I think I'm addicted to Facebook, and it's not healthy either. I notice that I pick up my phone and reflexively open Facebook even if it's only been a few minutes since my last check. So it's a constant distraction. The other thing that's becoming clear to me is that the experience doesn't make me feel good anymore.

First off, I've long since stopped corresponding. Since I was posting and friending more and more people, I figured I didn't need to send holiday cards any more. A few years down the line, we don't receive that many cards either. It makes for a depressingly bare mantle in December. Next, I've come to feel petty when I read what friends are doing. Are they bragging? Are they just making stuff up? Why don't I get to go to Bora Bora? Lately, it's the politics... an environment where stories have become arguments, and humor has become trolling. I never really feel good after a Facebook session. Sometimes I feel downright angry.

So, I'm trying to cut down. The shame of it is that the system is necessary in many ways. Hidden among the crap, our Temple events are easy to find; local businesses that I like advertise there. So, I feel stuck surfing Facebook. Still... I try to put my phone away, rather than always having it on me. I'm not posting as much anymore. I'll talk about sports, but I'm trying not to brag or complain about everyday stuff. I'm trying not to poke fun at other people's posts. If I start talking politics, then I want you to call me out on it. Not for my opinions, but for feeding the noise.

So, how are any of you going to hear from me? (You had to know this was coming...) Come to services and see me at Temple!!