

## *A Plea*

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Even as I strive to stay on top of all the activities happening in the congregation and the community, I also try to keep up with events in the lives of congregation members and those in our community. Sometimes I am more successful than others; it is not that I don't want to know, but I don't speak to everyone each week, and some things come up that I just never learn about, and can't acknowledge.

In that vein, one of the things that has forced itself into my awareness of late is that many of those in our community seem to be fine, but I have learned that can be deceptive. All is not always as it appears.

Without sharing any information that is private, here are two scenarios that may be encountered:

The first example: people may have health conditions that are not apparent, and that may take a toll on them not only physically, but also emotionally. They may not want to share their situation with others – often they may say they don't want to 'bother' other people, but it may also be that they feel they want to keep that information private, or not have it raised in general conversations, or brought up to them – no one wants to be reminded over and over again about something they can't change, after all.

The second example is that there are people in our community who may be in what I call a fragile state – by which I mean that they are doing fine and look okay, but if, G-d forbid, anything goes wrong - even a small thing - they can be catapulted into difficult situations which can grow to impact them out of all proportion to whatever the triggering event was for them. Imagine, in this category, someone who happens to twist and sprain their ankle and can't walk or stand on it – if they live alone, they may be unable to drive, or do their usual household chores, and that can lead to major impact on the quality of their life, and even their safety and wellbeing.

These two "silent" situations have been very much on my mind of late.

I rush to add here that the congregation and community have done a really good job responding to circumstances in every instance that they knew about; that is a real blessing for all of us, and a tribute to all involved. What was new (to me) was the recognition of just how often we ("we," here, really meaning "I") may have no idea what others in our community may need – so I am extending this request that if you need anything the community could offer that you let someone know, and if you know of anyone who is in a situation that could be made easier or better with the resources of the community that you share that information. It is difficult, if not impossible, to support those around us if we don't know that they have a need. Ideally, in a perfect world, we would know what others around us need without having to be asked or to be told; but this is the world that exists, and that is not a realistic expectation. Don't assume others know. Please give me and others the opportunity to do the right thing; make us aware of how we can help.

*Rabbi Joe Blair*