

3 short stories

About a year ago, a friend mentioned to me that he had met an older Jewish Woman named \*Beth. Beth had survived the Nazi occupation of France and moved to Corte Madera, he thought she would appreciate a visit.

I went to meet her with my son, Shneur. She was overjoyed to see us and touched by the visit and the freshly baked Challa we brought.

Beth shared with us her childhood memories of WW2 and the holocaust; her parent's struggle and sacrifice to survive and their challenging journey coming to the US to start a new life.

For years, she had been struggling to express her Judaism and had not celebrated Jewish Holidays in decades.

We started to visit her regularly. Leeba loves to light Shabbat candles with her on Friday evenings, and the holiday gift packages add much meaning to her life.

Beth is 93 years old and living alone. Often she will say to me, "I feel all alone, I have no friends or family nearby", and I always remind her that we are her family.

We visited her recently, right before Rosh Hashanah, and on our way out she remarked, "You know, I feel much better now, you really made my day".

Thank you for giving Beth the warm embrace of a Jewish community.

I was in Oakland Zoo during the Passover Holiday break with my kids. When my phone rang, Yocheved was none too happy to let me off Dad duty at the Zoo... \*Sherri was on the phone and mentioned that she was looking to connect with her Jewish Heritage. Over the kid's loud squeals of delight, we invited her over for the next evening's Passover Holiday Meal.

Sherri joined us the next evening for the Holiday Meal and lit Holiday candles for the very first time. For the first time in her life, Sherri began to explore her own Jewish identity. She was not raised Jewish and knew very little about her Jewish Heritage. While going through her family's sentimental artifacts she had come across a Machzor (A High Holiday prayer book) from the early 20th Century which had belonged to her great-grandmother.

"I asked my Jewish friends what to do with it and most suggested that I bury it," She said - As is the custom with Jewish Holy books that are no longer in use.

We suggested that instead of burying it, the most beautiful thing would be for her to BRING IT TO LIFE. Over the next few months, Sherri began to intensely explore her Jewish heritage, joining classes, celebrating holidays, and discovering her Jewish soul.

And then, on Yom Kippur at the Kol Nidre service, Sherri came with her grandmother's Machzor from over a century ago! ...and brought it to LIFE!

Thank you for helping Beth and Sherri reclaim their heritage and community!

Warmly,

Rabbi Mendel

Executive Director Chabad of Corte Madera