

## David's Condition

September 22, 2012 I have been writing about Fran's condition, my condition, and after David's brief visit earlier this week, I decided to write about David's condition.

David will be 31 years old on November 4. That is pretty old. Not to be trite, but when I was 31 (in 1958), I was married, had two kids and started on a second career. Times are different.

I can't describe the pleasure I get from having David around. There is no one as thoughtful, as helpful, and as giving as he. He is much more sensitive to Fran's condition and needs as I. He quietly does everything that is needed in the kitchen. He recognizes that Fran is moving slowly and is forgetful, and is patient.

David came home for Rosh Hashanah, and we went to shul Monday and Tuesday. Ideally, we would have gotten there in time for the d'rash, but Fran was not up to it, so we got there around 11-11:30, which was fine. We had a good visit with Julie and Michael and David was an important part of the visit. And Fran invited the Kantors and Shirley Handler for dinner Tuesday, and David did most of the work.

I had about an hour to talk with him when he opened up, and he shared with me a lot that I believe he usually only shares with Fran. I learned that since he started with Yoga, he has given up drinking and marijuana. I never knew that he smoked, and I never thought that he drank more than an occasional beer. I do know that he has been in therapy a long time. (Fran is not so enthusiastic about his therapist.) He revealed that he was tested for depression and anxiety—and that he has low depression but high anxiety. He talked about his anxiety from the time he was five and witnessed our arguing and fighting.

He knows that I am concerned about how long his dissertation is taking. He reassured me it is coming along, and made it clear that he will get his Phd. He is taking a class on dissertation writing and will be teaching a class on writing for history majors. He has established a routine, starting with Yoga in the morning and then getting to work.

David showed us the pictures of his camping trip to Isle Royale and spoke about it with excitement. It was a great experience. It might even have been transformative.

He certainly spends a lot of time on the internet with both his computer and his I phone. He knows when anything happens as soon as it happens. He is in touch with a lot of people and sources. And tho he is late in recognizing birthdays and anniversaries, he calls every week to wish us Gut Shabbes.

Nov. 21. David told us about the trouble he is having with his dissertation. It is going slowly, mostly because he really doesn't want to write it. It is a terrible chore, and he has no interest in it. He feels he is not cut out for this kind of unstructured life. He has not completed a chapter, and refuses to say he is 1/3 or 1/2 done. He is taking a class in dissertation writing and decided not to "present," It came crashing down on him his second trip to New Orleans. He has been depressed this past month. Still he does not regret his six years in Michigan. David said he would like to do a talk show on his station. Politics and culture. We saw Debra Dash Moore Monday evening and she was very complimentary. David is an excellent historian, very

talented, has diverse interests, will be a good teacher. Turns out David is not sure he wants to teach. He is interested in a young woman he met at the Yiddish Book Center. She was in the group after his. Her name is Sara Israel and she lives in Newton, and is taking children's book illustration at RISD. Her father has ALS. He is getting together with her today. He got an iPad for his birthday and is very pleased with it. It does everything. I am sure he will help Fran prepare for Thanksgiving. Tonight and tomorrow morning. We may go to Walmart in Quincy Friday morning.

Dec. 6. I just wrote about Fran. David continues to come thru. He flew in Tues. evening for Jerry's funeral and was very supportive to Fran. He spent time with his cousins, edited Fran's remarks, played with Seth and Lucas, and socialized at Niki's house. Saw Sarah last night. Reiterated that tho they keep in touch texting etc., conversations are hard since she doesn't talk much. We had a real discussion about the Israel-Palestine situation. David is very critical of Israel. Re Walmart: David and I drove to Quincy—there was nothing. A real disappointment. I drove him to the airport this morning. He comes back next weekend for my birthday celebration in West Orange.

Feb. 11. A lot has happened over the past two months. David really related with his siblings, it was a good weekend, David got screwed up on the flight back. I urged him to get a direct flight. He didn't. David started teaching, and likes it. A lot of work. The big news: David has decided to go to Hebrew College Rabbinical school. He made application, applied for a Wexner, and flew in Thurs. Feb. 7. Blizzard Friday resulting in a big mess. Couldn't see people Sat. and Sunday program was cancelled. I got him there Mon. morning. He really liked the set-up and will be coming back March 6 for the "interview." Got him to Logan for a 7 pm flight which was delayed, and then his connecting flight was cancelled. I drove back to get him. He got an 8:30 flight this morning. David promised to finish his thesis and get his PhD. It is going to be tricky. He will leave Ann Arbor the end of June and will work a week at the Yiddish Book Center. He will want to find a place to live—possibly JP. Driving to Logan this morning—heavy traffic—I expressed concern. He told me how upsetting my anxiety was, especially the tension between Fran and me. He also observed Fran's situation, her decline. He saw Sarah Israel Sunday but said nothing. My son, the Rabbi. Small class, shaky institution, but this is what David wants.

Feb. 26. Have nothing more to report. David will be back March 4 for interviews and psych testing. He has had a cold. Teaching is work, especially marking papers each week. About half the students just can't write. David does what he could. I will call him.

March 8. A crazy few days. David returned for the interview at Hebrew College. He worked very hard putting together his opening remarks to explain why, and to give a brief drash. He was then asked questions by the faculty. He did well. He also had a psych interview and sat in on a class. He was to return to Ann Arbor yesterday. Snow delay. He arranged to leave today. More snow. His 11:30 flight just took off around 3 pm. Connecting flight in Phila. Also delayed. Hope all works out.

March 28, Just spoke to David who has had a busy 3 weeks. He returned home, got word that he was accepted, got word that he was also accepted for an interview for the Wexner which will take place in NY on April 10. He made the Seder for the first night and went to Detroit for the second night. He is working hard on his writing history class. Turns out there are 6 members of the track team who can't write worth a damn making it difficult for him. His concern about the

interview: getting a suit. We will meet him in NY for lunch. He tried to put Lewis in touch with Yidn in Spain during Pesakh. Hard to find. But they are relating.

April 15. Just heard from David. He did not get the Wexner. A real disappointment. Strange that just as he learned by e-mail that he had not been selected, there was an explosion at the Boston Marathon finish line. Lots of people injured. Puts things in perspective. When we met David last Wed. after the interview, he gave himself an A-. Seems he needed an A. Josh Elkin was an interviewer. Good or bad? Was David seen as a loose cannon? Not the kind of "leader" they are looking for? It is lousy.

August 16. First, it appears that he did not get the Wexner, because another candidate also entering Hebrew College was tough competition. David came home, sent an e-mail to the minyan re house sitting and got three takers. He also got a gig with the BC radio station, and will be an intern at the Tremont St. shul, and will teach adult Yiddish at the WC. He studied biblical Hebrew from June 17 to July 24 at HC, then was an RA at the Yiddish Book Center for a week, and spent two days at a Woburn hotel with Rachel G. And today he is coming with us to the memorial for Marie Dismond. He is also talking about buying a big Tallis and tzitzis.