



Do you ever ask yourself, "I'm just one person, can I, do I, really make a difference out there on the streets?"

And the answer is a definite "YES". Let me share a lesson with you that I learned from one of our own, while on the streets. I was out the other night, doing a ride along in one of the toughest and busiest districts in the city. We started out at 6P.M., it was a cold night but the radio was nonstop, hot call after hot call. "Battery in progress", "man with a gun", "domestic battery", "person shot" "theft in progress" and the list goes on and on.

The officer I was with just looked at me and said "this is a typical night in this district, and we do the best we can". I didn't even realize it was 11:00 P.M. and we still did not stop for lunch. I told my partner "take me back to the District so you can go down for lunch". He said "I have one stop to make before I drop you off". That said, the officer pulls in to a gas station, and stops at the end of the lot in front of an elderly man sitting on the curb. The cooper went into the gas station, bought a sweet roll and cup of hot coffee and gave it to the man sitting on the curb. Then the officer got back into the squad car and said to me words that I'll never forget. "Rabbi, that man is a homeless man, with no family; I stop by every couple of days and get him something to eat. It helps me count my blessings and reminds me that there are so many out there that have so little, and how grateful I should be for all I have". He made me smile, made me proud, he did us all proud. Moments like these warm the heart and are priceless. He reminded me of the story of "The Star Fish".....

An old man had a habit of taking early morning walks on the beach. One day, after a storm, he saw a human figure in the distance moving like a dancer. As he came closer he saw that it was a young woman and she was not dancing but was reaching down to the sand, picking up a starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean.

"Young lady," he asked, "Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?"

"The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw the starfish back in the ocean they will die."

"But young lady, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You cannot possibly make a difference."

The young woman listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves, saying, "It made a difference for that one."

The old man looked at the young woman inquisitively and thought about what she had done. Inspired, he joined her in throwing starfish back into the sea. End of story.

Yes to throw back all star fish would be a monumental if not impossible task, but rather than being overwhelmed by the task, she took action. She threw one back, and then another, and

another. That young woman made a difference to each and every starfish she threw back, even though they may have added up to only a tiny percentage of the washed-up, dying starfish. She did what she could.

How often do we look at some of our problems and feel paralyzed because it seems overwhelming? How often do we detach ourselves and think it's not our problem? Bureaucracy, politics, war, violence, poverty...the list goes on. It's so easy to get stuck in helplessness, passivity, cynicism, but yet it's OUR world.

So instead of thinking about what you can't do, consider what you can do. What is the smallest action you can take? It might even be just a small act of kindness to a friend or stranger as simple as bringing a smile to someone who desperately needs one. Maybe it's a personal challenge that you need, to rock yourself out of complacency.

Look at a problem in your life, one that seems insurmountable, and think of the tiniest action you can take, and just do it. Because YOU DO MAKE a bigger difference than you think, to those whom you assist in time of need. Remember the quote "to the whole world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world".

So on behalf of ALL the Chaplains we say, thanks for all you do, thanks for each of you for making our city a better and safer place to live. Should you need a shoulder to lean on, wish some company for a ride along, have some good humor to share, don't hesitate to give us a call.

All our contact information is on the police chaplains ministry website, look us up.

May G-d bless you and always keep you safe. AMEN!

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

Rabbi Moshe Wolf 773-463-4780 or e-mail:moshewolf@hotmail.com