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A Small Act of Kindness

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as temporal rather than permanent—as a *time* of adversity rather than as a *world* of adversity. Even in the case of an incurable disease, hope can strengthen our capacity to cope from day to day, week to week, into the future.

When we have been betrayed, how can we hope to trust again?

If we have been hurt, it is appropriate to exercise caution about whom we ought to trust. It takes time and new positive experiences to rebuild trust—we need to accept that this is a slow process. What really matters is continuing to believe that trust exists, as believing in human integrity is central to our individual and collective spiritual and emotional survival. If someone steals from us, recognizing small acts of kindness and generosity can remind us that these virtues do exist.

Another way to rebuild trust is to strengthen in ourselves the very qualities we feel have been lost elsewhere. If we behave with integrity and love, then we

cannot doubt that these attributes exist.

In this vein, it's important to quickly repair even small ruptures of trust in relationships. Sometimes we have misunderstood the other person's intent, and sometimes he/she has not understood ours. Doing this can be challenging when our mood is low, our anxiety high, and we've shifted into "every person for himself/herself" mode. Yet this stance is terribly demoralizing in the long run. The most important antidote to despair is offering kindness and sustenance to one another, despite our fears.

The antidote to despair is connection.

Yes. Consider what Jewish tradition teaches at a time of life's greatest adversity: facing the death of a loved one. The mourner is required to recite *Kaddish*, a prayer of praise to God which in itself does not offer apparent consolation. Even when we might doubt that we'll ever again appreciate life's goodness, a *minyan* of others stands beside us to affirm that possibility, encouraging our faith that life is worth living and that we can become whole once again. □

A Whiff of Love

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freshly baked challah, both of which now remind me that while love may often be difficult to express, it can bring healing and peace of mind. More than ever, I am resolved to make certain that my wife, my children, and my grandchildren know just how much I love them.

Two gracious women, separated by thirty-six years and six thousand miles but united by devotion to a Shabbat *mitzvah*, contributed unknowingly to my recovery—my physical recovery and to the recovery of a personal relationship that I had allowed to wither over the years and that may have affected countless other relationships. Our ancient sages taught that one good deed leads to another. As my strength increases and I look forward to the years ahead, it is with the hope and prayer that I may be reminded each week by the glow of Shabbat candles and the sweet aroma of challah to express my love more freely, as a *mitzvah*, to family, to friends, and, yes, to God. □

Alzheimer's

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(*Mishkan T'filah* translation) so it can be recited by loved ones of Alzheimer's patients as a way of expressing and appreciating their moments of clarity.

RECITED FOR A FEMALE

*Modah ani l'fanecha,
melech chai v'kayam.
She-hechezarta bah nishmatah
b'chemla, rabah emunatecha.*

RECITED FOR A MALE

*Modeh ani l'fanecha,
melech chai v'kayam.
She-hechezarta bo nishmato
b'chemla, rabah emunatecha.*

I offer thanks to You,
ever-living Sovereign,
that you have restored her/his *n'shamah*
to her/him, with mercy.
How great is Your trust.

Miriam, I offer this prayer in
your honor. □