

Essay Contest for High School Seniors

How can Jewish values help create a future free of domestic abuse?

100 MENSCHES invites graduating Jewish high school seniors to submit an 800-1,000 word original essay describing how Jewish values can help create a future free of domestic abuse.

These Jewish values may help guide your thinking:



CHESSED
Compassion and caring for others



RODEF SHALOM
The pursuit of understanding, empathy and mutual respect



SHALOM BAYIT
Harmony in the home

In your essay please be specific about changes that would help play a role in eliminating domestic abuse in the Jewish, and broader, community.

The **TOP THREE** submissions will be awarded college scholarships totaling \$5,000:

- 1st Place > \$2,500
- 2nd Place > \$1,500
- 3rd Place > \$1,000

DEADLINE > April 15, 2016 by 5pm

Visit 100mensches.org for judging criteria, student eligibility guidelines, and to download the application. Email your submission and application (as PDFs) to lklein@jfsdetroit.org.

Please make sure your name isn't on your submission as judging will be anonymous.

Winners will be announced by May 15, 2016.

Questions? Contact Ellen Yashinsky Chute at eychute@jfsdetroit.org or 248-592-2666.



100 MENSCHES is a group of men who are taking a stance against domestic abuse and are committing to being a part of the solution.

100 MENSCHES is an initiative of JCADA, the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, a program of Jewish Family Service.



viewpoints »

Buddha Barbie

All The Single Ladies

There is no perfect life. The word perfect in itself sets us up for complete failure in our everyday lives. I learned an expression years ago, "the enemy of great is perfect." This means that while we are so busy looking for perfection we overlook when something is just plain good or even great.

Life is not a fairy tale — besides, fairy tales are not exactly as great looking as we thought when we were kids.

Let's take a closer peek ...

While Prince Charming always seemed so wonderful — handsome, successful, great hair — obviously there was no follow-up or gauge on how the happy couple really wound up once life became reality. So technically we only have a sneak peek at their "romantic" phase.

The women depicted in our lovely fairytales of yesteryears had, in actuality, quite imperfect lives.

Take Snow White, for example. She had a narcissistic, insecure, homicidal stepmother who actually put a hit out on her own stepdaughter because of her deep jealousy.

How about Cinderella? She had an emotionally and verbally abusive stepmother along with stepsisters who ridiculed her shamelessly. In today's world, Cinderella would have been a ward of the state and taken out of her home on first-degree child-abuse charges and placed into foster care.

Alas, in the midst of all their family drama, the Prince always comes along to save the day.

This is what sets girls up for failure. We are groomed to believe that if we don't have that happy ending we are not OK. The focus is so much on the meeting of the Prince that we have overlooked everything else in the story — all of our lives.

We don't realize when we are young and impressionable and reading these stories, tucked into bed and dreaming of our future, that meeting the Prince doesn't save us — it just adds a new dimension to our lives.

This brings me to today.

First of all, there is no perfect Prince. In fact, usually the higher up one is in the kingdom makes for a bigger pain in the royal tuchas. There are wonderful men out there but certainly they all have faults, just as we do. Romantic relationships can add wonderful joy to our lives — but they can't be our only focus.

I always tell people to focus on a purpose not a person.

Secondly, falling in love does not take away the burdens and stress of everyday life. Meeting a man doesn't save you. So despite what fairy tales say — women already have it all. We have the ability to save ourselves.

Preparing young Jewish women to be their own "saviors" should start early in childhood. Historically, gender often determined where interests were guided in school. Girls were ushered toward nursing while boys were steered toward being doctors, woman paralegals and men lawyers. Luckily, those days are gone and women can achieve greatness in any field they desire. It is with education that women can create a strong foundation for their future.

Don't get me wrong. I still believe in love. I just believe that teaching girls to wait for Prince Charming to come along and rescue them is a dangerous concept. Don't be damsels in distress; be the answer to your own fairy tale. Create your own happy ending where the heroine goes to graduate school, has a fabulous career, meets a great guy or doesn't, has wonderful friends and is self-sufficient.

Life is not a Disney film, and it does not always play out the way we imagined it would.

What's important to know is that we can write our own script, buy our own glass slippers and still live happily ever after. ✨



Karin Katz

Karin Katz explores her Zen-centric journey into self-awareness through her nationally renowned blog BuddhaBarbie.com, which balances spirituality with beauty. Contact her at bbarbiejn@gmail.com for comments, questions, events and sightings.