



Yoni's Global Sukkah Placemat and Conversation Starter

Make your hours count – by Neil Martin OBE

#YonisGlobalSukkah

Yoni Jesner
FOUNDATION

Inspiring young people to do more and care more

A person who is only concerned with himself, will wake up one morning and question his worth. A person who gives his time and effort to others will know his worth when he sees the fruits of his labour.

The rise of volunteerism and the value people place on its importance has made it evermore the thing to do. There are many drivers that initially motivate people to volunteer, often spawned by our own personal need or requirement, be it: to meet new people or partners; gain points towards an award or practice certificate; enhance UCAS forms or develop transferable skills for promotion at work.

There's nothing wrong with these initial drivers - in fact, these hooks have created incentives for charities to recruit a new volunteer workforce by asking: 'what's in it for the volunteer?' However, what really becomes important beyond the driver that starts your experience, and can be forgotten, is impact.

There's a feel good factor to doing good things that in itself can be a driver, but is how you give your time having a positive measurable outcome and affecting the lives of others, or might you just be 'ticking boxes' for yourself? What might feel like an act of kindness, may in fact be benefiting you far more than the cause, charity or individual in need.

The Double Benefit principle in youth social action of gaining by doing is vitally important in the journey from cradle to career, and the rewards and skills to be collected by volunteering are many. However as clear as we are in knowing and putting an emphasis on what is to be gained, it should become incumbent upon us to ask, 'Am I making a real difference?' and be just as clear and able to define what impact you hope to have achieve.

Yoni's aphorism reminds us that the true beneficiaries of our time and effort should be those others we help, and that the impact we have on their lives is the true measurement on what makes our life really worthwhile.

Whilst Yoni's life was short lived, it was the impact he had on so many that makes his light still shine so bright today and why it is so fitting that a volunteering award was created in his memory.

So just like Yoni, and as the old adage goes, the next time you 'have to volunteer' and whatever the initial drivers may be, 'don't just count your hours, make your hours count!'

Questions:

What drivers in society motivate you to volunteer and what benefits do you stand to gain?

What stops you from volunteering? And how can these barriers be removed?

How can the specific and unique skills of young people be used to help others in ways other generations may be less able?

How can you measure the impact you have on others when volunteering?

How might you directly impact an individual above and beyond the collective provision of your chosen charity? I.e. The specific needs/wants/desires of one resident in a care home.

What additional impact could be made by volunteering in groups like families, schools or youth groups? What additional factors need to be considered so that the true drivers are impact and outcome, so that it doesn't become a tick box exercise or curriculum filler?

If you were in charge, (be it Headteacher, Mayor, King or Queen) what issues in your local community or wider society would you like to change and how would you go about it?



Neil Martin OBE became Chief Executive of the JLGB in 2005, and transformed the UK's longest serving Jewish youth organisation into a national award winning, thriving, innovative and much respected youth charity, in the Jewish Community and wider society. Neil strongly believes every child really does matter, and is a leading expert in creating faith and culturally sensitive provisions that remove barriers to universal youth programmes. Technology and the user experience are always at the heart of Neil's creative work, notably seen through the '[evolve](#)' which powers the Yoni Jesner Award.

Connection to Yoni:

I never had the honour of meeting Yoni personally, but helped Elaine Robinson to create the Yoni Jesner Award at its start. We are proud that the award is now digitized and powered by JLGB, and that we are helping to keep Yoni's memory alive, through the acts of kindness of hundreds of young people each year.