



# Yoni's Global Sukkah Placemat and Conversation Starter Making Someone Feel Special by Simi Ben Hur #YonisGlobalSukkah



"There is no surer way of gaining someone's respect and admiration than by making them feel special."

Yoni has come to be known for words of wisdom and reflection, but all those who knew him spoke of his remarkable sense of humour, going to whatever lengths necessary to make people smile. This combination of a contemplative mind and thoughtful and jolly character is what made Yoni the person he was. It would also have made him an incredible doctor, fulfilling his dream of saving lives.

Yoni spent some time learning the life of doctors during his work experience placement at Shaare Zedek Medical Centre in Jerusalem. The ethos of Shaare Zedek mirrors that of Yoni's own life; to be the best at what you do and give all of yourself, to take people as you find them and support them however you can and most of all, to be a mensch. The Director of the hospital actually includes *menschkeit* as a formal criteria when assessing people who apply to work at the hospital. Going the extra mile is a way of life for the doctors and nurses.

Each time I visit Shaare Zedek, I always make time to visit the clown doctors at the children's hospital. These 'dream doctors' spend their days with the most sick and anxious children, finding simple and effective ways to turn tears and nerves into giggles and smiles. When I watch these incredible people at work, I can't help but think of how perfect Yoni would have been for the job.

Yoni found his place at Shaare Zedek in the most unexpected of ways. After his tragic death, Yoni's organs were donated. His kidneys were given to Yasmin, a young Palestinian girl who was required to attend Shaare Zedek every day for dialysis treatment to keep her alive. Yasmin now lives happily and healthily thanks to the gift of health from Yoni. This act made headlines around the world at the time; it was a rare story of hope for the future if a terror victim's family could find it within themselves to donate such an important part of their family to support someone on "the other side". Doctors often perform miracles but they cannot always prevent tragedy. But they will always build a connection with their patients and families to make them feel special, loved and comforted. At a time where life seems to only get busier and social media has given us an excuse to stop picking up the phone, let us remember Yoni and his way of life as an inspiration for all of us as we build relationships in our personal, professional and communal lives.

#### Questions:

When was the last time you phoned a good friend? (Facebook and WhatsApp don't count!)

When was the last time you told your friends they are important to you?

Do you ever find yourself regularly apologising for not having enough time to make arrangements with people?

What can you do to make time to invest in the relationships most important to you?



**Simi Ben Hur** is the Executive Director of Shaare Zedek UK.

Connection to Yoni: I never had the chance to meet Yoni but have known his name since friends shared beautiful messages and inspirational stories about him after he passed away. Yoni's affirmations have always inspired me and Yoni's name is one I have often thought of over the years.

Now working at Shaare Zedek, there is a very strong connection between Yoni, his family and the hospital. Yoni's medical work experience was at Shaare Zedek and the hospital often uses the gorgeous photos of him smiling with Jerusalem in the background. We are now working with Marsha, the family and the Foundation to use Yoni's values and connection to Shaare Zedek in an educational programme for young people to connect to Israel and volunteering. It is truly an honour and privilege to be working with such a special family.