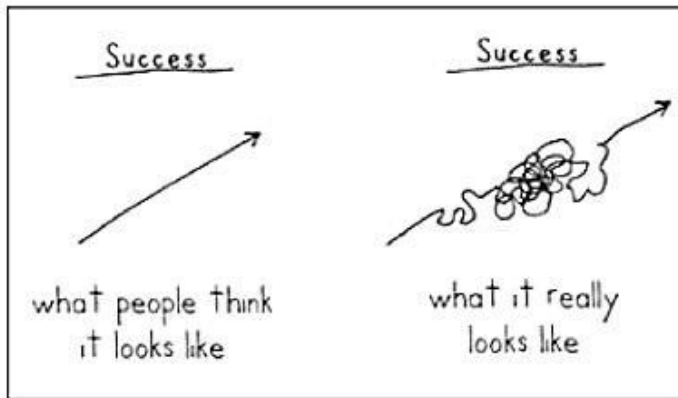


# BRINGING SEDER to CHAOS



## Freedom in Quarantine

### DAY 6 - MAGGID



When did your family come to this country? How did your parents meet? What is the source of your name? Which of your grandparents are you most like?

These questions aren't just cute family trivia—they tell us about how we cope. In a study from Emory University, they discovered that children's ability to cope correlated with their knowledge of their family history.

The Pesach Seder is about the redemption of the Jewish nation. Parents are obligated to teach their children our collective family history (see Shemot 13:8). The Talmud (Pesachim 116a) explains that one cannot just tell the positive outcome of leaving Egypt, rather one must tell the whole story - מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח - starting with the disgrace and ending with the praise. **We are mandated to teach our children the complete unedited history of our people.**

Bruce Feiler wrote a widely disseminated but continually relevant article for the New York Times, [The Stories That Bind Us](#). He explains that when a child knows the family history the child feels a sense of belonging and being part of a larger narrative, which ultimately helps with coping with personal setbacks.

Feiler outlines three basic family narratives: (1) the ascending narrative - "Son when we came to this country, we had nothing. Our family worked. We opened a store. Your grandfather went to high school. Your father went to college. And now you..." (2) the descending narrative - "Sweetheart, we used to have it all. Then we lost everything." (3) the oscillating narrative - "Dear, let me tell you, we've had ups and downs in our family."

He explains further that the oscillating narrative is the most healthful narrative. It is healthy to know that one comes from a history of ups and downs. **The Torah is an oscillating narrative, highlighting the highs and lows of the Jewish people.** As Jews, our historical narrative is embedded into our learning and our practice. At the same time, it is important for each individual family to tell their own family narrative. For many families, the seder is the optimal setting for retelling their family story, within the context of the greater story of the Jewish people.

Join the Conversation

**What is a unique family custom you have at your Seder?**

**Submit Your Answers**

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