

Drew Mayerson (8th Grade: Columbus, Ohio)
Level II Semifinalist
Letter to Jim Tressel concerning his book, *Winners Manual*

Dear Jim Tressel:

When you reboot a computer, it becomes faster and gets back to its basic programming. This is the equivalent of a person figuring out who they want to be in their life and discovering their purpose, in the life they want to strive to live. Your book is a guide of how to set yourself up for success after a reboot, just like a manual for a computer.

Your book *The Winners Manual* and my bar mitzvah have helped me to shape me as the person that I am. My bar mitzvah helped me to mature and grow to be more responsible. Now I feel more like an adult.

During my bar mitzvah training, I had meetings with the rabbi of my temple to learn/study sections of the commentary of the Torah. We looked for the hidden meanings of words we were reading. During that process I learned a lot about myself, and I really began to figure out what was/is important to me. I prioritized my life and the components of it. I learned to see the “big picture” in life and how my actions impacted others around me. I’ve grown to be a better brother, son and friend.

My point of view has changed to this: I love helping people and being around friends and people I love. I just want to have fun in my life. I want to do what I love and love what I do. Be a good person, have fun and everything else will follow suit.

Your book helped me to put what I learned throughout my bar mitzvah training into effect in my life. The “Block O of Life” goals chart really helped me to see my life on paper. Laying it out really helped me to see my weaknesses and strengths.

The biggest change for me that your book has helped me reach is the great improvement in my decision making. I was never a bad kid but I have made a few bad choices that have really hurt my pride, and made me ashamed of myself. I’ve used the concepts of humility, attitude as gratitude, and respect as described/talked about in your book. My decisions were based on whether they were right or wrong and whether or not I would get caught doing something that I knew was wrong. That mindset led to many regretful, shameful events in my life. Now, every time I make a decision I see my parents and my grandmother looking at me. I try to make the choice that they would be proud of. I want the people around me to be proud of me and everything I do.

Recently, I have been faced with the same decision that I failed to make correctly the first time. This time I used the new system of decision making. I made my parents proud and I didn’t disappoint them.

Your section about faith and belief inspired me to bring back a tradition that my family had when I was a kid. We always sung a prayer in Hebrew before bed. I have re-instated that tradition and it has strengthened my spiritual life. Having that time to think has helped me mature in so many ways.

I thank you for the gift you have given me.

Sincerely,

Drew Mayerson