



# ARE YOU A NEW PERSON?

GOLDIE GROSSBAUM

*“You probably feel like a new person!”*

*“I’m sure you have a new appreciation for everything!”*

*“I bet you wake up in the morning and say Modeh Ani with a whole new meaning!”*

These are typical things we say when talking to someone who went through a traumatic life-threatening experience; these are the questions I’ve been asked many times over the past year. \*

**And the answer is..**

Um, well...

The truth?

No.

Am I a new person?

No.

I am the same person.

Do I sing in the rain and stay calm and happy no matter what trivial matters go wrong?

As much as I’d like to say yes, the answer is no.

I’m still human.

I’m still the same me. Maybe in some ways I’m even more me than before.

It’s clearer to me what my strengths and capabilities are and I’m more aware of whether I’m using them well or not.

When I get upset or annoyed, it’s clearer for me to see my path out.

When I’m frustrated, I have more clarity on how to push through it. I have more awareness of what’s most important and what’s not worth stressing over.

Going through such an experience doesn’t eliminate

\* To read the story of Goldie’s life-threatening event, visit [nsheichabadnewsletter.com/archives](https://nsheichabadnewsletter.com/archives), click on “Goldie Grossbaum” from the dropdown menu, then look for Miracle in the Trauma ICU.

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your human side; on the contrary, you become even more human. In a good way.

On the last day of school in June, my kids begged me to pick them up from school.

I am usually the sole driver who takes them to school and picks them up; I am the main driver of our 15-passenger van. It had been ten long weeks of many different friends and relatives driving them and I knew they craved the security of normalcy and routine; they wanted me to pick them up from school.

Ten weeks into my recovery, feeling stronger each day, having finally started driving again and feeling more and more like a functioning human being—I swung my Wound VAC bag over my shoulder and pushed myself to do it. I climbed into the van, found a place for my VAC and drove off, grateful that I was feeling well enough to do it. Really, I wanted to feel the normalcy too!

The kids were thrilled to see me and came bouncing out of school and piled into the van. I was feeling so pleased with myself and so accomplished. I basked in their overjoyed greetings and babbling about their day, everyone talking at the same time. It was music to my ears; my heart was singing with joy. How I had dreamed of this day!

Barely two minutes into the ride, the bickering started. And the pushing and *kvetching* that always accompanied our rides was back.

I couldn't believe my ears. I opened my mouth, about to let them know just how shocked I was that *even though Mommy had been so sick and made such a huge effort to come and pick them up, here they were fighting, didn't they realize what a big deal it was that I came?!*

And I closed my mouth just in time, before any of that tumbled out. Because really, what exactly would it accomplish?

I did some deep breathing, something I got really good at over my recovery and many bandage changes.

*It's okay, I told myself. It's more than okay. This is actually great. They feel normal because you are in the van. We are back in the normal. Don't say anything you'll regret. Listen to the sound of their voices, not to what they're saying. Look out the window, see where you are. Feel the van moving—notice you're finally driving again!*

I slowly calmed down and put on music and we continued with the regular routine of everyone arguing over which music to play.

It was an eye-opening experience.

At first I was so annoyed that I had even gotten annoyed, and then I realized this was truly my welcome-back-to-normal moment.

I'm the same person, I'm still human, I still will get annoyed and frustrated about trivial things. And the kids missed me and even so, they still will fight in the van. But I can use my experience to lead me through those moments, instead of getting stuck in them. I can focus on the blessings and beauty that's always there but gets overlooked.

And here's the reality:

We don't have to experience a life-threatening emergency to do that!

Everyone has this ability. We just get blinded by life in general and forget to tap into it.

Just pause for a moment; use your five senses to notice where you are and what's around you and you'll see that you can do it too.

So, no, I haven't changed, and I think it's a good thing.

We are not supposed to change into someone else; that's not a life goal.

Rather, I want to put all my energy into being as much of my best self as I can be. ❄️



**GOLDIE** and her husband, Rabbi Yossi Grossbaum, direct Chabad of Folsom & El Dorado Hills in Northern California, with the able help of their 11 children ka"h. Goldie is a Certified Life Coach as well as a mikvah.org Certified Kallah Teacher. In her spare time, Goldie blogs ([littleyellownotepad.com](http://littleyellownotepad.com))

about being the mom of nine boys and two girls, ranging from baby to teens, and finding the humor in the ups and downs of raising kids and life in general.