

NEW YORK

The Jewish Week

SERVING GREATER NEW YORK / \$1.00 / AUGUST 24, 2001/5 ELUL 5761

Mind Your P's And L's

Building a different kind of value fund.

CHAIM LAUER
SPECIAL TO THE JEWISH WEEK

Every once in a while you are given the opportunity to meet someone special. Lisa Honig Buksbum is one of those rare people with a wondrous mix of brain and soul. She can see and feel a problem and visualize the response, and she has the skill, drive and wherewithal to make it happen.

OPINION Lisa is spending her waking hours developing Soaringwords, a Web site (www.Soaringwords.org) with allied programs to help very sick children, their parents and siblings through their long and lonely hours. It will be a place to turn to for comfort, information and even joy. Lisa found a significant way of meeting real human needs through the newest technologies.

After our first, very moving conversation, Lisa sent me a copy of a book that had made

Chaim Lauer is executive vice president of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York.

a great impression on her, "A Life Worth Living: The 9 Essentials." The book's author, Dr. Barrie Greiff, uses the letter L to anchor a list of the essential factors to achieve a meaningful life. He suggests that to achieve a positive life legacy, one must develop the capacities of Loving, Learning, Laboring, Laughing and Lamenting, Linking, Living, Leading and Leaving. Greiff's definitions, insights and supporting stories make his points and touch one's heart.

They also raised many questions and issues for me. We stress learning to our children, but do we show them the importance of love? We labor so very hard and long that we seem to have lost the capacity or time to laugh at life's vagaries — and ourselves. As Jews, in the process of refining lamenting to an art form (Oy! It is so hard to be a Jew!), we may have unlinked ourselves from the wondrous, joyous and fulfilling aspects of our heritage. We honor and pursue leadership, yet rarely do our leaders or we address the legacies we wish to leave behind.



'It is even more important to establish firm spiritual foundations for our children's lives than it is large trust funds.'

These L questions reminded me of a game I used to play with one of my daughters. Once, probably at the Shabbat table, I pontificated that all the things one must know should begin with the letter P. Aviva picked up the challenge and the game began. It continues to this day — I even whispered part of the P list to her when I blessed her on her wedding day. As it now stands, the list includes such things as patience, perspective, perseverance and persistence [they are not the same things], passion, appreciation and phun. The last two not only stand on their own merits, but were included to demonstrate the twin necessities of breaking the rules on occasion and of developing a sense of humor.

"So," you say, "I see the P's and L's mentioned in the headline, but what kind of fund are you talking about?" I call it a "Heritage" fund. It's sort of a trust fund, for it is based on trust and builds trust. It is an investment fund, but the investment is more than just money; it is our selves. It is a fund that rec-

ognizes the subtle difference in Hebrew between a *yerusha*, an inheritance, and *morasha*, a heritage — that is, the difference between something that is yours and you can do whatever you want with it, and something given in trust to you so that you must keep at least as well as you received it, if not improve upon it, before you pass it on to the next generation. It is a fund not based on short-term marketplace values but on eternal Jewish values.

Let me explain with another real-life example.

David Lansky's is one of those regular New York stories, but different. As a businessman he did well enough to be comfortable, raise his children, model for them how to be successful and serve on synagogue and agency boards. Many years ago while serving on the BJE board and its accreditation committee, David became familiar with the workings of schools and the challenges faced by children and teachers. He even began to teach adult education programs. Then life took an unexpected turn. Mr. Lansky stepped back from these activities to nurse his first wife during her final years. Time passed. He remarried another lovely lady. He then began to assess what was important