

Tribute delivered by Joy's mother, Phyllis Rochwarger, at a Siyum Mishnayot upon the conclusion of shloshim, June 10, 2004, Young Israel of Queens Valley

The definition of *joy*, according to *Webster's Dictionary*, is:

1. to rejoice — the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune, or by the prospect of possessing what one desires;
2. DELIGHT — the expression or exhibition of such emotion;
3. GAIETY — a state of happiness or felicity;
4. BLISS — a source or cause of delight.

All of these definitions of *joy* exemplify Our Joy. Our Joy was a bundle of energy. She lived life to the fullest. She never complained. She was hope for the future, understanding and comforting. She was always there for someone else and thought of herself last. She was wise and knowledgeable, but always wanted to learn and know more. She was friendly, hospitable, humorous, and outgoing. She was very athletic. She glowed inwardly and outwardly. She never sat idle, but kept busy every moment. Material things in life meant nothing to her. Torah and *chinuch* were her ways of life. She was a simple and modest person who was admired and followed by many.

We disagreed, debated, argued, and clashed many a time — Joy and I — after all, we were mother and daughter. My husband, Irwin, would always say this was because Joy and I were so very alike. I certainly hope so. The last several years Joy and I had become so very close. I often felt that I could tell her things that I wasn't able to tell someone else. She would predict outcomes to many of my problems and, of course, most of those predictions came true.

Joy made a positive impact on so many people's lives — many of whom my husband, Irwin, and I had not been aware of, until the people themselves told us.

During our *shiva* period in Israel, a former classmate of Joy's brought their eighth grade yearbook from the Yeshiva of Central Queens. Of course, just like many other parents, we neglected to read Joy's essays in the yearbook as carefully as we should have. During our *shiva*, there was one specific essay that caught our eye. We read and re-read it many times. I quote. The title was *The Falashans* — the Ethiopian Jews. She called them an "endangered species" and went on to say:

If we do not want to become vulnerable to the blame that the Falashans would be miserable in Israel, objects of prejudice, then we should start acting now, before it's too late. The only protection for Jews is unity. If the Holocaust should have taught us anything, it is the horrors of discrimination. Woe to us if we become guilty of ignoring fellow Jews in distress.

Joy was born on a terrible stormy and snowy day in February 1967. She would sleep during the day and be wide awake all night. Even then, Joy did things her "own way."

However, Joy did not become a full, glowing, and content person until she met her *bashert*, Jerry. Their wedding was the "talk of Yerushalayim." Their love and respect for

each other were like no other. They laughed, cried, and shared secrets with each other like no other.

Thank you, Hashem, for giving “Our Joy” and “Our Jerry” this last bit of happiness together. Even her doctor cried and said, “I have never met such a unique and wonderful woman such as Joy. It wasn’t supposed to happen this way. Unfortunately, it’s irreversible.”

Joy was *niftar* Erev Shavuot and, therefore, the *shiva* was cut down to less than two days. It also effected the shortening of her shloshim, which ends tonight/tomorrow. Again, Joy had her say, and would have it “her own way.”

“Our Joy,” the only comfort your family and friends can have at this time of bereavement, longing, and sorrow, is that you are peacefully looking down on all of us and praying for us. You can see how much we miss you and love you. May you be a “good *beiterer*” for all of us!

Aishet chayil mi yimtza — the caption under her yearbook picture reads:

There is nothing I won’t try.
Never heard the word *impossible*.