

Big Rocks

by Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer

A time management expert, addressing a class, gave a visual illustration. He put a one gallon, wide-mouth mason jar on the table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is the jar full?"

Everyone in the class, of course, said, "Yes."

"Really?" he said. He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar, causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the space between the big rocks. Then he asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?"

By this time the class was on to him. "Probably not," someone answered.

"Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and, bringing out a bucket of sand, he started pouring the sand into the jar, and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked his question. "Is the jar full?"

"No!" the class shouted.

"Good!" he said again. Then he took a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?"

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!"

"No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is this. If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all."

What are the big rocks in your life? Time with your loved ones? Your faith, your education, your dreams? A worthy cause? Teaching or mentoring others? If you don't put these big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all.