

By Shira Moskowitz

For the first time in my life, I'm not able to define myself by my career. Growing up I defined myself as a good student. Then when I started working I defined myself by my jobs. However, when I made the difficult decision to leave my job in the midst of a pandemic, I found myself, along with many other Americans, unemployed. This left me without a career through which to calculate my self worth and without a clear way through which to define myself to others. And you know what...it was surprisingly liberating.

During this pandemic, I've realized who I am both with and without a job. Part of that involves what I can bring to a new job, but it is no longer about how the job will define me, but rather how I will define myself as a human. I thought about what I enjoyed doing, I flexed creative muscles I hadn't used in far too long, and I challenged myself to learn more about racism, new technologies, and our upcoming elections. I'm proud of what I've done in my previous roles, but I'm also proud of who I was as a person in those roles - an empathetic listener, a collaborator, a supportive friend. I'm proud of the times I pushed myself out of my comfort zone in the jobs that I did (I moved to Mississippi for goodness sake!) and in the hobbies I pursued (taking a stand up comedy class and starting a podcast).

I'm excited to get back into the workforce again soon, but what I am most excited about is the new perspective I gained from these unprecedented times. My job and my accomplishments within that role will continue to be a part of who I am because I will continue to seek out work I am passionate about, but I will no longer measure my self worth through my career, or even through my hobbies. Instead I will measure my self worth through the person I am. I will measure my self worth through my desire to try new things, even if I fail miserably. But most importantly, I will see other people as worthy, not because of what they do professionally, but because they are human beings who are trying their best.

*Shira Moskowitz has been a member of TBT since she was 3 years old when her mom, Rabbi Susie Moskowitz, became the rabbi. She has loved growing up as part of the TBT community. During quarantine, Shira started a podcast called Counter Programming with Shira & Arielle. Each week they provide counter programming to all the negative COVID-19 news by discussing different count related topics (like counter tops, step counters, Count Chocula, and more). You can listen wherever you get your podcasts.*

