

# What counts is the spirit in which we choose to live

**MORAL PERSPECTIVES**  
**RABBI IRWIN GRONER**  
 Somers set Maugham, an outstanding novelist of a generation ago, indicated in his autobiography that his stammering was one main reason why he started writing. A physical defect, he pointed out, can be of utmost value to anyone, especially one who is striving in the arts. It may increase the depth and range of his insight. In his struggle to overcome the handicap, the artist becomes something he otherwise might not have been. To prove his point, Maugham cited the testimony of other lives and made a convincing case.

The poet Byron had a club foot, novelist Dostoevsky suffered from fits of epilepsy, scientist Pasteur was crippled by a paralytic stroke. Beethoven, the genius of music, became deaf. Milton, a supreme poet, was blind. Moses, the highest of the prophets, was slow of speech. So runs the record of biography. Much of the greatest achievement in the world is the product of handicapped people. How did they do it? Each of us needs to learn their techniques because all of us are handicapped in some way. Rare indeed is the person who does not feel a sense of inadequacy, failure or deficiency in some aspect of ability or function. To sink into self-pity is not the answer. It simply means deterioration and barrenness. We must ac-

cept ourselves, our powers and our limits, not grudgingly, but graciously. Since we all have difficulty in accepting the given and are reluctant to face facts, we engage in hypothetical thinking. If things were a little different... If my nose were not so big... If my parents were not so poor... If I had chosen a different profession or vocation... If I had seized the right investment opportunities... If I had not made the mistake of marrying Harry or Gwendolyn... How much better the whole prospect would have been if some of the "details" were different. Maturity involves acceptance. Each person enters into life with handicaps and imperfections. A central task each of us faces in the formation of any identity is acceptance of those defects and

limitations which are our destiny. Self-acceptance is a prelude to responsibility and creative change. It is impossible to delete those deformities and weaknesses, which we are all tempted to despise, without completely altering the person. If we do not like our lot in life, there are many others like us. We must beware of the subtle ways in which we cripple ourselves by rejecting the given terms

in which life is granted to us. Furthermore, there are usually some parts of any particular given world which can be changed or mastered by our will. There is almost always an area of freedom available to everyone. Those creative personalities indicated above — the ones who have suffered from obvious handicaps, but succeeded in the arts — have shown us how great and useful life can be despite apparent

limitations. What counts is the spirit in which we live — our courage, determination and imagination, our mastery of ourselves and our sympathy for the plight of others. *Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. If you have a question or comment, call him at 963-2047, mailbox number 1862, on a touch-tone phone.*

## Connecticut man assumes top LTU academic post

Lewis N. Walker will become the provost of Lawrence Technological University on Aug. 1. LTU president Charles M. Chambers announced Walker's appointment this week. Provost is the top academic position at the 5,000 student, Southfield-based university. Walker currently serves the University of Hartford, Conn., as special assistant to the president for corporate and international affairs. From 1982-93 he was dean of Hartford's College of Engineering. There, he established a center for assisting industry, increased applied research, and helped develop a university-wide curriculum. "Dr. Walker has broad experience in teaching and educational administration," Chambers said. "His proven commitment to team building, graduate education and his community and profession make him well suited to advance the academic programs at Lawrence Tech." In the past, Walker will oversee the colleges of architecture and design, arts and sciences, engi-



neering, and management. Other offices dealing with students and their programs also report to the provost, including admissions, continuing education, institutional research, library, professional development and student activities. Walker was selected after a national search involving 50 candidates. He succeeds Robert W. Ellis, provost since 1989, who announced more than a year ago his plans to return to teaching this

fall. An 11-member committee of Lawrence Tech faculty and staff, chaired by Joseph Oliveri, dean of engineering, screened the candidates and interviewed the top prospects. A native of Missouri, Walker holds three degrees from the University of Missouri-Columbia, including a doctorate. He served on the electrical engineering faculty at UM-Columbia for 14 years. He is also on the executive committee and is a former president of the Connecticut Society of Professional Engineers, and served as a national director of the American Society of Engineering Education. Additionally, he has served as a director of the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce and remains active in a variety of capacities. Walker has authored or co-authored more than 50 publications and academic papers. He has presented talks and seminars throughout the U.S., Europe, and in Brazil, Malaysia and India. He and his wife, Nancy, have three children.

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