

SAVE A CHILD'S HEART

Sometimes things don't always go as expected or according to plan, and sometimes things happen that are impossible to explain.

The part of me that didn't go according to plan, was unexpected, and difficult to explain, was that just over 18 years ago, I was born with 4 heart defects. It was not a unique event, in fact it was a well know congenital condition diagnosed some years ago by a French doctor, and was known by his name, Fallot's tetralogy. But now it had happened to me, and although it was my parents who had to deal with it in the beginning, it was something I would need to live with for the rest of my life.

I had an open heart operation at 9 months, and another at 12 years old just after my Batmitzvah. It seems also that I will need another operation soon after I finish matric this year.

This is not something I speak about ever. In fact this is the first time I have done so. Early on, as I started understanding the hand I was dealt, I decided that I needed to get on with life, stay positive, and take from life the very best it could offer. I certainly did not want to turn my condition into the centre of my life, or the issue of discussion with my friends. I needed to overcome the obstacle and get on with it, and thats exactly what I have done ever since.

Although my heart condition has in some respects had an influence on my life and how I live it, the great truth is that there is always somebody with more serious problems. In fact I have had a fun time, got involved with lots of things, have wonderful friends, and have a lot to look forward to. That's why I chose to speak here today. To support a cause for those who like me need very complicated life saving surgery, but cant afford it, or the medical aid, that I was lucky enough to have. I am among the few who are able to go to the best hospitals in the world, and be treated by the best doctors, and have all the love and support of my family and friends. The life saving surgery I had is not available to all, and I cant imagine what a parent or child must feel, knowing that such life changing surgery is needed, but don't have the means to pay for it. That must be the saddest and most desperate thought one could have, and the motivation for me and you to never take for granted what we have, and support initiatives like the Save a Child's Heart campaign. Understand that life is not always perfect, understand what acts of loving kindness and charity can achieve, and understand the pain of those who not only don't have access to life changing surgery, but don't necessarily know where their next meal is coming from.

I am one of the lucky ones. My challenge to you is to support those who are not!