

As I am writing this, I am sitting in my sukkah, enjoying my temporary dwelling for the last few days before we pack it up till next year. As my children get older, the holidays take on more meaning and resonance as they are able to participate more. Shaking the lulav is always great fun (kids seem less hung up on Judaism's strange rituals than adults do!) and we had a blast decorating our sukkah this year with our usual fall-themed décor and colorful lights (bought at a Christmas sale, post-Christmas. Here's a top tip: get all your Sukkah and Hanukkah décor discounted the day after Christmas!). This year, we had additional elements from our 'Days United' Sukkot subscription box (including lanterns, paper chains and Ushpizin paper dolls). The weather cooperated and we had only one day of rain, which is a pretty good score.

Every Jewish festival plays with the idea of 'polarity'—it interweaves and synthesizes several complex ideas which brings out a rich texture in our

to mention that I had neither yard nor porch to mount a sukkah on! Our immigration to America fulfilled our long-cherished version of the American Dream: our very own sukkah in our very own yard! Hence, the observance of the festival has been enhanced mightily by our lovely sukkah and the beautiful fall weather we get to experience in this part of the country and I have felt the shift from 'vulnerability' to 'joy' more acutely.

The pandemic, of course, has thrown our collective human family back into new and no-longer-remembered forms of vulnerability. All of a sudden, we are left cautious and at times fearful of infectious disease not experienced in a hundred years. We have all been left to feel unmoored in ways that history will help us articulate in the years to come. In this new reality, then, what is the relationship between vulnerability and joy? How can we find joy when we feel vulnerable and perhaps even afraid?