

# The Power Of Small Changes

**BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE**

Great events can arise from small differences. In *Les Miserables*, Victor Hugo writes of the battle of Waterloo: "If it had not rained on the night of the 17th and 18th of June, 1815, the future of Europe would have been changed." In 1920, the pacific King Alexander of Greece died of blood poisoning due to the bite of a pet monkey. A general election led to the recall of King Constantine who started a disastrous war with the Turks. Churchill said, "One-quarter of a million people died of that monkey's bite." And as Pascal famously remarked, had Cleopatra's nose been shorter the face of history would have changed.

What is true in history is truer in individual life. A little change can transform the direction of all our days. Do we say hello to the person who would otherwise pass by? Enroll in the class that momentarily piqued our interest? Take some sort of initiative when we know it is more comfortable to stay put?

We might easily be gripped by fatalism and believe that nothing can be otherwise. It is not true. On the vast tapestry of history and on the small tuft of life, tiny changes often alter everything. Have faith.