

The Crazy Person Who Did the Opposite of Everyone Else

1. From the story of Emanuel Sakat who volunteered for ambulance 54 of the United Hatzalah Emergency Medical Service. This ambulance rescued sixty injured people while coming under fire. All of those injured ultimately survived.

[Background: On the morning of Simchat Torah, Emanuel and two other ambulance workers received a call to head south and wait at the Heletz Junction to help evacuate those who were wounded. The Heletz Junction was outside the area where the fighting was taking place. The army would enter the battlefield and remove anyone wounded to the Heletz Junction. At that point the ambulance drivers would take the injured people to the hospital].

At Heletz Junction meanwhile they had set up a central assembly point for evacuating the wounded to hospitals; there was even a landing pad for helicopters. In theory ambulances weren't supposed to go past that point – they were ordered to stop there and wait for patients to arrive. Only bulletproof ambulances were allowed to go further. Magen David Adom has some bulletproof ambulances, but there weren't nearly enough for an event like this. Our ambulance wasn't bulletproof, of course.

When we reached Heletz Junction, they signaled for us to stop, but we kept going. Avi decided that we'd keep driving ahead. He said to me, "If I drive on Shabbat, I'm driving to save lives! I don't drive on Shabbat just to sit at Heletz Junction!" Half a minute later, the ambulance behind us informs the operation center that there's an ambulance driving past the assembly point,

and the dispatcher starts screaming at us over the radio: "HELLO! STOP! Turn around this instant; don't go any farther!" So we stop for a moment, put on our protective gear, our bulletproof vests and helmets, and keep going. And the radio goes back on: "Ambulance 54! I told you not to go past Heletz Junction! Where do you think you're going??!!" So Avi Gian says to him, "We're on our way to someone wounded; we have a SWAT team with us. They're covering us and giving directions." The other Avi and I look at each other. We didn't have a SWAT team; we didn't have squat. But the dispatcher bought it for a few seconds. A minute later, he gets on again and says to us: "I get that you don't want to come back alive. Have a good day, friends!"

From *One Day in October: Forty Heroes, Forty Stories*, page 54

2. From the story of Yosif Zeadna, a Druze taxi driver who drove to the Nova Festival in order to rescue people.

At six-something in the morning, my wife shows me that my phone is going crazy, messages, calls, non-stop, a mess, but I said to her, "Drop it, I'm not at work, it's Saturday, I don't have anything until one in the afternoon." But I see that my phone just won't stop, so I figure I should check it out. I pick up the phone and see the name "Amit Hadar" on the screen. Amit Hadar is the guy from Omer who hired me to drive him and his friends to the party.

I answer, "Yes, Amit?" and he shouts to me, "Yossi, save us!!" I said, "What happened, what happened?" and he says to me, "Sirens, missiles, there are even rumors about terrorists!" I didn't think twice; I got out of bed, pulled on my shorts; my hair was sticking up on end, haha! – and even though I'm the kind of guy that never goes out before having coffee, I gave up my coffee! I didn't even wash my face; I put on my flip-flops – not even shoes – dashed to my van, and I'm driving. I know

that when there's no traffic, it's a twenty-five minute drive from my place to them.

I drive through the farming towns, reach Netivot, and I see missiles— the sky is full of missiles – and I'm like, whoa, something weird is going on here; I've never seen so many, and I keep going. I'm the kind of guy who gives it my all; when I start something, I see it through. I got up to Kibbutz Sa'ad, and I turn left at the traffic circle there to Route 232, and when I turn I see a lot of cars

coming from the other direction, from Nova, speeding, cutting in front of each other, driving on the shoulder and all that, and everyone is waving their hands and signaling me with their lights like, "Go back, make a U-turn!" I said, "This isn't normal; something's up," and I kept driving; I kept going until I reached Be'eri.

From One Day in October: Forty Heroes, Forty Stories, pages 71–72

3. Continuation of the story of Emanuel Sakat who volunteered for ambulance 54 of the United Hatzalah Emergency Medical Service.

So we load all the wounded soldiers into the ambulance and bring them to Heletz Junction. It's already four in the afternoon. Gian sees Aaron there, the United Hatzalah Director of Operations, who's directing all the teams there. So he goes up to him and says, "Aaron, I need more ambulances at the entrance to Kfar Aza, I have lots of wounded there; I need more ambulances!" And everyone knows that Kfar Aza is an active war zone right now; there's actually house-to-house combat. But Aaron says to him, "No way, Avi; you're the only nutcase

who's going in there! I'm not taking responsibility for you, but if anyone gets a scratch there I'll never forgive myself, so no one else is going in!" And I see Avi say to him, "Come over here for a minute," and he takes him aside, and they talk for a couple of minutes, and afterward they come back, and Aaron says to all the drivers there, "Guys, every ambulance follows Avi! Now!"

From One Day in October: Forty Heroes, Forty Stories, pages 362–363

Guided Questions for "The Crazy Person Who Did the Opposite of Everyone Else"

If you prefer, you can create separate cards for each of these questions.

The Crazy Person
Who Did the
Opposite of
Everyone Else 1

Read section number 1

What do you think of the decision made by the three volunteers of ambulance 54?

What do you think of the dispatcher's decision?

The Crazy Person
Who Did the Opposite
of Everyone Else 2

Read section number 2

When reading heroic stories from that horrible day, we see that many heroes did the opposite of what others did. When everyone hid, they went out. When everyone ran away from danger, they ran toward it. When everyone was waiting, they were proactively trying to solve problems.

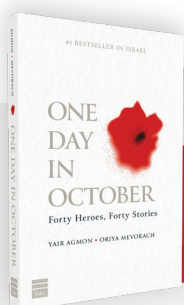
What do you think about this quality of being able to go against the grain? Do you think this is a good or bad quality? Are there specific circumstances where it is particularly good or bad?

Are you able to do something that is important to you even if other people don't understand what you are doing and may call you crazy?

The Crazy Person
Who Did the
Opposite of
Everyone Else 3

Read section number 3

Avi, the driver of ambulance 54, successfully convinced Aaron, the United Hatzalah Director of Operations, to allow additional ambulances to enter the dangerous area. Initially, Aaron thought Avi's request was crazy. What do you think Avi said to Aaron that made him change his mind? (What would you have said to Aaron if you were in Avi's place?)



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