

## **Survivor of 9/11 inspires others to find their 'moment of truth'**

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Nutritionists and doctors always tell their patients that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but on Sept. 11, 2001, it was the most important meal of Mike Jaffe's life.

On Sept. 10, Jaffe, a 41-year-old Westport resident, was sitting in a park during his lunch break, trying to figure out why he felt so frazzled and burdened by the demands of his life.

"Every morning my wife would drive me to the train station while my one-year-old daughter slept in the back seat, I'd work all day, commute back home where my wife would pick me up at the train station, again with my daughter asleep in the back seat, and I thought that there had to be a way for me to find some more time with my family while they were awake," Jaffe said. "That small decision made me feel like I was regaining some control of my life."

He decided, starting the next day, he would take the 9:15 a.m. train to work instead of the 8:45 a.m. So, on Sept. 11 he woke up and had breakfast with his wife and daughter.

"It was only 20 minutes, but we were still able to sit down together as a family," Jaffe said. "I remember thinking on the way to work what a perfect morning it had been."

While Jaffe was on the subway traveling to his office the first plane hit the World Trade Center.

"It hit my floor, my desk," he said. "My whole team was killed that day."

Jaffe spoke about what he called the "moment of truth" to the Westport Rotary Club on Tuesday, and he explained how he used that moment of truth to change his life.

"After that day I could have looked back on it and thought why me and why did this happen, but I decided instead to look forward and say, what now?" Jaffe said. "What can I do with the gift that I've been given? I figure, every minute I'm playing with house money now, right? I might as well make the most of it."

Now, seven years later, Jaffe, who refers to himself as the "human wake-up call," uses what he learned from Sept. 11 to inspire others to find their own moments of truth.



After Sept. 11, Jaffe started his own business, Jaffe Life Design.

His company offers private coaching, workshops, motivational speaking and other events. Jaffe said he provides those who seek his services with the "perspective, tools and support that enable individuals and organizations to create new possibilities for growth and success via empowerment, accountability and authenticity."

Basically, he gives them a push when they feel stuck.

"When you're in a difficult situation or when something bad has happened to you, it's easy to lose perspective and feel limited by what you can do to change it," Jaffe said.

"But you can change it, even if you have to take very small steps at first, and it's the same whether you want to do something simple like clean out your closet or something big like making a life transition."

Jaffe said life isn't perfect, and he still falls back into a rut from time to time, but that he reminds himself that he needs to keep moving forward, not looking back.

"Sept. 11 was my wake-up call and an opportunity to take a look at my life and see where I could make changes," he said. "Everyone has moments where they can do that."

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