

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

WELCOME TO SESSION ONE
Summit Seeds *Atid:*
Becoming a Future-Focused Jewish Leader



*Please turn your camera on and change your Zoom name so that it includes:
 First and Last Name, Wexner Program, and City*

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LISA KAY SOLOMON

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THE FUTURE IS.....



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Happening Tremendous
 Contingent
 Changeable Perseverant
 Unimaginable Abundant Opportune
 Long Coming
 Alive Limitless Malleable
 Inspiring Here Ours Now Beautiful
 Fertile Opportunity
 Accessible Innovative Imminent
 Endless
 Educational Unknown Circular Limitless!
 Unpredictable Magical Invigorating
 Boundless

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Identity, Pride, Continuity

How can we foster a sense of pride in Jewish identity across generations, empowering Jews to embrace their heritage and values while remaining fully engaged with the broader American and global societies? What strategies can help individuals navigate the balance between "de-assimilation"—reclaiming and deepening Jewish distinctiveness—and contributing vibrantly to the diverse "salad bowl" of our nation/world?

How do we reach the growing cadre of unaffiliated (or under-affiliated) Jews to recover and enrich their Jewish identities? This is the kernel, the 'pintele yid', the internal 'kol demama daka' in our spiritual existence.

The Jewish community has a robust infrastructure--- but it isn't engaging the vast majority of young Jews who are unaffiliated. **How do we work with the system to enable it to become flexible enough to meet the needs of the next generation so that we may build a thriving Jewish future?**

The problem is relatively simple to state and complex to resolve. **How do we attract nonorthodox Jews to want to be Jewish - to learn about Judaism, to take on Jewish traditions, to educate their children in Judaism, learn our history, visit Israel, and learn Israeli History - to be a part of the community and to engage in building community. In addition, how do we get orthodox Jews to embrace the non-orthodox?**

One of the most pressing challenges facing the Jewish community today is the issue of Jewish continuity. The growing lack of unity and diminishing number of children receiving Jewish education pose significant threats to the future of our people.

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Pluralism and Unity

How can we preserve unity and pluralism within our community as ideological divides deepen, particularly around Israel? This question has become urgent as we witness growing schisms within the American community, between American Jewish and Israeli communities, all accompanied by rising antisemitism from the left and the right.

Are there new ways of approaching our differences—the myriad perspectives and relationships and ideas they feature—to more accurately understand the present and chart a more vibrant and less polarized future where we are collaborators and not adversaries? What possibilities have we not yet imagined because our conversations typically take place in ideological and cultural silos?

The question that most often keeps me up at night in terms of the Jewish future is about what peoplehood will mean to a generation that comes of age in a most fractured and polarized world?.. One way to describe this challenge might be to ask "how do we expand the tent and keep everyone in it?"

How do we hold together as a people when we divided and also separated, and many but perpetuating divisiveness at this challenging moment?

Do we need religion to survive as a people? How do we address this for proud secular Jews? If the future of a majority of non-orthodox Jews is secularism who identify as Jews through ties to historical and cultural touchpoints, is that enough to sustain us? Similarly, how will an orthodox Jewry with a growing percentage of Haredi Jews affect the Jewish people and how we are perceived in the broader global society?

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Relationships between North American & Israeli Jews

How can we maintain the bonds of the Jewish People across oceans during a time of incredible turmoil when perspectives, values, and commitments are being shaped by our divergent realities? Amidst rapidly changing geopolitical realities, shifting dynamics within Israel, rising antisemitism around the world, and growing threats to the liberal order, the stories we've told about Israel and the North American Jewish relationship to it need to be re-envisioned.

The one question I have about the future of the Jewish People for a team of North American and Israeli leaders is how can we ensure – in the long term – that we, i.e. North American and Israeli Jews, remain one people? It is important that we map contingencies and responses so that we strategically steer the future to a desirable outcome.

What is the right-sized and right-paced relationship that leaders in the Jewish communal ecosystems of North American and Israeli Jewry can/should engage in that can withstand the tides and tests of time, which seems to be heading into ever-shortening cycles?

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Leadership, Organizations, Systems, and Impact

How can Jewish communities overcome systemic resistance to transformative change while preserving their core cultural values?

My question is the viability and efficacy of multiple new and legacy Jewish Organizations that are experiencing mission bleed and in many legacy cases a shrinking supply chain of funders? What has to change to be more imperative and relevant for today's sophisticated funders and tomorrow's funders. Will current and past leadership be malleable enough to serve the needs of the respective constituents/ beneficiaries or will we fail to lead for the future?

How can the Jewish nonprofit ecosystem adapt to the changing landscape of Jewish ancestry, geography, and denominational affiliation?... Are the categories Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox still relevant? In what ways is a new distinction - political and Zionist orientation - serving as an organizing principle for contemporary religious and communal life? What interventions can the Jewish nonprofit ecosystem - led by funders, federations, and networks like Wexner - make to address these changes?

Why do we think we are actually making a difference in the future of the Jewish people? We spend billions of dollars on PJLibrary, Jewish education (informal and formal), teen programming (USY, NFTY, BBYO, NCSY), college programming (Hillel, Birthright Israel), and young adult programs (Moishe House, OneTable). Are we seeing the "bang for our buck" in Jewish communal spaces (legacy institutions and new) from these initiatives 10, 20, 30 years later? If so, why?

How do we ensure that we have the rabbinic leadership we need not only now but in the future?

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Education, Communication, Relationship Building

How can we, as leaders, effectively communicate with and educate our wider networks who may not be Jewish? What resources are available, and how do we formulate a message that garners support from our peers and teaches them to stand against those who lack awareness, concern, or understanding?

How do we prevent lies and propaganda from being taught as history?

How do we stop upcoming generations from being miseducated by the subtle—then progressively less subtle—seeds of "revisionist" history taught in classrooms?

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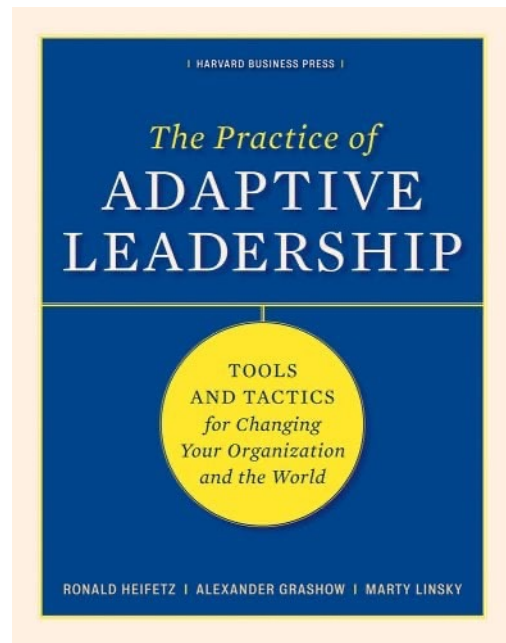


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"The single biggest failure of leadership is to treat **adaptive challenges** like **technical problems**."



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Anticipate Imagine Design

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Participant Introductions:

1. Share who you are, where you're calling in from, background with Wexner, and why this program.
2. Discuss: How are you being a good ancestor? (Reflection on TED talk)
3. Choose someone to introduce the group when we come back into plenary

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Judaism & Futures

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Futures thinking is **NOT** a prediction of what the future will be.

Futures thinking helps us understand and describe how a future might unfold to help build towards our preferred futures.

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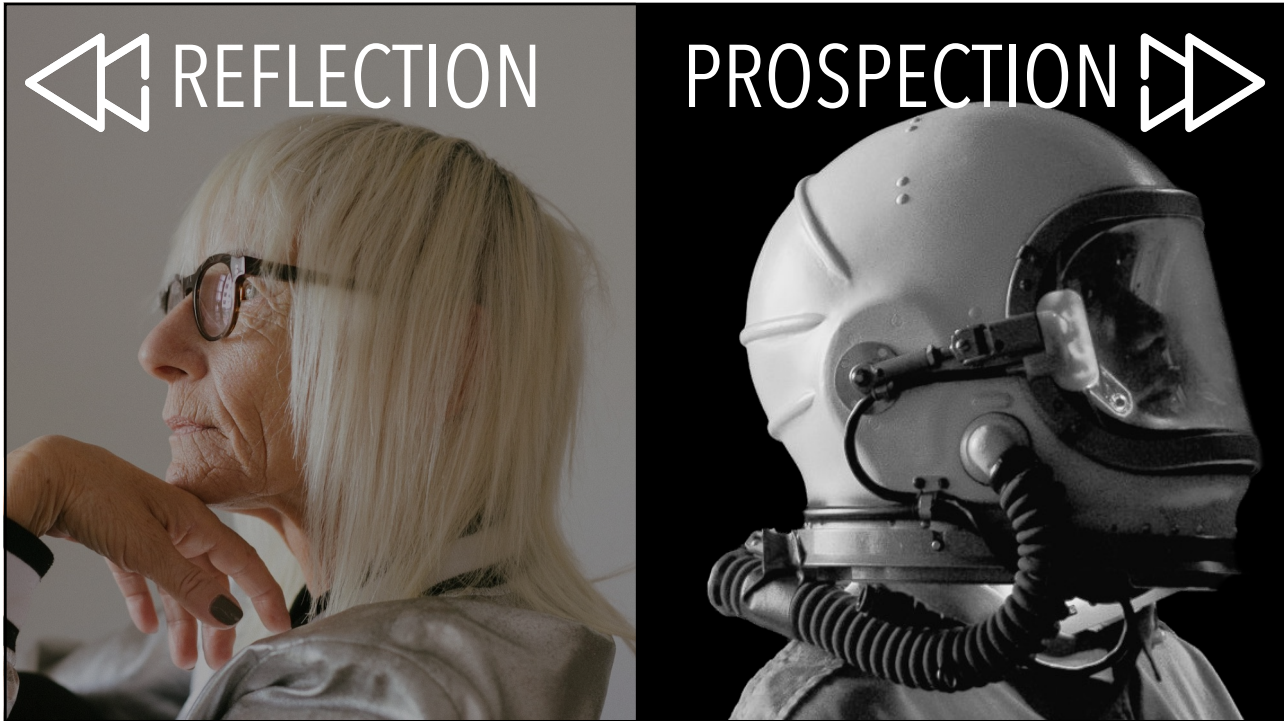
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Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ta'anit, page 23a:

One day, Honi the Circle Maker was walking along the road when he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi said to him: How long will it be until this tree bears fruit? The man said to him: It will not produce fruit until seventy years have passed. Honi said: Is it obvious to you that you will live seventy more years, such that you can expect to benefit from this tree? The man replied: I found a world full of carob trees. Just as my ancestors planted for me, I too am planting for my descendants.

יִנְמָא חַד הָוָה אֶזְל בְּאוֹרְחָא, חֲזַיִיה לְהֵוּא גְבַרְא דְהָוָה נָטַע חֲרוּבָא, אָמַר לֵיהּ: הָאִי, עַד כַּמָּה שָׁנִין טַעִין? אָמַר לֵיהּ: עַד שְׁבַעִין שָׁנִין. אָמַר לֵיהּ: פְּנִישֵׁטָא לָךְ דְחַיִּית שְׁבַעִין שָׁנִין? אָמַר לֵיהּ הָאִי גְבַרְא: עֲלֵמָא בְּחֲרוּבָא אֲשַׁכְחֵתִיהּ. כִּי הִיכִי דְשַׁתְּלוּ לִי אֲבָהֵתִי — שְׁתְּלִי נַמְי לְבְרָאִי



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Richard Powers, *The Overstory* (2018), p. 220-221

Fungi mine stone to supply their trees with minerals. They hunt springtails, which they feed to their hosts. Trees, for their part, store extra sugar in their fungi's synapses, to dole out to the sick and shaded and wounded. A forest takes care of itself, even as it builds the local climate it needs to survive. Before it dies, a Douglas-fir, half a millenium old, will send its storehouse of chemicals back down into its roots and out through its fungal partners, donating its riches to the community pool in a last will and testament. We might well call these ancient benefactors *giving trees*.



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Small Group Conversations:

What did our ancestors plant for us that is still bearing fruit in Jewish life?

What might we plant for our grandchildren that doesn't currently exist in our garden?

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Our Atid Program

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***Anticipate
Imagine
Design***

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***Anticipate
Imagine
Design***
Our Futures

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Anticipate

Imagine

Design

Frameworks
Practice
Conversation
Reading
Reflection
Application

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Homework & Futures Portfolio

Your personal futures laboratory.

Reading
Reflections
Application/ Practice

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Futures Portfolio Examples



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Application & Practice

Set up Futures Portfolio

Write a letter to your future self, date March 29th (before our retreat) via Futureme.org.

Think of 3 – 5 external trends that are meaningfully impacting the future of the Jewish community.

6 Word Memoir (for next time)

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futureme.org

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futureme

Read Public Letters Write a Letter to the Future SIGN IN

Write a letter to the future

"I love this. I've sent myself 5 letters so far and every year it's a surprise. Because I forget so easily. It turns into such a deep reflective process, that I usually weep and laugh while I write."

- Margaret
Member since 2011

YOUR FUTURE LETTER FULL SCREEN

Dear FutureMe,

DELIVER IN

1 Year 3 Years 5 Years Choose Specific Date

MAKE THIS LETTER

Private Public, but anonymous

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Your Email

SEND TO THE FUTURE!

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להתראות עד פעם הבאה... Until We Meet Again....

Next call: Tuesday, January 28, 12pm ET, 11am CT, 9am PT, 19:00 IT

Post Zoom Reading (to be shared on Landing Page):

- The Case for Futures Centered Design, by Lisa Kay Solomon
- A Word of Torah: On Not Predicting the Future, by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks
- The Future is at Odds with the Corporation, by Grant McCracken
- Optional: JPPI Scenarios for 2030

"Homework"

- Set up a Futures Portfolio
- 6 Word Memoir
- Send note to your future self via "FutureMe.org"
- Identify 3-5 high impact external forces shaping the future of Jewish life (either globally or in your community)
- Start to think about a topic area/ project that you might want to apply this in your community

SUMMIT SEEDS
PLANTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADING CHANGE

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