

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

Wexner Heritage Program Alumni Network

WHP Alumni Delegates Council Q3 Meeting Notes

Snowmass, CO July 28-30, 2024

Day One pt. 1

Discussion of Norms:

- It's ok to be happy and sad, fun and worried, brimming with ideas or hope or emptiness
- Judge all people with the scale weighted in their favor
- Patience, humility, curiosity
- Notice how many times you've spoken and leave space for others
- Define terms (acronyms, foreign languages)
- Ask for permission to share outside of this room
- Share stories, not names
- CONFIDENTIALITY
- Brave space
- Be sensitive
- No assumptions about collective thinking
- Speak in "I" statements
- Don't be afraid to disagree but do so respectfully
- Don't be afraid of being uncomfortable

X to the Nth (Two "BESTS" that have captured your attention, given you hope, or taken your breath away recently – in the last year)

- Doug: Elise Stepanik's speech to Congress re: what is happening on college campuses; really moved the needle
- Alex: Antiheroes that have become vocal and ardent advocates for Israel; Les pulling out of Harvard
- Mike L.: Trip to Israel in February – solidarity mission; so inspired by Israeli people. Likened Israeli society to two high speed trains: trauma and resilience. But train of resilience is struggling so hard to keep up. What Jewish communities around Diaspora have done since October 7
- Mytyl: Springing into action and engagement. How Israel took matters into their hands – particularly on October 7, especially women and women's organizations. Social media influencers using their platform to effect change. MACA (Mothers Against College Antisemitism). Many provide action items to "click and send." 3 organizations in Miami got together, found inclusivity to support Israel.
- Mike S.: Richie Torres – does an incredible job of describing what is going on in Israel. Amazed by people who have gone to Israel to volunteer.

Day One pt. 2

- Ernesto: Dr. Lori Santos: psychology professor at Yale. Teaches freshman psych class that has become the most popular in 300 years “The Science of Well-Being.” Grounded in measurable research that teaches how to make wiser choices to lead a happier and healthier life. It’s now on Coursera and he and his wife took it and are really trying to live by it. Addresses misconceptions on what really makes us happy. 9 factors:
 - Savoring
 - Gratitude
 - Social connection (not online)
 - Exercise and sleep
 - Kindness (tzedakah)
 - Meditation
 - Time affluence (valuing time more than money)
 - Signature strengths
- David: Water group was tossed out of food pantry coalition for advocating “From the River to the Sea” when coalition reached out they said they would not retract their rights to free speech. Author Dara Horn, “People Love Dead Jews” does great job discussing antisemitism. Also has podcast. Watched “Won’t You Be My Neighbor” on plane here. Fred Rogers said “Look for the Tikkun Olam” when describing events of 9/11.
- Ali: CEO of American Express on Monday morning after Oct 7 sent emails and acted showing support – Amex poured over 10 million dollars of support to Israel and sent emails every day for the entire week that followed expressing support and standing behind Israel and antisemitism. Showed her a voice and action among the quiet non-Jewish community. Hard for any company to take a stance, they took a stance, and it felt honorable.
- Scott Stone: “First Jobs” - 1800 students in film school got jobs from program at USC – hoping to replicate creating a network of owners of Jewish business for Jewish graduates. High Village LA: created by Rabbi Laura Geller – partnership with another synagogue in LA to create community for older Jewish residents in LA. Co-op, Shabbat dinner, put on 250 events last year, all well-attended. Layperson run. Remarkable to see a growing org in a world where synagogues are shrinking.
- Stephen: Doctor came up with idea to provide access to addiction treatment: program called “Road to Recovery.” Went to government and said would fund organization if she can raise 30 million dollars. She did it – two Jewish organizations. Government committed. Provides a whole process for rehab now at no cost. Created In-Person/online program for small Jewish communities pilot project in Canada with Wexner. Communities that are too small to fund the WHP now have an opportunity to connect.

Day One pt. 3

Session with Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein: “How to Handle Despicable People, Liars and Rodefs”

Reflection on Torah and Judaic Examples on the topic of honesty and truth

- “Keep far away from anything to do with falsehood.” Exodus 23:7
- It doesn’t say “don’t lie;” it says “distance yourself from falsehood”
- “Lean away” – Tirschak
- It’s unrealistic to say just “don’t lie”
- “You shall not steal, deal deceitfully or falsely with one another...” Leviticus 19:11, 35-36 (“The Holiness Code”)
- States why we shouldn’t lie “You should have an honest balance...”
- We know better
- “You shall not have in your house alternate measures...you must have completely honest weights and completely honest measures if you are to endure long... Deuteronomy 25:14-15
- “You shall not lie” is not in the Ten Commandments – it’s in the context of the sin, not by itself that makes it wrong

Rabbinic Period – Talmudic texts

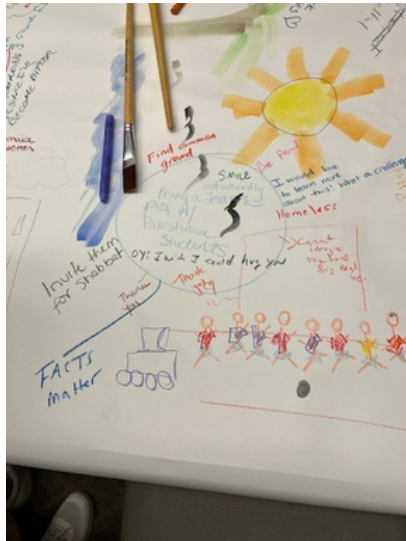
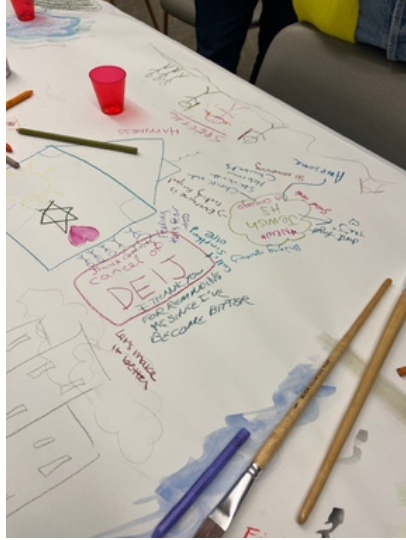
- Truth is hard to find
- Discuss the Hebrew letters of “truth” and “lie” – Emet is sturdy, hard to knock over.
- Don’t accustom a child to fail to honor commitments

Medieval Period

- Interpretation of Exodus phrase (Sefer HaChinukh), states that expression of distancing in that phrase is intended to mean it’s repugnant – it is not used in the other warnings, which emphasizes this
- Society is supposed to ground us in common truths – what happens when that breaks down?
- What about the idea that if you can’t disprove the story then it’s not a lie?
- Or “my stories are my truths”?
- Where are the limits?

Late Night Art – facilitated by Scott Simon – great interactive activity to develop relationships and converse with each other.

Pictures from Day One

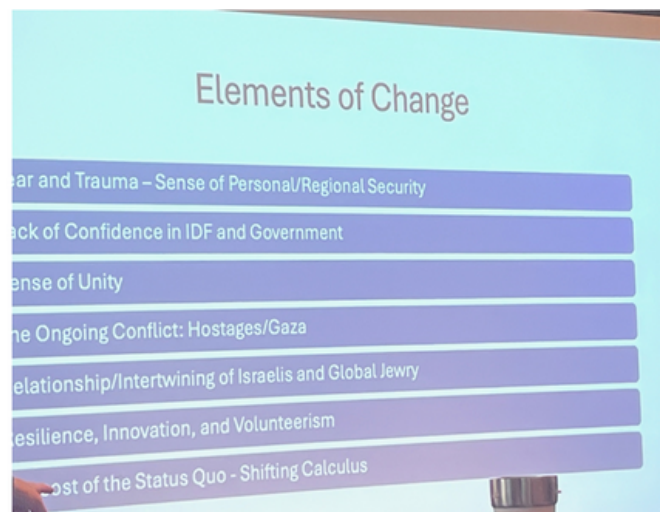


Day Two pt. 1

Time	Session	Speaker	Notes
9:30	Tackling Anti-semitism Part 1	David Leit	Podcast Learnings - Good podcasts but they stay in Podcasts, the media does not reflect these points.
			There is a lack of people in the muslim community that are willing to speak up, and the few that are around, don't have their voices amplified. " We are speaking to ourselves". Rachel Fish is a good resource re: Antisemitism. Brett Stevens pocast on anti-semitism
			84% of group buys into the IHRA definition. Good resources in the slide re: excelent Combatting anti-semitism efforts e.g. ISGAP/follow-the-money, they are in the Alumni Landing Page
			Where is the line between Free Speech and Anti-semitism expression - Hate Speech is protected by the constitution. If you are insighting immediate violence then it is barred but the bar is very high. The fact that hate speech is protected free speech does not mean you are not protected from consequences of your speech. There are also time, place and manner restrictions around speech and there is a good body of law around these constraints. There are rules around anonymity, e.g. KKK hoods. One example of consequences of Free Speech was the case of the Orthodox in Jackson Township NJ, where they expressed anti-jewish sentiment, but they applied neutral laws based on these expressions.
		Etan Basseri	Microsoft Case Study: Jewish Community group at Microsoft, no budget. No issues. After 10/7 things began to change. Security product teams basd in Israel. Message board go nuts on messages criticizing israel. Jewish group grows to 1300. November CEO posts on message board posts. HR not prepared. Begins to crackdown. Podcast plan. HR pauses it.
			Key Learnings: Good - no apparent anti-semitism, anti-zionism at Microsoft. New Jewish group relationships. The bad is that D&I are in decline, is this a national trend? Pockets of intolerance.
11:15	Tackling Anti-semitism Part 2	Angie Watkins, Jenny Wolkowitz	Wash U campus sits between the city of St Louis (Black) and the county of St Louis (White). Campus has always been very open. Wash U Chancellor has deep relationships with Chabad and Hillel. After 10/7, people are waiting for a statement. First statement is perceived as tepid. Campus was relatively quiet. Spring got heated up. More protests coming into campus. Police was instructed to prevent them from coming to center of campus. Ferguson Missouri is only 20 minutes away and protests had messaging tying the two " From Ferguson to Palestine". Faculty senate resolutions were issued, some faculty were protesting in against Israel. Some faculty were arrested. Police encounters, complains of police brutality. Affinity groups lobbied their faculty colleagues to defeat resolutions - one of them was defeated, one of them was not. The one that was defeated was advocating for no consequences for protesters.
			Wash U in general learned from what happened in the coasts and managed it well. Starting preparation for the fall as there is an expectation of things starting again. Principle has been "Protection of our students" and anchored all decisions on that principle.
			Elka's point - Two ways of handling - One is technical - using the law, like Ohio State did, nipped it in the bud. Second is Adaptive - building relationships and dialogue. Doing one alone is not enough
			Good resource for how to manage campus: https://www.sourcesjournal.org/articles/tag/Ontario Stephen Gaerber - Foundaiton in Canada wrote a white paper on how to fight anti-semitism.
12:00	Stronger Together?	Rabbi Elka Abrahamson	Elka/Wexner is struggling with how to harness the power of all of the Wexner Alumni - Israel, Fellows, Heritage (3700 Alumni) to get more outcomes, more projects, more results. They typically "hope" for outcomes and leadership, they don't demand it.
			Wexfactor: Curated Core Alumni conversations. Snippets of conversations that can be used in meetings, or education and other forums
			Do we need data to measure the impact of Wexnerites - What is the ROI of Wexner?
			2 Pizza Rule from Amazon - A team can only be large enough to be fed by 2 pizzas
			Opportunity for more Summits, for better connections. Opportunity to develop a way to share information, share best case studies, share data, know what others want. Summit between all 3 councils would be a great session
			Don't be East Coast Biased

Day Two pt. 2

Time	Session	Speaker	Notes
2:00	Moral Struggles in TaNaKh	Dr. Arna Poupko-Fisher	Thesis: Two things happening: 1) Inability to state or be able to state that something is right or wrong without dispossessing the other person from their dignity; 2) At the same time, inability to see other people's side, narrative and polarization
			Gossip may be a good thing - The Torah is a story of people's failings, the gossip about them, which creates a framework for learning right from wrong
			Colleges forgot to teach discernment, and complex items, everything gets put into two camps. The Torah provides a framework for nuance and complexity. Thesis: something can be necessary and bad at the same time.
			Most of liberal Judaism holds two concepts: Heteronomy - Free Will or Homonomy - Everything comes from above
			In the Bible, the concept of primogeniture is upended in Genesis - In the Bible, no first born is ever the leader. The Bible purposefully challenges the ways of being of the people in those days. Introduces the concept of Meritocracy, and greatness can come from anywhere. This is a radical idea in those times.
			Ethical monotheism can only come from people that are free to make their own choices
			Abraham - trying to save Sodom - He argued with G'd to save people that were not his people, and were in fact his ideological opposites
			Abraham sent Ishmael to the desert. It was bad, but necessary. There is a midrash where he goes back and goes back to the desert to see him and help him - gave him advice and Ishmael took it
			Kingship - another example of necessary but bad - needed for fighting battles, recovering lands, but they had issues
			Tanaja exposes us to moral ambiguity - that is what allows us to listen to people with whom we disagree violently, and not be violent.
5:30	Everything Has Changed: Processing October 7th	Dr. Karen Fraiman	Poem: "Amazing How Everything looks unchanged, Even when nothing remained the same" Michael Zats, Illusions
			Rachel Korazin (sp?) - Collected poems from October 7th
			People are feeling trauma for what happened, trauma for inability to take action, concern about losing some of our empathy for Palestinians.
			There is a shift in the cost of the Status Quo - which was the modus operandi of the government for the last decade. This could lead to seeking an alternative solution.
			We need to educate our children about the conflict. 7 years old is not too early. If they can read, they can hold understanding of the nuance of the conflict



Day Three pt. 1

Stephen-supporting Israel from afar

- Federation emergency funds
- Start up Reserves for Usraek
- Impact investing- Vanessa from Miami who made Aliyah, Adam Finked
- Angie-office hours idea "WTF"
- Sar-el trip

Michael Shiner

- Book: Thinking Fast and Slow
- The Knowledge Illusion-why we never think alone-feeling of knowing
- Behavioural economics
- We are loss averse
- Amos Twersky-Hebrew U & Danny Conman-
- came up with amazing problems e.g. Linda problem
- conjunction fallacy
- Dan Arielli-Israeli economist at Duke
- System 1 & System 2- intuitive vs. thinking sides of our brains
- Ohio and Steve's research-rating political knowledge
- pre explanation v post explanation
- positions are less extreme when you ask them to explain how their position works
- Because we evolved to do things together-collective intelligence

Flourishing Judaism

Scott Stone

- JFNA survey-4k adults surveyed
- 83% said (before 10/7) somewhat, not very, not at all engaged in Jewish life
- since 10/7 40% of the 80% are now showing up in jewish life
- How might we flourish for next 50-100 years?
- Look at things over 3-5 years, not last week's data
- Synagogues doing well have big preschools, day schools
- With excess real estate capacity are shrinking

Day Three pt. 2

Jon-Supplemental Jewish Education

- Jewish Kids Groups
- Participation decreased 45% since 2006
- Even fewer remain by senior year of HS
- # schools decreased
- 4 schools in Atlanta-help synagogues use their real estate
- Jewish Kids Groups-white labeled with partners
- Use it to build membership
- 3 programs
- -schools out
- -B Mitzvah program-accelerator
- -Teen Service Corps

Post B'nai Mitzvah program called Passport-Scott stone

- All related to a trip somewhere- DC, Homeless, Alabama, Portland, NY (3 trips a year, study with rabbis 6 weeks ahead) presentation at end
- Tzedek America
- Makom Community
- Passport for Israel-Miami
- Houston-consolidate classes for post-b'nai Mitzvah experiences
- How to engage parents in the message that journey doesn't end with B'nai Mitzvah
- Cleveland-practice our English with sister city in Israel-conversation partners, 60 minutes a week for 6 weeks or WhatsApp-adults-marketing as an English lesson for community
- 38 questions and you'll fall in love
- Can this continue to be a topic for WTF Wednesdays
- David-JEP

- **X to N'th**
- Blue Caftan
- Narrative Method-system for conversation
- Louis Schwartzberg-Fantastic Fun Guy, Gratitude Revealed
- TAP fund-tuition alternative program
- Bari Weiss - state of World Jewry
- Jon-Citizens Academy and FBI Academy