

C-7436 to C-7437 Transcriptions

Wexner Heritage Foundation. Boardroom discussion. 25 June 1996.

M1: [00:06:06] Richard Jaffee?

M: He's not even coming.

M1: He's not what?

M: He's not attending -- he's still coming in from San Diego.
He's not here yet, if he (inaudible).

M1: He was here yesterday!

F: No. Oops.

M: That was Mr. [Jaberg?], I see. Missed him.

M1: No, I said Richard Jaffee.

M: Yeah.

M: But earlier, you said Eric Jaberg.

M: Not (inaudible).

F: Well, he's not here.

M1: That's weird.

F: (inaudible) going whatever (inaudible).

M1: Oh wait a minute, you're quite right.

M: Think of --

M1: Yesterday that there were 14 (inaudible), today there are
15.

F: Wow.

F: It's every year. Yeah, did you sign up (inaudible)?

M1: Larry [Caflin?]

M: Here.

M1: Larry is here. So 11 are sitting here.

F: He's here. I was (inaudible).

M1: Gary Leavin? [00:07:00]

F: The rumor mill is gone.

M: Oh no, I ate the last piece.

M1: [DuRoches?].

M: See, humanitarian gestures just (inaudible).

F: That's the mother in you.

M1: [Roth?], Carrie and Sharon? You fooled me. You were over there yesterday.

M: Going to try and keep you on your toes.

F: Have a different perspective.

M1: Way back in the previous century, when I went to Yale, everybody was assigned a seat alphabetically. Every professor had a diagram, and he had it in front of him and he knew -- and gradually, had to by the semester, he remembered all the names and he didn't need his diagram anymore. That's the culture in which I was brought up.

Friedman, and the guy sitting next to me, F-O-R-D, Ford, Henry Ford, II. So we sat together for about three years. [00:08:00] And that's how I got to understand the high Protestant mentality of America, the high economic and industrial dreams and many years later, to cut a long story short, when the Six-Day war broke out, and then before it was on a cruise in Greek Islands, he called up and he said, "You guys are in the war." I said, "Yep." He said, "Can I do anything to help?" I said, "Well, yeah, you want to send some dough? Send some dough. That'll help." So he said, "OK, well, how's a hundred?" So I said, "A hundred's fine." So he gave a hundred thousand bucks at the time of the Six-Day war, and kept giving it every year as long as he lived.

M: Far cry from the (inaudible).

M1: And at one point, you know, he said, "My grandfather would be (inaudible).

M: Wasn't one of the Fords known as anti-Semitic?

F: Yeah, [00:09:00] that's what I thought.

M: Brought in the protocol.

M1: So I'm used to having a diagram with people's names because I'm really lousy, and I do apologize over and over again.

But when somebody trips me up and I think I'm looking over there for Roth, but Roth is over there --

M: Well, we couldn't really tell (inaudible).

F: We got to hear that (inaudible) theory of yours.

M1: Double cross.

F: The problem with that assigned seating is they used to do that in grade school, and I have really poor vision. And I was a T, and I was in the back of the room, and I could not see the board. I had to go and get glasses in second grade, finally (inaudible).

M1: Early shift (inaudible).

F: Thought I had a learning problem, I just couldn't see.

M1: See, so I got a vision from yesterday, [Schiffman?] is sitting over here, and Caflin is sitting over here, and Leavin is sitting over here, and the three of you guys were in a triangular discussion several [00:10:00] times. So I figured, well, I'll remember those names, but I don't. [Schlessinger?], there you are. We were eating together yesterday. Cynthia's here. She tried to duck. Not duck, she tried to transfer.

M: Transfer?

M1: But that's OK. That's OK.

F: But I'm up front about it.

M1: That's good!

F: Right.

M1: That is exactly the way to be --

M: Exactly.

M1: So that I can up front with you, you see.

M: You solved my problem.

M1: Right.

F: Right?

M1: Good.

F: So that's right. You can get tapes of other sessions.

M1: [Giordana?].

M: I'm (inaudible).

M1: OK, did I get it right today?

F: You did.

M: Yeah.

M1: Andy [Wasserman?]?

F: (inaudible) turn on the microphones.

F: He switched it.

M1: OK. All right, so listen. I forgot to mention (inaudible) -
-

M: Told you, Gary J. [Burgess?] is here.

M1: I called your name before, and you weren't here. You snuck in. Good. OK. [00:11:00] So who's not here is Michael Goldberg, Richard Jaffee and [Muschail Edmond?]. OK. This is today, what's today? The 25th. OK. See, I have to turn these sheets in, or (inaudible) gives me hell.

M: What happens if you don't?

M1: What?

M: What happens if you don't turn them in?

M1: Well, then I'm on her bad list, and that takes me a date to get back on her good list. (laughter)

M: I'm just asking how long it took.

M1: No, we have a wonderful relationship, a tiny little staff, and doing all this logistical job all over the country, and all the tiny little details -- did you get baggage tickets, and all that -- endless, endless. Place card seating, and everybody taking different courses --

F: They do a great job.

F: Unbelievable.

M1: And they are, all told, Nathan [Raime?] and myself,

[00:12:00] yeah, Laurie is four, and --

F: Shelly?

M1: Shelly.

F: Cara?

M1: Cara and Erica is seven. Oh, we got one more, Randy. Oh, Randy, she's pregnant, six months or so. And her mother died day before yesterday. Bingo. That's a tough one. Mother was in her late 40s.

F: That's terrible.

M1: Yeah.

F: First child.

M1: So there are eight of us running this show, and therefore, it's such a tight team, and everybody's close with everybody, and there's no rank or anything. Therefore, nobody likes to get on anybody else's bad side. But, you know, it happens, you do. I didn't turn in my sheet yesterday. So, I said I'll be good today, I'll turn it in today. "All right, you be sure." [00:13:00]

Among the stuff that was left for you yesterday was this orange thing, and I want to make sure that everybody has it. I didn't refer to it. What it is, you're not going to refer to it, but I urge you in your spare time to read it. I'm writing memoirs, and that's what Chapter 9, Section 6 means at the top. And that's, you know, the darned thing is

about 700 pages already, and I'm just having fun with it. I'm not going to do anything with it, I'm not going to try to get it published. Sandy Curtis is reading the chapters from San Diego. Do you know her?

M: From Oakland.

M1: Oh, she's from Oakland. Oakland, Oakland. So this is a chapter. And what it is is, a short biographical sketch, two or three pages on each person, [00:14:00] on all of the great mythical leaders of the UJA over the decades, 50 years' worth, whose names you may or may not recognize. The early names are the aristocrats. The Lehman family, Lehman family, governor of New York, senator from the State of New York, Morgan Farrell, the famous one, secretary of the treasury under Roosevelt, etc., etc. So put them away, and the reason I'm bringing it up is, there are two extras. Will somebody do me a favor and make sure that Richard Jaffee gets both of these? Thank you. So I have one more of the orange, and two or three more of the blue. And we're going to be working in the blue right away.

Are there any questions [00:15:00] leftover from yesterday? Any problems, any comments, anything still working that you

would like to have cleaned up today before we start on the business of the politician, and how to get to the top? Before we get into that? Nothing left over from yesterday? OK, good.

Let's turn to page --

F: Nine?

F: Nine.

F: Nine.

M1: Now I am sure that you are all very, very [00:16:00]

idealistic. I'm equally sure that pure idealism, altruism, genuine love of Judaism, love of the Jewish people, love of Israel, all those great, wonderful virtues; those and those alone will not, N-O-T, get you to the top in and of and by themselves. This is not to say that everybody at the top is cynical and hard-boiled and doesn't give a damn about your ideals, oh, yes, yes, they value those virtues. But those are not enough. And so, I'm saying this as a (inaudible), order to make sure [00:17:00] that you don't think that I base my own approach in life on cynicism and political maneuvering, and how to jockey and juggle, and how to twist other people around to bring them to your point of view,

and that that's all I am, that I'm talking without idealism. Yes, in this segment, really I'm leaving all the ideals out, all the ethics out. All the high, high noble motivations out. I'm dealing with a (inaudible). I'm dealing with a purely practical problem of how you can get the tiller in your hands, because your hands, in my book, are the most important hands in America, or in -- well, in your community. And [00:18:00] your leading your community depends upon your jockeying yourself into the positions where key decisions are made.

How many people have you got in your town? How many Jews are in your city?

M: Seventy to a hundred thousand.

M1: Seventy to a hundred, that's an honest appraisal. Because I always say a hundred, and everybody says, no, you're exaggerating, and I know I'm not because there are all the -- San Diego, because there are always more Jews in the woodwork than anybody wants to count. Got a hundred thousand Jews. Do you know anything about the structure of your central organization, which is called the Federation? That's the central structure. All that other -- there are

many other institutions, organizations, national organizations, Council of Jewish Women I'm sure has a chapter in your town, and (inaudible), I'm [00:19:00] sure, has a old little chapter in your town. National organizations, local organizations, synagogues and temples -- they all exist in every town, large or small. Columbus, Ohio, where Mr. Wexner lives, has got 13,000 (inaudible) souls; men, women and children. And those 13,000 people, they have all the same paraphernalia that you have with 100,000 Jews. But there's one organization which is the center of the town, the address for the town, when people want to come in from the outside and address the -- the what? The Federation. That's the address. And so the president of the Federation, man or woman, and the chairman [00:20:00] of its campaign which raises its money, man or woman, and the executive director of that Federation, man or woman, are the three most important people in the town, as far as the American Jewish Committee is concerned, as far as the UJA is concerned, as far as the Jewish Agency in Israel is concerned. When they want to talk to San Diego, they're going to want to talk to one other, or hopefully all three of those people. And then they know that they're

talking to what they call top leadership. And if you can make a deal with the top leadership, the top three people, then those three people will filter it down through the whole, I think overly-cumbersome, but that's just my opinion, others don't think so -- process-oriented [00:21:00] set of committees and councils and commissions and study groups, etc. So there's a bureaucratic filtering down that can embrace as many as one to two hundred people in city like as large as San Diego.

OK. I would like to see a show of hands, how many of you sit on committees or boards or subcommittees, or whatever the name is, of which I have said in your town is 200 people? Are you among that 200?

M: Not within Federation, no.

M1: Not within the Federation system. So you are here as one of the people invited to join [00:22:00] Wexner because of some position you hold in something else. We have a holistic approach. If you are the president of your synagogue, and you may not be in the Federation system, you still are doing a terribly important job in town. And we want you. But the Federation system is the one that makes

the major policy decisions for the town, which might or might not include your synagogue of which you're the president. So I want to stick with the Federation system, without in any way demeaning all the other agencies, organizations, institutions that are outside that system, but do not get involved in -- how many Russian Jewish families should we take into Oakland? The national organization back there [00:23:00] in New York is arguing that you should take 75 families, and you sit down inside -- and you figure out, can you handle 75 families? Can you find the apartments for them, can you get the furniture? Can you get the jobs? Can you get the English-speaking courses? And you come back and you say, well -- don't dump 75 families on us. We think we can handle 50, nicely, comfortably, easily -- let's take 50. And so the deal is made.

Now, the old folks' home isn't involved in that deal. The synagogue isn't involved in that deal. So somebody has to be the address into which all the questions get filtered, and the answers come out. And having given those answers, then that Federation will immediately turn to its Jewish

Family Agency. You have a Jewish Family Agency in --? Sure you do. And they [00:24:00] will say to the Jewish Family Agency, hey, look, we've made a deal with the HIAS, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, to take 50 families. Would you get your subcommittees going and make a schedule, and give me some time tables as to when we should expect these families, line up some apartments fast, get your legal committee together, look and see how much dough you might need outside of your own budget, etc., etc.

So the filter-down process, the delegating process, begins from the top on every single major matter you can think of in the international Jewish world, in the National American Jewish world, and of course in your local Jewish world in your local city; those three circles.

F: [00:25:00] Churdan?

M1: No no no --

F: Portland?

M1: Portland, OK. Are you among -- in Portland, it's not 200 people. In Portland, it's 75 people. Are you among that 75, on any committee, council? You are.

F: (inaudible).

M1: All right. It's OK. I'd like to go around the table, just by seeing a show of hands, how many of you, by this definition that I've just elaborated, how many of you are inside of that large list, because 75 people is a lot of people, and therefore you are inside of the Federation leadership system in the largest sense? I keep talking about I want you to get to the top, but I want, first of all, to find out if you're [00:26:00] inside at all to begin with. And it's no derogation if you're not. But just for my curiosity, hands up, are you inside the system? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Ten out of fifteen. OK. Well, there you are. And the other five of you, I am sure easily could be if you wanted to be.

So let's say that all of you are. You look at that thing on page nine, that Roman numeral two, that politician, how to reach the chair. And I left the chair deliberately generic, I didn't say chairman, chairwoman, chairperson -- that makes me nuts. [00:27:00] So the chair means one of those three top positions.

Now, is anybody here on a career path to become the executive director? Probably not.

F: Haven't had (inaudible).

M1: What's that? Well --

F: Trying to (inaudible).

M: My career is peaked. (laughter)

M1: Your career has peaked. Yeah, OK. So therefore, when we're talking about, aside from being -- well, what we're talking about are not three top positions, two top positions. So that's why I used just a generic term, "chair." Point one says to understand the political structure of your Federation and to work your way through it. Now, to understand the political structure, what you really have to know is, [00:28:00] what's the top decision-making committee? What's it called? Is it the "Chairman's Kitchen Cabinet?" So that's an informal name. Is it the "Executive Committee?" Is it a subcommittee of the executive committee, if the executive committee gets to be too large, 10, 12, 15 people, there might only be three, four, five people whom the chairman and the executive director want to consult. The structure is crucial for you to come to understand, and to know the names of the people.

I was talking to somebody last night who said that he has been the president of his Federation, and his next door neighbor is a guy who was the national president of a national [00:29:00] organization in the whole United States, and of course a former president of the Federation and a former chairman of the campaign. So this guy is neighbors with, and these two men have both been presidents of the Federation. So the fellow who is (inaudible), your age, is already in the kind of a past tense -- he's already been the president. So there's nowhere for him to go, except if he suddenly gets bored one year and he's got a lot of time, and he says, "Well, I'll be the president again." You must understand the structure, and I can't help you with that, because the structure is different in every town, the names of the key committee. In some [00:30:00] towns, the budget committee is the key committee, and that's the one that the chairman and the president always deal with because that's where the money is. And in some towns, the budget committee is linked with the allocations committee, which allocates the money to the various beneficiaries, so it's called Budget and Allocation.

There's no set pattern, it's not the same everywhere. Don't try to account for the differences; the differences are usually historic or personal, or vendettas, or ego fights - - you know, you Jews are a hard-headed, stiff-necked, and you keep your grudges going and it takes you a long time to be convinced that you're wrong. [00:31:00] And then you hardly ever admit to that -- which is good. I mean, I have no objection to that. It's a strong-minded attitude toward life.

So all I can say to you is that that's the first thing that you have to do. And if you go back and you go home and you do that, make that your first task. Get a chart of the table of organization. Your executive director can't refuse to give it to you. So what he -- he can't say, "That's classified, Adam, no, I" -- hit him over the head, and you say, "Come on, I'm a dues paying member of this Federation," because every contribution that you make to it makes you a member of it. Nobody solicits your membership, they solicit your money. Well, once you've given your money, you're a member. And as a member, you've got the right to see the table of organization of... the [00:32:00]

process by which you begin to move up in the system is, and therefore, beginning to be noticed, is to hit the chairmanship of a committee, or first you're a member of a committee. The committee is a bloody bore. It's 22 people dealing with some silly little problem that takes an infinite number of hours and shouldn't, and it's all a lot of waste of time. "Process" is the evil word in our system. But nobody's got the guts, except in rare occasions -- I've seen chairman of major cities, major, major cities -- Chicago or St. Louis, Philadelphia -- big towns where the chairman rules a meeting with a timetable such as we put in our program here. We [00:33:00] say 10:15 to 10:45, and if you'll watch it over these days, we're strict with it. I've seen chairmen running meetings of powerful people around the table with a timetable -- "This meeting is going to take one hour and 30 minutes, and I promise to get you out of here by then. And we're going to spend 15 minutes on Topic A and 12 minutes on B, and six minutes on C, and I'm going to cut discussion at the end according to the clock." (knocks on table) Now, that sounds rigid, that sounds authoritarian, but I'm offering it to you as an advice that when you get to the top, run your meetings that way. All

the people will appreciate it better. You'll get the same decisions done; you're not going to leave stuff undone. Now, so many meetings that drag on and on always end with, "Oh, well, we didn't decide, so everybody take out your date book and we'll set the dates for the next meeting." How many times have you heard that? [00:34:00] Until you're ready to throw up! And you say, "Oh my God, we spent two and a half hours and we didn't decide anything, got to have another meeting to decide it?"

So get into the committee system. Try to make it stricter than it is; more expeditious -- maybe "strict" is a bad word -- more expeditious, more precise. Reach a decision at the end of a given time period, and you will find that you really spent enough time discussing it, because you thought about it before you come into the meeting anyway, so let the chairman call the vote, and get the hands up and see what you want to do.

Once you get into an important committee, and I made a note here to choose a significant committee, not every one of the committees is significant. Not everyone makes the hard

decisions about the [00:35:00] big issues. And gradually, from that committee chairmanship, point C, you can push your way onto the overall board. Now, that's why overall boards get to be 50 or 75, or in some cities even 100 people, and I'm admitting to you from the beginning that it's pretty much a waste of time for the first year or so that you sit on that board, because you're a junior member, you're brand new, you're a neophyte -- "Who are you? How did you get on the board?" Well, you got on the board through good, hard work on a committee, and when you feel you've served your time on that committee -- and I don't know whether it's one year, two years, three years, whatever the time is, you've got your own little [00:36:00] -- there's a German word, *fingerspitzengefühl*, the feeling you have in your fingertips, or in America, the idiom is, "Your nose tells you." Well, I think the Germans are better with theirs, the feeling you have in your fingertips that it's time to make a certain move, move to a certain decision.

So you push your way onto the board. And you're one of 50 people, 60 people. And when it gets so many, you know what

happens, the executive director starts to print your names on the back of the letterhead, because there's no room on the front of the letterhead anymore. (laughs) What are you laughing at? You've seen that, right? You've seen that. And there, now, you're on this big [00:37:00] board, and there's a long list of names on the letterhead, and sometimes it's alphabetical, and sometimes it isn't. And you want to get to the top of that list. And then you want to get, ultimately, above that list where the few names are; the president, the chairman, the vice president, the executive director, the honorary chairman -- there's that little list up there on top of the big list.

Point D and point E, and once you've gotten yourself inside of the Chairman's Kitchen Cabinet, whatever that group is called, then you are close to the throne, OK? [00:38:00] The process to get there could be a five-year process. Meanwhile, you're doing all the good work that you're used to doing; if you're taking part in soliciting gifts or if you're making a curriculum for the Bureau of Jewish Education in your town, or whatever you're doing, whatever brought you to this table, whatever caused us to pick you -

- keep on doing it. And do more of it. And do it better. Then you get to be more noticed. Then you get to be an old, familiar face. By the time you push your way up toward the top of that list, people know you. People know you. And you're not a stranger, because these boards are very, very -- how shall I put it -- [00:39:00] selfish. Selfish. It's their turf, and you're pushing your way into that turf. And if they know you from some previous exposure and then they're comfortable with you -- now sure, there are lots of ways for them to get comfortable with you; if your father or your grandfather is the biggest giver in town, they know your name. And so you're welcome. Yeah?

M: So far, a lot of what you've told us, you have written here and I think it's pretty clear. I'd like to ask you something, but between the lines.

M1: Sure.

M: What are the things not to do as you work your way up through the system, so as to prevent obstacles? In other words, the kind of things that I see sometimes, somebody comes in, they're new, and they kind of take over, or they're [00:40:00] critical of somebody else's plan without knowing who that person is, what kind of work they put in.

Do you have any ideas along those lines as to what to do that doesn't impede this rise to leadership?

M1: All of the things which you know so well, because you have just knocked off two or three good things that one ought to be careful about. I want you to push your way to the top, but I want you to do it with sensitivity. I want you to do it with some [sechol?], with some common sense. If some important person is pushing a particular project, and you think it's just dumb, or you think it's wrong even, more than dumb, OK -- I wouldn't, for instance, get into a public confrontation for the first time that I was sitting on a particular committee. And I wouldn't shout across -- or not shout, I wouldn't say across the table, "Well, [00:41:00] Matilda, I think you're wrong," even in a sensitive tone of voice. You just make a little note for yourself. You call her up the next day, and you say you want to have a cup of coffee with you. And you start, in the one face-to-face dialog, to explain to her why your position, which she doesn't know. All you've done in the public thing is confront her and say you don't agree with her. But she doesn't know what you stand for. And you haven't got time to elaborate that, but in private, over an

hour lunch, sure you have time. So you say, "This is what I think, and I heard you expressing something quite different yesterday. And I didn't want to confront you," all nice, polite, civilized, good manners. So that's how you should do it. And the [00:42:00] wrong way is the other way, the confrontational way. It's the way that politicians get votes through Congress. It's exactly what they do.

M: How do you deal with the sea of incompetence around you? You've come to a board or a committee, what have you, you realize it's very clear from the outset, these people are not competent, they're not --

M1: All of them? The whole board?

M: Well, I wouldn't say the whole board --

M1: Right.

M: I can say a board is functioning incompetently, but I wouldn't say that everybody on the whole board is incompetent. But you kind of feel this board is not going anywhere --

F: Dysfunctional.

M: Dysfunctional, or etc. And how do you avoid not becoming a part of that, trying to affect some change without coming across as the new kid on the block who's a know-it-all?

M1: OK, so in the case where [00:43:00] you have been invited to sit in a committee and you think after attending one or two meetings that that committee is dysfunctional, and you could even go further and you could pinpoint the two or three people who seem to be the most stupid to you, and the most useless --

M: Who are usually chairmen. (laughter)

M1: Maybe. It might be.

M: (inaudible).

M1: Very well could be. Adopt the same policy that I said a minute ago about Matilda. But here, you don't go to the individuals who you think are the worst culprits. Here you go to the executive director, and you say, "Charlie, listen, you and I have to have lunch. I've sat through two" -- and then you're drinking a glass of beer together and you're having a sandwich, and there's no tension in the air, and all you're doing is reporting to him your feelings. You've been [00:44:00] through two meetings of this committee on the -- well, let's take the worst kind of committee which is in existence, and every city's got one; it's called the Long-Range Planning Committee. (laughter) And smiles, chuckles, so a lot of you have been through it.

"I've been through two meetings of this Long-Range Planning Committee; it's a horror, it's a dread, it's absurd, it's a joke. They're not focusing." Your executive director will say, "Well, come on, forget all those words. What's the main beef?" And so you are forced to distill your impressions and come down to a bottom line, and your bottom line is, "They're not focused. They're talking all over the lot. They're rambling all over the place. Two guys have got [00:45:00] something in their heads that they want to have an adult education course on fly fishing, and four other guys have got something in their head that they want to have a committee on how to get the Hebrew University to teach in English instead of in Hebrew. And everybody around the table is, you know, putting their pet ideas on there, and there's a mish-mosh, it's like a laundry list. There's no focus to the damned committee. Your executive director will understand that. And he'll be in to ask you questions about who seems to be the most dysfunctional. And if you think it's the chairman, then you name it's the chairman. You don't have to be afraid. Never fudge. Don't hide. Don't camouflage your opinions. But you're expressing them to the person who can correct the situation, if [00:46:00] that

person agrees with you, because the executive director then, with his sense of diplomacy, will pay attention and if he's smart, make some shifts. Make some shifts.

M: The other -- the executive director also is in a position to be able to give you the history, which you don't often understand when you first come on to these committees --

M1: Right.

M: You don't understand, there are always lots and lots of hidden agendas in the room that you don't see when you first come on to a committee, and the executive -- you know, if you go to take the time, like you said, to go have coffee, which I've done many, many times, you come to find out what those agendas are, and then you can align yourself with certain people in certain positions, in a way to try to achieve what you're trying to achieve. Without that, when you're first thrust into the middle of that mess, it's so [00:47:00] confusing, it's unbelievable. You don't understand these issues that seem to be confusing are even there, (inaudible) history.

M1: Absolutely. You're sometimes tempted to say, the hell with it. What am I wasting my time here for? Yes?

M: Maybe we're getting ahead of ourselves, but can you spend some time looking at leadership from the other perspective which is, you are a leader and the nature of leadership, nature of acting as a benevolent despot, question mark, as a delegator, question mark, and the notion of effective leadership once you're there, because I think many people have leadership positions and frankly are not necessarily aspiring to be the chairman of this committee, and have had to look at it from that other perspective also. And hopefully, you'll have a chance to weave that into the dialog?

M1: Sure. You've said two or three things; and they're a little bit jumping ahead. But we've got time, and I'll get to them.

M: Great. Great. Thank you.

M1: Yes?

M: I'll just say, [00:48:00] sometimes if you're on a dysfunctional committee or board, it presents you with an immediate opportunity. I just joined the board of a local non-profit, there are only seven people on the board, and it was very clear at the first meeting or two that they were just missing the whole point, and nobody could put his

or her finger on it, including the president. And so I finally just stated what to me was the obvious, and it made an impression. The lightbulbs went on. I mean, sometimes, depending on -- it seems to me depending on the people, depending on how everybody acts together, you may have the opportunity very early on, even though it's your first year, your first month on a committee, just to jump in and establish yourself.

M1: You're absolutely right, based upon the description you gave at the beginning, that this was a group of seven people. Within a group of seven people, you don't have to be as careful [00:49:00] or as sensitive as I was describing, sure. And I'm not saying that you ought to wait three or four meetings in order to establish your credentials before you do that now, you can do that right away. (pause in recording)

F: ... table, and the squeaky wheel gets the attention. And maybe it's the person that's been around for 50 years, and, you know, they're driving that train down one track. Most people sitting around the board table are a little shy, in my opinion, and they don't necessarily voice an objection. Everyone's afraid to stand up to certain people. So nobody

says anything, a call for a vote is taken, and if you are silent, you know, that's a sin of omission as well as -- your time is not to commit this faux pas by jumping in, and yet, isn't it [00:50:00] just as bad to keep your mouth shut for even a year?

M1: Well, if you really -- if it's really come to the point where a vote is being called, and you feel that if the committee report comes out voting, you know, such-and-such a way on such-a-such an item, and that it would be wrong, and that once a vote is taken, there's nothing you can do to overturn it, yes, then you have to talk up.

F: But what makes me the craziest is to walk out of the board room, and people will be talking in the elevator, going down corner, saying, "Look, could you believe that?" And to their negative comment, say, "Then why the hell didn't you say something during the meeting?" You get it on the table. And then if you voice your opinion -- I think sometimes things are done in the wrong location.

M: The parking lot.

M1: Like what?

F: The parking lot.

F: The issues that don't get discussed --

F: Yeah. I mean, all of a sudden, something else will come up, they'll say, "Well, why didn't you bring it up at the meeting?" You know, if I had heard that opinion voiced, I would have agreed with you and we could have overturned --

M1: [00:51:00] Well it depends on the severity of the whole matter. If there's an issue that comes up on a very, very important matter, important matter, and you see that the committee is fumbling, and you see them getting their -- working their way toward a vote which is going to be an error in your judgement, forget about all the people in the elevator. Why didn't they speak up? So why are they putting the monkey on your back? But it's on your back, because we're talking about it to you as the reader --

F: I have a different problem. I'm too vocal. And I'm the one that's the rabble rouser in probably every committee meeting I've ever been in, because I do voice my opinion. And I need to learn the politics, which is what I'm hoping to get from you this week --

M1: Well, you just hang on --

F: Not to take that person to lunch and maybe not to be so confrontational at the meeting --

M1: Yeah? All right.

F: And work from a different direction.

M1: So you've got to [00:52:00] tone yourself down.

F: Right.

M1: But if you'll reach the point where you really feel that they're about to make an egregious error, then you have to talk up. And what you ask --

F: Well, I do plenty of that. I (inaudible).

M1: And what you ask for is -- what you ask for is postponement of the vote.

F: Oooh, (inaudible) words.

M1: You don't start arguing the merits of the case. You just ask for a postponement of the vote.

M: But then you have to take action, though. I mean, that's --

M1: What's that?

M: But you have to take action. What I was going to comment about Cynthia's thought there is that if you're going to speak up, if you're going to go out on that limb, you have to be prepared to rally troops behind you in the community at large to support your position --

M1: Yeah, well, we're going to come to the rallying of troops.

M: In fact, there was a case in Seattle where this happened, where it was extremely successful. There was, on the JCC

Board, there was a woman who was, I think it was not more than maybe her third [00:53:00] board meeting --

F: Jen Gray?

M: Yeah, Jen Gray. She spoke up avidly about a problem that we were having there with the Early Childhood Services department, preschool. And in less than a year -- and she created a lot of controversy, but in less than a year, she solved the problem. I mean, it was really a, I think, one-handed effort, and she made some enemies in the process. But the problem was solved, that the (inaudible).

M1: I'm not against speaking up.

M: Yeah.

M1: I'm not against it. I don't want you to get the -- hey, do I look to you like (laughter)

M: But I'm agreeing with you. Absolutely. I'm just saying that I think that you -- if when you do take that -- you go out on that limb, you have to be prepared to put your action where your mouth is, basically, and follow through with it. Otherwise, a change will never occur.

M1: You have to have a whole bunch of followers behind you when you come into a public [00:54:00] position of being on a board. And it's one of the things a couple -- a page later,

the whole business of how you develop a following. A leader that's got nobody behind him better not try to lead anything. Remember that, I'm making the assumption that you have a group of people behind you.

M: Are you going to talk about that as part of this?

M1: Yes.

F: I think the politics of that is more interesting.

M: I think maybe to discuss Cynthia's issue a little more, what I have noticed is that you pick a group of 20 people, everyone's fears that they're going to be the one person who is objecting to whatever it is that's on the table, and so everyone kind of sits back, trying to get a sense -- you look at the body language and you try to get a sense of, you know, if I object to whatever this person is saying, am I going to have 10 [00:55:00] followers? Or am I going to be standing out there alone? All -- everyone gets quiet and I make a fool of myself. And I think what it leads to, what I've found is that you really -- in order to be prepared and be effective at the meeting, you need to have the pre-meeting meetings. And you need to go in when John Doe is going to be proposing X, and you know that that's on the table. You need to go into that meeting, if you object to

X, you need to have figured out who, at the table, is most likely to be sympathetic to that person, who's not -- and kind of get the politics --

F: Straw poll.

M: Straw poll, try to get an understanding of how the wind is blowing before you get to the meeting.

M1: All right, you know what you sound like? You're 100 percent right. You sound like the majority leader in the house. And the minority leader in the house. And each one of those guys goes around in what you call [00:56:00] the pre-meeting, they all go around, absolutely demanding clear answers from every congressman or every senator as to how they would vote if such-and-such a bill came up on the floor, and therefore, they know before the bill is brought up on the floor, approximately how the vote is going to go. That's counting noses. That's a very smart thing to do, because if you know in advance, pretty much, how something is either going to get promoted or opposed, if you know that in advance, and if you further know who is going to oppose and who is going to vote in favor, then you're in the cat bird seat. Then there's no possible mistake you can make.

M: At least you know -- because I've been -- Cynthia, she was last [00:57:00] time, at least you learn when it's not worth shooting off your mouth --

M1: Exactly.

M: -- and you're going to make a bunch of enemies because you're going to lose the vote, anyway.

M1: Exactly. Hey, listen, if it looks like it's going to be 275 to 40, then there's no sense shooting your mouth off. You just vote your way, you become one of the 40, and you become known as a cranky guy and a tough guy to roll over, and then you earn respect that way.

M: Or you trade that vote for something that's (inaudible).

M1: Sure! Sure, sure. OK.

M: Go ahead, I'm --

M1: I think we'll move faster. All of this, I just wanted to make sure that everybody understands that I'm not eliminating people who are outside the Federation system. You look at point two. If you don't work through the Federation system, then work via the route of an agency in [00:58:00] town, or the synagogue in town, or the local chapter of a national organization. That's also how you become noticed in town. And you become the lay chairman of

the Hadassah Chapter outside the Federation system, and everybody in town who reads the local Jewish paper every Friday -- you have one in every town, don't you? Yes. They know your name. So working through the Federation system is the most straight-forward approach, but working on the periphery through other organizations -- and I repeat over and over again, it's too bad that the synagogue world is on the periphery of the Federation world, but that's how it's been for the past 100 years. Only now is it beginning [00:59:00] to be changed, thank goodness. And so work on the periphery will also bring you to the attention of the Federation power brokers. Now, number three is how to attract attention to yourself, and I just put down a few things. Who wants to read them? Shoot.

F: Attracting attention to yourself by, A, unexpected managery contributions --

M1: Unexpected. Some young person, 30-year-old lawyer just getting started, you know, pops up at the meeting and pledges a thousand bucks.

F: That gets your attention.

M1: That's nice. And you live with the guy. And if he has good luck, and business is good, and next year he increases it

to [01:00:00] two thousand bucks. Well, OK, then you're somebody that can be counted upon. Then you're an insider already.

M: You could even do that with a very small amount of money, when they're not expecting any contribution.

M1: Oh --

M: For example, if you read the newspaper that the agency, the Jewish Education, is announcing the March of the Living. There's no appeal, or anything. You send in a check for \$18 and say, "I read about that in an article, it sounds wonderful. It's very impressive, and I'd like to help." The fact that it's the only contribution that comes in also brings attention.

M1: That's why I put in the word "unexpected," absolutely right. Regardless of the level. Go ahead.

F: Any creative piece of work, camping teenage students to Israel, absorbing Russians, etc.

M1: Any really creative piece of work. There's a woman I know in New York who's very, very wealthy, but she doesn't want public attention. And her gifts are all very large and they're always made anonymously. [01:01:00] But the one place in which she decided that she wanted to set a model

of work was in absorbing Russians, we take into New York City every year 20, 25,000 Russians. There are already a quarter of a million Russian Jews living in New York City. We lose population to Florida and to the Southwest. We gain population from Kiev, St. Petersburg, and Khabarovsk. And what she does is, runs around in her station wagon to thrift shops buying furniture to put in the apartments of the new Russians coming in. And she wants attention about that matter, because she wants other people to do the same thing. So any creative piece of work. C?

F: Publishing articles in local [01:02:00] Jewish or general paper.

M1: Yeah, well you saw what Chuck did last night. That tells you about -- calling the paper and saying, "Hey, interview me, I got something I want to say." And they'll interview you. If it turns out that you're talking a lot of junk, they won't print it. So the reporter's wasted an hour. But suddenly, if you've got some ideas that you want to be brought out into the public arena, you have an organ. You have a vehicle.

F: You can also write letters to the editor, if you're --

M1: Not as noticeable. Not as noticeable.

F: I think there's an astonishing percentage of readership. At least --

M1: Well, OK --

F: At least if it's printed, if it's printed --

M: It reads -- I think you're absolutely right. But it somehow is legitimized if the paper has interviewed you, as opposed --

F: Oh, it's true. True.

M: -- as opposed to you writing to the paper --

F: But, I mean, it's another avenue. [01:03:00] I'm saying instead, if you can't get interviewed, I'm astonished having written letters to the editor when, it's, like, it's amazing how many people read it, and, "You actually wrote that?" You know.

M: Yeah, sure.

M1: And the last thing I put down, but it's not the last thing, I mean, these four items were just picking cherries off the tree. There are a dozen more ways of attracting attention to yourself. Yeah?

M: This may not be the time for this, but on D, I have this idea that -- well, I guess my question is, joining a

national organization strikes me as more bureaucracy than actually doing something for --

M1: Not joining. Achieving a position.

M: Right. I've become some position in the young leadership cabinet of the UJA.

M1: OK?

M: Is that a role that actually accomplishes something for the community? Or is that, you go to meetings where you talk about things with different programs, and then you have -- I mean, [01:04:00] I get the feeling its -- there's somebody in my community that is involved in all of these national organizations, and he goes to meetings on weekends, and he says they're great, and it's wonderful. But he doesn't -- I can't see him doing anything --

M1: Locally?

M: Locally.

M1: Yeah, well, OK. So he's a fancy boy, and he likes to deal with a lot of other fancy guys and woman, and comes back home and doesn't pull his weight in his own community. Do you know him? Is he a friend of yours?

M: He's very committed and he's in all these things, but I --

M1: Does he -- is he a friend of yours?

M: He's a friend of mine.

M1: Take him out for a glass of beer and say, "Hey, John, what the hell are you doing?" I mean, the UJA National Young Leadership cabinet is a very important instrument. Brings in 25, 35 million bucks a year. So it's a good piece of work. And you go to Omaha [01:05:00] to make a speech, or you go to Houston to make a speech, you don't lift a finger here at home -- oh come on, that's no way to work. And you have to mold him and shape him and convince him and cajole him, and seduce him, and show him that there's two sides of a coin. There's the large arena and there's the smaller arena back home. And he's got to work in both.

M: He's on your board, or --

M1: What?

M: I'm just asking if he's not on your local board.

M: He's part of the young leadership --

M: I know that, but he's not -- but the local Federation --

M: Yeah, the board. But the board doesn't do anything. I mean, the board is --

F: You need national -- you need people working on the national level as well.

M: Are there people here that are --

F: How do you have the time to do national and local?

M1: I didn't say to discourage him from working on the national young leadership cabinet. All I'm saying is the other side of the [01:06:00] coin. That guy is short-sided, and that guy is a little bit selfish.

F: Now wait a minute. I don't know what he's talking about, but I --

M1: Whoa, whoa, whoa, he hadn't had a --

M: Well, I was going to say I'm very active in a young leadership cabinet in UJA. And the idea, part of the idea of the cabinet is to be active in your local community. Much like Wexner is trying to create leadership in the local community. So I think that what -- perhaps in a situation that's the exception to the rule, rather than the rule. I think that being active in a national organization has its place -- well, on the other hand, we courage that (inaudible).

M: I guess my question, what is being involved in a national organization accomplish? I mean, what is the -- what is the -- if you devote 20 hours a year, 50 hours a year to that, why do that rather than do your [01:07:00] --

M1: Not "rather than." You keep saying "rather than," and he's --

M: I mean a finite amount of all the --

M1: No, there's no such thing as a finite amount, until you're dead. Then dead, there's no more time.

M: If you're giving a year, (inaudible).

M1: Up to that point, there's plenty of time.

M: -- certain amount of time to charitable causes. And so to - -

M1: To say -- I'm interrupting you, because you're making a theoretical case in what he's pointing out is, that they're rather rare. If you've got one, then you've got to work on him to show him that he is short-sided. He's like a horse with blinders on. He only works on a national level.

F: I want to take you to a cup of coffee. (laughter)
(inaudible).

M1: Go ahead.

M: (inaudible), I mean, I am chairing a regional outreach conference for three days in Los Angeles next January.

M1: Where?

M: In L.A. [01:08:00] And that's what I'm doing as my national activity, OK? I'm still involved in my local community,

however, for the next six months, I will spend the majority of my time working on this conference, which is for the whole Western region. But that's the way I think that -- and this, of course, you know, in doing this, this involves all the local communities in the West. So it kind of ties this together, it ties these two together, which is necessary.

M1: Yes?

F: What Gary could do is, instead of waiting for him to bring something to you, why don't you be proactive and go to him and say, "You know, Jake," whatever his name is, "I'm sure you get fantastic material on your national board. And could you help me and campaign the issue by sharing some of the material that you brought? And in that way, make it known to him that you -- his work is necessary in your [01:09:00] local community as well as on the national level. I mean, I would do that.

M1: Come on, it's a matter of tact. It's a question of tact. It's a question of salesmanship. It's a question of opening up his eyes to the fact that he's doing a partial job, it's pleading that you need him to work also at home. All combination of psychological moods and emotions, and

because this -- when I called him a "fancy boy" before, there are very few, very few of these guys who simply are looking to gratify their ego. And if they can't make a speech at a big meeting at home, but they can make a speech at a big meeting in another town, and they come away from that with a sense of ego gratification, and that's all they're in it for, then your question is right. What really good -- [01:10:00] what good are they accomplishing out on the national scene at the expense of what they're not doing on the local scene? But those cases are so rare. And it's almost no member of, I don't know how many there now on the young leadership cabinet --

M: There's about --

M1: Three hundred guys?

M: Two, three fifty.

M1: How many?

M: Two fifty.

M1: Two fifty. I started that young leadership cabinet in 1959, 1959. And I took the first three years, '60, '61 to shape it and shape it, and kept cutting people out, like culling the herd, and wound up in 1963 with 31 guys, having started with a pool of about 125. And in 1963, Governor Lehman of

New York came to a meeting, a national meeting of the UJA [01:11:00] at my request. And to this day, the Governor Lehman award is the highest award after 30 years, the highest award given by the young leadership cabinet. Started with 31 guys. I think they are five times larger than they should be today. I think it's a big, odd, wieldy organization. And if I were in a position of authority today, I would just cut it back.

M: Well, it is, the way it is right now --

M1: What's happening?

M: -- substantially, I mean --

M1: What's happening substantially?

M: It's going to be reduced by 40 percent within the next two years.

M1: That's fine. I'm beginning to have some influence.

(laughter)

M: You headed into really what my issue was, and that is for myself, forget this other person, I've got a finite amount of time I'm willing to spend on [01:12:00] charitable causes. Is it worthwhile -- is it good for me as a leader to invest X-number of hours to join the national young leadership cabinet? Or should I spend that time, rather

than at the national level do something in my local community, wherever the (inaudible)?

M1: (inaudible). Your local community. You do that for the next 15 years of your life. And if you do that and you reach the top in your local community, then out there on the national level, somebody's going to notice you and they're going to try to pluck you out of your local community out onto a national board, and that's the time to join it. If you say to me either-or, you putting it in an either-or situation just now, then home base first. Yes, sir?

M: Yeah, I think what people have been doing is either explicitly or implicitly putting forward actual cases that have happened to them, and [01:13:00] that's the helpful way to learn. So I've known you for a long time and I've been pain in the ass to you since I -- first day I met you. (laughter) So I did not break pattern here. As a politician, Hebert, could you give us an example, or some examples, of where politically you failed?

M1: Politically, what?

M: You've failed.

M1: Failed?

M: You screwed up. And if you could help do a post-mortem on that, it may also help us get some examples of a cautionary tale so that other folks don't go down that path. Because as far as -- I mean, as far as I'm concerned, if you look at who's done something that has changed American Jewry in the last 30 years, for better or worse, it's you. So I think people who do great things probably also sometimes make great mistakes.

M1: Sure.

M: And so if you feel comfortable talking about something that [01:14:00] if you had it to do over again, you'd do it in a different way, it might be instructive.

M1: Sure. I'll take the most recent one; that's the one that's most -- uppermost in my mind. The failure that I had with the executive committee -- I told you this yesterday.

M: Yes, you did.

F: Yeah, about getting the --

M: But you're not done yet?

M1: But I'm not done yet.

F: He's getting --

M: I want to know one where --

M1: Where I failed was very simple. I didn't do homework, I didn't count the noses before I walked into that meeting. I dealt only, solely, with the executive director, Rabbi Brian [Louri?] and the chairman, Mr. Richard Pearlstone. And I dealt with those two guys and told them what I wanted to [01:15:00] do, and they were a little bit afraid, because I was going to -- you know, I'm asking for a big thing. And they thought that I was stretching too far. And yet on the other hand, they wouldn't refuse me. So I made the mistake of going into the meeting without having talked to anybody else. What I should have done is looked at the 15 names on that list, picked out five of them whom I knew well, Mr. X in Baltimore and Mr. Y in Atlanta, and so on, so on, and I should have done my homework, taken an extra week, made a few trips around the country to these different places, talked with each of these guys for an hour, knew [01:16:00] then after an hour how they felt on this matter, knew that minimally, if I gained nothing else out of the extra day's labor, that at least I was warming them up so that they weren't hearing something cold for the first time. But I was impatient. And the impatience came because I was nervous, because I saw a major failure in the

first effort to launch the Israel experience, a major failure made by a major player, Mr. Charles Bronfman of Montreal, Canada, who dumped three or four million dollars and spent three years of time setting up 12 cities in which he wanted to try to get 12 cities in America to set up very strong, effective Israel experience programs for [01:17:00] the young people in their community, and once he had 12 communities under his belt, then he would load onto the UJA and the CJF the fact that they had to make a national movement. So he was doing his homework, but he failed. Why did he fail? Because the approach that he made was fundamentally incorrect, from a monetary point of view. He was trying to persuade -- he was using the word "marketing" and he was trying to persuade community X to sell a thousand kids, or families, at a rate of about five thousand bucks each to spend the money to send their kids, OK. He ran smack into middle class America whose average income is \$80,000 a year, and there is not [01:18:00] five thousand bucks left over of discretionary dough. And I told him from the beginning that trying to market this thing individually was wrong, that this program had to be based on total community funds, which have to be raised in a

continental manner from coast to coast by national approach, and not put the load on every individual family.

M: So how come there's so much participation in March of the Living, which costs the families almost that amount of money for barely two weeks?

M1: Yeah, because you're talking about what, eight hundred kids? Nine hundred kids? Six hundred kids? Twelve hundred kids? There have been what, three or four March of the Living things, and no ship that they've hired holds more than that. And that's it. So if you're talking about twelve hundred --

M: You're talking about the Exodus trip. The March of the Living has, this past year, had six thousand kids, a lot from Israel, [01:19:00] mostly, if I'm --

M1: Oh, well, then we're talking about two different things.

M: Yeah.

M1: I don't know what this March of the Living is. I just know the one on the ship, duplicating the experience --

M: No no no. March of the Living sends, I don't know, three or four thousand kids from the United States for less than two weeks in the middle of the school year at a cost of close

to five thousand dollars, without substantial community support, and I'm amazed --

M1: Well, so am I. But you know, it's obviously a kind of a phenomenon. It means it's unique.

F: It is unique. They go (inaudible), they march from (inaudible), they march from (inaudible) and they go, they end up in Israel. It's a very unique --

M: But I still agree with you. He always -- Bronfman was trying to do this for virtually every kid in the community.

M1: That's correct.

M: And that's not right.

M1: And I can only -- my problem is that -- I admire some unique effort. [01:20:00] But to me, it's not decisive of anything. It's not a methodology that can embrace. We're talking about a mass problem in the United States. And if there are twelve hundred kids, or six, a thousand kids who went and did it -- God bless them -- but that's not going to solve the problem.

M: So what should Bronfman have done that --

M1: What Bronfman should have done was bought the concept that this project must depend on communal funding. And he wouldn't buy that concept. OK. So that having failed caused

me to be nervous and impatient. And through that nervousness and impatience, I decided to try to go to the top in the UJA myself, putting my chip on the table, my reputation, my 20 years of experience [01:21:00] as the executive director, and my personal knowledge of most of the people around that table. And I knew them, and they knew me. So there was a little bit of -- maybe there was a little bit too much of braggadocio about it, maybe a little too much of -- I mean, you're asking me to make a confessional of ex-post-facto, I didn't --

M: It could run up for the high holidays. (laughter)

M1: OK. And I walked away from that meeting and I was -- I couldn't believe -- I didn't take it personally. I said to myself, my God, what a failure of comprehension! And furthermore, I laid another argument on the table, not merely the matter of the value of trying to set up a large program for Israel experience, [01:22:00] but I said, "Hey you guys, you guys are in a decline. This will pick you up out of the decline and this will re-establish the UJA as an instrument which meets historic challenges. And you'll raise more dough in the regular campaign if you raise a big pile of dough in this special campaign. And I would like to

help take you out of the decline, like to restore the original reputation that the UJA had, always a big, crisp and on the edge and meeting every challenge. And in most cities the campaign has been flat for two or three years now. So this will help pick up -- [01:23:00] so that's an additional byproduct value." I laid that on the table, which was a very confrontational thing to do, but because I was telling them in effect, hey, you guys have been failing for the last two or three years. Now come on, you've got to re-engineer yourself, and you're damned lucky that a new idea has come along, Israel experience. You did brilliantly with the operation Exodus on the Russians, but what are you going to do now? So all of a sudden, history has put a silver platter in front of you -- grab it! That's confrontational. That's telling them, hey, come on guys, you've been lazy, passive, sloppy, whatever. You pick up on another big success. And incidentally, you may have this marvelous effect over the course of the next 15, 20 years [01:24:00] where we can scoop up a million kids from America and get them over there and do that, perform the magic. When it didn't work, and I walked out of there, I didn't feel shattered, depressed, broken down. I just

couldn't understand their passivity. So now I'm slowing down, and I'm going to go at this in the conventional -- you asked for what remedial action do you take after you recognize that you had a failure. So I'm setting up a date with the new chairman personally, the lawyer from Chicago, Mr. Richard Wexler, and I will go to his office in Chicago and I will sit one on one with him. And I will say, "Richard, what's your [01:25:00] plan for the 1997 campaign?" And he will tell me. And I will point out to him that the 60-page brochure that I just got, which describes the plan for the next year's campaign -- you saw it?

M: Yeah.

M1: It's a piece of junk.

M: You got (inaudible).

M1: It's pathetic! It's full of the crazy generalizations -- there were no practical ideas in there, except whoa, we have to figure out a way to get to the masses. I mean, you know, holy Moses! And so I will do my best to line up some support, one by one by one.

M: If I could follow on with this and go back a little bit further in time, you're the UJA general chairman for 20 years, executive director for 20 years. You do things that

people haven't [01:26:00] done before, and that some of the things that you did then are still in place, and people would be working with young leadership cabinet, commissions to Israel (inaudible). Yeah, this is the part that scares the hell out of me about Jewish leadership -- when you left, for whatever reasons under whatever circumstances, you were -- your position was taken by a man who was your deputy, Irving Bernstein, right?

M1: Irving Bernstein, right.

M: I don't know if people in this room every met Irving Bernstein, but Irving was a man who blended in so well with his background, you couldn't tell where the background started and really ended. If ever there was a notion of a kind of gray, faceless bureaucrat, what's who Irving was. And I think, from what I can tell since then, he's in -- even this most recent story you have, I think there has been a succession of gray, faceless bureaucrats at the wheel of the Jewish community. And so the [01:27:00] thing that I wonder about and that I'm worried about is, even if you get lucky and a lot of this is just luck, I mean, you can refine people's skills, but in terms of the gift to be able to lead -- not everybody gets it equally. Even if you

should be lucky enough to find someone like that, and what you did for 20 years, how do we -- how can we be sure that in the long run that change is made and change lasts, even after that charismatic visionary leader moves away, retires, dies? Because it seems to me the change that is real change is organizational change, institutional change. Because institutions outlive individuals.

M1: Oh, yeah.

M: Yeah, they do.

M1: You'd be surprised. Or, they outlive individuals -- I didn't mean to interrupt you -- but that one sentence -- or they [01:28:00] may remain in existence, but they become as gray --

M: Yes.

M1: -- and as meaningless as their gray executives.

M: So why did you not have a successor who is a visionary and charismatic as well?

M1: And after he finished his eight years, why did we get another gray one? And after he finally got dumped after his seven years, we thought we had a live wire in Brian, who used to be the Federation executive in San Francisco for 17 years. And I pushed hard for him to get the job, and for

the first two or three years, he was, I think, quite strong, in certain ways maybe even brilliant. Spent a lot of his time, which his two predecessors had not done, trying to build [01:29:00] support in Israel, the kind of support that would come from Israel to invigorate the average kind of lay leader we've been having up to now, because it isn't only that we could not find brilliant, exciting, charismatic executive directors, we couldn't find brilliant, charismatic lay chairmen! That also went downhill, which Michael could have mentioned. And I don't know what the UJA's going to do now. The fact of the matter is, that in the entire professional community in the United States of America, there are about 160, I think approximately, professional executive directors in place in that many federated communities. There [01:30:00] are about 600 other non-federated communities, in which the campaigns have neither executive directors nor chairman, and it's a UJA field representative who travels around with his office in the trunk of his car and raises the money on Main Street in Lincoln, Nebraska, you know. I've been in Lincoln, Nebraska twice in my life. And that means I've been through the United States of America. I've been in Pascagoula,

Mississippi, and I don't want to tell you, there are 600 places where clusters of Jews live, and we've tried to approach them all. In the whole professional field, there isn't a single man in the United States of America today whom I would recommend to be the chief executive of the UJA. And that's saying something. You're smiling. Do you agree? Don't agree?

M: [01:31:00] I'm --

M1: You're not smiling.

M: No, but it's good. I got your attention anyway. What surprises me is not that you didn't find the right person, but that you didn't groom the right person, you didn't make the right person --

M1: Oh, come on!

M: Invigorate -- I mean --

M1: He was my deputy for eight years! He was great, he was the number two man. He was a marvelous number two man. He released energies, my energies. He was magnificent inside man --

M: As a number two man?

M1: -- number two. And to have made him number one was an incredible error. And it was an error which Mr. Max Fisher

is guilty for. It only takes one man. There's no election committee, there's no nominating committee. There's no process. Up at the top, what's done is, one guy picks the next guy. I pick the general chairman of the UJA every time, every year. Nominating committees.

M: Why didn't you pick your successor?

M: Why didn't you [01:32:00] pick your successor? Right, exactly.

F: He did.

F: He did.

F: He did. He turned out number two. He's now number one.

M1: No, I had a number two man. The reason that I left, Michael said, "For whatever reason I left the job" -- I left the job to move to Israel because I put my money where my mouth is, and I wanted in the course of my lifetime to live in Israel for a decade with my wife and my kids, and really experience everything which I believed in since the time I was a kid. And the time I picked to move was when, in my second marriage with Francine, we produced two children, and they were in the kindergarten and first grade living in New York City, and there's one good day school in New York

City, I'm pleading with you in San Diego to build

[01:33:00] a good day school and you're not doing it.

M: Forgive me, I think you're getting off the topic. The quest, the topic is, what does a visionary leader have to do to groom the quality leadership so that the institution survives in a creative, visual way?

M1: You have to find the man. It's like the needle in the haystack. You groom, groom, groom -- you cannot groom. It happens so rarely. Eight years ago, in the Wexner thing, which I started and worked myself all alone for two years, I then said, "I need help." And I looked and I looked and I looked, and I found Nathan [Laufer?]. And Nathan Laufer was working, at that time, I think for the --

F: (inaudible).

M1: No, what's the organization in Los Angeles of the --
[01:34:00] oh, come on. Wiesenthal. The Wiesenthal Center. The New York office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. And he was, I don't know what, 31 years old, 32 years old. Now, it's rare as hell to see in a 31 year person the qualities that -- will he gradually emerge?

F: It is tough.

M1: I mean, that's the kind of -- that's its own kind of vision. And for eight years, Nathan has been my number two man, and up the ladder he came, and gradually we made him the vice president and then we made him the senior vice president. And then at a certain point, about a year and a half ago, I decided that 77 years old was enough and I ought to become the president emeritus. And Nathan Laufer [01:35:00] was groomed. He knew every thought in my mind. He knew every nuance of psychology that I knew, that I used. He knew every historic example that I could teach him of what I'd been through in my whole life. It's a long time, eight years.

F: But you cannot teach charisma, which Nathan you got very lucky, because he (inaudible).

M1: But I saw in that boy when he was 31 years old. And so, yes, that's good luck. I could have picked somebody then as an assistant who would never have matured and grown, and everything I poured into him wouldn't have worked. So Michael's right. Part of it's luck.

M: But there's another part here that I want to follow up on. I mean, I realize the guys at the top have power. But I also realize that there are a lot of powerful people at the

top levels of things like that UJA, and goodness knows you would have had your young Turks behind you, the young leadership people. So I don't think it's just [01:36:00] Max Fisher alone picked a different guy than the one you wanted. The thing that's the paradox --

M1: Not the one I wanted. I didn't have a candidate --

M: OK, but that makes my question even more poignant. Because in getting Irving, people consciously chose someone, not you.

M1: And Michael, no people, we're not involved in that decision. People were not involved in it. It was a one-man decision.

M: But Herbert, I mean, I've been around enough to know that if one person picks something and there are enough people that you all could vault at --

M1: Oh, well, wait a minute --

M: -- it doesn't happen. So hear me out.

M1: OK.

M: I believe that you had to be the way you were and the way you are to make things happen. But I think there's also a point that people -- that along the way, if you do the right thing, and you do it the way that [01:37:00] it has

to be done, no matter how many beers you drink, while you might make yourself an alcoholic, you're also going to make enemies along the way, and that there are times that leadership calls for sharp elbows. And what I worry about is, here is this kind of notion that you can't make something happen unless you go through and by force of persistence, force of vision, force of personality -- you move things, but along the way there are people who are just individually, psychologically, threatened by that kind of personality and who will say, "You know folks, this is all very nice, and none of us is going to challenge him one on one. But what we're going to do is, we're going to hide in the trees. And as he rides past on that white horse, we're going to jump him. And we're going to make things kind of go back to normal." And that's where institutional, structural changes are more [01:38:00] important, because if you get those in place, even the gray little bureaucrats can't automatically undo them. They will outlast them.

M1: Michael, it sounds paranoid to me. There are no people in the trees waiting to ambush you. (pause in recording) -- the trick, because the people at the top have to be firm in their conviction and fight off the opposition. The

opposition is never hidden way up there. Opposition to Mr. Clinton is as public as can be, for every reason under the sun, including his wife's career in the law office and all the ladies who are suing, and the court of appeals saved him today. They are not going to let the Miss Jones business until after the election is all over.

M: You know who the opponents are, OK? But what you may not know is [Chauquette?] apparently said last night [01:39:00] that Peres didn't know, that the submarine strategy -- you know, exactly what those opponents are doing. And if you think they're just sitting there nursing their wounds and grouching, they're doing more than that.

M1: Well, but I'm not sure what you're saying. Because if you have at the top of your institution a bunch of people who are trying to sink the head man, then those people are negatively motivated, not positively motivated. And what the hell good are they going to do with whomever they seek to put in? So two years later, they'll fire that guy. It doesn't mean that the institution has grown stronger. If -- I have never in my entire public career run into this ambush. Ever. I ran into a problem once with the comptroller who wanted more power than I wanted to

[01:40:00] give him, and it became a showdown between him and me, and I took the matter to the people, Mr. William Rosenwald and Mr. Dewey Stone, who was the funder of the Weizman Institute in Israel, and let those two guys battle it out. And I never had a contract, so I always in my whole life, totally independent, and I said to both of them, "Hey, if you want to give the comptroller more power and I say no because I think it's going to be bad for the institution, you two guys decide, and whichever way you decide is fine by me. And if you decide that you're going to back him, I'm going tomorrow morning. You don't have to worry about me. I have no contract with you, I'm not going to be a problem to you." That's also a source of strength, believe me, it is. So my whole point is, the people whom [01:41:00] you can find, the professional people and the lay people at the top of the organization have to be possessive of all of the characteristics that you listed before. And if they're not, then the institution suffers. The trick is, where to find such people. Where to find such people. And the search for them is endless. The only possibility now in the whole professional field in the United States is to find a lay person who is willing to

become a professional, some good -- if we have a magnificent, marvelous, wonderful principal of a day school, there is no such one person in America. But if there were, [01:42:00] I would take him. I don't need the richest guy in the world. I don't need the hot-shot lawyer from the big Wall Street firm. I would anybody who is out there, who is willing to switch over and become the professional executive director, which means an employee, because the lay leader is the boss, and the board, the executive committee is the ultimate boss that's going to back up the chairman. And I have searched this country and found some men and women who were willing to leave their lay professions and come over to the executive directorship profession; civil service, let's call it that, the Jewish civil service. And searching, searching, searching, searching, there isn't a single solitary man in America, or woman in America [01:43:00] today whose name is emerging. Mr. Brian Louri's term finishes in August, next month. He said at the beginning that he would give five years and then he would return to San Francisco. And that's what he is doing. Job's open. There isn't one name that has emerged as a potential candidate. If the Council -- if the UJA and

the Council of Federations do, indeed, choose to commit double suicide by merging, which will become a fact, let's say, about five -- by five years from now, between the two of them, they will look -- they're looking now. Maybe the merger won't take place, so then the UJA alone has to go looking. I hope it doesn't take place. [01:44:00] But the search is so pathetic, you go to every headhunter firm in the country and -- one of the guys who's here and now teaching David [Edell?], David Edell used to be -- David Edell is a super civil servant. Great. Perfect example. He used to be the director of big gifts in the New York City UJA. And big gifts there is six figures and up. And so he worked there for 10 years, and quit to form his own headhunting firm, and he's making his living quite nicely as the director of that firm. And he's got dozens of requests from all over the country, from federations, from day schools looking for principals, from Israeli organizations, [Shaar Zedek?] hospital, Tel Aviv Museum -- everybody in the world needs -- I mean, the salaries in this profession are astronomical [01:45:00] because of the matter of supply and demand, there's so damned little supply and so much demand, and the salaries are obscene. He

offered a guy a job for a quarter of a million bucks a year, and he's trying to think over whether he wants it or not, you know? I said, it's crazy! I left in 1971 with my kids ready to go into kindergarten and first grade, because that was the time, in my opinion, to begin life with the family in Israel, and the kids would slide into the Israel public school system, and their Hebrew would then become automatic and natural. Good. That was my motive. I had a terrible fight with Golda. She said, "You can't do a damned thing living in Israel for us, compared to what you can do living in America." I said, "Golda, listen, if you don't want to give me a visa, I'll take you to court." [01:46:00] (laughter) Aside from that, it's my choice. It's my personal family, it's my life. Should I have stayed behind to find a successor? Now I'll tell you the real part of the story. I had made an arrangement with Fisher and company, the chairman to come after Fisher was a guy named Paul Zuckerman -- and all the details are not important -- but the arrangement was that I would run the UJA from the policy point of view from Israel, and that Irving would run the organization in New York as the COO, the Chief of Operations, the second, number two, position, and that the

input that I could make from Israel was intellectual [01:47:00] policymaking, shaping the next year's program, finding the great speakers to do it, taking care of every important visitor who came over from America to Israel, solicit every big gift from everybody who came over to Israel, grab them in the hotel and say, hey, come on, next year's campaign is getting started. And I built a job description for myself of what I would do in Israel as the CEO, and Irving would remain as the COO. OK. It didn't take six months for the guys in New York to say -- the guys being Fisher and Bernstein -- to say, "Hey, we don't want the nerve center of the UJA to be in Jerusalem, even though Friedman says he'll fly back here once every month. We want the nerve [01:48:00] center to be here in the United States." And I said, "If that's what you guys want, that's what you guys can have." And then they took the path of least resistance. There was no search at all. They simply promoted Irving. Just as simple as that. And then the slide began. Yeah?

M: Let me try to restate what I think Mike was trying to bring out, maybe in a less paranoid way.

M1: No, he's not paranoid --

M: Well, that was --

M1: The (inaudible) of it was.

M: Well, I think you accused him of that. What I find, what I think leaders find, is that trying to create change in a bureaucracy, you run into the people who have a vested inter-- maybe it's just a human nature --

M1: So you have to replace them. That's the whole point! Ten years from now, throw them out!

M: I think the point is that the [01:49:00] -- you know, use the government. The president changes, but the bureaucrats in Washington remain. And the leader of the Phoenix Federation, the lay leader changes, but the executive director remains. The 20 people in the office remain. The people that are in the committees remain. And the challenge from the leader's standpoint is trying to get a fairly significant group of people whose natural instinct is to maintain the status quo to follow a vision that the leader may have, but you can't prove it to them that it's going to be a good result. And maybe even from a more subconscious standpoint, you can't prove to them that that result's going to be beneficial to them individually.

M1: You don't have to prove a damned thing. You have to be willing to take the risk that you are right.

M: And how do you get these people who's natural [01:50:00] instinct is to maintain the status quo to take that risk with you?

M1: Well, if they're resisting you to such an extent that they're in your way, then you get rid of them!

M: But I think the point Michael was trying to make is, they don't resist in a --

M1: Oh, come on. I -- you know, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on. One of the essence of qualities of a leader is taking the risk, if in advance you have thought through so carefully what it is that you want to do, and you are so convinced that you are right, and you have accumulated a following on the way up that you stand there in the superior position, superior to your predecessor lay leader, who is usually your worst opponent, and your executive director, who should be your strongest ally.

[01:51:00] And if both of those human beings are in your way, then you get rid of both of them. The lay leader, you don't appoint any committees. You give them all honorary titles. You give them the great dinner with the gold watch.

You do everything -- but he's out. And the executive director, you simply fire. I mean, you cannot -- I cannot answer every single nuance of every kind of a scenario that you're going to write which will show how difficult it is to make change. I know that. Change is revolution! Revolution leaves dead bodies in its wake. And if you're not willing to face that, then get out of this game.

M: Coming at a point, it's sort of how you get there.

[01:52:00] And here's a thought that I've utilized, and I want very much if I could hear your reaction, which is basically, not to deprive people of autonomy, and to the extent that you want to get from point one to point ten, let people be deeply involved in peripheral decisions that ultimately how they decide really becomes irrelevant in the grand scheme of things --

M1: Very clever.

M: Because ultimately, they don't feel deprived of an opportunity to participate and control, and you know, looking through the forest through the trees, that how they decide what they do, they're comfortable, they're happy, they're not going to be an impediment because they don't feel eliminated, so to speak.

M1: If you've got the patience, and you've got the wisdom of the serpent's tongue, and you've got everything going for you and you can manage to do that --

M: But to me, that's the critical step, because once you do that, you're not going to have people confronting you as deeply on the serious issues, because they don't feel neutered, for want of a better term.

M1: [*Cholech avod?*].

M: Yeah.

M1: This is an extended version of what I say, take the guy out for [01:53:00] lunch and immobilize him. So you're talking about immobilizing 10 people, 15 people, 20 people, by explaining to them that they're part of the process, and you're not depriving them of their turf, and da da da da da da -- God bless you. I mean, that is probably a better kind of a leader, probably a better kind of a leader because it's less dictatorial than I am.

M: I think, to me, I mean I think in your action, I mean, I think dictatorship should be limited to issues that are really critical, when sort of viability analysis for an institution, or the major decisions put out the impact, then you simply have to be a despot; a polite despot, but a

despot at all costs. But by and large, for the 95 decisions out of 100 that don't have a great impact, to be a despot is overwhelmingly counterproductive in my experience, although again, I defer to wiser minds than mind.

M1: No, but the difference between is that 95 percent of the decisions that are being made, [01:54:00] you, the top man, don't have to make and shouldn't make.

F: Which I wanted to ask you about delegation.

M1: That's it.

F: Which is why I've been raising my hand, because I see you, you're a very powerful guy, very charismatic. Leadership is not done by committee. It is a person, it's a leader. How and where, what do you delegate, and whom to?

M1: You delegate almost everything that you can.

F: And you really delegate it, I find that so hard to believe.

M1: You wipe your table -- you wipe your table clear of all the junk.

F: Yeah?

M1: Yeah!

F: You give up control?

M1: I don't want control over whether the next mission should lead on Tuesday at 12:00, or on Wednesday at 14 -- what do

I care? All I know is I said that I want 250 people on that airplane. That's what I said. And the second thing I said was, [01:55:00] "If you have trouble, let me know. And let me know in time so that I can take some corrective measures. Otherwise, I'll meet you at the airport."

F: Right.

M1: Finished! Whatever you define as the policy decision that has to be made -- and by the way, every leader defines it differently, I understand that. So that's why I say whatever you decide are the policy decisions, those you make, and all of execution of the stuff, you just give to somebody else. Now, you have to have enough staff to do that, and you have to have enough lay leaders who are called vice chairmen, vice chairmen -- you've got to have 10 vice chairmen, among whom, by the way, there ought to be one or even two people who possibly are promotable to be chairman two years down the road. You ought to keep your [01:56:00] president in office for four years. You ought to keep your chairmen in office for four years. Not this business -- I'd go around the country I says, you're the pres-- you guys are chairmen for one year, and the next year the guy becomes the president. And two years later,

he's out and gone and he's playing golf, or he's making a million bucks in the stock market, and he'll take 10 cards for you because he's a good guy, and finished. That's crazy disposing of manpower, that's taken so many years to cultivate the --

M: Now you're bringing up a whole other problem. How do you -- if you really want the level of quality, can you also get the four-year commitment?

F: Right. That's all.

M: I mean, that's the problem with what you're saying.

M1: You don't make a four-year commitment, what, are you signing a contract with him? He could be dead in two months from now.

M: Yeah, but it's for --

M1: We want you to be the president. The term of office of the president is four years. We hope you'll live long enough to carry it out. [01:57:00]

M: If we don't (inaudible) you in the first six months. Yeah.

M1: I mean, you don't say, "Will you come and be the person for four years?" And he says, "Oh geez, my kids' got to go to college," and you start telling him all the stuff that's in his future -- don't make him crazy. You want him to be the

president. He knows what the bylaws are, the term of the presidency is four years. He may (inaudible) with you, then. And you may want to make a deal with him, and you say, "Look, OK, when is the boy going to college?" Uh-huh. Well look, that's three years down the pike, OK? So maybe we can settle this thing and we'll find a new president after the third year. After the second year. I mean, everything is negotiable. I don't mean to sound ferocious, but leadership requires you to have utter conviction, knowledge of what you're doing. Knowledge is your strongest ally. [01:58:00] A good group of people around you, lay and professional to work with, mollification of trouble makers by whatever process, delegation of all details and good health. I have a very thick skin. A very thick skin. Let me see -- yeah, there was one -- we've got five minutes. Would you turn to page 11, capital B up at the top of the page, "How to Build a Following Around Yourself." You've got to have it. In my life, I defined my following as being five people, [01:59:00] if the five people were powerful enough, that's all I felt I needed. OK. You may feel more comfortable if you've got a following of 20 people. It's up to you. Every personality is different. "How to Build a

Following Around Yourself" -- I want you to be sure to read those points very carefully, and point number four, point number four is the most important. Go back to number three, the second sentence. "Win people to your long-range platform." OK. Now, how are you going to do that? I have always found the way to do it is number four -- "Create a small discussion group" -- small, six to eight -- four couples, eight people. I hate the business of the men, and then the wives stay home, and they wait for the guy to come home from a meeting -- no. Bring the women in.

F: It's just sexist there.

M1: Create [02:00:00] a small discussion group, meet on a social basis in your home to brainstorm the new projects that you have in mind to do, and how to implement them. This is displaying vision and forming a following. And you can do that -- you know, in the synagogue world, where you got 900 members and something, and pretty soon you say, hey, look, I'm going to make *chavurah* over here of 10, 15 people, and we're going to meet socially. And pretty soon you could do 20 of those in the synagogue. Little clusters all over town. All that does is strengthen the synagogue life and create a little adult education. In terms of

institutional organization life, these small groups in which you test [02:01:00] out your new ideas, will consolidate into your strongest set of supporters. And among them, you will find people with enough talent that you are willing to promote in the system. And I didn't want us to get lost, that's why I wanted simply to bring it to your attention. Think that one through. OK, (inaudible), three minutes. Anybody -- yes, sir?

M: Yeah, I feel somewhat out of it as I did at last year's Wexner session, and then I chose to put my efforts in on the synagogue side, and I feel I'm going to the Federation conference. And I was wondering if perhaps sometime in the next few days you might devote a little bit of time to the current interplay between Federation and synagogues and perhaps your vision of the interplay between Federation [02:02:00] and synagogues.

M1: Sure. Just remind me, that's all, and I can do it. The thing is starting, it is starting in Boston. And I'll tell you what's happening there, and then I will show you how I think it's spreading. And then I have my own vision of what it should be.

M: In San Diego also (inaudible).

M1: Is it starting in San Diego? OK, good. That's good. OK,
ladies and gents, thank you. [02:02:29]

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