



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.

Series C: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE). 1988–2003.

Subseries 6: General Files, 1990–2000.

Box
47

Folder
14

Barth, Karen. Strategic Plan interviews, 1996-1997.

Pages from this file are restricted and are not available online. Please
contact the [American Jewish Archives](https://www.AmericanJewishArchives.org) for more information.

MEMO

To: Nessa, Barry, Gail, Alan, Josie, Dan
From: Karen Barth
Subject: List of Potential Interviewees
Date: September 5, 1996

Attached is a list of potential interviewees. Please put a 0, 1, 2, or 3 next to each name, 3 being the most important and 1 being the least important. You have fifteen of each, i.e. fifteen 1's, fifteen 2's, and fifteen 3's. The rest should be 0s. Also, you may add a few names if you think we have forgotten anyone really important.

I need this back by Tuesday.



Jewish Insiders

Hannan Alexander
Brad Artson
Isa Aron
Saul Berman
Michael Brooks
Norman Cohen
Steve M. Cohen
Steve P. Cohen
Rachel Cowan
Shelly Dorph
Joel Grishaver
Dan Gordis
Sam Heilman
Gerry Kaye
Barry Kosmin
Larry Kushner
Norman Lamm
Aaron Lansky
Sara Lee
Joe Lukinsky
Danny Margolis
Jonathan Omerman
Joe Reimer
Mike Rosenak
John Ruskay
Jonathan Sarna
J. J. Schachter
Israel Scheffler
Marvin Schick
Stuart Seltzer
Barry Shrage
David Silber/Devora
Steinmetz
Susan Snerr
Ira Stone
Marjorie Tabanken
Gordon Tucker
Isadore Twersky
Jack Ukeles
Ruth Weiss
Eric Yoffie
Joel Zaiman

Jewish Visionaries

Arnie Eisen
Leonard Fein
David Gordis
Art Green
Yitz Greenberg
David Hartman
Larry Hoffman
Paula Hyman
Irwin Kula
Michael Lerner
Reynold Levy
Roly Matalon
Zalman Schachter
Harold Schulweiss
Eli Wiesel

General Educators

Roland Barth
David K. Cohen
Donald Cohen
Linda Darling-
Hammond
Sharon Feiman-
Nemser
Michael Fuller
Howard Garden
Judith Warren
Little
Neal Postman
Seymour Sarason
Barbara Schneider
Lee Schulman
Ted Siser

Non-Jewish Visionaries

Peter Berger
Leon Botstein
Diana Eck
Ram Emanuel
Amatai Etziona
Stan Fisher
Ellen Futter
Daniel Goldman
Linda Lowenthal
Aaron Miller
Michael Waltzer
Rosalind Yallo

Lay Leaders

Charles Bronfman
Stu Isenstadt
Aryeh Rubin
Dan Shapiro
Michael Steinhardt
James Wolfenson

SECOND PHASE INTERVIEWS

Interviewees	Location	Interviewer(s)	Contact Person	Scheduled Date	Notes Complete
Zalman Schacter	CO	BWH/GZD	KAB		
Ruth Wisse	BO	KAB/SO	NR	12/31	
Tamara Cohen	NY	NR/KJ	NR	12/10	
Danny Gordis	LA	KAB	KAB	12/19	
Michael Steinhart	NY	KAB/ADH	KAB		
Irwin Kula	NY	KAB/SO	KAB		
Arthur Hertzberg	?	KAB/DNP	NR DNP		
Michael Brooks	MI	DNP/NR	DNP		
Janice Weinman Shorenstein	NY	KAB/ADH	KAB		
Reynold Levy	NY	KAB/BWH	BWH		
Joel Zaiman	BALT	KAB/BK	KAB	12/30	
Kyla Epstein	CL	DNP	DNP		
Sara Lee	LA	KAB	KAB	12/24	
Isa Aron	LA	KAB	KAB		
Joel Grishaver	LA	KAB	KAB		
Amy Gerstein	SF	KAB/DNP	DNP		
Lee Shulman	SF	GZD/KAB	GZD		
Michael Hammond	BO	KAB	KAB		
Hank Levin	SF	KAB/DNP	DNP		
Larry Cuban	SF	BWH/KAB	BWH		

P:/KAB/INTERVIEW

Strategic
PLAN

This is the interview list as agreed at our meeting. Please get back to Holly with the scheduled date as soon as it has been arranged

Interviewee	Location	Interviewer(s)	Contact Person	Scheduled Date	Notes Complete
Saul Berman	NY	Shlomo/Nessa	Shlomo	10/29/96	Complete
Peter Berger	BO	Dan	Dan	10/2/96	Complete
David K. Cohen	MI	Whole staff	Alan		
Steve M. Cohen	JR	Alan	Alan	Complete	Complete
Rachel Cowan	NY	Nessa/Barry	Barry	10/24/96	Complete
Arnie Eisen	SF	Nessa/Karen	Nessa	11/13/96	
Peter Geffen	NY	Karen	Karen	11/6/96	Complete
Ari Goldman	NY	Karen/Gail	Nessa	10/8/96	Complete
David Gordis	BO	Karen/Dan	Gail	10/2/96	
Art Green	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	10/3/96	Complete
Fran Jacobs	BO	Dan/Karen	Dan	Complete	Complete
Roger Kamanetz	NY	Dan/Nessa	Nessa	Complete	Complete
Michael Lerner	SF	Nessa/Bettina	Nessa	11/5/96	Complete
Roly Matalon	NY	Barry/Gail	Barry	11/20/96	
Sharon Feiman-Nemser	MI	Shlomo	Shlomo		
Joe Reimer	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	Complete	Complete
Mike Rosenak	JR	Alan	Alan	10/9/96	
John Ruskay	NY	Karen/Shlomo	Karen	Complete	Complete
Israel Scheffler	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	Complete	Complete
Marvin Schick	NY	Karen	Alan	11/6/96	Complete
Dan Shapiro	NY	Karen/Alan	Alan	Postponed	
Barry Shrage	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	Complete	Complete
Harold Shulweis	LA	Karen	Gail	10/23/96	Complete
Bernie Steinberg	BO	Dan/Karen	Dan	Complete	Complete
Marjorie Tabanken	LA	Karen	Karen	10/25/96	Complete

Interviewee	Location	Interviewer(s)	Contact Person	Scheduled Date	Notes Complete
Isadore Twersky	BO	Karen/Dan	Gail	after 10/31	
Michael Walzer	NJ	Dan/Nessa	Dan		
Stanley Horowitz	NY	Karen	Karen		
Dan Bader	WI	Karen	Karen	11/21	
Mort Mandel	CL	Karen	Karen	Complete	
Richard Shatten	CL	Dan	Dan		
Jon Woocher	NY	Shlomo/Karen	Karen	Complete	
John Colman	CH	Karen	Karen	Complete	
Lee M. Hendler	BT	Karen	Karen	Complete	Complete
Steve Hoffman	CL	Karen	Karen	Complete	
Chuck Ratner	CL	Karen	Karen	Complete	
Esther Leah Ritz	WI	Karen	Karen	Complete	
Charles Bronfman	TO	Karen/Alan	Karen		
Alberto Senderay	PA	Karen/Alan/Nessa	Karen	Complete	

This is the interview list as agreed at our meeting. Please get back to Holly with the scheduled date as soon as it has been arranged

Interviewee	Location	Interviewer(s)	Contact Person	Scheduled Date	Notes Complete
Saul Berman	NY	Shlomo/Nessa	Shlomo	10/29/96	
Peter Berger	BO	Dan	Dan	10/2/96	Complete
David K. Cohen	MI	Whole staff	Alan		
Steve M. Cohen	JR	Alan	Alan	Complete	Complete
Rachel Cowan	NY	Nessa/Barry	Barry	10/24/96	Complete
Arnie Eisen	SF	Nessa/Karen	Nessa	11/13/96	Complete
Peter Geffen	NY	Karen	Karen	11/6/96	Complete
Ari Goldman	NY	Karen/Gail	Nessa	10/8/96	Complete
David Gordis	BO	Karen/Dan	Gail	10/2/96	Complete
Art Green	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	10/3/96	Complete
Fran Jacobs	BO	Dan/Karen	Dan	Complete	Complete
Roger Kamanetz	NY	Dan/Nessa	Nessa	Complete	Complete
Michael Lerner	SF	Nessa/Bettina	Nessa	11/5/96	Complete
Roly Matalon	NY	Barry/Gail	Barry	11/20/96	Complete
Sharon Feiman-Nemser	MI	Karen/Gail	Gail		
Joe Reimer	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	Complete	Complete
Mike Rosenak	JR	Alan	Alan	10/9/96	
John Ruskay	NY	Karen/Shlomo	Karen	Complete	Complete
Israel Scheffler	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	Complete	Complete
Marvin Schick	NY	Karen	Alan	11/6/96	Complete
Dan Shapiro	NY	Karen/Alan	Alan	Postponed	
Barry Shrage	BO	Karen/Dan	Dan	Complete	Complete
Harold Shulweis	LA	Karen	Gail	10/23/96	Complete
Bernie Steinberg	BO	Dan/Karen	Dan	Complete	Complete
Marjorie Tabanken	LA	Karen	Karen	10/25/96	Complete

Interviewee	Location	Interviewer(s)	Contact Person	Scheduled Date	Notes Complete
Isadore Twersky	BO	Barry/Gail	Gail	after 10/31	
Michael Walzer	NJ	Dan/Nessa	Dan		
Stanley Horowitz	NY	Karen	Karen		
Dan Bader	WI	Karen	Karen	11/21	
Mort Mandel	CL	Karen	Karen	Complete	Complete
Richard Shatten	CL	Dan	Dan	Complete	Complete
Jon Woocher	NY	Shlomo/Karen	Karen	Complete	
John Colman	CH	Karen	Karen	Complete	Complete
Lee M. Hendler	BT	Karen	Karen	Complete	Complete
Steve Hoffman	CL	Karen	Karen	Complete	Complete
Chuck Ratner	CL	Karen	Karen	Complete	Complete
Esther Leah Ritz	WI	Karen	Karen	Complete	Complete
Charles Bronfman	TO	Karen/Alan	Karen	1/2	
Alberto Senderay	PA	Karen/Alan/Nessa	Karen	Complete	

CRITICAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN STRATEGIC PLANNING INTERVIEWS

Interviewees had a wealth of ideas about how to enhance the vitality of American Jewish life and Jewish education. Some of the critical emphases and issues are summarized below.

1. A vision for the future

When asked what a more vital Jewish community of the future would look like, interviewees pointed in varied directions. Some emphasized the centrality of learning to Jewish life across different stages of the life-cycle. Others painted a community which offered substantially richer opportunities than are currently available for seekers in quest of a richer spiritual life that speaks to the need for meaning and transcendence. Others imagined an inclusive community in which various groups now pushed to the margins of Jewish life -- e.g. the gay community, secular Jews -- are embraced and allowed to enrich Jewish cultural life. Another pointed to a world in which compelling but, for many, yet-to-be-devised intellectual frameworks serve to integrate modern sensibilities and beliefs with central Jewish categories, thus ending the split in the contemporary Jewish consciousness. Another identified a future in which, informed by Jewish texts and sensibilities, Jews actively interpreted and addressed the critical moral, ecological and social challenges presented by contemporary life. Finally, while some imagined a Jewish future in which Judaism's distinctive religious insights and practices are at the center of Jewish life, and felt that it was only as such that Judaism would prove strong, others aspired to a Jewish community that featured a variety of diverse streams, both religious and secular.

2. Is there a crisis and, if so, what can we do about it? Where we now are: the optimism/pessimism continuum.

Is there a crisis? While many feel that Jewish cultural life is in a state of disrepair (as witnessed by demographic data), at least one person suggested that there is no "problem" requiring revitalization. The so-called problem is only a problem for traditional "establishment" institutions that are losing their social support; at the same time as this is happening, other forms of Jewish life, e.g. those associated with the Jewish Renewal movement are spontaneously coming into being and engaging the human energies of many.

Can the demographic crisis be meaningfully addressed? One person expressed the view that we are naive to think that the majority of American Jews can be engaged in Jewish life under modern conditions. At the other extreme, another expressed the view that we already possess the knowledge needed to develop educational institutions capable of revitalizing American Jewish life. In between are many who are cautiously optimistic and who urge the need for: new ideas about the nature and significance of Jewish life; new institutional forms (both communal and educational); new target populations; and higher quality leadership and other personnel.

3. Leadership

A number of individuals felt that the key to transformational change is dynamic leadership. Different kinds of leaders emerged as critical for different interviewees.

For some, high-quality, wealthy lay leaders seemed critical. A concern was expressed that there are not many young leaders of this kind on the horizon.

Others emphasized a critical need for "change-experts" -- for change agents and consultants who could help Jewish institutions develop and implement their change-agendas.

Others focused on charismatic congregational rabbis and emphasized the need to reconstruct rabbinic education so that rabbis could more readily meet the most critical challenges before them. Though there was a general sense that the roles of rabbis needed to be reconceptualized, different ideas were expressed about this reconceptualization. Ideas mentioned included: rabbi as teacher (especially of adults); rabbi as spiritual guide; and rabbi as community organizer.

4. Institutions

To repair or not to repair. Some interviewees were confident that, with appropriate inputs, existing institutions (for example, synagogues and schools) could be meaningfully repaired and urged investment in these primary institutions. Synagogues, day schools, and congregational schools were identified as arenas in which meaningful intervention is possible and desirable; what stands in the way is not inability but a failure of communal energy and will. It was suggested that outreach efforts that bring people into these existing institutions are unlikely to bear fruit if the institutions do not have something meaningful to offer those who walk in the door; there needs to be a message and responsiveness to people's needs. At the same time, some interviewees were skeptical that existing institutions could be transformed into adequate institutions for the American Jewish community. For example, the view was expressed that synagogues are so pathological as to be beyond repair, and a concern was expressed that by their very nature they seem always far behind and therefore unresponsive to the needs and concerns of their constituencies.

New institutional forms. Skeptics concerning the prognosis for existing institutional types, as well as some of their supporters, urged the development of new kinds of institutions that might more adequately address contemporary needs. New institutional forms that were proposed included: "virtual" universities, which while encouraging periodic face-to-face interaction, take advantage of interactive technologies like e-mail and video-conferencing; meditation centers; retreat centers; educational institutions organized around and lodged in familial-settings; after-school programs, very different from supplemental programs, that meet parents' needs for after-school day care; internally

pluralistic institutions that meaningfully bring together individuals representing very different Jewish outlooks and ways of life; institutions in which the distinctive ways of each group would be honored but in which opportunities for meaningful engagement across group lines would be written into the pattern of organization.

5. Achieving high-quality institutions

Critical ingredients. One set of discussions focuses on the ingredients of such institutions. Different emphases were found in the interviews. Some mentioned the need for strong, charismatic leadership (of the Marshall Meyer variety). Others noted that existing institutions typically have no compelling message that will engage people, and that they are unlikely to be vital unless animated by powerful ideas. Still others noted that we tend to build our institutions without attention to the felt-needs and rhythms of our potential constituencies, expecting them to adapt to us rather than the other way around; attention and responsiveness to the needs of relevant constituencies in designing institutional life is essential.

Design and/or fostering natural growth. Some interviewees felt that we now know - or can come to know - a lot about the character of strong Jewish institutions, and that therefore the job of a responsible Jewish community is to encourage, guide, and support the development of these institutions in a systematic way. Others (often skeptical of our ability to design institutions that are attuned to "the needs of the customer") emphasized the desirability of nurturing a cultural context that encouraged and supported grass-roots efforts of various kinds -- young shoots, some of which might evolve into tomorrow's powerful oaks.

6. Powerful ideas

While some interviewees emphasized the need for new institutional forms and/or new target-populations, others emphasized the spiritual/intellectual poverty of contemporary Jewish life and articulated a need for Jewish ideas that would prove compelling to contemporary American Jews. Jewish institutions -- new or old, explicitly educational or not -- are unlikely to prove engaging unless they are suffused with powerful Jewish ideas, ideas that infuse with rich meaning the acts and activities we associate with Jewish life.

One person ventured the idea that the critical problem we face is that our understandings of such terms as "prayer," "God," and "mitzvah" presuppose a world-view that is no longer credible to many contemporary Jews; therefore the challenge is to develop a new intellectual framework that will give such terms a meaning that can more readily be identified with.

One interviewee suggested that there is a need for a kind of Aspen Institute in American Jewish life -- an institution that encourages our most powerful and creative minds to address our deepest questions and that feeds the American Jewish landscape with a stream of rich ideas that enrich and challenge our understandings of ourselves as Jews.

Other interviewees emphasized the importance of ensuring greater access to powerful Jewish ideas -- for example, through a journal, or by making sure that rabbinical students routinely have opportunities to study under the most profound contemporary thinkers (so that they can be influenced in the ways that another generation of rabbis was influenced by thinkers like Heschel and Soloveitchik).

7. Target-populations

How inclusive should the community be? There are various echoes of the in-reach/out-reach debate in the interview data. Some interviewees expressed the view that the Jewish community needed to be more inclusive than it now is -- finding ways to be more welcoming and engaging to women, to gays and lesbians, to secular Jews, and to others who typically feel marginalized by, and sometimes alienated from, American Jewish life. It was suggested that not only does the Jewish community have the obligation to reach out to such groups on terms that are welcoming and affirming, but that such groups have the potential to make important contributions to the quality of Jewish life. Another group thought to be underserved by the community today was identified as "seekers" -- that is, individuals in quest of religious meaning and transcendent experiences; typically, very little provision is made for them in the organization of Jewish life.

Target-populations for education. While some interviewees explicitly resisted (as "magic bullet" thinking) the notion that Jewish educational interventions should focus on a particular target-population, others suggested that given scarce dollars and human resources, it would be strategically wise to focus on special target-populations. While those who took this position shared the view that we have to stop thinking of Jewish education as something that happens between the ages of 5 and Bar/Bat Mitzvah, there were very different views expressed concerning what special target-populations needed the lion's share of attention:

a. Adult education: Some believed that once adults have become powerfully engaged in Jewish learning, the education of their children follows in due course.

b. Adolescence: The view was expressed that this is the stage in which adult identities get shaped and that therefore Jewish education needs to be at its most serious at this stage of the life-cycle.

c. Early childhood and family education: Not only was early childhood viewed by some as a critical stage in human development; it was also suggested that at this stage it would be possible to draw the whole family into the orbit of education, giving rise to meaningful forms of adult education and family education.

d. The secular community: Some complained about the absence of adequate educational resources being directed at America's secular Jews, even though many

American Jews fall into this category. It was urged that this group not be written off, and that meaningful ways be found to engage them.

8. Improving Jewish education

A variety of ideas were expressed in the interviews concerning the best way to improve the quality of Jewish education. Below are some of the central ideas that were expressed:

Improve the quality of Jewish educators. Consistent with CIJE's emphasis on personnel, many interviewees spoke to the importance of improving the quality of Jewish educators. Some spoke to the desirability of attracting and training new populations of Jews for whom the work of educating would represent a sacred act laden with personal significance; Jews-by-choice, post-career individuals, and Russian immigrants were offered as examples. Others spoke to the need of professionalizing the field of Jewish education via licensing, standards, and strong pre-service and in-service education. Still others spoke to the need to facilitate the personal religious growth of educators working in schools, camps and other settings via retreats and sabbaticals.

Strengthen the content of Jewish education. a) Some urged that progress depends on moving away from an emphasis on what to do and how to do it and towards an emphasis on the "whys" of Jewish life, the powerful ideas or insights that underlie Jewish practices. Put differently, Jewish educating institutions need to be suffused with compelling Jewish ideas. b) Others urged that Jewish educational environments need to be welcoming and responsive to the genuine questions and the honest doubts of learners; otherwise, they will continue to be alienating institutions. c) While several individuals mentioned the need to make "text" central to Jewish education, more than one urged that we adopt a broad understanding of "text," one that includes works of art which gave the power to engage contemporary seekers.

Relationship between experience and education. While implicit in many comments was the suggestion that access, via education, to powerful ideas about Jewish life would transform otherwise empty Jewish practices into meaningful experiences, a very different view was also expressed: it was suggested that the hunger for Jewish education only arises after one has already had powerful Jewish experiences. It is such experiences that catalyze the desire to learn. As an example, it was suggested that, for many individuals, it is only after they have been deeply moved by a religious service (such as those at Bnai Jeshurun in New York) that they develop a desire to engage in systematic study. This suggests that facilitating powerful Jewish experiences should be the starting-point to Jewish education.

Emphasize the non-academic quality of Jewish learning. It was suggested that the Jewish learning we need to foster differs from the academic Jewish learning found in universities; it needs to engage the heart, to speak to the living concerns of the learner.

Improved institutional settings. While some felt that the supplemental school was a

dead-end, at least one interviewee felt that, suitably supported and enriched, it could be a powerful educating institution: not the quantity, but the quality of Jewish education is decisive, it was suggested. The possibility of substantially improving day schools was also mentioned by some. Others emphasized the need for other kinds of educational settings, e.g., those identified as "informal" or familial settings.

Religion and/or peoplehood. While some felt that Jewish religious ideas need to be at the heart of any Jewish renaissance, others felt that peoplehood -- the sense of ourselves as an enduring people with a multiplicity of outlooks, religious and secular -- needs to be at the center of Jewish education.

9. Eradicating financial barriers to quality education

Developing an army of educators that are up to the challenge of Jewish education is a costly endeavor, requiring substantial investments in salaries and both pre-service and in-service education. In addition, the view was expressed that the absence of money should not be an obstacle to a quality Jewish education; the community must ensure that all children have the opportunity for a quality education, regardless of their financial resources.



QUESTIONS ON THE SYSTEM OF JEWISH EDUCATION IN "EMERALD CITY"

1. Very generally, what is the place of education/learning in the life of the community? How is the place of education in the life of the community discernable in

- The landscape of institutions
- Funding allocation patterns
- The day-to-day life of children, families, and adults in the community?

2. What is the state of Jewish literacy and sensibility?

3. How are the aims of Jewish education understood?

4. What activities count as educational? Which of these are most important?

5. What are the principal arenas - formal and informal, self-consciously educational or not - in which Jewish enculturation/learning is going on?

6. What role is assigned to formal educating institutions in sustaining and enriching the community as a whole and its individual members? What roles are not assigned to explicitly educating institutions?

7. What are the major contexts in which children are educated to become American Jews (e.g. Early Childhood programs, Day Schools, Congregationally-based educational programs, camps, Israel-experiences, etc.)? What is the relative importance of each.

8. If "life-long Jewish learning" is the ideal, what would this look like? What constituencies are engaged in Jewish learning? What kind of learning is it? What are the settings? What are the rewards and outcomes for the participants?

9. If one compared educating institutions with the present, what would the major differences be in respect of:

- Organizational design
- Funding
- Goals

- Content
- Teaching methods
- Outcomes

10. Who are the educators? What skills, training, experience, attitudes, qualities of heart and mind, bodies of knowledge, commitments, etc. do they bring to their work?

11. How does the role of, say, "teacher" or "educational director", or "principal", or "rabbi", or "camp counselor" differ from their roles today? What educational roles are present that are not present in our own world?

12. What informal and formal opportunities, settings, incentives and settings are available to American Jews to grow into first-rate Jewish educators -- or for continuing growth once they have entered the field?

13. Relative to other fields that attract American Jews, what kinds of human rewards, remuneration, benefits, professional communities, and career-paths are available to those who choose Jewish education as their life's work?

14. What communal policies, resources, programs, and organizations are in place to ensure that Jewish education continues a) to be of superb quality, b) to enjoy widespread communal support and interest, c) to enable American Jews of different kinds to find the strongest and most appropriate education possible, and d) to attract, prepare, and retain the strongest possible educational leaders and educators?

15. Describe one or two education institutions or educational settings, that figure prominently in your view. Say as much as you can about who is learning (and why), about the pedagogy and content of the learning, about the background and approach of the educators, and about the outcomes of the experience.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

1. (Introduce yourself and explain CIJE if necessary.)
2. (explain reason for interview even if you have already done so when setting up the interview.)

We are engaged in a planning process at CIJE and as part of that process we are speaking to people who we believe to have interesting perspectives on: (pick one)

- ◆ Vision of the future for Jews in North America
- ◆ Perspective on Jewish education in North America
- ◆ Perspective on how lessons we learn from general education might apply in the arena of Jewish education
- ◆ Perspective on the context in which the Jewish people of North America find themselves.

Today we would like to speak to you about : (pick one, two or three topics)

Your vision for a revitalized Jewish community

- ◆ Your vision for an education system of Jewish education
- ◆ What can be learned from examples of successful change in the Jewish community
- ◆ What can be learned from examples of successful change in general education
- ◆ Social trends relevant to the problem of Jewish continuity

(Plan ahead of time which topics to discuss and what order.)

VISION FOR A REVITALIZED JEWISH COMMUNITY

1. If so called “continuity” efforts are successful, in what ways would you like see the Jewish community be different in 25 years.
2. If the person is having trouble with the open-ended question ask about whichever 2 or 3 themes of these seem appropriate:
 - Diversity/pluralism
 - Vibrancy
 - Community
 - Commitment
 - Jewish meaning
 - Moral passion
 - Involvement with Israel
 - Centrality of Jewish learning
 - Jewish literacy
 - Jewish values
 - Leadership
 - Innovation
 - Creative action
 - Jewish identity
3. If you had to pick one thing, what would you say is the most important thing that has to change to get from here to there?
4. What do you see as the role of education in this vision of the future?

CHANGE PROCESS IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

1. What are some examples you have seen of successful, transformational change within the Jewish Community?
2. Are there any lessons or rules-of-thumb that apply to creating change in the Jewish Community?
3. Where does change leadership usually come from? Can this leadership be cultivated or does it need to emerge?
4. In your experience or opinion, which are effective change methods:
 - Visioning processes
 - Top-down planning
 - Bottom-up experimentation
 - Networks of like institutions
 - Publications
 - Training programs
 - Outside change facilitators
 - Other?
5. At what level do you think changes needs to take place-e.g. communities, institution; national?
6. What is the role of lay leadership in change programs? What does it take to cultivate and motivate such leadership?
7. What are the major obstacles to change? How could these be overcome? ✓

LESSONS LEARNED FROM GENERAL EDUCATION

1. What state-of-the-art ideas in general education should we be incorporating into our future vision for the system of Jewish education.
2. Are there important ideas we should be considering in the area of :
 - Family involvement
 - Teaching methodologies
 - Evaluation
 - Professional development
 - Use of technology
3. What can be learned from successful change programs in general education that could help us to create change in Jewish education?

VISION OF AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1. What would it mean to have a true culture of learning in the Jewish community? ✓
2. If you were the "Czar" of education in the community and if money were not an issue, what kind of system would you design for Jewish education. ✓
 - Type of institutions/organization
 - Funding
 - Goals
 - Content
 - Teaching methods
 - Outcomes
3. What are the principal arenas-formal and informal, self-consciously educational or not-in which Jewish enculturation/learning is going on?
4. If "life-long Jewish learning" is the ideal, what would this look like? What constituencies are engaged in Jewish learning? What kind of learning is it? Where are the settings? What are the rewards and outcomes for the participants?
5. Who are the educators? What skills, training, experience, attitudes, qualities of heart and mind, bodies of knowledge, commitments, etc. do they bring to their work? ✓
6. How does the role of, say "Teacher" or "Educational Director," or "Principal" or "Rabbi", or "Camp Counselor" differ from their roles today? What educational roles are present that are not present in our own world?
7. What informal and formal opportunities settings, incentives and settings are available to American Jews to grow into first-rate Jewish educators-- or for continuing growth once they have entered the field?
8. Relative to other fields that attract American Jews, what kinds of human rewards, remuneration, benefits, professional communities, and career-paths are available to those who choose Jewish Education as their life's work?
9. What communal policies, resources, programs, and organizations are in place to ensure that Jewish education continues a) to be of superb quality, b) to enjoy widespread communal support and interest, c) to enable American Jews of different kinds to find the strongest and most appropriate education possible, and d) to attract, prepare, and retain the strongest possible educational leaders and educators.
10. Describe one or two education institutions or educational settings, that figure prominently in your view. Say as much as you can about who is learning (and why), about the pedagogy and content of the learning, about the background and approach of the educators, and about the outcomes of the experience. ✓

3. What self understanding is necessary for such revitalization.
Religious/ethnic/national?
4. Are there specific examples of other faith/ethnic communities that have been revitalized at the micro of macro level? What levers have been used?
5. What do you see as the way back in for people who are separated from their faith communities?
6. What contemporary social trends will support efforts at revitalization.
7. In your view what would be the most important thing the American Jewish community could do to strengthen itself.
8. If you were advising the American Jewish community, how would you frame the problem and how would you approach it..



4. Can you describe an example in general education where real fundamental change was achieved:
 - What was achieved?
 - Who were the change agents?
 - How did the change process work?
 - What were the obstacles? How were they overcome?
5. At what level do you think change needs to take place-e.g. communities, institution; national?
6. What role of lay leadership in change programs? What does it take to cultivate and motivate such leadership?
7. What are the major obstacles to change? What does it take to cultivate and motivate such leadership?

LESSONS LEARNED FROM GENERAL EDUCATION

1. What state-of-the-art ideas in general education should we be incorporating into our future vision for the system of Jewish education.
2. Are there important ideas we should be considering in the area for :
 - Family involvement
 - Teaching methodologies
 - Evaluation
 - Professional development
 - Use of technology
3. What can be learned from successful change programs in general education that could help us to create change in Jewish Education?
4. Can you describe an example in general education where real fundamental change was achieved:
 - What was achieved?
 - Who were the change agents?
 - How did the change process work?
 - What were the obstacles? How were they overcome?

SOCIAL TRENDS RELEVANT TO THE PROBLEM OF JEWISH CONTINUITY

1. What broad social trends have undercut the vitality of Jewish communities in the modern world?
2. What are the prospects for a revitalized Jewish community.

INTERVIEW NOTES

Interviewee: David Ackerman

Interviewer: Karen Barth

Date: October 1996

Location: Los Angeles

HIS BACKGROUND

- This is his third year at UJ
- His background is in social science research -- school is really a social setting
- He was Education Director of a big complex of schools and camps for 8 years
- MA in Education

UJ PROGRAM

- Was originally a joint program of JTS and BJE--started as teacher training
- This incarnation is 10 years old
- It is a generic program. Not focused on school, camp, etc-- not even solely conservative
- A 2-year, full-time program
- Three courses of study. Judaica, Teaching & Learning, Administration
- Students come with miserable backgrounds