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MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.

Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.

Subseries 2: Dan Pekarsky, 1981-2011, undated.

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78

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3

Lead Communities Project. Lay leadership forums, 1997.

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[American Jewish Archives](http://AmericanJewishArchives.org) website.

LAY LEADERSHIP FORUM:
Questions for Board Meeting

1. • What should be objectives for the Forum?
 - What would success look like?
2. • Should this be a lay or lay/professional conference?
3. • What should be our strategy for planning the Forum?
 - Who should be involved in the planning?
 - Who do we want to attend?
 - How will we motivate these people to attend?
 - Who are the partners we want to invite?
4. • What characteristics should this event have to impact lay leadership support and involvement in Jewish education?
 - Are there any models of conferences with these characteristics?
5. • What kind of papers and research should we commission for the Forum?
 - Should we do a piece of research on lay leaders to present at the Forum?
6. • How should the Forum be announced?
 - What message?
 - What media?
 - To whom should it be announced?

MEMO

To: Karen, Cippi, Gail, Ellen, Dan ✓
From: Nessa
Subject: Lay leadership: Background
Date: October 29, 1997

Attached are the notes from my September meeting with Lee Hendler, which I thought would interest you as we think about the Forum and JEWEL.

Meeting with Lee Hendler: 9/16/97

Nessa Rapoport

Some principles and observations about lay leadership development and education:

Whatever the audience--lay or professional--leadership education is about teaching and learning. The same laws apply: Thus, frontal teaching, "imparting facts," is not going to be as effective as engaging the learner and empowering him/her.

Lay leadership development must defy the current "class system," in which the more national the organization, the more prestigious the volunteer position is perceived to be. This model is empty; the real work is done locally, where you know the people and they know you--and you're accountable.

Lay leadership development for Jewish education is about creating a culture. Judaism is not the sole province of rabbis and professionals. Confident rabbis/professionals find the engagement of lay leaders a fulfillment of their vision, not a challenge to it. The text and its pertinence to the life and work of the lay leader need to be seamless, integrated.

Leadership is not about "being nice." It depends on the magic of chemistry, culture, energy and talent. Thus the job in lay leadership development is to identify individuals and develop them deliberately. It's not an "open house."

Money offers the power to influence people, and there's no way around that reality. It's not sufficient but it's necessary, because the power it confers is necessary to effect real change. We need to understand better how power works in the Jewish community. And we need models of women leaders with a range of styles and ways of doing things.

LH's generation: We need to understand how hurt they've been by Jewish life, their incredible vulnerability, and how many stumbling blocks have been put in their way. We should look for independent funders, like those at the Jewish Funders Network. They may feel disaffected, but they have also inherited money designated for Jewish sources. They have the resources, the competence, and the very high levels of secular education to be in a position to make a difference.

The quest for meaning, no matter how superficial its manifestations may appear, is real. We are the first generation to grow up on a truly secular diet, and it's not very sustaining. The leaders in their 60s and 70s--our parents--found the drama of saving Jews sufficient. The organizations that embodied that drama, like the federations, worked for them. We've inherited the idea that there must be Jews in the world--but why?

The generation of the 20s and 30s seems radically different. Not vacuous, as is often claimed, but marketing is in their bones. Their language is visual and quick, which makes the wordiness of Judaism a problem. They seem more cynical in some ways, but with a serious commitment to social action; they feel poverty, illiteracy, and the destruction of the environment keenly.

Criteria for Lay Leadership:

1. Power/resources. See above.

2. Talent.

3. A Range of Models.

4. Desire for Jewish knowledge and desire to lead out of that knowledge.

5. Experience. It counts: In the doing, in the trenches, putting in the hours is the way you learn. Trying to make something happen--running a program, serving on a board, running a business. There is no substitute for the seasoning that results from real time and effort, from making mistakes and learning from them. To bring in people who have never had experience is going to slow the learning curve.