

## Kenissa Konnections July 2021

### Message from Rabbi Sid

Just before the last Shmita year (2013) I had the privilege of speaking at and attending the first ever Jewish Intentional Communities Conference (JICC) at the Pearlstone Retreat Center outside of Baltimore, MD. Some 200, mostly young, leaders came to that conference to dream together what an emerging movement of new communities could look like. A few Israelis came as well, veterans of the well-established Israeli movement of intentional communities (AKA *Garanim*).



Many things were inspired by this inaugural JICC. One of them was *Kenissa*. Another one was Hakhel, the Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator. Hakhel started in 2014, a year earlier than *Kenissa*. The fact that both were housed at Hazon made it natural that Aharon Ariel Lavi, Hakhel's director, and I would become colleagues, thought partners and good friends. There is some overlap between *Kenissa* Network organizations and the organizations in Hakhel. Because Aharon is based in Israel, it was natural that Hakhel took on a strong Israel focus, sponsoring annual trips to Israel for its member organizations. In 2018, Hakhel partnered with the Israeli Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and expanded globally as well.

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**Kenissa Network Meet-Up**  
**Tuesday, July 20th at 2 pm (Eastern)**

Remember the excitement of meeting peers also creating new models of Jewish life and community when you attended a National *Kenissa* gathering? Join the Meet-Up with Rabbi Sid. Each participant will provide an update of their organization and their plans for the future. Meet colleagues from across the country doing cool things like you.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88275908948?pwd=cUpteXFOMDFla055RjZlN3RlUnVTdz09>  
 Meeting ID: 882 7590 8948  
 Passcode: 150338

### Build and Raise

Building relationships to help raise more money

It's July. Time for some summer fun-vacations, beach, rest, sun, traveling. I hate to spoil the party but let me ask you a question: Have you started working on your year-end fundraising appeal yet? If not, better get moving.

Although there's online donations, giving via text, Facebook fundraisers and other methods, direct mail is still king. Your organization's end-of-year appeal takes on greater importance not only for your 2021 budget but can help propel you forward in 2022 and beyond.

Crafting a successful direct mail appeal is an art form. [There are numerous fallacies out there](#) that some bosses still believe in and can sink your campaign. Two of the most common:

- **Writing for you and not the donor.** Your job is to produce copy that a donor can read, learn about a problem in the community and easily understand how their donation can solve the problem. Avoid using jargon that might be common around the office but would confuse the average reader. Your potential donors will throw away the appeal. Remember KISS: Keep It Simple Silly! Short paragraphs. Sixth grade level writing. Bold text where appropriate. Make it easy for supporters to skim and take action.
- **Committees are where good fundraising goes to die.** When too many people are involved in the copywriting and editing, the project will take forever and your original vision for the appeal will probably end up on the cutting room floor. Minimize the people involved in the overall process.

### Braver Leadership

Lead wiser,  
Lead braver

Have your supervisees been surprised and defensive when you've raised performance issues? In *Harvard Business Review's* "The Power of Listening in Helping People Change," authors Guy Itzchakov and Avraham N. Kluger emphasize that "...listening to employees talk about their own experiences first can make giving feedback [more productive](#) by helping them feel psychologically safe and less defensive."

Itzchakov and Kluger confirm that their research supports earlier research that found that leaders who listen are trusted more and have more creative teams with higher job satisfaction. So, what manager would possibly resist investing in becoming a better listener? Apparently, **the majority** of leaders who claimed in a 2000 HBR leadership study by Daniel Goleman that they didn't have time "for the slow and tedious work of teaching people and helping them grow."

If you want to listen better, but you're afraid that the approach feels too amorphous or passive to be productive, check out the structured GROW (Goal/Reality/Options/Will.) method, highlighted by Herminia Ibarra and Anne Scouler in HBR's ["The Leader as Coach: How to Unleash Innovation, Energy and Commitment."](#)

If you think you've already got the coaching style down, you might be chastened to learn that almost 1/4 of executives who rated themselves "above average" in this skillset were ranked by their colleagues as being in the bottom 1/3 of the group!

It's time to start listening up—for everyone's sake.

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*Arinne Braverman is a Kenissa Network member, Jewish Organizing Initiative alumna, and currently serves as the Executive Director of [Returning the Sparks](#) and President of [From Strength to Strength](#).*

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[Ephraim Gopin](#) is the founder of [1832 Communications](#), an agency which helps nonprofits build relationships and raise more money by connecting their fundraising and [marketing strategies](#). You can subscribe to [Ephraim's free daily eNewsletter](#) which includes relevant content for any NPO role you fill.

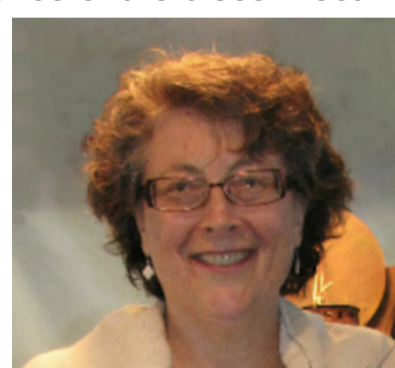
### Jewish Megatrends and Responses

*Editor's Note: Every Kenissa Network member was asked to respond to Rabbi Sid's lead essay in [Jewish Megatrends on the future of the Jewish community](#). We'll be featuring one of those essays in each issue.*

#### Jewish Spiritual Community: Filling a Need

Rabbi Bridget Wynne

Jewish Gateways, the community I founded, grew from my experience of the disconnect between what synagogues offered and what many Jews and their families wanted. I first noticed this in rabbinical school. Rabbis were supposed to plan and offer activities and then try to get people to come. This seemed backwards.



I'd been a community organizer, seeing people as co-creators we could learn from rather than as consumers that we, as rabbis, would serve. I was trained to ask questions about my peoples' lives and concerns, listen to their responses and what might be beneath them, look for common values that brought us together, and create from the bottom up, rather than the top down.

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### How We Built This

*Editor's Note: Every Kenissa Network member was asked to explain how they launched their new enterprise, a feature we call "How We Built This". We'll feature one organization in each issue.*

#### Alliance for Jewish Theatre

Danielle Levsky



Alliance for Jewish Theatre is the leading organization for Jewish theatre worldwide. AJT is made up of theatre-artists, theatres, and other people connected to theatre to promote the creation, presentation, and preservation of both traditional and non-traditional theatrical endeavors by, for, and about the Jewish experience. Its mission is to develop, innovate, promote, and preserve theatre with a Jewish sensibility.



In the past year, [Alliance for Jewish Theatre \(AJT\)](#) has found much light in the darkness. In response to the international pandemic of COVID-19 that began in the spring of 2020, we forged the [Telling Monologues](#) as an outlet for artists to respond to COVID-19 and Pesach.

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