


Webinar: 10 Suggestions for Educators in a Hurting Era

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Moderated by Malka Fleischmann

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WELCOME

As you join us, please put your name and location in the chat box so we know who's with us.



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1. Education is an act of resistance.

...I was becoming a PhD, which, as one of my children explained to a friend, is “a doctor who doesn’t help people”...

“I feel like a phony”, I said. “I study and teach about humanism, yet I myself am not doing anything concrete to help. I don’t travel to conflict zones. I don’t write op-eds in newspapers. I don’t open my home to refugees...”

He looked at me and said, “First, you are being hard on yourself. You are more engaged in these issues than many people, and teaching is a form of activism. Do you think it doesn’t make a difference? Each student you touch may work in more concrete ways than you; yet his work is motivated by his teachers. Do not underestimate that.”



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During dark periods, memory becomes a kind of resistance, and passing on one’s history and values becomes an act of sabotage. The deeds of hatred we see today are directed against bodies, but they are also directed against stories, traditions, different ways of seeing the world. Therefore, in the face of such deeds, education is an essential act of resistance. In moments such as the ones we are living through today, education is the holy act of making memory contagious.



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Take a Moment

Pause and consider:

What is a way that you serve as an activist through your teaching?



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2. When you disagree, do it for the sake of the other.

“I will make a helper against him” (Gen. 2:18). It is the will of Hashem that help and assistance will blossom from one who is “against him”.

This is like what we find concerning the sages Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish: Resh Lakish opposed and challenged every statement of his friend and teacher with 24 questions – and as a result, their understanding benefited. This is unlike Rabbi Elazar, who offered teachings in support of Rabbi Yochanan.

When a person sees how he is being challenged, he strengthens his ideas with more proofs and supports, and his words go out well into the world.

Mei Hashiloach on Genesis



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3. Celebrate questions.

שאלה



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4. Make memory contagious.

“A single death is a tragedy;
a million deaths is a statistic.”

Josef Stalin



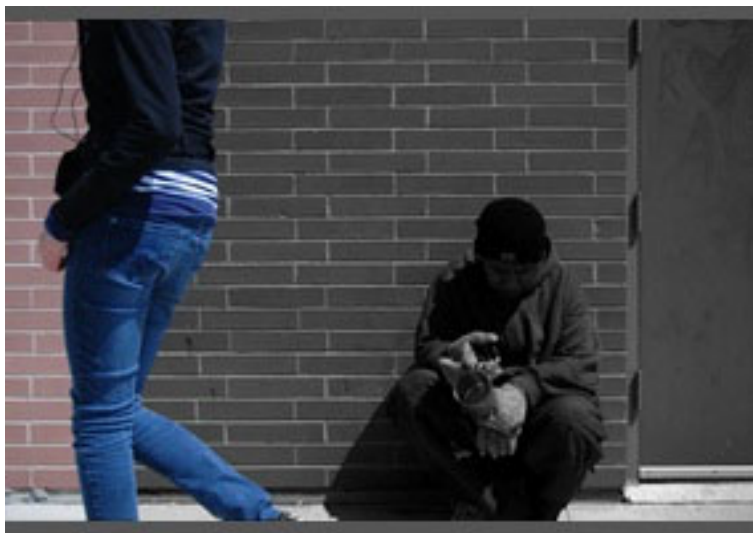
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5. Stay Awake (at least while you're awake)!



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6. Tell One Another's Stories.

“People say that stories help us fall asleep. But I say that stories are meant to wake people up!”

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov



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Take a Moment

Consider:

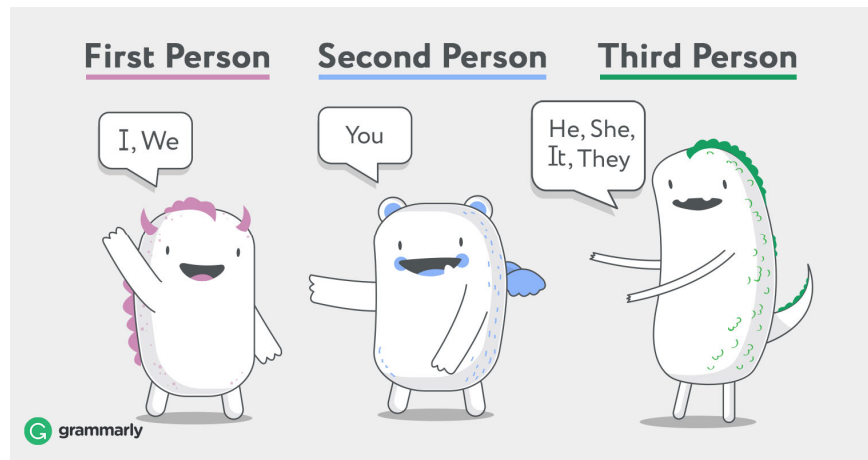
*How might stories help to wake us up?
How might they wake us up to the reality
of other people, to their suffering and
their dreams?*



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7. Pay attention to use of 2nd vs. 3rd person.



What is the moral implication of each of these?



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8. Wherever possible, choose to be vulnerable.

“David, on his way to fight Goliath, was given the king’s armor. For a battle this unequal, with life-and-death stakes, armor made sense. But David removed the armor, for it didn’t fit him. This image has stayed with me as a symbol of a key concept: that vulnerability is the greatest weapon if you are brave enough to use it.”

([Witness, Lessons from Elie Wiesel’s Classroom](#), pg. 65)

“When evil threatens the weak, we must fight back. And yet it is true that sometimes the only way to disarm a threat is to be vulnerable, to share our common humanity, in hopes of awakening the humanity of the other.”
(Ibid, pg. 67)



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Take a Moment

Where have you worn armor
that didn't fit?
When did you remove it?
What happened when you did?



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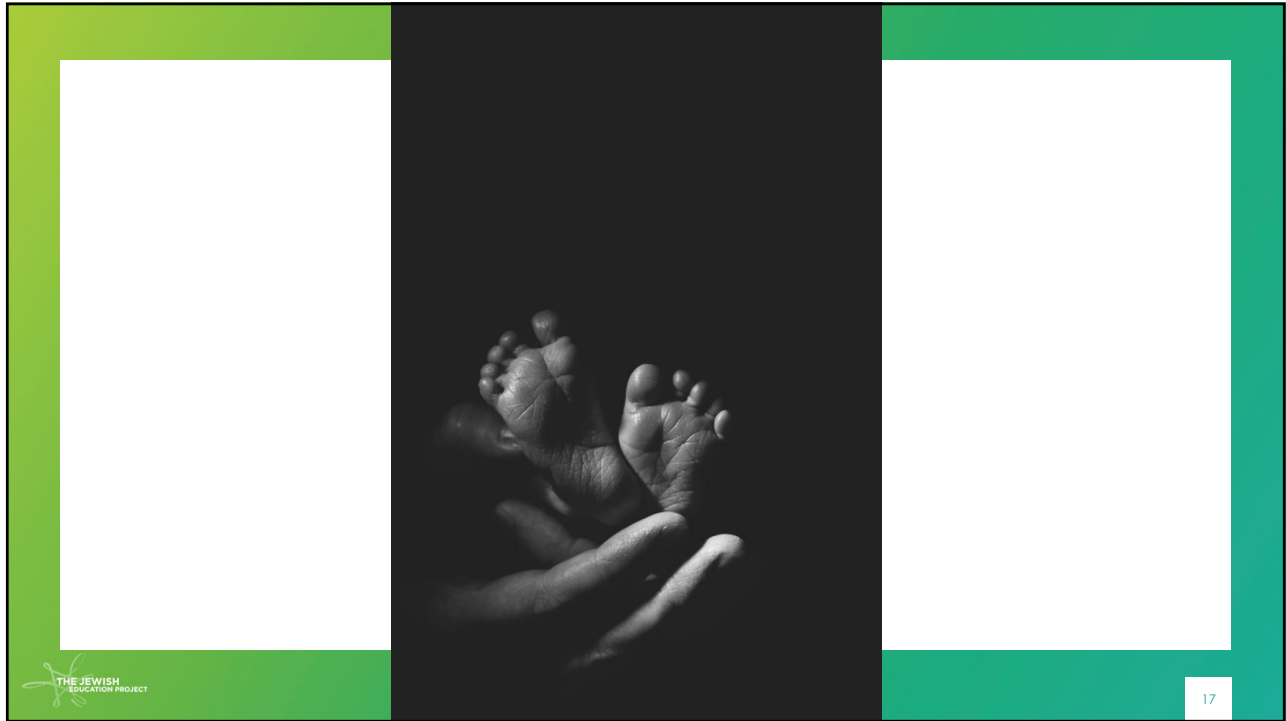
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9. Imagine holding a baby.

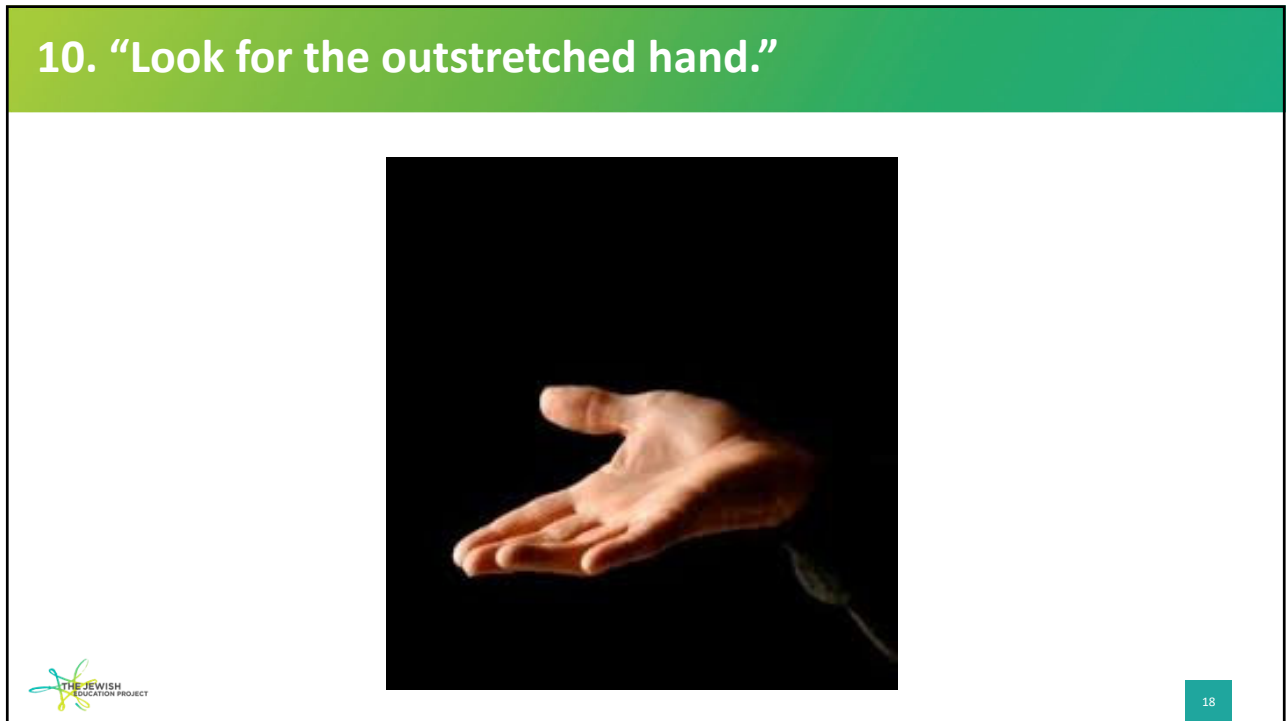


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Summary

1. Education is an act of resistance.
2. When you disagree, do it for the sake of the other.
3. Celebrate questions.
4. Make memory contagious.
5. Stay awake (at least while you're awake)!
6. Tell one another's stories.
7. Pay attention to use of 2nd vs. 3rd person.
8. Wherever possible, choose to be vulnerable.
9. Imagine holding a baby.
10. Look for the outstretched hand.
11. **(What will you add?)**



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THANK YOU

(these links will be in the chat and will be sent out after the webinar)

Responding to Hate: Resources for Jewish Educators <http://bit.ly/2EbvDBk>

Educational Resources on Anti-Semitism from Jewish Futures <http://bit.ly/2PMfvvi>

**THRIVING RETREAT 2020: Join us June 1-3 in Tarrytown, NY
to learn Grit, Gratitude and Empathy:** <http://bit.ly/36Hsbuu>



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