

Reconstructionist Incubator

How might we move bold ideas to action?



Cyd Weissman,
AVP Innovation and Impact,
Jewish Reconstructionist Communities

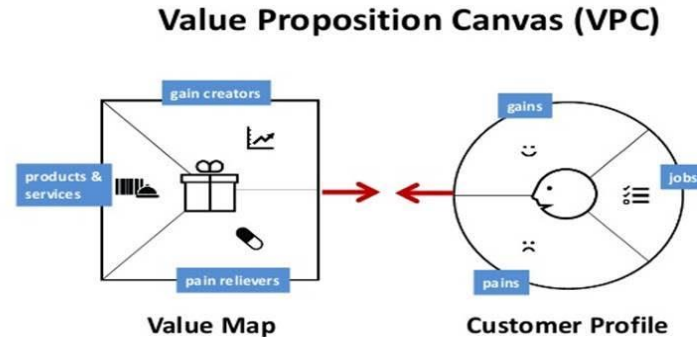
April 6, 2017

Where we have been

One: Value Proposition Canvas

What is the value for your customer/beneficiary?

<http://jewishrecon.org/incubator-session-1-moving-bold-ideas-action>



Two: Lean Start-up Rabbi Doug Heifetz, Test Assumptions

<http://jewishrecon.org/networks/sessions/incubator-session-2-lean-startup>

Three: Marketing and Branding, Rabbi George Wielechowski, A brand is an emotional and values connection

<http://jewishrecon.org/incubator-session-3-branding-and-marketing>

How much rests on freedom?

Rabbi Jacob Lieberman

Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger (the Sefat Emet)

Trans. by Rabbi Arthur Green in The Language of Truth 3:103

"Even if we were all wise, all understanding, and all knowing the Torah, we would still be commanded to tell of the Exodus from Egypt. And one who goes to great lengths in telling this tale is considered all the more praiseworthy." Scripture tells us: "When you bring the people forth from Egypt you shall serve God..." (Exodus 3:12), and also: "I am the Lord your God who brought you forth from the land of Egypt to become your God" (Numbers 15:41).

This process is renewed each year: Pesah is the season of our freedom. This is the meaning of [the verse:] "You are My servant Israel, in whom I take pride" [Isaiah 49:3]. Afterwards, on Shavu'ot, is the time when our Torah is given. Torah is renewed on Shavu'ot in accordance with the freedom that has been awakened on Pesah. Something like this happens every single day as well, as we recall both coming forth from Egypt and receiving the Torah. Even though we have already received the Torah, there is still a renewed revelation of Torah in each generation, each year, and each day--a revelation peculiar to that time. That is why freedom, too, needs to be renewed each year; through this we are able to renew our acceptance of divinity.

"To become your God" - this is something that takes place in the present and is forever happening anew.

Klal u'Prat

Analyzing and analogizing the Teaching

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When freedom is absent, we can neither accept the Torah nor develop a relationship with divinity. It is incumbent upon us to work towards freedom for all.• To the extent any of us are free, we are able to renew our relationship with Torah (Jewish practice and Jewish wisdom) and with divinity.• The depth of these relationships (with Torah and divinity) depends on the extent of our freedom. More freedom enables more depth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent are we enslaved and to what extent free in our work to create Jewish communities? How does this lack of freedom stymie Jewish practice and engagement?• What would freedom look like? What are some ways a renewed relationship with Torah or divinity could look like?• How can we use this time between Passover and Shavuot to awaken the freedoms that enable greater Jewish expression and revelation? |
|--|--|

Rabbi Sid Schwarz

Jewish Megatrends:

Priming the Pump of Jewish Innovation



Jewish Megatrends

- Traced steep decline in legacy Jewish organizations (four sectors)
- Simultaneously, pockets of Jewish activity in five discreet pockets:
 - social justice
 - spiritual practice
 - independent *minyanim*
 - Jewish learning groups
 - Eco-sustainability



Personal career working in both the mainstream community and at the margins of both the religious and political consensus (e.g. new paradigm synagogues; human rights and Middle East peace work).

- a. Goal: to identify, convene and build capacity
- b. March 2016-first national Consultation
- c. “Creatives” exploring new expressions of Jewish identity and Jewish life



Themes:

- a. *Chochma***-Applying the teachings and practices of one's inherited religious and cultural tradition to give greater meaning to life.
- b. *Tzedek*** – The impulse to work for greater peace and justice, especially for the most vulnerable in the world.
- c. *Kehillah*** -Intentional social arrangements in which people enter into mutual obligatory relationships committed to a common mission and to each other.
- d. *Yetzira*** -The human ability to imagine/invent create ideas, science, art and culture.
- e. *Kedusha*** -Finding one's sacred purpose or life's vocation.

Examples

- **Kayam Farm at Pearlstone Center (2007)**
 - *Already a center for JOFEE Network
(Jewish Outdoor Food, Farming and Environment Education Center)
 - *Planning a Moshav for about 50 families in the next few years
- **Detroit Jews for Justice (2014)**
 - *Flint water crisis
 - *Living wage campaign
 - *Holiday gatherings

More Examples

- **Kevah (2008)**

- *Micro-communities of learners; currently in Bay Area, Boston and Denver/Boulder

- *Meet 1-2x/mo. Teachers provided for a modest fee. App. 225/mo.

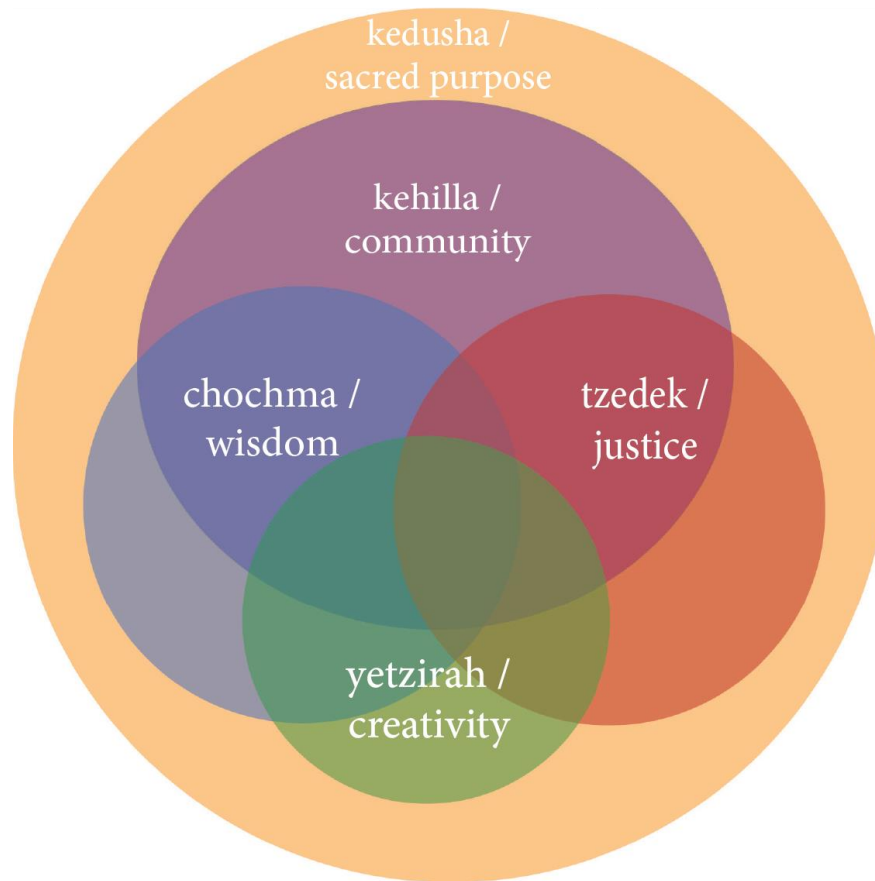
- *Topics range from Bible, to parenting, to mindfulness and Mussar

- **Chai Village-LA (2016)**

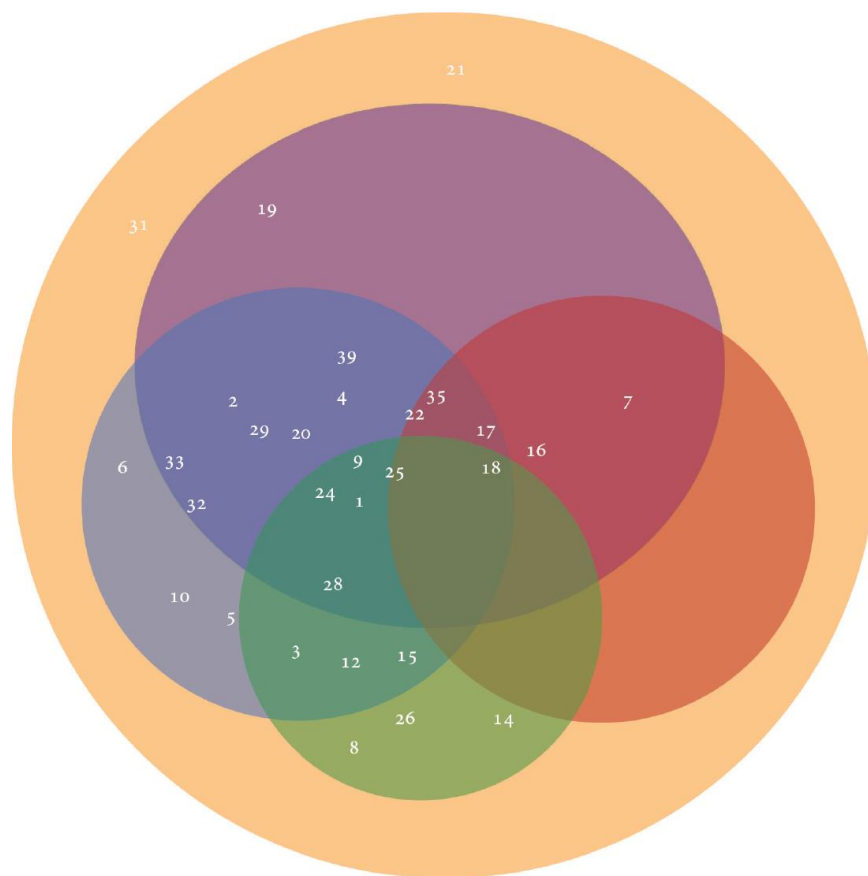
- *Temple Emanuel and Temple Isaiah engaging aging Boomers who they would have lost. Currently 185 members.

- *Part of Village Movement. Helping people stay in their homes by providing social networks and programs for engaged living

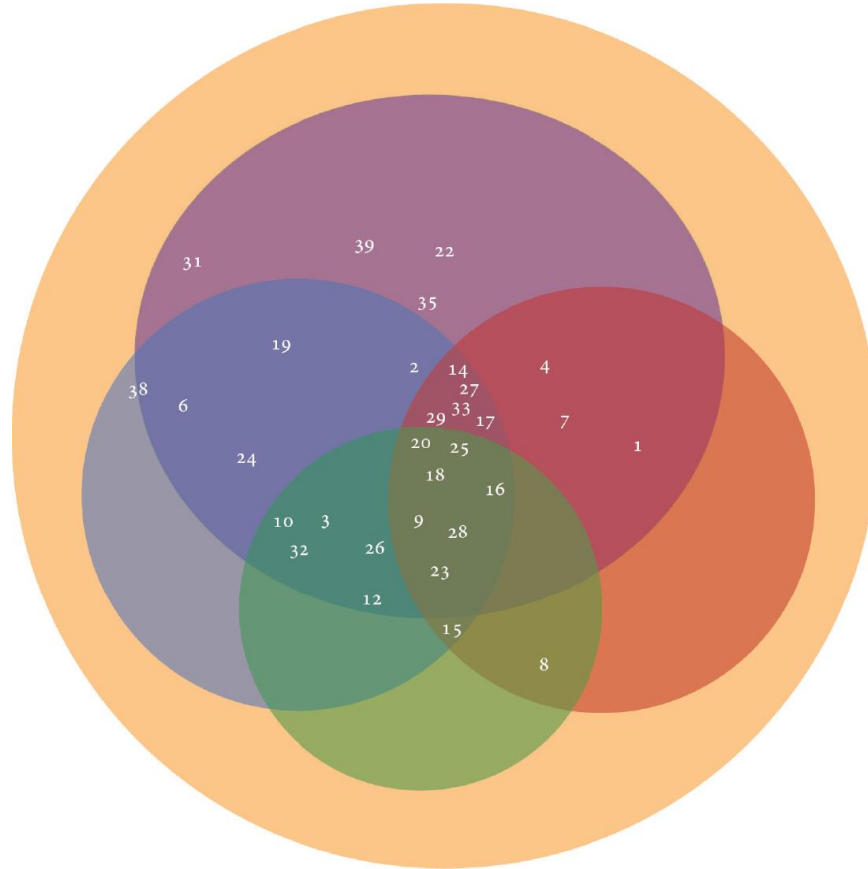
Venn Diagram of Themes



Current Reality

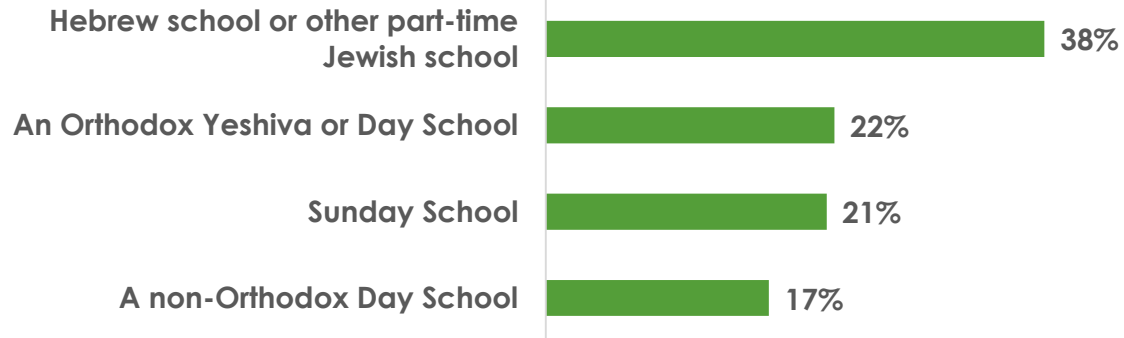


Aspirational



Respondents: Jewish Educational Background

Every respondent had some formal Jewish education and more than one-third (39%) attended a Jewish Day school.



62%



Attended a Jewish sleep-away camp during the summer

57%



Created by Chris Kier
from Mount Project

Regularly participated in Jewish life on campus during college or graduate school

52%



Created by Alexander Shumakov
from Mount Project

Participated in a Jewish youth group as a teenager

Characteristics of these groups and their founders:

- *Made possible by the new social economy: entrepreneurial, DIY, cyber-networked

- *Very eclectic, reflecting the passion of the founder
they tend to focus on one dimension of Jewish life, essentially boutique models as distinct from synagogues or JCCs that are retail supermarkets for all things Jewish.

- *They attract next Gen Jews in ways that the legacy organizations have failed to do

- *The founders are not “nones” but they attract many “nones”. They benefitted from programs of the legacy orgs!

Currently launching a national mapping project of the phenomenon

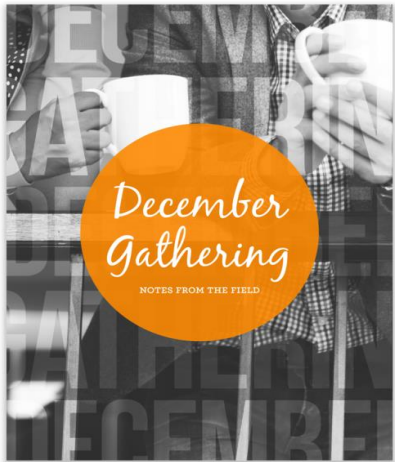
Beyond the Jewish World



What *Kenissa* has started to map in the Jewish world, is part of a larger trend happening in America.

How We Gather Project-Harvard Divinity School

Examples



The Sanctuaries (2013 in DC)-empowering creative and soulful living

The Dinner Party (2013)-started in LA, SF, NY and DC. Now in 50 cities and beyond US

Crossfit- 140 countries. Evangelism. Honoring the dead.

Accountability. Social responsibility.



Appendix B: Themes

In his 2013 book, *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Community*, Sid Schwarz identified four themes that he saw as “essential building blocks of any institutions that hoped to appeal to next generation American Jews.” He added a fifth theme, *Yetzirah*/Creativity based on input from the participants at the first NPSCI Consultation. In their 2015 report “How We Gather” and their follow-up work “Something More,” Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston looked at the broader landscape of secular and religious innovation, and identified seven such themes. Schwarz, together with ter Kuile and Thurston (who attended the first NPSCI Consultation as partner researchers), recognized the similarities among the themes they had each framed independently. Together they concluded that emerging communities of meaning tend to express and operationalize the following values, qualities and characteristics:

Schwarz

Kehilla

Intentional social arrangements in which people enter into mutual obligatory relationships committed to a common mission and to each other

Kedusha

Finding one's sacred purpose or life's vocation

Tzedek

The impulse to work for greater peace and justice, especially for the most vulnerable in the world

Yetzirah

The human ability to imagine/invent/create ideas, science, art and culture

Chochma

Applying the teachings and practices of one's inherited religious and cultural tradition to give greater meaning to life

ter Kuile and Thurston

Community

Valuing and fostering deep relationships that center on service to others

Purpose Finding

Clarifying, articulating and acting on one's personal mission in life

Social Transformation

Pursuing justice and beauty in the world through the creation of networks for good

Creativity

Allowing time and space to activate the imagination and engage in play

Accountability

Holding oneself and others responsible for working towards defined goals

Personal Transformation

Making a conscious and dedicated effort to develop one's own body, mind and spirit

Something More

Common thread/collective well-being/the circle that encompasses all

Applied Entrepreneurial Science

Your questions---your ideas, project, organization?



Reflections and Next steps

Next session April 27

Tough Words

Money and Failure, Rabbi Hayim Herring

