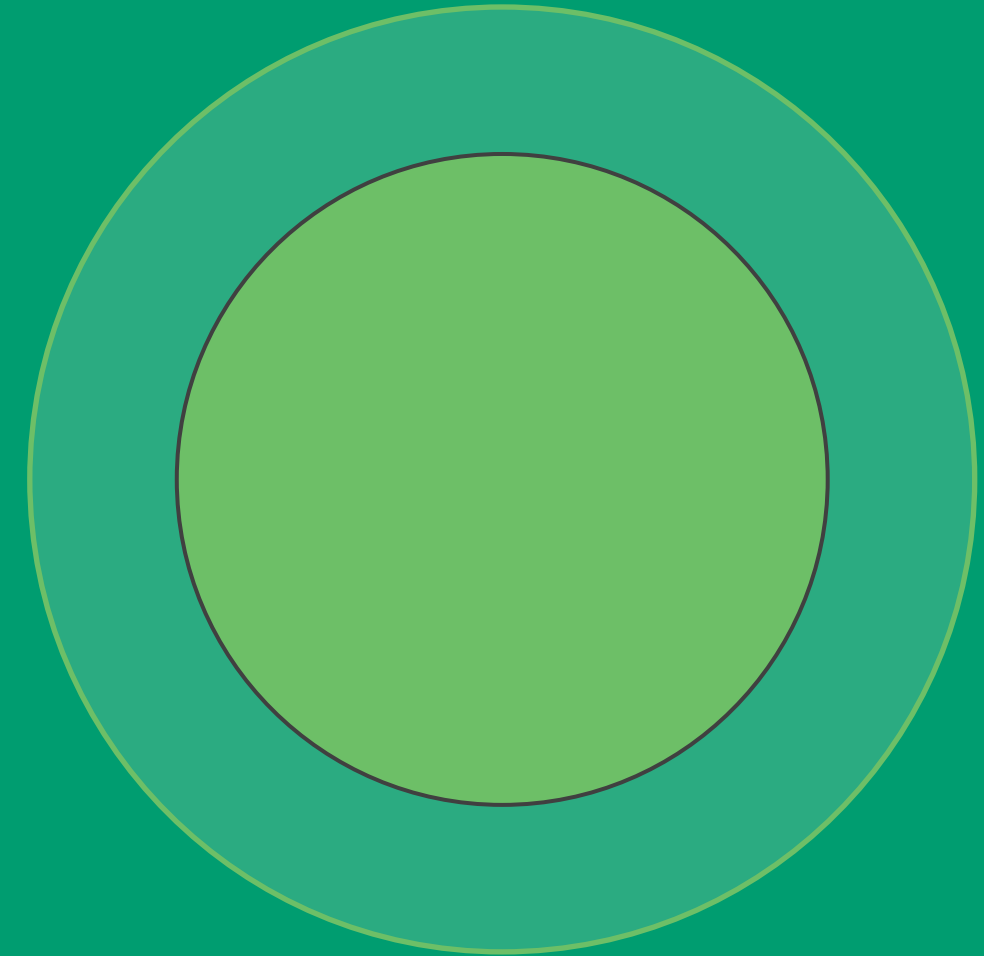


President's Primary Relationships

Leading Through Relationships



New Presidents Leadership Call 2026

Leadership Begins with Relationships

People first — your five key relationships as president



Rabbi



Staff



Board



Members



Volunteers

Different Congregations, Different Models

Small Congregation

- Volunteer-heavy
- Flexible roles
- President wears many hats

Large Congregation

- Professional staff
- Clear hierarchy
- President focuses on vision

Medium Congregation

- Shared leadership
- Staff + volunteers
- Clear role division

All Models

- No single right model
- Know YOUR context
- Adapt as you grow

Working with Your Rabbi

-  Meet regularly: Establish a standing meeting cadence for open dialogue
-  Know the contract: Understand responsibilities and boundaries clearly
-  Purple Book: Refer to the Rabbi Congregational Relationship handbook
-  Establish a Rabbi Liaison Committee
-  Address conflict privately: Never in board meetings or public settings

Executive Director/Administrator

Your Role

- Govern, don't manage day-to-day operations
- Set vision and policy as a board, not operations
- Trust the ED to run the organization
- Communicate regularly and transparently

Watch Out For

- Avoid micromanaging staff or programs
- Don't bypass the ED with direct staff requests
- Let the ED handle personnel matters
- Maintain clear lines of authority

Education Director/Head of School

-  Clarify roles: Establish who oversees what between clergy, Executive Director, and you
-  Support vision: Align educational programming with congregation mission
-  Respect family relationships: Honor the trust families place in educators
-  Introduce them to the Educator's Hub

Vice Presidents

Delegate Effectively

- Share responsibility fairly
- Match tasks to strengths
- Give real authority

Mentor & Develop

- Invest in their growth
- Share your experience
- Create stretch opportunities

Plan for Succession

- Your VP is your successor
- Prepare them deliberately
- Strong transition = strong future

Board Members

-  Govern: Focus on policy, strategy, and organizational direction
-  Think strategically: Look beyond immediate issues to long-term vision
-  Support decisions: Present a united front once the board has voted

Committee Chairs

Clear Expectations

- Define scope and authority
- Agree on reporting cadence
- Cultivate for leadership

Regular Reports

- Ask for brief updates
- Celebrate progress
- Catch issues early

Recognition

- Thank publicly and privately
- Name contributions at board
- People give more when seen

Members



Be visible: Attend services, events, and programs — show up



Communicate: Share news, decisions, and vision transparently



Celebrate: Recognize milestones, achievements, and contributions



Invite: Personally welcome new members and prospects

Your First 90 Days

1

Month 1 Listen

Meet with rabbi, ED, VPs,
and key stakeholders. Ask
questions. Take notes.
Reserve judgment.

2

Month 2 Priorities

Identify the top 3-5 issues
needing attention. Confirm
with the board. Begin setting
direction.

3

Month 3 Strategy

Articulate a clear vision for the
year. Build consensus.
Communicate to the full
congregation.

Navigating Conflict



Pause: Don't react in the moment — give yourself time to think clearly – check in with your liaison



Listen: Hear all perspectives before forming a response



Clarify: Ask questions to understand the real issue beneath the surface



Address: Deal with conflict directly but privately with those involved



Follow up: Check in after resolution to ensure relationships are repaired

Healthy Leadership Habits

Delegate

- You can't do it all
- Trust others with real work
- Check in, don't take over

Keep Asking

- "What do you need?"
- "How can I help?"
- "What am I missing?"

Thank People

- Gratitude is free and powerful
- Be specific and public
- Write notes, not just emails

Protect Energy

- Set boundaries on your time
- Take breaks — you're a volunteer
- A burnt-out president helps no one

Monthly Self-Check



What's thriving? Name the wins — don't skip this step



Who might be burning out? Check in before they disappear



What am I avoiding? Be honest with yourself



Who is the next leader? Start developing them now

Your Support Network



◆ Your Thriving
Communities
Liaison & Team



◆ Leadership Calls



◆ Thriving
Communities of
Practice



◆ Online
Resources &
Guides



◆ Mini Courses



◆ The Wenger-
Markowitz Family
Education Initiative
Educators Hub

YOUR LIAISONS

Justin Rosen Smolen
Maurice Harris
Nina Korican

You are not alone. Thriving Communities is here with you.



**RECONSTRUCTING
JUDAISM**

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.