

PORTRAIT OF JEWISH GIVING TODAY

A Deep Dive into What Drives Next
Generation Jewish Givers and How to
Support Their Leadership



WITH DR. TOBIN BELZER

SLINGSHOT

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We uncover the why behind the what—so you can spark change where it matters most.



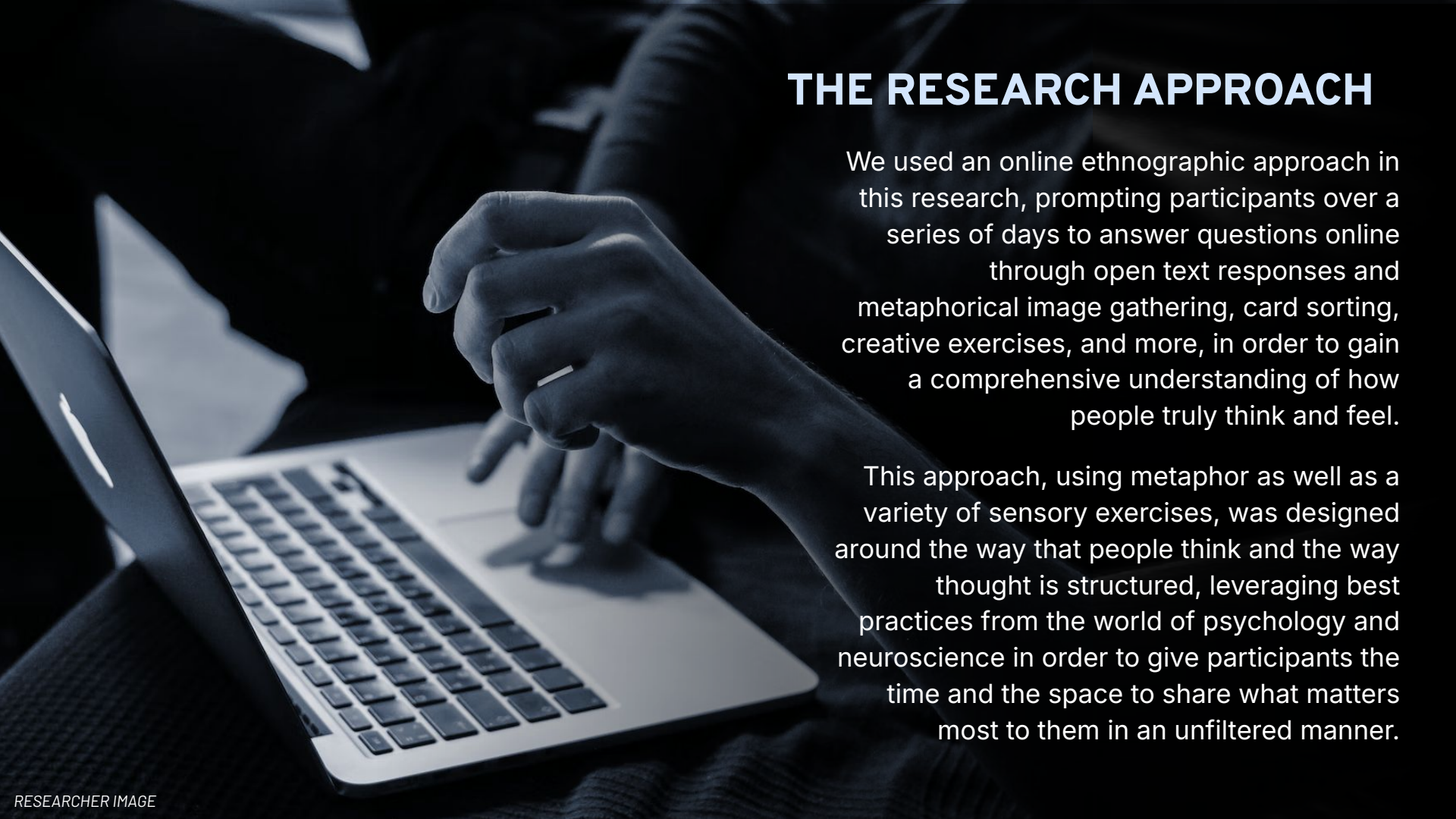
**WORTHY
STRATEGY
GROUP**

BACKGROUND

We are living through a moment of profound upheaval—politically, socially, and spiritually. Since October 7th, young Jewish leaders have been navigating a rapidly shifting world: rising antisemitism, generational fragmentation, eroding trust in institutions, and a constant stream of crisis and controversy. These pressures aren't just external—they are reshaping how this generation relates to Jewish identity, community, and the act of giving itself.

To understand how these changes are landing—and what young Jewish philanthropists need now—Dr. Tobin Belzer partnered with Worthy Strategy Group to conduct a deep dive into the minds and motivations of these emerging leaders. Drawing on Dr. Belzer's decades of research on American Jewish life, along with Worthy's expertise in online ethnography and uncovering hidden narratives through psychological and metaphorical techniques, the team mapped the stories young Jewish philanthropists are telling themselves about their roles, their challenges, and their hopes for the future.

The goal was to help Slingshot better serve this generation's needs, leverage their passion, and position them as effective, connected leaders. While they are far from a monolith, young Jewish philanthropists voiced remarkably aligned values, fears, and hopes. Their candid responses formed the data for this report, offering clear, actionable insights to guide programming that speaks to today's urgency while supporting the next generation of leaders.



THE RESEARCH APPROACH

We used an online ethnographic approach in this research, prompting participants over a series of days to answer questions online through open text responses and metaphorical image gathering, card sorting, creative exercises, and more, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how people truly think and feel.

This approach, using metaphor as well as a variety of sensory exercises, was designed around the way that people think and the way thought is structured, leveraging best practices from the world of psychology and neuroscience in order to give participants the time and the space to share what matters most to them in an unfiltered manner.

PARTICIPANTS

We recruited **n=31 NextGen funders**, ages 20–40.

Participants either come from families with a legacy of philanthropy or are self-made wealth earners. Most currently hold, or are expected to hold, decision-making roles in their family's or personal giving.

We spoke to participants representing a range of life stages and experiences—including those who are single, partnered, and parenting—and a geographic spread across the country.

All participants self-identified as Jewish and our focus was on those affiliated with Slingshot and its partners who both serve and seek to engage this demographic. Recruitment included direct outreach as well as referrals from young Jewish leaders within their networks, ensuring a mix of perspectives both inside and adjacent to Slingshot's immediate circle.



About the Sample Size

This study included 31 participants, which is typical and appropriate for qualitative research. Unlike quantitative surveys, the goal was not statistical representation but to surface the unconscious beliefs, values, and perspectives shaping how this generation approaches philanthropy and leadership. Research on in-depth, metaphor-based interviews shows that saturation of key constructs occurs after 7–12 participants per segment. With 31 participants, this study exceeded that threshold, providing a strong base to identify consistent themes while still allowing space for nuance and depth in participants' stories.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Our conversations revealed a generation deeply shaped by inherited values and lived experience, but also restless to define their own path. Their reflections trace a clear arc—from how giving first took root, to the strategies and struggles shaping their choices now, to the leaders they hope to become and the future they want to build.

1. **Where Giving Begins:** Their generosity is no accident—it's rooted in tzedakah boxes, mitzvah projects, family pride, and rituals that made giving feel sacred and personal. They often begin by investing in Jewish life, then branch outward toward other causes where their presence, trust, and impact can take root.
2. **Their Inner Strategy:** They see themselves in distinct roles—strategists, connectors, supporters, heart players—and know where they shine. But they also flex based on what's needed, always grounded in shared values like humility, community-driven change, and a deep sense of responsibility. What drives their decisions is a mix of personal connection, visible impact, and trust—when those three align, they give with clarity, confidence, and conviction.
3. **The Friction Behind the Philanthropy:** Even the most committed hit walls—stretched by time, emotional fatigue, competing obligations, and questions about their legitimacy or role. Clarity fades in the fog of too many options, board politics, or fear of missteps. And in moments of public heat—Israel/Gaza, social media storms, campus tensions—they don't want louder takes; they crave principled nuance. What they need is support that builds confidence, strengthens trust, and protects against burnout.
4. **Who They're Becoming:** Today's doers are growing into tomorrow's guides—less scattered, more focused. They're shifting from constant activity to strategic stewardship, seeking roles that offer balance, clarity, and lasting impact. As they gain confidence, they're not just showing up—they're anchoring institutions, mentoring others, and treating philanthropy as a core part of who they are.
5. **Vision for the Future:** They envision a future where philanthropy is joyful, grounded in Jewish values, and part of daily life—not just a milestone for later. Jewish identity is a source of clarity, not constraint. They want to shift power from institutions to communities, embrace multiple forms of giving, and lead with moral courage—bridging divides and building toward a more connected, just, and resilient world.

Together, these findings show a generation clear-eyed about obstacles yet deeply committed to impact. For them, making change isn't extra credit—it's a Jewish responsibility. And they know it can't be done alone: a rising tide lifts all boats, and progress must be driven with communities. Grounded in Jewish identity yet open to the world, they are ready to shape a more connected, resilient future.



Unless otherwise specified, the images featured throughout the following report were provided by the participants.



CHAPTER 1

WHERE GIVING BEGINS

How family, tradition, and early experiences shape lifelong habits of generosity.

Belong together, lift together, act with care, and leave the world stronger for the next generation.

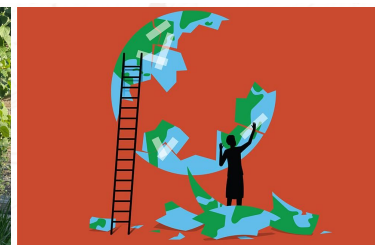
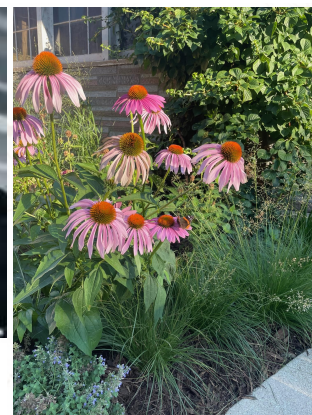
When asked to share a metaphorical image for a core belief or value that guides them, today's young Jewish leaders showed us the blueprint of who they are becoming. They are **rooting their lives in community and family, and measuring success by how much they show up for others.**

Kindness is their daily operating system. Truth and learning are their anchors. **Stewardship—of people, planet, and culture—is the long view.**





COMMUNITY · KINDNESS · STEWARDSHIP · JOY · AGENCY · TRUTH



“It is so important to be there hand in hand with those you love.”



When the world feels polarized, unsafe, or overwhelming, they double down on identity, community, and small but real acts of care.

WHAT THEY VALUE—AND WHY IT MATTERS

- ▶ **Community as a lifeline:** In grief, fear, and shock (e.g., shootings, war, antisemitism), they turn toward community for strength, ritual, and repair—camp blessings, family networks, colleagues, and friends who “lift you up.”
- ▶ **Jewish identity with a spine:** Several explicitly reaffirmed their Jewishness post Oct. 7 and amid rising hostility—choosing boundaries (like ending a relationship to someone who minimized their recent Jewish experience), staying in Jewish work, and being “joyfully Jewish” while holding compassion for disagreement.
- ▶ **Agency through action (big and small):** They translate values into motion: protests, donations, volunteering, or respectful dialogue across differences.
- ▶ **Stewardship and future focus:** Kids and the next generation sharpen their sense of duty; thoughtful consumption and environmental concern signal “leave it better.”
- ▶ **Truth and learning:** Lifelong learning and truth are moral anchors in a noisy, cynical time. As one participant puts it, “the law is always evolving... there’s always more to learn,” and his continuing legal education is the same stance philanthropy needs: keep learning and keep showing up.
- ▶ **Joy as resilience:** Celebration (half-birthdays, camp moments) isn’t trivial; it’s fuel that keeps them human and hopeful.

Rooted in what they learned at home, this generation is evolving those values to meet today's moments.

ADMIRED TRAITS OF PAST GENERATIONS

Grit & Gratitude

"They knew how to work hard, delay gratification, and stay steady even when life wasn't perfect."

Selflessness & Service

"They showed up for others — not for credit, but because it was the right thing to do."

Commitment to Community

"Family and communal well-being always came first."

A Clear Jewish Anchor

"Jewishness was central — and not questioned. It shaped what they gave to, and why."

SHIFTS THEY'RE CONSCIOUSLY MAKING

From Stoicism → Emotional Openness

"We're not afraid to be vulnerable. Strength includes empathy, joy, and showing up with our full selves."

From Insular → Interconnected

"We still care deeply about Jewish causes — but we see our fates as linked with other communities, too."

From Legacy → Presence

"Instead of waiting for wealth or age, we want to give now, show up now, and make meaning in real time."

From Obedience → Authenticity

"We're unlearning the pressure to conform. We want to lead in ways that feel true to who we are, not just what's expected."

From Hierarchy → Shared Leadership

"We're less interested in top-down philanthropy. We want to co-create with grantees, communities, and each other."

The people and places that shaped their values also shaped their giving.

PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS

It starts at the kitchen table.

Parents normalize giving—weekly tzedakah, choosing where the money goes, coming along to community appeals, watching mom/dad give time as well as dollars. Grandparents or elders teach generosity and fairness (like when telling a family story).

JEWISH INSTITUTIONS

Jewish institutions turn values into practice.

School, synagogue, Federation, and Hillel provide the opportunities to keep practicing —drives, phone banks, student-led campaigns—so kids *do* giving, not just hear about it.

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

Seeing impact locks it in.

Named gardens, a hospital visit, a grandparent's photo on the JCC wall—tangible proof that generosity shapes real places and lives.

PERSONAL IDENTITY

Giving isn't just something they did—it is a part of **who they are**.

How did you decide you wanted to be a person who gives?

“

...it's hard to pinpoint a single moment, but I think for me, it's the example that my parents and grandparents set about giving back to the community and how that's an important value.. I was very blessed and afforded many opportunities growing up and seeing how my parents went about their lives on a day-to-day basis, their involvement in local synagogues, high schools, the [local] Federation, and just general philanthropy and how they chose to give back and always communicating to us the importance of giving back...

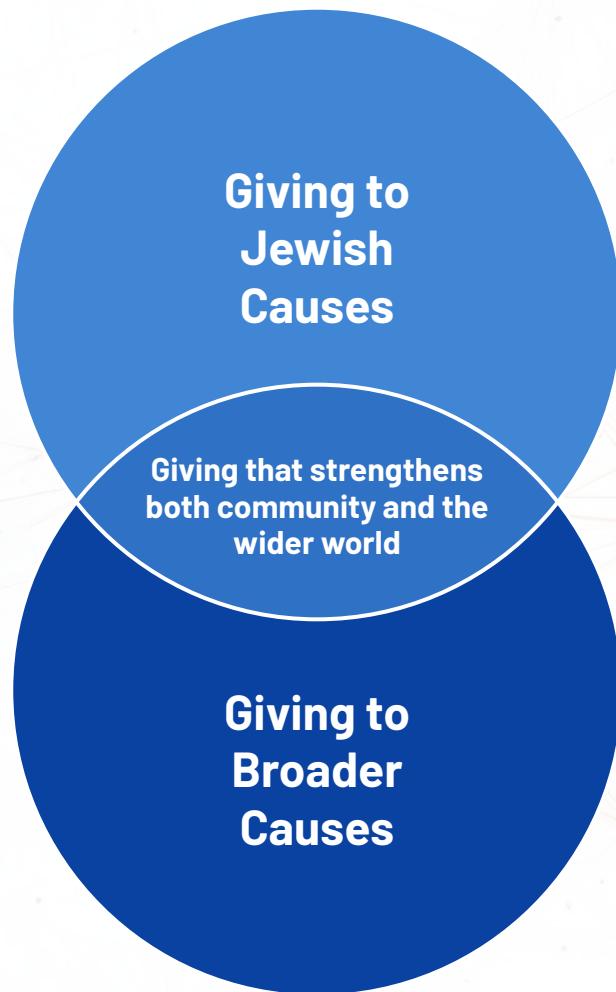
It's a central tenet to what I want my identity to look like, what I want my reputation to be as someone who does care and puts in the time, both time, energy, funds as available, et cetera, to giving back to the community. For me, it says that you're someone with humility that cares about others. It's not just about dollars and cents. At the end of the day, it's really about how can you be a good person, set a good example for others, leave the campsite cleaner than you found it. That's something I always strive to do.

”

The backbone of it all is their Jewish heritage.

For most, Jewishness isn't a footnote—it's the engine of their philanthropy. They name **Judaism as central or overlapping so tightly that it functions as the lens for how, where, and why they give.** That lens **can point inward** (prioritizing Jewish community needs, Federation/DAFs, Jewish orgs tackling wider issues) **or outward** (using tzedakah and tikkun olam to inspire broader, non-Jewish giving).

The early on-ramps are clear: family, ritual, and text—like Rambam's Ladder (a guide to ethical giving), pe'ah (leaving the corners of a field for the poor), tzedakah boxes (daily habits of generosity), and mitzvah projects (youth-led acts of service). But **adulthood introduces nuance.** Many feel deep pride in caring for "our people," while also confronting real tensions—politics, insularity, and the desire to reach beyond. **Jewish identity offers the motivation, the language, and the boundaries; personal conscience decides where and how far to go.**





CHAPTER 2

THEIR INNER STRATEGY

The logic and lived beliefs that shape their giving.

When these young Jewish leaders think about their current role, they see themselves as players in a bigger game.

THE ROLES THEY SEE FOR THEMSELVES

▼ The Strategists:

At the head of the chessboard—framing problems, planning moves, and holding the long game.



- ▼ **The Heart Players:** These are the morale-builders and trust-holders—the ones who keep the “team” grounded and committed.



▼ The Supporters & Adaptables:

They're the wild cards and the engine—filling gaps, showing up under pressure, and making the machine run.



▼ The Connectors:

Create the flow by linking people, ideas, and timing to unlock possibilities.





“I try to adapt my role based on the setting. As a philanthropist I like to be a supporter and let those involved daily take the lead. As a board member, I like to help guide strategy and actively work to move progress forward.”

They don't, however, see engagement as a fixed identity.

Instead, they approach it like gameplay: adjusting their moves based on what's needed, where they have an edge, and how the field is evolving.

Hands-on involvement offers a close-up view of the work, a clear sense of what's really happening, and a way to align their values with their actions. This is especially important when they're testing a strategy or ensuring organizational accountability and efficacy.

When they're **not hands-on**, it's because they trust the professionals to do the work well or they recognize that they don't have the time or capacity to be directly involved.

Most shift between the two, always aiming to be as useful as possible where it counts.

Behind every move
they make is a deep
value and belief system
etched in tradition,
driven by duty, and
guided by community.



5 CORE RULES OF PLAY



DO THE REPAIR

Making change isn't extra credit—it's a Jewish responsibility.
"If not now, when?"



USE WHAT YOU'VE GOT

Privilege, time, and luck come with obligations.
"If you have more, you owe more."



CHANGE HAPPENS WITH PEOPLE

Nothing *about* them without them. Let the community lead.
"Change can't be forced on communities—they must drive it."



STAY HUMBLE, KEEP LEARNING

Be the support, not the savior. Lead with listening.
"We can learn from others what we don't already know"

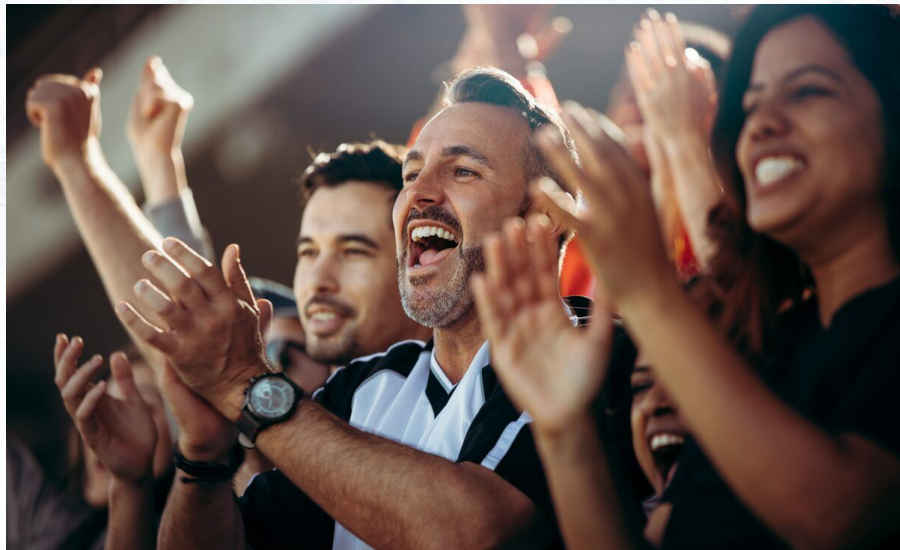


ACT NOW, AIM DEEP

Move quickly to deliver results and don't stop at the surface.
"Tikkun Olam is only achieved by healing the underlying wound"

The biggest emotional win? When their moves lead to real momentum.

For these young Jewish leaders, meaning peaks when their giving feels tangible, catalytic, and rooted in community.



What Creates That Emotional High:

- ✓ **Seeing the impact up close**
Meeting grantees, witnessing programs in action, getting real feedback
- ✓ **Having decision-making power**
Shaping grant programs, strategy, or hiring—their choices matter
- ✓ **Making an “unlocking” gift**
Pushing a project over the line or launching something new
- ✓ **Building the world they want to live in**
Funding local institutions or services their families will use
- ✓ **Crossing milestone “firsts”**
Opening a DAF, making a major gift, or joining a learning cohort
- ✓ **Giving that aligns with core Jewish values**
Solidarity, justice, belonging, tradition

How they choose to help depends on what's most effective, not what's most visible.

What Effective Help Looks Like to Them:

- **Money** fuels the work—and they know it's often the most straightforward way to drive outcomes.
- **Time** is valued when it fills a real gap, not when it creates busywork.
- **Skills** are most valuable when clearly aligned with an organization's needs—offering expertise rooted in one's own training or field (e.g., a marketer providing marketing support, a lawyer offering legal counsel, a tech professional advising on product development).
- **Speaking out** only feels powerful when it's targeted (e.g., meeting a legislator, not broad social media).

At its core, their message is: trust the professionals, don't create extra work, and lean into what you personally do best.

When you think about making a difference, how do you see the impact of the following	Has a large impact	Neutral	Has a small impact
Giving money	97%	3%	0%
Giving time	81%	13%	6%
Raising my voice and speaking out	48%	42%	10%
Advising and coaching on skills	48%	42%	10%

Quiet or loud, the intent matters.

Many see anonymous giving as noble and humble—"the highest mitzvah." Others give publicly to lead by example. Most agree: both have value, depending on the moment.



A MESSAGE TO A FRIEND ON THE POWER OF FINANCIAL GIVING

While many value giving time, skills, or voice, **there's a strong consensus that money remains essential—the "lifeblood" that powers everything else.** It pays staff, funds programming, and keeps trusted professionals working. Even small donations matter. For this group, giving money is more than financial—it's a show of trust, priority, and belief in the mission.

Imagine a friend tells you they're not sure giving money to a cause really makes a difference. What would you say to help them see why it matters?



"So while I think it's really easy and fair to argue that it feels unhelpful if you can't give millions of dollars or you know, my money is not gonna make a difference, if you think about it, **if everyone felt that way then nothing would get done.** So I love to think about it as growing something in your garden. It may not happen overnight, but each dollar, each person who gives is helping to grow that garden and without it, it wouldn't be as colorful, it wouldn't be as vibrant."

Personal Connection + Visible Impact + Trust = Confident, Values-Based Giving

PERSONAL CONNECTION

Giving is anchored in identity, memory, and moral inheritance—camp, synagogue, family legacy, alma mater. Jewish belonging often sets the starting point, but it doesn't end there. Once grounded, **they're drawn toward even broader issues that they've seen, felt, or touched directly**—from equity and democracy to climate, reproductive justice, and Black- and Indigenous-led efforts. Lived experience and emotional proximity often open the door to broader commitments.



VISIBLE IMPACT

They want clear evidence that the work actually works. That means:

- ✓ **Tangible outcomes:** meals served, cohorts trained, programs launched
- ✓ **Operational excellence:** clear goals, capable leadership, smart execution
- ✓ **Transparent learning:** openness about challenges and course-correction

For this group, visible progress—**not perfection**—is the strongest proof.



TRUST

They rarely decide in isolation. For most, the first stop is a trusted circle—**family members, foundation peers, spouses, mentors, rabbis, or community leaders**—who help them pressure-test their instincts and check for blind spots.

But trust doesn't stop with personal relationships. It extends to the organizations themselves. What earns their confidence is **transparent, learning-oriented leadership**—people who are honest about challenges, clear about goals, and open to course-correction. They **trust leaders they can speak with** or who come highly vouched for, and they pay close attention to peer validators who “know the terrain” and can signal when something is worth backing.

THE GIVING EQUATION

CHAPTER 3

THE FRICTION BEHIND THE PHILANTHROPY

Emotional weight, outside pressures, and what keeps people on the sidelines

Before diving into the frictions, it is important to note that this study was intentionally designed to surface complexity. People are multidimensional; they hold competing truths, and their responses often shift depending on the context or framing of a question. **Apparent contradictions should not be read as inconsistencies, but rather as evidence of nuance—illustrating the layered, sometimes conflicting ways individuals navigate identity, values, and action.**

These frictions highlight the need to approach the findings with openness, appreciating the depth and multidimensionality of people's lived experiences.



THE BARRIERS

We provided a list of barriers that sometimes keep people from getting involved in philanthropy to see which obstacles get in their way the most...

	FEELS LIKE A WALL	FEELS LIKE A SPEED BUMP	NOT REALLY AN OBSTACLE FOR ME
Lack of time or bandwidth	48%	45%	3%
Feeling emotionally burnt out or overwhelmed	48%	35%	13%
Too many competing priorities or obligations	29%	58%	10%
Not being asked or invited to participate	3%	55%	39%
Not feeling qualified or experienced enough	16%	48%	32%
Not being part of the right networks	10%	45%	42%
Not knowing where to start	23%	32%	42%
Feeling judged by others (family, community, peers)	13%	35%	48%
Feeling disconnected from community or institutions	13%	35%	48%
Fear of saying or doing the wrong thing	10%	42%	45%
Worrying about blowback or controversy around certain causes	6%	39%	52%
Feeling like my contribution won't matter	0%	45%	52%

It's not just what they do—it's how it feels. And sometimes, it feels heavy.

Even committed leaders hit emotional walls. When clarity fades—because of overload, messy dynamics, or moral fog—motivation dips. **It's not a crisis of commitment; it's the weight of wanting to help and not knowing how.** What brings them back? Shrinking the scope, regaining control, and reconnecting with trusted people.

WHAT DRAINS ENERGY

- **Overwhelmed and Underpowered**
In moments of crisis, they're flooded with appeals but unsure where to turn—and when the problem feels too big, their contribution can feel too small to matter.
- **Governance grind or broken trust**
Board politics, gratitude gaps, or gifts used off-plan undermine confidence.
- **Frustration with the system**
The nonprofit world feels slow, under-resourced, and reactive.
- **Same few people doing everything**
Burnout builds when leadership relies on the same inner circle.
- **Awkward power dynamics**
Blurred lines between funders, friends, and grantees create social strain.
- **Moral fog and fear of missteps**
Topics like Israel, elections, or antisemitism create pressure to get it "just right."

HOW THEY REGAIN THEIR FOOTING

- Shrink the target**
Pick one org, one goal, one success metric.
- Gut-check with peers**
Ask: What would actually help this month?
- Pause and right-size**
Adjust commitments to avoid burnout.
- Clarify the role**
Align expectations to reduce ambiguity.

When they're stretched thin and unclear on where to direct their focus, even the most committed leaders stall.

THE MOST CHALLENGING HURDLES TO OVERCOME

1. The **dominant wall is time—people are stretched by careers, kids, and constant asks, which breeds burnout and “I’ll-get-to-it-later” drift.** When energy is low, even small frictions (cash-flow timing, relentless fundraising emails, not knowing who’s doing credible work) become heavy.
2. The second wall is orientation: **many don’t know where to start or how to focus,** especially in a news cycle that keeps throwing new fires at them; without a clear map and warm introductions, momentum stalls.
3. A third cluster is **legitimacy anxiety—feeling too young, too new, or under-resourced to be taken seriously**—plus the ambient risk of saying/doing the wrong thing in polarized spaces (from Israel discourse to cross-community work), which nudges people toward silence or safe, shallow engagement.

WHERE PRESSURE SHOWS UP

The Israel + Gaza Bind

After October 7th, many feel pulled in both directions—supporting Israel while feeling compelled to acknowledge or ease Palestinian suffering. They want to express nuance, but fear backlash from both within the Jewish community and broader society. Silence often feels safer than speaking up.

Jewish Identity as a Red Light

Their Jewishness sometimes becomes a reason to pause: whether vetting organizations for antisemitism, worrying about exclusion, or feeling a cause might view them with suspicion. Others grapple with whether donating to individuals or movements with anti-Israel stances crosses a line.

Giving in Someone Else's Name

A common tension arises when people serve on boards, family foundations, or institutional committees. Representing "the org" can override personal values, pushing them to "go along" with decisions they wouldn't make solo.

Pressure to Give (Even When Misaligned)

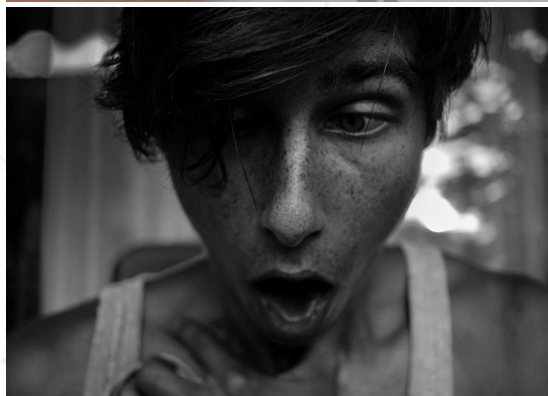
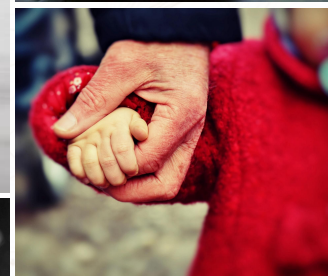
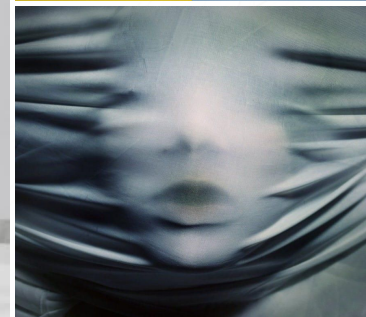
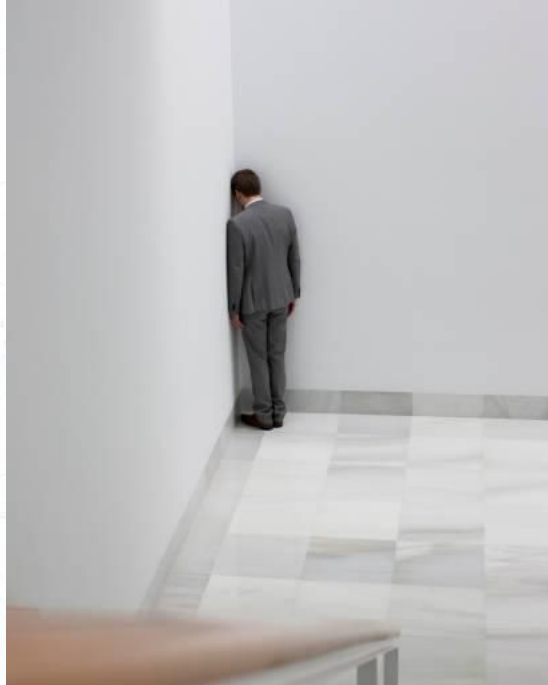
Some feel nudged to support causes they don't fully connect with—out of loyalty to a peer, social guilt, or an inherited sense of obligation. Others note internal pressure to only fund the "highest impact," even if their heart is elsewhere.

At times, community expectations, political tensions, or fears of misinterpretation can make giving feel risky or fraught.

Most participants say outside pressure rarely holds them back from giving—especially when acting on their own behalf. However, tensions emerge when representing institutions, family foundations, or navigating politically sensitive causes. In those moments, people may "go along" with the group or hesitate to participate in giving until the potential impact is clear and vetted.

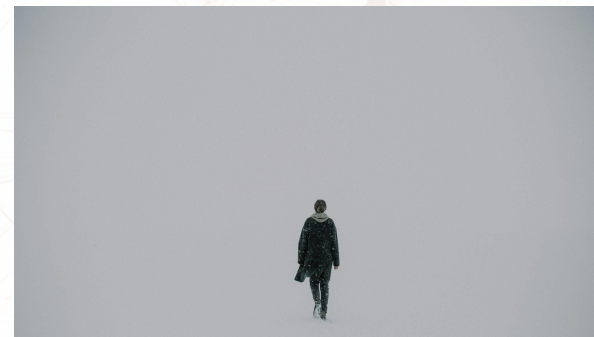
Antisemitism today hits hard—and hits unevenly.

The emotional map is jagged. **Fear, fatigue, and hypervigilance shape daily life**—especially around parenting, travel, and public expression. Some wear Jewish symbols with pride; others tuck them away. **Loneliness runs deep** as some retreat behind communal walls or feel alone even in familiar crowds. For a few, **distance or guilt lingers**. There are blurred lines between antisemitism and anti-Zionism, estrangement from some progressive spaces, and distrust of right-wing co-optation. **But across the board, people are strapping in—not to win overnight, but to endure, organize, and respond together.**





"While I know Oct 7th didn't invent antisemitism, I feel that since then, I've felt much more alone and isolated. I feel that as a Jewish people, we have been left out of so much (i.e. liberal spaces) that have always been important to me (i.e. BLM, environmental causes, etc). I feel that so many people have just forgotten that the Jewish community is not one single flavor but an amalgamation. And yet, since Oct 7th I feel this sense of smallness and sadness."





"Honestly, **it grinds me down**. I was lucky not to have many, if any, experiences with antisemitism growing up, but the recent rise in antisemitism makes me emotionally exhausted. It's painful to see people who I know are trying to do the right thing parroting antisemitic tropes that have become mainstream, and it's difficult to feel like I need to have a conversation with every single person that I see posting such things online."



Some lean in. Others hold back. Everyone feels the weight.

Responses are split on whether or not antisemitism today spurs more action.

- ▶ One third are **leaning in harder**—more vocal, more active, more learning and leading;
- ▶ While another group says “yes, but it’s complicated,” **engaging selectively** amid safety concerns, platform anxiety, and questions about what philanthropy can actually solve.
- ▶ A third cluster reports **no change** because they were already engaged (or see antisemitism as a recurring tide),
- ▶ And a final set is **distancing or disillusioned**—buffered by privilege, burned out by constant focus, or frustrated by communal politics.

Across camps, two themes run strong...



1. A hunger for clarity and education around antisemitism
2. A pull toward community for safety, which can either energize action or limit coalition-building



What they want next is a Jewish response that's proud, porous, and principled.

The dream isn't louder statements—it's deeper roots. People want:

- ✓ Joyful, visible Jewish life—because joy is safety.
- ✓ Clearer education on Judaism and antisemitism—especially for allies.
- ✓ Coalition over isolation—bridges, not bunkers.
- ✓ Room for complexity: the ability to condemn antisemitism and care for Palestinian lives.
- ✓ Less partisanship. More solidarity.
- ✓ New strategies, not just old defenses.



“Working against hate is like scaling a new mountain face. You won't know what you're up against until you're there. You might climb up and up and up, and then hit an obstacle that requires you to climb back down to go around. There's not [a] straight path through hate, and if what we're doing isn't working, or was and is no longer, we may have to return to a more basic campaign and work our way back up. The mountain is endless, and the hurdles constant.”



CHAPTER 4

WHO THEY'RE BECOMING

A glimpse into how these young leaders are evolving—who they want to become, what they've learned, and the impact they hope to leave behind.

Today, they're climbing. Tomorrow, they want to lift.

When these leaders imagine themselves 5–10 years from now, they don't see more hustle—they see more clarity. **Today's doers want to become tomorrow's guides: strategic, steady, and able to lift others.** Philanthropy remains a core part of who they are becoming, but the expression is shifting.

They picture themselves **narrowing their focus—trading breadth for depth—to make a greater impact.** They want to move from showing up with time alone to stepping in with leadership, financial commitment, and a confident public voice. Many see **giving as a shared, intergenerational practice**—with partners, kids, or future families. Nearly all want to **keep learning**: about issues, communities, and how to be truly useful. This next chapter is about values in motion—philanthropy as identity, not just activity. **At the heart of it: repair what's cracked now, so they can elevate what's promising next.**



THE PERSONAL EVOLUTION THEY HOPE FOR

DOING → STEWARDING



From taking action to being a trusted guide for others

EARLY-STAGE → SEASONED



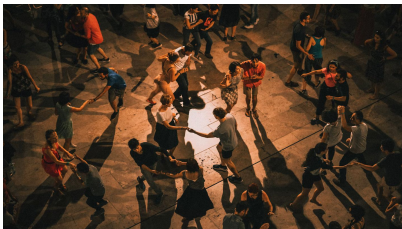
From young listeners to confident decision-makers

SCATTERED → CENTERED



From "many hats" to more balance and clear focus

UNCERTAIN → CONNECTION



From feeling unmoored to having trusted community



“In photo one, I am training in a swimming pool. I am swimming laps over and over again. I am getting my reps in so that I can get stronger and more confident.



In photo two, I am doing an open sea/lake swim. **The weather isn't ideal but that doesn't matter because I am strong, I am confident in my approach, and I will take my time to get the results I want. I'm not in a rush.**”

They recalled moments—both humbling and empowering—that changed how they show up in philanthropy.

Some lessons came easily, others demanded discomfort and bravery. But in every case, these realizations deepened their sense of purpose, sharpened their strategy, and expanded their voice—reshaping how they understand leadership, engage with antisemitism, and define what real impact looks like.

LESSONS THAT SHIFTED THE WAY THEY LEAD

Personal Power & Growth

- Learning to use their voice with clarity and conviction
- Gaining confidence through mentorship, family, or early roles
- Feeling inspired to grow into their philanthropic identity

Action Through Responsibility

- Embracing a “if not me, who?” mentality
- Learning by doing—trial and error as a teacher
- Realizing their example inspires others to act

Strategy & Intentionality

- Understanding how where you give shapes what you stand for
- Balancing donor intent with organizational needs
- Learning from peers and community to give smarter, not just more

After reflecting on what they've learned, they shared moments when they truly felt their impact—and what made it possible.

Whether it was increasing Jewish representation as part of DEI efforts in the workplace or helping organize a holiday party for underprivileged children, the consensus was that **making a difference didn't boil down to just one thing. Many factors were at play, with participants noting:**

- The significant role their **support system** played, whether familial, organizational, or professional
- The importance of **time** (both in terms of their commitment and dedication, and feeling like they struck while the iron was hot)
- The value of **confidence, patience, and persistence**
- The importance of **subject matter expertise**

ADVICE TO OTHERS LOOKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

It's all about hard work and persistence — have confidence in yourself and your actions, and don't give up or take no for an answer.

"Grab the bull by the horns! Have confidence in your actions, even if it's new or you're uncertain."

Be realistic — focus on what's relevant and what's achievable. Lofty isn't always better than grounded. And remember that Rome wasn't built in a day — small steps matter just as much as big ones.

"If you want to make a really big difference, find something that you can actually make an impactful difference with. Don't pick something that is unattainable or outside of your ability."

Don't underestimate the importance of finding the right people — someone with passion or vision, someone who believes in you, someone with expertise or the right means. Your network makes all the difference.

"Start by thinking of a problem they want to solve...try to talk to the professionals doing that work and ask how they can get involved and what will make the most impact."

For most, success isn't measured by scale alone—it's defined by depth, intention, and alignment with purpose.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY...

For young Jewish leaders, quality easily beats quantity when it comes to success—they'd prefer their impact to be felt more deeply by fewer people, even if it means their reach isn't as extensive.

"Quality of help. I'd rather help less people more deeply...than sprinkle goodness like fairy dust. Ideally, I'd be able to do all the things but I cannot."



Concentrated, purposeful efforts are more appealing than sweeping initiatives that are only focused on breadth of scope.

BUT LEAVE ROOM FOR NUANCE

Others, however, see nuance in the circumstances, feeling that success depends on the goals of the endeavor. What matters to them is the achievement of a positive result (a tangible, measurable impact) regardless of scope or depth.

"What matters to me in success [is] the difference you are able to make. It doesn't have to be people helped, or amount given, but it depends situationally on the organization and their needs...seeing smiles and feeling that your actions made a difference is what matters to me and brings me a feeling of success."

While some called the notion of proactive philanthropy “a monumental task” and “unrealistic” in today’s unique cultural and political climate, young Jewish leaders had ideas on how to be less reactive, ranging from attitudinal shifts to systemic change.



For many, reactive philanthropy isn't necessarily a bad thing — a clear need can be outlined and defined, and then efforts designed specifically to meet those needs.

WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO BE MORE PROACTIVE

- ▼ **Build trust with communities and integrate trusted representatives into the communities** they're aiming to serve — this is part of establishing strong yet agile organizational support (networks of distribution)
- ▼ **Begin weaving philanthropy more into daily life.** Talk about it in schools, de-mystify it, and lower the bar — tell people it's not only about money — to bring more people into the philanthropic fold
- ▼ **Shift the mindset for funders** — get them to be long-term partners in an endeavor, or make multi-year commitments to a cause. This has the potential to reduce the mad scramble for funds and allow philanthropies to better anticipate where they could be needed
- ▼ **Move funders away from being risk averse and married to the status quo** — get them comfortable with change and taking chances, trusting that the people involved in the philanthropic organization know what's best, even if it's different
- ▼ Create a closer **alignment between the values of the current systems of government and philanthropic values**

A hand holding a camera lens against a scenic background of a lake and mountains. The lens is held in the foreground, and the background is a blurred landscape of a blue lake, green mountains, and a blue sky with white clouds. The lens is black and silver, and the hand is light-skinned. The lens is held in a way that the opening of the lens is centered in the frame, showing a clear view of the landscape through it.

CHAPTER 5

VISION FOR **THE FUTURE**

From the causes that inspire them to the future they hope to build—for themselves, their communities, and the world

If the world's biggest problems called for a philanthropic superteam, participants knew exactly which causes they'd tackle first.

Global & Civic Priorities

While causes ranged widely, a majority focused on systemic issues, feeling that by tackling the larger issues impacting our world, country, or communities, we may be able to mitigate others, like a dam built for flood control.

These are the key global and civic causes participants identified:

- Protecting democracy and fighting authoritarianism, both in America and around the world, and combating extremism and championing de-polarization
- Economic inequality and poverty
- Climate change and sustainability
- Education, including strengthening civics education and lowering the cost of higher education
- Affordable housing and combatting homelessness
- Health equity
- Food (in)security
- Women's rights
- Immigration
- Gun violence
- Mental health resources
- Championing peace

Jewish Community Priorities

Some causes were related directly to participants' Jewish identity, like:

- Combating antisemitism
- Israel and Palestine – whether it was “resolving propaganda,” strengthening “Palestinian solidarity,” or tackling “starvation in Gaza”
- Strengthening the Jewish left
- Building intergenerational Jewish communities
- Strengthening communication and relations in the Jewish community, both internally and externally
- Supporting Holocaust survivors

**These lists reflect participants' responses to an open-ended question. Inclusion of an item does not indicate broad consensus, and no further context was provided beyond these initial responses.*

“If you feel moved
by something, **let it**
actually MOVE
you. Do something
about it.”



Beyond the world's biggest challenges, participants reflected on the distinct role Jewish funders can play—within the community and far beyond it.

Participants saw Jewish funders as uniquely equipped to lead—with **values rooted in justice, lived experience with discrimination, and a deep sense of communal responsibility**. They emphasized moral clarity, cultural resilience, and a belief that if Jewish funders don't support Jewish causes, no one else will. For many, leading isn't just a choice—**it's a responsibility grounded in history, identity, and the urgency of this moment**.

What Jewish Funders Are Uniquely Positioned to Lead

Combating Antisemitism

"Antisemitism is such a big issue right now. And how we spread Jewish joy and feeling of safety and community. It's essential to our success as a people and it needs innovation."

Strengthening Jewish Identity & Values

"...It is frightening to see so many of my peers...not have a deep engagement or knowledge of Judaism or the Hebrew language, and turn only to institutions for occasional holidays or educating their children at a fairly shallow level."

Building Bridges Within the Community and Beyond

"Community building with non-Jews needs to be a higher priority...Widening the tent of what it means to be Jewish will provide a much larger impact on the health and safety of the Jewish community."

Leading with Moral Courage in the Middle East

"They model what the world needs more of- compassionate leaders who are fearless."

Advancing Jewish Joy & Belonging

"In my mind, if you cannot create a future where Jewish people feel like they belong, that Judaism is fun and a part of their life/family/culture, then what are we actually fighting for? I think, especially now with such division...we need to find a way to come together to build a more inclusive Jewish world—no matter your religiosity, ideology, etc."

On Building Bridges Within the Community and Beyond

On today's platforms, **media is their bridge to community**. Most don't see themselves as influencers so much as educators and amplifiers—lifting real stories, correcting misconceptions, and creating spaces where people can wrestle with complicated feelings. A smaller group leans into an on-camera role, offering a human face and clear voice for a cause. Across the board, they agree that effective campaigns aren't made in a vacuum: they braid **compelling storytelling with relatable emotion and a concrete call to action**—and they land it at the right cultural moment.

Participant Sourced Examples of Compelling Media



"Short, punchy, right to the point. "



"The timing of the campaign and it's persistent strong message were effective. The campaign leaders and the media content didn't say too much, and instead they let the few words speak for themselves. I thought this was effective in stirring emotion."



"The story is everything. I think without a story the message doesn't get across. A good story has emotion, has a character or person you can root for. To me, this was powerful because everyone could see themselves in SOME part of this campaign... I loved the unique POV, the storytelling, the multiple examples. Really strong and stuck with me."

So what makes young Jewish leaders most excited when thinking about the future of philanthropic giving?



New Voices Having a Seat at the Table

“Big shifts in who holds power - I think this new generation (millennials and gen z) have so many ideas, are more open, more willing to push boundaries and cut red tape. I’m excited for the next generation to have leadership roles. I wish it would happen sooner rather than later.”

Seeing the Tangible Impacts of their Efforts

“I am finally seeing pipelines I have been building over a decade panning out. As I leave this particular community, I feel great hope at the people I have pulled into it and up the ladder, and hope they will continue moving the work of incremental but lasting change forward.”

Creative Ideas Taking Root in the Age of Innovation

“I’m excited by next-gen leadership stepping into power with money and new decisions and shifting ideology. I think next-gen philanthropists will bring innovation to the impact space in a way never before seen, which will ultimately help solve old problems in new ways.”

Young Jewish leaders are hopeful for a world where community takes precedence, where welcoming and belonging are innate, and where they can openly—happily—share their Jewish identity.

This imagined future is rooted in three interlocking foundations:

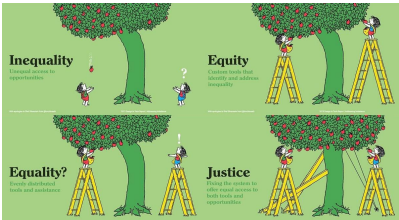
STRONG SOCIAL FABRIC

Connection, trust, unity across differences



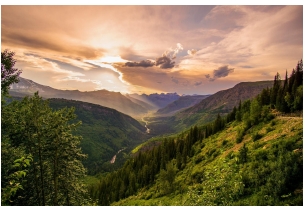
FAIR FOUNDATIONS

Safety, basic needs met, ladders to opportunity



LIVING SYSTEMS

Thriving people, durable institutions, and harmony with nature



And if possible, they dream of seeing the following in their lifetime...

A SHIFT IN POWER DYNAMICS – OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE ULTRA-WEALTHY & PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS, INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNITY

“Changing the power dynamic within the US Jewish community. Helping shift the power from a few wealthy individuals, to true community leaders that support the community regardless of their donation size.”

THE RECOGNITION AND VALUATION OF OTHER TYPES OF GIVING BEYOND MONETARY GIVING

“I would love to see a massive shift in recognizing the value of giving that isn’t just treasure. If you have someone in tech who can get a group together to help build you an app that will let you access a wider swath of your community, then give that in-kind donation the same appreciation as the \$25k donation someone made in cash.”

MAKING PHILANTHROPY A DAILY PRACTICE, NOT JUST SOMETHING ONE DOES WHEN THEY REACH A CERTAIN AGE OR MILESTONE

“I’d love to be a part of a culture and mindset shift to embedding philanthropy into the bedrock of how we act each day.”

"I have weeds in my yard that I haven't gotten to yet—some giant thistles. The other day, I was in my car and looking at my front yard and I saw a goldfinch land in the thistle and start eating the seeds. Turns out, goldfinches love thistle. If I had pulled the thistle, there would have been no goldfinch.

The world I want to see is one in which we are able to think about our connections to one another and to the planet—every choice you make has an impact. Are you

considering others? Are you thinking about treading lightly or are you trampling through? The world is so big and too many people can't see past their nose. I want to live in a world in which we appreciate being connected and truly care for one another. **In the same way that the thistle supports an ecosystem I wasn't aware of, so too does a human safety net. We are all on this planet together and I hope we support each other more."**

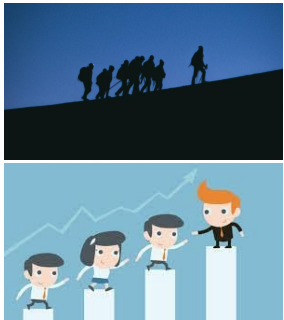


Looking ahead, they see themselves growing into steadier versions of the roles they already play—more grounded, more assured. They aspire to be the kind of person others can count on. The one who brings people together, offers steady guidance, and helps move good ideas forward.

The 6 Archetypes They Want to Embody

The Bridge Builder

Connectors who bring others with them—across generations, geographies, and beliefs. They build pipelines of people and ideas, turning goodwill into lasting momentum.



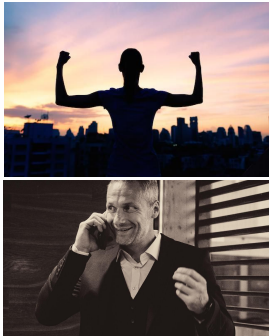
The Strategic Partner

Collaborative doers who power change behind the scenes or alongside others. Whether spotlighted or silent, they show up where needed—braiding time, funding, and trust into collective progress.



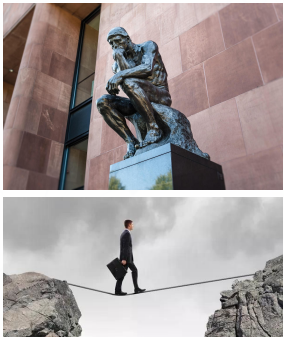
The Challenger

Principled voices with backbone. They ask hard questions, push for clarity, and hold organizations to a high standard—always grounded in humility and the long game.



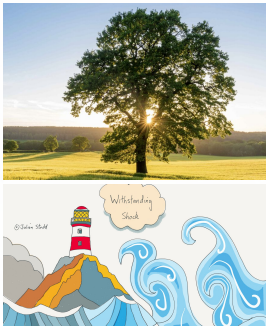
The Thoughtful Risk-Taker

Bold, but never reckless. These leaders experiment with care, balancing instinct with evidence to stretch toward innovation without losing their footing.



The Steady Anchor

Reliable and future-facing, they offer consistency in chaos. Whether as lighthouses or deep-rooted trees, they're built to endure and bridge divides over time.



The Legacy Steward

Focused on the long arc, these leaders want their lives to be building blocks—leaving behind a foundation of values, service, and devotion others can grow from.



The Path Forward

Most feel they're still in training—stacking experience, learning the field, building systems, and growing in confidence. The gap isn't values; it's reps, reflection, and the right on-ramps. They're not asking for shortcuts—they're asking for tools. **This is a generation of humble builders. If we invest in their growth, they'll build the world—and the philanthropic field—we all hope to see.**

REQUESTED TOOLS OF SUPPORT

- **On-ramps to real roles with real stakes—especially in orgs that support next-gen growth.**
They want structured opportunities to practice leadership—through board seats, governance roles, or project-based involvement.
- **Curated intros, issue briefings, and explainer decks—especially across both Jewish and secular spaces.**
They need to know more organizations, issues, and players to give confidently and strategically.
- **Simple decision-making rubrics, values-based filters, or peer-vetted frameworks for strategic clarity.**
They're looking to move from sporadic giving to intentional, repeatable practices.
- **Trainings or templates for peer invites, event facilitation, or collaborative giving campaigns.**
They see bringing others along as part of their role—but aren't always confident in the "invite."
- **Low-ego Jewish learning spaces, cohort-based experiences, and visible models of non-wealth-driven leadership.**
Imposter syndrome shows up—especially around Jewish knowledge, newness to philanthropy, or not having "enough money."
- **Modular roles, asynchronous content, and phased commitments (e.g. seasonal giving circles, family-friendly leadership labs).**
They're asking for support that respects their bandwidth, life transitions, and emotional energy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This generation is *here*—activated, thoughtful, and ready to lead. We're not losing them unless we ignore what they've told us. These recommendations are a roadmap for how to engage them with care, clarity, and credibility. Every "what to do" is drawn directly from what we learned—real needs, real friction points, and real energy waiting to be channeled.

1 Center Jewish Identity as a Launchpad, Not a Limitation

Many participants root their giving in Jewish values and experiences—but want that to be a starting point, not a silo.

What to do? (1) Frame giving as a Jewish way of engaging the whole world. (2) Support causes that serve both Jewish communities and broader civic needs. (3) Normalize dual alignment (Jewish + universal) as a strength, not a split.

2 Show What's Working and Why It Matters

This generation wants to see impact with their own eyes. Trust grows when they understand what's changing, who's benefiting, and how they're part of it.

What to do? (1) Invite them to visit programs, meet people impacted, and see change in action. (2) Highlight how their participation helped move the needle, not just the org. (3) Share both wins and "work in progress" moments—build trust through transparency.

3 Offer Role Clarity and Structured On-Ramps

They want to be useful—not just write a check. Many are looking for meaningful ways to plug in with their time, skills, and networks.

What to do? (1) Offer every giving opportunity come with a "doing" opportunity. (2) Spell out exactly what's needed—how much time, what the role is, and why it matters. (3) Design modular, time-bound ways to try things out (e.g., "one-month project pod," "six-month giving circle," "event co-host").

4

Hold Space for Grief, Complexity, and Hope Post-10/7

They're still processing—emotionally, politically, spiritually. Many feel both more activated and more alone.

What to do? (1) Create quiet, trusted spaces for reflection and peer support (especially across differences). (2) Offer frameworks and facilitators who can hold nuance—not just take sides. (3) Recognize the tension between urgency and burnout, and help people navigate it with care.

5

Invest in Leadership that Doesn't Look Like Leadership

Some of the most impactful participants don't see themselves as leaders—and don't want to be public-facing.

What to do? (1) Expand the definition of leadership to include behind-the-scenes roles: culture carriers, bridge-builders, quiet anchors. (2) Recognize emotional labor and relational trust as core contributions. (3) Celebrate diverse leadership styles in storytelling and recognition.

6

Help Them Build Peer Movements Rooted in Connection and Jewish Joy

They want to grow with others—not in isolation. And in heavy times, joy is not a distraction—it's a source of resilience, meaning, and motivation. Shared learning, laughter, ritual, and pride in Jewish identity can make giving and leadership feel less like a burden and more like a blessing.

What to do? (1) Support them to bring friends, cousins, partners, or colleagues along—make it easy to share the experience. (2) Infuse Jewish joy into convenings—through food, ritual, music, humor, or storytelling. (3) Offer social scripts, co-hosting kits, and creative formats that feel warm, welcoming, and values-aligned.

THANK YOU.

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CROWN FAMILY PHILANTHROPIES

ONETABLE



And Anonymous Support From Next Generation Funders