**SISTERHOOD 101 DISTANCE WORKSHOP**

June 18, 2019

Sisterhood is the key to empowerment, social change and personal growth. “It’s a bond between women who share common goals and come together to move the organization forward”. (Karmetria Dunham Burton)

This is such an exciting and rewarding time for you. Being a sisterhood president garners much responsibility and great satisfaction. Knowing that we create an environment where everyone can share ideas, work as a team and develop leadership skills. You and every sisterhood member are a valuable part of our WL team. This position involves a lot of hard work, dedication, determination, time and energy. You must know your own strengths and weaknesses and you must learn from both success and failure.

Even though each sisterhood is autonomous, it’s the Women’s League’s mission statement that is the foundation that keeps us connected. “The mission of Women’s League for Conservative Judaism is to strengthen and unite synagogue women’s groups and their members: support them in mutual efforts to understand and perpetuate Conservative/Masorti Judaism.”

We want to engage, enrich and empower Conservative Jewish women.

* As sisterhood president, how will you do this?
* What resources are available to you?
* What do you need in order to do your job?
* How do you cultivate and develop leadership?
* How do you communicate with others?
* What are your expectations, visa vi your vision and goals for the year?

These are some of the things we will be discussing this evening.

Let’s talk about some of your responsibilities:

One of the most important things a sisterhood president should think about is who is going to replace you, who will you mentor?

The quality of a leader is reflected in the standards you set for yourself.

1. How will you do this? What do you see as your responsibilities?

* You are responsible for supervising/overseeing the work of the other officers and board members and ensuring that they function together as an effective team.
* You provide the overall vision and sense of direction for sisterhood.
* You are the face of the organization and represent its best interests.
* As sisterhood president you are the spokesperson/representative/external liaison for sisterhood at any meetings or functions you attend.
* You serve as a role model for your board of directors and sisterhood members.
* Be a team player – build consensus, it’s not my way or the highway, everyone has a voice and vote.
* Remember to compromise when necessary - all compromise is based on give and take.
* Be kind – always praise publicly, critique privately.
* It’s important to show respect – treat people kindly even if you disagree with them.
* We are all volunteers – everyone’s time and efforts are greatly appreciated.
* Be accountable – you are responsible for the working conditions of the organization.
* Communication is so important – build bridges not roadblocks by being available to discuss issues.
* As I mentioned a moment ago, a key function of a leader is overseeing activities...

Good leaders develop a strong workplace morale by encouraging their team members. A positive attitude that includes noticing what your team does well is essential to creating a productive and high-morale environment, writes Dan Rockwell. "Do you believe that people with defeated spirits achieve great results?" he asks.

* Many leaders are tasked with mediating disputes or conflicts between team members, leave any baggage you have at home, this is when a compromise may be necessary. It’s not about me as there is no I in team. It’s about working together for something bigger than ourselves.
* Set SMART goals so your vision can be reached in a timely manner. I’ll talk more about goals in a minute.

1. What do you need in order to do your job? What’s on your check list?

* Review your data base, add names, email address and phone numbers of new members, delete the names of women who are no longer members. If you don’t have anyone to update your data base, you can appoint a data base manager, it’s another opportunity to grow leadership.
* Send your region president a list of board members.
* Put the region president on your mailing list and invite her to your events. Be sure to send your yearly calendar of events to the RP to avoid conflicts in scheduling events.
* Be sure that all Torah Fund payments are sent to the Torah Fund office in a timely manner, don’t hold on to anyone’s checks.
* Discuss concerns and future ideas with your board.
* Delegate and encourage team building. (What happens when you do everything and don’t delegate)? You get burned out and you start to resent people for not doing their job. Meryl is going to talk more about this later.
* Act as a liaison between sisterhood, the region and WL.
* Review and update your bylaws and mission statement, are they relevant to today’s sisterhood?
* Read all emails and respond in a timely manner. Share your regions updates, the Shabbat message and This Week in WL with your sisterhood members.
* If geographically possible attend region events.

I’d like to explain some of the terminology that we use.

* So often I hear people say executive Board, it’s the executive committee. The executive committee consists of **key board members usually the VP’s, secretary’s and any appointees who can act on behalf of the board of directors** when it is not in session. The executive committee must bring the decisions to the board for a vote.
* WL does not have a TFVP, Randy Schwartz is the TF chair.
* WL has vice chairs not co-chairs.
* We have Distance Workshops not Distance Learning.
* Its region not regional.

Although many of you may be familiar with the services and resources your per capita provides each member of sisterhood, I’d like to review some of the services and publications that are most helpful.

“**Sisterhood Advisor**” This is a wonderful reference for you and sisterhood board members. Pay special attention to the pages about the website, bylaws, sample budgets, finances and job descriptions. Copies of the **Sisterhood Advisor** can be found on the website at [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org) under **Sisterhood Administration**.

There are so many publications available to you, the **Sisterhood Program Planner, Ways to the Means, Blueprint for Membership, Membership Magnets, D’vrei Nashim, Mishpacha**: The **Modern Jewish Family**, and **Wellness and Learning**. All this information is available on the website, [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org).

Please encourage your members to take some time to navigate the website and download the information specific to their portfolio. I hope you know that the region and WL have a parallel chair for most of the positions on your board. We are eager to assist when asked.

**Women’s League app –** Download the app on your smartphone, its free just by going to your app store and download Women’s League for Conservative Judaism.

**Distance Workshops** – Women’s League provides customized training on a variety of topics covering every area of sisterhood business and leadership development. Women’s League knows that the great training it offers isn’t always convenient for its members to attend. Encourage your board members to register for any or all DW that relate to their portfolio. Everyone can take advantage of these sessions for **free** in the comfort of their home**. It’s very easy to register at** [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org)Distance Workshop chairs are Toby Maser, [tobala704@aol.com](mailto:tobala704@aol.com) and Harriet Merkowitz, [harrietm18@comcast.net](mailto:harrietm18@comcast.net).

**Personal Conversations** provide a forum to address everyday issues through discussions about obstacles and opportunities, using conference calls and/or easy to access webinars. Registration is a click away on the WL website. For more information contact Dr. Barb Levin, [barbl11@aol.com](mailto:barbl11@aol.com)

**Consulting Services** – One of the best ways to get the most from per capita is by benefiting from one of the great WL services.

Sessions are available **free** for every sisterhood for the asking, whether onsite or via Zoom. This is part of your per capita at work for you.

Topics range from membership, leadership, goal setting/strategic planning, problem solving and how to find a president. The topics fit the needs of your sisterhood. These customized workshops are available to every sisterhood. You can schedule a session by contacting Meryl Balaban, Consulting Services Personnel Chair, [mbalaban@wlc.org](mailto:mbalaban@wlc.org), or Sandy Berenbaum, Consulting Services Chair, Services to Sisterhood Chair, [sberenbaum@wlcj.org](mailto:sberenbaum@wlcj.org).

**Did you know that Mentoring** for sisterhoods who need more assistance can also be provided for many positions on the board. Mini trainings via conference calls or Zoom for board orientations or committees are available. Take advantage of this wonderful service.

In the past few months I’ve had several conference calls asking about membership, sisterhood challenges and programming ideas.

**Leadership Institute** – Talk about engaging, enriching and empowering our members, the LI will expand your skills as a leader and enhance your knowledge as a Jewish woman while strengthening your connection to Women’s League, your sisterhood and your community!

Network with other women. Master goal setting and time management. The LI is held twice yearly, in the summer and winter months in various parts of the country. The next LI will be held on Sunday and Monday, July 28 – 29, at the JTS and the WL office in NYC. Scholarships are available from WL and may also be available through your region.

**We have list serves for the following:**

**Preznet** – Have you signed up for the sisterhood preznet? This is an online discussion group for sisterhood presidents to share information. Share ideas about fund raising, programming, Torah Fund and membership. Contact Renee Ravich, [rravich@wlcj.org](mailto:rravich@wlcj.org) to sign up.

**If you have the following chairs, encourage them to sign up for the respective list serves.**

If you have a **Judaica Shop** chair encourage her to participate in the online discussion group for information about vendors and merchandise. Contact Etta Fialkow, [ettafialkow@aol.com](mailto:ettafialkow@aol.com) for more information.

**Creative Judaic Arts –** the definition of Hiddur Mitzvah is to create and make things while doing good. The CJAlist serve is a perfect way to share projects and get great programming ideas. Jody Glass, [jglass524@bellsouth.net](mailto:jglass524@bellsouth.net).

**I love to read as I’m sure you all do too. Women**’s **League Reads** is a moderated online discussion group for members of **Women**’s **League** in which everyone is invited to post comments, ask questions and make observations about the book. Membership in **Women**’s **League Reads** is open to all our sisterhood members. Live chats with the author of previous books can be downloaded. For more information you can register with ltsilverman@wlcj.org or contact Vivian Lieber, vleber@wlcj.org.

To sign up for any of the list serves contact **Lois Silverman at lsilverman@wlcj.org**

**Communications** – Does your sisterhood have a Facebook page, Instagram or twitter account? If you would like assistance setting up a social media page you can contact our communications chair Lara Werwa, [lwerwa@wlcj.org](mailto:lwerwa@wlcj.org)

**We are pleased once again at convention to recognize each sisterhood’s Jewels in the Crown -** What are the Jewels in the Crown of Women’s League? Every sisterhood in our network can be a shining jewel when it offers programs that are educational, provide social activities and community service. Sisterhoods who meet the criteria of a wide range of activities — those developed and sponsored by Women’s League as well as home-grown programs and initiatives — will be acknowledged as the glittering jewels in the Women’s League crown. Awards will be presented at Convention July 12-14, 2020 in Shamburg, IL. Download the JIC awards for wonderful programming ideas. I hope you are keeping a list of all the programs and events that qualify. This is a wonderful opportunity to create a position on your board and develop new leadership. She can keep a record of all the wonderful things your sisterhood has accomplished.

Let’s talk about your connection to the region. As sisterhood president you are held to a higher standard. You represent the women in your congregation. It’s important to know that by virtue of being sisterhood president you are a member of the region board of directors. The mission of the region is to serve as a connection between WL and its affiliates, to strengthen and provide services to our sisterhoods.

Each sisterhood is unique, reflecting the culture, history and population of the area of the synagogue. Sisterhood plays a role in each member’s life, friendships develop and grow, we try things we have never done before and leadership skills are honed. Sisterhoods may vary in size, but here are some tips that will help you in your role as sisterhood president.

Be sure you assign the right person, as each one brings something special to that position. There’s no one size fits all board, it’s important to understand everyone’s skill set. It’s important for everyone to know what their job entails. Officers and chairs should have a clear understanding of their jobs, responsibilities, accountability and to whom they report.

1. How do you cultivate leadership?

You cultivate leadership by enabling and motivating others to act by empowering your team members to make decisions that support team objectives. Don’t tell people what to do, let them know what needs to be done and inspire people to have confidence in their own ability. Give your team all the tools necessary for them to be successful and complete the task; budget, time frame, region and WL resources.

1. How should we communicate with others?

Here are just a few more tips to that will assist you during your term as sisterhood president.

* Have an agenda. Ask your board members in advance if they have something to report so that they are prepared for any meeting.
* Come to meetings prepared. Know what you want to accomplish at the meeting and put priority items at the beginning of the agenda.
* Begin and end meetings on time, don’t punish those who show up on time by waiting more than 5 minutes.
* Move discussions along. If you see comments that are being repeated, ask if anyone else has anything to add.
* Make sure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts. Ask for thoughts of those who tend to be quieter at meetings so they can feel part of the team.
* Provide adequate support, be available to answer questions.
* Organize – appoint capable people to do the task and be on your team.
* Supervise – allow team members to do their job, don’t micromanage.
* Evaluate – did you achieve your desired goal, what worked and what needs improvement.
* Most important, thank everyone for a job well done.

1. What are your expectations visa vi your vision and goals for the year?

Michael Hyatt provides five principles for us to follow:

1. **Keep them few in number.** Productivity studies show that you really can’t focus on more than 5–7 items at any one time. And don’t try to cheat by including sections with several goals under each section. This is a recipe for losing focus and accomplishing very little. Instead, focus on a handful of goals that you can repeat almost from memory.
2. **Make them “smart.”** This is an acronym, as you probably know, and it is interpreted in various ways by different teachers. When I refer to smart goals, I mean this. Goals must meet five criteria. They must be:
   * Specific—your goals must identify exactly what you want to accomplish.

**Bad: Write a book.  
Good: Write a book proposal for The Life Plan Manifesto (or My life in sisterhood)**

* + Measurable—as the adage says, “you can’t manage what you can’t measure.” (If possible, try to quantify the result. You want to know absolutely, positively whether or not you hit the goal).

**Bad: “Earn more this year than last.”  
Good: “Earn $5,000 more this year than last.”** Actionable—every goal should start with an action verb. (e.g., “quit,” “run,” “finish,” “eliminate,” etc.) rather than a to-be verb (e.g., “am,” “be,” “have,” etc.)

Bad: Be more consistent in blogging.  
Good: Write two blog posts per week.

* + Realistic—you have to be careful here. A good goal should stretch you, but you have to add a dose of common sense. (I go right up to the edge of my comfort zone and then step over it. (If I am not out of my [comfort zone](https://michaelhyatt.com/outside-your-comfort-zone.html), I’m not thinking big enough.)

**Bad: Qualify for the PGA tour (Qualify for Dancing With the Stars.)  
Good: Lower my handicap by four strokes (Take dancing lessons).**

* + Time-bound—every goal needs a date associated with it. When do you plan to deliver on that goal? A goal without a date is just a dream. Make sure that every goal ends with a by when date.

**Bad: Lose 20 pounds.  
Good: Lose 20 pounds by December 31st.**

1. **Write them down.** This is critical. There is a huge power in writing your goals down even if you never develop an action plan or do anything else (not recommended). When you write something down, you are stating your intention and setting things in motion.
2. **Review them frequently.** While writing your goals down is a powerful exercise in itself, the real juice is in reviewing them on a regular basis. This is what turns them into reality. Every time I review my goals, I ask myself, What’s the next step I need to take to move toward this goal. You can review them daily, weekly, or monthly. It’s up to you. The key is to do!
3. **Share them selectively.** Share them with your board and people who are committed to helping you achieve them (e.g., your mentor, mastermind group, or business partner).

CONGRATULATIONS to each of you for accepting the position of president of your sisterhood. You’re on this call because you CHOSE to make a difference in the lives of the women in your synagogue.

Sisterhood is an entry point for many women into the life of the synagogue. We find that no matter what our interest is, cooking, running the Judaica gift shop, reading books, teaching Torah, participating and leading services, raising money or playing mah jong, there are others want like us who want to do it too. Sisterhood allows us to find a way for our interests to support our community.

**First and foremost: What is your job as president?**

**Developing your own leadership as well as looking for and nurturing the leaders in your sisterhood is one of the most important jobs in your presidency. This is where the WL Leadership Institute, Consulting services, and Region events and officers can help.**

* To me besides dealing with the day to day operations of your sisterhood, your job is to **create an environment, where all the women of your sisterhood feel included,**
* T**heir voices and opinions are valued**
* **Their efforts are appreciated and are in sync with the mission of your organization.**

. First, get to know the women on your board and accept them for whom they are and what they can offer in time and talent. This will help you work with them more effectively. Be sure your board gets to know you too. Plan time in the beginning of your year for board members to get to know each other.

**Trust the members of your board**. **This involves delegating**, Once your board knows what’s expected of them, give them the opportunity to do their job. They may not solve every challenge the same way you would, but that doesn’t mean that their way is wrong. With a climate of trust, it will lead to greater effectiveness. In order to plan for your year you need to have a VISION and a MISSION STATEMENT, which I will touch upon in a little while.

**Be willing to compromise**. *You may have started with a vision for a project, but sometimes as you work on it, you may find that the final product is not what you had expected it to be. Compromising shows strength.* It shows that you can listen to different ideas and not feel the need to hold on to something that may not be the best idea.

**Establish goals**. Working collectively to establish goals gives board members ownership of the project and this will give them a greater sense of responsibility*.* It will make your board easier to lead as everyone agrees what you want to accomplish. **Mission statement answers these questions:**

**Recognize their efforts**. Praise boosts motivation and engagement. We are all volunteers and we get paid with the acknowledgement and appreciation of a job well done.

Now I want to talk about the importance of delegating. I am sure that we have all been in a situation with having a job that needs to get done and we have thought why don’t I just do it myself? Then I don’t have to take the time to explain it and I know it will be done correctly. It just seems so much easier. Like that Nike ad says, “Just do it!”

There are a number of reasons that people do not delegate. First, some people do not delegate because they feel that **the task is not important.** For instance you may think that asking someone to stuff envelops is an insult. It’s such a mindless task. But we all know when you have a large mailing to do, that it gets done so much faster when you have 10 women helping than when there are only 3.

Some people do not delegate because they think that **the job is so difficult that only they can do it right**. This shows a lack of trust in others and sometimes an inflated opinion of themselves.

Another reason some people do not delegate is because they really **enjoy doing the job and do not want to let go.**

Some people do not delegate because they think that **they can get the job done on their own faster** than taking the time to start explaining it to someone else and then letting them do the job. It may be true that they can get the job done faster, but working on your own can be lonely. There’s a saying that goes: If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far go together. And aside from that you need to build your boards involvement.

If you haven’t updated your **Mission Statement** in years, here are the questions you need to ask yourselves when setting out to write one:

1. **Who** are you?

2. **What** do you stand for?

3. **Why** do you do it?

4. **Who** do you serve?

5. **What** benefits do you offer them?

You can have consultant visit your sisterhood to help you write or rewrite your mission statement.

Before you begin your year, you want to create a VISION. Your VISION is a picture of the future you seek to create. It shows where you want to go and what it will be like when you get there. The more richly detailed and visual the image is, the more compelling your vision statement will be.

Next you need to TAKE your VISION - CREATE YOUR GOALS and PUT IT INTO ACTION!!

Now, take your vision statement and brainstorm ideas with your board. Try to put together a team of women who share your vision and want to take the collective ideas and “run with it”.

You will be working with the women on your board. Your board may have 5 members or 15. It depends upon the size of your sisterhood and what you are most comfortable with.

There’s no one-size-fits all solution to building a sisterhood board. To determine the best size for your board, consider the pros and cons of small and large boards

Ensure you’re providing new board members with the necessary materials and information during the orientation process. And have the outgoing officer define the position **as it fits into your sisterhood.**

Am I comfortable and confident in expressing my ideas to others?

Am I naturally curious and open to hearing new ideas?

Can I be assertive without being aggressive or flippant?

Do I take control of my own life and responsibility for my actions?

How receptive am I to other people’s feedback and critique?

Make sure that your passions and unique abilities are a good match with your sisterhood’s mission and needs.

Unfortunately, because so many have experienced “death by committee” — those painful experiences of meeting over time with a group that produces little and drains your time and energy — some have started replacing the label “committee” with “team” when forming new groups.

As you can imagine, that does little to change the dysfunctional dynamics. In fact, it often makes things worse, because expectations have been raised without changing the approach or practices applied.

A **team** is made up of two or more people who work together to achieve a common goal. Organizing in **teams** allows an organization to benefit from the skills and perspectives of members from different parts of the organization

**If you are on a team, you owe it to your team members to authentically choose to be a fully participating member of that team.**

If you are a member of a committee you are there to represent the best interests of those who put you on the committee. Committees need strong facilitators to help drive decisions.

1. Define the Purpose. Everything should start with setting a purpose. ...
2. Find the Right Committee Members. ...
3. Appoint a Committee Chair With Excellent Leadership Skills. ...
4. Preset the Meeting Times.

Teams need guidance, direction and strong connections between it’s members. Group ownership is cultivated. Teams don't get bogged down in red tape and have a better chance of ending projects on time or early since every member is fully invested.

Each decision made by a team is intended to enhance effectiveness in fulfilling its purpose.

If you are being invited or assigned to a committee, chances are you are there to represent some constituency group(s). While you may want to be on the committee and participate fully, your primary commitment is to the people and interests you represent rather than the committee itself. Your primary responsibilities are likely to provide input and to be a conduit of communication back to those you represent. While the committee may have a goal, the committee leaders do not typically require you to personally own achieving that goal. You simply are there to do your part.

Teamwork, on the other hand, especially high performance teamwork, requires a different kind and level of commitment. It requires that every individual is committed to the same shared goal. The team goal becomes as important as the commitments you have to any other group(s) you represent.

So while committees are based upon deliberation, **teams are based upon action.**

I’d like you to take a piece of paper and draw two columns.

Label one “Committees” and the other “Teams” You will need 6 rows. The first entry under “Committee” is: **Strong leader.**  Go across to the Teams column and write **Shared leadership.** Now go to the next line under committee and write” **Individual accountability**”. Go across and write “**Mutual accountability**”. The third entry may need a little more space. Write “**Committee’s purpose is same as the organization**” Under Teams you’ll write “**Specific team purpose is that the team itself delivers**”. The 4th entry states: “**Efficient meetings**”. Under teams you’ll write: **Encourage open-ended discussion and active problem-solving sessions.** The 5th row says “**Measure effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others.**” Under teams say: “**Measure performance directly by accessing collective work products.”** Then finally on the last row, state: “**Discuss, decide and delegate**” Under Teams say: “**Discuss, decide and do real work together.”**

**Differences Between Teams and Committees**

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| --- | --- |
| **COMMITTEES** | **TEAMS** |
| Strong leader | Shared leadership |
| Individual accountability | Mutual accountability |
| Committees purposes same as the broader organizations | Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers |
| Efficient meetings | Encourage open-ended discussion and active problem-solving sessions |
| Measure effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others | Measure performance directly by assessing collective work products |
| Discuss, decide, and delegate | Discuss, decide, and do real work together |

Which word defines your sisterhood?

Do you work more in committees or teams?

Can you have both? Yes! Absolutely!

Building consensus is the most common way for committees to make decisions. This essentially means the members vote and majority rules. The people who are not in the majority are disenfranchised. If you are one of the ones who voted the other way, when someone asks “why did your committee decide that?” your response will likely be something akin to, “I didn’t — they did.”

Consensus may work for some committees, but it rarely works for a team. Team members must not only own the shared goal; they must own the decisions made in service of that goal.

Teams members must commit to aligning, not voting, or they risk the success of the team. If you find you can’t get behind the prevailing decision, continue a dialogue until you get whatever you need addressed to choose to get behind the decision, even if it is not the decision you would have made if it were up to you.

Our Sisterhoods like many other organizations are experiencing an evolution in what volunteers are willing to do and how much time they are willing to give. There are a number of factors that have created this. One is that more women are working, either full time or part time and so they have less time to give to volunteering. So, what can Sisterhoods do?

There are several options. One is to break down some of those BIG jobs into several smaller ones that will require less time and less of a commitment. With many women working full time, it may allow them to say “yes.” Another idea is to think about having co chairs. This possibility might be more appealing to those busy women you would like to be involved. It’s also an opportunity to get more women involved, and now you will have two women or sometimes three women holding the same position.

When you have all the information needed, as a leader you are not a silo or a gatekeeper, you share all of the resources to engage, enrich and empower your team members!

Start where you are

Use what you have

Do what you can!!!

(Arthur Ashe)

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Berenbaum

Meryl Balaban