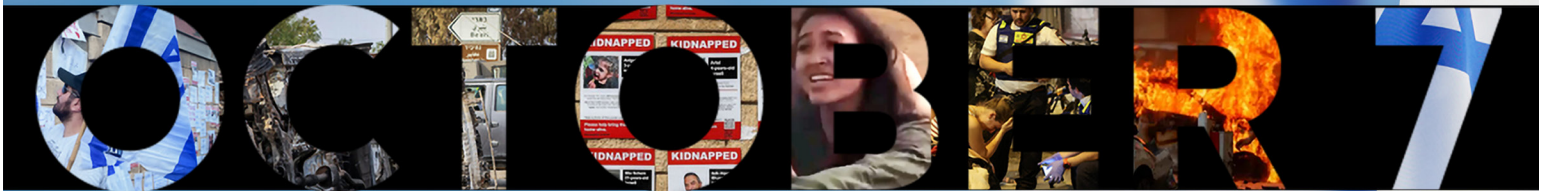


THE DAYS AFTER



BUILDING HOPE

THROUGH GLOBAL
JEWISH RESILIENCE

The Days After October 7:
Building Global Jewish Resilience through HOPE

PLAYBOOK

“Judaism is a religion of details, but we miss the point if we do not sometimes step back and see the larger picture. To be a Jew is to be an agent of hope in a world serially threatened by despair. Every ritual, every mitzvah, every syllable of the Jewish story, every element of Jewish law, is a protest against escapism, resignation or the blind acceptance of fate. Judaism is a sustained struggle, the greatest ever known, against the world that is, in the name of the world that could be, should be, but is not yet. There is no more challenging vocation. Throughout history, when human beings have sought hope they have found it in the Jewish story. Judaism is the religion, and Israel the home, of hope.”

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks | *Future Tense – How The Jews Invented Hope*. 2009.

What could arguably have been “the best time in Jewish history” took a turn on October 7, 2023 with what President Biden called “the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust.” The tragedy challenges the basic Zionist story, which presumes that the creation of a Jewish sovereign state will be enough to break the cycle of atrocities that previously befell the Jewish people. This narrative formed the prism through which World and Israeli Jewry saw themselves and each other. But as of October 7, this story – in all of its divergent and convergent forms – is now in flux.

The horrific massacre, ongoing hostage crisis, war, and heightened threat to Jewish people around the world indicate an unfolding period of increased insecurity and internal ruptures. The existential crisis we find ourselves in demands that the Jewish people harness our hope to generate *global* Jewish resilience, cohesion, and vision. The crisis presents us with an opportunity to write a new story about *who we are and why we are* that encompasses the long-stretching story of the Jewish people.

If we choose to develop the elements for this narrative in the days to come as a joint effort between Israeli and world Jewry, we will have the opportunity to come out of this crisis stronger and better than before. It is in this generation’s hands to fundamentally transform the Israeli-world Jewry relationship and how we see ourselves as a Jewish people.

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The Tisch Center for Jewish Dialogue at ANU - The Museum of the Jewish People, has the expertise to connect the Jewish people and to offer a methodology for building and translating resilience to educators and leaders. Our program will help educators and leaders by providing them with a toolbox to help their students and community members build personal and collective Jewish resilience in facing the current crisis.

The Resilience Playbook seeks to:

1. Frame the immediate crisis;
2. Define and articulate the need for Jewish resilience;
3. Explain the elements of Jewish resilience;
4. Outline how to build it.

FRAMING THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS

The current war is being waged in the physical world and the virtual world, within our communities, among the Jewish people, and from outside forces. All these elements are highly combustible. They are constantly evolving and far-reaching. It will take great resilience to maintain clarity and cohesion in the face of multiple fronts.

1. We are in a multi-front war: internally and externally, physically and emotionally (identity)
 - a. **In Israel:** The country is reeling from the horrors of the massacre, the pain of the ongoing hostage crisis, and loss of life. With this fresh trauma, the state has entered a total war-state-of-mind. These elements meet a high level of distrust of Israeli decision-makers following their inability to stop the attack. While this current moment follows months of protests and internal conflict in Israel, the crisis immediately brought about overwhelming unity and resilience within *Israeli civil society*. This is the country's new narrative of hope. The narrative of civilian resilience, while moving, fails to understand this moment within a greater global Jewish context – *it's an Israeli story, not a Jewish story*. Simultaneously, Israelis still expect and appreciate the support of the global Jewish community.
 - b. **In the Diaspora:** Jewish individuals and communities are deeply experiencing events in Israel in a number of independent and clashing ways:
 - i. **Unity and Pride:** Solidarity with Israel and a sense of connection was at an all time high following the horror of October 7. This solidarity quickly transformed into a moment of pride for the Jewish people and Judaism due to Israeli stories of heroism and the mass civilian response to support the IDF and affected families. It remains to be seen how this pride and solidarity evolves with the war. Historically, Jewish people in America have admired and drawn strength from Israeli resilience and stories of bravery and heroism.

- ii. **Antisemitism:** Jews around the world are experiencing a severe rise of hatred and escalated antisemitism, online, on campus, against Jewish institutions, and in the public sphere. There are now daily acts of physical violence and threats facing Jewish individuals and communities. The majority of North American Jews who have been supportive of progressive causes feel abandoned by their allies and by the phenomenon of denial and outright support of Hamas.
- iii. **Power meets Vulnerability:** The contrast of Israel's power as a strong nation-state with the vulnerability of October 7 and rise of antisemitism create a confusing clash of identities. Israel's military response against Hamas and its resulting rise of Palestinian casualties sit uncomfortably with the humanitarian and liberal tendencies and identity of a great majority of American Jewry. This creates internal conflict on a personal and communal level.

THE RESPONSE:

The events which continue to rapidly unfold following October 7th impact Jews everywhere, uniting us in grief, shock, and fear. Now is the time for *global Jewish resilience* to serve as a *Global Jewish Iron Dome* in the days to come. We can build this resilience through building our narrative.

[Resilience](#) is the ability to transcend a crisis while adapting to a changing reality, minimizing harm, and preserving core values and sense of identity.

Jewish resilience is the capacity of a Jewish individual or community to have a strong enough sense of Jewish identity and purpose in times of crisis facing Israel and the Jewish people. It is the ability to manage disappointments with Israel and the Jewish community while staying in the tribe. It allows us to hold our power on one hand (the might of a nation-state) with the vulnerability that comes with antisemitism in its various forms. Jewish resilience understands and anticipates the rise of hate against the Jewish people. Jewish resilience allows us to have hope for a brighter Jewish future. Resilience is practiced through the narrative we tell ourselves about where we come from, what we believe and do, and why. The following guide further defines the components of this resilience and how to build it.

ELEMENTS OF JEWISH RESILIENCE (ON A PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE LEVEL)

1. **Thick Jewish Solidarity:** Solidarity comes out of a sense of peoplehood, the idea that *Kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*, that every Jew is responsible for another. Prioritizing solidarity as a value is an organizing mindset. It can be utilized to think clearly, determine priorities and make decisions in a crisis. Further, solidarity is an antidote to the loneliness and hand wringing that can arise in response to high-stress time. Jewish solidarity extends beyond time and space, creating a vertical connection between those who came before us and will come after us, and a horizontal connection with Jews around the world. A thick solidarity holds even in times of internal disagreements, not just in response to outside enemies.
2. **Leadership:** Individuals look to institutions and leaders in positions of authority and power to lead them through moments of crisis by providing clarity, organization, and direction. This crisis hit at a moment of significant distrust in the Israeli government and a lack of high-level global Jewish leaders to generate consensus (Think, a Justice Louis Brandeis, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, etc.). The surprising nature of the crisis only increased the existing distrust. In Israel, civil society filled in the “governance gap” by creating a network of civilian volunteer leaders who coordinate with each other to lead resilience efforts. Jewish community and institutional leaders around the world are and must do the same. “Governance” and leadership is to be transitioned into the hands of community leaders – lay and professional, rabbis, educators, and parents who see themselves as empowered to provide the necessary clarity and direction in this crisis. This global leadership network must effectively work and communicate with each other in coalition.
3. **Smart Bitachon:** “*Bitachon*” is security in Hebrew. In a Jewish context, it refers to Trust. This can be Trust in a higher power, to [our parents](#) and families, and community, to our institutions, to ourselves. This trust and security must be cultivated through practical measures, i.e., physical security and functioning institutions, as well as a level of loyalty and confidence in Jewish institutions. “Smart security” outsources a reasonable amount of authority to the institutions while not forfeiting a level of personal responsibility, independence, and action. Additionally, solidarity adds to a sense of security. The Israeli public function best when they feel the full power of the Jewish people behind them. And vice-versa.
4. **Hope for the Future.** Solidarity is most easily cultivated through trauma. It is most transformative when cultivated through hope. This hope is nurtured in the mind. It is articulated in vision. Hope is fuel to generate a sense of a personal and collective mission. The relationship between Israel and world Jewry and the definition of ourselves as a Jewish people are in motion. Now is the time to build a hopeful vision for the Jewish future each of us desire and to believe that we have the courage and power to bring it about.

5. **Narrative:** *Resilience is born out of the ability to find this hope in a trauma.* Hope is exercised through the practice of a certain type of narrative. This narrative is an *oscillating one* – it communicates with both the individual and others around the message: *“My ancestors fell. And then they rose. Now, we have fallen, and just like those who came before us, we will rise.”*

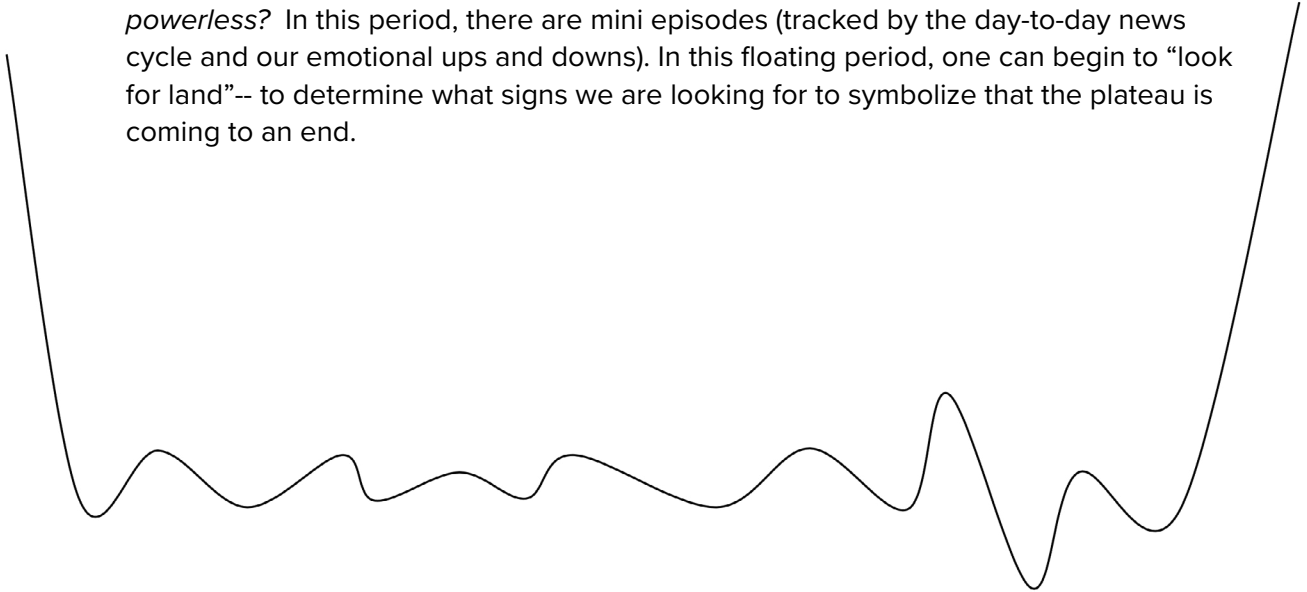
HOW TO CULTIVATE JEWISH RESILIENCE

1. **Realize you can build and teach resilience as a mindset.** Research shows that a one-hour intervention for high school-age students on how to build a growth mindset can have tangible results in the students’ mindset and subsequent performance. Like a muscle, resilience can be cultivated, exercised and utilized. Educators can define, communicate, and teach this mindset



2. **Create an oscillating narrative.** In the aftermath of September 11, a [research team at Emory University](#) discovered that youth who receive an oscillating family narrative are most resilient when faced with a crisis based on their understanding that they and their ancestors have navigated through challenging times, and the expectation that they, too, will experience them. On an oscillating narrative:
 - **This narrative is vertical:** It stretches through historical time. According to Emory University’s research, individuals need to maintain a sense of coherence post-trauma. This can be done using “*seder logic*” - connecting the current crisis within a long arc of history: “This is a story about me, and the Jewish people who came before me and will come after me. **We** were present – *in Egypt, at Mount Sinai, in the concentration camps, at the Creation of the State of Israel, at the Pittsburgh Tree of Life Shooting, and on October 7, 2023. Just like “we” got through it then, we will get through it now and in the future.*”
 - **This narrative is horizontal:** – A narrative can be expanded to include others in its scope. It can and ought to be framed in a larger global Jewish context. In particular, this encourages Israelis to incorporate world Jewry into their narrative. It inspires a narrative of solidarity beyond generational, political, or geographical divides. *It’s a story about me, the Jew to my left and to my right.*”

- **This narrative has plateaus:** Within the “highs” and “lows” of this narrative, there are periods of quiescence. Following a turn, the story line doesn’t immediately go up or down. In fact, in this space, we are in both an up and down – one has not fully let go of the high (the previous mindset and reality) and is still processing the shock and consequences of the initial fall. This creates great confusion - *am I powerful or powerless?* In this period, there are mini episodes (tracked by the day-to-day news cycle and our emotional ups and downs). In this floating period, one can begin to “look for land”-- to determine what signs we are looking for to symbolize that the plateau is coming to an end.



- **The narrative protects us from surprises:** The idea that antisemitism could be eradicated with the State of Israel was a false expectation. Antisemitism will always exist – with every generation it takes on new forms and strains. Moving forward, accept this reality and function with greater clarity. *“In our past, there were ups and downs, which tells me there will continue to ups and downs in the future.”*
3. **Embrace this moment as a fundamental turning point in the previous narrative.** There was “the day-before” and “the day-after” October 7. The day-after narrative is already forming. With so much out of our control, we have autonomy in how we want to tell and harness this narrative.
 4. **Now cultivate and practice this narrative.** Tell your own story from October 7 until today, tell the story you were told by those who came before you, tell the story you told on October 6, consider the story you want to tell to others about who you are, what you’ve experienced, and where you come from. Consider how you want to tell this story to future generations. After you’ve cultivated this story for yourself as a personal practice, tell it to someone else and ask for theirs in return.

5. **Choose to Hope.** *Hope is the belief that the future will be better than the present and we have the power to make it so.*
- **Find stories of hope and hold on to them.** Even Rachel Goldberg-Polin, whose son, Hersh, is a hostage in Gaza, was able to find [“a whisper of hope”](#) within her suffering in the story of a Bedouin man who risked his life to protect a group of Israelis.
 - **Consider symbols for yourself that will represent hopeful turning points.** Articulate the signs you are looking for and then recognize them when they occur as metrics of progress. This could include the return to a certain routine, the release of hostages, a calmer campus climate.
 - **Find hope in the friendship of allies.** [As Rabbi Sharon Brous said](#), “I know in my heart and I want you to know in yours that we are not as alone as we feel... It is the human instinct to key in on what’s missing, often at the expense of what is present right before us.” Be grateful for the clarity of true friendships that rise to the top.
 - **Look for hope in the stories of our past – personal and collective.** Those who came before us demonstrated great resilience, clarity, and vision within the darkest moments of our family and collective Jewish history. These stories give us strength to know that just like “back then,” we too, have the strength to prevail.
 - **Find your “Why.”** If you know it, reinforce it. Each of us has a mission. Defining our mission, in general, and in a crisis, in particular, is what allows for the hope of a better future to triumph over the despair of a lost past. It activates our most inner core, from which true clarity and joy come through.

*“Only with the compass of vision
in our hands will we find our
way in the stormy waters of our
conflicting times.”*

David Ben-Gurion | *Vision and Path*, Volume 1, p. 26. 1949.