

Collaborative Leadership Among Professionals

The RE-IMAGINE Project seeks to support significant, long lasting, far reaching change instead of small changes with vanishing effects. Our experience reveals that professionals play a key role in making this happen. Professionals who actively seek to work collaboratively with one another and with their lay people are able to generate and sustain the change they seek. The following explores ways professionals can exercise leadership along a continuum of collaboration with one another.

Practice Professional Collaboration By:

- Making regular times for communication.
- Using inquiry, reflection and study to explore ideas (e.g., as practiced in RE-IMAGINE). Cultivate what Peter Senge, leading theorist of systems thinking and change, calls “the capability to converse in ways that nurture reflection and inquiry, to build shared understanding, and to coordinate effective action” (*p. 45 Senge, The Dance of Change*).
- Developing shared language and values that support your vision and goals (e.g. we are a Shabbat-centered community, we are a Jewish home with multiple gateways for all learners).
- Creating shared strategies for achieving your goals.
- Building a trusting relationship with mutual respect and support.
- Advocating for one another in the private and public spheres.
- Sharing responsibility, ownership, passion and commitment to vision/initiative with one another.
- Demonstrating appreciation for the critical role that each of you plays.

Text study: Please read together both the sacred text and the case study below and then answer the questions that follow.

The Lord said to Aaron, “Go to meet Moses in the wilderness.” He went and met him at the mountain of God, and he kissed him. Moses told Aaron about all the things that the Lord had committed to him and all the signs about which He had instructed him. Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. Aaron repeated all the words that the Lord had spoke to Moses, and he performed the signs in the sight of the people, and the people were convinced. (Exodus 4: 27-30)



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For many years the rabbi and the educator at Congregation B'nei Torah had worked hard to develop a solid working relationship. The rabbi never missed an opportunity to praise the educator's accomplishments within the religious school. The educator consistently supported the rabbi whenever parents shared concerns with her. Congregants viewed the two as a great team because they seemed to get along so well.

Recently, the congregation decided to participate in a process of rethinking the educational program. Both the rabbi and the educator were asked to be part of a steering committee, something which had rarely happened in the past. As the process of articulating their hopes and dreams for the school evolved, it became clear the rabbi and the educator held very different views of the future. This came as a surprise to both of them as they had always assumed they saw things from a shared perspective. Neither wanted to challenge the views of the other in front of the lay people involved in the project and so both tended to give vague responses when it came time to share their ideas.

1. Reflecting on the ways listed above to practice professional collaboration, in what ways did Aaron and Moses succeed in doing so? In what ways did the rabbi and educator from B'nei Torah succeed in doing so?
2. In each case, what could Moses and Aaron, the rabbi and the educator have done to practice professional collaboration more effectively?
3. What typifies your professional collaboration now? In what ways could you enrich your collaboration so you can work together to make long lasting, far reaching, and significant change?

