

## April Newsletter 2019 - Nisan 5779

*A Happy And Sweet Passover To All*

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### The Reform Pay Equity Initiative: Copy Us, Please

On this Equal Pay Day it is important to note that the gender-based pay gap is a #metoo issue, meaning the societal norms which deny women physical and psychological safety also lead to women being underpaid. The wage gap is the financial dimension of gender harassment. And, unfortunately, no community is immune from misogyny or pay inequity. Not even the Reform Movement with its foundational principles of gender equality and social justice. While our Movement has vocally advocated for equality in the national workplace for decades upon decades, we have not turned that critical eye on ourselves. Now, finally, a Movement-wide partnership to address the wage gap directly is making important progress, while creating a model and resources for all.

In its third year, the Reform Pay Equity Initiative (The beginning of RPEI's work is documented here.) continues its comprehensive approach to the wage gap within the Reform Movement, striving to influence the employment practices of 900+ congregations and over 1.8 million Reform Jews. This partnership of the seventeen organizations under the Reform Movement umbrella supports the female Jewish professionals of the Movement, while at the same time it provides resources and trainings for our institutions and congregations to ensure unbiased hiring and contract negotiations. In addition, the resources and learning shared by this Initiative are open to everyone, not only one type of Jewish professional and not exclusively the members of the Reform Movement. RPEI is fueled by generous funding from the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York and women's rights activist Audrey Cappell.

Foremost, RPEI has educated the leaders of our organizations concerning the complexities of the pay gap and how it manifests itself in our Movement. In turn, each has openly shared the work of the separate entities, creating synergy in our efforts to narrow the

wage gap. We have learned how to better collect and analyze the compensation data of our Jewish professionals; we have also recognized the limitations of data collection.

RPEI has sought ways to maximize transparency, which is a powerful tool against the wage gap. We have encouraged colleagues to share compensation data with each other and to better utilize the salary studies and surveys provided by their professional organizations. But most importantly, the placement commissions of these professional organizations are in the process of requiring or strongly recommending synagogues participating in the placement process list a proposed salary range, instead of leaving the information blank or saying, “commensurate with experience.” The Joint Commission on Rabbinic Placement (URJ and Central Conference of American Rabbis) has already made this mandatory, while the American Conference of Cantors (ACC) educates synagogues on Pay Equity issues, asking them to list a salary range. The ACC has not moved to a mandatory model due to the wide breadth of years of experience individuals bring to cantorial positions.

We have invested in educating professionals and lay leaders, speaking at Reform Movement gatherings: major organizations’ board meetings, social action forums, numerous conferences, and at our Reform seminary, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. RPEI has engaged experts to teach negotiation skills for women and Jewish ethical employment in many of these forums. We have urged our Jewish professionals to be active partners by educating their congregations by using their different expert educational modes: teaching, preaching, writing, singing about the wage gap, especially around Equal Pay Day. Many women have sought help navigating their personal wage gap; Reform congregations have reviewed their compensation structures. In addition, non-Reform Movement organizations, Jewish professional groups, and seminaries have requested input to understand the best practices of documenting and amending pay inequities.

RPEI has created important resources, all outward facing. Filled with information and guidance, the Reform Pay Equity Initiative website is hosted by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) but is accessible to all. There visitors will find topical resource tabs, including on negotiation skills, teaching & preaching, and implicit bias, but more importantly, there are two curated portals, one for employees and another for employers, meaning for both Jewish professionals and lay leaders employment stakeholders. These portals direct the visitor towards the resources customized to their needs.

An important resource create by RPEI and found on its website is The Reform Jewish Quarterly fall 2018 issue. It contains a symposium on Pay Equity with twelve articles exploring the topic. There are study guides, providing instant lessons tailored to adult education, board training, or search/hiring committee training. The CCAR has generously made these articles and study guides open to the public without the usual fee.

In the coming months there will be an in-depth ‘negotiation skills for women’ tool and an implicit bias training for search committees. The website will continue to evolve to provide the best educational materials, interventions, and training materials for employees and

employers. The seventeen organizations of RPEI will further educate our Movement and imbed Jewish ethical employment practices into every stage of hiring and employment.

The members of the Reform Pay Equity Initiative invite others, both within the Jewish community and beyond, to make use of our model and resources. Copy us, please.

*Rabbi Mary L. Zamore*  
*WRN Executive Director*

*Rabbi Marla Feldman*  
*WRJ Executive Director*

*This is was originally published in eJewishPhilantropy on April 2, 2019.*

## **Rabbinic Training**

**Rabbi as Supervisor: The Art of Coaching\***  
**with Linda Rich**  
(\*not just for supervisors)

**Monday, May 13, 2019 at 1:00 pm ET**

This session introduces a range of coaching techniques that can be used to deepen conversations, build relationships, solve problems, increase motivation, and develop others. Each participant chooses the tools that work best for her, and integrates these into her work.

**[Click here to Register for this learning session!](#)**

Linda Rich is a consultant, executive coach and specialist in leadership and organizational development. Her focus is now on the nonprofit and faith-based sectors after years in the corporate world. Linda has consulted to organizations and congregations on issues that include strategic planning, governance, team building, mergers and organizational change. She's facilitated workshops and retreats for the Alban Institute, the JTS Rabbinic Training Institute, Clergy Leadership Incubator (CLI), AJR, and The Jewish Board, among others. She's worked with a variety of federations, including those in the Berkshires, Philadelphia and Rockland County. Prior to entering consulting, Linda held several positions at a major financial services firm and later ran a 360-feedback business. She serves as practice leader for Coaching & Mentoring at UJA-Federation of NY's Pro-Bono Consulting unit and sits on UJA's ACE (Agency Capacity and Excellence) Committee. Linda is the creator of Wandering Jews, a monthly curated listing of Jewish-interest lectures in NYC, which is hosted and

distributed by Limmud NY. She holds an MBA from NYU, accreditation from the Association for Coaching, and certifications in a variety of feedback and development tools.

## Reflections From the CCAR Convention

Many milestones were marked at the April 2019 CCAR Convention in Cincinnati, most notably the installation of Rabbi Hara Person as our next Chief Executive on this 130th anniversary of our rabbinical organization founded by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise. The shacharit service and her words that morning were inspirational. The WRN dinner saw its largest attendance ever at a CCAR Convention with nearly 140 attendees. At the dinner we studied the text of Zelophehad's Daughters and discussed the times in our own lives when we had to advocate for ourselves. It was powerful to be together as a community. Yet there is another convention program that lingers in my mind: On Tuesday morning, April 2 (aka Equal Pay Day), the CCAR's Task Force on the Experience of Women in the Rabbinate presented "Wising Up."

The program began with a series of monologues depicting true stories that our women colleagues endure since HUC-JIR began ordaining women in 1972. The scenarios, presented by colleagues in dramatic readings, spanned the spectrum from disrespectful and inappropriate comments to sexual harassment and inappropriate touch. This theatrical presentation brought me to tears several times, and evoked frustration, anger and disbelief. For example, the scenarios described absurd, uncivil comments said to a chaplain in the hospital and a prospective congregant who says a disgusting, harassing line to the rabbi after services. Following the monologues there was an opportunity for dialogue, split into two separate conversations. The first allowed those present to reflect on the stories we just heard. The second discussion directed participants to self-select and engage in a conversation within various themes: allies, commenting on appearance, harassment, and more.

In this second set of conversations, we could choose to dialogue with only male identified colleagues, only female identified colleagues, or mixed genders. I wish that we had had more time for conversation, but it was a good beginning. While members of the Women's Rabbinic Network have been sharing our experiences and addressing these issues since the WRN began in 1978, this CCAR convention marked the first time that our male colleagues have been brought into the conversation face-to-face, reflecting on our stories.

Thank you to Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, Amy Schwartzman and the other colleagues on the Task Force for helping to move the conversation to one among all our colleagues. We have before us the challenge to change the culture that exists in our Jewish communities and in society at large. At the end of the discussion each of us was asked what we pledge to do to help bring about a shift in these narratives. Whether or not you were at the Convention, what might you pledge to change the culture?

*Rabbi Amy L. Memis-Foler*

Co-President, WRN

[Click here to view photos from the dinner!](#)

## Mazal Tov to the Upcoming HUC-LA Ordinees



The WRN *Vatikot* shared things they wish they knew at ordination and the biggest surprises of their early career years. Special thanks to Nora Feinstein, WRN student ambassador to HUC-LA, Karen Bender for guiding the conversation, Beth Lieberman for the Blessings and behind the scenes help and Karen Fox for hosting. The ordines loved their Swag, *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women Rabbis* signed by all the rabbis who were present. A precious moment for all!

Soon, you will each have a new name, which is *moriteinu harabba*, our teacher, the rabbi.

You might be feeling, Will I know enough? Will I be enough? Remember to tell yourself: Yes, and yes. Marcia Falk's Friday night blessing is spot on for this moment in time.

Julie, Lexi, Joanne, Elana, Leah, and Lily,  
 הַיְי אֲשֶׁר תְּהִי וְהִי בְרוּכָה בְּאֲשֶׁר תְּהִי

Be who you are -  
 and may you be blessed  
 in all that you are.

*Blessing by Rabbi Beth Lieberman.*

## **Rabbi Jordie Gerson's Message to Her Congregation - March 27, 2019**

*(WRN asked Jordie if we could repost this message as it contains challenges we all face and values towards which we all strive.)*

Dear GRS Community,

One of the greatest gifts of my professional life has been the network of female clergy colleagues and friends I've developed since ordination. My dearest friends are Episcopal Priests, and Unitarian ministers, UCC pastors and Methodist ministers and female Rabbis from across the denominations - all of us women. Our bond is deep and unspoken - and we

function as a kind of ongoing reality check and safe space for each other; inheritors of patriarchal traditions that are shattering the “stained glass ceiling” and changing models and assumptions about who is fit to be a religious leader.

Because being a female leader in America is still against the norm, and being the Senior Rabbi or Minister of a church is even more statistically rare. Even though it's 2019, in the religious world -- even in the liberal denominations -- it can sometimes feel like it's the 1950s. Reform Jews didn't even start ordaining women until 1972.

This is not happenstance. The Harvard Business Review has found that women leaders - across professions - have to work twice as hard to be taken seriously, and viewed as competent in their roles, and I don't have a single female clergy colleague who has not been told multiple times that they are “not nurturing enough” or “should be warmer” and, in a sense, less professional. Surveys of male CEOs and performance reviews have found that they rarely, if ever, receive this kind of feedback. For our male colleagues, it is simply enough to be competent. And women who are younger, smaller and more feminine are, to a person, seen as less competent, no matter what their accomplishments. Women leaders are expected, the Harvard Business Review also noted, to be all things at all times - an impossible bar to hit.

As the first female Rabbi of GRS, and the daughter of a woman who was a pediatric surgeon when it was a rarity, I function, most of the time, as if my gender makes no difference in my position as your Rabbi, because I truly believe that much of the time it doesn't. But a study was recently published by the Oxford University Press's Academic Insights for the Thinking World Blog that was shared with me which suggests there are, in fact, real differences in having a female clergy person, and I want to share their most striking - and moving - finding with you:

“In our survey, women who had influential female clergy growing up have higher levels of self-esteem as adults, as well as higher levels of education and full-time employment, compared to those who had only male leaders. They are also more likely think about God in more graceful/loving terms instead of a more authoritarian/judgmental way. This is important because self-esteem, education, and one's view of God have all been linked to psychological and emotional health and well-being. Thus, female clergy can indirectly improve future levels of health, well-being, and economic empowerment of young women and girls in their congregations.”

This is not to diminish the successes of my male colleagues, many of whom mentor, support and advocate for women clergy at every step. Nor is it to claim that male religious leaders cannot be tremendously nurturing and effective leaders in their own right. But there is added value in having a “non-traditional” clergy person who doesn't fit the old school model.

Here's the takeaway: if we want to live in a world of equity, we have to model that world. If we want our daughters and granddaughters to become whatever they can imagine: a Rabbi, a surgeon, the President of the United States, the messages that matter the most are the

ones they receive at home, at school, and at synagogue. The only limits to their successes are those that live in their imagination.

One final note: The year I interviewed to become your Rabbi, I had numerous other interviews around the country. The only - THE ONLY - place I interviewed that didn't ask me a single question about my gender, or plans for pregnancy, or how I would assert my authority as a small, young woman was GRS. When I pointed this out to Ken Greenberg and Wendy Schreiber, who were helping lead the search committee, they simply responded: "You were the best person for the job. Gender didn't even come up."

Since that moment, I have become more certain, each and every day, of how truly blessed I am to be your Rabbi. I feel lucky in more ways than I can name to be seen and treated - by each of you - as a professional.

Thank you for being my congregation,

*Rabbi Gerson*



June 2-June 5th, Scripps College,  
Claremont, California

[Click Here To Register Now!](#)

Join your inspiring colleagues for a restorative, invigorating, and forward-thinking Convention featuring:

- Special celebrity guest appearance to be revealed in the coming week!!
- Update and stories from the Task Force for the Experience of Women in the Rabbinate
- Storytime with Sally Priesand
- Hands-on social action project in the community

## WRN Oys and Joys

### OYS

Condolences to Yael Splansky on the death of her grandmother, Eudice Lorge.

Condolences to Janise Poticha the loss of her mother, Revera Bradley Poticha.

Condolences to Rachel Bearman on the loss of her grandmother, Joy Bearman.

Condolences to Naamah Kelman and Leora Ezrachi Vered on the loss of their mother and grandmother respectively, Jacqueline Levy Kelman.

Condolences to Allison Bergman Vann on the loss of her father-in-law, Perry Joe Vann.

Condolences to Laura Rappaport on the loss of her father, Donald C. Rappaport.

- Luxurious suites at Scripps' award winning campus
- Laughter, comradery, resources, and relaxation with new and old friends!
- Scholarships available, please be in touch with Lynne Goldsmith for details.

Check out the [WRN Convention page](#) for details, including travel information.

## JOYS

Mazal tov to Bonnie Steinberg and her husband Daniel Gensler on the birth of their granddaughter, Adira Kinneret Gensler.

Mazal tov to Marla Hornsten's son becoming a Bar Mitzvah.

Mazal tov to Erin Polansky's son becoming a Bar Mitzvah.

**WRN Board Nominations Coming Soon! A Special E-blast Following Pesach.**

## Women's Rabbinic Network - Instagram



Are you looking for material for your organization/ congregation's newsletter? Why not encourage your community to follow the [Women's Rabbinic Network on Instagram](#)? We're highlighting the work of our members and teaching hundreds of people a week that [#ThisIsWhatARabbiLooksLike!](#)

If you would like to be highlighted on the WRN's Instagram account, please [click here](#) and complete this short questionnaire.

[Unsubscribe](#)