

Humanity. Hope. Chinuch.

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The three words that keep reverberating in my mind after spending time in Israel with such eminent colleagues at this time. We are changed as a field by the attacks of October 7. Our responses require us to be driven by humanity as a value and hope as an attribute.

Humanity

The strength of peoples coming together to choose life, putting their own lives at risk to save others, showed the best of humanity. The best of humanity creating a school from nothing, delivering food, clothes, toys. Every meeting and individual conversation confirmed the weakness of the current governmental leadership. The desire to begin again with totally new leadership was continuously echoed.

Sitting alongside those with shattered realities, those who have spent their lives bridge-building for peace, committed to ideological values of a shared co-existence, now so traumatised by the horror of October 7 that their loss is not only of their homes,



their families, and friends—it is the loss of entire identities as peaceniks, being rodef shalom, pursuers of peace. Robbed of identities that wanted peace with every neighbor but can now only perceive there are no real partners for peace in the region. How might Israel make peace without partners? Through hope.

Hope

The opportunities for civilian leadership, grassroots initiatives, and the strength of unity give glimmers of hope for the immediate and short-term future. The recognition and appreciation of the peoples of Israel, within Israeli society and the diaspora, has rarely been so strong. The need to partner with those who choose peaceful resolution, those who choose to live in a shared society, can be the only way forward, surely? In the field, some colleagues have referred to feeling like we are in the Shoah. In addition, the media have reported many times that more Jewish people were murdered on October 7 in Israel than on any day since the Holocaust. I have found it difficult to disconnect from my Holocaust education but I am left with the conclusion that what is lost cannot be brought back. We must look forward and build a stronger sense of *Amiyut*—shared peoplehood. A deeper sense of the interconnectivity of all citizens of Israel, and of shared opportunities to help each other thrive. I witnessed hope in every person I met, from the

people handing out sandwiches to the families of hostages, to those managing the rebuilding of devastated communities. Hope as a shared aspiration.

Chinuch

We are one people. What happens in Israel has a direct correlation to what happens to communities in London, Paris, NYC, San Paolo, Sydney... The horror experienced in Israel on October 7, the myriad of emotions and lack of words continue to overwhelm.

The Israel-Gaza war is being played out for young people on TikTok. Increasing levels of antisemitism and Islamophobia are leaving our youth on a spectrum that stretches from intense fear to disengaged-not-my-issue.

Our educational responses are vital. Our educational responses need to acknowledge Israel's right to self-defence as well as show compassion for those who have lost loved ones.

For some, they respond by wrapping themselves in an Israeli flag, singing "Am Yisrael Chai" and for others, they are questioning "Am Yisrael why?"

Wrapped in a metaphorical narrative of alienation, questioning how they fit into 'Am Yisrael' which

does not appear to recognise the importance of “the other.”

Our role as Jewish educators is to strengthen each young person’s sense of belonging to Jewish peoplehood.

And sometimes, when asked what the answer is, I am left with more questions.

Questions that need answering in a range of ways and that continue to connect rather manically, like a dog chasing its own floppy tail:

- How might we better engage our young people to Am Yisrael as a global peoplehood, with Israel at its core?
- How can we better equip our young people to manage the antisemitism they are facing in the Diaspora right now?

The other questions, around territories, government, inclusivity of all peoples of Israel – we need to answer those, too.