

# 11 WAYS TO STAY IN THE JUSTICE GAME

Working for social change can sometimes feel hard and exhausting—it takes time to have an impact, and progress doesn't always happen in a straight line. Here are eleven ways of thinking about the work, by Avodah's founder, Rabbi David Rosenn, that can help inspire you to dig in for the long haul.

## 1 CURIOSITY

Tap into your natural curiosity to keep learning new things and grow in your work. If you feel curious about the people and issues that fill your workday, you'll want to keep coming back to them and follow the story.

## 2 SOMETHING BIGGER

As many activists know, staying in it for the long haul requires developing a sense of broader purpose in the world, and seeing your work as part of something bigger than your own job or organization.

## 3 MAKE IT PART OF WHO YOU ARE

When you forge friendships with people who share your commitments and link your activism to your core beliefs, you will find staying in justice work for the rest of your life no longer seems like a challenge; activism is a part of who you are, and it always will be.

## 4 EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS

Going up against powerful interests that oppose change requires us to be smart and effective. When you take the time to learn how to be successful, you win.

## 5 MENTORING

Mentors can help us set our sights high and provide much of what we need to stay committed to the climb. When the time comes for you to mentor someone coming up the ranks, welcome the chance to repay the investment that others made in you.

## 6 ANGER MANAGEMENT

Outrage can be a powerful impetus for righteous action—but we must control both our own anger and how we experience anger pointed at us. There's a reason that the symbol of anger is fire—mastered, it has tremendous productive energy; left to burn out of control, it can destroy everything in its path.

## 7 COMMUNITY

Communities of people committed to social change help us overcome fear and stay hopeful and grounded. Building justice-oriented communities may seem like a diversion from the “real” work of social change or an inappropriate use of resources. But not only do they help us survive and grow, they enlarge the arena in which we operate and boost all of our chances of long-haul success.

## 8 KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING

Knowing your destination makes it possible to draw a map that leads there. Having a vision of a changed world helps you know what you are working for, lends purpose and direction to your work, and gives you reason to keep moving forward.

## 9 THINK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

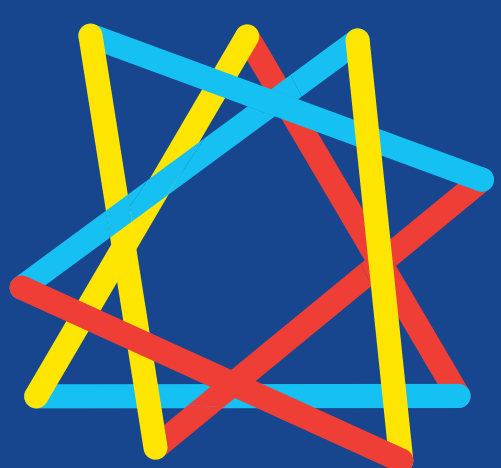
The most successful president of the United States was a loser. His first business failed. He tried farming; that failed, too. When he first ran for the state legislature, he lost. When he was finally elected, he ran for Speaker and lost. Then he ran for Congress and lost, ran for Senate and lost. He ran for Vice President and lost, ran for the Senate again, and lost again. When he was finally elected President, the country erupted into civil war. Everyone is familiar with Lincoln's great victories, but few know just how much he had to stick it out to arrive at them. Some of what it takes to stay in for the long haul is simple tenacity. When you get knocked down, you must pick yourself up and get back in the game until you succeed. Thank God Abraham Lincoln did. If you ever feel like quitting, just think of him.

## 10 SPIRIT

Your spiritual life will keep you grounded and energized as an activist, and provide a sense of purpose that is hard to defeat. Failing to cultivate an inner life separates you from the deeper meanings of your activism, leaves you overdependent on outward approval, and diminishes your power.

## 11 GRATITUDE

Taking time to feel grateful for the fact that we spend our time doing challenging and meaningful work, have remarkable friends and colleagues, and are able to contribute to something larger than ourselves offers a constantly renewable source of perspective and encouragement—two very important resources for anyone in it for the long haul.



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