

beta

the 2019

LIPPMAN KANFER FOUNDATION
FOR LIVING TORAH

culture book

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our values

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To Be Of Use

*The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
They seem to become natives of that element,
the black sleek heads of seals
bouncing like half-submerged balls.*

*I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,
who do what has to be done, again and again.*

*I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters
but move in a common rhythm
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.*

*The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums
but you know they were made to be used.
The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real.*

~Marge Piercy

1. purpose

Our mission—to help people apply particular Jewish wisdom to universal human questions—is our North Star. Everything we do is measured against that purpose.

My mother made me a scientist without ever intending to. Every other Jewish mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: So? Did you learn anything today? But not my mother. "Izzy," she would say, "did you ask a good question today?" That difference—asking good questions—made me become a scientist.

~Isidor Isaac Rabi,

2. curiosity

We're insatiably curious—about everything—and committed to a continuous cycle of hypothesis testing, reflective practice, and action-oriented learning.

It is never easy to demand the most from ourselves, from our lives, from our work. To encourage excellence is to go beyond the encouraged mediocrity of our society.

~Audre Lorde

3. excellence

We don't let perfect be the enemy of the good; we'll settle for excellent. We believe the Divine's in the details—all the way down to the Oxford comma.

Two are better off than one, in that they have greater benefit from their efforts. For should they fall, one can raise the other; but woe betide him/her who is alone and falls with no companion to raise him/her

~Kohelet / Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

4. collaboration

We know that none of us is as smart as all of us. We design our team—and our relationships with our partners—to maximize collaboration based on mutual respect and transparency.

Michael Jordan was one of the rare basketball players who had a love-of-the-game clause in his contract that allowed him to stop by any playground in America, put on a pair of sneakers, and play in a pickup game, something he quite often did. Such a clause might strike fear in the hearts of any sensible management, wary of injuries, fearful of losing its most gifted player in some pickup game where a macho player might try and nail its superstar. But it was something he had insisted on, and it reflected his pure, childlike pleasure in the game.

~David Halberstam

5. fun

We embrace the Jewish sensibility of *simchah*—seeking to infuse our sacred and serious work with joy and a sense of humor.

how we support our team

- + we work out of a light-filled townhouse in park slope, brooklyn
- + we nourish our team with a well-stocked kitchen (and we serve pie every year on pi day)
- + we take gratitude seriously (we send hand-written thank you notes)

+ we aspire to the 70/20/10 ratio in supporting staff professional development:

- 70% on-the-job stretch assignments
- 20% mentoring/coaching
- 10% external training

+ we're committed to civic engagement and give our staff the day off on biennial election days to volunteer at polling stations or engage in nonpartisan get-out-the-vote work

ways of working

+ we pride ourselves on a robust board & staff partnership in which we work and reflect together

+ we expect, value, and act upon input from all members of our team

+ we build time for bilateral performance feedback between staff and supervisors every other month

- + we come together regularly as a staff—and annually as a board & staff team—for **intensive retreats** to review and refine our strategy, learn together, imagine the future, and have fun
- + we have a **book group** that reads & discusses items of shared interest
- + we use **tech tools** to provide flexibility to the team, but we don't let them be weaponized to invade our **personal time**

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