



# The Why and How of Thriving in Jewish Education

May 28-30, 2019



# Connection Questions:

- ▶ When you hear the word “thrive” what comes to mind?
- ▶ Why is it important to thrive?
- ▶ I thrive when I...
- ▶ How do you help others thrive?



# A Thriving Experience: Thinking Positively

Why are we here?



“People were not just saying that they wanted to smile – although smiling cannot be underestimated – they were explaining that they want these activities to provide them with joy and nourishment, with friendships and kinship, with relaxation and stimulation.”

– *Generation Now Report 2016*

“The Jewish Education Project empowers educators and communal leader with the tools they need to help young people and their families thrive individually and collectively as Jews and global citizens.”

– *The Jewish Education Project Vision Statement*



# Definitions

- ▶ **Thriving:** Thriving is the product of the pursuit and engagement of an authentic life that brings inner joy and happiness through meeting goals, being connected with life passions and people, and relishing in accomplishments through the peaks and valleys of life."  
*-Adapted from Lynn Soots, "Flourishing" The Positive Psychology People*
- ▶ **Jewish Education that leads to Thriving:** Jewish education that leads to thriving draws from mainstream scientific research and Jewish wisdom to allow learners to live a more meaningful, relationship-driven, and responsible life.  
*- The Jewish Education Project*



# The Why and How of Thriving in Jewish Education Retreat Goals

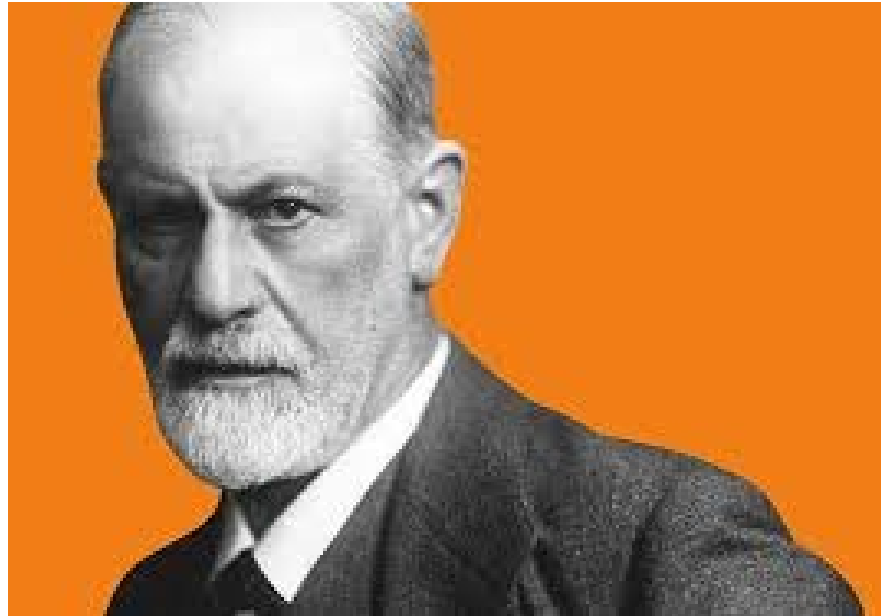
Participants will be able to:

- ▶ Understand what it means to thrive Jewishly
- ▶ Describe what Jewish education that leads to thriving looks like
- ▶ Begin to apply these concepts in their own settings
- ▶ Access information and resources
- ▶ Connect with a like-minded group of educational leaders



# Is thriving a new idea?

- ▶ Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky (student of the Alter of Slabodka) was once asked, “Do you mean to say that the Alter understood a student like Freud understood people?” Rabbi Kamenetsky replied, “Aaach, there is no comparison. The Alter understood a person much better.”



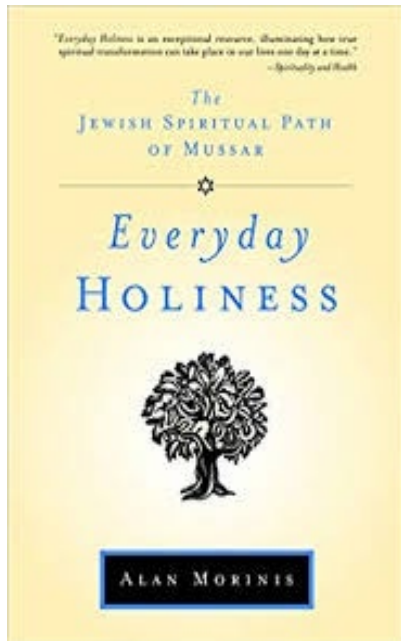
# Is thriving a new idea?

SEL “is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”

-The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)



# Is thriving a Jewish idea?



"Every one of us is assigned to master something in our lives. You have already been given your assignment and you have already encountered it, although you may not be aware that what faces you is a curriculum, nor that this is the central task of your life. My purpose in this book is to help you wake up to your personal curriculum and to guide your steps toward mastering it.

The sooner you become familiar with your curriculum and get on with mastering it, the faster you'll get free of these habitual patterns. Then you will suffer less. Then you will cause less suffering for others. Then you will make the contribution to the world that is your unique and highest potential."

# Is thriving a Jewish idea?

Each person has a Torah unique to that person, his or her innermost teaching. Some seem to know their Torahs very early in life and speak and sing them in a myriad of ways. Others spend their whole lives stammering, shaping and rehearsing them. Some are long, some are short. Some are intricate and poetic, others are only a few words, and still others can only be spoken through gesture and example. But every soul has a Torah. To hear another say Torah is a precious gift. For each soul, by the time of his or her final hour, the Torah is complete, the teaching done.

-Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, *God Was In This Place & I, i Did Not Know*



# Thriving Experience Choices

- ▶ Teaching With Your Kishkas (Yoni Stadlin)
- ▶ Leveling the Playing Field: A New Take on an Old Tradition (Mollie Andron)
- ▶ From Surviving to Thriving: Cultivating Self-Awareness, Resilience, Empathy, and Wholeness through Jewish Mindfulness Practice (Rabbi Sam Feinsmith)

