

Year of Wrestling Together
Community Conversation #6

UNDERSTANDING ANTI-SEMITISM & INTERNALIZED ANTI-SEMITISM

At the most recent *Wrestling Together* community conversation, we explored ways that each of us has been impacted and distorted by anti-Semitism. Our personal stories, alongside historical context, hold the keys to understanding how we, individually and collectively, carry the damaging effects of this systemic oppression against Jews. If you are Jewish, this can be an insightful lens for looking at what distortions you absorbed about yourself as a Jew, about other Jews/types of Jews, about Judaism, and about your connections with people of other groups. If you're not Jewish, this can be a useful lens for understanding Jews more deeply and to have greater clarity to partner in the work of ending anti-Semitism. For all of us, it can open space for more compassion, understanding, and conscious choice rather than reactivity, as we build relaxed, undefensive, joyous Jewish community together that is working to end all forms of oppression. ~ *Rabbi Miriam*

* * *

Responses from the February 23rd Community Conversation

At the end of this *Wrestling Together* session, participants were asked to share something from this conversation they learned or wanted to share with the wider community:

- I began to understand ways in which anti-Semitism has shaped aspects of my life. These are very valuable conversations for myself and for the community. Thank you.
- When we make space to notice how anti-Semitism and internalized anti-Semitism impact us and others, we can begin to separate that from the human in us and others and build a bridge.
- Interesting to reflect on how the anxiety and defensiveness of everyone in my family is likely (at least partly) rooted in fear of annihilation!
- This session made me think about my internalized “stuff” as the daughter of Jewish immigrants where “my success” was their success as Jews who had fled pogrom-infested Europe. But many immigrant families feel that way, don't they?
- Self-abasing behaviours are resultant from cultural conflicts (as well, or more than) psychological conflicts.
- Ethnocentric. Barriers to acceptance. Gut feelings
- I need to reflect on internalized anti-Semitism and the ways it impacts my life.
- Thought-provoking. So interesting to sit with other Jews and talk about internalized anti-Semitism.
- There is hope. This evening made me hopeful, because it was open and honest.