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Central Conference of American Rabbis Annual Conference  
Catalyzing Change in Our Communities

Art Markman  
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"Catalyzing Change in Our Communities"  
Central Conferences of American Rabbis 2019 conference  
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>> Friends in the back, if you can hear me, if you can make your way. We are ready to start our program. Thank you.

>> Now it's real.

>> RON SEGAL: Good morning, friends. We're going to get started. And off we go. So despite what I know are a diversity of ways in which each of us connects with [ Speaking Hebrew ], one thread that I know runs through all of our hearts is that of [ Speaking Hebrew ]. So the opportunity to be able to thank as we gather for this program this morning, first to be able to express our appreciation to the Israel ministry of tourism, one of the sponsors for this year's convention is truly a great privilege.

I'm honored to be able to invite to the dais to share a few words of greeting, the northeast director of the Israel ministry of tourism, Chad Martin. Chad is a native of Ohio, and we are delighted, truly, to be able to welcome him to share a few words and want to again express our gratitude to the ministry's generosity for supporting this convention. Thank you, Chad.

[ Applause ]

>> CHAD MARTIN: Thank you. So first of all, I guess I'll introduce myself. For some of you, I've known you a little bit -- quite a while. You know I'm not an intern

somewhere. My name is Chad Martin. I'm from Youngstown, Ohio. I've had the honor and pleasure to work for the state of Israel as director of the northeast, our highest producing region or office in the world for Israeli tourism for the last three years.

[ Applause ]

However, contrary to appearance, I've worked in this industry for the last 13 years. So I have some special Jewish numbers I'm celebrating here. It's my bar mitzvah in Israeli tourism and my seventh CCAR. If you have not met me, you did not come to the exhibition center -- and we know who you are -- this is my second time addressing you. We will do our very best -- we missed last year, but we will do our very best to support you every year. We know what you did for Israeli tourism. You are the liaisons for Israel in your communities and travel to Israel and we sincerely appreciate that.

The next thing I want to say is thank you. That's how we love to open. On behalf of the state of Israel, it's my honor, my pleasure to thank you for coming to Israel. The last time I spoke -- and I'm relatively sure this isn't because I spoke to you and said this, but I knew there was a lot of frustration governmentally with some decisions made in Israel. We pride ourselves on being apolitical. We promote Israel travel. That is where it starts. That is where it stops. We work with tour operators all over because we want everyone to experience this destination.

My words were speaking with your feet does not mean walk away, regardless of whether that resonated, you sure as heck didn't, you ran right to Israel. What do I mean? My first year in ministry of tourism, we had about 620,000 tourists -- 650,000 tourists in 2016. That was my first year. I spoke here in 2017. Little did I know that we should shatter the record at 815,000 tourists from North America. This past year, we had 1 million tourists from North America. And I can tell you that that is to your credit and we know that because about 40% of our tourists are Jewish. And while, yes, a lot of them do come from Muncy and Brooklyn and borough park, we know that half of the market itself is group, and that's not where the group business comes from. It comes from you. It's because you talk to your communities. You say come with me to Israel. These are people that would never have gone if you had not told them to.

From the bottom of our hearts, we appreciate what you do in advocating for tourism and visitation of Israel in your communities. I can't say that enough. Let me paint a picture of what that means coming forward. Yes, it means higher hotel prices. We know that. It's frustrating. We're trying to get more hotels. A new world has opened up because of the work that you've done in the way of building a derrick to Israel. What do I mean? In the same time period, those three years, we have opened up seven new gateways to Israel. That's not additional flights out of JFK. That's Boston, Montreal, Chicago coming in March. Maybe Israel is going to Disney. Maybe. That's Vegas. That's two flights to San Francisco. Could be silicon valley, could be a few synagogues. That new nonstop route to Israel opens up whole new venues for communities to experience this wonderful destination.

Regardless of what you agree or disagree with, it doesn't stop Israel from being amazing. The last thing I want to say, just to finish up, is that being from Youngstown, I have to close saying that my grandfather grew up in Squirrel Hill. I think all of us -- you'll hear from many more accomplished scholars and other folks about the response to that here, but I want to give tourism perspective because ours is unique one. We don't approach things with tourism at the end, we approach it in the beginning. I was very impacted myself, as all of you were, with what happened last year. The first thing I asked myself, what can tourism do to help build a bridge and help

better make people understand tourism, not just tourism to Israel, understand what has happened to our people.

And that is, I think, tourists of Poland and Israel would be the most impactful way to do that. We have about 10,000 students that go every year, March for the living, April–March. Wouldn't it be amazing if we had 10,000 non–Jews go. It seems to be quite coincidental that Martin Luther King day is only a week away from international holocaust day. If you have any interest in building those programs, which for us as American tourists coming via Poland, we would be very interested in working with you to make that connection. We believe you are the ones that can really help to build that [ Speaking Hebrew ] to our story and what it means and educate this population.

So thank you very much. Thank you for coming to Israel. Thank you for bringing your congregations to Israel. Keep up the good work, and we'll keep the flights a–coming. Thank you very much.

[ Applause ]

>> Thank you so much. This morning, we were led in an inspiring, moving, beautiful worship service in the historic sanctuary where Isaac Mayer Wise once preached. Our service contained innovations Wise would never have dreamed of himself. Women dancing, guitars, this is the strength of our reform movement honoring our tradition while remaining relevant through our innovations.

Today, we will focus our afternoon on innovation to kick off our day, I invite up the vice president of leadership, Erica Asch.

[ Applause ]

>> ERICA ASCH: I am the last person doing an introduction before the actual speaker.

[ Laughter ]

We'll get there. Art Markman is the centennial professor of psychology and marketing at the University of Texas and the director of IC2, Innovation–Creativity–Capital institute. He is a thought leader in the field of reasoning, decision making and motivation. He's written over 150 scholarly papers and several books. His latest book "bring your brain to work" focuses on how you use the science and motivation to change your behavior at work and home and will be published in June.

Through his writings and blogs and podcasts Dr. Markman has brought his insights from cognitive science to a broader audience. I am excited to hear him this morning because his work focuses on insights of science into the work of everyday people. We'll continue our theme of innovation with workshops this afternoon, including a two–hour intensive run by Dr. Markman. We are part of the movement that's sought to innovate while remaining anchored in tradition. We call out for leadership to challenge us to think about new ways in the work we do. Dr. Markman will push us to grow and take wonderful ideas back home to our communities and how we continue to meet the needs of those we serve. Dr. Markman.

[ Applause ]

>> ART MARKMAN: Is this one on? Oh, good. This way I don't have to be tethered to this. That's my innovation for the day. No, that's -- okay. It's -- it's really great -- great to be here. And this is a dream of mine now. I get to talk to a whole bunch of rabbis for a period of time. So if you–all want to assume you're just -- close

your eyes and sit back, that would be well-deserved for all the times that I've had -- that I've adopted that position listening to your fellow rabbis.

So what I want to do today is talk a little bit about -- about change and how to do it for effectively. And one of the things that we have to understand up front is that almost every organization is actually designed to resist change. And not to create change. This is true whether you're dealing with -- with religions or companies or governments. A lot of what we're trying to do is actually set up structures that get people doing the same thing over and over again. In fact, religion is exquisitely designed to do that. Really, you take a set of values and then because values are hard to live up to without a structure to go along with them, then religions create structures. The idea of getting people to gather together several times a day to pray is -- is really, you know, saying our community has to -- has to get together every single day and not just, you know, once a year.

That's how we maintain community. And so what we do is to create structures that are designed not to change. On top of that, religion in particular holds a central place in the hearts of many people. And as a result, they want things to remain as they were when they were young. And so -- and so the -- there's a fundamental tension, particularly in movements that are trying to reach out to people who are not currently engaged deeply in the community. And the tension is that you have a bunch of people who are engaged and perhaps have been engaged their entire lives who want things to remain exactly as they were when they were 6. And then you have a bunch of people who aren't being served by that that you're trying to reach out to and they don't want whatever it was when they were 6. And so how do you simultaneously make the people who don't want any change ever happy while at the same time reaching out to the people who don't -- who want something different in their lives.

And that -- that is fundamentally the problem that you're facing. And on top of that, it's stuff that people care about really deeply. Which means that when you make that change, you run the risk of -- of needing a flame retardant suit in order to stand in front of the people who you've created change for. This is -- I just want to lay out, this is fundamentally the problem. How do we create change that allows us to engage with new people while at the same time not alienating everybody else.

I want to present a couple of frameworks to think about. This is to get us started. For those people who really want to dig in, this afternoon, we're going to actually sit down. I got some worksheets we can fill out, some discussions to have. And we'll dig into this from a work standpoint. But right now, I want us to think about this conceptually. As I was thinking about this talk, I realized one place to start is actually with just trying to give you a framework about what gets people to want to change. It turns out one of the best frameworks for thinking about this comes from addiction research and smoking cessation of all things. And there's a -- there's a -- there's a model called the stages of change model. And what's interesting about it is, it has six stages. I'm going to skip the sixth because that's relapse which we're hoping to avoid.

[ Laughter ]

But let's focus on the other five. So the first of those five is what's called pre-contemplation. This is where you're not even -- change isn't even on your radar. You're just not even the least bit interested in making any kind of change. The fact is most people, most of the time in their lives, are in a pre-contemplation stage for most of the things that are going on with them. And so those people who are happy members of your congregation who come regularly and participate regularly, they're not really thinking of changing anything. And those people who aren't coming, either they're paying their dues but never showing up, or they aren't -- they're unaffiliated in your

community. They're probably not thinking about it either, for the most part. So that's -- one of the things you have to do is to reach those people and move them into the next phase, which is called the contemplation phase.

And in the contemplation phase, you are willing to conceive that there could be a change in your life, but you're not quite sure what it is or how to do it yet. And that's a phase where people are now malleable to be thinking about the idea that they might do things a little bit differently. Now, once you've got people thinking, well, maybe a change would be in order, now the next phase is what's called a preparation phase where you are actually willing to plan to do something differently in the future. And so -- and so now you have this opportunity with people who are in that phase to actually get them to think about, well, what would get you to show up to a service or a class or to just engage in some kind of social activity, to plan for that. After which, you get action which is an actual attempt to do something and -- and that's a -- that's a much more active phase for people.

And then finally what you get a maintenance where having gotten people to make a change, you now are trying to create structures that get them to continue to do this. And I find this framework useful because it helps us to understand the variety of people that we have affiliated with congregations, and it gets us to think about what we might need to do in order to bring more people in while not disrupting that maintenance for those people who are coming all the time. And that's -- you know, that's fundamentally the problem.

So one of the first things that you have to ask is where is your congregation with respect to a change that you're considering. And -- and where are the variety of constituents. So are there a bunch of people who have been agitating for a particular change, or is this something that's really dormant. And so if nobody's really thinking about this change yet and yet you think this is something that's really important, now there's a lot of work that needs to be done just in raising the issue with people, in having conversations. And by the way, I use the word "conversation" advisedly, I actually mean conversation. Okay? There is a tendency for people who spend a lot of time -- and I completely empathize with this -- spend a lot of time standing in front of groups speaking to think "conversation" means I'm going to say a bunch of stuff, other people are going to listen, and then that's going to change their behavior.

And by the way, I got to digress here because I think this is really important. Anyone who thinks that you can get people to change their behavior by giving the right message hasn't actually been paying attention to the Torah, okay? I always like to point out that Judaism has a top ten list. The ten commandments. If we excise a couple of them that have to do with follow this religion rather than that one, all the statements are about behavior change. And really the most difficult kind of behavior change which is do the thing that's right in the long-term rather than the thing that's right in the short-term. The guy that annoyed you don't kill him. The pretty thing that somebody else owns don't steal it. The very attractive person married to your neighbor, live him or her alone. These things are on the list not because they're easy, but because they're difficult. The list is a failure in the sense that human kind does all of the things that are on the list.

So God, only omnipotent deity came down and gave the commandments and failed in the best selling book of all time. What makes the rest of us think we're simply going to tell something to someone and that's all we need to do in order to influence behavior? It's about much more than just standing and talking and saying something, even with thunder and lightning and clouds. It's -- it's fundamentally starts with actual conversation, with sitting down with people and one-on-one and in small groups and

finding out where are you, what do you -- what do you want, what are you interested in. And -- and having that conversation come in both directions to actually internalize what people are telling us about -- about what they want so that we can begin to incorporate that into our thoughts about how we might create the kind of change that we're interested in in a way that engages with people.

Some of those conversations are ones that we as individuals can have. Some of these are ones where we have to engage a broader group of people. You need allies with change. You need to have executive directors who are on board with this. I had the -- I had the privilege of speaking to the national association of temple administrators who were having their meeting in Austin in November. And I started my talk by pointing out that one of the fundamental problems with creating change in synagogues is that NATO was meeting in November in Austin and the reform rabbis were going to be meeting in Cincinnati in April and we weren't all actually in the same room at the same time. And -- and for the purposes of change, actually, we need to be in the same room at the same time. We need to be having conversations about how to align the executive directors and the executive leadership, the board, and key congregants, key people willing to go out into the community and talk to people, to have those conversations and then to gather that information and to generate a little bit of enthusiasm and excitement around a set of topics.

And to be willing to have the difficult conversations, right? Some of these changes will annoy people or upset them. And you have to accept that that sort of thing is going to happen, and you have to -- you have to recognize that -- that people will be upset. And change is difficult. I'm skipping ahead to some things I was going to say later, but I'll say them now. Change is difficult for people. And one of the things that we have to recognize is that one of the reasons change is difficult is because anytime you do something new, it feels a little uncomfortable. So, for example, just think about what happens when you're sitting in a synagogue that is not your own and they use a different melody for something that you've been singing your whole life. Or as you would be thinking of it, they're using the wrong melody to sing it. In that moment, you feel a little uncomfortable. You're thinking to yourself, wait a second -- no matter how open you are to new things, still, there's something wrong with them not using the melody that you were familiar with.

And that discomfort, you know, you're able to say, well, I realize I'm in a different place, so I'm going to learn this. If I'm here for a week or two, maybe I'll learn it and that will be great. If you go in with that attitude, you have this discomfort, but at least you get through it. But now think about what happens when you create a change within a congregation and -- and there are some people who aren't already open to this. They're going to feel uncomfortable. And frankly, lots of people are going to be uncomfortable. It's going to be partly those people who are there all the time if you've made a change, you're doing things differently and they're uncomfortable with that. Those people who aren't really affiliated with your congregation yet who come in and -- and experience this new situation, they may be uncomfortable because it's not something that they're used to doing. When you have that discomfort, now you got to figure out who do I put the blame on?

And without being -- if you're not told who to put the blame on, you look for the most prominent person in the room and it's their fault. So you become a lightning rod for people's complaints about the changes that are made. So it's important when communicating about changes that you want to make that you help people to understand that while you are excited about that change and you think in the long run it's going to be great, it's going to be uncomfortable at first. And let everybody know up

front, if it feels a little strange, that's actually okay. That means it's working. If it didn't feel at all strange, it would mean we didn't make a change.

So if you're going to feel uncomfortable, tell people, look, I want you to give it six weeks. If you -- and what I tell people is do this. Tell people -- imagine that you -- that you came into a little bit of extra money and you redid your kitchen. Okay? And so now you have brand-new appliances and brand-new cabinets and draws and it's beautiful, but you don't know where anything is. For six weeks, you will be really uncomfortable in your kitchen because you can't find anything the way you did when it was your familiar kitchen. And at no point would you say, I wish we'd never changed the kitchen. You'd still walk in every day and go, I love this kitchen, I can't find anything, but I love this kitchen.

[ Laughter ]

And then after about six weeks, you would love the kitchen and you'd be able to find everything. And what you need to let people know is, you're just redoing the kitchen. You are making things more beautiful, but at the cost that it's going to take you a few weeks to get used to what you're doing. And so treat it like a wonderful new kitchen that you've created and -- and give it a chance. Right? Because if not, then from week one, you can find reasons why this was just a dumb idea. I knew all along that this wasn't going to work. And that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy also. What happens is, you continue to get people feeling bad about something. You have to get people on board recognizing it's really important to understand that any kind of change that you create is going to be a little bit uncomfortable.

So -- so what do you have to do to get people into this phase of being willing to even consider a change? So you've got to understand what people are doing, and -- and talk with them, and you need to communicate with them about what it is that you're trying to accomplish. And you need to do it in a way where you give people an opportunity to -- to have some input, even if that input -- and let people know when they've given you input, if it's had an impact on -- on how you're implementing something, let them know. And if not, you know, it's okay to sit down with people and say, you know what, I appreciate the discussions that you made. We're going to try it this way. I'm going to keep your ideas in mind. And please keep in contact with me. But don't ignore the people who gave you input that you didn't use because they will remember that they gave you input and you didn't use it and they're the people who are willing to say I told you so all along.

So what you want to do is to head that off by saying, look, we didn't go in this direction, but I want to keep the conversation going because the thing about creating change is you don't just implement the change and then walk away and let it run. Change, even successful change, is maybe 75% successful when you launch it. Change is like software. Version 1.0 has bugs in it which is why it's followed two weeks later by version 1.1 and then 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 and so on. You keep tweaking things as you go along. So you want people to understand that you are trying something and you're going to fix it. If it's not perfect on day one, that doesn't mean it's all wrong. It just means that -- that it -- it needs to be tweaked a little bit and that you're open to doing that. And that's why you want to keep that dialogue open with people so that people remain engaged, even if you didn't follow their initial suggestions. You might actually come back later, you know what, on further thought, I think you were right, we should probably have done it this way and let's try that.

So you want to have that kind of conversation. Now, one of the things that's really important to do as you implement change is to know yourself a little bit as well. So one of the things that happens with a lot of people who end up in leadership positions is

that many people who are in leadership positions are really great strategically, not so good operationally. And for any organization to function, you need both vision and operation. You need someone who's going to stand up and say, this is -- this is where we want to go. This is what we want to accomplish. This is who we are as a people, as a congregation. And then you need to actually have it implemented. There is a personality characteristic -- psychologists have the big five personality characteristics. They're called that because they're big and there are five of them.

[ Laughter ]

They are the biggest sources of variation between people. One of them is something called conscientiousness. Conscientiousness reflects how much do you finish the things that you start. Okay? So conscientious people, they're the people you give something to do and then they go and do them. The problem is that people with an academic inclination -- I'm going to put rabbis into the bin along with professors -- are generally speaking not actually that high on the conscientiousness dimension. That's not a terrible thing. It turns out there is a moderate negative correlation between conscientiousness and creative. To the extent that you consider yourself willing to try new things and wants to see how you can make changes in things, well, that -- that probably is -- if you've selected for that, then -- then you -- you may not have, you know, a high level of conscientiousness. Universities suffer from this as a big problem. We go out of our way to hire people who are moderate to low in conscientiousness and then we're self-governing institutions, which is problematic.

And so what this means is, you have to understand upfront that there's a -- there's a significant probability that you're going to need help, that you're going to need to surround yourself with people who get stuff done, who conscientious. Conscientiousness has two components to it. One is, do you finish the stuff you start? And the other is, how strongly do you adhere to the rules. Like are the rules really important to you. So the higher the conscientiousness of the people that you bring onto help you implement something, the more likely it is there are also going to be people who are going to find it a little difficult that you're making changes in something that was a rule for them, that this was the way things were done.

And so it means that you're going to have to really spend a lot of time early on working closely with those people who are going to implement these changes to make sure that they're completely on board with it so that this becomes the rule that they want to follow and that they want everyone else to follow. And then make sure that they're on top of it. Because even if you are one of the rare rabbis who's high in conscientiousness, you're still really busy. That's fundamentally a part of the job is that everybody wants a little bit of your time. And needs a little bit of your time. And so -- and so even if you want to put a lot of time into everything and finish what you've started, you're going to be engaged in a juggling act. And then on top of that, that may not be your strong suit to begin with. So it's really important to have board members and executive directors who are on board with the changes you're going to make, who are going to help you to get the communications out, who will remind you to keep communicating about this.

Because one of the things that will happen is, you start the change, good, that's moving, I'm done with that, I'm going to move onto the next thing, but people are still in that period where they're getting used to the change. They need more communication, but you're onto the next thing. So you need someone to, for lack of a better word, nag you to get back to communicating about the things that have already started. So you need to have that structure because you -- particularly because you are living on a different time scale in -- with respect to the changes you create than



your congregants are. Because when -- this is actually -- I first discovered this issue of the time scale actually while -- I did a lot of work for proctor & gamble. I'm pointing in that direction as if they're over there. They sort of are over there.

What I discovered actually with P&G was, they have people who just spend all their day, every day working on, like, Crest toothpaste. Like every single day they come in. If you work in the Crest area of the building -- I was struck by this -- you walk into the building and there's pictures of Proctor & Gamble packaging everywhere. You walk into the Crest section of the building and it's just Crest packaging everywhere. Every single day you're surrounded by this packaging. At some point, people who are working there go I'm tired of this packaging. And so -- and so they hire a designer to make new packaging. And then they -- and now they have this fresh, lovely packaging. And they -- and they send that off into the world. And now they change the decor of their wing because now it's all new packaging. And they feel good for a while.

And after about two years of walking by all that packaging again, they're tired of the decor because it's the same old stuff. And they hire a designer and go through this all over again. Here's the problem. As a consumer, if you purchase toothpaste, you buy toothpaste, I don't know, every six, eight weeks. Which means let's say six times a year you interact with that box. So -- so Proctor & Gamble changes up its packaging, whatever toothpaste you buy, changes up their packaging and now you can't find it on the shelf. So you're angry and frustrated because there's been a change, and now you look for it. You find it, okay, I'm going to buy it -- I'm still going to buy my brand, but I'm upset. You buy it and then you take it out of the packaging to use it, which means the only time you ever see that packaging is when it's in the store. You do that six times a year.

So by the time you've gotten enough repetitions to have a habit, say ten or 12, it's two years have gone by and that person at proctor & gamble is now frustrated with how old the packaging looks. They change up the packaging just when you were able to find it in the store because you as the consumer are living on a different time scale than the people who work selling toothpaste. Well, this is the same thing -- same thing holds true for what you are doing. You are living the congregation every single day. You wake up and you think about these issues. But the people you serve are not interacting with you as often. And so you have to remind yourself that even though it's been six weeks already, how is it that people aren't used to this, it's because those six weeks were 42 days of your life, but only probably 12 hours of engagement on their part. In that same period of time. So you have to ask yourself, what is the time scale that the people that I'm affecting are living on and how do I make sure that I am thinking about this with respect to their life, not mine.

Which is hard to do. Because -- because we -- we're -- you know, it's -- conceptually, you sort of get it. After a while, it feels like it's been going on forever. So you have to be willing to really think about what is the life of the people whose worlds I'm affecting, what is it like. And best yet, have some spies. Have some people who are actually living that who will report back to you periodically and say, well, here's how it's going. I kind of liked it this week, or still not used to it yet or this is driving me crazy. Whatever it is, get feedback from people who are living it rather than relying on your own intuitions and rather than relying on people to come forward to say something. There are two kinds of people who come forward. There are some people who complain about everything, and so they'll be very vocal. But most people actually won't tell you what they're thinking, which is very frustrating.

I served for eight years as the director of a master's program at the University of Texas called the human dimensions of organizations. We had these executive

master's students, these are people -- average age of 40. Ranged from late 20s to early 60s. They'd come back to school. I kept asking them, how's it going. They'd be like, great, it's a transformative experience, I love this. And then -- and then my associate director would come to me and say here are all the complaints they're making on the list serve. Why isn't anyone coming to me? Well, because it didn't feel like it should escalate all the way to the director. Well, but we can't fix anything if we don't find out what the problem is. That's why you need spies. You need -- you need people who aren't you who are getting the actual feedback as opposed to the stuff people are willing to tell you.

Because that's how you find out how it's going. So I'm going to -- I'm going to open it up in a moment because I want to make sure that we have some time for you--all to ask some questions. I realize you don't often have an opportunity to have a psychologist standing in front of you, so I -- I am willing to answer any question that doesn't start with "I have this friend."

But before I do that, I want to say one other thing, which is it is important to recognize that if you're going to create change in -- in congregations that -- that you want people to understand that -- that -- that you -- that the changes that you're creating are -- are changes that are designed to really bring the community closer together. And that if -- if, in fact, a change isn't succeeding, that you're willing to -- to change the change and even to reverse the change if necessary. I think -- I think one of the things that people need to understand is that whenever you try to do anything innovative, not every innovation succeeds. I collect lots of stories about -- about innovations that -- that fail. You know, when the Segway came out, for example, every man, woman, and child in the United States apparently was going to have one. And now we know that they're most suitable for tour companies and mall cops.

[ Laughter ]

Actually, that one's an interesting one because it -- it does talk about the value of speaking to people. Because as I watched this being rolled out, I remember thinking to myself why hasn't anyone in their marketing team ever asked anyone if they're willing to pay \$4,000 to achieve a goal they can currently achieve for free. And -- and I -- and I think there are simple questions like that that we can ask people that become part of our decision-making when -- you know, because what's going to happen, for example, you're going to hear a bunch of great ideas at this conference. Some of them which might be exactly right for your congregations and some of which might not. And -- and your enthusiasm will only go so far in convincing people.

So having those conversations, asking people, is this what you want, is this what you're excited about, and asking both the regulars as well as the people who are unaffiliated who you could reach out to. Is this what you're excited about, because what works in one town might not work in another. Even towns that almost border on each other. So -- so, you know, we have to be willing to try a portfolio of things and not -- and not just one -- there's going to be always one thing that works. So let me just summarize what I told you, then we'll give you a chance to ask some questions.

So if you're going to be successful at creating change, you have to know where people are with respect to that change. You have to move them towards that contemplation phase, being willing to think about it, towards a preparation phase, am I willing to actually try to plan for something, towards an action phase where they're willing to do something. We want to move people towards that. We need to engage a large number of people, particularly executive directors and board members. We need to converse with people rather than speaking at them. And if we do all of that, and then if we prepare people for the discomfort that comes along with change, then we have a

much better opportunity to create the kinds of changes in our communities that we're looking for. And for those of you who want more depth on this, what we're going to do this afternoon is I've got this little journal that I use for behavior change in general, but turns out to be really useful for creating change in organizations.

We're going to actually work through that with groups who are struggling with similar problems. You'll have a chance to work with some of the exercises, talk with each other. It will be a much more interactive session. So I got to -- I got a minute here I guess to -- why don't you run through the crowd.

>> Actually, we've already had a few people ask us some questions about if you could talk a little about that failure factor.

>> ART MARKMAN: Yeah.

>> So many of us are judged by our lay leaders on how successful we are. And so convincing people to go on a journey that may bring failure, can you talk a little bit about that?

>> ART MARKMAN: Anyone afraid of failure? Anyone? You know, it's tough, but the thing is 100% of things that you don't try don't work. Okay? So -- so you have to remind people that -- that being willing to try something is the first step towards success. And so -- and so I wouldn't -- you know, I would -- I would try to help people to understand that every time we go on a journey in which we try to change something, we are going to learn something. We are going to learn something about what we -- who we are, who we are as a congregation, and that we should be focused on the positive elements of things throughout. And even if something doesn't come out the way that we'd hoped, we will be different on the other side of this than we were at the beginning.

And that the commitment is to continually learn from the experiences that we have. Will everything that we do succeed? No, it won't. And we have to -- you know, we have to set expectations appropriately, that -- that, you know, we may try and program and it doesn't work. And maybe it doesn't work because it was -- it was a bad program and maybe it doesn't work because it was the wrong time and maybe it didn't work because of factors that were completely out of our control.

The history of innovation in general is littered with stuff that didn't work. But the question is not -- and this is why you want a broad based team because the question shouldn't be are you willing to follow me on this change. It's are we willing as a community to try this thing knowing that we're going to have to work at it, knowing we're going to have to fix it, and, you know, are we the kind of congregation that is willing to work together to try something new where we're going to keep the lines of communication open. Because it is -- it is when you -- you step in and say, no, no, this is -- you know, I'm doing this, this is my change and I'm going to pull you in this direction, that's the place where change is -- is the hardest because you get the most resistance from people who don't want to go along, and -- and it -- that's the sort of change that also creates the most antagonism between you and the board you and leadership you and prominent congregation members.

You know, we are a -- we have to be a community. Now, the community doesn't mean democracy, but it does mean that you have to create partnerships with people. You have to -- you have to find stakeholders who are willing to come along. And the beauty of having those stakeholders is that they're -- they're the ones who are going to be initiating conversations with other people in the community. And I think that you want to have people who believe in the changes that you're making and -- and want to have those conversations and want people to -- to give you that -- that benefit of the doubt.

And it's -- you know, it's hard. Look, it's hard to fail. It's hard to fail. Because we are a society that prizes outcomes, you know. We prize the end -- end over the means. And, you know, honestly, the best thing that you can tell people is, you know, we all know the end for all of us, right? So -- so it was never about -- about the end. It was always about the -- you know, the means, the way that we're going to get there. And so the trick is we're going to go on an adventure together and an adventure that we're going to learn from and hopefully become closer as a community, as a part of it, and hopefully more inclusive as a part of doing that. But that's -- we're asking people to come along on a journey with us.

And that's where you get the self-fulfilling prophecy. When people believe they're on a journey and doing something that can be accomplished, there's an important concept that the best way to motivate people is you need to engage the motivational system the way you engage the motivational system is by highlighting a gap between present and future. So there's some -- there's who I am, who we are right now, who we'd like to be in the future. That gap creates energy. Now, physicists will tell us that energy without direction is heat while energy with direction is work. And so our job in leadership roles is to highlight the gap and then to point in the direction of how we do it, of creating the plan that gets us from where we are to where we'd like to be. And it is bridgeable gaps that are most motivating to action, gaps in which I believe that if I carry out a set of actions, I can actually make it into the desired future.

And so our role is to engage people by creating these bridgeable gaps. When you do that, when you create a plan that we're all willing to work on together, you get much more buy-in from the people around you who then are willing to be part of that process, which both increases your chances of success, and even if something doesn't succeed, increases everyone's sense that you gave it the best possible try.

>> Thank you very much. Let's give Dr. Markman a big hand.

[ Applause ]

For those of you who would like to continue to conversation, Dr. Markman will be convening a session at 1:45 in rosewood. So 1:45 in rosewood. For those participating in sessions this afternoon found in the mayflower rooms, these are on the lower level, that's LL on your elevator buttons. And then finally cohort lunches begin now. The room designations are found in the program book or the app. [Speaking Hebrew ], everyone. Oh, get lunch first. Where? Great question. Rick, where do we get lunch?

>> [ Off Mic ].

>> Out and about! There are restaurants around and you can also find things in the lower level.

[ Session concluded at 12:15 p.m. ET ]