



Yoni's Global Sukkah Placemat and Conversation Starter Don't be sarcastic – by Anthony Ashworth-Steen #YonisGlobalSukkah

Yoni Jesner
FOUNDATION

Inspiring young people to do more and care more

“Don't be sarcastic...”

These three little words can be passed over very quickly, but for me they demonstrate the importance of communicating well with others around us.

How I wish that we heeded these words...

From observing conversations in conferences and sessions and on social media there are trends which I feel are hindering the progress of Israel discourse in the community such as self-righteousness and sarcasm.

We need to work together to create new models of Israel discourse because if we fail to do so, polarisation within the community will get worse and people will simply get turned off by Israel.

Whilst I do not claim to have all the answers, I believe that there are three important steps which we can take as individuals (and as a collective) which will help to take the poisonous sting out of the current dialogue:

1. Take time before responding – In the age of instant communication it is all too easy to read something, get angry and respond instantly. I am going to pass on advice I was once given: take 24 hours before responding.
2. Don't assume bad faith – During debates/discussions it is often seen as a sign of weakness if someone backs down or changes their mind or position – I don't agree. I believe that we have the capacity to learn from all interactions. Therefore when reading an article/thread/ tweet etc. take a step back and think: where is the other person coming from? In the Talmud, minority opinions are recorded and it is through dialogue that the text is formed.
3. Push yourself out of your comfort zone – It is important to associate with people who have completely different opinions to you – it is with real challenge that there is true growth.

Yoni gave us three little words to remember. Now it is up to you to put them into action.

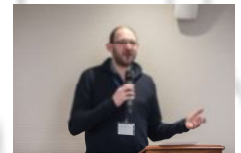
Questions:

Can you think of a time when you have regretted saying something to someone?

Why do you think people speak badly to others?

How do you think we can make Israel dialogue less poisonous?

How do you intend to improve the way you communicate?



Anthony Ashworth-Steen is

the Director of Informal Education and Israel Engagement at UJIA, one of the leading communal organisations in the UK. He is an experienced educator with over ten years professional experience in the field. Anthony holds an MA in Educational Leadership from the Institute of Education, University College London, and received a distinction for his research into educational teen travel to Israel.

Connection to Yoni:

Yoni and I grew up in Glasgow and shared very similar paths in terms of the schools we attended, love for Judaism and Israel, commitment to the community and passion for Jewish youth movements (although we went to different ones!).