

Book Review: Inspiring Jewish Leadership

Reviewed By: Marci Eisen, Manager of the Professional Excellence Project, Jewish Federation of St. Louis

How do we as professionals in 2009 engage lay leaders in Jewish life? Are we really ready to transform our agencies and communities? How do we inspire and empower others? How do we incorporate Jewish values in a relevant ways? What research is available to guide us along the way? What are our roadblocks? What honest and thoughtful conversations can each of us initiate, without waiting for someone else to step forward?

These are just a few of the questions Dr. Erica Brown's effective book on Inspired Jewish Leadership (Jewish Lights, 256 pp) helps to explore. Erica is the director of adult education for the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning and the scholar in residence for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. Her style is accessible, as if she is having a conversation directly with us. She has a unique ability to integrate Jewish teachings with social science research and contemporary writings on leadership and decision making. She is positive, yet realistic, about what is happening in our organizations. She offers concrete examples and potential discussion topics for staff to utilize.

In each chapter, Erica balances our day-to-day realities with big picture issues. Her topics include leading and meaning, putting the Jewish in leadership, visioning, "who" are we leading, types of leadership, transformation, role of women, resolving conflict, ethics, changing the world and changing ourselves, meaningful boards and succession planning. Erica's advice is direct with options for addressing each challenge. In the St. Louis Jewish community we are sharing copies of the book for future discussions. If lay leadership development is a relevant topic to you, I highly recommend this book to you and your colleagues. But don't let it stop there. Let's all step forward to think about our own leadership styles and how we can both serve and lead for the good of the Jewish community.

[Inspired Jewish Leadership](#) is available for purchase from either Jewish Lights or Amazon