

# Shining in the Invisible Spotlight: A Tribute to My Colleague Stanley Stone



I was honored to speak at the farewell celebration for our friend and colleague Stanley Stone, who is leaving our Federation and Foundation family for an exciting new position.

In a lovely and moving event, several of us spoke about Stanley, his work, and his values.

Here's what I said ....

My dear friends,

Living on a kibbutz many years ago, we used to tell a long and not very funny joke. I'll spare you the

meandering plot, but the punchline was when a tourist asked why Israel always built the kibbutzim in the most beautiful places. It was a joke about someone not seeing the cause. Only seeing the effect.

Only seeing the beauty of the final product and not the work that went into its creation, its maintenance, its continuation.

Some, seeing the incredible growth and success of our community, our Federation, our Foundation, do not know the reasons why. They see the effects. They see the results.

But you know. The results happen because of dedicated professional leaders. Like Stanley.

This community's growth and beauty happened because of people like Stanley.

People watch us. They listen to what we say, and watch how we react, and compare the two.

Craig Wasserman wrote a fascinating book some ten years ago, called "the invisible spotlight."

All leaders, he said, work in the heat of this invisible spotlight. Every word and deed we put out there is scrutinized. And most of our leaders aren't even aware of this scrutiny, of the impact of the passing moment, how our instincts and reflexes can betray us or boost us.

Some eighteen years ago, as a junior fundraiser from the West Coast, I came to see Stanley and ask for advice and guidance. Without hesitation he opened his office and sat with me, sharing thoughts and wisdom. Showing kindness.

Some ten years later he opened up his office to me again, giving me space to work and collaborate as a partner agency liaison, sharing his community vision, his values, and his thoughtfulness.

Working together these past five years as colleagues, I can only attest to that unbreakable *menschlekeit* kindness, behavior, and warmth of spirit. Stanley walks the walk of the invisible spotlight. He truly is kind, and compassionate, and empathetic. He genuinely cares. And he truly has been a great builder of our community.

When we end a section of learning, we use an Aramaic formula to say goodbye to the text. *Hadran Alach*, we will return to you.

Because a goodbye is never final in our lifelong engagement with Torah, with learning, with community.

We may have completed a chapter, and we may be moving on to a new chapter, but when the time comes to part ways, we say, we will return to you, *Hadran Alach*.

When we say goodbye, we don't fully leave each other. No departure is final. We don't just say *Hadran Alach*, we also say *VeHadrach Alan*. We'll revisit you and you'll revisit us. When Moshe sets off for Egypt, Yitro, his father-in-law says to him, 'go in peace.' At least that's what the English translation says. But the actual mekor reads "*Lech leShalom*", "Go toward peace".

*Torah Temimah* explains that *Leich beShalom* – go in peace – implies that you'll stay on the same level at which you began. And that's not a wish for growth.

On the other hand, "*Leich leShalom*," go toward peace, isn't just a wish for a safe trip. It means continuing a journey for ever-greater perfection, *shlemut*. Wholeness. *Leich leShalom* is a wish for you to travel toward the next level of success and wholeness.

Stanley, go toward peace.

Go with the knowledge that you have created something beautiful here. That tourists – or anyone – who comes to Jersey, will look and say, why did they build the Federation and Foundation in the best and most beautiful way possible?

Move to an even better future.

And continue to shine in the spotlight.

May it be a future filled with meaning and purpose.

And know how grateful we are for what you've built and who you are.

Thank you.