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Writing an Engaging Arc Around the Big Questions: Lech Lecha - Go Forward (Take Yourself and Go)

Introduction for Facilitators

Across genres, writers invite readers on a journey along with their characters, carrying both from here to there—and when successful leaving both changed. The challenge authors face is how to craft that experience in a way that readers' interests are peaked with the tension, drama, and discovery they crave. Authors ask, "How do I keep my reader reading?" In this unit, we'll explore how to structure a dramatic arc that sustains engagement when writing about personal and spiritual journeying initiated by big life questions.

You may be familiar with the 12-step writer's template, the "hero's journey" that moves the protagonist (the hero) from a known world, to an unknown world filled with challenges, eventually returning the hero back to their world, transformed (e.g. The Odyssey, Harry Potter). A need for personal glory, knowledge or treasure, magical support and tangible reward characterize the hero's journey. The hero's journey provides a template to write an engaging story about, as Madonna might say, the material world.

When our writing is focused in a decidedly different direction, on life's big questions (e.g. Who am I? Why am I? Where do I belong?), we as Jews understand there are no easy or dogmatic answers. To find the answers, our tradition directs us to go forth, *Lech Lecha*, לֶךְ־לְךָ. *Lech Lecha* can mean going out on a physical journey in the world. It can also mean a personal or spiritual journey, to **go to yourself**, to go inward for self-discovery; to **go with yourself**, to take your values wherever you go; and to **go by yourself** having the courage to stand alone, to be your unique self.

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Lech Lecha invites us to pursue challenging life questions, to wrestle with faith and hope when obstacles arise, and ultimately to make meaning of our quest.

To write an engaging tale of uncovering the answers to life's big questions, we as Jewish writers are invited to use a template extrapolated from the timeless telling of our matriarch Sarah's journey, as she pursues the universal big question, "How can I fulfill my purpose?"

From Sarah's story, we have extrapolated a three-step template for crafting an engaging dramatic arc when writing about personal and spiritual transformation.

1. Ask big life question stemming from a crucible moment
2. Personalize faith/hope wrestling when meeting obstacles
3. Make Meaning of events—not just what happened—but what mattered

To explore how to write an engaging arc when writing about personal journeying, you'll find these three sessions are designed to stand alone. Each session explores a different aspect of *Lech Lecha* and a different writing practice for creating an engaging arc. Participants who can attend all three sessions will experience the added benefit of building and deepening the arc over time.

Adjust your schedule as needed to respond to the interests of your circle. The chart below highlights the big ideas in each session: a core concept, a writing tool, and a Jewish wisdom text.

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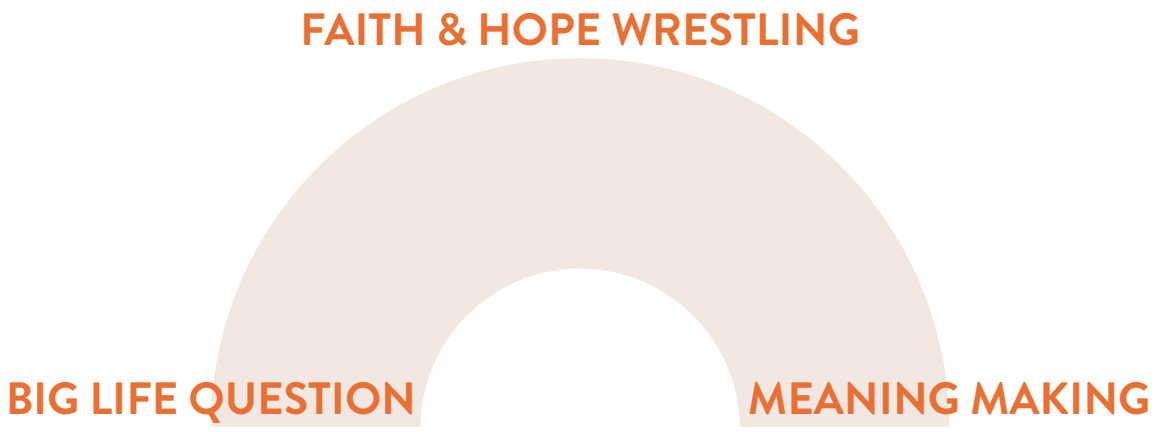
Writing an Engaging Arc Core Concept	Writing Tool	Jewish Wisdom
Session One: Ask a big life question arising from a crucible moment	"In Medias Res" Drop the reader into the middle of the action, immediately highlighting the stakes	*Lechi Lach*, Debbie Friedman The big question arising from a crucible moment— to go forth to oneself, journey for the answers
Session Two: Explore small moments of faith and hope wrestling when meeting obstacles	Relatable anecdotes	Itzik Manger's *Abraham and Sarah*
Session Three: Make meaning of events	Perspective shift and point in time (PIT).	*Conversation with Sarah,* *The meaning made of Sarah's journey*

Three Steps for Writing an Engaging Arc:



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Writing an Engaging Arc Around the Big Questions: Lech Lecha - Go Forward (Take Yourself and Go)

Session One: Ask Big Life Questions — "In Medias Res."

Opening Ritual: Welcome and Connections

Approx. 10 minutes

"We are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have the answers."
~ *Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel*

When seeking clarity or connection, which kind of question animates you the most? Why/when/how/what/where/who/which? (1 minute or less for each person).

Today's Focus

Approx. 1 minute

- Connect with others
- Explore *Lech Lecha* (Go forward, take yourself and go) beginning with the big question arising from a crucible moment
- Use "In Medias Res" to put the reader into the middle of the action

Jewish Wisdom: Guidance for our writing and our life's questions

Approx. 20 minutes

Across genres, writers invite readers on a journey along with their characters, carrying both from here to there—and when successful leaving both changed. The challenge authors face is how to craft that experience in a way that readers' interests are peaked with the tension, drama, and discovery they crave. Authors ask, "How do I keep my reader reading?" In this unit, we'll explore how to structure a dramatic arc that sustains engagement when writing about personal and spiritual journeying.

When our writing is focused on exploring big life questions (e.g. Who am I? Why am I? Where do I belong?), the idea of *Lech Lecha* (לֶךְ־לְךָ) invites us to journey forth, to uncover the answers we seek. Because there are no easy answers or dogma in Jewish thought, *Lech Lecha* invites us to pursue challenging life questions, to wrestle with faith and hope when obstacles arise, and ultimately to make meaning of our quest.

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Lech Lecha (לֶךְ־לְךָ) is a grammatically unique Hebrew phrase that combines a verb and an indirect object—literally "go forth/take yourself and go"—making it rich in both grammatical ambiguity and spiritual interpretation.

Lech Lecha can mean:

- go to yourself, to go inward for self-discovery
- to go with yourself, to take your values wherever you go
- go by yourself, have the courage to stand alone, to be your unique self

To write an engaging tale of uncovering answers to life's questions related to going to, going with, or going by yourself, we can follow a template extrapolated from the timeless telling of our matriarch Sarah's journey. Below is a pivotal moment in her life that sparked her big life question.

In Sarah's senior years, after a lifetime of infertility, she hears the challenging and disorienting promise to be the mother of a child and a great nation. In the story's subtext, extrapolated from the unwritten white spaces, we hear her ask: "How can I possibly fulfill my purpose?"

Genesis 18:12

וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ לֵאמֹר אַחֲרֵי בְלֹתִי הָיְתָה־לִּי עֶדְנָה וַאדֹנִי זָקֵן׃

And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "Now that I've lost the ability, am I to have enjoyment—with my husband so old?"

Sarah's quest to pursue her purpose is captured in the following song ***L'Chi Lach***. It is based on the Biblical text *Lech Lecha* instructing Abraham to go forward to an unknown land (Genesis 12: 1). *L'Chi Lach* puts a twist on the original text by using the feminine form for go forth, inviting Sarah and all women in their senior years to go forward/take yourself and go.

Debbie Friedman, (1951-2011) wrote ***L'Chi Lach*** in partnership with feminist scholar Savina Teubel (1926-2005) for a ceremony they were creating, *Simchat Chochmah,* to honor senior women's journey of continued self-discovery. Teubel said it was to celebrate "the beginning of the last phase of my life." You can find the song on youtube.

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L'Chi Lach (go forward/take yourself and go) by Debbie Friedman

L'chi lach to a land that I will show you
Leich l'cha, to a place you do not know
L'chi lach, on your journey I will bless you
And you shall be a blessing (x3)
l'chi lach

L'chi lach, and I shall make your name great
Leich l'cha, and all shall praise your name
L'chi lach, to the place that I will show you
l'chi lach

L'sim-chat cha-yim (x3) (for the joy of life, go forward)
l'chi lach

(first verse repeats twice more)

Questions for Hevruta (study partner) or done in a large group:

1. A call to go forward/to take yourself and go can begin from an internal or external voice. What is the source of the call in the song? What difference might it make if the source is an internal or external voice?
2. The authors are celebrating the journey of senior women. What big life questions might women (and people of all genders) ask as they pause to celebrate their final chapters?
3. Reaching a pivotal life moment, like reaching the age of 65, can spark big life questions. Think back to your answer in the opening ritual. What kinds of events or experiences might get you asking: who/ what/ where/ when/ why/ which/ how?

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Writer to Writer: Wisdom of Seasoned Jewish Writers

Approx. 10 minutes

Review this quote about the writing tool *in medias res*, to begin in the middle. What stands out for you?

> **Always start from the middle.** Many times, when I write a story, I make up the story as I write it. For example, two people are sitting in a busy train station. One says to the other, "I know you stole that money." So now when I tell the story I don't have to write about the train. Why would people keep reading? Here are two kinds of incentives for people to stay with the story: They want to know what will happen. Is he going to admit he stole the money? (interest in the future) ; and They want to understand what happened before? (interest in the past). When you jump in the middle of the story without people really knowing what is going on, you capture them. You are saying "here is the heart of it, come with me along and I'll explain." You can share what happened in the beginning, if it is important, you can find a way to later.
>
> **~ Etgar Keret, Etgar Keret's 10 Rules of Writing**

In medias res, is a Latin term meaning "in the middle of things" used to describe a narrative technique to begin in the middle of an action rather than at the chronological start. By beginning with a crucible moment of uncertainty or major life change (such as relationship, health, career), you can spark a big life question that allows you to generate immediate tension and urgency. In medias res immediately draws your reader into the world you are creating.

Consider:

- Identifying a dramatic moment of uncertainty, major life challenges, mystery, or curiosity.
- Beginning writing in the middle--when the dramatic pivotal moment begins
- Articulating the spiritual or existential question sparked by the crucible experience

Writing Prompts

Approx. 20 minutes

Apply the prompt to a new piece of writing or something in progress. Be playful and open to whatever may appear on the page.

Write about a challenging and pivotal moment. Get right into the action by beginning in the middle. Give voice to the driving question(s) arising from that experience.

Need help getting started?

1. Select a character who is on a spiritual or personal quest. Consider your own experience (personal reflection) or the experience of someone you know (memoir). Or you could consider a fictional character. (short story/poem)
2. Identify a crucible moment (e.g. a major life event like change in health, relationship, career) that challenges that person in a way that gives rise to a big life question (e.g. Who am I? What is most important? What do I believe?)
3. Think of that crucible moment as an event that requires one to *Lech Lecha* – "go to yourself, to go inward for self-discovery; to go with yourself, to take your values wherever you go; and to go by yourself."

JWC Writer to Writer: learning from your colleagues

Approx. 20 minutes

Invite writers to share from their work and to listen. This could be with a partner or with a larger group. (5 minutes each writer)

- Warm feedback (something you appreciate in the writing–an image, sound, word choice, etc.)
- Something that you're curious about (something that might help in a next edit)

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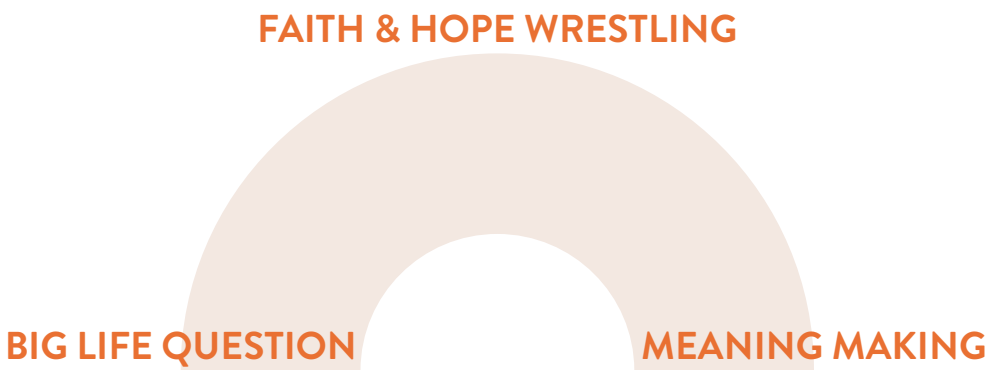
Next steps & Closing Ritual

Approx. 10 minutes

Today we explored *Lech Lecha* (go forward, take yourself and go) with a focus on framing big life questions that arise from dramatic crucible moments. An engaging arc of personal journeying begins with the question. As a closing ritual, we invite you to share with your circle:

- What are you taking home with you? (emotions, needs, questions, or writing ideas)
- You may wish to continue working on the draft you generated today and bring it next time as we continue to explore *Lech Lecha* and the craft of writing an engaging arc around life's big questions.

Three Steps for Writing an Engaging Arc:



Next: Session Two: Faith/Hope Wrestling | Relatable Anecdotes

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Writing an Engaging Arc Around the Big Questions: Lech Lecha - Go Forward (Take Yourself and Go)

Session Two: Session Two: Faith/Hope Wrestling | Relatable Anecdotes

Opening Ritual: Welcome and Connections

Approx. 10 minutes

What is something you have faith in? Why? (1 minute or less per participant)

Today's Focus

Approx. 1 minute

- Connect with others
- Explore *Lech Lecha* (Go forward, take yourself and go) with emphasis on faith and hope wrestling when facing obstacles
- Writing a relatable anecdote

Jewish Wisdom: Guidance for our writing and our life's questions

Approx. 20 minutes

Across genres, writers invite readers on a journey along with their characters, carrying both from here to there—and when successful, leaving both changed. The challenge that authors face is how to craft that experience in a way that peaks readers' interests with the tension, drama, and discovery they crave. Authors ask, "How do I keep my reader reading?" In this unit, we'll explore how to structure a dramatic arc that sustains engagement when writing about personal and spiritual journeying.

When writing is focused on exploring big life questions (e.g. Who am I? Why am I? Where do I belong?), the idea of *Lech Lecha* (לֶךְ־לְךָ) to go forward, to take yourself and go, invites us to pursue challenging life questions, to wrestle with faith and hope when obstacles arise, and ultimately to make meaning of our quest.

To write an engaging tale of uncovering answers to life's big questions, we can follow a template extrapolated from the timeless telling of our matriarch Sarah's journey. In her senior years, after a lifetime of infertility, Sarah hears the challenging and disorienting call to be both the mother of a child, and a great nation.

In the story's subtext, extrapolated from the unwritten white spaces in the text, we can hear her ask the big life question: "How can I possibly fulfill my purpose?"

Repeatedly, as Sarah seeks the answer to her question, she encounters disappointment. Events—including reaching her 90th birthday—indicate that she will NOT fulfill her purpose. Yet, she perseveres, doing what's in her power (e.g. offering her maidservant Hagar to Abraham to have a child) while struggling to keep faith and hope alive. Sarah, according to the text, stopped having her periods and yet is promised that she will have a child. Our matriarch responds to this promise in a truly human and relatable way: with disbelief. She then lies about her initial response (Genesis 18:13-15).

Sarah's struggle to have faith in the face of overwhelming obstacles is captured in the following poem written by Itzik Manger (1901-1969), one of the great Yiddish poets and playwriters of the 20th century. Manger rewrote many Biblical stories using a modern lens, often placing Biblical characters in an Eastern European setting. "Abraham and Sarah," focuses on an anecdote set in a modern context that reveals Sarah's humanity, her doubt and hope. Read the poem below. You'll notice that Manger used the auspicious number "eighteenth" as an exaggeration, showing how Sarah has hoped, waited, and experienced the cycle of disappointment around her ability to conceive for so many years.

Abraham and Sarah | Itzik Manger

"Abie, when will we have child?
We're both already old folks
Everyone knows a woman old as I
has been due for the eighteenth time."

Abraham Our Father smiles and is mute
and puffs away smoking his pipe:
"Have faith my wife, if He on High wills
then even a broom can shoot."

"Abie, Listen up, every night
I hear how my body sobs
And Hagar is still only your maid
And I am your only true wife.

Often, I think that the star in the window
is really the soul of our child,
that wanders around every night
among rain and shadows and wind"

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Our father Abraham smiles and is mute
and puffs away smoking his pipe
"Have Faith my wife. If He on High wills
then even a broom can shoot."

Sometimes when I see how Hagar's child
plays with the sun in the sand,
and I give him a pat on his little head,
a strange sadness comes into my hand.

And when I take him to me on my lap
and he smiles so cleverly and good,
my eyes grow damp and large
and a strange sadness comes into my blood.

Abie, when will we have a child?
We're both already old folks.
Everyone knows a woman old as I
could be due for the eighteenth time."

Abraham Our Father smiles and is mute
and puffs away smoking his pipe:
"Have faith my wife, if He on High wills,
than even a broom can shoot."

Questions for Hevruta (study partner) or done in a large group:

1. How does Manger humanize/make relatable Sarah and Abraham? What works/doesn't work in making the anecdote engaging?
2. Manger puts a Yiddish proverb in Abraham's mouth "if God wills it, even a broomstick can shoot," meaning that even highly improbable events can occur. What commentary does it offer about Sarah and Abraham's faith? How might Abraham have been more supportive of Sarah as she wrestled with her faith/hope?
3. Reflect on your answer in the opening about one thing you have faith in. To what degree is faith/hope a constant? What can help keep hope/faith in discouraging moments?

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Writer to Writer: Wisdom of Seasoned Jewish Writers

Approx. 10 minutes

Review the quote below about how to write about a time when you/or a character wrestle with faith and hope when meeting an obstacle in pursuit of a big life question. What stands out for you?

> When you write about a particular moment, think about what was special about that moment. Keep pushing the "why" of what is important. And then ask why again. Not just that something made you want to sing—ask, why did it make you want to sing? Write about the small, personal moment even when you are trying to say something big. The small is where the gold is.
>
> Get to the flash points of something that sits with you, that you remember. If you can, lean into a counter-intuitive moment, like something that was shattering, but there was also joy to be found in it.
>
> Watch that you don't use the same words that are overused. You may want to describe being broken-hearted, but those words are said over and over. You need to find new words to help people get in touch with what they are feeling. Use a thesaurus.

Abigail Poegrebin, award-winning journalist and novelist

Consider:

- Digging deep: why does the moment matter?
- Elevating counter-intuitive experiences: find joy in something broken.
- Expanding language: find words that paint a relatable and vivid picture.

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Writing Prompts

Approx. 20 minutes

Apply the prompt to a new piece of writing or something in progress. Be playful and open to whatever may appear on the page.

In this unit we've been exploring how to write an engaging arc that begins with asking a big life question.

In today's exercise, you'll heighten reader engagement by writing about one small moment when a person (fictional or real) wrestles with faith and hope when they face an obstacle in their pursuit of a big life question.

Need help to get started?

1. Keeping in mind your character's quest, identify a significant barrier. Write about what happens to faith and hope in one small moment when encountering a hurdle along one's spiritual or personal journey. Is faith strengthened? Is hope challenged? Be open to unlikely combinations arising (e.g. joy and shattering).
2. To make sure your anecdote is relatable, foster empathy by revealing vulnerability and flaws (even our matriarch Sarah expressed doubts and shame). Use language that brings your reader close (e.g. a sinking feeling vs. couldn't even sip my coffee).
3. Build tension by keeping your reader unsure, at least for a while, about what they might discover.

Over the next session, consider making this the focal point of your creative work. We'll be deepening the exploration of creating a dramatic arc.

JWC Writer to Writer: learning from your colleagues

Approx. 20 minutes

Invite writers to share from their work and to listen. This could be with a partner or with a larger group. (5 minutes each writer)

- Warm feedback (something you appreciate in the writing–an image, sound, word choice, etc.)
- Something that you're curious about (something that might help in a next edit)

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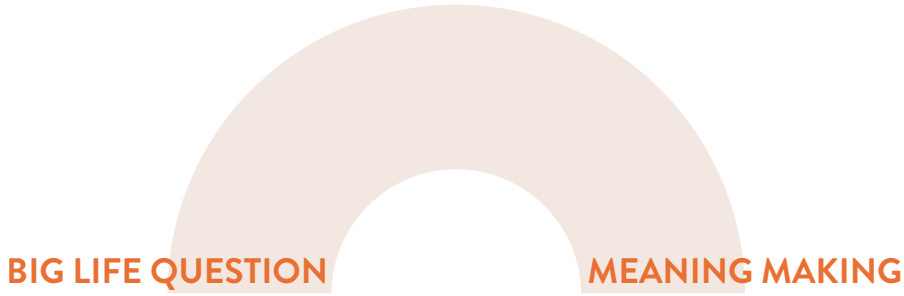
Next steps & Closing Ritual

Approx. 10 minutes

Today we explored *Lech Lecha* (go forward, take yourself and go) with a focus on highlighting relatable vulnerable faith/hope wrestling anecdotes. By fostering readers' empathy and keeping the outcome unpredictable, you can sustain readers' interest. As a closing ritual, we invite you to share with your circle:

- What are you taking home with you? (emotions, needs, questions, or writing ideas)
- You may wish to continue working on the draft you generated today and bring it next time as we continue to explore *Lech Lecha* and the craft of writing an engaging arc around life's big questions. In the coming weeks, we will explore the role of meaning making in writing an engaging arc around big life questions.

Three Steps for Writing an Engaging Arc:



Next: Session Three:| Meaning Making. Perspective Shift

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Writing Memorable Characters: Lech Lecha - Go Forward (Take Yourself and Go)

Session Three: Meaning-Making. Perspective shift.

Opening Ritual: Welcome and Connections

Approx. 10 minutes

"I was on time. No, you were late. I remember it well. We dined alone! We dined with friends." (I Remember it Well, Gigi, Lerner and Loewe).

Time plays a role in what and how we remember. Think about an important event in your own journey. How has time impacted your recall of that event? (1 minute or less for each person).

Today's Focus

Approx. 1 minute

- Connect with others
- Explore *Lech Lecha* (Go forward, take yourself and go) with emphasis on making meaning of the journey
- Use perspective (Point in time) to deepen meaning

Jewish Wisdom: Guidance for our writing and our life's questions

Approx. 20 minutes

Lech lecha (go forward, take yourself and go) is the Jewish idea that life is a journey where we ask big questions, struggle with obstacles and ultimately make meaning and gain wisdom. This framework offers us a template for how to write about spiritual and personal journeying in a way that keeps readers engaged.

The timeless telling of our matriarch Sarah's journey illustrates that template. In Sarah's senior years, after a lifetime of infertility, she hears the challenging and disorienting call to be both the mother of a child, and of a great nation. Her journey begins as she pursues the question: "How can I possibly fulfill my purpose?" Repeatedly she encounters disappointment. The dramatic tension rises as Sarah struggles in truly relatable ways to keep faith and hope alive.

Eventually Sarah gives birth, but that is not the end of her journey. Generations of our people have reflected on Sarah's story, seeking to uncover wisdom and insight. Time provides a unique lens allowing each generation to reflect on Sarah's journey. With the passage of time, we know not only what happened, but also the guiding lessons drawn from those events.

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The following poem, written in 2026, by three women who work with the Jewish Writers' Circles, explores the question of how time might have impacted Sarah's perspective on events that occurred during her quest to become a mother of a child and of a people. It offers a contemporary answer to what meaning can be drawn from Sarah's journey.

The poem begins and ends with verses from, the *Amidah*, the standing prayer, which connects worshippers to God and to our ancestors, *Avot*, (including Sarah). Traditionally, worshippers bend their knee at the word *Baruch* to symbolize subservience to God. The prayer is considered a conversation, a silent dialogue, between the worshipper and God. The poem builds on this idea, by imagining a private conversation between Sarah and the generations.

A Conversation with Sarah

First, the generations call out:
"*Baruch Ata Adonai Elohenui Velohei avotenu v'imaotenu*
Blessed are You, Adonai our God and God of our fathers and mothers,"

Responding, I say, my children, after all these years,
When I hear you say my name, I answer.
Confidently, you stand on your own, yet
You also need me, so I come to you
It's what a mother does

I was certain I'd never be Sarah, ema, the matriarch
It's no secret, I laughed at the messengers
declaring old woman, you will be a mother,
to birth a son, and a people
Naturally, I didn't believe the impossible

Then *Adonai*, you, and the generations proved me wrong
teaching me to walk humbly into the unknown
Holding the triumphs and tribulations of our people
Insisting once again, joy does come in the morning*
So, I learned to replace hand wringing doubt
When the impossible appears before me
Now, naturally I am lingering longer in possibility

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A Conversation with Sarah, (continued)

Throughout time my children, naturally, I see
Some of you stand, bend your knee, call out to me,
Some walk away, bend your knee to another, don't even recall me
Some never call, choosing to fight viciously with one another

My hands no longer wring like when the messengers came
You are all my children,
I can't heal your pains,
Each generation suffering your own,
but what I can do, naturally
is remind you, as a mother does
When the impossible is before you
Linger longer in possibility, my children.
Call again.

We hear you, Sarah, ema, our matriarch,
reminded once again,
We will strive to hold on.
And will call again.

"*Barchu Atah Adonai, Oseh haShalom*
Blessed are you, Compassionate One, Maker of peace."

by Cyd B. Weissman, Gabrielle-Kaplan Mayer, Adva Chattler

("Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" is found in Psalm 30:5)

Questions for Hevruta (study partner) or done in a large group:

1. The poem situates Sarah in the present day as she speaks to her children, the Jewish people. What wisdom, insight, or meaning has Sarah gained in her role as a mother? In her relationship to faith?
2. Contemporary Jewish writers often integrate original text into their work. In this case, the authors reference the Amidah and a Psalm. In what way does/doesn't original text enrich the meaning and context of the poem?
3. Reflect on your answer in the opening ritual about how time impacted what or how you remembered an event. What wisdom or insight did you gain from looking at an event from a different point of time?

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Writer to Writer: Wisdom of Seasoned Jewish Writers

Approx. 10 minutes

Review this quote about making meaning of events through time.. What stands out for you?

"I

As a writer, "I've been playing with my father's antique clock collection in my memoir and how time stopped after he died and 250 clocks stopped chiming and gonging and playing music until my house was eerily quiet. I felt like my father had died a second death. For me, time is a spiral and the past is here in the present that moves into the future in every breath, every word.

My father repaired broken time pieces, restored them to life, gathering broken parts to make them whole. I see now, after he died, that he was an artisan of time, and set each clock to chime at a different time, as he was not interested in time that imprisons us, but in time that liberates us. Even after his death, my father teaches me something about Time and its mysterious beats.

I love the Jewish sense of time as both Historical and Cyclical – and imagine a spiral of time as I write, a spiral unspooling which is neither early nor late. This is the sacred time of the Torah but also of literature. Here Time is fluid, bending, wiggly."

Lisa Grunberger, playwright and poet

Consider:

- Immersing yourself in the values and context of the narrator at the point in time of their reflection
- Identifying shifts in perspective that frame how an event is understood. For example, a doubt into faith, a failure into learning.
- Using the point in time as a waiting period to explore the uncovering and discovering of new insights.

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Writing Prompts

Approx. 20 minutes

Apply the prompt to a new piece of writing or something in progress. Be playful and open to whatever may appear on the page.

Accept the invitation of *Lech Lecha*—to go to yourself, to go inward for self-discovery; to go with yourself, carrying your values wherever you go; or to go by yourself, with the courage to stand alone.

For yourself or for a character, identify an endpoint: a significant moment that invites reflection on a journey. That moment may be shaped by achievement or failure, disappointment or success, certainty or loss.

Now, time travel. Have your narrator or character look back on that "endpoint" from a different point in time. What new insights have emerged with distance and reflection? What meaning can now be made of the experience? How has the passage of time shifted their understanding of what happened?

You may want to draw on a piece of Jewish text—perhaps about one of our ancestors—that has troubled, challenged, or spoken deeply to you. How might you give voice to the Biblical character in the way the poem read today gave voice to Sarah? Allow time to pass, allow that Biblical character to look back, reflect and make new meaning of events that occurred.

JWC Writer to Writer: learning from your colleagues

Approx. 20 minutes

Invite writers to share from their work and to listen. This could be with a partner or with a larger group. (5 minutes each writer)

- Warm feedback (something you appreciate in the writing–an image, sound, word choice, etc.)
- Something that you're curious about (something that might help in a next edit)

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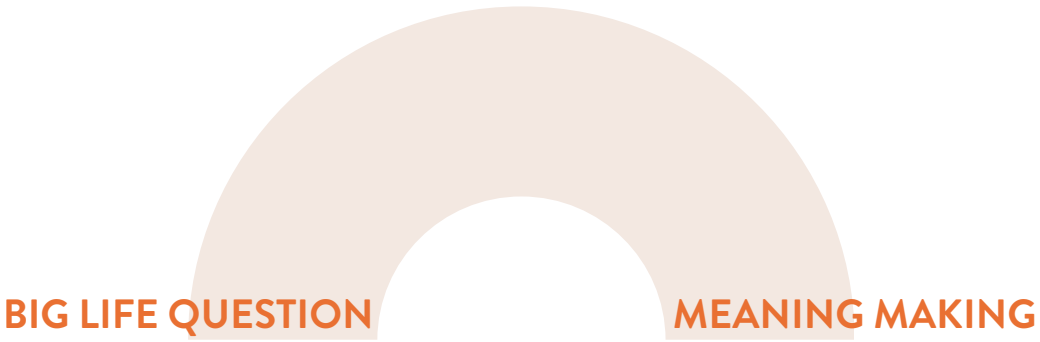
Next steps & Closing Ritual

Approx. 10 minutes

Today we explored *Lech Lecha* (Go Forward/Take Yourself and Go) with a focus on meaning making when writing about an engaging spiritual or personal journey. As a closing ritual, we invite you to share with your circle:

- What are you taking home with you? (emotions, needs, questions, or writing ideas)
- What new perspectives on writing about a spiritual journey are you carrying forward?

Three Steps for Writing an Engaging Arc:



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Mazel Tov on completing the JWC module on *simcha*!

In the tradition of a ***siyyum***, a celebration marking the completion of a unit of learning—most often a tractate of Talmud—learners say ***Hadran Alach*** (We will return to you). This phrase reminds us that completing a study is not the end of the journey, but just another step.

Following this tradition, you may want to mark this moment with a special celebration/*siyyum*. Consider using the phrase *Hadran Alach* ("We will return to you") to reflect on a learning or writing practice that you would like to return to as your writer's journey continues. Like the study of Torah, a writer's journey is a lifelong process.

Hadran Alach

הַדְרָן עֲלָךְ

הֲדְרָן עֲלָךְ מַסֶּכֶת (יאמר שם המסכת) וְהַדְרָךְ עֲלָן. דַּעְתָּן עֲלָךְ מַסֶּכֶת (יאמר שם המסכת) וְדַעְתָּךְ עֲלָן. לָא נִתְנַשֵּׁי מִינָךְ מַסֶּכֶת (יאמר שם המסכת) וְלֹא תִתְנַשֵּׁי מִינָן, לָא בְּעָלְמָא הָדֵין וְלֹא בְּעָלְמָא דְּאָתֵי:

We will return to you, ***Lech Lecha*** and you will return to us; our mind is on you, ***Lech Lecha*** and your mind is on us; we will not forget you, ***Lech Lecha,*** and you will not forget us – not in this world and not in the next world.