

The story of your child's creation.

I was invited to interview the American philosopher and scholar of education, Parker Palmer, on a stage in front of 400 Jewish educators, shlichim (ambassadors to Israel, like our own, Merav Dill), and Jewish communal professionals from all over North America and Israel, as the kickoff to the icenter's annual conference (<https://www.theicenter.org>).

I have been studying and writing about Palmer's work for 20 years. I got to share with him what a huge debt of intellectual, spiritual, and personal gratitude I owe him. I described how Parker has given us new questions to ask, and new tools with which to answer them. While there are many scholars who write about how to handle the what and the how, and even the why of education, Parker, has dedicated his life to addressing the "who" of education. He has taught us that our humanity is no luxurious afterthought to fit in to our practice, if we have time. Rather, he has guided me and countless others to turn the mirror back on ourselves as the ultimate direct instruments of education, and to take very seriously the conscious use of our teacher and leader selves, as an equally critical lens into the deep and sacred work we do. As well, Parker Palmer helped to inform my own research that has focused on the importance of naming and embracing the role of dissonance in identity formation, to ensure that, as we put it at CJDS, "No student OR teacher checks any part of his/her true self at the door."

He and I spoke about all sorts of things ranging from what makes him laugh uncontrollably, to his sublime ethical treatment of the dilemmas of the "dual curriculum" in Jewish education that left the audience speechless (not bad for a Quaker pastor!). Parker is a poet in his own right, and we concluded by doing a joint reading of one of his favorite poems, which happens to be one by one of Israel's great contemporary poets, Yehuda Amichai, called, "Hamakom sh'anu tzodkim bo," The Place Where We are Right. I read it in Hebrew, he read it in English, and then he took us all inside of what the poem captures for him.

Getting to meet Parker Palmer and engage in discourse with this great intellectual light about the things closest to our hearts, was, in a word, spiritual.



In case you want to eavesdrop on some of the conversation, the icenter provided the [link to the recording of the interview](#), which begins 12 minutes in, with Founding Executive Director of the Jim Joseph Foundation, Chip Edelsberg, introducing Parker and Tali: