



Kabbalah
Experience

Our Story Manifests
Annual Report 2019

Reflections from the Executive Director

What does it take for the infinite to create space for the finite?

What does it take to manifest change in an organization?

Last year, I had the opportunity to deepen my learning at Kabbalah Experience and better understand the functioning of the organization. David and I had conversations about growth, development, and vision, and at one point he asked me if I would consider being Kabbalah Experience's next Executive Director.

As the organization's founder, David felt he was in a place in his career and family life — and the organization was in a place, as well — that he could create space for new leadership, and for the organization to expand to its next level. Oftentimes, it is hard for a founder to contract, in order to make space for creation to occur.

David has remained fully committed to Kabbalah Experience as its Spiritual Director, while mentoring me in teaching kabbalah and in leading the organization. Working with David, it is clear he models *tsimtsum*/contraction in such a way that Kabbalah Experience is able to grow. He contracts for new growth to occur.

To highlight what has happened this year at KE:

- We received an \$80,000 grant from Rose Community Foundation, which was matched with \$160,000 in individual multiple-year donations in order to sustain the executive leadership transition.
- We had a successful Sixth Annual Fundraiser with singer songwriter Ellis Delaney headlining.
- We experimented with new class models and adjunct faculty options and increased student registration and class offerings for 2019.
- We launched two 'self-study' videos, *Soul* and *Space: Tree of Life*, and completed filming *Masks* for release in early 2020.
- We successfully transitioned organizationally and fiscally into a leadership model with two senior professionals, Melanie Gruenwald as the Executive Director and Dr. David Sanders as the Spiritual Director.
- We participated in CO Gives Day for the first time and raised over \$13,000.

None of this would be possible without vision and commitment from our donors, students, and volunteers. I am grateful to be on this journey with Kabbalah Experience and to have David, and you, as my partners.

We believe Kabbalah Experience can serve as a model for spiritual education — reaching students across the world through ZOOM video conference, and also by training Kabbalah Experience Fellows to launch KE groups in their home communities.

In the new year, we are seeking to expand our course offerings, online presence, and core of teachers. Kabbalah Experience is professionalizing its board and systems — investing in marketing, CRM software, leadership development, and thought leadership.

While we grow, our core mission is the same: to serve as a center for adult spiritual education, using Kabbalah as a tool for living with greater awareness, connection, and personal transformation.

As we teach meditation from the Zohar, we reflect on this mantra: *Dlayt atar panui meenay* — There is no space devoid of you.

David, in the myriad of ways you have created space for creation to occur...there is no space devoid of you.

Thank you for your leadership, mentorship, commitment and vision.

Thanks for offering a true model of *tsimtsum*—a contraction, in order for expansion to occur.

With gratitude,
Melanie



Reflections from the Spiritual Director

*Remember the heart is a tender thing
Restless and hopeful it cries and sings
Sometimes you need shelter and a space to be
A little tough, not tough enough, a little lost at sea.*

*And when everyone's racing and you join in
If you can, try running with a smile
Because there is a danger in going too fast
Getting too far ahead can set you back*

*Right on time, You are right on time,
You're right on time.*

Ellis Delaney sang those words to me as I celebrated my 60th birthday on January 18, 2018. I had, with the help of my friends and family, come to a realization. The way forward for Kabbalah Experience required risk, a willingness to let it end or let it begin anew. I knew the time was right for a change.

That evening was filled with emotion. KE students took to the stage to sing, my eldest son Ben sang *Walking in Memphis*, and then Ellis mesmerized with her soulful songs. I missed my Dad who died many years before and missed my surrogate Dad, Bob Loup, who had died the year before. The evening ended in dance, with Rita by my side; we danced as a family, the seven of us in a circle. I did not have on blue suede shoes but my feet were ten feet off of Beale.

I was aware, a nagging aware amidst the celebration, of who was missing. Her husband had come first to study at KE and so I was expecting them both to join us that evening. But that evening was the last evening their precious son Koby would grace this world with his presence.

From that young man's heroic broken halleluyah came his Mom, Melanie, to find solace and support for her own deep sorrow in continuing her study at KE. The vessel had been shattered, but fragmented light was glinting off the jagged shards.

We are indeed, as the poet Lawrence Kushner penned, "each other's puzzle pieces." The timing seemed all wrong and yet Melanie showed up right on time. When Ellis Delaney returned the next spring to headline for our fundraiser, I was ready. Melanie was ready. We had not moved too fast, we had moved very deliberately through a plan that would allow for a smooth transition in leadership. With incredible generosity, KE students and our Board of Directors insured that we had the financial resources to move forward. They more than matched a grant from Rose Community Foundation, and we announced last spring that Melanie would be the new Executive Director of KE.



I joked that evening that in becoming KE's Spiritual Director I was not going to be at KE in spirit only. So it has been. I handed over to Melanie the running of KE on July 1, 2019, and since then we have walked hand in hand, worked hand in hand to keep KE thriving and to continue evolving our teaching and practice of spiritual awareness.

My deepest gratitude to you, Koby, for bringing your Mom to study with you at KE and to all of you for allowing KE to continue on; "for the heart is a tender thing and sometimes you need a shelter and a space to be."

With love,
David



"The classes I have taken at KE have opened up a door to see the "unseen reality" of our world and allowed me to learn more about myself. I love the rich discussions we have in class and feel connected to people I learn with." —Amy Topelson, KE Student and Board Member

Meet Our Adjunct Faculty

Reb Tirzah Firestone, PhD, is an author, Jungian psychotherapist, and founding rabbi of Congregation Nevei Kodesh in Boulder, Colorado. She is a leader in the international Jewish Renewal Movement and a renowned Jewish scholar and teacher. Tirzah has taught nationally for over 30 years about body-mind psychology, Kabbalah, feminist mysticism, ancestral healing and other modern applications of ancient wisdom. Her current teaching focuses on healing ancestral trauma.



Reb Tirzah Firestone, PhD

Rabbi Dr. Reb Mimi (Miriam Sara) Feigelson is an ordained female Orthodox rabbi, international teacher of Chassidut, Spirituality and a storyteller. Reb Mimi created the role of the *Mashpiah Ruchanit* (spiritual mentor) in Rabbinical Seminaries in the United States and in Israel. Reb Mimi has served as the associate director of the Yakar Institute for Tradition and Creativity, and as the director of the Women's Beit Ha'midrash. She is the blessed and proud soul-mother to over a dozen children.



Rabbi Dr. Reb Mimi Feigelson

Positive Vibrations **Kabbalah Experience 6th Annual Fundraiser**

For our Sixth Annual Fundraiser in April 2019, we gathered in celebration of the growth of Kabbalah Experience. It was a wonderful opportunity to honor the teachers, Board, volunteers and all the members who make this community conscious and caring. The program showcased healing bowls and gongs with **Ann Martin**, Sound Energy Practitioner, and recording artist **Ellis Delaney** delighted our audience with heartwarming, original songs. We were thrilled to share the announcement of Melanie Gruenwald's transition to Executive Director at this event.

Each attendee was sent home with a Positive Cookie, to continue enjoying the positive vibrations of the evening.



Ellis Delaney



Ann Martin

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Kabbalah Experience Board of Directors

Our fundraising and special community events would not be possible without the generous involvement of volunteers. We gratefully acknowledge the creativity and hard work that make KE events so successful. The Annual Fundraiser was chaired by Board Members Gwen Crawford, Michelle Friedman and Michelle Saxer.

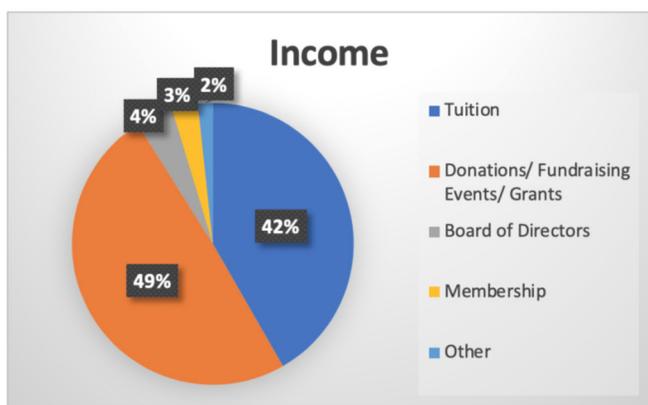
- Adrienne Abel**
- Mimi Bergen**
- Jaye Kephart**
- Brittany Wangsness**

- 2019-2020**
- Bettina Kurowski, Chair
 - Gwen Crawford
 - Ken Diamond
 - Michelle Friedman
 - Robyn Loup
 - Martin Morris
 - Dr. Sharon Sagel
 - Michelle Saxer
 - Morgan Sicklick
 - Amy Topelson
 - Stacy Wasserman

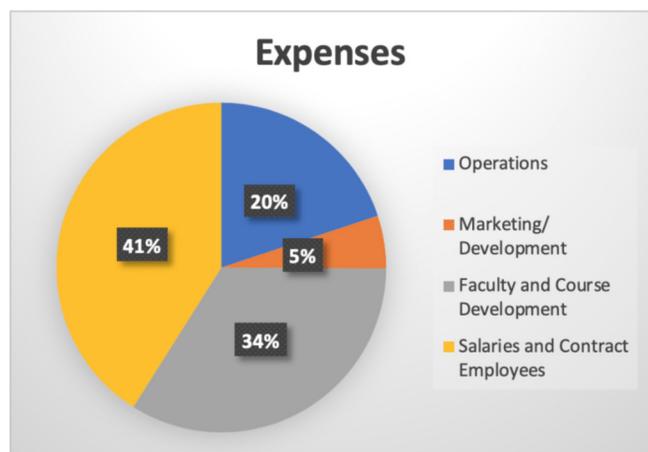
We gratefully acknowledge the service of those board members who rotated off the board this last year:
 Dr. Mel Wernimont,
 Board Chair
 Joe Costello
 Phil Mason

Special thank you to Ken Diamond for serving as Interim Co-Chair this fall!

Financials Profit and Loss-FY 2018



INCOME	
Tuition	98,000
Donations/Fundraising Events/Grants	116,000
Board of Directors	10,000
Membership	7000
Other	4000
TOTAL	\$235,000



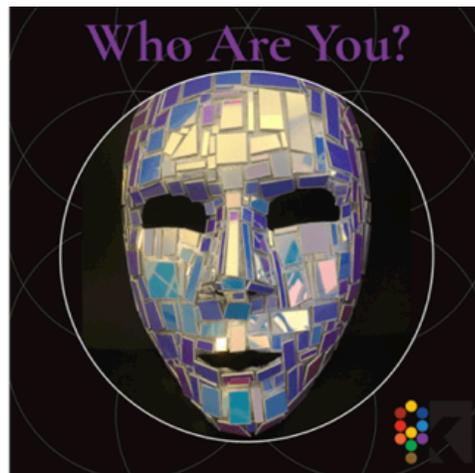
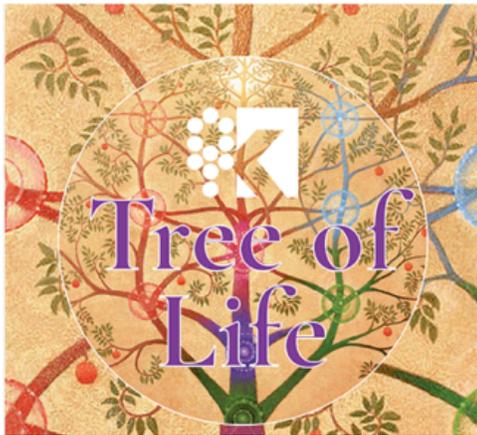
EXPENSES	
Operations	50,000
Marketing/Development	13,000
Faculty and Course Development	85,000
Salaries and Contract Employees	103,000
TOTAL	\$251,000

Upcoming Opportunities

The newest Kabbalah Experience self-study tools will be available in 2020:

- *Masks* streaming course and student guide
- Kabbalah Experience Haggadah
- Kabbalah Experience Omer journal

Become a part of the KE legacy and underwrite one of these projects for world wide distribution. Your name and dedication will be featured throughout the materials. Please contact David at david@kabbalahexperience.com about these underwriting opportunities.



Save the Date!



**AN EVENING
OF SPIRITUAL
CONNECTION WITH
REBECCA ROSEN**
Kabbalah Experience
7th Annual Fundraiser
Thursday, March 26, 7:00-9:00 pm
Soiled Dove Underground

Mark your calendars for KE's 7th Annual Fundraiser, *An Evening of Spiritual Connection with Rebecca Rosen*, on Thursday, March 26, 2020.

Thank you to our sponsors (as of 12/17/19):

- Anonymous
- JewishCOLORADO
- Ken Diamond
- Michelle and David Friedman
- Bettina Kurowski
- Ray Merenstein/ RDM Communications
- Amy and Gerardo Topelson

Tickets and sponsorships available at: <http://bit.ly/KE-annual-event-rebecca-rosen>

Donors

As a school, tuition is a significant source of KE's income. That said, we would never be able to offer as many courses, educational materials and events without the even larger sum of private donations from our community. We are grateful for this powerful support you and other students provide. We thank you for your generosity.

This list reflects donations from July 1, 2018-June 30,2019. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions.

KETER

Anonymous
Robert Corn
Ken Diamond
Marti and Dr. Andrew Freeman
Diane Gimber
Barbara Goldberg
Eileen and Richard Greenberg
Celeste Grynberg
Bettina Kurowski
Robyn Loup
Louann and Micky Miller
Wendy and Jimmy Miller
Jane E. and Stanton Rosenbaum
Andrea Singer Pollack
Rose Community Foundation
Michelle Saxer
Andrea and Scott Stillman
Amy Toltz-Miller
Ruth Toltz (z"l)
Drs. Anne and Mel Wernimont

TIFERET

Elaine and Dr. Richard Asarch
Laurie and Andrew Brock
Corinne and Avi Brown
Joe Costello
Megan and Dr. Robert Fante

Erica Farber
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YESOD

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Gwen Crawford
Jodi Eisen
Michelle Friedman
Shaul Gabbay
June and Dr. Ivor Garlick
Sheryl Goodman
Susann Gordon
Andrea Green
Rivka Grinberg
Melanie and Rabbi Salomon
Gruenwald

Beverly and Dr. Dan Jacobson
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Janice Lines and Ginny Simms
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Stuart Gabel
Devra Ochs
Josie and John Ostrander
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Marta Pentecost
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Ellen Robinson
Rita and Dr. David Sanders
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Carolyn Steele
Nancy and Craig Steele
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Amy Topelson
Michelle Weckler

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Sally Kurtzman
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Laurie Marcus
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Pamela Mayeda
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Nancy Nowak
Nancy Ostroff
Myra Rieger
Roslyn and Michael Rudnick
Dr. Sharon Sagel
Linda Schatz
Nora Schruttt
Lisa Soicher
Sally Stich
Jeannie Yi

We Are Grateful for You!

At Kabbalah Experience we are building upon a powerful foundation by nurturing creativity, community, and connections.

In the Tree of Life, *Hod* is Surrender: acknowledging what is, accepting and giving way. HOD is also representative of GRATITUDE as we flow on to *Malchut*, manifestation.

With your support, we have hope that the evolving story of Kabbalah Experience continues on.

Please consider making your year-end gift to help support the future of Kabbalah Experience today!

We gratefully acknowledge the longstanding and generous support from Rose Community Foundation.





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