

**Jewish Vocational Leadership:
Exploring the Relationship Between Calling and Profession**

... ויקרא אל-משה

Steven Pressfield, *The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle*

The professional, though he accepts money, does his work out of love. . . . The professional has learned, however, that too much love can be a bad thing. Too much love can make him choke. The seeming detachment of the professional, the cold-blooded character to his demeanor, is a compensating device to keep him from loving the game so much that he freezes in action. . . . playing the game for money produces the proper professional attitude. It inculcates the lunch-pail mentality, the hard-core, hard-head, hard-hate state of mind that shows up for work despite the rain or snow or dark of night and slugs it out day after day . . . Resistance outwits the amateur with the oldest trick in the book: It uses his own enthusiasm against him. Resistance gets us to plunge into a project with an overambitious and unrealistic timetable for its completion. It knows we can't sustain that level of intensity. We will hit the wall. We will crash. The professional, on the other hand, understands delayed gratification. . . . A pro views her work as craft, not art. Not because she believes art is devoid of a mystical dimension. On the contrary. She understands that all creative endeavor is holy, but she doesn't dwell on it. She knows that if she thinks about that too much, it will paralyze her. So she concentrates on technique. The professional masters how, and leaves what and why to the gods. . . . she doesn't wait for inspiration, she acts in anticipation of its apparition. The professional is acutely aware of the intangibles that go into inspiration. Out of respect for them, she lets them work. She grants them their sphere while she concentrates on hers. . . . The professional dedicates himself to mastering technique not because he believes technique is a substitute for inspiration but because he wants to be in possession of the full arsenal of skills when inspiration does come.

Sarah Lewis, *The Rise: Creativity, the Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery*

The wisdom of the deliberate amateur is part of how we endure. . . . proficiency is best kept by finding ways to periodically give it up. It is an old idea for artists, seen in the freedom that comes in a late style or the Zen concept of "beginner's mind," a shift in the perspective that comes from trying to see things anew after gaining sufficient experience. . . . The amateur's "useful wonder" is what the expert may not realize she has left behind. Psychologists call the unintended routine that comes with expertise the Einstellung effect. It is the cost of success: The bias that creeps in without our notice and can block us from seeing how to do things any other way. . . . An amateur is unlike the novice bound by lack of experience and the expert trapped by having too much. Driven by impulse and desire, the amateur stays in the place of a "constant now," seeing possibilities to which the expert is blind and which the apprentice may not yet discern. . . . The term *amateur* is now pejorative: to lack in skill or knowledge, to be a dilettante, dabbler, fancier, or hobbyist - all conceptual flirts. Yet centuries ago, the word amateur wasn't meant to disparage. It described a person undertaking an activity for sheer pleasure, not solely pursuing a goal for the sake of their profession. The French *amateur* is from the Latin *amator* - a lover, a devotee, a person who adores a particular endeavor. An amateur's adventure is an embodied feeling of being rapt, utterly absorbed. . . . and feeling refueled, our endurance enhanced by authentic passion.