

Testimonials from Penny's Talks & Workshops

Book Presentations

While Penny's book tells the stories of powerful Jewish women working to make change in their communities, her presentations themselves challenge us to engage with these questions with immediacy and love. Along with the others whose stories are recorded on the pages of her book, Penny exemplifies the activism and passion that inspires those of us working for justice in our communities today.

–Elena Hoffenberg, Harvard College Progressive Jewish Alliance

Penny opened a sensitive and profound conversation at our temple. I was hoping to bring an understanding of both privilege and internalized anti-Semitism to my congregation. Penny's great compassion, vulnerability and insight hit the mark. Most of the participants bought her book and a few are requesting a study group based on it. Kayn Yirbu/May such work increase.

–Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Kiener, Temple Israel, Greenfield MA

Penny's lecture was a powerful and engaging way for my students to understand the true power of what it means to choose justice. She exposed students to ideas they had not thought of before and enabled them to understand concepts such as internalized oppression through dynamic personal and political stories. My students still reference her lecture in class and in their writing!

–Oren Kroll-Zeldin, Adjunct Professor Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice, University of San Francisco

Penny set up such a safe, gentle and respectful forum for all to learn and share. By the end of her reading and presentation, participants were stimulated, open and strategizing about how to keep the dialogue going.

–Lynn Grotsky Congregant of Temple Beth Hatfiloh, Olympia, WA

Dr. Rosenwasser's talk brought together many cross-sections of Princeton's Jewish community to reckon with the powerful ideas in her book. The participatory style of the event was riveting, and I found myself pondering her deconstruction of "hurt people hurt people" for weeks afterward.

– Lily Gellman, Princeton Alliance for Jewish Progressives

Having Penny speak and share her work at our school was a great gift. She brought her powerful political and historical analysis, using compassionate and open-hearted language. This rare combination made a space that many people could participate in, where we could have conversations that we haven't had before.

– Jessica Rosenberg, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Your interactive approach was just right, and the content flawless -- well thought out and well presented.

–Professor Gordon Fellman, Professor of Sociology; Chair, Peace, Conflict, and Coexistence Studies, Brandeis University

Penny can touch hearts in your community, no matter where in the diaspora you may be. She came to Bozeman MT and touched the souls of Jewish women and men, connected us to how the traumas of our past affect us today, and offered hope for healing through justice. A profound visit that not only offered healing, but also built community.

–Rabbi Ed Stafman, Congregation Beth Shalom, Bozeman MT; President of OHALAH (Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal)

It was a great privilege to hear you speak... Your presentation was woven together so thoughtfully and intelligently as you tackle really hard issues and bring relevance and urgency to light. It is indeed “an activist’s call to repair the world.”

–Maxine Hermolin, United Jewish People’s Order, Toronto

Penny’s compassion, insight and humor made our first collaboration with members of a local synagogue a meaningful beginning of transforming Jewish community and expanding dialogue about oppression, privilege and fear.

–E.E. Miller/ Jewish Voice for Peace/Western MA

A couple people said it was one of the best Shaarei Shamayim events they ever attended. That's a huge statement, after years of gatherings in a very warm and connected community. I think we will continue in some way, and use your book. The tone you set and opening you created sparked something sweet, powerful and hopeful.

–Congregant from Congregation Shaarei Shamayim, Madison, WI

You gave us the emotional support that reminds us WHY we do what we do...Talk and action go together.

–Mona Cohen, Social Justice Committee, Shir Hadash Synagogue, Milwaukee WI

Penny’s presentation at Kol Tzedek Synagogue was thought-provoking and engaging, and she was a pleasure to work with. I recommend her as a speaker for other congregations and settings in which people are working to integrate Judaism and justice.

–Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Hermann

Penny is a wonderful, heartfelt speaker and writer who manages to speak the truth of our deepest fears with the utmost compassion and depth of spirit. A must-see!

–Corey Levine, Independent Jewish Voices, Canada, Victoria, B.C. Chapter Coordinator

Penny Rosenwasser puts together a profoundly engaging book talk. Just as her book includes many voices, so does her presentation, weaving in readings by community members, and

completely captivating the audience. I laughed, I cried, I recognized myself in new ways, and committed at a deeper level to overcoming oppression in all its forms.

–Diane Swords, Intergroup Dialogue Program, Syracuse University

Please book Penny for your next event. Her books are dynamic and powerful, and her reading gave me goose bumps.

–Cynthia Mitchell, Alumni Relations, California Institute of Integral Studies

Penny brought a fresh, inspiring conversation to Portland last year. Her talk had depth and humor. She invited discussion about the diverse experiences that shape Jewish identity and the concept of ingrained anti-semitism and injustice. There was dialogue about community, multiculturalism, and the responsibility to do good. People talked and listened. But best of all, they became curious.

–Parent, Portland Jewish Academy (K-8th grade), Portland, Oregon

People were very engaged and found what you have to say, and the way you say it, very meaningful. I think it will open up conversations at the temple in new ways.

–Congregant from Congregation Tikkun V'Or, Ithaca, NY

When Penny started discussing how people, especially trans, female, and queer Jews, can note these internalized negative terms, I felt so relieved that someone understood me. I related to what Penny was saying so deeply that I felt like I could remember this lecture for years.*

–Sarah Katz, Jewish Studies student, University of San Francisco

You gave us so much to think about. Rabbi Lisa and all the BCC members I spoke with were very happy.

–Congregant from Beth Chayim Chadashim Synagogue, Los Angeles

Penny Rosenwasser achieves the challenging balance of telling the truth about our complicity in the Israel/Palestine debacle and leaving us hopeful and directed towards personal and political healing.

–Mara Sapon-Shevin, Professor of Inclusive Education, Syracuse University

Penny's book and wisdom reach across all human experience.

–Sutree Irving, New Directions for Peace, Portland OR

"Dare to Be Powerful" Workshop

This workshop can range from 3 – 8 hours and can be tailored to your group. It is primarily geared to cis-women and gender-queer folks who were socialized as women. Travel and honorarium requested (or workshop fee paid by participants).

Recently my organization brought Penny in to do a workshop for women in their 20s and 30s on the topic of working through internalized sexism and antisemitism. We could not have been

more pleased with the outcome. Within a day of posting the event online, the registration filled to capacity; the combination of the topic itself plus Penny's activist fame contributed to a highly sought after event! Many of the workshop attendees immediately signed themselves up to join our mailing list and to get involved in other ways. So organizationally, bringing Penny was a good choice. And the workshop itself was magical: Penny's unique facilitation style allowed for plenty of time for participants to process everything they learned, and the outcome was a group of highly inspired, empowered and better-connected women. I definitely recommend bringing Penny in as a speaker or trainer!

–Talia Cooper, Program Director, May'an, NYC

You had your finger on the pulse. You led us through the experience of being heartbroken, but also feeling hopeful and connected. It was just what we needed, in terms of our leadership, and we didn't even know we needed it.

–Noa Grayevsky, Bay Area

The digging we did in the workshop was fantastic, and I liked the bonding that came as a result. I learned things! Self-reflective things, and things about framing hurt and pain into more constructive energy. This learning is awesome.

–Sarena Sairan, Toronto

Penny has taken the findings from both her research and decades of feminist activism to create a truly extraordinary experience. Combining feminist insights with thought-provoking exercises, Penny guides participants in reflection that draws on both the heart and the mind. She leads with enormous compassion, guiding participants to reflect, reassess, reconsider and re-dedicate ourselves to working for honest, meaningful change in ourselves and our communities.

–Dr. Sarah Anne Minkin, Bay Area

I left the workshop feeling really empowered and rejuvenated. It was so nice to hear others voice what I often feel.

–anonymous participant, NYC

Our workshop was just what I have been seeking. The experience of uncovering my internalized anti-Semitism is painful, intense and challenging. And it's exactly what I know I need to do to claim my "Jewish voice" in the activism I do. In this visceral workshop I let the feelings swell beyond my throat and into tears and movement and the sweetest hugs and understanding eyes from the others in the room. So good.

–anonymous participant, Bay Area

Penny's Talk, "Anti-Semitism: What it is and what it isn't"

You spoke so brilliantly... enabling people to really understand anti-Semitism for what it is.

–M. Dove Kent, ED, Jews for Racial & Economic Justice

Interviews

I found your interview to be powerful and really helpful. You have such a generous and compassionate way of analyzing and explaining things, that people who I usually think of as on the "other side" retain their complexity and humanity.

—Bay Area activist

Women in the Middle East Class: Responses from City College of San Francisco

Thank you Penny! I walked out of your presentation feeling so inspired and motivated to continue fighting for social change!

Your stories were haunting and inspiring, I will hold them with me for a long time.

What I heard and learned from your experience has moved me to do something for my own community. Thank you so much for sharing your experience with us.

It was great to hear your stories and the voices of Palestinian, Jewish and Israeli women working towards justice!

Your presentation was amazing! The stories you shared put a face to the destruction and violence occurring in that region, thanks!

Thank you for your gigantic heart, you have done your friends in Israel/Palestine justice.