

Sustaining Your Activism: Betsy Cohen's Guidelines

Betsy (aka Batya Kallus) is an American-Israeli activist who lives in Jerusalem. With 23 years in Israel under her belt, she has these tips for sustaining ourselves for ongoing struggles:

1. **Be strategic.** Think about what will actually make a difference. The posts I like the best are the ones with the most concrete calls for action-call your senator, congressperson, demand that they hold themselves responsible against the assaults.
2. **Don't shout** gevalt! This only feeds the troll and leads to despair. Despair is the greatest weapon they have against us. If we are in despair, we will crawl into our blankets and never come out.
3. **Find your voice.** The enemies of free and public expression are doing everything in their power to silence us. Keep speaking out, keep writing. Keep challenging.
4. **Find allies to the left and right.** There are allies everywhere and now is not the time to crawl into a sectorial box. The theory that only those in my particular bubble understand me is misguided. Sectorial thinking leads to their increased ability to divide and conquer.
5. **Know your enemies.** You will be surprised to discover which people are with Trump and his minions. Just the other day, I spoke with an Jewish leader who shocked me to the core by his enthusiastic support for the new Administration.
6. **Support those who come under attack.** Based on the divide and conquer strategy, they will attack easy targets that can be taken down quickly and delegitimized. Here is Israel, we have seen this over and over again. The media loves these delegitimization attacks. Challenge the attacks, respond back very aggressively and be fully supportive of the individuals and groups under attack. As someone who lived through this, I can tell you it is awful and support matters.
7. **Keep laughing-humor is our greatest weapon against despair.** In Israel, the best jokes arise during wars. Use humor to fight against the darkness.
8. **Keep loved ones close.**
9. **Nurture those parts of yourself and your community that will feed your souls.** Music, art, prayer, community building, what ever it is that will give you the spirit and strength to keep going.

10. Finally... **rest!** We need a day of rest every week to keep our souls and bodies ready for the next challenge. Being on 24/7 alert will not help us. Renewal through physical, mental and spiritual rest will enable us to keep going for the

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