THE BOARD MIRROR

What will this term have been for?

A short, private reflection for board presidents, chairs, and trustees

You took a job nobody trained you for. You inherited arrangements no one fully explained, you have a term with an end date, and somewhere in the back of your mind is the wish not to be the president or chair on whose watch something broke.

That is not a complaint about you. It is the shape of the role. Almost every capable board leader I have met is carrying some version of it, and almost none of them have said it out loud.

This is twenty statements about your own leadership — how it works around you, and how you hold it. It takes about fifteen minutes.

THREE THINGS THIS IS NOT

1. It is not an evaluation of your rabbi, your CEO, or your executive director. Not one statement here asks you to assess anyone but yourself.
2. It is not a report to anyone. Nobody sees this. There is nowhere to send it. It is yours.
3. It is not a test you can fail. A low number is information about a structure, not a verdict on a person.

HOW TO SCORE

1 Not true yet 2 Rarely 3 Sometimes, or unclear 4 Mostly 5 Consistently true

Answer as you would think it, not as you would say it at a board meeting.

ONE

Expectations

What is this job, actually?

01 I know what this role is responsible for here, and what belongs to the professional leadership..... ____

02 I know what the board expects of me, as distinct from what my predecessor happened to do..... ____

03 The people who elected me and I agree about what this term is for..... ____

And inside — how you hold the role:

04 I am doing this job, not the job I already know how to do from my own profession..... ____

05 I know what "enough" looks like for a volunteer term, and I am not holding myself to a full-time one..... ____

Expectations — _____ / 25

TWO

Governance

Where does my authority end?

01 I know which decisions belong to the board, which are mine, and which belong to our professional leadership..... ____

02 This board governs rather than manages..... ____

03 When something is unclear, we have a way to settle it that is not simply whoever feels most strongly.. .____

And inside — how you hold the role:

04 I can hold a decision I do not personally like, once the board has made it.....____

05 Our professional leader is the professional leader — and I say so out loud when it matters.....____

Governance — _____ / 25

T H R E E

Environment

Who shapes what happens here?

01 I know who holds influence here beyond the board roster.....____

02 I understand what my predecessors left in place, and why they left it that way.....____

03 I know where resistance to change will come from, and it does not take me by surprise.....____

And inside — how you hold the role:

04 I am not carrying one conflict, or one difficult person, on behalf of the whole board.....____

05 I have someone outside this organization to think out loud with.....____

Environment — _____ / 25

F O U R

Results

What will this term have been for?

01 I can name two or three things this term is meant to accomplish.....____

02 There is a plan for what happens when my term ends that does not depend on me.....____

03 We measure something more than whether people seemed content at the annual meeting.....____

And inside — how you hold the role:

04 I am building for whoever comes next, rather than proving something during my own term.....____

05 I would be glad if my successor got the credit for what we started.....____

Results — _____ / 25

WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW

Reading it

ELEMENT	YOUR SCORE	OUT OF
EXPECTATIONS	_____	25
GOVERNANCE	_____	25
ENVIRONMENT	_____	25
RESULTS	_____	25

Total _____ / 100

85 – 100 Clear. Your term has a shape and you know what it is for.

65 – 84 Mostly clear, with friction in one place. The lowest element is where to look.

45 – 64 Real ambiguity. Not unusual, and not your fault — most of it was here before you.

Below 45 The role has not been defined for you. That is a structural problem, and it is fixable.

THE ONE THAT MATTERS

The total is not the finding. Look at your lowest element and read its five statements again. In almost every organization I have worked with, one of the four is carrying weight it was never built to carry — and it is usually the one nobody has ever named out loud.

FOUR QUESTIONS, IF YOU WANT THEM

1. What surprised me?
2. Which of these has been true since before I arrived?
3. What am I doing because it is mine to do — and what am I doing because no one else picked it up?
4. If my successor read this, what would I want to have fixed before they sat down?

An arch has two sides. Your professional leader holds one. You hold the other.

Board leaders are shaped, not born — the same as the professionals they serve alongside. If any of this is worth a conversation, write to me. There is nothing to prepare.

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