



## Margot Stern Strom

*Social Change Agent; Executive Director, Facing History and Ourselves*

TOPIC: Social Change

SUBTOPICS: Ethics and Culture; Organization and People

### BIG IDEA

#### Facing History and Ourselves

Facing History and Ourselves is truly a marriage of head and heart. Based on the belief that students must be trusted to examine history in all of its complexities, including its legacies of prejudice and discrimination as well as resilience and courage, Facing History encourages young people to develop their own ideas and to contribute their voices to critical discussions and debates among their peers and in the larger community.

As the Executive Director of Facing History and Ourselves since its inception, Margot has recognized that young people are moral philosophers—and that it is critical to listen to their voices to understand how to make education relevant to them and to the

world they will enter. She offers a deep understanding of democracy and the link between history and ethics. Margot helps audiences around the world understand that by revisiting the prejudice and discrimination in the past, we can examine the meaning of our own attitudes and behavior and begin to see how we might make a difference ourselves and in others.

### BIOGRAPHY

Margot Stern Strom is an international leader in education for justice and the preservation of democracy. Through her commitment to honoring the voices of teachers and students and her deep belief that history matters, she has enabled millions of students to study the Holocaust, to investigate root causes of racism, antisemitism and violence, and to realize their obligations and capabilities as citizens in a democracy.

Margot has been the Executive Director of Facing History and Ourselves since its inception. With her leadership, Facing History and Ourselves has become known worldwide for the high quality of its materials and programs for both students and teachers.

While teaching social studies at the Runkle School in Brookline, Massachusetts, and studying moral development at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1976, Margot attended a conference on the Holocaust that inspired her to develop lessons and classroom resources that focused on this then-neglected history. It deepened her commitment to understanding issues of individual responsibility and moral decision-making in adolescents and defined her own learning about democracy.

Margot moved from the classroom to become project director and, in 1980, Executive Director of Facing History and Ourselves. Through pilot workshops and in consultation with scholars and teachers, she created the Facing History Scope and Sequence: the journey that students undertake to learn about the impact of history on their own lives and their futures.

Facing History teaches the skills of in-depth historical thinking in the belief that all students are capable of attaining the high standards necessary to engage deeply in its resource materials. Through using these skills, students develop greater understanding of the tragedies in humanity's history and greater compassion for others.

Margot has developed a world-class nonprofit organization that sets the standard for demonstrated impact, a strong business model, and outstanding leadership by board and staff. She has given children and adults a platform to discuss the most important moral questions we must all ask and answer.