

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Anatomy of Peace

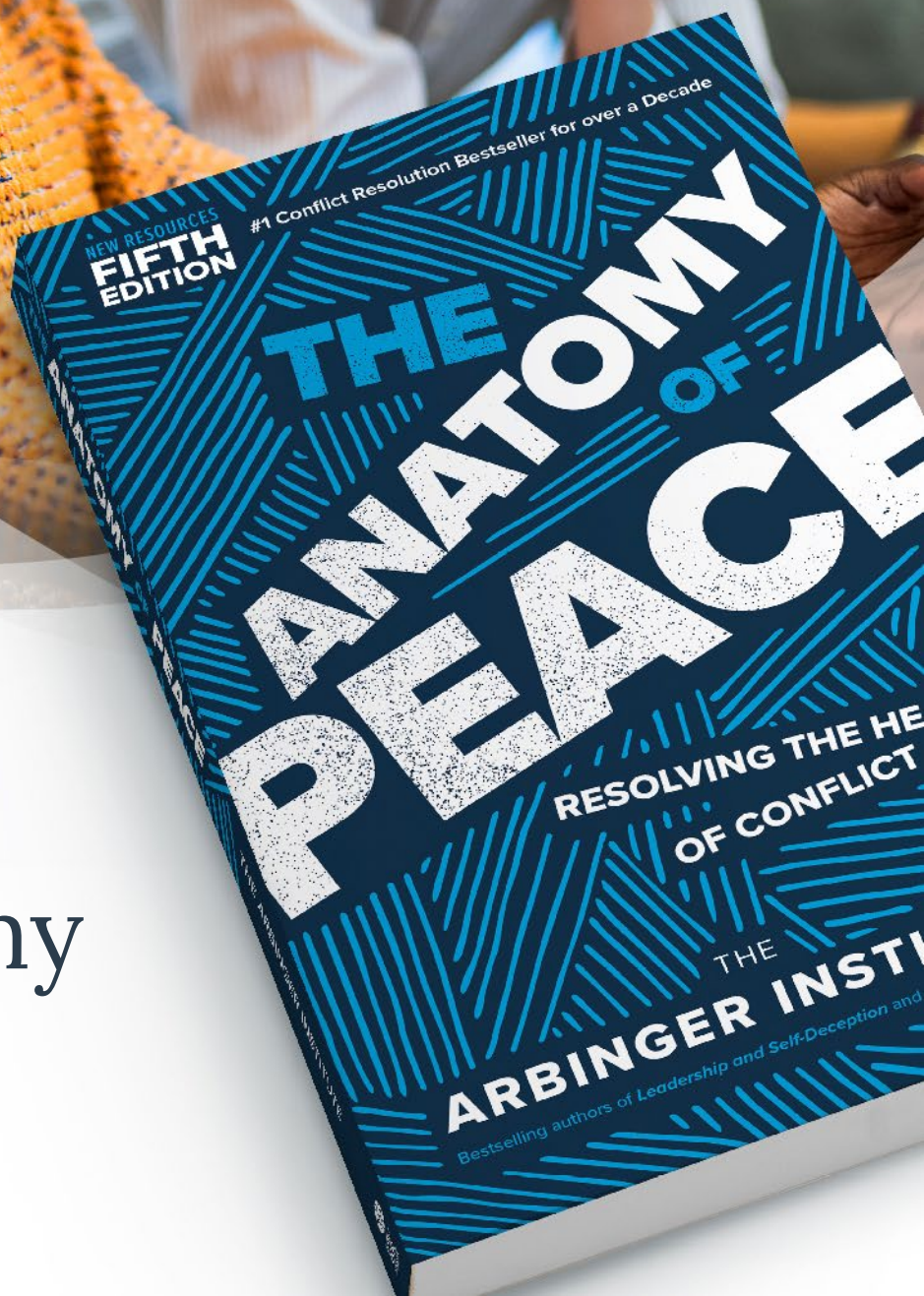




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PART I:

The Heart of Peace

CHAPTERS 1-2:

Enemies in the Desert & Deeper Matters

Core Ideas

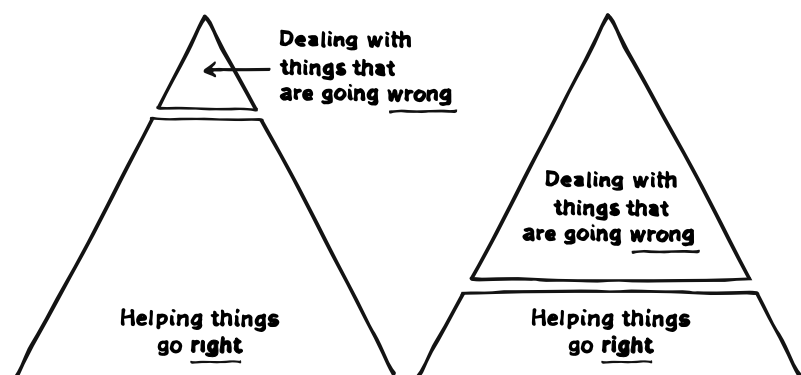
As the group of parents gather with the leaders at Camp Moriah, they are asked to consider where they spend more time and effort in their attempts to influence their wayward children—helping things go right or dealing with things that go wrong. We too often focus on correcting or fixing others when trying to influence them to change.

“It’s only natural when confronting a problem that we try to correct others,” as Yusuf admits. But, in so doing we undermine our influence by inviting resistance. “Further correction rarely helps a child who is pouting, for example, or a spouse who is brooding, or a coworker who is blaming.” The only way to influence others to change is to “get really good at the deeper matters,” as Yusuf says, “at helping things go right.”

Group Processing

How does our natural desire to “fix” others sometimes make things worse? Think of a time this played out in your life and discuss what you learned.

Identify a relationship at home or at work where you would like to exert greater influence to help the other person change. Considering the influence pyramid, have you been spending more time and effort dealing with things that are going wrong or helping things go right? Which diagram better captures where your time and effort has been spent in this relationship?



How does our natural desire to “fix” others sometimes make things worse? Think of a time this played out in your life and discuss what you learned.

Share what you could do to help things go right in this situation.

Peace in Wartime

Core Ideas

This chapter explores the difference between a “heart at peace” and a “heart at war” in the historical context of the Crusades and the leadership of Saladin. It illustrates the power of leading with a heart at peace, even in times of great conflict, and challenges common assumptions regarding weakness and strength.

Group Processing

Yusuf believes that Saladin was “remarkably and unfailingly strong,” and that the secret of his strength was that his heart was at peace. What did you learn by considering the contrast between Saladin and the Crusaders? Discuss how a “heart at peace” might be a source of strength.

How does Saladin’s approach to leadership challenge conventional ideas about weakness, strength, power, and conflict resolution?

Share an experience when you or someone you know led with a “heart at peace” in a difficult situation. What did you learn by observing them? What was the result?

Consider other people in your life who seem to live their lives with a heart at peace. Share what is it about them that leads you to see them in this way.

Further Exploration and Application

Consider a current relationship or situation where there is conflict: at work, in your family, in your community. What would it look and feel like to apply a “heart at peace” in that relationship or situation?

Write about a time when someone extended unexpected kindness or generosity in a difficult situation. How did they impact the outcome of that situation?

Beneath Behavior

Core Ideas

This chapter highlights the fundamental distinction between what we do and how we see—between our behavior and the underlying motivations that animate our behavior, our “way of being.” It introduces the concept of seeing others as people rather than objects and explores how the way we see others—whether we have a “heart at peace” or a “heart at war”—shapes our experience of them and their experience of us.

Group Processing

Reflect on times in your life when you have seen others as objects and on times when you have seen others as people. What do you learn from making this comparison? Avi suggests that we can’t see clearly when our hearts are at war. Think about experiences in your life that might illustrate this.

Follow these instructions to individually complete the exercise on the following page:

1. List the names of the people in your life whom you impact most—at home, at work, and in your community.
2. Now, considering each person, ask yourself, “Do I see this person as a person with needs, hopes, and challenges as real as my own? Or, do I tend to see them as vehicles or as obstacles? Is there anyone who is irrelevant to me?” Simply write P, V, O, or I next to their name to indicate whether you see them most often as people, vehicles, obstacles, or irrelevancies.
3. Next, considering each person, ask yourself, would they agree with what I have written? Particularly for those I’ve said I see fully as people, would they agree that this is always the case? If not, why?
4. Finally, for each person whom you often don’t see as a person, honestly consider what that must be like for them to be seen by you as a vehicle, obstacle, or as irrelevant. What do you suppose it is like for them to be seen in these ways?

Person	P/V/O/I	What must this be like for them?

Discuss what you have learned. What realizations have you had about the relationships you've considered? Share any thoughts about what you could do differently.

Further Exploration and Application

Avi suggests that “when our hearts are at war, we can’t see clearly. We give ourselves the best opportunity to make clear-minded decisions only to the extent that our hearts are at peace.” In what relationships or situations is your heart at war? How might your perception of the situation and ideas about how to improve the relationship or situation change if you had a heart at peace?

Keep a journal for a week, noting instances when you see objects rather than people. Discover how just paying attention to the way you perceive others affects your interactions.

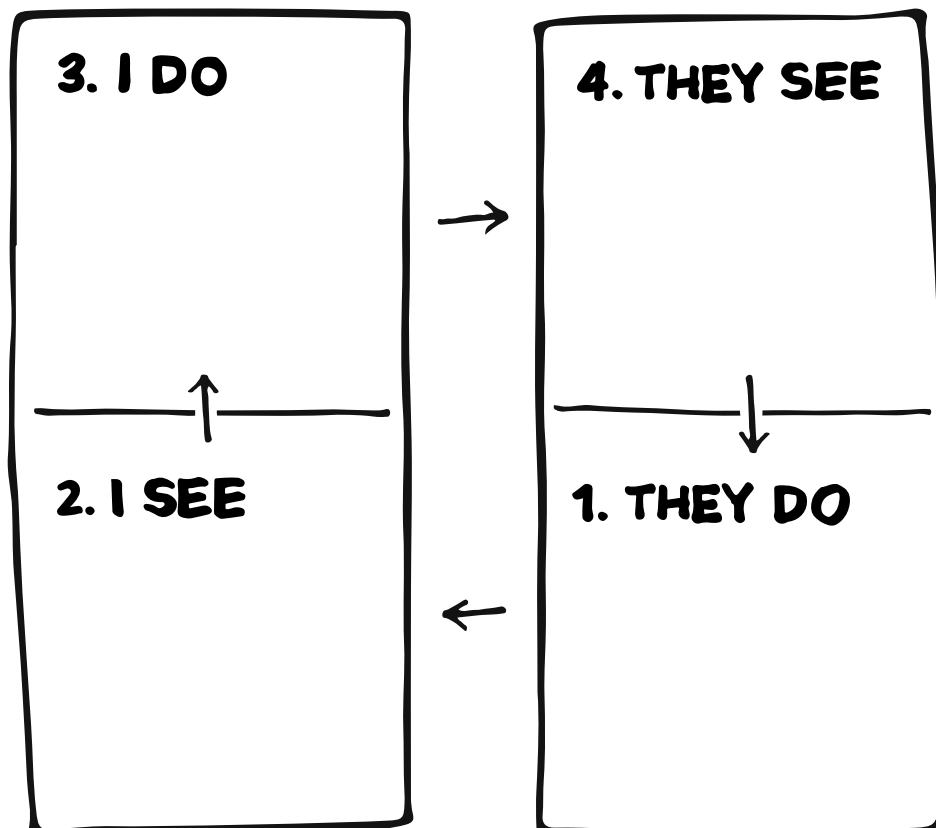
The Pattern of Conflict & Escalation

Core Ideas

These chapters explore the hidden dynamics at play in patterns of conflict called “collusions.” Learning to diagnose these dynamics is critical to identifying and addressing the self-sabotaging and destructive ways we unwittingly perpetuate these conflicts to satisfy our need to be justified for seeing others as objects.

Group Processing

Identify a relationship where you experience friction or conflict. To diagram the conflict, begin in quadrant 1 by writing down something this person does that bothers you. Then, in quadrant 2, write down how you see this person when they are acting in the way you indicated in quadrant 1. Then, in quadrant 3, write down what you do in response when you are seeing this person in the ways you’ve listed in quadrant 2. Finally, in quadrant 4, write down how the other person might see you, given what you are doing.



Given what you've listed in quadrant 4, is the other person more likely to continue (or even escalate) the behavior that you don't like? How are you inviting in this other person exactly what you don't want?

As a group, discuss your discoveries in diagramming your collusions. Discuss what your collusions reveal about Avi's insight: "When we start seeing others as objects, we begin provoking them to make our own lives difficult. We actually start inviting others to make us miserable. We begin provoking in others the very things we say we hate."

Further Exploration and Application

Identify another recurring conflict in your life. What role do you play in perpetuating it?

Identify a situation where you have blamed someone else for a conflict. How might you reframe the situation now to take greater responsibility for your role?

CHAPTER 7:

The Right Thing and The Right Way

Core Ideas

This chapter discusses how doing the right thing isn't enough if not done with the right way of being. As Yusuf explains, "the deepest way in which we are right or wrong is in our way of being toward others. I can be right on the surface—in my behavior or positions—while being entirely mistaken beneath, in my way of being."

Group Processing

When have you done the "right thing" in but with the wrong way of being? Have you ever done something that was technically "right" that was negatively received? Or have you been on the receiving end of someone else's behavior that should have been elevating—like receiving a compliment or apology—but you felt like they were up to something?

As a group, discuss these experiences and what these experiences taught you.

Share experiences when someone corrected, confronted, or provided straightforward feedback in a way that left you feeling respected, understood, or motivated. How did they see you and what difference did that make?

Discuss the relationships or situations where you find that your “internal wars,” as Yusuf describes them, “are poisoning our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes toward others.” What have you learned thus far that might help you see the humanity of those you are struggling with?

Further Exploration and Application

Before the group leaves for the day, Yusuf challenges them to “see everyone you encounter as a person.” For the next twenty-four hours, make a concerted effort to do this and journal your experiences here to process and learn from what happens.

Reality

Core Ideas

This chapter explores how our personal justifications in conflict can create a “need” to see others in a certain way. Rather than addressing real issues, we sustain conflict because it reinforces our self-image. When we feel wronged, we often cling to a sense of injustice because it allows us to maintain a view of ourselves as the victim or the morally superior party. This can lead to a cycle where we unconsciously seek evidence that supports our grievances rather than resolving them. The group at Camp Moriah learns that without addressing these twisted needs, true peace and influence remain elusive.

Group Processing

Share an example of when you held onto a negative perception of someone because it justified your own actions or emotions?

Discuss how shifting your perspective on another person's motives might change your approach to a conflict that you find yourself in right now or might have changed your perspective in a past conflict..

In what ways do you see the idea of a “twisted need” manifest in workplace, family, or community conflicts?

Further Exploration and Application

Reflect on a past situation where you felt the need to be “right.” How did that impact the relationship?

Identify one area in your life where you might be sustaining a conflict due to a twisted need. What small steps can you take to change your perspective?

PART II:

From Peace to War

The Beginning of an Idea

Core Ideas

Objections arise as the group at Camp Moriah struggles with the idea that they might be part of the problem. This chapter reveals how resistance to change is often rooted in fear, pride, or misunderstanding. Because we perceive ourselves as justified in our conflicts, admitting fault or responsibility can feel threatening. It may challenge deeply held beliefs about ourselves and force us to reconsider the way we interact with others. The chapter emphasizes that by recognizing how we are contributing to the very problems we complain about, we open the door to resolution and deeper connections with others.

Group Processing

What personal objections have you had to the possibility that you might be contributing to a conflict?

Consider the conflicts you find yourself in right now. Why do you think it's difficult to accept personal responsibility in these conflicts?

Discuss how overcoming these objections within yourself can lead to stronger relationships and enable you to find ways to resolve these conflicts.

Further Exploration and Application

Identify a conflict where you feel resistance to change. What might be the deeper reason for this resistance?

If you weren't experiencing this resistance, what might occur to you to do to be more helpful?

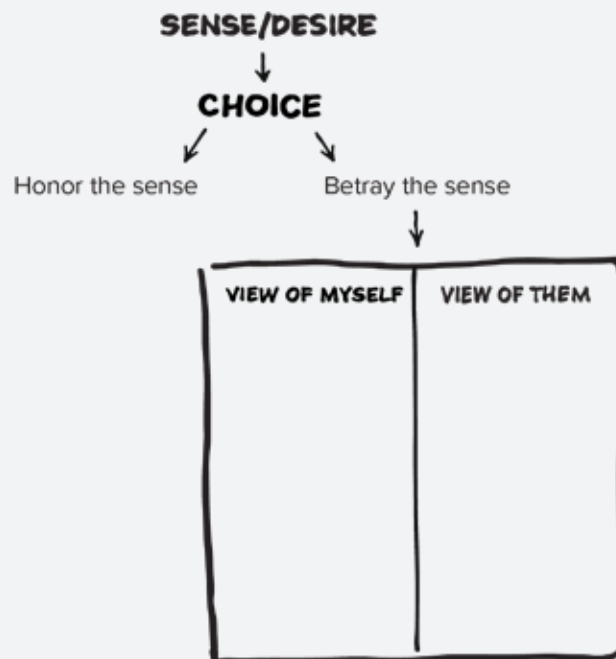
Choosing War

Core Ideas

This chapter introduces the Self-Betrayal diagram, showing how we can move from seeing someone as a person to seeing them as an object—and how that shift often begins with a quiet act of self-betrayal. Yusuf recounts a moment when he felt a clear desire to help a struggling man but chose not to act. That choice changed how he saw the man, himself, and the world.

Rather than own our self-betrayal, we justify it by blaming others. We inflate their faults, view ourselves as victims, and tell ourselves stories that preserve our sense of goodness while excusing our inaction.

The central insight is this: the emotions we feel in conflict aren't caused by others—they're caused by the way we choose to see others. And that way of seeing often begins with a decision not to do what we know is right.



Group Processing

Reflect on a time when you betrayed your own sense toward another person. What did it feel like? How did your thoughts and feelings about others shift afterward? Use the diagram to explore your experience.

The group explores how Yusuf began to justify his inaction by seeing Mordechai as a threat, a burden, or even disgusting. How do we tend to justify our mistreatment of others after betraying ourselves?

Yusuf talks about how we tell stories to preserve our sense of being a good person. What are some subtle ways you've seen yourself (or others) try to maintain that image—especially when avoiding responsibility?

Consider the diagram Yusuf draws. What do you think changes in a relationship when we start to believe that our negative emotions are caused by others, rather than by our own choices?

Further Exploration and Application

Think of a situation in your life right now where you feel frustrated, resentful, or disconnected. Can you trace that feeling back to a moment when you didn't act on a helpful impulse? What might have changed if you had?

Keep a journal for three days. Note when you choose not to act on your senses toward and for others—like helping, apologizing, or speaking up. Reflect on how you explain or justify that choice to yourself afterward.

A Need for War

Core Ideas

This chapter reveals that when we betray our sense of what's right—like ignoring the impulse to help—we create a need to be justified. That need shifts how we see others: not as people, but as objects we must blame to excuse our own actions. This is the root of what Yusuf calls “a need for war.”

Yusuf shows how his resentment toward Mordechai didn't come before his betrayal—it came because of it. The betrayal made him inflate Mordechai's flaws and villainize an entire group. We do the same. To justify our inward choices, we horribilize others and cling to resentment—not because of what they've done, but because of what we've done.

Importantly, seeing someone as a person doesn't excuse harmful behavior—it's what makes real accountability possible. As one story shows, compassion doesn't trap us in a toxic relationship; it frees us to leave without bitterness.

A heart at war needs enemies. But when we let go of the need to be justified, peace becomes possible—even in the most painful circumstances.

Group Processing

Yusuf says that when we betray ourselves, we create a “need to be justified.” What does that mean in your own words? Can you think of a time when you may have inflated someone's flaws in order to feel justified in how you treated them?

What parts of this chapter challenged you? Were there moments where you felt resistant to what Yusuf was saying? Explore that resistance with the group. What might it reveal?

Consider Yusuf's point that we often need to horribilize others to excuse our own inward choices. What are the subtle ways this shows up in relationships at work or home?

What stood out to you in the story of the woman who showed compassion to her abusive husband? What did her story teach you about what it means to see someone as a person?

Further Exploration and Application

Yusuf asks, "Am I holding myself to the same standard I am demanding of them?" Reflect on a relationship where this might apply. What might the impact be if you shifted the focus toward your own standard of behavior?

Think of a situation where you feel hurt, resentful, or frustrated. Ask yourself: What story am I telling myself that justifies this feeling? What changes when you challenge that story?

For the next week, watch for times when you feel the need to "prove" that someone else is wrong, bad, or the problem. Pause in those moments and ask yourself: What am I needing to be justified for?

The Path to Peace

Core Ideas

In this chapter, the group begins to see how peace is not just a goal but a way of being. Peace starts from within and is reflected in how we see and treat others. When we stop seeing others as objects or obstacles and start seeing them as people with hopes, needs, and fears, our behavior naturally becomes more constructive. We see possibilities and solutions that simply don't occur to us when our hearts are at war. The path to peace is about shifting from a heart at war to a heart at peace.

Group Processing

What does it mean to have a heart at peace versus a heart at war?

How can changing the way you see others affect your ability to resolve conflict?

Share an experience when someone treated you with unexpected compassion. How did it impact you?

More Germ Warfare

Core Ideas

This chapter introduces four core “justification boxes”—patterns of self-justification we fall into after betraying our sense of what’s right. These boxes aren’t personality types, but a mindset that distorts our view of ourselves, others, and the world.

Better-than: I see myself as superior and others as inferior or incompetent.

I-deserve: I view life as unfair and others as ungrateful, leading to entitlement or resentment.

Need-to-be-seen-as: I’m overly concerned with my image—needing to be liked or admired—which can keep me from seeing and doing what is most helpful.

Worse-than: I see myself as deficient and others as better, often using self-doubt or insecurity to justify disengagement or withdrawal.

Each box helps us feel justified for our inward mindset, but in doing so, it also cuts us off from others. We justify blame, avoidance, or even cruelty—not because others deserve it, but because we need to make sense of our own betrayal. This chapter invites us to name our box, not as self-condemnation, but as the first step toward seeing clearly again.

Group Processing

Avi introduces the four justification styles. Which of the boxes—Better-than, I-deserve, Need-to-be-seen-as, Worse-than—feels most familiar to you? Which shows up in your home or work relationships?

In the story about Jack, Avi admits that his “softness” as a manager didn’t come from kindness—but from avoiding conflict to preserve his image. Have you ever withheld needed feedback or help out of a desire to be liked or to avoid discomfort?

Avi and Carol both share vulnerable stories about their internal struggles. How did their experiences illustrate that justification doesn’t always look angry or arrogant? What can softer forms of justification teach us about self-deception?

Which justification box do you most often find yourself in when you're avoiding a conversation, a decision, or a relationship challenge? What stories do you tell yourself to find justification.

Further Exploration and Application

Over the next week, try to identify which justification box you're in during moments of tension or withdrawal. Ask yourself: What view of myself, others, or the world am I protecting right now?

Choose a relationship where you feel frustrated or stuck. Which justification box most often shows up for you there? How might that box be keeping the other person from feeling seen?

If you're comfortable, share with someone close to you the box you're most prone to. Invite them to help you notice it—and do the same for them. Discuss how it affects your ability to act with a heart at peace?

The Path to War

Core Ideas

This chapter describes how self-betrayal leads to cycles of escalating conflict. We begin to need the conflict to justify our actions, which deepens the divide and reinforces negative perceptions. These cycles create the “boxes” we live in, seeing others in distorted ways.

Group Processing

Can you identify a current or past conflict that escalated due to mutual need for justification?

How did your own mindset contribute to the escalation?

What might it take to break the cycle?

PART III:

From War to Peace

Apologies

Core Ideas

True apologies require more than words—they demand a change of heart. Apologies are effective when they are accompanied by a shift in how we see others and how we act. This chapter highlights that we can't fake peace; it must be genuine and grounded in empathy.

Group Processing

Have you ever received or given an apology that didn't feel sincere? What was missing?

What makes an apology truly effective?

What changes in mindset and action are necessary to make apologies transformative?

A Gift in Wartime

Core Ideas

Even during conflict, it is possible to extend empathy, respect, and understanding. This chapter demonstrates that compassion is not conditional on others' behavior—it is a gift we can choose to offer, regardless of the circumstances.

Group Processing

Share a time when someone extended compassion to you in a difficult situation.

What impact did that gesture have on you?

What keeps us from extending compassion when it's most needed? Is there a situation or relationship right now where you could extend the same compassion that you have received?

Marching Bootless

Core Ideas

In this chapter, a simple act—Camp Moriah staff taking off their shoes—becomes a powerful metaphor for leading with a heart at peace. Rather than trying to force or persuade Jenny, Mei Li and Mike joined her in her world, walking the city barefoot to build connection rather than control.

Their humility invited openness, not defensiveness. This moment reveals a deeper principle: we influence others most when we set meet them with shared humanity.

Yusuf broadens this lesson beyond the trail, applying it to leadership at home and work. Privileges and double standards—whether in parking spots or emotional distance—often send the message that others are less important. True leadership, he says, isn't about enjoying your status. It's about creating a space where others can grow, contribute, and feel seen.

Group Processing

What struck you about the way Mei Li and Mike engaged with Jenny? How was their influence different than if they had tried to convince her through logic or force?

Yusuf says, “Most wars between individuals are of the cold variety.” What does that mean to you? Where do subtle acts of war—like withholding help, attention, or empathy—show up in your life?

Consider the metaphor of “taking off your shoes.” What might that look like in your workplace? In your family? In a tense relationship?

Lou comes to the realization that he created an environment of privilege and separation. Have you ever been in an environment like that—either as the person with privilege or the one excluded from it? What was the impact?

Further Exploration and Application

Identify one area of your life where you hold a “candy bar” or “inflatable mattress”—a privilege or comfort that separates you from others. What might it look like to set that aside?

Think about someone you lead or influence—at work, home, or in your community. What would it mean to “take off your shoes” with them this week?

Kate’s leadership stood out not because of power, but because of humility and care. Who is someone you know who leads like that? What can you learn from their example?

Surrender

Core Ideas

Surrender is not weakness but a powerful internal shift. It means letting go of the need to be right and choosing to see others without distortion. This surrender opens the door to genuine peace and influence. Despair often feels honest—but it's rooted in a lie. When we believe we are stuck or that nothing can change, we surrender to falsehood. The truth is, if we're part of the problem, then we are also part of the solution. Our influence may not change others directly, but our way of being invites others to change

Group Processing

What does surrender mean to you in the context of relationships? How might “surrender” be misunderstood? What would surrender, properly understood, mean in your challenging relationships?

How can surrender lead to strength and clarity?

Share a moment when surrender helped you find peace or resolution.

Why does Avi say that we separate ourselves from others “at our own peril”?

Locating the Peace Within

Core Ideas

Peace starts from within and is not dependent on others changing. We discover influence when we stop needing others to be different and instead focus on our own clarity, compassion, and responsibility.

Group Processing

Where are you waiting for someone else to change before you see them as people?

What would it look like to stop waiting turn outward toward them now, unconditionally?

How might this shift affect your relationship?

Letting Go

Core Ideas

Letting go is the process of releasing resentment, blame, and fear. It is not about condoning harmful behavior but about reclaiming your own power to choose peace. Letting go is a courageous act of freedom.

Group Processing

What are you holding onto that might be holding you back?

What would letting go look like in that situation?

How can you distinguish between true letting go and indulgence or avoidance?

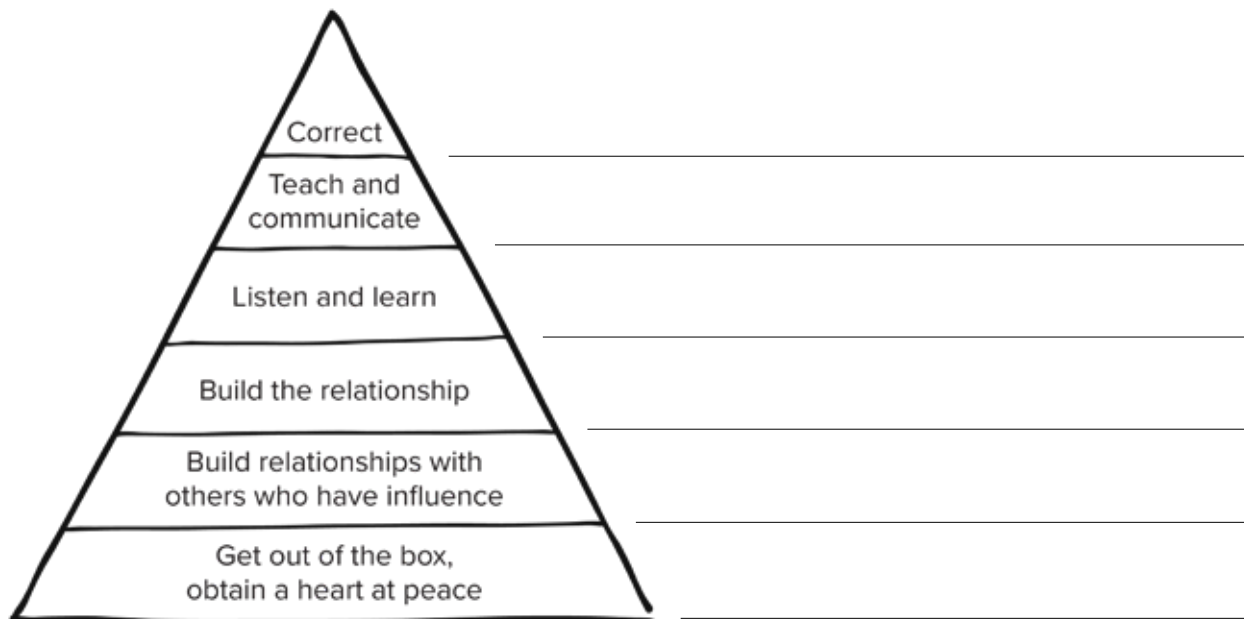
Action & A Strategy for Peace

Core Ideas

The pyramid strategy helps us help others change. It emphasizes that most of our influence comes not from correcting but from listening, learning, building relationships, and seeing others as people.

Group Processing

Identify a relationship that is strained or where you spend significant time and energy in “correction”. Use the Influence Pyramid provided here to consider where you have been spending your time and where you need to spend more time and energy in order to help things go right. In those areas of the pyramid where you have been weakest, identify concrete steps you can take. And don’t neglect the foundation of the pyramid. For our efforts at any level of the pyramid to be successful, we need to be right in our way of being—to see others as people.



PART IV:

Spreading Peace

Lessons

Core Ideas

This chapter invites reflection on what's been learned and what transformation has occurred. The parents begin to recognize their own growth and how their mindset shifts are changing their relationships and lives.

Group Processing

What was your biggest personal insight from this book?

How have your perspectives on conflict and relationships changed?

What's one area where you feel a meaningful transformation has begun?

Peace on Mount Moriah

Core Ideas

The final chapter symbolizes what is possible when we live with a heart at peace. The setting of Mount Moriah reinforces the power of reconciliation, transformation, and hope. Living outwardly becomes a way of life, not just a momentary choice.

Group Processing

What does peace mean to you now, having completed this book?

How can you cultivate peace given what this book has helped you understand?

What steps will you take to foster peace in your family, workplace, or community?



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