



HOW DO I KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO BREAK UP?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

This resource explores **interpersonal relationships** as a result of the **Israel-Hamas war**, through the value of **Authenticity**.

At-a-Glance:

Since the war in Israel/Gaza, relationships of all kinds are being tested. Trusted relationships that we have held dear, now seem a bit tenuous and we may no longer feel that we are able to trust the people we thought we could. Knowing how to be in a relationship with people that we perceive as different from us, is feeling uncomfortably hard at this moment. Through the value of authenticity, we will consider how we are able to show up in relationships as our real selves and if we feel that we can't, how we can course correct in order to stay both true to ourselves and in relationship with others.



Time Estimate:

45 minutes



Materials Needed:

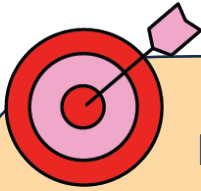
- Worksheet handout
- Pens



Best Uses:

- For adult audiences
- For moments when disagreement is particularly fraught
- For relationship building and/or repair

LET'S GET STARTED



FRAME THE ISSUE

Facilitator reads for framing:

Since October 7th and the ongoing war with Israel/Hamas, the world has physically and emotionally felt like it is on fire. Our social media feeds are inundated with triggering images and the rhetoric on the street feels inflamed. Trusted relationships that we have held dear, now seem a bit tenuous and we may no longer feel that we are able to trust the people we thought we could. Being in relationship with people that we perceive as different from us, is feeling particularly hard at this moment.

With all the noise and the vitriolic rhetoric, how do I know whether I should stay in a relationship or break up? The break-up could be on an individual level or a group level, unsubscribing from a newsletter or unfollowing a social media account. And if I don't break up, then how do I stay in a relationship while also defending my own authentic needs at this moment?

Facilitator prompts the group:

- What are some of the emotions that are surfaced for you when you consider this reality? Name them/write them down. (ie - loneliness, rage, sadness...)
- How are your relationships being tested at this moment given the situation in Israel?

5 min





EXPLORE THE VALUE: AUTHENTICITY

5 min



Facilitator reads for framing:

Exploring these questions through the value of authenticity can offer layering to the many relationships that are tested through holding diverse viewpoints.

Authenticity is often described as the quality of being real or true to oneself and acting in accordance with desires, motives, ideals or beliefs that express who you really are. As our world has been turned upside down and our new reality is brimming with contradictions and uncertainties, some of our truths have been shattered. At the same time, other truths have emerged, and some of us have come closer to discovering our evolving authentic selves in this moment. All of this impacts our boundaries within relationships.

Being in relationships requires us to make a collection of choices every day. It is about the choice to show up and be real - the choice to be honest to let our true selves be seen.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- As you think about this definition of authenticity, describe a moment within the last few weeks/months that you have felt like you can show your true self? And what did it feel like?



ACTIVITY

15 min



THE FOUR HORSEMEN:

Facilitator reads for framing:

Often, crisis events force us to confront our convictions, and through introspection we claim our personal truths. When it comes to sharing them with others, though, we can hold ourselves back from giving those ideas life.

In 1983, Dr. John Gottman of the Gottman Institute designed a “love lab” where he observed how couples interacted and approached conflict. During his study, Gottman separated all couples into two groups: He called one group the masters of relationships; the other group was the disasters. The disasters of relationships had four behaviors in common, and he labeled these the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Dr. Gottman conducted additional research where he predicted break-up with 90% accuracy based on the first three minutes of a conversation. What he noticed was that couples who started their conflict conversation with criticism and elicited defensiveness in their partner ended up breaking up vs. couples who used gentle start-ups or began their conversation expressing their feelings and needs.

How can we use Gottman’s litmus test to determine whether we can stay in a relationship and be our authentic self while also articulating our own needs at this moment?



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Scan the QR Code or [click here](#) to use the Four Horsemen Rubric worksheet to consider your different relationships at this moment and determine whether you can stay in them while being your authentic self.
- Spend 7-10 minutes answering the questions and following the worksheet and then review your answers.
- Pair with a havruta/partner and discuss your reflections.





JEWISH ANCHOR

Facilitator reads for framing:

In Jewish tradition, the *Te'naim* is an engagement ceremony created in 12th Century Europe.

During the celebration, the families signed a contract that was witnessed and read out loud to the community. This document set the date for the wedding and outlined the pre-marriage obligations of each family regarding the dowry, gifts, plus other financial and logistical matters. Although the contract wasn't legally binding, like the *ketubah* (marriage contract), it was a symbolic way of recognizing what each person was committing to bringing to the relationship. And if either family went back on their word, there were consequences.

Today, some couples supplement the traditional *Te'naim* ceremony and articulate personal conditions and concerns – both current and future – that express their love, trust, shared values and commitment to the marriage.

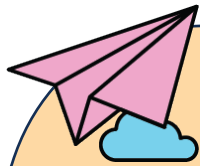
Facilitator prompts the group:

- Why do you think that it's necessary to verbalize the conditions for a relationship?
- If you were to create a *Te'naim* contract for your relationships with others – specifically surrounding Israel – what are some conditions that you would need someone to adhere to in order to stay in a relationship with them?

6 min



4 min



PROMPT ACTION

Facilitator prompts:

Let's take the Four Horsemen seriously.

- Choose one of the relationships that you are struggling with at this moment, and try using one of the four suggested behaviors for helping you shift in that relationship.
- Spend 2-3 minutes writing about how you will shift in that relationship.
- Try it out a few times. Each time you do it, it will give you more information about how you are or aren't able to show up within this friendship. (After each time you try the behavior, take note of it. It will give you helpful information for what to do next.)
- What is one commitment you can make in the coming days and weeks to keep returning to this framework to help you navigate this relationship while being your most authentic self?

3 min



CLOSE WITH INTENTION

Facilitator prompts the group:

- As you continue to think about your relationships during this stressful time, what is one way the Four Horsemen tool can help you?