



WHERE CAN I FIND HOPE?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

This resource engages with the **current crisis in Israel** through the value of **Hope**.

Note for facilitator:

This resource was created by the Values in Action team, in response to the horrific terror attacks on Israel by Hamas. It is designed by educators for educators as a tool for processing the events of the moment through a values-based approach. It does not engage with politics, history or religion *per se*, but rather offers a path for educators to help their learners and community members process the moment we are in, with values as a starting point.



Time Estimate:

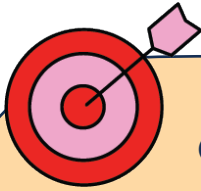
- 40 minutes



Materials Needed:

- Device to listen to Leonard Cohen's song Anthem and copies (digital/print) of the lyrics
- Pen and paper for prompts throughout
- Optional – a way to collaboratively collect and share poems/messages of hope

LET'S GET STARTED



OPENING PROMPT

Read the following refrain from Leonard Cohen's song "Anthem."

(You will have the opportunity to listen to and engage with the full song later on, for now, just focus on this refrain.)

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Close your eyes and imagine a vessel, an object or even a living being that has a crack in it.
- At this moment, what comes to your mind?
- Share with the group.

3 min





EXPLORE THE VALUE: HOPE

Facilitator reads for framing:

Hope is a value which reflects a confident yet uncertain expectation of achieving a future good. Hope is forward-looking, and can be a way of feeling, thinking and influencing one's behavior.

In a collection of essays about hope, *Hope in the Dark*, Jewish author and activist Rebecca Solnit writes: "Hope locates itself in the premise that we don't know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act... Hope is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists."

In other words, hope is that which we hold onto in order to keep us going. But in moments of crisis and devastation, with so much loss, pain and trauma, it is natural to veer into a deep sense of hopelessness. How do we hold onto hope for a better future when all seems bleak? Does being hopeful mean that we don't also hold onto the tragedy and suffering? How do they sit together?



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Identify one moment over the last week/s when you felt a sense of being hopeful. When was that? What prompted it?

3 min





ACTIVITY

15 min



Where does the light get in?

PART I - Listen

Facilitator reads the following for background:

Leonard Cohen (1934-2016) was a Canadian singer, songwriter, poet and novelist. His music was strongly influenced by his Jewish roots, as he engaged with themes such as faith, love, loss, and mortality. In 1973 when the Yom Kippur War broke out, he left his then home on the Greek island of Hydra to fly into the warzone to sing for and boost the morale of the Israeli soldiers.

In 1992 he released the song *Anthem*, as part of the album *The Future*. It took him more than a decade to compose, perhaps because of its complexity of holding different feelings and values together at once. It is a song that reflects light – even just a sliver – during moments of darkness.

Facilitator prompts:

In a quiet space, spend a few minutes listening to the song by scanning the QR code here or clicking this [link](#). You can use the lyrics below to follow along.



Facilitator prompts:

- What is one emotion that comes to the surface after listening to the song?
- Explain.

PART II - Analyze

Facilitator prompts the group:

- Read through the lyrics to *Anthem* below.
- As you go through them, underline, highlight, or keep a separate list of all the words that make you feel hopeful. (Aim for at least 5-7 words.)
- Review your list. Think to yourself – what is it about these things that makes you feel hopeful?
- Spend 2-3 minutes free-writing explaining why and how those things foster hope.
- Share your lists and reflections with the group.



ANTHEM

The birds they sang

At the break of day

Start again

I heard them say

Don't dwell on what has passed away

Or what is yet to be

Ah, the wars they will be fought again

The holy dove, she will be caught again

Bought and sold, and bought again

The dove is never free

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in

We asked for signs

The signs were sent

The birth betrayed

The marriage spent

Yeah, and the widowhood

Of every government

Signs for all to see

I can't run no more

With that lawless crowd

While the killers in high places

Say their prayers out loud

But they've summoned, they've

summoned up

A thundercloud

They're going to hear from me

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in

You can add up the parts

But you won't have the sum

You can strike up the march

There is no drum

Every heart, every heart

To love will come

But like a refugee

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in

Ring the bells that still can ring

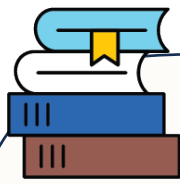
Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in

That's how the light gets in

That's how the light gets in



ANCHOR IN JEWISH WISDOM

10 min



Facilitator prompts the group:

- In havruta/pairs, read the following text and answer the prompts that follow.

The Book of Mishlei/Proverbs contains guidance for living a wise, moral, and righteous life, in the form of poems and short statements. It consists of both general observations about human nature as well as lessons directly instructing the listener to take a course of action.

In *Perek*/Chapter 13, *Pasuk*/Verse 12 it states:

Hope deferred sickens the heart,
But desire realized is a tree of life.

תוֹחֶלֶת מִמְּשָׁכָה מַחֲלֵה לֵב
וְעֵץ חַיִּים תִּצְאֶה בָּאָרֶץ:

Prompt Questions:

- What do you think “hope deferred” means?
- What might “a tree of life” be referring to?

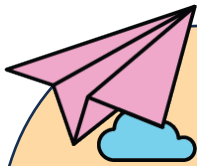


Facilitator prompts the group to think more deeply about the value of hope:

Think about the value of hope as it relates to you at this very moment and answer the questions below:

- What is most hard about finding hope right now?
- What other values feel most alive at this moment that hit up against finding and cultivating a sense of hope?
- Does allowing yourself to find hope negate other feelings and values? Explain.

7 min



PROMPT ACTION

PART I – A Phrase of Hope:

Facilitator reads and prompts the group:

- Return to the key line of Leonard Cohen: “There is a crack, a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” Using that as inspiration, come up with a phrase of your own in a similar style that captures hope.

[Allow the words to spill out of you. Do not be concerned with judging your personal artistic merit, speak from the heart.]

- Share your Phrase of Hope with others either by reading it to them in person or posting it on this [collaborative board](#).



PART II – Committing to Find Hope:

Facilitator prompts the group:

Now is an opportunity for you to commit to finding and holding onto hope. Ask yourself – how can I stay motivated, and put one foot in front of the other to keep on going when all seems so dark? What propels you forward? What holds you back? Where and how can you find hope during such moments? Once found, how do you hold onto them?

- What is one immediate commitment you can make that will enable you to find hope amidst the darkness?
 - *The commitment can be a positive action – I commit to DOING something – or refraining from doing something – I commit to NOT ...*
- Write down your commitment and keep it with you. Return to it throughout the day, and especially when you start to feel particularly hopeless.



CLOSE WITH INTENTION

Facilitator prompts the group:

- Using the metaphor of Leonard Cohen, in the cracks you feel and see right now, who or what is the light that for you offers hope?

3 min

