



DO I SOMETIMES JUST NEED TO BE ALONE?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

This resource explores the issue of **Loneliness** through the value of **Authenticity**.

At-a-Glance:

This resource explores the idea of getting to know oneself most authentically, and the time and space from others that might be necessary to do that. Through a creative iterative drawing prompt, and introduction to the Jewish concept of *hitbodedut*, learners will have a chance to think about the ways they may develop and grow when they are alone and be prompted to take action to make those moments most effective.



Time Estimate:

40 minutes



Best Uses:

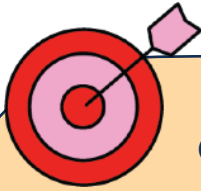
- For high school students
- For group reflection and discussion
- Opportunity for creativity and self-reflection



Materials Needed:

- Two sheets of blank paper for each participant
- Pens, pencils, markers – preferably different colors
- An object to serve as a model to draw (toy, statue)
- A timer for drawing prompt

LET'S GET STARTED



OPENING PROMPT

Facilitator reads the following prompt:

The quote below is from award-winning author Nicole Krauss' first novel, *A Man Walks into a Room*, a reflection on memory, solitude, loneliness and intimacy.

"When you are young, you think it's [*loneliness*] is going to be solved by love. But it never is. **Being close - as close as you can get - to another person only makes clear that impassable distance between you.**"



Facilitator prompts the group:

- What do you think is meant by the quote above?
- Do you agree with it?
- Have you ever felt close to someone but also far away from them? When? Describe it.

7 min





EXPLORE THE VALUE

Facilitator reads:

The value of authenticity, or figuring out what it means to be true to ourselves, is a lifelong process. Doing that while living in relationship among others can be tricky. Being close to others might only highlight how different we really are from them. How much of ourselves is built in context of relationship with others? Do we sometimes just need to be alone to really know ourselves?



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Think of the last time you needed to be alone. When was it? What did you do?

6 min





ACTIVITY

12 min



ITERATIVE DRAWING: ME AND WE

Preparation:

- Put a drawing model (statue, toy) at the center of a table.
- Divide into small groups (if possible).
- The team sits around the model, ready to draw what they see. [*Different teams can work in parallel*]

Instructions:

ROUND ONE - Individual Drawing

- Each individual has **three minutes** (by themselves) to -
- Draw the model (as it is seen)
- At the bottom of the page write 5-6 words (anything that comes to mind) about what you drew

ROUND TWO - Group Drawing

- Group members take turns drawing in 30-second sprints. (If you are six people, you will do this for a total of three minutes, as before)
- In each 30 second sprint draw what you see and write **one** word on the bottom of the page.
 - *When a sprint is over (30 seconds), the next person takes over and starts drawing immediately.*
- **Note:** there is no break between the sprints! The total time of this iteration should be the same as in round one.

Gather back as a group and the facilitator prompts the whole group:

1. Which of the two drawings looks more “authentic” to you?
2. Which of the two sentences is more interesting?
3. Who is the owner of each drawing?
4. Do you feel the second drawing is yours? Or were you ‘just’ working on it? Were you afraid to ruin someone’s work? Afraid that someone might ‘ruin’ yours?



JEWISH ANCHOR

Facilitator reads:

The search for one's authentic self is a lifelong quest that demands hard work, time, and reflection. Does such work require that one be alone? Solitude – the idea of being completely alone (perhaps in a physical way) – can sometimes be one's best companion, allowing people to actualize themselves in the most authentic ways.

In Jewish thought the concept of *hitbodedut* refers to practices of self-secluded meditation, through which one establishes a close, personal relationship with God. **It can also refer to the isolation from others that people might need in order to truly be themselves.**

Many Jewish leaders and prophets secluded themselves in the wilderness working alone as shepherds where they could be alone in the fields for long periods of time.

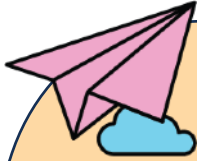
Facilitator prompts the group:

- Who are some Biblical characters you know of that did this?
- Why do you think they did it?
- In what ways do you think being alone (perhaps in nature) can change a person?

7 min



5 min



PROMPT ACTION

AN EXERCISE OF THE IMAGINATION – SOLO TIME AND TIME WITH OTHERS:

Facilitator prompts the group:

Imagine that are given the opportunity to go anywhere in the world, by yourself - for one week - with the provision that for one hour a day you would have visitors.

- Where would you go?
- On a separate document/sheet of paper, create a sample daily itinerary or schedule in with activities to fill up **four hours of time**: 3 hours of “solo” time and one hour of “visitor” time.
 - What would do on your own over the course of the day?
 - For the one hour when you would have visitors – what would you do with them?
- Compare and contrast the time by yourself and the time with others. How do they differ?
- Of the **personal itinerary** created above, commit to 1-2 positive actions/ activities that you will now go ahead and implement in your daily life to increase your own sense of self. What are they? Why did you choose them?

3 min



CLOSE WITH INTENTION

Facilitator prompts the group:

- As a result of the exploration above, what are two words that you are leaving with which highlight a new perspective on the issue of loneliness?