



HOW DO I FIND MY PEOPLE?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

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

At-a-Glance:

This resource invites learners to explore the value of *awareness* in overcoming loneliness and finding connection. Using a "Where's Waldo?" activity and a story from the Talmud, participants will reflect on how awareness of themselves and others can help them identify "their people." Through the "60 Seconds of Me" exercise, they will practice recognizing and affirming positive qualities in others, fostering a deeper sense of belonging and connection.



Time Estimate:

45 minutes



Materials Needed:

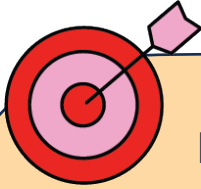
- Copy of Where's Waldo, either printed or projected onto a wall/screen



Best Uses:

- Note: the activity in this lesson works better with a group that knows each other already—like a cohort or group that meets with some regularity.

LET'S GET STARTED



FRAME THE ISSUE

The Facilitator should digitally share or print an image of Where's Waldo for participants. Invite the learners to explore the page and share what they noticed as an opening activity.

A little history: In the 1990s (*if applicable*) when your parents were growing up, a craze took over the nation. *Where's Waldo?* was a series of books on oversized pages, full of people, in which the reader had to find this one goofy character, in his striped red shirt and matching beanie, sporting big round glasses. Over time, the series introduced a handful of friends of Waldo, similarly dressed like him like Welda his best friend, or Odlaw (Waldo spelled backward), his frenemy.

Where's Waldo? was an iconic game, but it also unintentionally proved something about society and how we interact with people. At a medieval castle, an outer space landing, a Viking ship for Waldo, or in our case for us at school, at a dance, here at (fill in the name of school/institution/group) –wherever you are, it can be hard to find our people.

It's easy to be alone and feel lonely, even if you aren't technically alone. All of us, even when it feels like we are the only ones, are trying to figure out who are "our people" and where do we find them.

Facilitator prompts the group:

- Does that feeling resonate for any of you? Do you feel comfortable sharing a time when you were among people but still felt alone?

10 min





EXPLORE THE VALUE: AWARENESS

5 min



Today we're going to explore the value of awareness, of ourselves and others, as a way to think about loneliness.

Awareness can be described as an act of curiosity. Sometimes when we ask questions, we unintentionally judge others, and truthfully ourselves. However, approaching that awareness with an open mind can help us understand who we are, what we can bring in relationships, and how we can find people with shared or complementary values and interests.

Becoming more aware isn't just getting to know ourselves better. It's about seeing other people through a different lens and finding our commonalities. Those people eventually become like mirrors, where you see what you like about yourself reflected in their personality, too.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- How would you define the value of awareness? What does thinking about awareness bring up for you?
- How can increasing our awareness of others change the way we interact with them?



JEWISH WISDOM

Facilitator reads:

Read the following story, an adaptation of text found in the Talmud, Menachot 29b, or use this [video](#) adaptation.

The scene: Moses and God are having a conversation about why it's taking God so long to write the Torah. Moses is frustrated, and God tells him that in the future, people will study every detail of the Torah. God decides to show Moses proof.

Moses and God time travel into the future. God and Moses are now in the classroom of a man named Akiva, the most brilliant teacher of his time. He's teaching his class about details in the Torah.

Moses: "God, I don't understand what's going on here. I can't follow the conversation, and I barely can understand any of the words they're saying. This is a basic Torah class?!? I guess I don't know the Torah as well as I thought I did. How is that even possible? I literally carried the Torah down the Mountain.... Um, God. I don't feel well. My stomach hurts and my head is spinning...I need to get out of here."

In the background from the classroom:

"My teacher, from where does this tradition come from?"

"It is a law transmitted to Moses from Sinai."

Moses: Wait, what? That's my law? I mean I guess that's possible. Now that I think about it, I recognize parts of that, just not pulled together in that way. And it's probably been studied and changed a few times over the years. I've never had to look at the Torah in any way other than my own. But after seeing someone else try to understand it, I'm seeing it in a new light. I just wasn't aware of that framing. And to be honest, I think it's a beautiful teaching I wouldn't have come to on my own.

At this realization, Moses is comforted.

Facilitator prompts the group:

- What do you make of this story?
- How is it possible that Moses doesn't recognize the Torah?
- Why do you think it is Akiva's citing of Moses that makes Moses aware of his own teachings?

10 min





ACTIVITY: 60 SECONDS OF ME

10 min



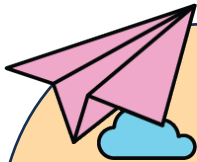
I'm going to ask you to partner with someone who you know. Choose a person A and a person B.

For the first 60 seconds, person A will share all of the best qualities they know about person B. You should fill the entire minute. Person B's job is to listen.

(Give them 60 seconds marking both the start and the finish for participants so they don't need to use a timer.)

After the minute, Person B should take some time to respond to Person A. How did Person A do? What felt true about what was shared with you? What surprised you? Would you describe yourself differently? *(Give them 2 minutes to respond).*

Now we are going to do the same thing in reverse, with Person B talking about Person A. *(Repeat by giving them 60 seconds and then a debrief afterward)*



REFLECT & PROMPT ACTION

10 min



Today we explored a famous Jewish story and did an activity to exercise our proverbial awareness muscles to manage loneliness. It might have felt uncomfortable at times, but introspection generally does. Awareness, as we experienced, can be about learning something for the first time, even though it's always been there.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- How did this activity make you feel more aware of your own self? How about others? Did that awareness feel good? Uncomfortable? Surprising?
- What does it feel like when someone notices something positive about you?
- If and when you are feeling brave, you can try to share something great you noticed about a friend, classmate, or someone in your everyday life.
- What actions can you take to be more aware of yourself and others in your everyday life? How might the value awareness help you find your people, and make us all feel a little less lonely?