

A Velcrow Ripper Film

SCARED SACRED

U S E R S ' G U I D E



"We witness remarkable instances of resilient individuals attempting to build something positive from these tragedies. This moving and ultimately uplifting film deserves consideration for inclusion in most media collections."

--School Library Journal, April 2006



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SCARED SACRED

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Introduction

ScaredSacred is a feature documentary created to inspire hope, offering tools to transform crisis, whether personal or global, into an opportunity for growth. The film features a vibrant cast of inspiring individuals who demonstrate the power of the human spirit to rise to unimaginable challenges. Award-winning filmmaker Velcrow Ripper invites us to join his five year pilgrimage to the Ground Zeroes of the world: to the minefields of Cambodia, war-torn Afghanistan, the toxic wasteland of Bhopal, post-9/11 New York, Bosnia, Hiroshima, Israel and Palestine. While questioning if it's possible for humanity to transform the 'scared' into the 'sacred,' Ripper unearths unforgettable stories of survival, ritual, resilience and recovery.

This Users' Guide is intended to maximize the benefit of *ScaredSacred* as a discussion and teaching tool. It breaks the documentary into locations, summarizes each location, and directs users to related information in the DVD extras and additional resources. The guide provides discussion questions and suggests activities to be used in the classroom or discussion group.



Director's Statement

By Velcrow Ripper, March 2006

Every day we hear new stories of global warming, dangerous viruses, war, starvation, deforestation, religious and ethnic intolerance, the yawning gap between rich and poor, North and South. While we might wish to run away and hide from these facts, that is ultimately impossible: we live on one small planet. Could we somehow learn to face the storm with opened hearts, instead of with a pounding pulse contracted in fear? Could we learn how to transform the crisis, take the energy of destruction and turn it into an impetus for growth?

By heading straight into the face of the places where the worst has already happened, I was time traveling into a possible future we might all be facing, searching for tools to create possibility in impossible times. I wanted to understand how it is that some people are able to go through the darkest days of human history and find a way to the other side, turning breakdowns into breakthroughs. In every place I discovered 'flowers in the ashes' - miracles of the human spirit. I brought back stories of hope and strategies for creating hope, for transforming the scared into the sacred.

I also travelled to many of the worlds holiest places, like Lourdes, Bodhgaya, Haifa and Konya, in order to experience the faiths of this planet firsthand, to try to understand their core, their essence. I discovered that there is a current that runs through them all. What is more, this common thread can be accessed even by those with no religious inclinations - what I like to call 'the secular sacred.' Anyone who has gazed into the wonder of a baby's eyes or looked up in awe at the night sky and tried to imagine the grandeur of the universe, has a sense of the sacred. The most surprising discovery was that, without fail, the Scared places were also Sacred - places of pilgrimage, of remembering, of recovery. In each and every situation, there are sacred stories to be found.



THE DVD

The DVD of *ScaredSacred* contains:



1. The Film – A 105-minute documentary offered in English or French versions, in wide-screen format. Sound can be Dolby Digital 5.1 or stereo.

2. The Locations – A visual map with clickable main location headings allows viewers to go to each specific section. The content of each section is explained both on-screen and in this study guide with complementary information.

3. The Director's Commentary – Select this option after your first viewing, to deepen the experience. Several of the locations also feature a reading of excerpts from the upcoming *ScaredSacred* non-fiction novel - Hiroshima, Afghanistan (Taliban era), and Israel/Palestine.



4. The Extras

I. Guided Meditation – A guided Tonglen meditation practice, lead by **Velcrow Ripper**. This is the Tibetan Buddhist practice of breathing in suffering, and out compassion. Can be used as one 35-minute lesson, or in shorter five-minute segments.

II. Director's Q & A – Selected questions and answers from *ScaredSacred* screenings with director **Velcrow Ripper**.

III. Panel Session – Forgiveness, Justice and Genocide. Featuring **Atom Egoyan**, director of *Ararat*, a film about the Armenian Genocide, and **Hadani Ditmars**, author, *Dancing in the No Fly Zone: A Woman's Journey Through Iraq*.

IV. Photo Gallery – An image gallery of photographs by Velcrow Ripper, accompanied with selected songs from the film.

For more info and Users' Guide updates, visit www.scaredsacred.org



"If ordinary human beings in the world can see their own suffering and vulnerability, then perhaps they can become aware of the vulnerability and suffering of others. That's what going to a sacred place, going to a place where great suffering has taken place, is about. That's the transformative moment, when you begin to see that you're not separate from any of the people involved, perpetrators and victims. And then change can happen. That's why people need to go to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they need to go to Cambodia. And now, here even."

– Roshi Enkyo O'Hara, New York City, September 2001

P R E - V I E W I N G S U G G E S T I O N S

Discussion Questions

As a group, brainstorm all the ideas, thoughts and images that you have about the word 'scared.' Do the same for the word 'sacred.' This is a starting point for understanding the words 'scared' and 'sacred', at the core of the film. Reflect on what these words mean to you at the end of *ScaredSacred* and see if definitions have changed.

Suggested Activity: The Scared and Sacred Interview

Objective: The power of story.

Form groups of two and interview each other, searching for 'scared' and 'sacred' stories. Sample questions: Can you describe a 'scared' moment, a story of crisis or suffering that happened to you? Did you learn anything from this crisis? Can you describe your reactions to a 'scared' moment that occurred recently somewhere else in the world? Can you think of a 'sacred' moment in your life, however you might use the term? If the word *sacred* seems too abstract, think about a time when you felt a sense of awe and wonder. Do you have hope for the future? Why or why not? What could give you a sense of hope? Present your interviewee's story in any way you see fit.

Extended Activity: Guided Tonglen Meditation

The Tibetan Buddhist practice of *Tonglen*, breathing in suffering, and out compassion, is an important aspect of *ScaredSacred*. For a heightened experience, follow the guided Tonglen meditation included on this DVD before viewing the film. Also works well immediately after viewing.

Relevant DVD Extras:

* Users Guide - Tonglen Meditation Resources (p. 21)

* Special Features: Guided Meditation.



V I E W I N G S U G G E S T I O N S

While viewing *ScaredSacred*, take note of your thoughts and reactions to the film. Make a note of segments that you find particularly moving, or difficult, or funny, etc. Also, pay attention to the use of sound in the film, and its visual style. Educators/facilitators might wish to show the film from start to finish. You can also stop the film after each location in order to give students a few minutes to write down their reflections.

Questions to consider:

How does the soundscape of the film affect your experience? What visual devices does the filmmaker use? How is *ScaredSacred* different from traditional documentaries?

Suggested Activity: Active Tonglen Meditation

Objective: Transforming suffering into compassion.

At many of the Ground Zeroes in the film, you will see images of smoke going backwards and forwards. This is a visual representation of the practice of Tonglen meditation, in which one visualizes breathing in suffering, in form of a dark smoke, and breathing out compassion, in the form of white light. While watching the film, allow to rise in you a strong compassionate desire free the affected parties from their suffering. Imagine breathing in their suffering, in the form of dark cloud, drawing it into your heart where it explodes in a flash, transforming into compassion. As you breath out, send them compassion, in the form of a white light, wishing them good health, happiness, peace, whatever they might need. The in breath is hot heavy, dark; the out breathe is cool, fresh, spacious, light. Do not hold onto the suffering - transform it immediately.

Relevant DVD Extras:

- * Special Features - Tonglen Meditation
- * Users' Guide - Tonglen Meditation Resources (p. 21)

“The sacred in ScaredSacred is surprisingly secular, although that may stem from Ripper’s own Ba-ha’i faith, which emphasizes world peace and a unity of religions. Although it is but a small step to infer a higher power at work, the film leaves it to the audience to make the connection if they choose. This lack of dogma makes ScaredSacred as accessible as it is personal” - The National Post



POST-VIEWING SUGGESTIONS

After viewing the film, allow students time to decompress and collect their thoughts. The following section is divided into segments based on locations featured in the film. Before addressing the specific segments of the film, you might wish to take some time to have a general discussion about the film where students can share with each other their responses. They may wish to read excerpts from the notes they took during the film.

Discussion Questions:

How can we continue to find hope in the world? How can we take action? What is meant by the statement “the people I’ve met have shown me that no matter what happens, we have the freedom to choose the way we respond, to whatever comes our way?” How have the people in *Scared Sacred* chosen to respond to the crises they have been confronted with?

Suggested Activity: Envisioning a Hopeful Future.

Objective: Learning to think of the long term future of the planet.

Write a letter to yourself as you might be in 20 years. Explain your feelings about the current state of the world and how you would like to see the world 20 years from now, assuming anything is possible. Envision yourself in 20 years. What are you doing, how do you feel, what have you accomplished? Make it an optimistic forecast. Mail the letter to yourself, and keep it sealed as a time capsule. Open it in 20 years!

Relevant DVD Extras:

- * Locations - Additional notes, map.
- * Director’s Q&A.

LOCATION SUMMARIES AND ACTIVITIES

The following section is divided according to the locations featured in *Scared Sacred*. In each section, you will find a brief summary, information about the main characters, suggested discussion questions and activities, relevant DVD extras and additional resources. Each location segment is self-contained so you may pick and choose which locations and activities to focus on. These activities can be conducted after the entire documentary has been screened, or after each individual section. The numbers correspond to the scenes in the Locations section of the DVD extras.



1 . B E G I N N I N G

ScaredSacred begins on the west coast of Canada, on the eve of the millennium. Rather than run away from his growing sense of fear of a world in crisis, filmmaker **Velcrow Ripper** decides to run towards, inviting us to join him on a journey to the Ground Zeroes of the world, in search of stories of hope amidst the darkness, seeking to learn how to ‘turn the poison into the antidote.’ Breathe in *scared*. Breathe out *sacred*.

Relevant DVD Extras:

* Locations - Additional notes, map, play scene.

2 . B H O P A L , I N D I A

(1 2 m i n .)

“The name of our clinic suggests that there is possibility if there is compassion. You can ask the simplest Bhopal person, ‘What is your fondest wish?’ and she will say, ‘What I have undergone shouldn’t happen to anybody.’ 80% of them are people living on physical labour, who are not today in the new globalized world, neither in the production stream nor in the consumption stream. They’re not in the market, so they’re expendable. What we’re trying to do, in our small way, is to assert the right of the expendable to live. We have a right to live.”

– Satyhu Satangath, Sambhavana Clinic

Bhopal is the site of an enormous pesticide leak from the Union Carbide factory, the largest industrial disaster in history. On December 3, 1984, shortly after 1 a.m., forty metric tonnes of deadly methyl isocyanate (MIC) burst out of a tank at the Bhopal Plant. As many as 20,000 people have died to date as a result of the disaster and thousands more are sick. Union Carbide has not properly cleaned up the site at Bhopal, where toxic wastes continue to pollute the environment and contaminate the water. The people of Bhopal continue to actively protest the injustice.

● **SATYHU SATANGATH** was doing community work in a nearby village when the Bhopal disaster struck. He rushed to the site to help in any way he could, and fifteen years later he is still in Bhopal, still helping. He founded the Sambhavana Clinic, which offers free medical care to the survivors, using both holistic and Western medicine.

● **MEHBOOB BI** is a survivor of the gas tragedy and a member of the women’s survivors’ group. She lost her husband and two children in the disaster.



B H O P A L , I N D I A (c o n t ' d)

Discussion Questions:

Read the quote at the top of the page. What do you think Satyhu means by this? When you go shopping, how many items in your grocery bag do you think are made in a developing world country? How much of the cost do you think goes to those people who actually do the farming or sew the clothing? What responsibilities do those in developed nations have? Can changing what we purchase help those in the developing world?

Suggested Activity: Stakeholder Role-play

Objective: To explore the notion of responsibility – corporate, social, and environmental – through role-playing a stakeholder activity.

A 'stakeholder' is someone who has a vested interest in an issue. As a class, brainstorm and identify the stakeholders associated with the Union Carbide disaster (the victims, the factory workers, Union Carbide executives, the Indian government, environmental groups).

Divide into groups. Each group takes on the role of ONE of the stakeholder groups. How would that stakeholder group think and act both before and after the pesticide leak? Research on the stated opinions of the groups at home or in class. After the research has been conducted, return to class and have one representative from each group present its stakeholders' views to the rest of the class. Allow time for questions after each presentation.

After all the presentations are completed, allow for an open discussion, question- and- answer period, and debriefing period. End the activity by asking: How do you feel about the situation in Bhopal now that you've completed this process? Have your views changed?

Relevant DVD Extras:

* Locations - Additional notes, map, play scene.

Additional Resources:

- Sambhavana Clinic: www.bhopal.org
- International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal: www.bhopal.net
- *Five Past Midnight in Bhopal: The Epic Story of the World's Deadliest Industrial Disaster* by Dominique Lapierre and Javier Moro (Warner Books, 2002).
- *Bhopal: The Search for Justice* (Peter Raymont and Lindalee Tracey, directors), 2004. Distributed by the National Film Board of Canada.



3 . C A M B O D I A

(1 1 m i n .)

“When they kill, like they kill my friend, they kill my family, I cannot do anything. If I angry, they kill me too, so I have to keep quiet. Make my life safe. If they say, ‘You laugh.’ I laugh. Ha, ha, ha, you know. We cannot say, ‘No, you not kill my brother, sister, or my father.’” No, we cannot say. We can only look and smile, and just like that, they want.” – Aki Ra

Approximately 1.7 million Cambodians (21% of the population) lost their lives during the Cambodian genocide of 1975-1979 – one of the worst human tragedies of the last century. One of the lasting legacies of three decades of war in Cambodia are the land mines laid by the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese and others, which continue to claim new victims to this day. It is estimated that there are as many as four to six million active landmines today. Over 40,000 Cambodians have had amputations as a result of mine injuries since 1979 – one of the highest rates of physical disability in the world.

● **AKI RA** was a child when his parents were killed by the Khmer Rouge. He was forced into the war by the Khmer and trained to lay landmines. When the Vietnamese invaded, he switched sides, fighting against the Khmer Rouge. When the UN finally arrived, he joined them, volunteering to decommission the very mines he had laid himself. Today the UN is gone, but Aki Ra continues the long task of de-mining Cambodia. Using only a simple wooden stick, he decommissions from 50 to 100 land mines each day.

Discussion Questions:

When the world learned the horrors of the Holocaust, there was the widespread belief that no genocide should ever happen again. Yet Cambodia, as well as the even more recent examples of Bosnia, Rwanda and Sudan, reveals that genocides continue to occur, even under the world’s watch. How would you define genocide? What responsibilities does the international community have to prevent them? What can we do as individuals do to prevent genocide and human rights abuses in general?

Suggested Activity: The Power of One.

Objective: To explore the impact that a single individual can have in his or her community.

Using Aki Ra as inspiration, find other examples of the power of one person to make a difference in his or her community, and write a short profile of the individual. Include biographical information, how they have affected change and how their work helps both their communities as well as themselves. Encourage students to share these stories with each other as well as the experience of researching these stories with their peers.



C A M B O D I A (c o n t ' d)

Relevant DVD Extras:

- * Locations - Additional notes, map, play scene.
- * Panel Session - *Forgiveness, Justice and Genocide*.

Additional Resources:

- Landmine Museum: www.akiramineaction.com
- *Stay Alive, My Son* by Pin Yathay with John Man (Simon and Schuster, 1987).
- *The Killing Fields* (Roland Joffé, director), 1984.

4 . B O S N I A

(6 m i n .)

"If I just hid, I would not stay normal. My work was my therapy...working in the long nights without electricity. My idea was to exchange the negative image of the war for a more positive vision of the human soul." – Nejadad Bejovic

After the final collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, ethnic conflict erupted in Yugoslavia as leaders sought to carve up territory. What followed was the bloodiest conflict that Europe had seen since World War II. War broke out in Bosnia in 1992 and on April 6 of that year, the Bosnian Serbs began their siege of Sarajevo. Residents of Sarajevo were cut off from food and could not communicate with the outside world. During one of the longest sieges in the modern history of war, residents continued to go about their daily lives all the while dodging the surrounding snipers' bullets. More than 12,000 people were killed, 1,500 of them children. Another 50,000 were wounded.

● **NEJADAD & AMINA BEJOVIC** are married artists and survivors of the siege of Sarajevo. Nejadad explains that because they were prisoners, the only route to freedom was through their minds. He worked as a sculptor, transforming the negative debris of war into the positive force of art. Amina is an actor who helped stage plays during the siege.

Discussion Questions:

The story of the Bejovics demonstrates the transformative power of art. They used art as a method of coping with their suffering and staying sane. Similarly, Velcrow Ripper set off on his journey to the ground zeroes of the world in order to deal with his fear of the devastation in the world. How can such art (such as film, music, sculpture, etc.) help bring positive change in the world? Do artists have a social responsibility? What are the various ways art is used to raise awareness, protest or commemorate suffering?



B O S N I A (c o n t ' d)

Suggested Activity: Art, Crisis and Conflict

Objective: To explore the power of creativity and art in dealing with conflict and crisis.

Create a piece of art that inspires hope, from stories of crisis. Using materials of your choice, create something that reflects both sadness and possibility at the state of the world. Allow your non-verbal side to express itself in the drawing, sculpture, collage, etc. You can incorporate objects from the natural world along with images and text from newspapers, internet news sources and magazines that demonstrate global current events where people are suffering in some way. Using these found images and words, create a piece that conveys a sense of beauty and hope in the face of crisis. Afterward, in groups of 2-4, share your pieces of art with each other. Other people often see interesting things in our art that we did not intend. Share your interpretations with each other.

Extended Activity:

Create a piece of transformative art from a story in your own life, from your community, and/or from the world at large.

Relevant DVD Extras:

- * Special Features - Photo Gallery
- * Locations - Additional notes, map, website, play scene.

Additional Resources:

- FAMA International: www.famainternational.com
- *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* by Chris Hedges (Anchor, 2003).
- *Welcome to Sarajevo* (Michael Winterbottom, director), 1997.
- *Romeo and Juliet in Sarajevo* (John Zaritsky, director), 1994.





5 . H I R O S H I M A

(7 m i n .)

"You shouldn't complain. Many people had the same experience. You are not special,' they said. Then we tried to forget, not to tell our story. 10 Ten years later, when we had the Bikini Atoll nuclear test, we were so much surprised, and we became so desperate. Japan was the end of nuclear war, but, oh... they are still producing nuclear weapons. Do they know what a dreadful, miserable day that we had? We need to tell our story." – Kae Goh Ogura

On August 7, 1945, the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima and two days later dropped another A-bomb on Nagasaki. Approximately 190,000 people were killed by the bomb in Hiroshima; 80,000 of whom were killed instantly. After the war, Hiroshima was reconstructed as a “peace memorial city.” The *Hibakusha*, or “bomb-affected people,” were long considered outcasts in Japanese society. They were ordered not to tell their story for over a decade following the attack. Finally, the ban was lifted, and today the survivors feel it is crucial that their stories be told and retold, to help prevent the repeat of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

● **KAE GOH OGURA** was a little girl when the bomb was dropped. She was also told to be quiet. The act of telling and retelling her story has become a way to transform her tragedy into a force of change.

Discussion Questions:

The topic of nuclear weapons is still very relevant today. Despite the terrible consequences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, countries continue to develop nuclear programs. Discuss nuclear proliferation and global security. How do you feel about the need for nuclear weapons in the world? Why do some people view nuclear weapons as essential to global security? Why do others feel that it endangers global security? What are the lessons we can learn from the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Suggested Activity: Breathing Compassion

Objective: Transforming suffering into compassion.

Close your eyes. Visualize the faces of the people of Hiroshima. Open yourself to their suffering. Now imagine sending them compassion, good health, and happiness. As you breathe in, draw in their suffering. As you breathe out, send them compassion, anything they might need. Continue breathing in suffering and out compassion, for five minutes.

See Tonglen Meditation Resources (p. 20) for full instructions, and a text template.



HIROSHIMA (c o n t ' d)

Extended Activity

Objective: To explore the power of storytelling as both a method of healing and as a tool for prevention.

Interview one of your friends, and ask them to tell you a story of a sacred moment in their lives, and a story of fear or suffering, however you choose to define the term. Ask the same questions of a parent or someone of your parent's generation. Ask the same questions of a grandparent or someone from their generation.

Relevant DVD Extras:

* Locations - Additional notes, map, website, play scene.

* Director's Commentary - re-play the Hiroshima scene with director's commentary selected. This section uses excerpts from the upcoming *ScaredSacred* book.

Additional Resources:

- Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum: www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp
- *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* by Robert J. Lifton (UNC Press, 1991).
- *Black Rain* (Imamura Shohei, director), 1989.

6. A F G H A N I S T A N (T a l i b a n e r a) (8 m i n .)

"I am twenty years old, and for twenty years the war is going on in Afghanistan. We hope one day we will be happy in our country." – Zoelya

Due to decades of civil strife and oppressive regimes, more than 5 million Afghani people have been displaced over the past 23 years – the greatest number of refugees in the world. A significant number of these refugees are women. Women were denied their basic human rights. For even the slightest infraction, women were routinely punished violently and sometimes killed.

● **REVOLUTIONARY AFGHAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (RAWA)** has been struggling for peace, freedom, democracy and women's rights in Afghanistan for over 20 years. They run a network of underground schools, orphanages, and mobile health clinics for women throughout Afghanistan and in the refugee camps in Pakistan.



A F G H A N I S T A N (c o n t ' d)

● **ZOELYA** was raised in the RAWA orphanage, and has gone on to become a member herself. Her mother was a member of RAWA, and was killed by the Taliban when Zoelya was 14.

Discussion Questions:

In light of the status of women in Afghanistan, what rights do women in our society take for granted? What obstacles do women continue to face in North American society? If you are a woman, have you ever felt disadvantaged? How? Consider the increasing rates of body image issues (eating disorders, plastic surgery, etc.) and discuss how “free” or oppressed woman actually are.

Suggested Activity: Researching Gender Rights and Women’s Issues

Objective: To examine local, national and international organizations that are working on women’s rights in order to understand the similarities and differences of women’s struggles around the world.

Divide the class into small groups. Have half of the groups research RAWA, as well as other international organizations working on women’s issues. Have the other half of the groups research local and national women’s organizations. Find the common themes amongst these organizations and explore the differences between them.

Extended Activity:

Invite a woman who works for women’s rights to come speak to your class. Organize a fund-raising campaign to collect donations and raise awareness for women’s organizations, be it RAWA or your local women’s shelter.

Relevant DVD Extras:

- * Locations - Additional notes, map, website, play scene.
- * Director’s Commentary - re-play the Afghanistan scene with director’s commentary selected. This section uses excerpts from the upcoming *ScaredSacred* book.

Additional Resources:

- RAWA: www.rawa.org
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (Riverhead Trade, 2004).
- *Kandahar* (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, director), 2001.
- *Return to Khandabar* (Paul Jay and Nelofer Pazira, directors), 2004.



7 . N E W Y O R K C I T Y (1 2 m i n .)

“One can't just squash that reaction of anger. One has to listen to it, and really examine, what are we really angry about? We are not living in a bubble that is separate from the terror and violence, the institutionalized violence, that goes on all over this world. I think this country has been living in a bubble for a long time, not realizing that we're a part of it, that in many ways, we contribute to the conditions that cause this.” – Roshi Enkyo O'Hara

On September 11, 2001, two airplanes hit the twin towers of the World Trade Center. In all, 2,819 people were killed in the terrorist attacks. In the weeks following 9/11, many New Yorkers took refuge in Union Square Park. If Times Square was considered the domain of the corporation, then Union Square was considered the place of the people. This is where people gathered to grieve, to share, to argue, and fundamentally, to discuss.

● **ROSHI ENKYO O'HARA** is a Zen teacher and co-director of the "Zen Peacemakers Order." Her Zendo is only a few blocks from Ground Zero.

Discussion Questions:

What did the people at Union Square mean when they say “our grief is not a call to war”? Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

Suggested Activity: Sharing Circle

Objective: To explore the power of sharing our thoughts on 9/11.

Sit in a circle and introduce the idea that the circle is a place where people will respectfully share their feelings about the events regarding the topic of 9/11. Emphasize that the circle is a place to practice the art of listening carefully to others, as well as sharing our ideas in a respectful and honest manner. The circle is a space where all participants need to commit to creating an environment free of judgment, where people feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings. Clarify that this is a sharing circle, not a discussion circle. The focus is on listening and sharing respectfully, not on responding to comments others have made.

Ask everyone to reflect on the following question: How did you feel about what happened on September 11? As much as possible, focus on feelings, not just on theories or facts. Use a talking stick format – pass around an object such as a stone or stick and whoever feels compelled to talk does so when the object reaches him/her. When the speaker is finished, the object is passed on. Let people pass if the object comes to them and they are not ready to share. Let the talking stick go around the circle 2 or 3 times completely. Be prepared for people to share less on the first time around, as they may feel uncomfortable. People will share more during the second and third time around. Find a way of closing the circle by acknowledging what has been said and asking people again not to pass judgement on each other for what has been shared. Emphasize respect and confidentiality both before and after the activity.



NEW YORK CITY (c o n t ' d)

Extended activity:

Suggestions for future sharing circles: hopes and fears for the world, actions that individuals have taken that had a positive impact on the planet.

Relevant DVD Extras:

* Locations - Additional notes, map, website, play scene.

Additional Resources:

- Zen Peacemaker Order: www.zenpeacemakers.org
- Coping.org: www.coping.org/911/tribute/content.htm
- *Portraits: 9/11/01: The Collected "Portraits of Grief" from the New York Times.* (Times Books, 2003).
- *11'09'01-- September 11.* 11 Eleven directors from all over the world present 11 stories (each 11 minutes, nine seconds, and one frame long) of the event's impact around the world (2002).

8 . A F G H A N I S T A N (p o s t - T a l i b a n) (1 3 m i n .)

"Human beings are like one body. If one part of the body is in pain, then the rest of the body will not feel comfortable." – Sar War Jan

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, instability and human rights abuses continue as opposing warring factions of warlords dominate most of the country. In 2004, Afghanistan's Human Development Index ranked 173 out of 178 countries. About 70% of the population lives below the poverty line.

SAR WAR JAN is a remarkable Sufi musician. The Taliban threatened to kill him, so he buried his lute, and fled Kabul. He returned four years later, to find his house destroyed, but his lute safe beneath the earth.



A F G H A N I S T A N (p o s t - T a l i b a n ; c o n t ' d)

Suggested Activity: Adopting Someone Else's Perspective

Objective: To examine something from a variety of perspectives in order to gain a more complete understanding.

Break up into groups of four. Ask participants to think about the situation of Afghanistan. If you felt more compelled by any of the other stories in the film, you may think about those.

After a few moments of silent contemplation, invite them volunteers to take turns speaking and listening to each other. Each person will describe the issue from four perspectives in turn:

- (1) from a personal point of view.
- (2) from the point of view of someone whose views are very different and even opposed.
- (3) from the point of a child that is directly involved in or affected by the situation.
- (4) from the point of view of a future human whose life will be directly affected by that particular situation.

Allow at least three minutes for each perspective, and give a one- minute warning before moving on. For shorter versions, use only one or two of the four perspectives.

*Based on the teachings of Joanna Macey

Relevant DVD Extras:

* Locations - Additional notes, map, website, play scene.

Additional Resources

- *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World* by Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown (NSP, 1998).
- *Daughters of Afghanistan* (Robin Benger, director), 2004.





9 . I S R A E L / P A L E S T I N E

(1 6 m i n .)

“Will causing pain to someone else ease my pain in any way? Of course not. It takes time, a long time to choose the other way – the way of understanding. And the most important question: how can I stop this from happening to anyone else?” – Rami Elhanan

Since the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000, over 1,000 Israelis and 3,400 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict. Israel began building the West Bank Wall in 2002. Israel maintains that the wall, also known as is the Security Wall and the Annexation Wall, is a temporary structure needed to prevent further suicide attacks on Israeli citizens. Palestinians and others maintain the wall represents an additional effort to confiscate Palestinian land and redraw geopolitical borders.

● **THE BEREAVED FAMILIES CIRCLE** are a group of Israelis and Palestinians who have lost their children in the conflict. They have banded together to form a powerful peace group. One of their initiatives is to encourage dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. “Hello Peace” is a telephone project that enables callers to dial a chat line to talk with the other side, with the so-called “enemy.”

● **RABBI DAVID ZELLER** is the executive director of the *Yakar Institute for Tradition and Creativity*, an open community in Jerusalem that brings together Jews from different backgrounds and orientations for learning, sharing, prayer and social action.

Discussion Questions:

Rami Elhanan explains that when someone loses a loved one, he/she is faced with two alternatives. The first, and the more natural, is to be angry and seek revenge. The second, is to overcome the desire for revenge and understand the other side, and eventually forgive. What are the moments of your life when you took the path of anger and revenge? What are moments in your life when you took the second path of compassion, forgiveness? How did those decisions make you feel? Reflect on a time when you have really been hurt directly by someone else. Reflect on a time when loved ones have been hurt by others. How did you feel? How did you want to react? How did you react? Have you ever been in a conflict that has ended with forgiveness?



I S R A E L / P A L E S T I N E (c o n t ' d)

Suggested Activity: Choosing Forgiveness

Objective: To explore the importance of choice in our relationships, and in conflicts in general, in order to escape negative patterns of interaction.

Identify a situation in your life where there is conflict in an important relationship. The relationship should be personal, significant, and one that you would be willing to share with others. In groups of 3-4, share a typical scenario of conflict between you and this important person. Discuss with your group. Ask for suggestions as to how you could handle this situation differently. Using role-play, practice the new strategy. Conflict occurs because we get stuck in the same patterns of behaviour, action and reaction. By exploring alternatives with others, we have more choice in how to react in important situations.

Relevant DVD Extras:

- * Panel Session - Forgiveness, Justice and Genocide.
- * Locations - Additional notes, map, website, play scene.

Additional Resources:

- Parents Circle Families Forum: www.theparentscircle.com
- *Forgiveness, Breaking the Chain of Hate* by Michael Henderson (Bookpartners, 1999).
- *Raised to Be Heroes* (Jack Silberman, director), 2006. Distributed by the National Film Board of Canada.





T O N G L E N M E D I T A T I O N R E S O U R C E S

“The concept of war is very much based on the concept of ‘we’ and ‘they.’ Destruction of your enemy is actually destruction of yourself.” – The Dalai Lama, Sarnath, India, 2000

After following the guided meditation on the DVD you can use the template below to create your own Tonglen practice. This can be used after viewing each location or adapted at will. The practice can also be used at any time during the day - send a passerby some compassion, accept their suffering. It is recommended that educators try the practice themselves before leading a group, and consult the additional resources.

Allow five minutes for a warm up meditation, then five minute for each visualization. You can stop after each location, and perform Tonglen on the people of that locations community, or select specific scenes to focus on.

Sample 1.5 Hour Class Plan:

1. Play the Tonglen Meditation DVD. Stop after first four cycles (20 minutes).
5. Play Scene 5, Hiroshima (7 minutes).
6. Breathe in the suffering of the people of Hiroshima (5 minutes).
7. Play scene 6, Afghanistan (8 minutes).
8. Breathe in the suffering of the people of Afghanistan (5 minutes).
9. Play scene 7, New York City (12 minutes).
10. Breathe in the suffering of the people of New York (5 minutes).
11. Play scene 9, Israel and Palestine (16 minutes).
12. Breathe in the suffering of the people of Israel and Palestine (5 minutes).
13. Breathe in the suffering of all the people of the world (5 minutes).

Tools:

- * a bell or gentle gong to signal the start and stop of each meditation cycle.
- * silent timer.

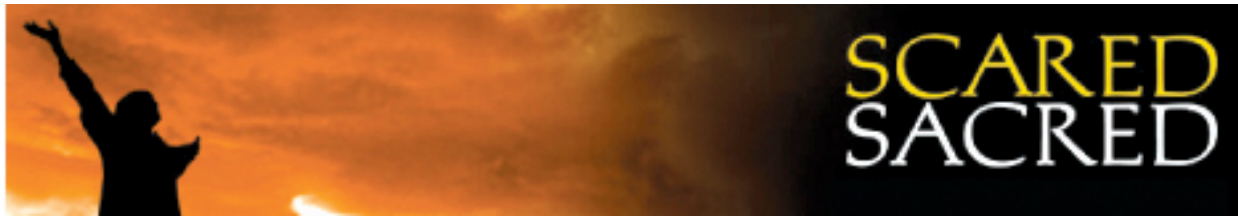
S C R I P T

Please make yourself comfortable. Begin the Tonglen by sitting quietly and bringing your mind home. Straighten your spine, let go of the ‘posture of the wilted flower.’

Ring bell

Begin counting your breathes to ten, starting over again when you lose count, slowly stilling your mind, for five minutes.

Ring bell



TONGLEN MEDITATION (c o n t ' d)

To inspire your practice, meditate deeply on the suffering that all beings experience, and allow their suffering to open your heart and awaken your compassion. Visualize that sitting in front of you is an individual or group that you know to be suffering.

Open yourself to their suffering, allowing yourself to feel connected to them, becoming aware of all of their difficulties. Feel rising in you a strong compassionate intention to release them from their suffering and even its causes.

Breathe in their suffering, in the form of a dark cloud, and visualize it coming into your heart center, where it dissolves in a flash of white light, transforming into compassion, simultaneously dissolving any final traces of self-grasping, of your ego, thus fully revealing the heart of your enlightened mind. As you breathe out, consider that you are sending out, in the form of brilliant cool white light, all your healing love, warmth, energy, confidence, joy, good health, happiness, peace, whatever they might need. The in breath is hot heavy, dark; the out breath is cool, fresh, spacious, light.

NOTE: is important to not hold onto the suffering, not even for an instant. Transform it in a flash, into compassion.

Ring bell after five minutes.

As you conclude each session of Tonglen, dedicate its positive and healing power to those you had visualized and pray that the merit of your practice of compassion may benefit all other beings. You can extend this to others who are suffering in front of you - friends, your community, strangers, the world, people from the world's ground zero's--and practice taking in and transforming their suffering, extending to them all of your happiness, clarity, understanding, forgiveness and love. May all Beings Be Happy.

Relevant DVD Extras:

* Special Features - Guided Tonglen Meditation.

Additional Resources

- Pema Chodron on Tonglen: www.shambhala.org/teachers/pema/tonglen1.php
- Christine Longaker on Tonglen: www.spcare.org/practices/tonglen.html
- *Awakening Compassion 6 CD Audio Course* by Pema Chodron, Sounds True. (www.soundstrue.com).
- *The Compassion Box*. Tonglen Instruction Book (*Start Where You Are*), Card Set, and Meditation CD by Pema Chodron, Shambhala Classics. (www.shambhala.com).