

Enemy, Stranger, Neighbor, & Friend



a rough guide on religion and othering

by and for young scholars, activists, and development workers
engaged in peacebuilding and the cultivation of social resilience

©2021 Andrew D. DeCort, Lani Mireya Anaya Jiménez,
Ikenna Paschal Okpaleke, Matthew Ryan Robinson

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Welcome & Introduction

Introducing the Rough Guide on Religion and Othering

The Focus and Purpose of the Project

How do religions represent inside and outside “others” in their ideas, symbols, and practices? How do religious representations of others influence social cohesion? And what role can young leaders play in engaging with the challenges and the potential found within religious traditions’ representations of “others” to cultivate social resilience?

This *Rough Guide On Religion and Othering* offers a practical resource for group study and project visioning that can inspire and equip groups to address core tensions that emerge in religious representations of “otherness”. The guide presents four chapters on the ways religious ideas, symbols and practices represent other persons and groups as enemies, strangers, neighbors, and friends. The guide includes anecdotes drawn from real world situations, short essays on each topic, group reading exercises that draw on the sacred writings of many of the world’s religious traditions, and a gallery of projects developed by young leaders to engage with the challenges of othering by drawing on their religious traditions’ beliefs, symbols, and practices as resources.

After working through this guide, it is our hope that you and your communities will be equipped with:

- **a set of rigorous questions** to ask yourself about how to work with your own religious tradition's potential for engagement with others in ways that promote social resilience and flourishing.
- **a selection of source materials** drawn from different religious traditions illustrating the wisdom of the world's religious traditions concerning practical and prudent engagement with, as well as radical love and acceptance of, outsiders.
- **new ideas for projects and approaches** to cultivating mutually life-giving relationships with outsiders in your own (inter)religious communities and projects.

Youth, Peace, and Religion

The *Rough Guide On Religion and Othering* is written for young leaders and produced primarily by young leaders. In 2021, the United Nations and Folke Bernadotte Academy published *Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook* (YPS Handbook). Several key insights of the YPS Handbook are central to the format and purposes of this *Rough Guide*. In particular, the YPS Handbook challenges simplistic notions of seeing young people as perpetrators or victims of violence. The sober reality is that young people are profoundly influential leaders today who are partners in preventing violence and sustaining peaceful societies.¹



The main questions then become how young leaders affirm their roles and how theories of change developed for working toward peace can be “youth led” and “youth focused”. The YPS Handbook emphasizes that social cohesion correlates strongly to the degree of meaningful participation opportunities in decision-making processes and self-organizing that community members experience.

But this does not only apply to the identification and management of socio-environmental challenges in post-conflict situations and approaches to addressing those challenges - for example, distribution of leadership roles, jobs, or material resources or creating bridges of

¹ This combines the recommendation of the UN's Youth Peace and Security Agenda of persons aged 18-29 and the African Union's definition of persons aged 15-35. “Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2250 (2015), Urges Member States to Increase Representation of Youth in Decision-Making at All Levels”, United Nations, accessed May 15, 2021 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm> . African Union, *African Union Charter*, (Addis Abeba: African Union, 2006) https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-treaty-0033_-_african_youth_charter_e.pdf

social contact between opposing groups. Researchers and outside development actors have often focused on these kinds of things in the past and then observed that such approaches do not seem to translate into increased connectedness, trust or solidarity among opposing groups. Instead, as the YPS Handbook argues, robust social cohesion requires more specifically that the communities involve themselves as beneficiaries, partners, and leaders who identify the challenges to social cohesion their communities are facing and, indeed, that they name them explicitly as challenges to social cohesion.

This means that communities would draw on their own past experience and beliefs about others to represent those relationships in language and action as relationships characterized by trust and deceit, solidarity and isolation, welcome and exclusion. Such representations are never merely descriptive and factual but evaluative and ethical and draw on communities' treasuries of ethical knowledge for guidance.

The YPS Handbook mentions but does not discuss religion. This Rough Guide, however, assumes it reasonable to expect that religious traditions, and the wealth of ethical wisdom they store up, would inform and influence communities' representations of outside others. It is only natural then to ask what representations of outside others are preserved in religions' textual, aesthetic and ethical traditions. In addition, the YPS Handbook treasures the role of community-based leadership as an entry point for youths' meaningful participation in actions such as intergenerational work, dialogues, decision-making, conflict transformation, and other governance processes. This Rough Guide seeks to combine the YPS Handbook's call to learn from young leaders with the expectation that religious commitments play an important role in their lives. The goal here is to invite young leaders who are involved in communities where religious traditions hold an important place in the community to share their own ideas and experiences concerning (1) intra- and interreligious representations of outside others and (2) the potential therein for peace.

Religion and Social Resilience

The language of “reconciliation” has become widely used in peace building contexts. The meaning of this term and the objectives it means to highlight can be better understood if we look at two other terms that are often used in conjunction with it: social cohesion and social resilience.²



Social cohesion refers to the sense of connection to a group within the group, as reflected in social ties, participation in the group, and the stability of institutions organizing the group’s resources, as well as trust in those forms of organization. Social resilience considers these factors as well but particularly in situations of conflict, trauma, or crisis. With this focus, a group’s resilience is a reflection not only of its ability or capacity to persevere through hardship and bounce back afterward to a state of in-group cohesion. It also includes the group’s capacity to integrate changes to the in-group, to welcome new groups and their ideas and practices, and to grow and to flourish together.

Beyond cultivating social cohesion, religious communities also have significant influence in cultivating societal well-being, or “social resilience”. Yet, in highly diverse contemporary societies, indeed, in the age of a “global society”, the influence of religious communities can be ambivalent: sometimes serving as a source of social cohesion (helping groups stick together internally) or of social resilience (helping differing groups join together and flourish). Religious communities can cultivate trust, stability, vision, purpose and hope, but they also sometimes sow suspicion, distrust, fear, and serious insecurity.

² For development and research resources, see the Appendix “Additional Resources for Growth and Challenge” below on page 79.

Understanding the specific roles that religions play in pursuit of societal well-being becomes even more complicated in contemporary societies where the boundaries between the ideas, aesthetics and ethics of a *religious group* and those of specific *nations* or *ethnicities* are highly porous. Religions' characterizations of enemies and strangers, for example, can be overlapped with ethnicity, cultural heritage or political party. In the context of ethnic conflict, nationalistic pride, and populist social movements, one result of such overlapping is that religious communities can be instrumentalized in service of the ends of inclusion/exclusion. For example, identity-based beliefs, symbols, and practices might be used to include the members of one's own group and to exclude the members outside of one's own group in a zero-sum, "us versus them" struggle for rights and resources.

However, religions also possess significant resources for welcoming, caring for and protecting outsiders, such as narratives about neighborliness, symbols interrelating multiple groups, and ethical guidance about how to treat strangers and enemies.

So it is tremendously important for leaders or persons of influence in their religious communities to give attention to the ways in which "others" are represented, how these representations are used, and how they might be open to multiple interpretations -- with various outcomes.

This *Rough Guide on Religion and Othering* considers four basic human relationships with "others" that all of the world's religious traditions engage with: the enemy, the stranger, the neighbor, and the friend. In doing so, the purpose is to reflect on religious representations of "others" and their significance for social cohesion and social resilience.

In doing so, the guide draws on the wisdom of several different religious traditions, focusing on their textual sources and the ideas, images and practices those sources discuss.

Against this background, the main questions animating this guide are:

- How are the enemy, the stranger, the neighbor, and the friend represented and practiced in the textual, symbolic and ethical traditions of a society's religious communities?
- How do these understandings and practices impact the cultivation of social cohesion and social resilience? And
- how might negative representations of "others" be named and refined toward reconciliation and mutual well-being among religious communities and their "others"?

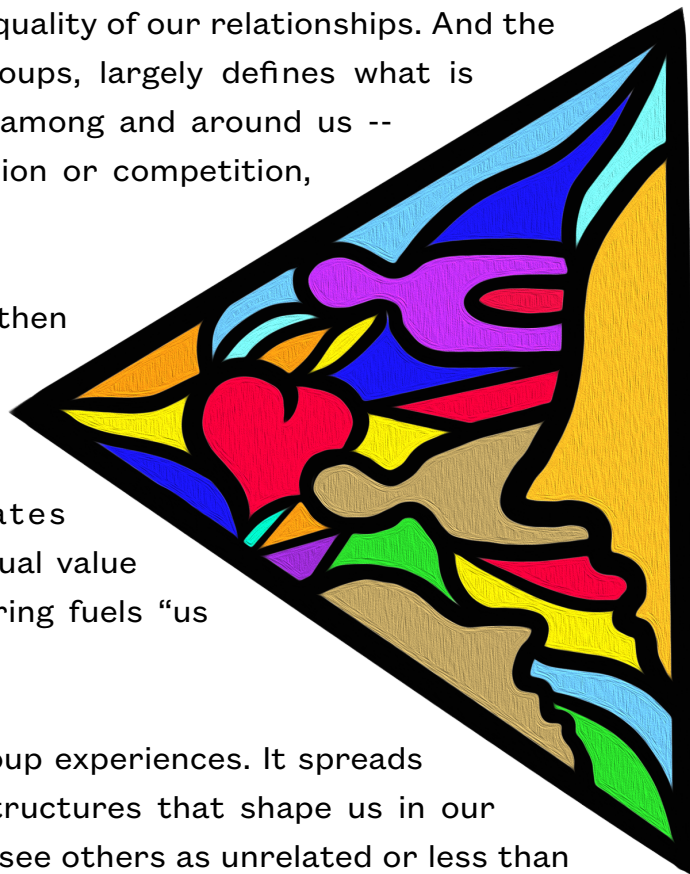
Religion and the Challenges of “Othering”: Enemy, Stranger, Neighbor, Friend

Othering, Relationships, and Religion

The way we see others profoundly influences the society we see around us. The reason is simple: the way we see others defines the quality of our relationships. And the quality of our relationships, as individuals and groups, largely defines what is possible for our society. What do we see growing among and around us -- dignity or disrespect, trust or suspicion, cooperation or competition, creativity or conflict, flourishing or suffering?

If the way we see others shapes the society we see, then othering is extremely important for our social cohesion and resilience. **We describe othering simply as seeing others as unrelated or less than ourselves.** The othering vision creates disconnection between people and a sense of unequal value or even a need to exclude or attack others. Othering fuels “us versus them” mindsets and relationships.

Othering often grows out of painful personal or group experiences. It spreads through the words, images, stories, beliefs, and structures that shape us in our families, communities, and wider cultures. When we see others as unrelated or less than ourselves, the door is open to picture others as enemies, which can lead to dehumanizing or demonizing them. And these attitudes, words, and images can lead to violence, war, or genocide. An escalating cycle of othering is unleashed.



Our action movies vividly illustrate what's at stake in othering: when we see others as unrelated or less — think of Stormtroopers, Orcs, or other (in)famous “bad guys” — we don't care what happens to them. They may get shot, blown up, or annihilated, and their suffering doesn't make us feel sad or disturbed. We may even joyfully cheer. **What happens on our screens and in our societies is sourced in the way we see others.**

Our religious beliefs, values, and practices profoundly influence how we see others. And thus **religion can play a very powerful role in othering, both to fuel and to heal it.**

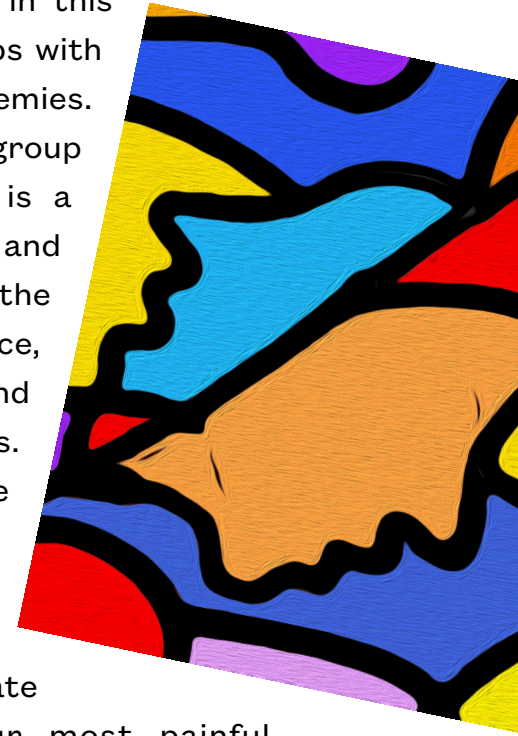
Religion can fuel othering by sanctioning our sense of exceptional identity, picturing others as uniquely sinful or even satanic, and justifying our desire to exclude or punish others as God's will. But religion can also be a powerful force for healing othering. Some of the most basic teachings of our faith traditions — that God has created all people with precious value, that we all make mistakes and need mercy, that we are called by God to practice love and compassion even when “the other” least deserves it — can uproot othering. These religious visions give us new eyes to see that we are fundamentally connected as people and equal in precious value, even in our disagreements and conflicts. And these visions are vital for cultivating social resilience and mutual flourishing.

This manual invites us to explore the rich resources in our diverse faith traditions for healing othering, cultivating shared flourishing, and practicing hope in our relationships with enemies, strangers, neighbors, and friends.

Enemy

The enemy is the first category of relationship we will explore in this manual. Conflict is a familiar and painful reality in our relationships with others. Out of conflict, we may begin to see others as our enemies. “Enemy” literally means the opposite of a friend: an individual or group we dislike, fear, resent, or hate. Labeling people as enemies is a powerful form of othering, because it can harden our conscience and justify excluding, attacking, or even annihilating others. This is the gateway to dehumanization, which may lead to mass violence, atrocity, and genocide. Here our faith traditions can offer profound resources for interrupting enemy-making and healing relationships. The teaching that God has created all people with inherent value cuts to the root of othering. Recognizing that we too are imperfect and capable of evil cultivates self-awareness and expands compassion. Hearing the radical call to love our enemies opens new imagination and energizes practices of hope that cultivate reconciliation, social resilience, and shared flourishing. Our most painful experiences can become places of profound healing and transformation, both for ourselves and the society we share.

Who are your enemies? Which voices and platforms fuel othering and enemy-making in your context? What words, images, and ideals do they appeal to? What does your faith tradition teach about how we should see and treat our enemies? Are you familiar with its call for compassion, rejection of hate, and practices of love for others? How will you actively practice loving your enemy?





Stranger

The stranger is the second category of relationships to be explored in this manual. The idea of the stranger is considered important because of its paradoxical nature. On the one hand, it is easier to create conflict by perceiving the stranger as an enemy due to the fear of the unknown. Yet on the other hand, the appearance of the stranger at our doorstep and in our neighborhoods offers us the opportunity of practicing one of the most important human virtues, namely, hospitality, which opens up to neighbourliness and friendship. Hospitality is highlighted not only in the ancient classical literature (for example, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*) but also takes a central place in virtually all existing faith traditions. In this manual, we shall explore the idea of hospitality to the stranger in some select Jewish, Christian and Islamic sources. The fact that the stranger stands at the crossroad of vice and virtue, of enmity and hospitality, raises the consciousness of the choice of positive transformation as well

as the consideration of some important questions.

Who is a stranger to me? How do we overcome real fears and prejudices in dealing with the presence of a stranger in our community? In our lived reality, are there ways of promoting the narratives and practices of hospitality, which are deeply rooted in our faith traditions?

Neighbor

The neighbor is the third category of relationships to be explored in this manual. Contemporary understandings of the neighbor can be traced back to the Latin *vicinus*, meaning “district” or “place”. Similarly, the English word “neighbor” comes from “neah” meaning “near” and “gebur” meaning “dweller.” The concept is used to name the person who dwells with others in the same area or neighborhood although in separate homes. In this way, the neighbor is traditionally regarded as someone we know better than a stranger based on our proximity to one another. Not all neighbors are friends, however, and the potential to become enemies if tensions among neighbors escalate must



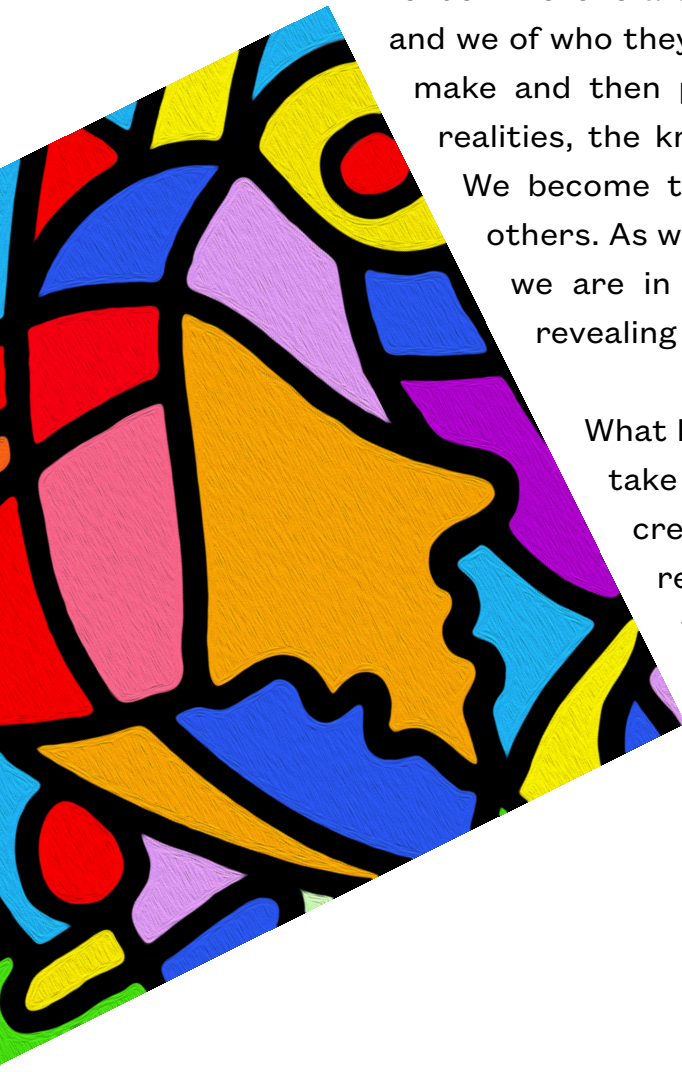
be carefully considered. The conceptual construction of the neighbor often involves the exploration of different elements related to the proximity and preference, the balances of power, reciprocity, and the love both to God and to the neighbor. The Abrahamic religions include within their scriptures the precious value of the neighbor and of neighbor-love as a reflection of God’s love.

Who is my neighbor and how do I define them? What does loving the neighbor entail? How do we build neighborhoods and what is expected in terms of responsibilities, time investment and religious ethics?

Friend

Friendship is the final category of relationships we will consider in this manual. True friendship has been regarded as one of the most valuable gifts a person can hope for, indeed, as a treasure worth seeking and guarding at all costs. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle famously described a certain kind of friendship as a relationship with an other whom you see as another instance of yourself; the friend is you in the shape of another person. Our friends complete us, and we would not be who we are without our friends. There is a certain way in which our friends are part of who we are, and we of who they are: our memories, our interests, the concrete plans we make and then pursue in our lives and which then become our future realities, the knowledge that we acquire, the convictions we hold dear: We become the individuals that we are in and as relationships with others. As we will see in each of the episodes of this series, we are who we are in relationship with others. But this insight is especially revealing when we consider who and how we are in friendship.

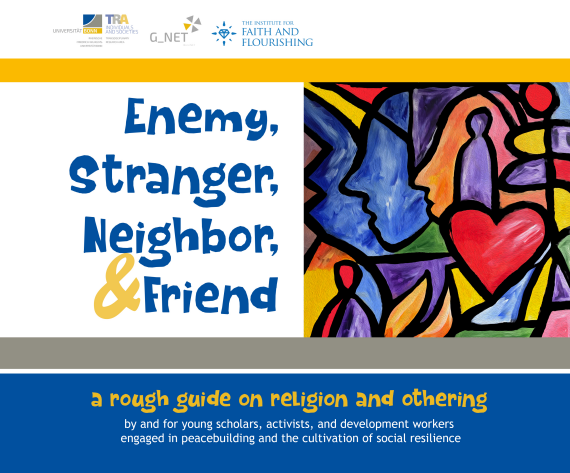
What kinds of friendships are there, and what forms of othering take place in the context of friendship? Are all friendships created equal? And how can insights drawn from our religious traditions offer guidance as we seek to discern the potential in friendship for cultivating peace?



How to Use this Rough Guide

Engagement and Learning Together

For the purposes of this *Rough Guide on Religion and Othering*, knowledge is held to be inseparable from know-how. Know-how is, in turn, something produced and refined on the ground, by actors and communicators who are engaged in the problem fields that they not only wish to understand but also to improve. For this reason, the guide sees the experience and expertise of all project participants as an essential and primary source for the work of identifying (“concept”), reflecting upon (“closer examination”), and then transforming (“transformation”) the ways we see others and the roles our religious traditions can play in that process. It is out of this desire to highlight and learn from one another that this guide has been designed in a way that gives a higher priority to the input of participants than to presentation of content by the project coordinators. The project is the participants - you! Participation is listening to and sharing with one another. The product is the know-how that we can produce together for enhanced social resilience and shared flourishing.



What to Expect and What is Expected

The *Rough Guide on Religion and Othering* consists of four chapters organized thematically around the topics of the enemy, the stranger, the neighbor and the friend. These chapters are meant to be read and discussed in “Enemy, Stranger, Neighbor, Friend” (ESNF) study groups.

What to Expect 1. Chapter Structure

Each chapter follows the same structure. The chapters introduce the topic by drawing on personal experiences of the authors. This is followed by a short essay organized around the concept + closer examination + transformation structure and outlining some of the most important aspects of the topic and consulting the wisdom of various religions. A selection of readings for group study drawn from sacred texts and textual traditions then follows. Finally, projects are highlighted for inspiration in closing that illustrate the ways young leaders have engaged with the topic to effect positive social change. A list of further readings is provided for continued study.

What to Expect 2. Engagement with Religious Traditions

Throughout, the guide engages primarily with Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions and to a lesser extent Buddhist, Hindu and non-religious traditions. In this way, we have drawn on more familiar texts in the hopes of offering an accessible set of materials. However, we recognize the selective nature and limitations of both of these choices. Other religious traditions not represented here also have contributions to make, while behind the texts we do engage with stand rich traditions of interpretation, which would certainly add nuance and complexity to the pictures we have presented. We offer them, not with any pretense to comprehensiveness, but as an invitation and hopefully inspiration for further inquiry and engagement from participants.

What Is Expected 1. Gatherings

Each chapter can be read individually, and should then be worked through in a group setting, with the structure of the chapters in the guide corresponding to the structure of group gatherings. Each chapter can be completed in the gathering in 90 minutes, and time suggestions are included in the chapter margins.

As a participant in an ESNF study group, you will attend five group gatherings: one introductory and four sessions addressing each topic. The group gatherings are structured into (1) a time of greeting, to be followed by (2) an anecdote drawn from lived experience and a related generative question. The generative question sets the tone for (3) a short precis and provocation of approximately 10 minutes, shared by the unit facilitator and serving the purpose of summarizing key questions and challenges to consider in approaching the topic of that unit. This is followed by (4) a time of guided reading in small groups, inspired by the *Havruta* method of textual study (see page 21), to deepen your learning from and with one another. Finally, approximately 30 minutes of every group gathering is devoted to “elevator pitch”-style presentations by participants about projects they have been involved in or plan to work on, with particular attention given to the dynamics of othering.

What is Expected 2. Cooperative Exchange via Social Media and an “Elevator Pitch”

In an effort to bring your listening and sharing into a form that challenges and benefits everyone involved, in an ESNF study group all participants will be asked:

- to create a **social media post** (to be shared on the ESNF project social media accounts) of 4-5 frames/slides featuring a project that you have been involved in or are planning and that has relevance to the issues of othering and the enemy, stranger, neighbor or friend. The posts should introduce the project and summarize its objective, methods, outcomes and lessons-learned.
- to make at least one **comment** on each post of your fellow participants. For a group size of 20, the posts of 5 participants will be featured every week. This means you will make 5 comments every week on social media (and only 4 in the week in which your own post goes live). All participants should tag the project and use the hashtags **#ESNF**, **#enemy**, **#stranger**, **#neighbor**, **#friend** respectively so that the project facilitators can keep

track of the collective conversation as well as any broader resonance the conversation finds beyond the project.

- to give a 3-4 minute “**elevator pitch**” on the basis of your social media post.

Complete instructions, along with examples, and a step-by-step guide for preparing the posts and the pitch can be found on page 28-32 of this guide.

These digital forms of listening and sharing are meant to generate a set of resources and skills which each participant can then adapt and refine in their own projects and organizations: new project types, new perspectives, and different methods along with guidance for choosing them and steps for implementation. At every point, attention will be given to the ways we “other” other people and groups, and how the representation of others facilitates belonging and exclusion, peace and conflict, and not just social cohesion but potentially social resilience also.

Program Guide



Modality

- The program will be offered in a 100% online modality with the use of this manual, our social media platform (Instagram), and the Zoom live sessions.
- The program has a length of four weeks. Each week will explore one of our units: Enemy, Stranger, Neighbor, Friend.
- Every Monday, we will have a 90-minutes live session with an ice-breaker (15 min); a lecture from one of our facilitators (15 min); a group reading and reflection (30 min); and the pitch presentation and dialogue sessions (30 min).

Zoom Link: The link for our live sessions is the following >>

Topic: ESNF Youth

Time / Place:

7:30-9:00 Mexico City/Chicago,
13:30-15:00 UK,
14:30-16:00 Lagos/Berlin,
15:30-17:00 Addis Ababa,
21:00-22:30 Bangalore

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://uni-bonn.zoom.us/
meeting/register/
tJEodOqgpzkuH9SVVxzYFn
3kdcDKr0-uoje](https://uni-bonn.zoom.us/j/3kdcDKr0-uoje)

Meeting ID: 955 3389 2450

Passcode: 661791

Session Dates Table

Unit	Topic/Facilitator	Date and Time (CET)
Welcome	Introduction and Orientation	Monday October 4th, 2021
Unit 1	The Enemy Andrew DeCort	Monday October 11th, 2021
Unit 2	The Stranger Ikenna Paschal Okpaleke	Monday October 18th, 2021
Unit 3	The Neighbor Lani Anaya Jiménez	Monday October 25th, 2021
Unit 4	The Friend Matthew Robinson	Monday November 1st, 2021

- The participants are encouraged to read the unit concept notes included in this manual before every Monday live session.
- During the week, the participants will be required to comment on the participants' posts (See Guide to Participation on page 28-32). This aims to review the content of the week's unit.

Program Completion Requirements and Ethics

- Participants must accomplish at least 90% of total activities of the program in order to receive the certificate. These activities include: attendance, participation in the live session, the creation of the social media posts, the pitch, and comments on the social media posts of others.
- The participant is expected to attend all live sessions. Only under special cases that might hinder the participant from attending one of the sessions, the participant must communicate with the facilitators and follow the staff indications to make-up for the absence.
- The visual materials presented for the social media post and pitch must belong to the participant and/or the organization represented.

Ground Rules

- Being fully present.
 - Accomplish the course requirements, activities, and learning resources.
 - Respect the times to deliver/present the activities and be punctual for the live sessions.
 - Listen patiently and attentively to others and avoid interrupting.
 - If possible, keep your camera on.
- Fair participation for all.
 - Share time so that all can participate.

- Everyone in the meeting is expected to share ideas, ask questions, and contribute to the discussions. Commit to sharing your perspective and speaking honestly.
- Stay on point and on time.
 - Respect the groups' time and keep comments focused on the point.
- Ask for clarification.
 - If there is something that you don't understand, please ask for clarification. If you don't understand the issue or solution, then there are probably others who also don't understand.
- Attack the problem, not the person.
 - Differences of opinion are normal. You may not agree with everything that other participants say. Please be open to hearing other people's perspectives. If you don't agree, respectfully challenge the idea – not the person.
- Mute yourself.
 - Background noise disrupts the meeting for everyone and might prevent us from hearing the information that we need. Choose a quiet location – away from pets, children, etc. Use the mute button when you are not speaking.
- Respect
 - Respect each other's thinking and value everyone's contributions with the same respect you would want from them.
 - Communicate respectfully with the participants and the program staff.
 - Respect copyright materials and learning resources.
 - Use inclusive and professional language during the sessions and activities.

If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact your gathering facilitator or the program coordinators:

gnet@uni-bonn.de

Guide to Group Reading (“Havruta” Method)

What Is Havruta?

Where do questions come from? Perhaps a lack of understanding, or perhaps difference of opinion. How are difference of opinion and lack of understanding discovered? In critical conversation with others who have not experienced a situation or understood it in exactly the same way as we did. *Havruta* highlights the importance of asking questions for deeper understanding in life and in community. *Havruta* focuses textual study through asking questions and conversation. But *havruta* also recognizes that asking an honest question or expressing disagreement are vulnerable acts. For this reason, one studies with a friend or trustworthy companion. Each person promises understanding and sympathy, each expects just and fair treatment, each listens with anticipation of learning from the other.

Havruta is a traditional Jewish form of textual study with a partner. From the Hebrew word *haver*, “friend” or “comrade,” *havruta* refers both to one’s partner in study and to the process. In the practice of *havruta*, one partner reads a passage (usually only a few lines or even just a few words) and the other person summarizes in his or her own words and raises questions. Then both partners discuss possible meanings and nuances. After switching roles, the process repeats.

Havruta as an Orientation to Group Reading in ESNF

Each unit of this guide includes a section for group reading to be conducted in a *havruta*-inspired format. The ESNF project facilitators and participants acknowledge that there are risks in borrowing from the traditions of others for other ends and purposes than those originally intended. ESNF, however, seeks not to reuse *havruta* study for other purposes, but to be guided by its spirit and toward the shared end of what Paul Ricoeur famously

called seeing oneself as another. If readers are interested in learning more about this traditional practice in the context of Judaism and study of Torah, see the section “Additional Resources” on page 75 below.

In the group reading section of each unit, you will find a selection of very short texts drawn from the scriptural and sacred texts of a variety of religious and non-religious traditions. There are also risks here in selectively picking such short passages, including loss of context, incompleteness, misrepresentation. Translation from original languages into English creates further distance from traditional communities of interpretation. We can acknowledge such drawbacks with humility and still learn from these texts by careful, respectful reading in community with a group of diverse others.

Steps for Group Reading Following the Principles of *Havruta* Study

As you enter into times of group reading, organize your reading into three movements and roles, one for each group member:

- Reading
- Responding to the text
- Responding to one another

Reading. The texts reproduced in this manual are short, but they are rich and complex, full of texture, light and shadow, melody and rhythm. In order to honor this richness, the reader can

- read the text aloud very slowly;
- read only one sentence or even just one phrase at a time, slowly several times;
- as you read multiple times, place the emphasis on different words each time.

Responding to the Text. In *havruta* study, the text is seen as itself a member of the study group. The text brings its own background experience into the conversation, it carries its

own concerns and interests, and offers its own insights and ideas. So in responding to the text, respond with the same respect, patience, and eager interest you would show to any person you are having a conversation with. The responder should:

- **Wait.** Begin by listening to all that the voice of the text has to say (through the voice of the reader).
- **Ask.** Once the text is done speaking, ask sincere and serious questions, aimed at understanding the text as its authors and communities would want to be understood. Avoid rhetorical or trivial questions and try instead to ask questions to which you genuinely do not have an answer and questions that really matter. In other words, show genuine interest and care.
- **Wait again.** With these questions in your heart, either re-read the text once again, as many times as helpful. Or, move on to the final movement

Responding to one another. As you now begin to respond to the responder, do not forget the text! The second responder should keep the text at the center but will respond to both the text and the first responder's reflections. The second responder might:

- **Ask.** Are there additional meanings in the text that the first responder may not have highlighted;
- **Note.** Highlight points of agreement or disagreement;
- **Wonder.** Conclude the round with an open-ended observation that follows the text beyond the text toward your own situations. For example, "In light of _____ (in the text), I wonder what it would mean to..."

Move on to the next text, shift the roles within your group, repeat these movements until you have worked through each text.

Guide to Participation: Social Media Posts and Pitch

ESNF is meant to be a mutual leading and learning experience. This tool is not a curriculum but a rough guide, meant to outline a general framework for discussion that comes alive through participants' contributions as co-learners and co-leaders. The program (that is, the guide + gatherings) intends to serve as an incubator for creative exchange and encouragement, where young peace innovators can draw from their own religious traditions and share their own ideas, projects and methods, as well as learn from the ideas, traditions, projects, and methods of others.

Perhaps you have not been involved in any projects that explicitly take the language of enemy, stranger, neighbor, or friend as a central or organizing theme. Or maybe you have but without realizing it: The chapters of this guide draw attention to a whole host of interpersonal and social dynamics that these terms entail. Each chapter begins with a list of keywords to help you reflect more deeply on the direct language of enemy, stranger, neighbor, and friend and dynamics like suspicion and trust, distance and proximity, surprise and familiarity, need and provision that come into consideration when reflecting on these relationships. In what ways have you, your project, and communities engaged with these and other related issues? What did you learn about enemies, strangers, neighbors, or friends and about peace and social resilience along the way?

The ESNF program design helps participants get to know one another and facilitates a high level of interaction with a minimal amount of time investment in three ways.

Introduce Yourself to One Another

Once you are admitted to the program, please introduce yourself on the [Padlet](#) page prepared in advance by your gathering facilitators.

Here are some ideas for what to include:

- A selfie
- A short personal introduction
- A quirky fact about yourself
- A related project you have been involved in
- The organization to which you belong
- Your interest in the ESNF project



Post Your Project and Comment

Each participants is asked to create **two social media posts** using the Instagram format introducing a project

- that you have been involved in, are currently part of, or one that you would like to create, and
- that is related to the problems of “othering” and relating to enemies, strangers, neighbors, and friends in ways that promote peace and social resilience.

The First Post

The first post should have five frames addressing the following elements

- What was the project? (title, organizing group, etc.)
- Who was involved? (leading and/or participating)
- What methods did you use, and why those methods?
- What were the intended outcomes?
- Can you suggest best practices or lessons learned from the project?

You may choose to make the first post at any time of your choosing within the first two weeks of the course; this will serve as the basis for your “pitch” (see below).

The Second Post

The second post should include three frames and should reflect on the representations of otherness in the project introduced in your first post, engaging this with the terminology of ESNF, religious traditions, and societal resilience. The second post should be done in the last week of the course.

Remember to give credit! Properly cite any text or images for which you do not own the copyright. All participants are responsible for securing re-use permissions where necessary.

Comments on the Posts of Others

In addition to your social media posts, all participants should make a contentful comment on the posts of at least two or three other participants every week. Something like “Exciting!” can be an encouraging comment, but is not very contentful. Instead, try sharing how the post challenged you, inspired you, made you wonder or worry. Your comments can also be practical or religious questions which can be incorporated into the live sessions. The aim is to create richer conversation and knowledge-exchange. Remember to include the hashtag #ESNF in order to get credit for active engagement toward the certificate.

Pitch your Project

Thirty minutes of each gathering is to be devoted to listening to and learning from one another’s experiences working on projects promoting peace and social resilience. Again, you are the learners and the leaders! As you participate in the ESNF gatherings, ask

yourself, “What can I learn from my fellow program participants? What can I share with them?”

The “elevator pitch” format is a fun and engaging way to share project ideas. In the business world, elevator pitches serve the purpose of attracting interest from potential employers and investors in your ideas. In the ESNF context, however, you are not looking for financial investment of start-up capital for your project idea. Instead, you can offer one another a human investment of encouraging and constructively critical feedback and engaged interest.

Making your Pitch

Use the frames of your **first post** to help you plan your pitch. However, since your co-participants will already have seen your first post, it is important that you do more than simply show those frames again! This time you are going to premier your **second post**, which deepens the level of religious reflection on the elements of othering that your project touches on. Here are some ideas to help you transform your visual posts into an engaging personal presentation:

- Describe a situation and draw attention to some problematic consequences that resulted from the situation
- Formulate a question about that problem that invites the reader to imagine alternatives or solutions
- Introduce the available cultural and religious resources (teachings, symbols, and practices) that actors in the situation did or could draw on for promoting peace and social resilience



- Explain how those resources did or could make a difference in the ways people related to enemies, strangers, neighbors, and friends
- Finally, write all of this into 300 words using a very natural-spoken engaging tone of voice, memorize it, and practice in advance!

Scheduling

In a group of twenty participants, each person will pitch one project idea during the course of the five ESNF gatherings (only four of which include the thirty-minute block for project pitches). The pitch should be no longer than three minutes in length. This schedule allows for five pitches per gathering and leaves enough time for three additional minutes per pitch for a couple of questions from the rest of the group.

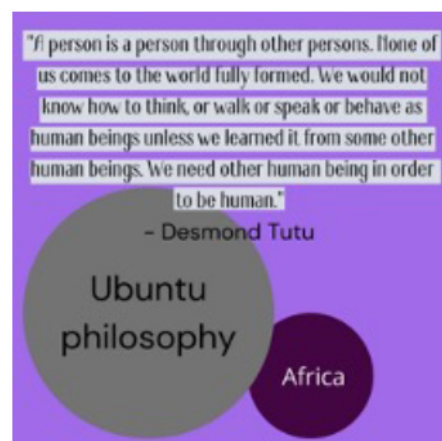
Hashtags

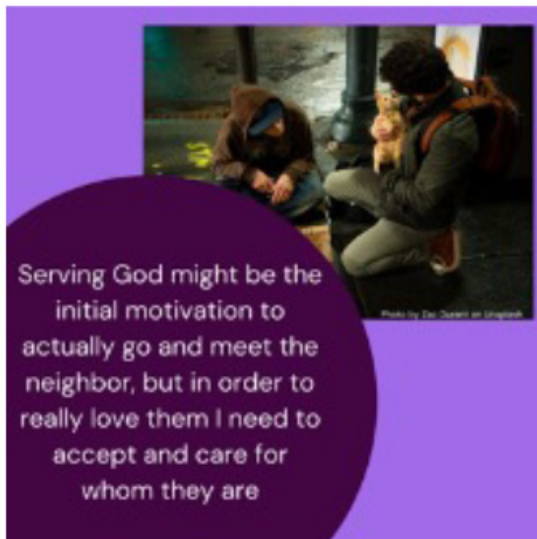
In order to make it easier for project participants and facilitators to follow one another's contributions, **use the hashtag #ESNF** on all program-related content!

If you build on the ESNF program and expand it in other directions, we'd love to follow and support you! Help us keep in touch by **using the hashtags #ESNF and #ESNF+.**

Example Content for Posts and Pitch

The following pages illustrate the kind of content creation that ESNF hopes to inspire. These instagram posts were designed by creative students in an international G_NET seminar conducted in 2021 on the theme of “The Neighbor”. Content used with permission of the creators: Lara Weller (Germany), Esther Akinade (Nigeria), and Dina Willci (India).





Meet the Team!



Andrew DeCort is passionate about seeing the precious value of each person, encouraging love, and challenging cultural patterns that devalue others. Andrew directs the Institute for Faith and Flourishing and is the co-founder of the Neighbor-Love Movement. He holds a PhD in Ethics from the University of Chicago and has lectured in ethics, theology, and Ethiopian studies at Wheaton College, the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, the University of Bonn, and the American Theological Initiative.



Ikenna Paschal Okpaleke is a post-doctoral researcher working in Action Area 3 (Social Response-abilities), Problem Field 1-3 (Social Upheaval) on a project titled "The Legitimacy of Dissent? Democracy and Ecclesiology in Dialogue". Dr. Okpaleke holds a PhD and two Masters degrees from the KU Leuven. He has published numerous journal articles on topics in ecumenical theology, African theologies, and spirituality.



Lani Anaya is an expert in peace and development. She does consultancies for local, national, regional and international projects related to youth inclusion in peacebuilding, ecumenism and the 2030 Agenda. Lani holds a BA in International Relations from UNAM, an MSc. in Peace and Conflict Studies from Uppsala University, a specialization from the University of Geneva and she is currently studying MA in Ecumenical Studies at Bonn University.



Matthew Robinson holds a PhD in theology and religious studies from Northwestern University. He leads the Department for Intercultural Theology at the Protestant Theological Faculty of the University of Bonn. His main research interests are in religion and inter-/trans-culturality. He loves learning from students and is inspired by young leaders who think global and act local.



enemv

Unit 1. The Enemy

Keywords: *Othering, Conflict, Violence, Faith, Love, Hope, Practice*

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.” **Proverbs 25:21**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” **Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:43-45)**

“Shall I tell you what is better than much prayer and sadaqa [giving to the needy]? Mending discord. And beware of hatred -- it strips you of your religion.” **Prophet Mohammed (ibn Anas, Muwatta Malik, Book 47, Hadith 7)**

“The command to love one’s enemy is an absolute necessity for our survival. Love, even for enemies, is the key to the solution of the problems of our world.” **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

Introduction

Conflict is a painful and familiar reality in our relationships with others. Out of conflict, we may begin to see others as our enemies. “Enemy” literally means the opposite of a friend: an individual or group we dislike, fear, resent, or hate. Labeling people as enemies is a powerful form of othering, because it can harden our conscience and justify excluding, attacking, or even annihilating others. This is the gateway to dehumanization, which may

lead to mass violence, atrocity, and genocide. At root, hate means the desire for the other not to exist.

Here our faith traditions can offer profound resources for interrupting enemy-making and healing relationships. The teaching that God has created all people with inherent value cuts to the root of othering. Recognizing that we too are imperfect and capable of evil cultivates humble self-awareness and expands compassion. Hearing the radical call to love our enemies opens new imagination and energizes practices of hope that cultivate reconciliation, social resilience, and shared flourishing.

With love and courage, our most painful experiences can become places of profound healing and transformation, both for ourselves and the society we share.

Icebreaker

- What is your favorite food?
- Have you ever shared a meal with an unexpected person and/or in a surprising place?

Anecdote: Ferdosa's Declaration

In October 2018, I was invited to speak to about 200 youth at a city hall in eastern Ethiopia near Somalia. Serious ethnic conflict had broken out in the region. I saw huge camps with dark tents sheltering people who had been labeled as enemies and driven from their homes.

I spoke to the youth about loving our enemies and how this radical love can cultivate healing and hope in our communities. Intense question and answer followed as the youth wrestled with this unusual response to conflict.

When the meeting ended, a young woman named Ferdosa came up to me, and she spoke passionate words I will never forget: “Dr. Andrew, **no one has ever told me to love my enemies before! Starting today, I will love my enemies and teach others to love their enemies!**”

Ferdosa then held my hand and raised it up, almost like she was making a covenant or oath. We took a selfie together to symbolize our shared commitment to love our enemies. Years later, Ferdosa told me that she considers this one of her greatest strengths: “I am a person who loves even my enemies.”

Ferdosa’s words deeply inspire me: even in contexts of high conflict, youth are hungry for an alternative to othering, hatred, and violence. Sometimes all they need is an explanation of why loving their enemies makes sense and an invitation to start the journey.

Reflections on the Enemy

- Who are your enemies?
- Which voices and platforms fuel othering and enemy-making in your context?
- What words, images, stories and ideals do they appeal to?
- What does your faith tradition teach about how we should see and treat our enemies? Are you familiar with its call for compassion, rejection of hate, and practices of love for others?
- How will you actively practice loving your enemy? (Explore several practices [here](#).)

Question for Reflection and Preparation

Have you ever heard the call to love your enemy? If you have, when was the first time and how did you respond?

Group Reading

From the Hebrew word *haver*, “friend” or “comrade,” *havruta* refers both to one’s partner in study and to the process. In the practice of *havruta*, one partner reads a passage and

the other person summarizes in his or her own words and raises questions. Then both partners discuss possible meanings and nuances. After switching roles, the process repeats. For more detailed instructions, see page 22 above. Try to read and discuss the following texts in 30 minutes.



Jewish Sources

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:18

“Do not hate an Egyptian, because you resided as foreigners in their country.” Deuteronomy 23:8. *Note:* The Israelites had recently escaped centuries of slavery in Egypt.

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Proverbs 25:21-22.



Christian Sources

“[Jesus said,] ‘But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs

to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” Luke 6:27-36

“As the soldiers led Jesus away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him... Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Jesus to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’” Luke 23:26-34



Islamic Sources

“The most virtuous behavior is to engage those who break relations, to give to those who withhold from you, and to forgive those who wrong you.” Prophet Mohamed, Hadith Al-Tabarani, 282

“Shall I tell you what is better than much prayer and *sadaqa* [giving to the needy]? Mending discord. And beware of hatred -- it strips you of your religion.” Prophet Mohammed, Ibn Anas, *Muwatta Malik*, Book 47,

Hadith 7; Malik 1642

“Ibn Salul [a chief leader of the Khazrag tribe in Medina] worked for nine years against the Prophet and was known for mocking the Prophet. For instance, he spread rumors that the Prophet’s wife, Aisha, had committed adultery. His efforts to create dissent among Muslim groups were so successful that Ibn Salul’s son, a devout Muslim, asked the Prophet for permission to kill his own father. The Prophet rejected the request. Ibn Salul was not punished for his actions or words, despite the Prophet having the power to do so.

When Ibn Salul was on his deathbed, the Prophet went to visit him. There, Ibn Salul asked for the Prophet's shirt, which was believed to have some sort of mystical powers, and asked him to attend his funeral. The Prophet agreed. Umar ibn al-Khattab (a respected Muslim leader who would later become the second successor of the Prophet) reminded the Prophet of all the things Ibn Salul had said and done against him and against Islam and tried to persuade him not to attend. However, the Prophet said that in spite of Ibn Salul's deeds, he would petition God more than seventy times if it would save Ibn Salul's soul... we should respond to people who mock our faith with compassion -- we should generously share our tunics, sincerely weep at their funerals, and fervently pray seventy times for their souls." Aziz Abu Sarah, "Insulting Islam," in *Strangers, Neighbors, Friends* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 33.

"Go my friend
bestow your love
even on your enemies
if you touch their hearts
what do you think will happen?"

Rumi, *The Love Poems of Rumi* (New York, NY: Wellfleet Press, 2015), 126

Inspiration

Practice: Seeing, Feeling, and Responding

The following three exercises invite you to see your enemies, to understand what you’re feeling toward them, and to imagine and embrace healthy responses to those feelings based on the needs and opportunities in your context.

1. Enemy Inventory: Who are your enemies? We may quickly assume, “I don’t have any enemies.” But think about people who make you feel on edge, upset, or afraid -- people you dismiss, dislike, avoid, reject, or don’t want to pray for. Spend a moment in silent reflection and make a list:

Personal Enemies	Identity-based Enemies
a. Myself:	g. Ethnic/racial:
b. Family:	h. Political:
c. Friends:	i. Religious:
d. Neighbors:	j. Ideological or cultural:
e. Colleagues:	k. Other Identities:
f. Other contacts:	

2. Emotional Awareness Spectrum: What do you feel toward these people? Use the lists below to explore the emotions, words, images, and actions that you associate with them. Circle words that resonate with you; write a “?” next to words that make you pause or ask new questions. These lists are not exhaustive; write in what you find yourself feeling, thinking, seeing, and doing.

Emotions: “I feel...

- Numbness, indifference, hardhearted

- Annoyance, frustration, dislike
- Blame, betrayal, rejection
- Shock, confusion, lost
- Pain, loss, grief
- Upset, anger, rage
- Fear, threat, under attack
- Humiliation, revulsion, disgust
- Condemnation, contempt, hate

Words: “I think or say...”

- “They’re not part of my life; I feel nothing toward them.”
- “I don’t care about them or want to be around them.”
- “It’s their fault; I can’t think about them or hear their side of the story.”
- “I can’t believe they did that to us; my world is spinning.”
- “The pain they made us suffer is unbearable.”
- “They deserve to be punished; I’m not sad if they suffer.”
- “They’re dangerous and can’t be trusted.”
- “I hate those people; they sicken me.”
- “They’re evil and should be wiped out.”

Images: “I see them as a...”

- joke, cartoon, symbol
- shadow, mass, mob
- savage, barbarian, invader
- sinner, pervert, freak
- thug, criminal, terrorist
- weed, germ, cancer

- skeleton, death, monster
- animal, reptile, insect
- demon, devil, satan

Actions: “I’m capable of...”

- ignoring them.
- avoiding or excluding them.
- insulting them or affirming negative stereotypes about them.
- defending my perspective and not listening to other possible sides to the story.
- falling into depression or losing hope.
- exploding and saying and doing things I usually wouldn’t.
- feeling threatened and taking positions that I might normally see as extreme.
- desiring for them to suffer and be treated like something less than human.
- fantasizing or actively planning about how I can defeat or harm them.

3. Creative Imagination and Agency: What are healthy responses to these emotions in your immediate and extended relationships? How do you want to address these conflicts in your life and context in ways that honor your faith and elevate human flourishing? Explore several practices for loving your enemies [here](#).

Further Readings

- James K.A. Smith, "[Healing the Imagination: Art Lessons from James Baldwin](#)," in *Image Journal*, Issue 107. Smith explores how we see others and how this "imagination" shapes our world. (3 pages)
- Andrew DeCort, "[How Should We Treat Our Enemies?](#)" originally published on andrew-decort.com on March 17, 2019. DeCort explores Jesus's groundbreaking command to love our enemies in its cultural context and for today. (5 pages)
- Aziz Abu Sarah, "[Crossing Enemy Lines](#)" in *Strangers, Neighbors, Friends: Muslim-Christian-Jewish Reflections on Compassion and Peace* (Cascade Books, 2018), 7-11. Aziz explores how he shifted from hating his enemies after his brother was murdered to practicing compassion. (4 pages)
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stranger

Unit 2. The Stranger

Keywords: *Difference, The Other, Alien, Fear, Hospitality, Out-Group*

“Friendship transforms a stranger into a relative.” **Traditional Arabic saying**

“Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.” Paul (Romans 12:13-14)

“This is only some poor man who has lost his way, and we must be kind to him, for strangers and foreigners in distress are under Jove's protection, and will take what they can get and be thankful; so, girls, give the poor fellow something to eat and drink, and wash him in the stream at some place that is sheltered from the wind.” **Princess Nausicaa on Odysseus in Homer's *The Odyssey* VI (Butler, 1932), 105**

“I beg you not to disturb yourself. I particularly beg you to be my guest.” **Father Zossima in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov***

“Strangers from the Unseen have arrived in the meadow; go forth, for it is a rule that ‘the newcomer is visited’.” **Rumi, *Mystical Poems of Rūmī*, 141:3**

Introduction

Defining the identity of a stranger is difficult today because there are many senses of “strangeness” that shape our responses to others. We might focus on geography and understand the stranger as someone who is passing by, unknown, and not staying. Still, this geographic focus may be too limiting. Today we have neighbors who are strangers just

because they are “not staying” in our relationship circles. The digital world also blurs the borderline between the one who is familiar but still a stranger.

This complexity shows the importance of exploring the meaning of “strange” and “strangeness” in our lived experience. We need to examine our emotional and rational impulses and reactions when we encounter the stranger. Some of our negative reactions are based on the concrete experiences of ourselves and others, whether friends, neighbors, or other strangers. **The fears, suspicions, and hesitations we feel are not to be dismissed casually without proper interrogation.** At the same time, we should also familiarize ourselves with our faith traditions’ counter-narratives that celebrate strangers and call for radical hospitality. Progress toward positive transformation and social resilience demands this serious engagement with our experiences and convictions.

To different degrees, every individual in our **relationship circle** was once a stranger. This striking fact can encourage us to be actively open to positive transformation in our encounters with strangers and welcoming them into our relationship circles. Still, this transformation requires **intentionality**: How can we consciously create positive encounters with others in the different circles of our relationships? How can strangers find peace in our neighborhoods? This intentionality also nudges us to face the real **difficulties** in making such transformations: Are there limits to making friends out of strangers? We know that **there can also be a negative movement in which the stranger is turned into an enemy.**

Our encounters and the relationships that grow out of them are a two-way street. But each of us is an agent who can take the initiative to cultivate positive relationships and a culture of hospitality. So what kind of disposition should we have towards a stranger? And what frameworks can help us to avoid contributing to exclusion or conflict?

Icebreaker

- Where is the strangest place you can imagine traveling? Why do you think so?
- Have you ever travelled to a place where you were a complete foreigner? If so, where? How did you feel at first, and how did the people make you feel when you encountered them?

Anecdote: The Hot Seat in a Summer Integration Class

In summer of 2019, I decided to do the integration course organized by the government in Belgium for immigrants. Eighteen of us from eighteen countries took the course. We were complete strangers to one another. Our class instructor, a Moroccan immigrant who naturalized in Belgium, had such a warm personality. He found creative ways to not only teach us what was in the syllabus but also to make us bond with one another. Soon we felt like one lovely family.

One of our instructor's methods was called the 'hot seat moment'. In turns, each of us sat in the middle of the class and was asked all sorts of questions. There were no limits to the questions we could ask, but the one in the hot seat was also free to decline answering. This helped us to know each other better and even to connect with one another's families. The instructor did this exercise with every set of students.

On the last day of the 'hot seat moment', he normally invites one of the Belgian instructors to voluntarily take the 'hot seat'. On one such occasion, a student asked the instructor how long he had been facilitating the integration of immigrants into Belgian society. The instructor answered, quite confidently, "For 15 years".

Then came the next question by another immigrant: "Has any immigrant become your friend?"

Dead silence followed.

Question for Reflection and Preparation

What does this story say to you about our attitudes towards strangers? What might have been responsible for the lack of transition from strangerhood to friendship? Can the values of our faith traditions contribute to transforming integration processes into true hospitality and relationship?

Group Reading

From the Hebrew word *haver*, “friend” or “comrade,” *havruta* refers both to one’s partner in study and to the process. In the practice of *havruta*, one partner reads a passage and the other person summarizes in his or her own words and raises questions. Then both partners discuss possible meanings and nuances. After switching roles, the process repeats. For more detailed instructions, see page 22 above. Try to read and discuss the following texts in 30 minutes.



Jewish Sources

Abraham & Sarah Story (Genesis 18:1-8)

“The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. 3 He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” 7 Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who

hastened to prepare it. 8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate."



Christian Sources

The Judgement of the Nations (Matthew 25:31-46)

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison

and you did not look after me.’ 44 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

45 “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ 46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”



Islamic Sources

Prophet Muhamad’s Charter of Privileges (“Ashtiname”) granted to the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mount Sinai in 628AD:

“This is a message written by Muhammad the son of Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, far and near, we are behind them. Verily, I defend them by myself, the servants, the helpers, and my followers, because Christians are my citizens and by Allah I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be changed from their jobs, nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims’ houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God’s covenant, and disobey his Prophet... Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nations is to disobey this covenant till the Day of Judgment and the end of the World.”

Inspiration

The Strangers Project

The Strangers Project was founded in 2009 by Brandon Doman and involves a record collection of over 20,000 true stories written by strangers on transit. The writers are expected to write on the spot as if making an entry in their journals, and without indicating their names. Brandon encourages these individuals to write what is true and personal about themselves. Part of this collection was published in 2015 by Harper Collins with the book *What's Your Story? True Experiences of Complete Strangers*. Indeed, *The Strangers Project* illustrates our shared humanity and confirms that the experience of the stranger is at once the experience of every human person.



This picture of *The Strangers Project* shows an exhibition of the anonymous stories of strangers. Some of these exhibitions have been carried out on the streets, attracting considerable interests from both locals and passers-by. Further details on *The Strangers Project* can be found on the official website at <http://strangersproject.com>.

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Unit 3. The Neighbor

Keywords: *Trust, Social Cohesion, Reciprocity, Community.*

“Here I am, ready to take on the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself.”

Morning Prayer, *Jewish Reconstructionist Prayer Book*, 1.

“The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God, and love of the neighbor.”

A Common Word, *An Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders*, 2.

“...choose for your neighbor that which you choose for yourself.”

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, 64.

“Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.”

Li Ying-Chang, *T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien*, 213-218.

“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity”

Paul (Colossians 3:14).

Introduction

The neighbor is the third category to explore in this manual. Neighbor is a term that comes from the Latin *vicinus* that meant “district” or “place”. In Latin and English, the concept is used to name a person who dwells with others in the same neighborhood although in separate homes. Given this proximity, the category of the neighbor suggests greater

closeness than that of the stranger. Yet, neighbors have the potential to become friends or enemies. Building a neighborhood can be complicated and often requires going an “extra mile”. This requires the investment of time or other resources, moving beyond individual comfort zones, showing patience and long-suffering, and negotiating potentially ambiguous responsibilities with kindness. This could be one of the reasons why many religious texts and teachings talk about loving the neighbor as God and as one’s own self, popularly known as the Golden Rule.

Who is my neighbor? Do I perceive and consider as neighbors only those who are the “same” as me? What does loving the neighbor entail?

Icebreaker

- How many different “neighborhoods” do you “live” in?
- How did those groups form?
- Who is present and participating there and who is not?

Anecdote:

During my BA, I had the opportunity to do a group exchange programme to Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim country. My mom was particularly worried about the implications for me as an active youth Christian living surrounded by people with a different belief. To be honest, I was more concerned about cultural protocols: I wondered if being-left handed, for example, could carry serious misunderstandings with the soon-to-be-neighbors.

As soon as our group arrived, we met our Malay student leader, Nik. Since we were all living at the university, some members of our group began to hang out with Nik and other local students. Nik and I spent a lot of time talking about life and, in particular, our religious

backgrounds. Over the course of my time in Malaysia, I observed how Nik treasured his religious tradition in ways that went against the stereotypes I had unfortunately learnt. By sharing life, we could see similarities in our religious neighborhoods, while also appreciating our different perspectives. As in any multicultural context, cultural and religious tensions inevitably arose in the Malay-Mexican neighborhood that both groups of Malay and Mexican had co-created, and we had to learn to move beyond our comfort zones to care for one another despite those misunderstandings.

Some years later, Nik came to Mexico, and I was able to introduce him to some of my neighborhoods. By this time, each one had developed more hospitality to welcome one another in our differences. Our neighbor relation became a genuine friendship in which we have both extended our neighborhoods to welcome and be welcomed by the other. Last year, we met again in the Scandinavian region, as part of our globaltrotter academic careers. There, we discussed what had been for us, as newcomers who come from strong faith settings, our arrival to new and more secularized neighborhoods...

Nik has taught me the value of neighbor-love in the most simple actions. Our current friendship is a vivid example of how a person who might be seen as the “enemy” or a “stranger”, has flourished beyond physical neighborhoods.

Reflections on the Neighbor

- What kind of neighborhoods do you inhabit?
- Where are these formed today?
- What does proximity mean in relationship to preference and neighborhoods?
- How can we expand our neighborhoods?
- What expressions of hospitality and hostility can we find in our neighbor relationships?
- Where do you meet God?
- How do you see the love-Neighbor and the God-Self World dynamics?
- How do you see/find/encounter God in your neighbor/ neighborhood?

Question for Reflection and Preparation

How have you transitioned from being a stranger to becoming a neighbor? Do you tend to focus on the differences or rather the similarities we have with our neighbors? How do you build your neighborhoods?

Group Reading

From the Hebrew word *haver*, “friend” or “comrade,” *havruta* refers both to one’s partner in study and to the process. In the practice of *havruta*, one partner reads a passage and the other person summarizes in his or her own words and raises questions. Then both partners discuss possible meanings and nuances. After switching roles, the process repeats. For more detailed instructions, see page 26 above. Try to read and discuss the following texts in 30 minutes.



Jewish Sources

Leviticus 19:1, 9-18, 33-34

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigners. I am the Lord your God. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord. Do not defraud or rob your neighbor. Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight. Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord. Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the Lord. Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. Do not seek

revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.



Christian sources

Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' [Deuteronomy 6:5]; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself' [Leviticus 19:18]." "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii [two days' wage of a day laborer] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."



Islamic sources

Hadith reported by Muslim, Kitab al-iman [Book of Faith], Book 1, #72 and #74

"None of you has faith until you love for your neighbor what you love for yourself... He will not enter paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct."

Imam Abu Hanifa (d. 767CE)

"[The man who disrupts my teaching] is my neighbor... Even if he harms me, I will never harm my neighbor." Later in this story, the man who was harassing Imam Abu Hanifa is arrested. When the Great Imam finds out, he goes to the authorities in the middle of the night. They tell him to go home and return in the morning. But the Great Imam insists that he won't leave until this man is released. Why? Because he is a neighbor: "My neighbor has been imprisoned. If my neighbor has defrauded someone of his right, I will take care of it. If he oppressed other people, I will take care of it." The Great Imam declares, "Even if he harms me, I will never harm my neighbor."



Bahai sources

Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, 64.

"The word of God which the Supreme Pen has recorded on the of the Most Exalted Paradise is this: O human! If your eyes are turned towards mercy, forsake the things that profit you and embrace that which will profit mankind. And if your eyes are turned towards justice, choose for your neighbor that which you choose for yourself. Humility exalts a person to the heaven of glory and power, while pride lowers him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation."

Inspiration

The Neighbor-Love Movement

The [Neighbor-Love Movement](#) was born out of Dr. Andrew DeCort's PhD studies and life-changing encounters in Ethiopia. The movement aims to transform how people see and treat others across our greatest divisions. Everyone who wants to join the movement is invited to [sign](#) the Neighbor-Love Covenant, a commitment to see all people as neighbors across boundaries and identities and to treat them with value, respect, and practical compassion (see figure below):

The graphic is a white rectangular card with a red border. At the top left is the Neighbor-Love Movement logo, which consists of a red diamond shape with radiating lines. To its right is the text "NEIGHBOR-LOVE MOVEMENT" in red, with "MOVEMENT" in a smaller font. Below the logo and text is the heading "OUR COVENANT" in red. Underneath this heading is a paragraph of text in black: "Today I covenant to love my neighbor as myself. Every woman, man, and child is my neighbor across every boundary and identity. I choose to see and treat my neighbors with value, respect, and practical compassion. Today I say Yes. I am an ambassador of neighbor-love." Below the covenant text is the heading "OUR PRACTICES" in red. Underneath this heading are six icons arranged in two rows of three. Each icon is red and has a corresponding text block below it. The icons are: an eye, an ear, a megaphone, a hand with a heart, a heart, and a brain. The text blocks describe the practices for each sense: Eyes (See others as your neighbors...), Ears (Listen to your neighbors...), Mouth (Speak to your neighbors...), Hands (Serve your neighbors...), Heart (Open your heart to your neighbors' joy and pain...), and Brain (Understand your vocation as an act of neighbor-love...). At the bottom of the card is a red horizontal bar containing social media icons (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter) and the text "@BALINJERAYE" and "www.balinjeraye.org/sign".

NEIGHBOR-LOVE MOVEMENT

OUR COVENANT

Today I covenant to love my neighbor as myself. Every woman, man, and child is my neighbor across every boundary and identity. I choose to see and treat my neighbors with value, respect, and practical compassion. Today I say Yes. I am an ambassador of neighbor-love.

OUR PRACTICES

Eyes: See others as your neighbors - people with precious value - and smile at them. Resist overlooking, labeling, or dehumanizing others.

Ears: Listen to your neighbors with patience and empathy, even when you disagree. Resist closing your ears.

Mouth: Speak to your neighbors with truth, respect, and kindness, even when you disagree. Resist speaking words of insult, generalization, or hatred. Ask for forgiveness when you make a mistake.

Hands: Serve your neighbors with justice and compassion in little and big ways. Resist using power to exploit or hurt others.

Heart: Open your heart to your neighbors' joy and pain. Pray for others and bless them. Release envy, grudges, curses, and desire for revenge.

Feet: Move toward outsiders and enemies and build relationship. Walk with people who are different than you. Resist staying in your own circle.

Brain: Understand your vocation as an act of neighbor-love. Resist separating your work and values.

Sign here

[f](#) [i](#) [y](#) [t](#) @BALINJERAYE www.balinjeraye.org/sign

Image from the Neighbor-Love Movement official [website](#)

The Neighboring Movement

The Neighboring Movement is a grassroots movement in Wichita, Kansas that believes “everyone is gifted, and when people share gifts, they experience wholeness and the community gets stronger.” Their methodology is illustrated in amazing constellation figures, and their work aims to create neighborly relationships that change the world for good (see figures below):



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Unit 4. The Friend

Keywords: *Mutuality, Trust, Vulnerability, Dignity*

“Friendship...is an absolute necessity in life.” **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 8**

“Acquire for yourself a friend.” **Maimonides, *Commentary on the Talmud* (Mishnah Avot 1:6)**

“Ananda, cousin of the Buddha, observed: ‘This is half of the holy life, lord: admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie.’ But the Buddha answered, ‘Don’t say that, Ananda. Don’t say that. Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable friendship is actually the whole of the holy life.’” **Upaḍḍhasutta (Samyutta Nikaya, 45.2)**

“A friend should restrain his companion from the evil path and lead him on the path of virtue.” **Gusvami Tulasidasa, Kishkinda-Kanda 130, Sri Ramacharitamanasa**

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” **Jesus**

Introduction

Friendship is the final category of relationships we will consider in this manual. True friendship has been regarded as one of the most valuable gifts a person can hope for, indeed, as a treasure worth seeking and guarding at all costs. The Greek philosopher Aristotle famously described a certain kind of friendship as a relationship with an other

whom you see as another instance of yourself; the friend is you in the shape of another person. Our friends complete us, and we would not be who we are without our friends. There is a certain way in which our friends are part of who we are, and we of who they are: our memories, our interests, the concrete plans we make and then pursue in our lives, and which then become our future realities, the knowledge that we acquire, the convictions we hold dear. We become the individuals that we are in and as relationships with others. As former Archbishop of Cape Town Desmond Tutu explains using the philosophy of Ubuntu, and as we have seen in each of the chapters of this guide, we are who we are in relationship with others. This insight is especially revealing when we consider who and how we are in friendship.

Icebreaker

- If you could pick one fictional character to be your best friend, who would it be and why?

Anecdote: “Fake Friends”?

In 2017, I was approached by an individual who worked with refugee youth in the city of Bonn. She wanted to develop a project connecting the young people she worked with and German university students.³

She had observed that, among refuge-seeking migrants, single young adults were an especially isolated and excluded group. Too old for the secondary school system but not qualified for university or for many jobs according to local official requirements, this demographic often found it difficult to plug in to social systems where they might form contacts and build relationships with German peers.

³ Matthew Ryan Robinson, “„Fake Friends“, Migration Und Freundschaft,” *Pastoraltheologie* 107, no. 7 (July 26, 2018): 333–52. <https://doi.org/10.13109/path.2018.107.7.333>.

These observations led her to a simple but profound idea for a solution: What if a mutually beneficial situation could be arranged in which these young people and German students could just hang out and get to know one another in a low-pressure, no commitment setting? In the pilot project that formed out of our cooperation, six refuge-seeking young people and ten students formed “fake friendships” - artificially selected pairings - and met on a regular basis with one another for shared meals or to talk about music and poetry they liked or to visit a museum or meet the other’s family. They even started inviting one another to social events and learning a little bit about one another’s holidays.

These relationships helped to overcome some stranger anxieties and stereotypes (in both directions!), not just between the two friends, but, *via* the friend, extending toward many “others” whom the friend was assumed to represent culturally. Contact does not by itself produce intimacy,⁴ and not every such “fake” friendship became a “real” one. But a few of them took root and remain strong now four years later.

Reflections on the Friend

- How might a person holding a different vision of a good and just life than I hold nevertheless be “higher” than me and help me to “progress”? How can I show myself to be such a friend for them?
- Where do I experience my own weaknesses and limitations in cultivating a good and just life, and how might others help me in that?
- Finally, can I identify any ways in which I and others who are not my friends are still part of the same story, with our lives wrapped up in one another’s good in some way? How might we go about realizing this possibility together?

⁴ Mousa Salma. “Building Social Cohesion between Christians and Muslims through Soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq.” *Science* 369, no. 6505 (August 14, 2020): 866–70. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abb3153>.

I am so grateful that this colleague invited me to lead the project with her and that we could get to know one another. We ourselves were strangers with a “migration background” who became friends.

Question for Reflection and Preparation

How can strangers become friends? Can you start a friendship with a stranger by choice, or will that be just a “fake” friendship?

“Complete friendship”, according to

This is a helpful start: Friendship is an interpersonal relationship of mutual affection aimed at the Good.

Group Reading

From the Hebrew word *haver*, “friend” or “comrade,” *havruta* refers both to one’s partner in study and to the process. In the practice of *havruta*, one partner reads a passage and the other person summarizes in his or her own words and raises questions. Then both partners discuss possible meanings and nuances. After switching roles, the process repeats. For more detailed instructions, see page 22 above. Try to read and discuss the following texts in 30 minutes.



Jewish sources

*From Maimonides Commentary on the Talmud (Mishnah Avot 1:6):
"acquire for yourself a friend"*

"And he said, "acquire for yourself a friend". He said it with an expression of acquisition and he did not say, "Make for yourself a friend," or "Befriend others." The intention of this is that a person must acquire a friend for himself, so that all of his deeds and all of his matters be refined through him, as they said (Ta'anit 23a), "Either a friend or death." And if he does not find him, he must make efforts with all his heart, and even if he must lead him to his friendship, until he becomes a friend. And [then] he must never let off from following [his friend's] will, until his friendship is firmed up. [It is] as the masters of ethics say, "When you love, do not love according to your traits; but rather love according to the trait of your friend." And when each of the friends has the intention to fulfill the will of his friend, the intention of both of them will be one without a doubt.

And how good is the statement of Aristotle, "The friend is one." And there are three types of friends: a friend for benefit, a friend for enjoyment and a friend for virtue. Indeed, a friend for benefit is like the friendship of two [business] partners and the friendship of a king and his retinue; whereas the friendship for enjoyment is of two types - the friend for pleasure and the friend for confidence. Indeed, the friend for pleasure is like the friendship of males and females and similar to it; whereas the friend for confidence is when a man has a friend to whom he can confide his soul. He will not keep [anything] from him - not in action and not in speech. And he will make him know all of his affairs - the good ones and the disgraceful - without fearing from him that any loss will come to him with all of this, not from him and not from another. As when a person has such a level of confidence in a man, he finds great enjoyment in his words and in his great friendship. And a friend for virtue is when the desire of both of them and their intention is for one thing, and that is the good. And each one wants to be helped by his friend in reaching this good for both of them together."



Hindu sources

From the Ramayana of Tulasidasa (Kishkinda-Kanda 130, Sri Ramacharitamansa)

One would incur great sin by the very sight of those who are not distressed to see the distress of a friend. A man should regard his own mountain-like troubles as of no more account than a mere grain of sand, while the troubles of a friend should appear to him like Mount Sumeru, though really they may be as trifling as a grain of sand. Those fools who are not of such a temperament presume in vain to make friends with anybody. A friend should restrain his companion from the evil path and lead him on the path of virtue; he should proclaim the latter's good points and screen his faults, should give and take things without any scruple and serve his friend's interest to the best of his ability and finding him in distress love him a hundred times more than ever. The Vedas declare these to be the qualities of a noble friend. He, however, who contrives to speak bland words to your face and harms you behind your back and harbours some evil design in his heart, and whose mind is as tortuous as the movements of a snake is an unworthy friend and one had better bid good-bye to such a friend.



Buddhist sources

From the Pali Canon of Buddhist Teachings (Mitta Sutta, Anguttara Nikaya 7.35)

"Monks, a friend endowed with seven qualities is worth associating with. Which seven? He gives what is hard to give. He does what is hard to do. He endures what is hard to endure. He reveals his secrets to you. He keeps your secrets. When misfortunes strike, he doesn't abandon you. When you're down and out, he doesn't look down on you. A friend endowed with these seven qualities is worth associating with."



Christian sources

From Jesus's Discourse with his Disciples at the Last Supper (John 15:12-17)

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.



Islamic sources

From the Quran (Quran 43:67)

Friends on that Day will be enemies one to another, except those who fear Allah.

A Hadith of Mohammed (Sunan Abi Dawud, 4833)

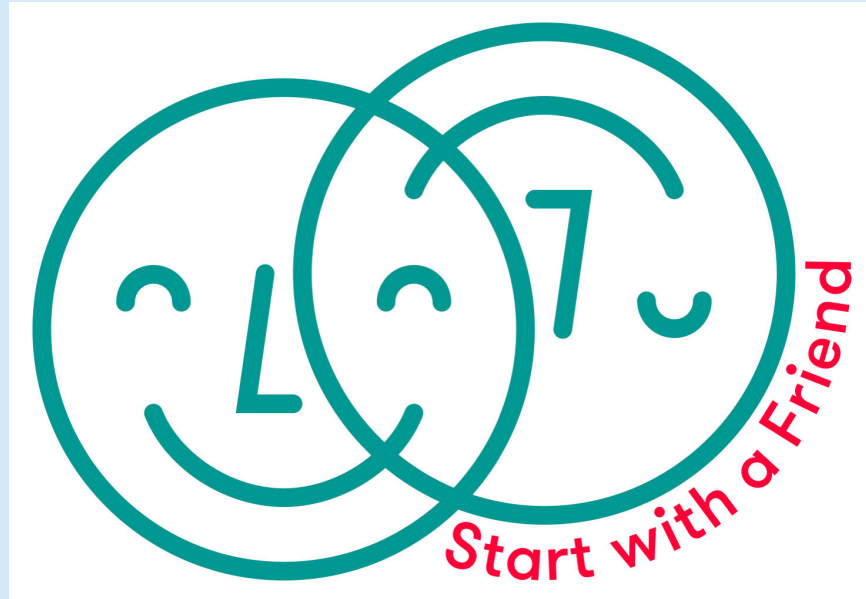
And the Prophet Muhammad said in a hadith: A person is likely to follow the faith of his friend, so look whom you befriend."

A Hadith of Mohammed (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2101)

And in another hadith: "The example of a good companion and a bad companion is like that of the seller of musk, and the one who blows the blacksmith's bellows. So as for the seller of musk then either he will grant you some, or you buy some from him, or at least you enjoy a pleasant smell from him. As for the one who blows the blacksmith's bellows then either he will burn your clothes or you will get an offensive smell from him."

Inspiration

Start with a Friend



“Start with a friend” (SwaF) is a project designed to help people new to Germany meet local people and in that way create bonds for relational support and stronger social ties. SwaF was founded in Berlin in 2014 as increasing numbers of refugees came to Germany seeking safety from war in Syria, among others. By 2021, SwaF reached at least twenty cities in Germany and Austria and could list more than 6000 friend tandems. Visit <https://www.start-with-a-friend.de/> to learn more - and if you are in Germany, to volunteer!

Further Readings

- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated and edited by Roger Crisp. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Senectute, de Amicitia, de Divinatione*. The Loeb Classical Library; 154. London u.a.: Heinemann [u.a.], 1959.
- Fine, Lawrence. *Friendship in Jewish History, Religion, and Culture*. Edited by Lawrence Fine. Dimyonot: Jews and the Cultural Imagination; 12. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2021.
- Mahallati, M.J.A. *Friendship in Islamic Ethics and World Politics*. University of Michigan Press, 2019.
- Marsha L. Dutton. *Aeled of Rievaulx: Spiritual Friendship*. Liturgical Press, 2010.
- Rambachan, Anantanand. *Essays in Hindu Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.
- Robert, Dana L. *Faithful Friendships: Embracing Diversity in Christian Community*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019.

Take Action

Enemy

1. Start with yourself. Who are you tempted to hate and why?
2. Choose love. Renounce insults, and refuse to humiliate anyone.
3. Cultivate your context. Identify enemy-making labels and dehumanizing trends in your society, and challenge them.
4. Pray for your enemies. Develop an inner life of forgiveness and healing, and look for opportunities to understand and bless

Stranger

1. Biases and prejudices are communicated through language. Pay attention!
2. Cross-check stories you hear about other people. Restrain yourself from labelling or stereotyping a group of people.
3. Be a little bit adventurous. Learn a new language or adopt a second culture.
4. Commit yourself to treating all persons fairly and equally

Here's how to get started with

Neighbor

1. Pray for your neighborhood, neighbors and household.
2. Make a list of the neighbors you've wanted to catch up with and haven't. Contact them to check in on how they're doing!
3. Add a 'love your neighbor' page on your organization website/social media where neighbors can offer help and seek help.
4. Host an online/onsite event for getting to know your neighbors!

Friend

1. Consider. Look for an opportunity to pursue friendship with someone outside of your usual groups.
2. Celebrate. Get to know and enjoy spending time with one another.
3. Challenge. Deepen your mutual trust through increased transparency.
4. Receive. Accept being challenged as well as being accepted, and grow together into new opportunities and experiences.

Additional Resources for Growth and Challenge

Havruta: For more information on the traditional mode of textual study with companions (Havruta), see the resources offered by Pedagogy of Partnership at: <https://www.hadar.org/pedagogy-partnership/resources-for-online-learning>

Neighbor-Love Movement practices: <https://balinjeraye.org/en/mindfulness>

Social Cohesion and Social Resilience: Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE); <https://scoreforpeace.org/> Social Cohesion Hub; <https://www.socialcohesion.info/concepts>



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