



Sample Session

A Note on Strange Times

Transition Exercise

Set the tone for the session by asking folks to turn off their phones and set them aside. Introduce a brief transition exercise, like asking participants to take a few cleansing breaths before you begin. The exercise is important to help folks remove some of the mental clutter that gets in the way of being present.

Book Excerpt

Read the following passage to the group and reflect on the questions below together:

“As I was ready to press Send on this manuscript, COVID-19 happened...While we don’t know when it will end, we know that at some point it will...While speaking to other parents, two main kinds of questions come up again and again:

When will we get back to life as we knew it?

What are we looking forward to once COVID-19 passes?

There are two different attitudes toward these kinds of questions. The first looks backward, while the other looks forward. The questions are like a study in basic grammar: We are happy to long for the past tense or hope toward the future: it’s the present tense we don’t want to inhabit. But the impulse to ask these questions is absolutely clear. It comes from an attitude of “Get me out of here!!!”

There is another way. Instead of trying to escape the present, we can adopt a *becoming* mindset. The tense of *becoming* is *present continuous*. We move through a period of time and become transformed by it. Difficult times are never things that we can sidestep, ignore, or deny. They need to be moved *through*. While parenting through the pandemic, the question that guides me is: *how* am I going to move through this time? What are the internal resources I can depend on? And how can I help my children access their own internal resources as well?”

After a vaccine against COVID-19 has been created, we will all be able to breathe more easily. But we will emerge forever changed.” (*Becoming a Soulful Parent: A path to the wisdom within*, 7-9)

 *How have you been moving through this unprecedented time?*

 *What are the internal resources you’ve depended on and felt supported by?*



Ayeka Workbook

Invite participants to take 5 minutes to write their own reflections to the following prompts:

- ☞ *What have you learned about yourself during these months of the pandemic?*
- ☞ *Name one thing you've learned that you would like to carry with you into the months ahead.*

Spiritual Chevruta¹

Ask participants to split off into pairs. If you are on Zoom, you can use the break-out room function to make this easier. Ask each person to share something that was evoked by what they wrote. Share with participants that they should bring their full attention to their chevruta or pair and ask each partner to listen generously to the other. There are three rules for Spiritual Chevruta time: no interrupting, no judging, and no giving advice. Following these rules will make this time meaningful for each participant.

Closing Circle

Bring the group back together and ask participants to share an insight they learned about themselves or someone else in the group from the session.

Bonus! Ancient Wisdom for Today's Parents

Consider reading the following passage from the book aloud to the parents gathered as a way of ending the session.

“The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, famously said, ‘Let me fall if I must. The one I will become will catch me.’ With each challenge we face, wisdom literature can ground us, and the reflective time we give ourselves can help us explore our inner lives and grow in self-understanding.” (*Becoming a Soulful Parent: A path to the wisdom within*, 117)

¹ Spiritual Chevruta is another way of saying ‘paired learning.’ Chevruta comes from the Hebrew word *chaver* or friend and is the paired learning Jews traditionally do when they pour over an ancient text together. A *spiritual chevruta* is one where the *text* you are pouring over is the text of your own life.