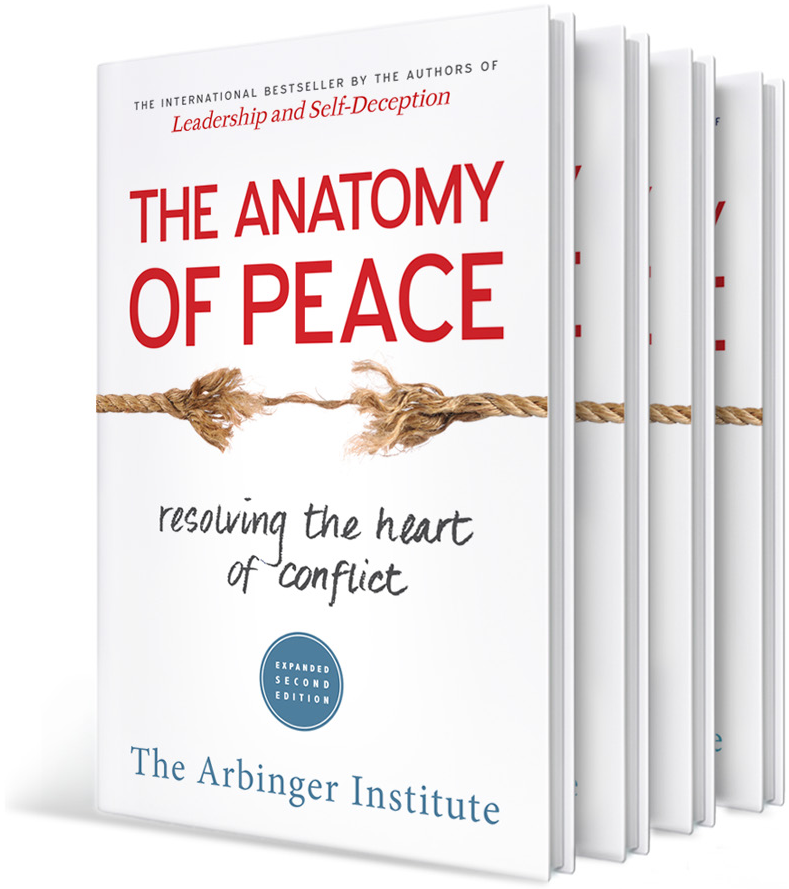

Study and Discussion Guide

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THE ANATOMY OF PEACE

Study and Discussion Guide

The reflection and discussion topics and questions provided here can be used to enrich individual and group study of *The Anatomy of Peace*, by The Arbinger Institute. (Page numbers in this guide refer to the pages in the Second Edition of the book, published in 2015.) Reading, pondering, and discussing the book, you can experience an inner change taking place—in thought patterns, assumptions about situations in your life, views of yourself and others, and in your optimism and plans for the future. The process can be enhanced as you reflect on, write about, and/or discuss the items below, or any other questions or insights you're interested in.

One set of items is provided for each of the book's twenty-four chapters. If you are working alone, you can begin with the reflection items and then ponder the discussion items by yourself, possibly writing your thoughts in a journal. (We highly recommend the use of a study journal to record thoughts and responses.) If you are in a discussion group, it's best in many cases, to start by spending a few minutes on the reflection items individually, and then to talk as a group about the discussion items. Discussing the reflection items may also be helpful to the group. Depending on the needs and desires of your group, you can take on one chapter and its discussion points per meeting or move at a faster pace. However, we encourage you not to rush. There is much to be learned and discovered through rich pondering and discussion.

At all times, we at The Arbinger Institute are available to help you with your learning experience. If you wish to go beyond the items discussed in the book or in these reflection and discussion topics, or if you would like personal or organizational help in implementing these ideas, please contact us at 801-447-9244. You may also reach us via email at: help@arbinger.com.

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CHAPTER 1

Enemies in the Desert

Reflection

Think about the times in your life when others have tried to influence you to make a positive change. Make a list of two or three examples of when those attempts have failed and then a separate list of two or three examples where others successfully influenced you to change.

Ponder for a moment on the differences in approach and delivery between the two. Write down some thoughts on why you think certain attempts were successful and why others were not.

Discussion

Consider the way that Yusuf al-Falah interacts with Jenny. What is interesting or significant about their exchange on page 8?

CHAPTER 2

Deeper Matters

Reflection

Write down the names of two or three people in your life whom you wish would change in some way. Next to each of their names, write the percentage of time you spend helping things go right in that relationship, and the percentage of time you spend dealing with things that are going wrong. For example:

John	Helping things go right	25%
	Dealing with things that are going wrong	75%
Chris	Helping things go right	10%
	Dealing with things that are going wrong	90%
Mary	Helping things go right	60%
	Dealing with things that are going wrong	40%

Discussion

On pages 17-18, Yusuf talks about how he had never convinced his wife, Lina, that she was wrong by trying to change or correct her. What has your experience been (both when you have tried to change others and when others have tried to change you)? Discuss what it takes to become, as Yusuf put it, an "agent of change."

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CHAPTER 3

Peace in Wartime

Reflection

Think about people in your life with whom your relationships are struggling. In these situations, how have you been like the Crusaders who took Jerusalem and how have you been like Saladin? Also consider people in your life that seem to live their lives with hearts at peace. What is it about them that leads you to identify them as "heart at peace" individuals? List traits that stand out to you.

Discussion

Discuss the similarities and differences between the contrasting stories of the Crusaders and Saladin. Lou argues that Saladin sounded "disturbingly weak," though Yusuf believes that he was "remarkably and unfailingly strong," and that the secret of his strength was that his heart was at peace. Drawing upon these stories and your own experience, what do you think? How might a "heart at peace" be a source of strength? What questions or other thoughts might you have?

CHAPTER 4

Beneath Behavior

Reflection

Reflect on times in your life when you have seen others as objects; then reflect on times when you have seen others as people. What do you learn from making this comparison? On page 37, Avi suggests that we can't see clearly when our hearts are at war. Think about experiences in your life that might illustrate this.

Discussion

On page 34, Avi says that seeing another person as an object is an act of violence. Do you agree with this statement? If so, in what ways are we violent when we see others as objects? On page 39, Avi says, "Generally speaking, we respond to others' way of being toward us rather than to their behavior. Which is to say that [others] respond more to how we're regarding them than they do to our particular words or actions." Discuss examples of this phenomenon. Also, why might someone who is seeing others as people be more successful in a difficult negotiation, as Avi suggests on page 35?

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CHAPTER 5

The Pattern of Conflict

Reflection

Create your own Collusion Diagram using Avi's example from page 45. Begin in the first quadrant with something another person does that bothers you. Then, in the second quadrant, write down how you see this person when he or she is acting in the way you indicated in the prior quadrant. In the third quadrant, write down what you do in response when you are seeing this person in the ways you listed in quadrant two. In the fourth quadrant, write down how the other person might see you given what you are doing. Now consider the following: Given what you've listed in quadrant four, is your counterpart less or more likely to continue (or even escalate) the behavior you listed in quadrant one that you don't like? Ponder the implications of this.

Discussion

Over the first five pages of this chapter, we can feel the characters start to go to war with each other. What were some of the signs that this was happening? On page 45, Avi then says, "When we start seeing others as objects, we begin provoking them to make our own lives difficult. We actually start inviting others to make us miserable. We begin provoking in others the things we say we hate." Think of examples where you have experienced or seen this happening. As a group, walk through the reflection activity above. Help everyone create a collusion diagram of their own. If anyone is willing, have them share their example and discuss the details with the group.

CHAPTER 6

Escalation

Reflection

Revisit the collusion you diagrammed from Chapter 5. Consider those whom you have enlisted in your own "cause." Add to your diagram any allies that you have brought into the collusion. (See page 53 for an example.)

Discussion

Invite anyone who is willing to identify some allies they have recruited into their own collusions that they previously diagrammed relative to Chapter 5. Discuss the different ways that we recruit others to our sides of collusions. On page 54, Lou was able to immediately see larger-scale collusions in his company. Discuss collusions people see in their own organizations or in other areas, such as politics or world events.

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CHAPTER 7

The Right Thing and the Right Way

Reflection

Think about situations in your life where you think you might be doing the right things but be doing them with a heart at war. What do you notice in those situations? How have others been responding to you? How have you been feeling? Who have you felt is responsible for how you have been feeling? Also, consider someone in your life that you see as an object. What good qualities might you be ignoring? What needs might they have that you have been failing to see?

Discussion

On page 58, Yusuf said, "If you are not wrong, then you will be willing to consider how you might be mistaken." Discuss what he meant by that. Also, discuss the story about Lou causing his father's car to roll into the Hudson River. What do you find surprising in that story? Inspiring? Difficult? Worrisome? Ask for and discuss examples people might have that remind them in one way or another of this story. Also, consider what the story Carol told on pages 63 and 64 did for the group. What did it do for Lou? Why is this important?

CHAPTER 8

Beneath Behavior

Reflection

Think about people you know who are like Kate Stenarude, as described on pages 72 and 73. What is it like to be with these people? What do they invite in you?

Discussion

Over lunch, Lou called John Rencher, the head of the union. To put it mildly, the call didn't go well, and Lou dismissed everything he had learned to that point as a bunch of bunk. Why do you think Lou used that conversation as evidence that the ideas he had been learning from Yusuf and Avi were a waste? What was Lou failing to see in that moment? Have people identify the realities in their own situations that they are likely to find difficult. Discuss how we might be tempted in those moments to dismiss these ideas. Why might that be a mistake? On page 76, Carol threatened to leave Lou. What do you think—was she in or out of the box in this moment? Discuss.

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CHAPTER 9

The Beginning of an Idea

Reflection

In the brief philosophical overview on pages 80-81, we learn of Martin Buber's formulations of the two basic ways of being: I-It and I-Thou. Consider the meaning of the hyphen in these descriptions of the ways of being. There is no separate "I" way, but rather two different ways in which we are connected with others—either as people or as objects. Reflect on what this suggests: that that there is no way to be disconnected from others, just different versions of connection. What observations do you have about this?

Discussion

On page 82, Yusuf says, "We have been suggesting that the foundational problem in our homes, our workplaces, and our battlefields is that our hearts are too often at war—that is, we too often insist on seeing people as objects. And we have seen how one warring heart invites more 'object seeing' and war in others. It follows from this," he continued, "that in order to find peace, we must first understand how we and others have foregone peace and chosen war." To this, Lou retorts, "Sometimes we don't choose war. War chooses us." Discuss Yusuf's response to Lou's objection. How did he agree and disagree with Lou's point? What do you think both about Lou's point and Yusuf's response?

CHAPTER 10

Choosing War

Reflection

From an example in your own life, construct your own Choice Diagram following Yusuf's example found on page 92. Begin by writing a recent sense of helpfulness you've had toward another that you didn't follow through on. Then fill out the four quadrants of the box in your case.

Discussion

If group members are willing, have them pair up and discuss the individual self-betrayal stories that they diagrammed. Then discuss: What similarities do we find in our stories and situations? How are these situations similar and different from the Yusuf's story about Mordecai?

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CHAPTER 11

A Need for War

Reflection

Revisit your Choice Diagram from the previous chapter. Ask yourself: When I had the sense to help another, was I seeing him or her as a person or an object? Then ask the same question about how you were seeing that person after you betrayed yourself. Compare how you were thinking and feeling about that person before you betrayed yourself compared to after you betrayed yourself.

Discussion

Thinking about the discussion on pages 94-96 of the book, what do we need after we betray ourselves that we don't need before? And why is it that we acquire this new need after we betray ourselves? Discuss Yusuf's contention on page 98 that "as painful as it is to receive contempt from another, it is more debilitating by far to be filled with contempt for another." What point is he making, and do you agree? Why or why not?

Finally, consider what Yusuf said on page 107: "Although nothing I can do in the present can take away the mistreatments of the past, the way I carry myself in the present determines how I carry forward the memories of those mistreatments. When I see others as objects, I dwell on the injustices I have suffered in order to justify myself, keeping my mistreatments and suffering alive within me. When I see others as people, on the other hand, I then free myself from the need for justification. I therefore free myself from the need to focus unduly on the worst that has been done to me. I am free to leave the worst behind me, and to see not only the bad but the mixed and good in others as well."

Think about any ways you feel you have been mistreated that you continue to focus on. How has that focus perhaps been holding you back?

"As painful as it is to receive contempt from another, it is more debilitating by far to be filled with contempt for another. My own contempt for others is the most debilitating of all, for when I am in the middle of it—when I'm seeing resentfully and distainfully—I condemn myself to living in a disdained, resentful world."

The Anatomy of Peace, page 98

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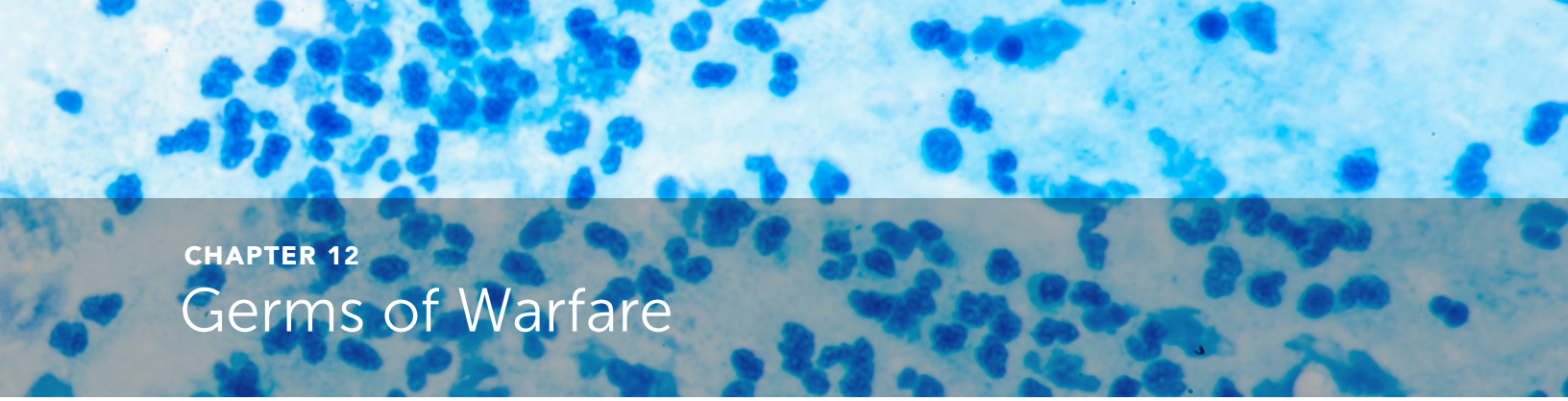

CHAPTER 12

Germs of Warfare

Reflection

Yusuf, Lou, and Elizabeth identified themselves in the "better-than" and "I-deserve" boxes. Do you identify with any of the views or feelings associated with these boxes? Explore the ways that these carry boxes might be adding to the conflicts in your life right now. In what ways might they be causing you to separate yourself from others? (The Going Deeper section from pages 248 through 251 in the Appendix may help you in your reflections about this.)

Discussion

Have everyone think of a time when they think they were in a better-than box. Ask for someone to share his or her example. Discuss. Then do the same regarding the I-deserve box. Discuss the sorts of situations in which we find ourselves in these kinds of boxes.

Might an organization I am a part of have such a box? If so, what does it look like and what does it cost?

Discuss Yusuf's statement on page 114 that, "The more sure I am that I'm right, the more likely I will actually be mistaken. My need to be right makes it more likely that I will be wrong!" Why is this the case, and what might this reality be costing me and us?

When I betray myself, my whole world changes.
It changes because I have chosen a different way of being in the world—
a way that needs justification.

Because I need justification, I begin to see everything in a self-justifying way.
Others, myself, the world, my past, my present, my future, my hardships,
my responsibilities, my view of everything becomes transformed—
transformed for the purpose of feeling justified.

The Anatomy of Peace, page 109

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CHAPTER 13

More Germ Warfare

Reflection

Avi and Carol identified themselves in the "need-to-be-seen-as" and "worse-than" boxes. Do you identify with any of the views or feelings associated with these boxes? Of the four kinds of boxes discussed in this and the prior chapter, what would you say is your most common box style? Lou is haunted by Yusuf's question, "How would it be to live with someone who thought of you like that?" As you ponder your own carry boxes, consider those in your life who experience you in your carry boxes. How would it be to live and interact with you when you are in the box? (The Going Deeper section from pages 248 through 251 in the Appendix may help you in your reflections about this.)

Discussion

Have everyone think of a time when they think they were in a need-to-be-seen-as box. Ask for someone to share his or her example. Discuss. Then do the same regarding the worse-than box. Discuss the sorts of situations in which we find ourselves in these kinds of boxes. Might an organization I am a part of have such a box? If so, what does it look like and what does it cost us? Throughout the book, Lou has been worried that seeing others as people might make someone soft. How do these two chapters about the kinds of boxes we carry help us to respond to his worry?

CHAPTER 4

The Path to War

Reflection

On page 140, the group is left with an invitation to "notice your battles and ponder your wars." Consider your own battles and wars—at work, at home, elsewhere. Do you view them differently than you did prior to reading to this point of *The Anatomy of Peace*? Why or why not? What seems different to you now?

Discussion

On page 130, Yusuf says, "No one, whatever their actions, can deprive me of the ability to choose my own way of being. Difficult people are nevertheless people, and it always remains in my power to see them that way." Do you think this is true? Why or why not? Is this an exhausting or an empowering thought? Why? (On this latter point, you might consider the exchange between Carol and Lou on pages 127 through 130.) Discuss as a group.

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CHAPTER 15

Apologies

Reflection

As we recognize ways our hearts have been at war, we may feel prompted to apologize to those we have mistreated. Take five to ten minutes to ponder people in your life that you feel you may need to offer an apology. Act on those impressions as soon as possible.

Discussion

On their drive to Camp Moriah, Lou and Carol apologize to one another for the ways they have seen one another in their marriage. Lou tells Carol that she is beating herself up again, to which Carol replies, "No Lou, beating myself up is what I have quietly been doing for years now. I'm not beating myself up now, I'm just finally noticing the internal fight." What is the difference? Why is this important?

CHAPTER 16

A Gift in Wartime

Reflection

In describing the loss of his father during the Yom Kippur War, Avi notes on page 151 two different types of weapons—both the mortar bomb that killed his father and the verbal bullets that he shot at his friend, Hamish. While you may or may not have personally experienced the violence of war, in what ways have you discharged "verbal bullets" at another group or individual with whom you were in the box?

Discussion

On page 152, Avi shares that years after the Yom Kippur War, he came to the realization that "whenever I dehumanize another, I necessarily dehumanize all that is human—including myself." What do you think he means by this?

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CHAPTER 17

Marching Bootless

Reflection

In describing the experience of following Jenny shoeless through Phoenix, Mei Li says, "Joining the youth in their hardships helps them because it helps us not to invite their hearts to go to war." Why do you think this is the case? Thinking about this example, are there ways in which you might be inviting others' hearts to go to war?

Discussion

Review the story of Mike and Mei Li taking off their shoes (the story and discussion spans pages 154 and 161). Thinking of whatever context is most applicable to the group—whether a work context or a home context, for example—discuss the kinds of perks, privileges, and distinctions that might invite and reinforce people in their boxes. What might "taking off our shoes" mean in these contexts?

CHAPTER 18

Surrender

Reflection

As this chapter opens, Lou is feeling weighed down by the enormity of the problems he is facing and perhaps helping to cause. Are you facing any issues like that—issues that have you weighed down and despairing? If so, how does this chapter help you? By the end of the chapter, we learn of how Avi ended up sending his estranged friend, Hamish, a letter. In thinking about that story, are there any letters or notes you feel like you need to send to anyone, or any other actions you feel you need to take?

Discussion

On page 167, Yusuf draws an important distinction between making others change and inviting them to change. Discuss that difference. In this chapter, Avi describes suddenly seeing things differently that he had before—how he began to see Yusuf differently, for example, and Hamish, and Americans, Jews, Arabs, his family, and even himself. How can we explain this change in Avi—in how he felt, saw, regarded, and remembered?

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CHAPTER 19

Locating the Peace Within

Reflection

Think of a current conflict in your life. Ask, "How might I have horribilized, blamed, claimed victimhood, exaggerated values, or focused on myself in this conflict?" Write your thoughts down on paper.

Discussion

Review the first three steps of the getting-out-of-the-box process that are discussed in this chapter. Regarding the first, consider together the symptoms of the box that we have learned from the book—including blaming, exaggeration of values, defensiveness, justification, victimization, horribilizing, self-focus, obsession with being right, and any others that come to mind. Make a list as a group. Discuss why it might be helpful to be on the lookout for these symptoms within us. Then discuss how we can find out-of-the-box space.

Thinking of Avi and Yusuf's story, discuss why it is helpful to find such space when we are struggling in the box. And then discuss the kinds of questions we can ask ourselves to help us ponder our situations anew. (You might find additional help by consulting pages 252 through 257 of the Appendix.)

CHAPTER 20

Finding Outward Peace

Reflection

On page 190, Yusuf lists a number of questions on the board. Answer these questions for yourself, thinking of an individual with whom you struggle to see as a person.

Discussion

As a group, discuss Yusuf's experience with Ben Arrig, related on pages 187 through 189. How do you respond to Ben's comments now that you have read the book to this point? Compare your current response to how you think you would have responded to his comments before you had read the ideas in the book. In what ways has your understanding shifted? If members of the group are comfortable, invite them to share with one another their learning from the Reflection exercise.

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CHAPTER 21

Action

Reflection

Ponder what senses you may be having towards others in your life. Decide when and how you will act on those senses, keeping in mind that the sooner you act, the more likely you are to stay out of the box and be successful.

Discussion

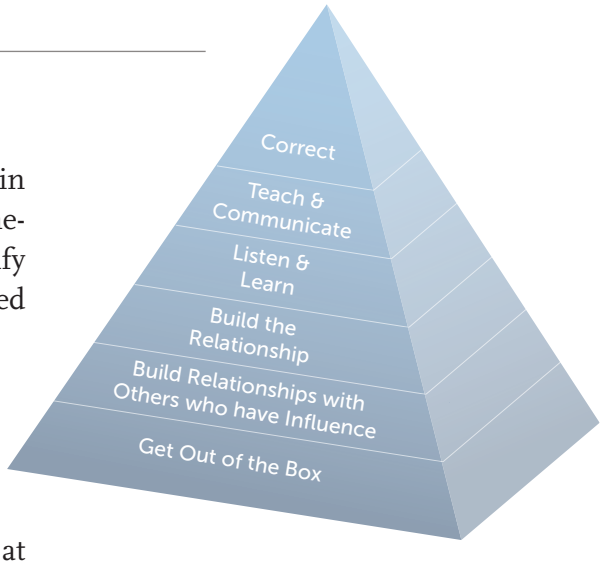
"Action" was Ben Arrig's favorite word. Discuss why this was the case, and what action has to do with maintaining a heart at peace. As a group, review and discuss the getting-out-of-the-box process outlined on page 201. After this discussion, have each of the members of the group identify (to themselves) someone in their life with whom they need to take action. Invite them to think of something specific they feel they should do regarding, with, or for this person.

CHAPTER 22

A Strategy of Peace

Reflection

Think of someone in your life you wish would change in some way. This could be someone in your workplace, someone at home, or someone from some other context. Identify the levels of the Influence Pyramid where you probably need to be spending more time and effort.



Discussion

Review together the Influence Pyramid on page 218.

Discuss examples of out-of-the-box thinking and behavior at each level of the pyramid. Why are the lower levels of the pyramid ways to help things go right? Discuss where on the pyramid we often end up getting stuck in our efforts with people. Discuss things we could do more of, or differently, at the lower levels of the pyramid to get better at helping things go right.

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CHAPTER 23

Lessons

Reflection

Consider the lessons for applying the pyramid that are detailed in this chapter. What do they invite you to think about and do in relation to the person you identified (in your reflections about Chapter 22)? What would change? What do you need to do next?

Discussion

Discuss what difference it would make if we were to conscientiously apply the pyramid and live its lessons in our interactions with others. What would be different? What would be the same? Lesson 3 states that our effectiveness at each level of the pyramid depends on our way of being. Why is way of being so crucial to our success or failure? Discuss as a group.

CHAPTER 24

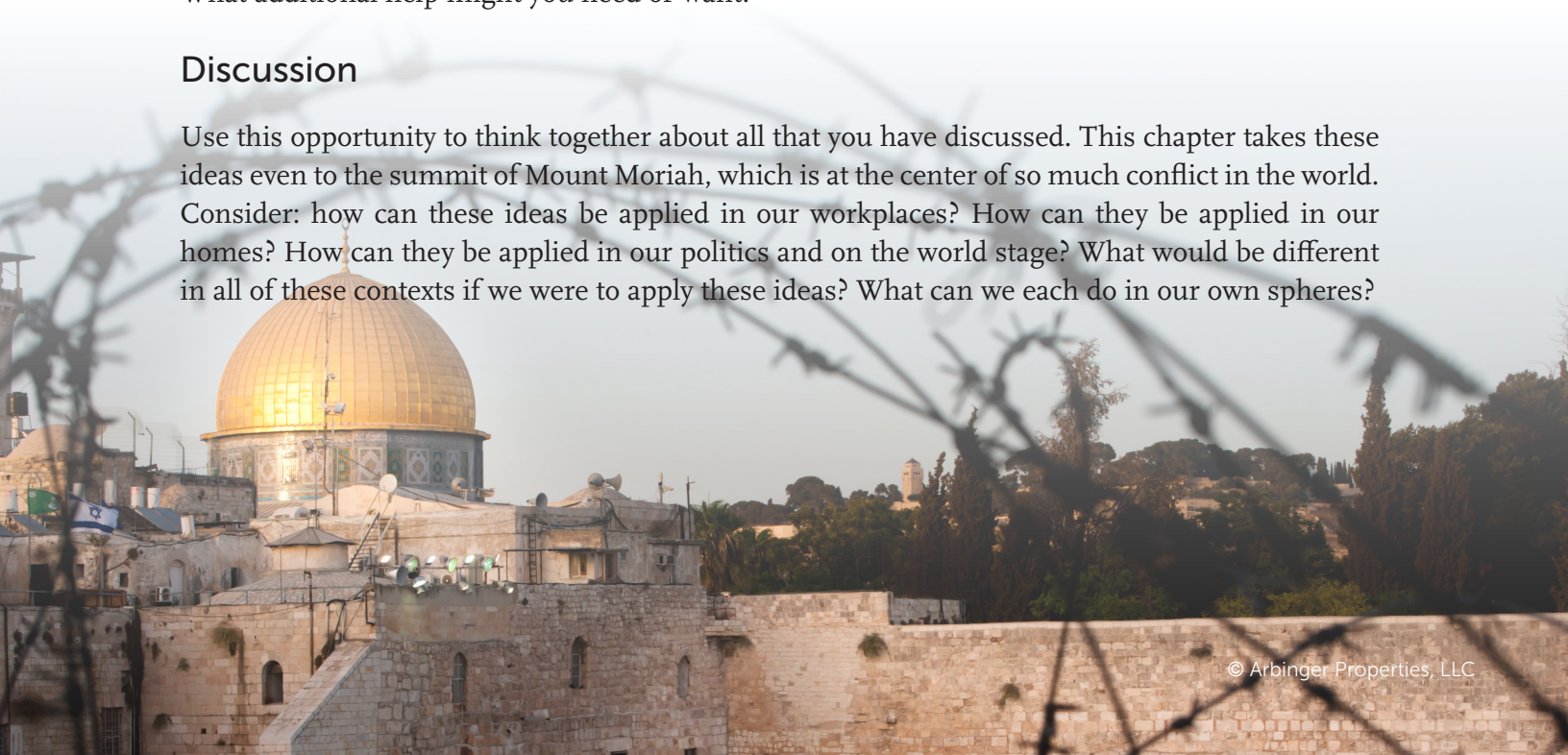
Peace on Mount Moriah

Reflection

What sticks with you as you think back on your reading and pondering of the book? What things do you take away as things you want to do differently in your work life? Your home life? With others? What do you want to change about yourself? How will the book help you with those changes? What additional help might you need or want?

Discussion

Use this opportunity to think together about all that you have discussed. This chapter takes these ideas even to the summit of Mount Moriah, which is at the center of so much conflict in the world. Consider: how can these ideas be applied in our workplaces? How can they be applied in our homes? How can they be applied in our politics and on the world stage? What would be different in all of these contexts if we were to apply these ideas? What can we each do in our own spheres?



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