

Remember, Reflect, and Repair CONVERSATION GUIDE

Introduction: On October 7, 2023, the people of Israel experienced an unprecedented attack; the Jewish people and world have been reeling since. Honeymoon Israel is a community of people with a wide diversity of backgrounds. We invite you and all of the emotions you are holding right now into this space. Feelings of pain and confusion, feelings of powerlessness and frustration, feelings of loneliness and being overwhelmed. Our connection to each other was sparked in Israel, and regardless of our own unique perspective, we know that being in community with others who are sharing the same weight can help us hold any and all emotions during challenging times.

This conversation is designed to support us in holding these varied emotions and reflect on how our time in Israel helped to shape how we might be feeling today. Along with fear and sadness, there is also space for joy as we consider our personal memories of Israel. We recognize that each of us holds our personal perspectives and different relationships with Israel. All of these are legitimate and influence the way we engage in deep conversations. While this conversation is not designed to help us discuss the conflict specifically or the geo-political history of the region, we hope that it guides us in supporting each other as we process our varied emotions.

One of the phrases that has been repeated over and over again since October 7 is *Am Yisrael Chai*, which means “the people of Israel live” and is used as an affirmation that the Jewish people will continue on. Avraham Infeld teaches us that history lives in the past, but Jewish memory guides our future. Whether you identify as Jewish or love someone who does, our personal and shared memories and reflections are one of the ways the people and family of Israel live within each of us; it is a vibrant part of our Jewish present and future. We hope that by sharing these memories, reflections, and aspirations in this space, we will lift up the livelihood that sustains us even during difficult times.

Part 1: Remember (*Individual*)

Conversation facilitators should read the instructions below slowly and guide others through this private reflective exercise. You also have the option to use this as a journaling exercise. Play this Spotify playlist [“HMI Remember, Reflect, Repair”](#) as you remember.

Close your eyes and let your mind drift back to your time in Israel. Imagine the sights, sounds, and tastes that defined your experiences. Think about the moment you lit a candle for Shabbat in Israel. How did that make you feel? The warmth of a familiar tradition, or the excitement of a new one, a deep connection to your surroundings. Recall the breathtaking view of Jerusalem's rolling hills. What did you see? A city steeped in history, a skyline that touched the heavens. Think about what sounds, stories, and perspectives you heard in Israel, what people you met. Who are you holding in your heart? Now, go back to the taste that lingers in your memory. What did it evoke? Perhaps a fusion of flavors that resonated deeply within you. These moments are the vibrant threads that make up the tapestry of your time in Israel, etching memories that continue to live within you.

Part 2: Reflect (*With your partner*)

Couples should sit across from each other and answer these questions guided by the conversation facilitator.

1. How are you feeling? What's on your mind and in your heart at this moment?
2. In this current context, what is it like to identify as Jewish or to have deep affection for someone who is Jewish?
3. Consider the boundaries and allowances you're granting yourself at this point. Are there specific permissions or support you'd like from your partner in this regard?

Part 3: Repair (*As a full group*)

Our hearts are heavy, but in Jewish tradition we aim to repair a fractured world, beginning with self-reflection. These questions can be contemplated in small groups or as a collective:

1. What do you wish your friends and family understood about your feelings and experiences during this time?
2. In the words of Mr. Rogers, "Look for the helpers in times of trouble." Where have you witnessed acts of kindness and assistance in your community or beyond?
3. Recognizing the importance of not just identifying helpers but also becoming one, how are you contributing to a world that's more secure and compassionate for everyone? How are you embodying the role of a helper in your own way?

Closing: There have been a variety of feelings shared today. We really appreciate everyone being so honest and vulnerable together. We want to close together as we think about how we remember, reflect, and repair moving forward.

Option 1: Song - [Oseh Shalom](#)

*Oseh shalom bimromav
Hu Ya'aseh shalom aleinu
Ve'al kol Yisrael
Ve'imru, imru, Amen.*

May the one who makes peace in
high places,
Make peace upon us
And on all of Israel –
And say, Amen.

Option 2: Poem - "A Walk in Caesara"

The well known Poet Hannah Szenes immigrated from Budapest to Mandatory Palestine as a teenager. She then returned to fight the Nazis during the Holocaust, where she was captured and killed. One of her most famous poems, "Walk in Caesara," is a reflection on the timely and timeless:

*My God, my God,
I pray that these things never end –
the sand and the sea,
the rush of the waters,
the crash of the heavens,
the prayers of the heart.*