

All In This Together

Stories and Teachings
for Loving Each Other
and Our World

Jack Kornfield

This book is a collection of stories, poems and essays. We chose this book because it was easily accessible, tender and lends itself to group discussions. I hope you enjoy the next few weeks with each other as the stories and poems do what didactic teaching often fail to do, open your heart to your own experience. Blessings, Neusom

Week 1 What Do You Expect

The story of Gawain and the Hag, page 5.

Ever wonder “what do women want”? After reading this story you may have an answer.

Who do you identify with in this tale? What are the lessons?

The story of the 7-year-old, page 11

To see another is a gift. Do you have a story of being seen or seeing someone?

“A bug crawls over the paper, leave him be, we need all the readers we can get”

Why do we need to be right, undisturbed, dominant or heartless?

A veteran’s story, page 21

Please relate to the famous *A Course in Miracles* line: “*In my defenselessness my safety lies.*

Young suffering men need recognition/compassion/respect, page 29

From what framework are we seeing others?

Week 2 Despair is a Failure of Imagination

Deciding we are unlovable of unworthy, page 61

With our hearts open to our suffering, is the conclusion that we are unlovable true?

Kindness, page 63

Discuss the power of kindness.

The power of community, page 64

Do our chosen communities support our highest values? If you knew your back was covered, what loving thing would you do?

Robert Desnos, page 65

In this inspiring story of unexpected outcomes, does the inevitable seem inevitable?

“Despair is the failure of imagination.” Wade Davis

Where is our fear unchecked by our imagination?

“Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality.” Lewis Carroll

Unpack this quotation in light of something you usually think is intractable.

Zen Teacher, page 77

Please relate to the last two sentences of the story:

“Only to the extent that a person exposes himself willingly over and over again to annihilation, can that which is indestructible arise within him. In this lies the dignity of daring”

Week 3 Loving Awareness

Chemo transformation, page100

Please sit quietly with the words that ended this story and then discuss.

“Loving awareness allows us to trust our bodies and open our heart to hold this human incarnation with its tainted glory, beauty, and pain. Healing can come when we turn toward our struggles with our whole hearts and listen deeply to a reality beyond our fears.”

The rascal returns, page 108

Have you ever been saved from foolishness by a community?

Rachel Naomi Remen, 119

In the broken vase the light shown through the crack. Tell us of a story in which the darkness turned to light.

Truth telling, page 121

“...now willing to tell the truth, and a fresh tenderness and compassion.”

It can be a lot to ask for someone who is hiding something to tell the truth. Have you ever seen the truth telling heal?

The stories of life and death, page 122

The power of stories to heal when expressed in a safe place should give us hope for reconciliation and renewal. Why do you think this is so?

Choosing the stories we retell, page 127

Dalai Lama, “Some of these stories do not have my best interest in mind.”

What stories should you stop telling?

Week 4 The Weight of a Snowflake

Weight of a snow flake, page 215

What does it serve for you to think, “I’m not important”?

Carl Sagan quotation, page 224

“ I recommend dying to everyone. It’s character building. You get much clearer perspective of what’s important and what isn’t, the preciousness and beauty of life.”

Death is one bracket of life, the other, birth. What in your life is wanting to birth and will it take a death for that to happen?

Albert Camus, page 227

“In the midst of winter, I found there was within me an invincible summer.”

Please tell a story of overcoming.

Zen Master, page 236

Read out loud the last three paragraphs. What jumps out at you?

Initiations, page 239

When we are present to our times, we sometimes lose the wisdom of the long view. With the arc of history in mind, what seeds would you like to plant today?