

coexist

an Upstander Project film

Coexist Teacher's Guide

USING FILM TO
HELP BYSTANDERS
BECOME UPSTANDERS
Dr. Mishy Lesser

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USING *COEXIST* IN CLASSROOMS AND WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND FACILITATORS

Coexist tells the story of five survivors and five perpetrators of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, and how they live side by side today. It is a film about Rwanda, and also about the human capacity for brutality and humiliation that sees difference as something to be eliminated rather than as a source of strength to be cultivated. Rwanda has much to teach the world about forgiveness and reconciliation, about how to care for victims and rehumanize perpetrators, and how to deal with ambiguity, as in the case of perpetrators who also protected victims. *Coexist* gives us an opportunity to think about complex questions that challenge all people: how we see and deal with difference, how the fear of losing power can lead to an abuse of that power, and how humiliation can be used to degrade and dehumanize.

The activities in this guide prepare young people for viewing the film and help them think and talk about genocide, colonialism, dehumanization, mob mentality, bullying, and reconciliation, as well as their personal experiences as victims, witnesses, bystanders, upstanders, and perpetrators of violence.

This guide is organized around two foci: genocide, and social emotional skills for self-awareness, responsible decision-making, and moral reasoning. Each focus contains two lessons and a variety of learning activities that connect with scenes from the film.

Through journaling, one-on-one conversations, small-group discussions, large-group presentations, and standards-aligned learning activities, educators can use the guide to help viewers develop skills in critical thinking, collaboration, social and global awareness, and civic engagement while reflecting on their own lives and clarifying their beliefs. Educators seeking ideas on how to address complex current issues in ways that are relevant to their students will find creative and stimulating activities in the guide.

Go to www.upstanderproject.org to screen and order the film. For help using this guide and to share feedback, you can email *Upstander Project's* learning director at mishy@upstanderproject.org. And, after you teach the film please help us by filling out our questionnaire at upstanderproject.org/survey

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Coexist began in 2006 with my first trip to Rwanda, where we met and interviewed genocide survivors still trapped in the fog and pain of traumatic experiences so horrific they cannot be easily recounted. The experience jolted me out of the relatively comfortable world in which I had been raised. Even before I got home, an overwhelming voice inside of me said, "I have to do more. These stories must be told, and I firmly believe the people who lived them are yearning to be heard." It wasn't until I visited a classroom three years later to show clips from that journey that I realized what this project could become, and what its core purpose could be. The stories of Rwandans inspire students to consider opportunities for reconciliation and forgiveness in their own lives.

When I went back to Rwanda in 2009 to shoot our documentary, I was thus better equipped to understand how U.S. students might learn from the stories we would uncover at reconciliation and healing workshops across the country. As we explored, we learned the path to reconciliation is long, complicated, and uncertain. Some people may never find ways to reconcile, instead favoring tolerance or coexistence. Others embrace reconciliation after years of work, conversation, reflection, and apologies. We also saw resilience, love, pain, and perseverance unlike anything I'd ever witnessed.

Five years after that first classroom visit, many thousands of students have now seen our documentary film and learned valuable transformative lessons via this teacher's guide. What began as my quest to do something positive for the world has evolved into the *Upstander Project* with a specific mission aimed at stimulating deep thought and reflection among youth and all people on issues that affect each of us: conflict, revenge, reconciliation, forgiveness, and truth.

I am honored to partner with Dr. Mishy Lesser, *Upstander Project Learning Director* and the author of this guide. We are honored to take this journey with you, and welcome your thoughts, critiques, feedback, and stories. And in our collaboration there is one thing I firmly believe: Films don't change the world. You do.™

Adam Mazo

Director of *Coexist*

April 2014

INTRODUCTION

THE FILM

Coexist is a 53-minute film that chronicles the experiences and perspectives of victims, perpetrators, and survivors of genocide in Rwanda, and the challenges Rwandans face as they try to end the cycle of violence that has caused them catastrophic loss and incalculable suffering. Viewers will be introduced to Rwandans Agnes, Grace, Jean, Jean-Baptiste, Pacifique, Theosphore, Augstin, Gregoire, Theophilla, Solange Nyirasafari, Alexander, Sam Nshimiyimana, Marc Gwamako, Domitilie, Elisabeth, Reverend Philbert Kalisa, and Fatuma Ndangiza, and U.S.-born Rwanda scholar, Tim Longman, all of whom tell stories that reveal the enormous complexity of forgiveness and reconciliation, and the ways Rwandans approach personal and social healing. They share testimony so others can learn from their excruciating and also hopeful experiences. Teachers who want to begin their class with a historical overview should fast forward to **Scene 5 “Myths” (32:07)**, play it first, and then show it again as part of a full screening of *Coexist* to help students understand this complex history. *Coexist* was created by documentary filmmaker Adam Mazo, with support from Mass Humanities, the Yip Harburg Foundation, the Tomfohrde Foundation and in-kind donations from hundreds of donors and supporters. The original version of the movie, released in September 2010, was 40-minutes long; the current version was completed in February 2014.

THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

The *Coexist* Teacher's Guide includes four lessons and resource materials to support:

- (1) an examination of colonial legacy to create historic context for understanding the genocide and processes of dehumanization, and the challenges of post-genocide society;*
- (2) study of the connection between genocide and bullying, forgiveness and reconciliation, re-humanization, responsible decision-making and personal choice, and the cultivation of upstander behavior.*

The film and guide can be used to teach middle and high school History, Social Studies, Current Events, Civics and Government, Language Arts, Humanities, and to support positive school climate campaigns. It is also relevant to college faculty in Peace and Justice Studies, Sociology, Religious Studies, African Studies, Film, Global Studies, and Political Science. This guide is supportive of the social and emotional wellness, and moral development of students, and is appropriate for Grade Levels 7-12 and post-secondary.

*The author wishes to thank the scores of in-service, pre-service and retired teachers, students, school administrators, youth, and youth workers, whose willingness to wrestle with the complex and at times disturbing issues posed by *Coexist* has helped shape and improve this guide and contributed to the success of the Upstander Project.*

CORE THEME OF THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

The core theme of this guide is the pressing need for all people, youth and adults alike, to learn new ways of dealing with difference to repair broken relationships, foster mutual understanding and respect, and promote justice.

Users of this guide will learn new information and approaches to teaching about

- the role of colonialism in magnifying differences among people in Rwanda;
- causal factors of genocide in Rwanda;
- the role of the international community in allowing genocide to happen;
- the complexity of life in a post-genocidal society.

And they will gain insight into the beliefs, values, and behaviors that

- contribute to 'us-them' thinking, scapegoating, mob mentality, and bystanding;
- foster upstanding when an individual or group is targeted for harm;
- promote remorse, accountability, reparations, forgiveness, and reconciliation;
- encourage empathy, truthful speech, compassionate listening, and mutual respect.

Each lesson relates the material in the film to the experiences and realities of youth in the United States, and there may be deep relevance for viewers around the world. Although some U.S. viewers of *Coexist* may have no direct experience with genocide or mass atrocity, they are likely familiar with individual and group behaviors that have been identified as early precursors to genocide, such as name-calling, slandering, blaming, isolating, humiliating, and targeting.

This guide supports exploration of how one group can dehumanize another, the role of mob mentality, and the individual and institutional efforts to re-humanize perpetrators and encourage healing for survivors. It helps teachers examine with their students the justifications people use for violence and our collective desensitization to its devastating impact.

OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR LESSONS

Lessons begin with learning objectives and consist of an opening activity, key questions for reflection or discussion, a main activity, and a closing activity. Discussion questions can easily be retooled and used as writing prompts or analytical essay assignments. The lessons do not stipulate time parameters, for experienced teachers can best determine the duration of the lessons. Most teachers will find there is more material in each lesson than can be used in a single class session. In some cases, teachers may decide to cover a lesson over the course of several classes. Both this guide and the film are designed to support this approach. While Lesson One recommends screening Scene 5 about Rwanda History and Lesson Two the screening of *Coexist*, teachers may decide to use the [Scene-by-Scene Synopsis](#) to focus on specific learning activities.

Teachers are invited to consult with this guide's author (Dr. Mishy Lesser mishy@upstanderproject.org) about their readiness to screen the film, how to prepare students for disturbing images and stories, and what combination and sequence of learning activities could best support their student learning objectives.

The four lessons are embedded in the two parts of this guide:

PART ONE: COLONIALISM, GENOCIDE, AND RWANDA'S PATH TO HEALING

1. Learning about Rwandan History
2. Screening *Coexist*

PART TWO: COEXIST FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

3. Learning from *Coexist*
4. What It Means to Me

SCENE-BY-SCENE SYNOPSIS

A synopsis of the film is provided below. The **name of each scene** corresponds to the **name on the DVD menu**. The numbers correspond to the “chapter” that appears on screen when clicking through to the next scene, and the running times for each scene are listed in minutes and seconds (mm:ss). The total run time with credits is 56:52; without credits is 52:55.

1: Irreparable?

Start Time (0:00) Scene duration (8:36)

The opening scene to *Coexist* provides a brief introduction to the events of the 1994 Rwanda genocide and juxtaposes the present government's policy of forced reconciliation with statements by victim/survivors and people who perpetrated. Viewers are introduced to the principals of the film: Grace, Theosphore, Pacifique, Agnes, Jean, and Domitilie. Since 2003, perpetrators have been released from prison and are returning to villages and communities where they have to live side-by-side with victims. Together their voices frame the difficult question *Coexist* seeks to explore: “Can forced reconciliation lead to true reconciliation?”

2: Responsibility

Scene duration (9:02) Cue up at (8:36)

“Like the gazelle who doesn't know the rustle in the grass is a leopard, we didn't know what hit us until it was too late.” - Joseph Sebarenzi

This scene highlights the remarkable journey of Agnes from victim to thriving member of REACH, from “other” to cherished friend of her former perpetrator’s family. Agnes recounts the trauma of 1994, seeing her husband and three of her children killed, followed by her family’s rejection and subsequent rape. We join her journey to reconciliation in 2006 at a REACH workshop face-to-face with the wives of perpetrators. “I wanted to beat them,” she admits. Unlike other perpetrators, her neighbor, Alexander, admits to destroying her home and accepts responsibility. He admits, “Agnes sacrifices for me...and her forgiveness was real.” We meet Reverend Philbert Kalisa, and former perpetrators Jean-Baptiste, Gregoire, Jean, and Alexander. They wrestle with the question of who bears responsibility for their actions in the genocide and mention the role of brainwashing.

3: Healing

Scene duration (8:06) Cue up at (17:39)

“These people can only talk about forgiveness because they have no idea of what we have been through.” - Frida Gashumba

This scene provides a concise example of Grace's efforts to heal from the traumatic losses she has endured since the genocide. She tries, with support from counselors at the [Rwanda Youth Healing Center](#), to cope with painful memories from her childhood. Grace shares her own struggles with grief, loss and anger at losing her parents and being mistreated by relatives. She compares herself to Theophilla: a fellow survivor, counselor, and bride-to-be. Grace struggles to accept her loss and herself.

4: Reparation

Scene duration (6:25) Cue up at (25:46)

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the LORD. - Leviticus 19:18

A seven-year old during the genocide, Pacifique lost her mother, brothers, and uncles. Theosphore murdered her brothers and spent ten years in prison. She is an adult when Theosphore invites her to a REACH workshop, and confesses his crime and asks for her forgiveness. “I felt like I was electrocuted,” she admits, upon hearing of his role. Together, they follow the prescription of unity and reconciliation. When he learns she is homeless, he participates in a REACH program to build a home for her young family.

5: Myths

Scene duration (4:45) Cue up at (32:12)

In their greatest hour of need, the world failed the people of Rwanda. - Kofi Annan

This scene focuses on Rwandan history. Through archival footage and expert analysis, viewers get an overview of how and why the genocide happened. Rwanda scholar Tim Longman provides insight into the “creation myth” that was established by European colonists, which racialized the social differences between Tutsi and Hutu. Viewers learn how this myth of Tutsi superiority was reinforced through laws, and institutional policies and practices. Viewers hear about the Rwandan Patriotic Front's decisive role in ending the genocide, and how in the process it committed acts of mass murder with no accountability, complicating efforts to foster reconciliation.

6: Betrayal

Scene duration (10:49) Cue up at (36:58)

“It's not like they're holding a gun to your head saying, ‘You have to forgive.’ But... to release prisoners just because they said they're sorry, it's too soon.” - Jocelyn Mutangana

The idea that reconciliation is forced upon Rwandans by the government is explored and challenged. Genocide survivors Domitilie and Elisabeth talk about the murder of their relative Paul, who survived the 1994 genocide and was murdered in 2007. Paul served as a judge on one of the Gacaca courts set up to prosecute genocide perpetrators. Domitilie, Elisabeth, and the journalist Sam explain why they believe the Gacaca courts have created new problems and failed to provide justice for all Rwandans. Marc makes a connection between genocide and bullying and Sam contrasts the “official story” of reconciliation to tears shed behind the safety of closed doors. Jean reveals that he'd rather die than kill again.

7: Strength

Scene duration (3:47) Cue up at (47:48)

“We are preaching hope, standing on the bones of the past.” - John Rucyahana

Fatuma shares her optimism about the future and Marc suggests genocide could happen anywhere in the world. Tim tells the story of his Rwandan students and likens them to students in the U.S., except for the choices they were forced to make. Sam describes what is happening as tolerance, not reconciliation. Pacifique talks about her future. Grace speaks of hope. Agnes explains what gives her strength. Viewers are left to decide how they see the situation in Rwanda and the prospects of reconciliation.

Epilogue & Credits

Scene duration (5:15) Cue up at (51:36)

We update viewers on what is happening in the lives of the Rwandans featured in *Coexist*. A closing song offers a few moments for viewers to sit with their personal feelings about the movie. (Note: this chapter is not included in the scene selection menu.)

PART ONE: COLONIALISM, GENOCIDE, AND RWANDA'S PATH TO HEALING

LESSONS AT A GLANCE

LESSON ONE: BRIEF HISTORY OF RWANDA

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LESSON TWO: SCREENING *COEXIST*

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PART ONE: COLONIALISM, GENOCIDE, AND RWANDA'S PATH TO HEALING

LESSON ONE:

BRIEF HISTORY OF RWANDAN GENOCIDE (SCENE 5: MYTHS)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

During the Rwanda history lesson students will watch Scene 5 (Myths) of *Coexist* and have an opportunity to

- think about the role of colonialism in fostering social tension and multigenerational intergroup hatred in Rwanda;
- demonstrate their understanding of the factors that contributed to genocide in Rwanda.

OPENING ACTIVITY



To get students to relax, open up, and share perspectives on conflict and violence. (Teacher needs three stacks of differently colored paper, enough to give each student one sheet from each stack. Avoid dark colored paper. Students need blue- or black-ink pens.)

Students sit in a Circle for this fast-paced activity. Each student gets three pieces of paper, preferably colored paper; for example, yellow, orange, and pink. The teacher will read three incomplete sentences, one at a time. After reading each sentence, students take the same color sheet and complete the first sentence. One- or two-word responses are fine. When finished, they crumple the sheet into a paper **snowball** and toss it into the center of the Circle. Before moving to the second sentence, each student grabs a snowball (ideally not their own) and reads aloud the comment while the rest of the group listens. This activity helps build group trust while also protecting individual confidentiality.¹

Sentence 1: When someone disagrees with *me*, I tend to....

Sentence 2: When *I* disagree with someone, I tend to....

Sentence 3: Once when I experienced someone being violent I felt....

MAIN ACTIVITY

Teacher provides an overview of Rwandan history (see **Introduction to Rwanda** on following page) prior to showing Scene 5 of *Coexist*. The material in the following pages can also be used as a reading assignment for small groups or as a framework for research projects. Teachers can ask students to point out key facts and engage in rigorous inquiry by examining and evaluating sources listed in the footnotes and annotated bibliography, interpreting evidence, and developing claims. After the teacher's overview and screening of Scene 5, students can either view the film scene-by-scene or in its entirety, ideally in the next class.

¹Jennifer Derosby, Social Studies Teacher at P.S.1 Charter School in Denver, uses a similar activity called “Fear in a Hat,” in which each student writes a response to a prompt and puts that response in a hat; then another student picks a response from the hat, reads it aloud as if it were her/his own, and explains the source of her/his fear. This exercise cultivates empathy and understanding among students. Thanks to Jennifer for pointing this out.

Introduction to Rwanda

Coexist is a documentary film that focuses on Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide (see *Resource Section for [Rwanda Map](#)*). Teachers might want to make a connection between 1994 and the birth year of their students. Starting on April 6, 1994, between 500,000 and 700,000 people (perhaps more) were slaughtered over the course of a hundred days in this small East African nation about the size of Massachusetts. Ask for a student volunteer to figure out what the date was a hundred days ago. Once calculated, you may want to pause and ask students to consider what has happened in their lives since that date. Then invite them to try to imagine the impossible: what it would have been like to be persecuted, or to be the persecutor, during a hundred days? Then ask if anyone knows the seating capacity of the largest local sports stadium or performing arts center, and ask them to calculate how many times its seats would have to be filled to reach 700,000. Once a student comes up with the number, it is useful to invite students to close their eyes and imagine filling and emptying the seats of the stadium “x” number of times.

In Rwanda there are two main social groups, Hutu and Tutsi.² Approximately 85% of Rwandans are Hutu, while 14% are Tutsi. Recruit a student volunteer to calculate 85% of the number of students in the classroom.

Most of those killed during the genocide were Tutsi, and many were politically moderate Hutu who rejected genocide ideology and refused to support or participate in the slaughter. Virtually all killers were Hutu. Most were men but some were women.³ Some women in leadership positions also helped organize and encourage the genocide. Make sure students understand that while Tutsi also killed Hutu when putting an end to the genocide, these massacres did not constitute genocide because their goal was not to exterminate all Hutu (see *Resource Section for [Key Terms](#)*).

The international community played an important role in allowing the genocide to happen. “Policymakers in France, Belgium, and the United States and at the United Nations all knew of the preparations for massive slaughter and failed to take the steps needed to prevent it. Aware from the start that Tutsi were being targeted for elimination, the leading foreign actors refused to acknowledge the genocide. To have stopped the leaders and the zealots would have required military force; in the early stages, a relatively small force.”⁴

²A third group, the Twa, makes up less than 1% of the population in Rwanda. While traditionally the most marginalized community in Rwanda, they were not the main target for extermination in the 1994 genocide. According to some reports, one-third of their population was slaughtered in the genocide.

³Nicole Hogg, “Women’s participation in the Rwandan genocide: mothers or monsters?” *International Review of the Red Cross* 92, no. 877 (March 2010): 69-70.

⁴Alison Des Forges, *Leave None To Tell The Story* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 2.

Pre-Colonial and Colonial History

Rwandans lived in relative isolation prior to the incursion of European powers.

Before European colonizers arrived...Rwandans thought their country was the center of the world. They thought their kingdom was the most civilized and their monarchy the most powerful. It was that organized and obedient military that so fiercely protected the nation. Slave traders were pushed back from the borders. Few immigrants settled there. It was one of the few African nations to live virtually in isolation from other cultures. Rwandans spoke one language—Kinyarwanda—worshipped one God, and answered to one king....That king was a Tutsi. The king appointed both Hutu and Tutsi to positions of authority in his administration and in local communities, but Tutsi enjoyed more power, social status, and influence than Hutu. Despite this, the two groups lived peacefully together—working together, marrying one another, having children together.⁵

Historically, the people of Rwanda and the Africa Great Lakes Region were primarily farmers (Hutu) and cattle herders (Tutsi). There were Hutu land chiefs and Tutsi cattle chiefs. Then as now an overwhelming majority of Rwandans made a living from agriculture. The Tutsi were the ruling class and many Hutu worked for Tutsi in bonded service, creating a servant/master relationship. In spite of this, there was considerable intermarriage, and people could change groups by becoming farmers or acquiring cattle.

When Europeans colonized Africa in the late 1800s to control its vast wealth, people protested and resisted in a variety of regions, though less so in Rwanda, where the Germans saw the Tutsi ruling class as more European than the Hutu. By favoring the Tutsi over the Hutu, they began to transform long-standing differences between the two groups into a deep division.

Belgium took over colonial domination of Rwanda from Germany in 1919 and controlled the people and their resources thanks in part to a strategy referred to as “divide and rule.” With relatively few Belgians residing in Rwanda, the colonial power leaned heavily on Tutsi to enforce their domination. They “introduced an ideology that had highly destructive effects. A Belgian priest wrote a ‘white paper’ in 1916 proclaiming that Hutu and Tutsi were racially different. Drawing in part on existing cultural myths, it described the Hutu as the original inhabitants of the area, and Tutsi as coming there from Ethiopia in the sixteenth century, conquering the local population.”⁶

⁵Joseph Sebarenzi, *God Sleeps in Rwanda* (New York: Atria Paperback, 2011), 11.

⁶Ervin Staub, *Overcoming Evil: Genocide, Violent Conflict, and Terrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 62.

Belgians continued to spread the lie that Tutsi were smarter than Hutu and gave them more status, thus breeding a dangerous “us-them” dynamic among the population. They imposed the use of identity cards, which listed a person’s social group. If someone’s identity was unknown, those who owned at least ten cattle were listed as Tutsi, and those with fewer were inscribed as Hutu. Under Belgian rule, group membership thus became more rigid, making it harder for people to switch.

Tutsi were given government jobs and better education and housing, while Hutu were largely barred from these privileges. By replacing the historic social differences among Rwanda’s people with “the racial dictatorship of one party,”⁷ the Belgian colonial overlords grew the tension between Rwanda’s main social groups. Starting in 1930 the Catholic Church ran the country’s educational system and helped strengthen the Tutsi aristocracy and further spread the fallacy of Hutu inferiority. The Belgians actually wrote the country’s history that was taught by the school system, and it reflected their beliefs while protecting their interests. Hutu felt looked down upon and humiliated, and many became resentful and afraid that Tutsi would forever rule them. Decades of escalating tension and discrimination created conditions for physical violence in 1959 when Tutsi militants attacked a Hutu leader. Hutu retaliated and killed hundreds of Tutsi, forcing thousands into exile.

Post-colonial Rwanda and Genocide

During World War II, as the vulnerability of the European powers became increasingly clear to colonized people all over the world, anti-colonial movements gained strength in Africa. By the time Rwanda gained independence in 1962, the Belgians and the Church supported a Hutu government, which continued the persecution of Tutsi as seen in 1959. The Hutu power movement was born, and it gradually became more extreme and entrenched over the following decades, which helped further set the stage for genocide. It is estimated that 130,000 Tutsi fled to neighboring countries, where many lived as refugees for decades to come. In the early 1980s in neighboring Uganda some of those exiles formed a political organization which evolved into an armed resistance group that was renamed the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1987.

In the 1980s the International Monetary Fund subjected Rwanda to its structural adjustment policies. According to proponents, structural adjustment supports free market programs and policies, and contributes to poverty reduction. Critics say it leads to privatization, deregulation, weakened trade barriers, and the threat of fiscal discipline by outsiders. They add that the

⁷Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: Free Press, 2005), 161.

failure of structural adjustment to improve a country's economy thereby sharpens social tension and divisions among its people.⁸ Drought damaged crop production in Rwanda in the latter part of the decade and the price of coffee plummeted on the world market. A high birth rate led this already densely populated country to become even more crowded, and with it, discontent escalated. In the decades preceding the genocide in 1994, Rwanda's fertility rate was above 7 children per woman.⁹ Subsistence farmers and livestock growers saw their incomes collapse and millions suffered hunger and deprivation. Many Rwandans blamed the Hutu government for corruption and mismanagement, and it, in turn, deflected the blame by scapegoating the Tutsi.

In October 1990 the RPF, comprised primarily of Tutsi exiles, invaded Rwanda from Uganda, creating further political instability and sparking a four-year civil war. The economic crisis worsened and Rwanda became largely reliant on emergency food aid. By this time, the government of General Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, had been in power for nearly two decades, and it was under internal and international pressure to make reforms and put an end to exclusive Hutu rule. The number of opposition parties of Hutu and of Tutsi grew, and these parties created youth groups to promote their interests. "By early 1992, Habyarimana had begun providing military training to the youth of his party, who were thus transformed into the militia known as the *Interahamwe* (Those Who Stand Together or Those Who Attack Together). Massacres of Tutsi and other crimes by the Interahamwe went unpunished, as did some attacks by other groups, thus fostering a sense that violence for political ends was 'normal.'" ¹⁰

Hours after President Habyarimana's plane was shot down on April 6, 1994, those promoting Hutu supremacy and the extermination of the Tutsi organized mobs to try to seize control of Rwanda's elaborate system of local administration. The interim government gave its officials and citizens the cover of "legitimate" orders to hide the evil they were doing. Administrators broke the genocide down into a series of discrete tasks which they executed without consideration of the ultimate objective of the work. Cultivators turned out for the long-standing practice of communal labor although they knew that they were to cut down people as well as the brush in which they found them.¹¹

According to social scientist Scott Straus, the killing spread primarily because it was supported by local political leaders in particular districts. In some areas lack of local support undermined the ability of Hutu hardliners to seize total control of local jurisdictions. For example, no killing

⁸Interview of Noam Chomsky by Pete McCormack, October 18, 2005. http://www.petemccormack.com/social_005.htm

⁹The World Bank, "World Development Indicators," <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/rwanda>

¹⁰Des Forges, 4.

¹¹Des Forges, 12.

occurred in Giti prefecture where a local leader decided to prevent the violence, later telling Straus, “One cannot fight for one’s country by killing people.”¹² And at the Nyange School Hutu and Tutsi students were killed because they refused to be separated into two groups by Hutu militia. The politically moderate Hutu Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, died horrifically for refusing to support plans to start the genocide and died soon after it began.

In other areas, Hutu power leaders came from Kigali and instigated the killing. Human Rights Watch suggests “(t)he genocide was not a killing machine that rolled inexorably forward but rather a campaign to which participants were recruited over time by the use of threat and incentives.”¹³ Straus comments,

Eventually the Hutu promoting violence won: the balance of power shifted to those claiming that the time had come to attack Tutsi. In most communities, there appeared a clear point when this happened—a tipping point—when pro-violence forces in a particular community consolidated control. From that point forward, those forces mobilized other Hutu men to participate in the attacks. A new 'us or them' dichotomy took shape, quickly marginalizing opposition, and the killings spread like wildfire across the communities.¹⁴

In response to repeated requests by Rwanda-based Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire of the United Nations peacekeeping force for Rwanda (1993-94) to prevent further massacres, the UN withdrew peacekeepers from its existing force. The UN and U.S. refused to acknowledge that genocide was happening in Rwanda because to do so would have required them to step in to prevent further killings and to punish those responsible, as mandated by the articles of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.¹⁵ This international treaty, which became effective in 1951, states that the acknowledgment of genocide comes with the responsibility “to prevent and to punish.” In 1949 President Harry Truman “heartily endorsed the genocide convention”¹⁶ but “(t)he early U.S. leadership on the genocide treaty largely evaporated in the months and years that followed.”¹⁷ It took nearly four decades, until 1988, for the United States Senate to ratify and adopt the treaty.¹⁸

¹²Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 86.

¹³Des Forges, 6.

¹⁴Straus, 88.

¹⁵The 1948 U.N. *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, which came into effect in 1951, requires that its signatories take preventive action and defines genocide as a punishable crime.

¹⁶Samantha Power, *“A Problem from Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 64.

¹⁷Power, 65.

¹⁸For in-depth analysis of opposition in the U.S. Senate to the Treaty's ratification, see Power, 61-85, 163-169.

It is estimated that three-quarters of the Tutsi population was slaughtered. At least a quarter of a million women were mutilated and raped, and thousands of rape victims were killed. Many who survived discovered they were infected with HIV and died of AIDS. Thousands of Tutsi civilians and politically moderate Hutu owe their lives to Hutu who refused to join the genocide and risked everything to protect them. The slaughter waned as Tutsi fled or were killed.

The RPF largely put an end to the genocide when it took control of the capital, Kigali, on July 4, 1994. Millions of Hutu fled the country out of fear of retaliation. Human Rights Watch estimates that 10,000-40,000 Hutu combatants and civilians were killed by the RPF in retaliation for the genocide.¹⁹ Rwanda was in a state of ruin. One in four children would die before their fifth birthday. Life expectancy was 30 years.²⁰ A survey conducted by UNICEF in 1996 of 3,030 children found that 96% had witnessed violence, 70% had witnessed killings or wounding, and 91% thought they were going to die.²¹

Straus estimates that between 175,000 and 210,000 individuals participated in the genocide, which is equivalent to 14 to 17 percent of the adult male Hutu population. “It was not all Hutu who participated in the genocide, nor all Hutu men. It was only a minority who did.”²² By 2000, “the government had arrested nearly 110,000 individuals on genocide charges.”²³

Four years after the genocide President Bill Clinton apologized, acknowledging his own inaction by saying, “We did not act quickly enough after the killing began. We should not have allowed the refugee camps to become safe haven for the killers. We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide.”²⁴

The UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Tanzania in late 1994. Its first trial took place in 1997 and the first conviction was the following year. Jean-Paul Akayesu, Hutu mayor of the Rwandan town of Taba, was found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity, and sentenced to life in prison. By late 1998, three individuals had been convicted of genocide (including Rwanda's former prime minister, Jean Kambanda). Though the international community had failed to prevent the genocide, with the punishment of the four men, the UN *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* had been finally put into practice.

¹⁹http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/Geno15-8-03.htm#P1018_314677

²⁰Over the past decade deaths from HIV, TB, and malaria dropped by 80%, maternal mortality by 60%, and life expectancy doubled.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/02/rwandas-historic-health-recovery-what-the-us-might-learn/273226/>

Also see UNDP Human Development Report 2011, Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All (Rwanda).

²¹UNICEF, 1996.

²²Straus, 117- 118.

²³Straus, 98.

²⁴Transcript can be read at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/jan-june98/rwanda_3-25a.html

Coexist Timeline on Escalation of Violence in Rwanda

Late 1880s

Rwanda becomes part of German East Africa and is populated by Hutu, who are mainly farmers, Tutsi, who for the most part own cattle, and Twa, who are primarily hunters and potters. By acquiring wealth in cattle, Hutu families could become Tutsi. Germany rules by favoring the minority Tutsi (14%) over the majority Hutu (85%) and Twa (<1%).

Europeans Colonize Africa



Belgium Takes Control



1919

New colonial leaders exploit the myth that Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa are separate races. Tutsi are considered tall and regal and more closely related to Europeans. Belgian colonial policy provides power and wealth to many Tutsi, while Hutu must pay higher taxes. Many Hutu are forced to work as servants to Tutsi.

1959

Hutu fear Tutsi will forever oppress them after independence and rise in a violent rebellion. Tutsi chiefs are driven from power and many Tutsi flee the country.



Coexist Timeline on Escalation of Violence in Rwanda

1962

Belgium Leaves Rwanda

Hutu government takes charge. Attacks by Tutsi refugees lead to Hutu reprisals that kill thousands of Tutsi civilians, pushing many more Tutsi to flee Rwanda. Living as refugees in nearby countries, Tutsi vow to return home. Tutsi in Rwanda suffer discrimination and have few opportunities in education or government.



1973

General Juvenal Habyarimana seizes power and continues Hutu rule, keeping uneasy truce with Tutsi.



1980s

Rwanda experiences economic hardship when the world price of coffee drops.

Drought and growing hunger. People blame government. Government blames Tutsi.

Exiled Tutsi in Uganda create the Rwandan Patriotic Front.



Coexist Timeline on Escalation of Violence in Rwanda

1990

RPF Invasion

Rwandan Patriotic Front invades Rwanda, beginning a 4-year civil war. Hutu government uses the invasion to justify claim that Tutsi want to come back to oppress the Hutu and to urge the Hutu to prepare for "self-defense." Government radio propaganda dehumanizes Tutsi.



Genocide Begins



April 6, 1994

President Habyarimana dies when his plane is shot down; this incident ignites genocide.



Local Hutu leaders organize mobs to kill Tutsi.

Hutu extremists take over and target Tutsi.



At least 500,000 Tutsi are slaughtered.

July 1994

The RPF wins the civil war, ending the genocide and taking control of the government. Commander Paul Kagame is the key leader of the government.



Coexist Timeline on Escalation of Violence in Rwanda

2003

RPF leader Paul Kagame elected president with 95% of vote. Official policy calls for "unity and reconciliation" among all Rwandans, but some members of civil society and the opposition decry repression.

Making Coexist



August 2010

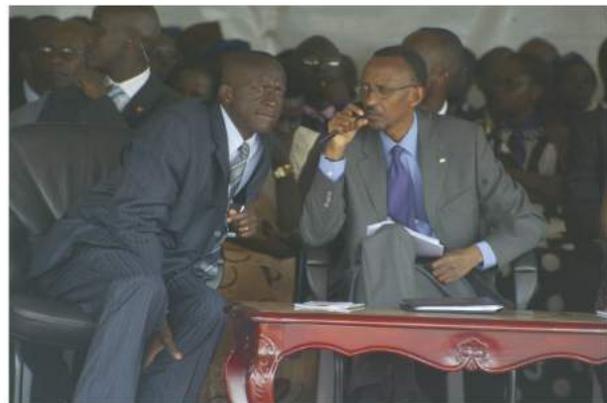
Paul Kagame reelected president with 93% of vote after numerous disturbing reports of repression and persecution of the opposition.

Kagame Elected



Summer 2009

Coexist film-making team interviews survivors and perpetrators of 1994 genocide in Rwanda.



Key questions for discussion or writing prompts *prior to* viewing Scene 5. Can also be assigned as research projects.

- Begin to make a list of when and where genocide has occurred in human history.
- Were the native peoples in North and South America, and Hawai'i subjected to genocide? Are there different kinds of genocide? (see *Resource Section* for [Comparative Definitions of Genocide](#))
- Discuss the meaning and implications of stereotyping, prejudice, scapegoating, privilege, and humiliation of a certain group, and emphasize the importance of these behaviors in creating conditions for genocide. Offer the following definitions if needed: stereotypes—a set of traits that are ascribed to an identity group, often based on inadequate knowledge or understanding of that group (derogatory stereotypes are a set of negative traits that ridicule and demonize an identity group²⁵); prejudice—making a judgment about others based on real or fabricated differences that leads to the privileging of one group over another; scapegoating—the targeting of one person or group with blame, hostility, harm, and/or rejection; privilege—unearned advantage conferred to a group through a set of policies and practices of which they are often unaware; humiliation—a form of oppression that aims to make a person feel denigrated and reduced to a lower position in one's eyes or others' eyes (see *Resource Section* for additional material on prejudice and discrimination).
- What do stereotyping, prejudice, and scapegoating look like in your local community? What are the different kinds of privilege that exist? Who has privilege and who benefits from the status quo? Which behaviors, policies, and systems reinforce privilege for some and disenfranchisement for others?
- Ask students to consider the **history of the U.S.** and also of their community, and to identify cases in which one group was attacked by another group and felt dehumanized (see *Resource Section* for bibliographic sources on genocide of [Native Americans](#) and [Hawai'ians](#), and [Jim Crow segregation](#)).
- Ask what **genocide** means and create a working definition. With middle school students, invite them to write two sentences in response to this prompt: Genocide means.... Offer this, if need be: genocide is the planned destruction and extermination of a religious, ethnic, racial, or national group “*whether by directly killing them or creating conditions that lead to their deaths or inability to reproduce.*”²⁶

²⁵Helen Fox, *When Race Breaks Out* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 44-45.

²⁶Staub, 100.

- Underscore the deliberate and planned nature of genocide (*see Resource Section for a definition of [genocide](#), [comparative definitions](#), and [The Ten Stages of Genocide](#)*).²⁷
- **Assign research projects** (most appropriate for high school students) and invite students to present their findings briefly:
- Identify the main causes of the Armenian genocide and investigate why the U.S. refuses to call it genocide.
- Explain why it took nearly four decades for the U.S. Senate to ratify the UN *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide*. Describe the arguments introduced by those who opposed and supported ratification.
- Examine former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell's policy on the use of force during the war in the Balkans in 1992, consider why he did not refer to that war as genocide, and explore the impact of Powell's policy on the genocide of Muslims in Bosnia.
- Create a historical timeline beginning with the multinational UN relief effort in Somalia in 1992, up to and including what happened to U.S. forces in Mogadishu in 1993.
- Compile and analyze the main reasons given by the U.S. and the UN for not stepping in to stop the genocide of Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu in Rwanda in 1994.
- Explore the relationship between Indonesia and East Timor starting in 1975, the genocide of East Timorese in 1999, and the way the U.S. government and media responded to genocide.

²⁷Gregory Stanton, "The Eight Stages of Genocide" (paper presented at the U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C. 1996). In 2013, Stanton added Discrimination and Persecution to his original model.

An important reminder before viewing *Coexist*:

Coexist contains subtitles, and students will miss important testimony and commentary if they take notes while viewing so it is preferable that they take notes **after** they watch the film.

- Show Scene 5
- Ask students what stands out for them, what surprised them, and what questions they have after viewing the film
- Distribute *Coexist* Timeline on Escalation of Violence in Rwanda found earlier in this lesson

CLOSING ACTIVITY AND PERSONAL REFLECTION



Students will need their journals or notebooks.

Ask students to think of a time when someone spoke up to help or protect them. Have them describe the situation and how it made them feel; then ask them to think of a time when they were disappointed that no one spoke up on their behalf. Again, ask them to describe the situation and how it made them feel.

PART ONE: COLONIALISM, GENOCIDE, AND RWANDA'S PATH TO HEALING

LESSON TWO: SCREENING *COEXIST*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

When students see *Coexist* they will have an opportunity to

- think about a variety of factors that contribute to genocide;
- consider different views of forgiveness and reconciliation;
- cultivate their listening and discussion skills;
- appreciate how Rwandans are fostering personal and social healing in their country.

OPENING ACTIVITY

To prepare for viewing *Coexist* the teacher reads the following story.

A Cherokee grandfather was teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside of me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil: he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is good: he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, forgiveness, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. This same fight is going on inside of you—and inside of every other person, too.” The grandson thought about it for a moment and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?” The old man simply replied, “The one you feed.”²⁸

Prompt:

- What does the “terrible fight” symbolize in this story?
- What do the wolves symbolize?
- How do you “feed the wolves” inside you? Which wolf are you feeding today?

²⁸Kathryn Liss, *Help Increase the Peace Program Manual* (Baltimore: American Friends Service Committee, 2004), 160-161.

PRE-SCREENING LECTURE

Coexist features the stories of survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, returned refugees, and government officials, as well as commentary by journalists, activists, and a U.S.-born Rwanda scholar. It examines their perspectives on forgiveness, reconciliation, remorse, revenge, taking personal responsibility, coexistence, tolerance, and making amends. In the film you will hear the testimony of women who were victimized during and after the genocide—some by being subjected to sexual violence—and men who participated in the genocide, as well as the views of social commentators and people working to heal their broken country. Some images and testimony of human suffering in *Coexist* are graphic (e.g., machete attack by Hutu perpetrators at 1:49; Agnes’s mention of her rape from 9:40-10:02; open graves at 16:10 and 17:15) and students should be forewarned about these images and given the option of looking away or leaving the classroom.

Coexist introduces viewers to two programs, [REACH](#) and the [Rwanda Youth Healing Center](#), that aim to foster personal healing for victims and, in the case of REACH, social healing between victims and perpetrators released from prison. REACH and RYHC exist in an abundant and richly varied field of Rwandan nongovernmental organizations that use traditional practices and trauma healing tools to help people come to terms with the frightful atrocities they witnessed and experienced, and to help them rebuild their country from the ashes of genocide. In well-facilitated workshops people learn to question the history of social divisiveness Rwanda experienced as a colony and as a new nation and to deal with hard questions, such as whether to forgive, how to rehumanize perpetrators, and how to engage with individuals who both killed and rescued.

To help students consider the complexity of forgiveness **before** completing the activities in Lesson Two, teachers can ask them to read the testimony of Janet Connors, [My Forgiveness Was a Gift to Them](#) (see *Resource Section*).

MAIN ACTIVITY

Screening of *Coexist*



Remind students to refrain from taking notes during the screening (for they will miss testimony and commentary due to the movie's frequent subtitles) and to find a comfortable spot from where they can easily read the subtitles.

Key questions for reflection/discussion after viewing *Coexist*:

1. Ask students what surprised them about *Coexist* and what questions they are left with.
2. Invite students to identify what factors can contribute to genocide (offer *social, political, cultural, economic, ideological, and psychological*, if needed). Based on what you saw in *Coexist*, what combination of factors might begin to explain what happened in Rwanda?
3. During Belgian colonial rule, how did Tutsi treat Hutu? What stereotypes of Hutu shaped the way they were treated and contributed to their feelings of resentment?
4. Once in power, how did Hutu dehumanize Tutsi? What stereotypes of Tutsi shaped the way they were treated? What message of contempt of Tutsi was spread by Hutu?
5. What role did radio broadcasters play? What was their message? What myths did they repeat? Is there a difference between the degree of responsibility that should be assigned to those who instigate genocide and those who follow the instigators? How was mob mentality fostered in Rwanda in the build-up to the genocide?
6. What role do rumor, innuendo, and emphatic repetition of lies play in the targeting of one group by another?
7. Can you name some of the opportunities for upstanding that were missed before and during the genocide, both by Rwandans and by the international community?
8. How does one group dehumanize another in your school or community? What myths and lies are told?
9. Ask students to list the characteristics of a society in which genocide would be less likely to occur, and after they share their lists, ask this question: What role do a shared sense of history and shared values play in a society's stability? How can justice be established after wrongdoing?

Small Group Activity – Textual Analysis and Listening Circles²⁹



Teacher needs clipboards, paper, markers for small group activity.

Introduce students to Listening Circles, which are perhaps the oldest form of social technology known to humankind. It is likely that all our ancestors developed ways to give everyone a voice in matters of community importance. We are indebted to indigenous elders from the Pacific North West of North America for sharing this tradition with our teachers in Circle Work.³⁰ By sitting in Circle when studying genocide, we aim to teach skills and cultivate abilities that can serve as an antidote to othering and scapegoating.

Divide up students into small groups. Give each group a clipboard, paper, marker, instruction sheet, Talking Piece, and 1-2 quotes to analyze from those that follow. You may want to ask all groups to start by remembering whatever they can about the individual whose quote they will analyze. Each page is self-contained with instructions, quote, photograph, and discussion questions. All groups follow the same instructions.

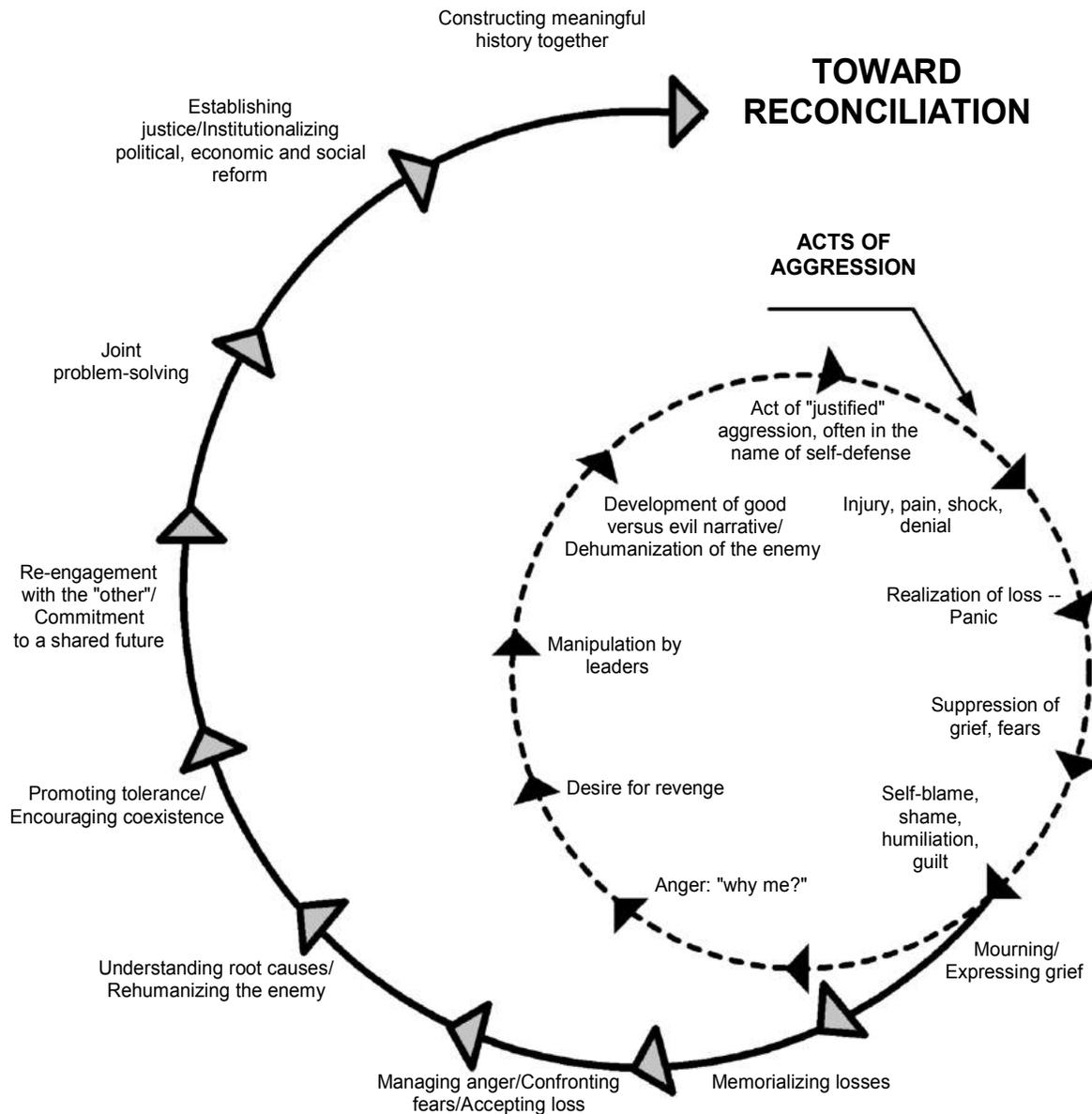
As mentioned earlier, teachers may want to assign as reading one or more of the [Stories of Forgiveness](#) (see *Resource Section*) in conjunction with this activity. There is a variation of the activity at the end of this chapter for teachers who either have limited time or want to sharpen the focus on forgiveness and reconciliation.

Lastly, teachers may want to introduce students to the diagram [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#) on the following page to help them better understand the experiences, motivations, and choices made by the individuals in the film.

²⁹Kay Pranis, *The Little Book of Circle Processes* (Intercourse: Good Books, 2005); Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, and Mark Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles from Crime to Community* (St. Paul: Living Justice Press, 2003); and Ben Mikaelson, *Touching Spirit Bear* (New York: HarperTrophy, 2001) and *The Ghost of Spirit Bear* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

³⁰We use beach stones as Talking Pieces. Teachers can introduce other objects: feathers, driftwood, or shells from the natural world, though when not available, any object that can be passed easily will do.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF REVENGE, MOVING TOWARD RECONCILIATION³¹



© 2005 Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, Inc. Adapted from EMU, Conflict Transformation Program; Based on Model developed by Olga Botcharova, cited by Paula Green in *Peacebuilding in Divided Communities*, 2012.

³¹Like all two-dimensional diagrams, this one has limitations and is offered solely as a guide for discussion. The diagram is most helpful when adapted to the needs, beliefs, experiences, and norms of those who use it. It is important to underscore that emotions are dynamic rather than fixed to an established continuum.

AGNES: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

Step 2: The spokesperson reads out loud the **Background Information**, the **Assigned Quote**, and the **first question**, and then passes the Talking Piece to her or his left so group members can share their perspectives on the first question. The Talking Piece can be passed around the circle more than once until everyone has had a chance to speak to the first question and the group is ready to move on.

Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).

AGNES



Background Information: We meet Agnes at the beginning of *Coexist* wearing a green headscarf. Her husband and three of her six children were killed during the genocide. Agnes was raped and now has a sexually transmitted disease. Viewers are often surprised to learn that she is a Hutu woman who married a Tutsi man.

Assigned Quote from Agnes: “I have to be strong so that I may forgive so that I may continue living. The strength allows me to take care of orphans. Because now we are the women and the men of our families. We are parents of diverse families, parents of Rwandan families.”

Agnes has chosen to forgive. She works with other Hutu and Tutsi women preparing food for reconciliation workshops.

Questions:

1. Why do you think Agnes decided to forgive and what other choices did she have?
2. Where would you locate Agnes on the **Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation** diagram?
3. What impact did Alexander’s confession have on Agnes?
4. What choices do you have when deciding whether to forgive someone who has hurt you?

GRACE: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

Step 2: The spokesperson reads out loud the **Background Information**, the **Assigned Quote**, and the **first question**, and then passes the Talking Piece to her or his left so group members can share their perspectives on the first question. The Talking Piece can be passed around the circle more than once until everyone has had a chance to speak to the first question and the group is ready to move on.

Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).

GRACE



Background Information: Grace’s parents were killed during the genocide when she was 10 years old. She describes the role of her extended family in abusing and taking advantage of her. She sought counseling at the Rwanda Youth Healing Center, and graduated from law school in 2011. She is now working to realize her dream of being a child advocate.

Assigned Quote from Grace: “A killer may come to ask me for forgiveness, but he doesn't seem to be sincerely sorry when he asks for forgiveness. It seems to me that he is just doing it to appease the government.”

Grace has not forgiven those who killed her parents. She eventually reconciled with her relatives.

Questions:

1. What conditions necessary for forgiveness were not met in the case of Grace and those who killed her parents?
2. Where would you locate Grace on the **Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation** diagram?
3. What choices do you have when deciding whether to forgive someone who has hurt you?
4. Grace shows many different emotions in the film. Ask everyone in the circle to name one of her emotions. Do you recall an empty smile?

ALEXANDER: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

Step 2: The spokesperson reads out loud the **Background Information**, the **Assigned Quote**, and the **first question, and** then passes the Talking Piece to her or his left so group members can share their perspectives on the first question. The Talking Piece can be passed around the circle more than once until everyone has had a chance to speak to the first question and the group is ready to move on.

Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



ALEXANDER

Background Information: Alexander was Agnes’s neighbor and participated in burning down her home. He was the first to confess his actions to her and says he felt pressured by his elders. Elders can be older siblings, relatives, friends, or other adults.

Assigned Quote from Alexander: “Because of the government [during the genocide] and because I was also with the elders I did what they did. I didn’t have a choice. And I was following the law.... I was among the first people to volunteer and I confessed to [Agnes]. I confessed to participating in the destruction of her house.”

Alexander says he was following his elders and the law.

Questions:

- 1.Explain Alexander's actions during the genocide. What impact did the elders have on his decisions? Could he have disobeyed them, and if so, how? What if many others had disobeyed?
- 2.What impact do elders have on you? Do you ever feel pressure to follow your elders even if you disagree with them?
- 3.The speaker confessed that he helped burn down Agnes’s house and told her who else participated. Agnes says his confession helped her. What role do you think his confession played in Agnes’s decision to forgive and work with Hutu and Tutsi women preparing food for REACH? Where would you locate Alexander on the **Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation** diagram?

GREGOIRE: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



GREGOIRE

Background Information: Gregoire was a mid-level government official in his district and is now serving a life sentence for organizing massacres. We meet him halfway through the film at the heavy door to the prison and he is wearing an orange prison uniform.

Assigned Quote from Gregoire: “Maybe some people blame it on the government, but the government is not inside our hearts. I brainwashed people to kill Tutsi. I never killed Tutsi but...if I’d wanted to stop it nothing would have happened.”

Gregoire takes responsibility for brainwashing people to kill Tutsi.

Questions:

1. Develop a working definition of brainwashing. What are its key components and what purpose does it serve? Who brainwashes whom? Who gets to decide on the message?
2. What does Gregoire mean when he says that the responsibility lies with him rather than with the government? Please explain your reasoning.
3. Given what you understand about genocide, do you think Gregoire could have prevented some of the killing? What would it have taken to stand up to those perpetrating the genocide? If Gregoire had succeeded, what word would describe his role?

JEAN: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



JEAN

Background Information: Jean is a confessed killer who instigated his neighbors to kill over 40 people. He admits to killing one person, was released from prison, and lives with his wife and four children.

Assigned Quote from Jean: “Killing a person is a crime but [during the genocide] killing was no longer a crime. Before [the genocide] people were punished for killing others but at that time you were supported. So you understand why I would blame the one who told me to kill a Tutsi. [But now] I would never grab a machete and slaughter a person again. No, it’s forbidden! Even if the government ordered it, I would rather die, because the consequences would affect me too. I would not do such a thing.”

Jean shows concern for his own dehumanization and vows he would never kill again.

Questions:

1. Jean suggests killing would hurt him too. What sort of consequences is Jean talking about?
2. Many Rwandans say they killed because government officials told them to. Is Jean responsible for the killings if he believes he was ordered to do so? Is he accountable to a higher authority?
3. Are you accountable to a higher authority if told to do something you believe is wrong?
4. Who do you think is responsible for the genocide? Those who gave the orders to kill? Those who carried out the orders? Those in Rwanda who failed to stop it? Those outside Rwanda who failed to stop it? Please explain your choice.

JEAN-BAPTISTE: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



JEAN-BAPTISTE

Background Information: Jean-Baptiste is a confessed killer who was released from prison.

Assigned Quote from Jean-Baptiste: “I’m kneeling down because some people said on the radio that they would never kneel down before the Tutsi. But it’s not the Tutsi that we are kneeling before; we are kneeling before all Rwandans, so that we can be one people. I therefore ask for forgiveness even from those who never knew me. I ask for forgiveness from those who know me. Because asking for forgiveness is the most important thing. Because the government is teaching us about unity and reconciliation.”

Jean-Baptiste kneels before all who are participating in a REACH seminar. He says that asking for forgiveness is the most important thing a perpetrator can do.

Questions:

1. Is it possible to repair the broken relationship between perpetrators and their victims? If so, what needs to happen for the relationship to be salvaged? If not, why?
2. Is asking for forgiveness the most important thing a perpetrator can do? If so, why? If not, what else needs to happen?
3. Where would you locate Jean-Baptiste on the **Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation** diagram?

DOMITILIE: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

Step 2: The spokesperson reads out loud the **Background Information**, the **Assigned Quote**, and the **first question**, and then passes the Talking Piece to her or his left so group members can share their perspectives on the first question. The Talking Piece can be passed around the circle more than once until everyone has had a chance to speak to the first question and the group is ready to move on.

Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



DOMITILIE

Background Information: Domitilie and her husband Paul survived the genocide. He became a judge at Gacaca and was gruesomely murdered in 2007, 13 years after the genocide. Domitilie became a widow and the sole parent of 8 children. She does not feel safe in Rwanda.

Assigned Quote from Domitilie: “Probably they want to show the whole world there’s peace in Rwanda. But for sure...the victims are still in danger. The hands that killed still intend to kill once again.... They are still threatening us even though we gave them our hearts and showed them that we understand that the previous government forced them to do what they did. But they’re not understanding.... They’re still randomly killing genocide survivors.”

The genocide in Rwanda ended on July 4, 1994, yet in 2009 Domitilie said violence continues in Rwanda. She added that victims understand that some perpetrators felt they had no choice but to harm others, yet still perpetrators continue to target survivors.

Questions:

1. What did Domitilie mean when she said, “The hands that killed still intend to kill again...even though we gave them our hearts”? Where would you locate Domitilie on the **Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation** diagram?
2. How do you explain the ongoing violence in Rwanda?
3. If you could make one recommendation to the people of Rwanda to make their country a safer, more peaceful place, what would that be?

ELISABETH: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



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ELISABETH

Background Information: Elisabeth is Paul's sister and Domitilie's sister-in-law. Paul survived the genocide, became a Gacaca judge, and was gruesomely murdered in 2007, 13 years after the genocide.

Assigned Quote from Elisabeth: "Once a killer always a killer. It's like something they were born with. What if somebody told you to take a machete and slash somebody? You wouldn't kill him and take his property. Would you forgive that person?"

Elisabeth says that people are born killers and that they don't change.

Questions:

1. What does Elisabeth mean by "Once a killer always a killer"? Do you think people are born that way or that killing is something people learn?
2. She says she won't forgive those who killed her brother and asks if the viewer would. Is there anything to be gained from forgiveness in this case? What role does forgiveness play in the rehumanization of perpetrators?
3. Where would you locate Elisabeth on the **Breaking the Cycle of Violence, Moving Toward Reconciliation** diagram?

TIM: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



TIM

Background Information: Tim spent many years living in Rwanda before and after the Genocide as a human rights researcher and teacher. He lost many friends during the Genocide.

Assigned Quote from Tim: “When the genocide happened my students came together and decided they would protect their Tutsi friends. At some point one of the students betrayed them by telling the death squads where the Tutsi students were. One of my students had his legs chopped off and was left to bleed. The reality is these students are just like ones I have in the United States. American students should feel fortunate that they’re not being called upon to make those moral decisions. It’s not that these students are different from my American students. They’re just in a different situation.”

Tim describes how one of his Rwandan students betrayed his Tutsi friends.

Questions:

1. What does Tim mean when he says that his Rwandan students are just like the ones he has in the U.S., except for the moral decisions they have to make? How do you explain his statement?
2. Is everyone capable of betraying his or her friends and family?
3. Can you be certain you would never betray your loved ones?

SAM: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



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SAM

Background Information: Sam is a Rwandan journalist who speaks in French for most of the film. He lives in Kigali.

Assigned Quote from Sam: “If people force themselves to have a reconciliation process at least they are making an effort to not beat each other up. At least with this reconciliation policy there is a certain amount of tolerance. Because without it we would see acts of revenge. But I would call it tolerance more than reconciliation.”

Sam contrasts reconciliation with tolerance.

Questions:

1. Can you define tolerance and reconciliation, and the difference between them?
2. Which term do you think best describes the current situation in Rwanda? Is there a better term to describe what is happening between victims and perpetrators?
3. Use either of these terms in the context of an episode in U.S. history and explain your reasoning.

MARC: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

Step 2: The spokesperson reads out loud the **Background Information**, the **Assigned Quote**, and the **first question**, and then passes the Talking Piece to her or his left so group members can share their perspectives on the first question. The Talking Piece can be passed around the circle more than once until everyone has had a chance to speak to the first question and the group is ready to move on.

Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



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MARC

Background Information: Marc is a Rwandan peace activist. He grew up outside Rwanda and moved there following the Genocide.

Assigned Quote from Marc: “The people are lacking trust. Some of them feel insecure. If somebody beats you the first time or bullies you in school, you don’t want to walk next to them. People in America or people in the West should know they are not just Africans but they are human beings just like them. They also bleed red blood. History happens so we can learn from it. So if it happened in Rwanda why can’t it happen at home where you are? It might not be you, but your child.”

Marc suggests that genocide can happen anywhere, maybe not now but in the future.

Questions:

1. Can you make the case that genocide has happened in U.S. history? Against whom? By whom? Where? When?
2. Do you agree with Marc that genocide could happen in the U.S.? What might be the seeds of genocide in our own midst?
3. What conditions could contribute to genocide here in the U.S.?
4. Given what you know about genocide in Rwanda, what do you think are the primary historical, economic, political, and cultural factors that contributed to genocide there?

FATUMA: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Step 3: The spokesperson reads out loud the **second question** and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. Repeat until all questions have been talked about by everyone in your circle.



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



FATUMA

Background Information: Fatuma was the leader of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

Assigned Quote from Fatuma: “Our policy is Unity and Reconciliation...[which] means accommodating everybody, including even the perpetrators. We find ourselves killers having to live side-by-side with victims after 1994 genocide. We cannot have a land of victims and a land of perpetrators. Despite whatever happened, they have to live side-by-side.”

Fatuma underscores the need for reconciliation among Rwandans.

Questions:

1. What is the purpose of the government’s official policy that requires reconciliation among victims and perpetrators, and bans speech that might be considered divisive, such as identifying people as “Hutu” and “Tutsi”?
2. How do you interpret the emphasis in Rwanda on unity and reconciliation as compared to the emphasis in South Africa on truth and reconciliation?
3. What did you learn in *Coexist* about how Rwandans approach personal and social healing?

PACIFIQUE & THEOSPHERE: INSTRUCTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).



PACIFIQUE & THEOSPHERE

Background Information: Pacifique is a 22-year old woman who lost her mother, brothers, and uncles during the Genocide. Theosphere, the man who killed her brothers, served ten years in prison for the crime. He seeks her forgiveness in a REACH reconciliation workshop, and in so doing, realizes she is homeless and builds her a home.



Assigned Quote from Pacifique: “I didn't know that he was the one who killed my siblings. I felt like someone who had been electrocuted. [When I found out] I was astonished and I was afraid and I was shaking. I felt so many changes happening inside me. I gave him forgiveness because he asked for it. We have to try to reconcile with them. ”

Pacifique gave Theosphere forgiveness a year after he asked for it.

Questions:

1. What are the different kinds of forgiveness shown in the video clip (Scene 4: Reparation)?
2. What does Pacifique gain by allowing former killers to build her a home? What is her primary motivation? Do Theosphere's actions constitute reparations for killing members of her family? What ambiguity do you see in Pacifique's response to Theosphere?

TWO RESPONSES TO GRIEF, TWO RESPONSES TO PERPETRATION: INSTRUCTION SHEET

For teachers who either have limited time or want to sharpen their focus on the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Step 1: Choose a spokesperson. His or her role is to share *one* idea from your group with the rest of the class once all groups finish their conversations. Use a Talking Piece to ensure that everyone gets to speak. **Guidelines for using the Talking Piece:** everyone has an opportunity to be heard, to listen, or to offer the gift of silence by passing. If someone passes on the first round, offer him or her the Talking Piece before starting the second round, in case they now want to speak.

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Agnes and Grace: Two Responses to the Grief and Atrocity of Genocide



Background Information: We meet Agnes at the beginning of *Coexist* wearing a green headscarf. Her husband and three of her six children were killed during the genocide. Agnes was raped and now has a sexually transmitted disease. Viewers are often surprised to learn that she is a Hutu woman who married a Tutsi man. Hutu militia persecuted her.

Assigned Quote from Agnes: “I have to be strong so that I may forgive so that I may continue living. The strength allows me to take care of orphans. Because now we are the women and the men of our families. We are parents of diverse families, parents of Rwandan families.”



Background Information: Grace’s parents were killed during the genocide when she was 10 years old. She describes the role of her extended family in abusing and taking advantage of her. She sought counseling at the Rwanda Youth Healing Center, and graduated from law school in 2011. She is now working to realize her dream of being a child advocate

Assigned Quote from Grace: “Whenever I see them [those who killed my parents] I remember everything.... They hurt me, they left me all alone.... I’m not part of them because nobody came to reconcile with me. When we [victims] cry they make fun of us, saying, 'Haven’t they finished crying yet?' I want to be alone and just reflect upon my history. I will live alone until I die.”

Questions:

1. What are the differences in the ways Agnes and Grace have dealt with what happened to them? Where would you locate them on the **Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation** diagram?
2. What conditions have to be met for there to be forgiveness? To help you answer this question, think of a time in your life when you forgave someone. Under what conditions were you able to forgive? Or, think of a time when you were unable to forgive. What conditions were not met?
3. What is reconciliation? What is the role of reparations in reconciliation? How does it build upon and go beyond forgiveness?

Jean and Gregoire: Two Responses to Perpetration during Genocide

Follow Steps 2 and 3: The facilitator reads out loud the Background Information, Assigned Quotes, and the Questions.



Background Information: Jean is a confessed killer who organized his neighbors to kill over 40 people. Jean admits to killing one person. He was released from prison and lives with his wife and four children.

Assigned Quote from Jean: “The good thing is that people are living happily together. Killing a person is a crime [today] but at that time [during the genocide] killing was no longer a crime. Before [the genocide] people were punished for killing others but at that time you were supported. So you understand why I would blame the one who told me to kill a Tutsi. But now there are no problems. Now people are collaborating. People have forgotten those troubles.”



Background Information: Gregoire was a mid-level government official in his district and is now serving a life sentence for organizing a massacre. We meet him halfway through the film at the heavy door to the prison and he is wearing an orange prison uniform.

Assigned Quote from Gregoire: “Maybe some people blame it on the government but the government is not inside our hearts. I brainwashed people to kill Tutsi. I never killed Tutsi but...if I’d wanted to stop it nothing would have happened.”

Questions:

1. What are the differences in the ways Jean and Gregoire have dealt with what they did during the genocide?
2. How do people take responsibility for their actions differently?
3. What can you do in your classroom or community to foster greater willingness by people to take responsibility for their harmful actions?

CLOSING ACTIVITY AND PERSONAL REFLECTION



Students will need their journals or notebooks

Read the following reconciliation success story of a genocide widow from a village in the Huye District in Rwanda's Southern Province. Its capital is Butare, which was Rwanda's colonial capital and traditional "second city." In Huye, victims/survivors, perpetrators who were released from prison, and ex-combatants participate in a process of community reconciliation founded on participation in dialogues, micro-enterprise, and trauma support.

As a genocide widow who lost most of her children said, "at first we were afraid, and [the perpetrators] were ashamed, but then we talked about the challenges and traumas we all live with." The widow spoke of a newfound sense of community after years of loneliness. She enjoys the group meetings and post-harvest parties. She can go to her neighbors for help, even if they are former perpetrators. An ex-prisoner said how helpful it was for him to understand that he, too, suffers from trauma. He gave a speech at the close of his sector's recent commemoration, sharing his testimony. "Even if I am ashamed of what I did, I am not ashamed to speak. I want my wife and my children to know what happened. I do not want them to go on thinking I am innocent and to blame the neighbors for accusing me. Now I am living more comfortably in the community with a freer heart."³²

³²USAID, "Turning from the Past to Face the Future: Negotiating the Transition to a Post-genocide Rwanda" (Washington, DC: USAID, 2012), 31.

Think about how this story relates to your personal experience with forgiveness by using the following questions to prompt personal reflection and journal writing.



People often report feeling relieved, lighter, and more energized when they forgive and are forgiven; when forgiveness is not granted or offered, people often report feeling heavy, stuck, burdened.

Questions:

- Have you ever been able to forgive someone who hurt or disrespected you?
- What prompted you to forgive them? How did you view them before you forgave them? How did you view them after you forgave them? Try to remember how it felt to forgive them and describe in detail.
- If you chose not to forgive, explain your decision and how it felt not to forgive them and describe in detail.
- Have you ever been forgiven by someone you hurt or disrespected? If so, describe in detail how it felt to be forgiven. If not, what happened to your relationship with that person and why do you think he or she chose not to forgive you?

PART TWO: *COEXIST* FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

LESSONS AT A GLANCE

LESSON THREE: LEARNING FROM *COEXIST*

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LESSON FOUR: WHAT IT MEANS FOR ME

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PART TWO: *COEXIST* FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

LESSON THREE: LEARNING FROM *COEXIST*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After seeing *Coexist* students will have an opportunity to

- understand the parallels between bullying and genocide;
- reflect further on the attitudes, behaviors and perspectives of victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and upstanders;
- develop working definitions of key words;
- explore the meaning of compassion and forgiveness.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Use the following quote as a writing prompt.

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

MAIN ACTIVITY

Teacher gives **Overview** of the connection between genocide and other forms of mistreatment and brutality, such as bullying.

Overview of Genocide and Bullying: Common Denominators

Genocide and bullying both stem from an abuse of power and rely on contempt, humiliation, and dehumanization bred by hatred when targeting a group or an individual for mistreatment. Both can happen when others fail to step in to stop the spreading of lies and when a new accepted level of cruelty is established incrementally. As former nun Barbara Coloroso writes, "To begin to fathom genocide, the place to start is not with conflict but with bullying. Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate activity intended to harm, to induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and to create terror in the target."³³ Coloroso goes on to say that bullying includes three elements: imbalance of power, intent to harm, and threat of further aggression. She adds that when "bullying escalates unabated, a fourth element is added: Terror."³⁴

How do the behaviors seen in bullying escalate into something more widespread and dangerous? Coloroso writes, "When institutional and situational factors combine with a murderous racial, ethnic, or religious ideology rooted in contempt for a group of people, then bullying is taken to its extreme. The bullies are now well on their way to setting the stage for the dress rehearsals that precede a genocide. What begins as taunting, mocking, hazing, and humiliation quickly progresses to torture, and then on to mass murder. Incinerate children and go home for dinner."³⁵

³³Barbara Coloroso, *Extraordinary Evil A Short Walk to Genocide* (New York: Nation Books, 2007), 55-56.

³⁴Coloroso, 56.

³⁵Coloroso, 74.

Herbert Kelman highlights the **routinization of cruelty** as a key marker for genocide and as a factor in bullying. In *Violence Without Moral Restraint*, he sets forth two additional psychological conditions for genocide: **obedience to authority** and **dehumanization**. In the first, which he refers to as authorization, “...the person becomes involved in an action without considering the implications of that action and without really making a decision. Once he has taken the initial step, he is in a new psychological and social situation in which the pressures to continue are quite powerful.”³⁶ In the second, the victim and victimizer are dehumanized in the sense of being deprived of identity and community.



Students need their journals.

Questions for reflection/discussion:

Teachers can encourage student reflection on how these three psychological conditions for violence (routinization of cruelty, obedience to authority, dehumanization) were met in Rwanda and the degree to which they have been met in acts of hatred in their school or community. The following questions assume that students have discussed *Coexist* and worked with some of the learning activities found in Part One of this guide.

- Define authority: What is authority? Was obedience to authority a factor in the rise of Hutu power and the orchestration of the genocide? Is obedience to the authority of the bully a factor in keeping students from becoming upstanders? What is the role of individual choice versus group think?
- How were the Tutsi dehumanized in Rwanda? How is the targeted individual or group made to appear unworthy of respect and compassion at your school?
- How did the Hutu power movement “test the waters” of tolerance for mob-driven acts of cruelty before ordering the full-scale slaughter of Tutsi? And how do bullies at school “test the waters of tolerance” through name-calling, mistreatment, and deliberate isolation of victims?

³⁶Herbert Kelman, “Violence without Moral Restraint: Reflections on the Dehumanization of Victims and Victimizers,” *Journal of Social Issues* 29, no. 4 (1973), 46.

Teacher asks students to make lists of the:

- Range of victim feelings, as seen in *Coexist* (add the following only if students do not mention them: acceptance, withdrawal, anger, outrage, grief, torment, fear, humiliation, shame, embarrassment, depression, lack of trust, betrayal, vengeance). Ask students if they know victims who have had other feelings, and add them to the list.
- Range of perpetrator attitudes about their role in the genocide (*see Resource Section for People of Coexist to help students remember the perpetrators featured in Coexist: Jean, Gregoire, Theosphore*)
- Bystander behaviors during genocide (*see Resource Section for People of Coexist to help students remember the bystander: Alexander*)
- Different ways people heal: contrast Grace with Agnes, or Grace with Theophilla, or Agnes with Domitilie and Elisabeth, Pacifique with Elisabeth
- Different ways people respond to the call to take responsibility for their actions: contrast Jean, Gregoire, Alexander, Theosphore
- Approaches used by Rwandans to rehumanize former perpetrators: REACH, RYHC

PERSONAL REFLECTION AND SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY



Teacher needs one Talking Piece per group of five students for Circle activity. See Resource Section for [People of Coexist](#) and [definition of compassion](#).

Part One

Students write in their journals or share in dyads. **Think about** the people featured in *Coexist*.

1. Define compassion: What is it?
2. Think about the people you met in *Coexist*.

For whom do you have the least compassion and why? If you could sit with this person, what question might you ask to gain more understanding of him or her? Do you think you could ever develop a shred of compassion for this person?

For whom do you have the most compassion and why? If you could sit with this person, what question might you ask her or him? What experience of your own might you want to share?

Part Two

Divide up students into groups of five and ask them to sit in a Circle. Remind students that the testimony and comments made in the film reflect the opinions of those interviewed, and as viewers they are encouraged to consider whether they agree or disagree with what they heard. Teacher gives a Talking Piece and set of questions to one student in each group. This student will help keep the conversation flowing in the Circle. The student with the Talking Piece and set of questions reminds others how to use the Talking Piece (speak when you have it, listen when you don't, pass when you want to give the gift of silence, send the Talking Piece around again in case those who passed in the first round now want to share). Next, the student reads the first question and passes the Talking Piece to her or his left. You can assign a different set of the following questions to each group or use the same set of questions, depending on the learning outcome you are seeking and the amount of time available.

1. Are people born killers? Do you agree with Elisabeth that “once a killer, always a killer”?
2. What are some of the justifications you have heard people use for acts of violence?
3. What do you think are the various causes of violence? What role does injustice play in creating conditions for violence?
4. Who stands to benefit from forgiveness? Who stands to lose?
5. How might you judge the sincerity and remorse in a perpetrator’s confession or admission of guilt?
6. What role did sexual violence play in the Rwanda genocide? Does violence impact women differently than men? If so, how and why?
7. What examples can you name from the “public square” that contribute to or incite violence? What about advertisements, lyrics, bumper stickers, video games, films, and online postings?

PERSONAL REFLECTION AND BUDDY SHARING

1. Have you ever justified violence by yourself or others? If so, what arguments did you use or have you heard others use?
2. Name the different forms that violence can take (e.g., personal, interpersonal, intergroup, social, economic, sexual, psychological, institutional, or more broadly systemic or structural). How is this form of violence justified by the media/by those in positions of authority/by you?
3. Have you ever felt satisfied when stepping in to protect someone who was being mistreated? Have you ever felt paralyzed from stepping in to protect someone who was being mistreated?
4. How have you been othered by someone? How have you othered someone?

Share with a buddy.

CLOSING ACTIVITY AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

What most concerns me about the content of this conversation is....

A question that remains unanswered for me is....

PART TWO: *COEXIST* FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

LESSON FOUR: WHAT IT MEANS FOR ME

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a follow-up to viewing and discussing *Coexist*, students should have an opportunity to continue

- deepening their understanding of how they see and deal with difference;
- exploring and sharing their feelings about the film, and acts of mistreatment and harm they have experienced;
- examining the critical role of bystanders and upstanders, including the role of the U.S. in response to the genocide;
- recognizing prejudice and othering, and thinking about how to take a stand.

OPENING ACTIVITY

To promote reflection on the issue of personal and group responsibility.



IMPORTANT: Students should be discouraged from sharing something current that makes them feel vulnerable or something they are ashamed to talk about or might feel unsafe revealing to others. Students should be told that this activity is not designed to provide an opportunity to expose something done to them by others in the classroom. School counselors can be notified in advance of this activity, in case painful or disturbing memories get triggered. Students will need their journals or notebooks.

Ask each student to think about an instance **when he or she was mistreated**. This could have happened at school or on the street, and could involve name-calling, pushing, excluding, demonizing, or any other form of mistreatment or disrespect. **Students are advised to pick an instance they feel comfortable talking about.** If students prefer not to participate in this activity they can pick an instance when someone else was mistreated. In their journals, students will write up to five sentences about the incident and up to five sentences about how it made them feel or, if using a case not their own, how they think it made someone else feel.

Students divide up into dyads or small groups, and share among themselves the incident they wrote about and how it made them feel. Each person can take up to two minutes.

Key questions for reflection/discussion

Ask students to make a personal list of the main **kinds of difference** they see in their school community. Teacher assembles and clusters student ideas to create a group list or asks for a student volunteer to do so.



Add any of the following if missing from student examples and if relevant: gender, social class, age, religion (or lack thereof), neighborhood, abilities, country of origin, immigration status, language, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family composition, rural/urban. (Teacher needs flip-chart and markers)

Ask students to identify which acts of harm or mistreatment they as a group have experienced. Adapt the [snowball exercise from Lesson One](#) to protect confidentiality. Teacher makes a list of the acts of harm or mistreatment the group has experienced. Ask what role people's beliefs about difference played in these acts of harm or mistreatment.

MAIN ACTIVITY

Choose one case of mistreatment, name-calling, othering, or disrespect from the list. It is very important to pick an incident that is not current and that will not expose or embarrass anyone.

As you set up this activity be sure to mention that

- bystanders can become upstanders when they step in to stop cruelty and abuse, and it is important to learn how to do this safely and to be effective;
- upstanders can rely on safety in numbers to protect themselves and their communities, and to uphold values such as mutual respect and trust;³⁷
- those who bully may themselves have been mistreated, and they may have a serious problem with anger management and need help, and efforts should be made to bring them back in to a healthy relationship with the community.

Discuss the Case:

- Describe the victim, why he or she was labeled as different, and his or her particular vulnerability. How was speech used to denigrate the victim? Who allowed the perpetrator to spread a message of hate?
- Have others been victimized for having similar characteristics? How long have they been vulnerable? Is there anything the victim could have done differently to protect himself or herself? Did the victim ask for help in the past? Was she or he taken seriously? Is there anything others could have done to protect the victim or have a positive influence on the situation? Are there outside people or organizations that could have protected and supported this victim?
- Describe the perpetrator's characteristics. In what ways did he/she have power over the victim? Is there anything he/she was afraid of, ashamed of, or felt humiliated by? What kind of encouragement did the perpetrator get? Did he/she have a supportive audience? Did he/she have an inner circle of peers who provided encouragement? Has this perpetrator ever been a victim or witness to acts of violence? Has this perpetrator ever gotten help with anger management? Did anyone reach out to this perpetrator to help him/her develop caring relationships and find a path toward tolerance and reconciliation?

³⁷See *Quabbin Mediation* (www.quabbinmediation.org) for information about active bystander training.

- Draw a timeline that charts how the case originated, developed, and escalated. Pay special attention to any attempts made to protect the victim, or dissuade the victimizer, as well as missed opportunities to diffuse the situation.

Discuss what role upstanders might have played in deescalating this case of violence and the meaning of personal responsibility.



See [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).

Pose the following question about the students' experiences referenced in the group's list of acts of harm or mistreatment.

What keeps bystanders from taking a clear and strong stand against abusive and cruel behavior?

Would it matter to you if the victim were

- a friend?
- someone you don't like?
- someone who is "different"?
- someone you consider "unpopular"?
- someone who has been mean to you?
- someone you don't know?

How can a bystander become an upstander and at the same time protect himself/herself and show courage?



Depending on the case, consider adding concrete actions, such as calling for help from adults and other students who can stand up to the person doing the bullying, peacefully separating the victim from the bully, using clever distraction to deescalate tension, asking the victim if he or she needs help to try to diffuse the tension, pretending you were supposed to meet the victim and leading him or her out of harm's way, reporting bullying behaviors on social media.

Upstander training can help develop student ability to intervene. Students can explore the tension between wanting to be accountable to their community and yet not knowing how to stop cruelty when they witness it. They can also learn to recognize their own sensors that tell them when a situation is unsafe, and to consider their options for protecting themselves, while also protecting a potential victim from abuse and cruelty.

Textual Analysis

In *Coexist* we see victims and perpetrators wrestling with the human consequences of the 1994 genocide. Our discussion about bystanding and upstanding has up until now focused on individual and group behavior. **What happens when a country or group of countries, not a person, plays the role of bystander or upstander?** Let's examine the role of the international community in relation to Rwanda during the genocide.

Policymakers in France, Belgium, and the United States and at the United Nations all knew of the preparations for massive slaughter and failed to take the steps needed to prevent it. Aware from the start that Tutsi were being targeted for elimination, the leading foreign actors refused to acknowledge the genocide. To have stopped the leaders and the zealots would have required a relatively small military force. Not only did international leaders reject this course, but they also declined for weeks to use their political and moral authority to challenge the legitimacy of the genocidal government. They refused to declare that a government guilty of exterminating its citizens would never receive international assistance. They did nothing to silence the radio that broadcast calls for slaughter. Such simple measures would have sapped the strength of the authorities bent on mass murder and encouraged Rwandan opposition to the extermination campaign.³⁸

According to the former speaker of the Rwandan parliament,

... in reality the United States could have done a great deal without ever sending troops. If President Clinton had strongly spoken out against the genocide and threatened the Rwandan government with action if they persisted, I firmly believe those perpetrating the genocide would have stopped. A country like Rwanda would never stand a chance against a force as strong as that of the

³⁸Des Forges, 2.

United States. The threat of force alone would have made the leaders of the genocide call for an end to the killing, and because of Rwandans' strong obedience to authority, their followers would have listened.³⁹

In 1998, four years after the genocide, President Clinton visited Rwanda for a three-hour stopover at the Kigali airport and apologized to the victims: "We come here today partly in recognition of the fact that we in the United States and the world community did not do as much as we could have and should have done to try to limit what occurred."

Ask students to read the following text by genocide scholar and U.S. government official, Samantha Power.

Why did the United States not do more for the Rwandans at the time of the killings? Did the President really not know about the genocide...? Who were the people in his Administration who made the life-and-death decisions that dictated U.S. policy? Why did they decide (or decide not to decide) as they did? Were any voices inside or outside the U.S. government demanding that the United States do more? If so, why weren't they heeded? And most crucial, what could the United States have done to save lives?⁴⁰

Even after the reality of genocide in Rwanda had become irrefutable, when bodies were shown choking the Kagera River on the nightly news, the brute fact of the slaughter failed to influence U.S. policy except in a negative way. American officials, for a variety of reasons, shunned the use of what became known as the "g-word." They felt that using it would have obliged the United States to act, under the terms of the 1948 Genocide Convention. They also believed, understandably, that it would harm U.S. credibility to name the crime and then do nothing to stop it. A discussion paper on Rwanda, prepared by an official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and dated May 1, testifies to the nature of official thinking. Regarding issues that might be brought up at the next interagency working group, it stated,

Genocide investigation: Language that calls for an international investigation of human rights abuses and possible violations of the genocide convention. *Be Careful. Legal at State was worried about this yesterday—Genocide finding could commit [the U.S. government] to actually "do something."* [Emphasis added.]

³⁹Sebarenzi, 127.

⁴⁰Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide," *The Atlantic Magazine* (September 2001): 1.

During the entire three months of the genocide Clinton never assembled his top policy advisers to discuss the killings. [National Security Advisor] Anthony Lake likewise never gathered the "principals"—the Cabinet-level members of the foreign-policy team. Rwanda was never thought to warrant its own top-level meeting. When the subject came up, it did so along with, and subordinate to, discussions of Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. Whereas these crises involved U.S. personnel and stirred some public interest, Rwanda generated no sense of urgency and could safely be avoided by Clinton at no political cost. The editorial boards of the major American newspapers discouraged U.S. intervention during the genocide. They, like the Administration, lamented the killings but believed, in the words of an April 17 [1994] *Washington Post* editorial, "The United States has no recognizable national interest in taking a role, certainly not a leading role." Capitol Hill was quiet. Some in Congress were glad to be free of the expense of another flawed UN mission. Others, including a few members of the Africa subcommittees and the Congressional Black Caucus, eventually appealed tamely for the United States to play a role in ending the violence—but again, they did not dare urge U.S. involvement on the ground, and they did not kick up a public fuss. Members of Congress weren't hearing from their constituents. Pat Schroeder, of Colorado, said on April 30, "There are some groups terribly concerned about the gorillas.... But—it sounds terrible—people just don't know what can be done about the people." Randall Robinson, of the nongovernmental organization TransAfrica, was preoccupied, staging a hunger strike to protest the U.S. repatriation of Haitian refugees. Human Rights Watch supplied exemplary intelligence and established important one-on-one contacts in the Administration, but the organization lacks a grassroots base from which to mobilize a broader segment of American society.⁴¹

⁴¹Power, 7.

Discussion questions:

1. What key facts did you learn from the readings? What surprised you?
2. How does Sebarenzi describe the options available to the U.S.? And in light of this source, what response do you wish the U.S. had made?
3. How does Power explain the fact that the U.S. failed to intervene to prevent the Rwanda genocide? Use this source in your explanation.
4. What power do we have as U.S. citizens to influence the decisions of our government and the editorial boards of major American newspapers?
5. Can you think of any successful campaigns or boycotts in U.S. history that have influenced the thinking of and decisions made by our government? What are some common characteristics of successful campaigns or boycotts?
6. What role can a “grassroots base” play in mobilizing public opinion for change and urgent action?
7. Why do you think the American people were mute during the Rwanda genocide and failed to pressure their government into taking action?
8. Is there any injustice you want to speak up about, either as an individual or as a class? Whose attention do you want to get? How could you attract other supporters to your cause? What change do you hope to create? How will things look differently if you succeed?

CLOSING ACTIVITY



Give students a copy of the [People of Coexist](#) and [Breaking the Cycle of Revenge, Moving Toward Reconciliation](#).

Discussion

Divide up students into groups of 4-5. Give each group a clipboard with paper and a pen. Ask one student to volunteer to be the note-taker and group spokesperson. Students sit in a Circle, use a Talking Piece, and generate a list of all the connections they see between what happened in Rwanda and what is happening in their lives. Give groups 10 minutes to develop their lists and then invite each spokesperson to report out. Teacher records and clusters the responses, and invites open discussion.

Four Options for Personal Reflection:

1. Write a letter to someone who had the power to protect others yet did not stand up and speak out. Explore your feelings about that person's role as a bystander, and whether you think the individual has learned anything from the choices she or he made. You do not have to send this letter, but you can if you want to.
2. Write a letter to someone you dislike or fear. This can be someone you know personally, a historic figure, or a public figure. See if you can highlight something redeeming about her or him while composing your letter, or mention a fork in the road you wish she or he had taken in their life. The purpose of this letter is for personal learning and growth, not for sending.
3. Write a letter to someone who was mistreated or disrespected at school. You do not have to send this letter but you can if you want to. Focus on what you saw, how you felt while witnessing the mistreatment, and how you wish you had responded to the incident. Take personal responsibility if you want to.
4. Write a letter to someone you mistreated and convey how you feel about your behavior. The purpose of this letter is for personal learning and growth, not for sending.
5. Reflecting on how you see and deal with difference in your life, write a Personal Pledge that reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors you hope to embody, and the choices you intend to make in your relationships and in the communities that matter to you.

Thank you for using the *Coexist* Teacher's Guide.

Please share your thoughts and experiences
by filling out our questionnaire at
upstanderproject.org/survey.

RESOURCE SECTION



*Genocide survivor,
REACH Participant, Living with AIDS*

Despite being raped and enduring her family's murder, she has forgiven those who came forward to confess. She says forgiving those who killed her family allows her to go on. Agnes expresses compassion by working with other women preparing food for reconciliation workshops and by caring for her adopted children.



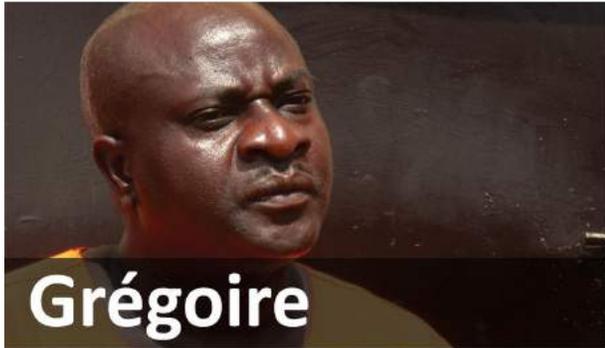
*Genocide survivor, Rwanda Youth Healing
Center Member, and Law Student*

Grace's parents were killed after her godmother, a nun, outed her family to genocidal killers. After their murder, she sought refuge with four different families, all of which betrayed her trust and left her isolated. Because of these experiences, she decided she wants to live alone for the rest of her life. Enduring physical, sexual, and emotional abuse has made Grace feel like an outsider to those who chose to forgive and reconcile after the genocide. She believes she knows who killed her family but the killers have never come forward to ask for forgiveness. Grace says she feels like that means they could kill again.



Bystander, Destroyed Homes

The first person who approached Agnes and admitted he harmed her. Alexander and Agnes were neighbors before the genocide, but during the genocide Alexander admits he helped burn down her house. Today, they are neighbors again, living peacefully.



Low-Level Genocide Leader

He takes responsibility for brainwashing Hutu and ordering them to kill, but says he never killed anyone himself. Sentenced to life in prison, he is appealing. Grégoire hopes that since he has embraced reconciliation he will be released.



Confessed Killer, Ex-prisoner

He believes it is the duty of all Rwandans to end genocidal ideology and move forward with reconciliation. He admits he killed a man during the genocide and ordered his neighbors to kill. Jean mostly blames the government for his actions, but today says he is committed to a united Rwanda.



Confessed Killer

He is a confessed killer who was released from prison. He participates in a REACH Workshop and kneels before the people who are present. He vows to never kill again.



Genocide Survivor, Paul's Widow

She believes the violence is not really over. Her husband Paul, a judge of the Gacaca Court, was brutally murdered in 2007 for his involvement in sentencing genocide perpetrators to prison. She does not believe reconciliation in Rwanda is the success story believed by many people, both in and out of the country.



Genocide Survivor, Paul's Sisters

She does not believe that killers can change. She believes they are born that way and that no one, not even a government, can make someone become a killer.



Director of African Studies, Boston University

He was teaching in Rwanda before the genocide and has spent much of his life after the genocide studying what happened and why. He warns the policy of mandating reconciliation could prove dangerous in the future, since many Rwandans he has spoken to do not in their hearts believe the government's version of what is happening now.



Journalist

Has mixed feelings on the government's policy of mandated reconciliation. He acknowledges most people do not necessarily believe in their hearts that genocidal ideologies are gone for good, but on the other hand believes it is good that Rwandans do not express these ideologies and have learned to tolerate their neighbors. He believes tolerance may be a more attainable goal than reconciliation.



Peace Activist

Believes in the power of Rwandan youth to carry on with peace and prosperity for the nation. Says mandating reconciliation is good for now, but without true healing in the hearts of Rwandans there could be violent consequences in the future.



Fatuma

*National Unity & Reconciliation Commission,
Executive Secretary*

Believes reconciliation means accommodating all Rwandans, even those who killed in the past. She believes reconciliation efforts must continue to ensure a bright future for Rwanda and that any sacrifices in personal liberty are necessary to ensure peace.



Pacifique

*Genocide Survivor, Mother,
REACH Member*

Pacifique was 7 years old during the genocide. Her mother, brothers, and uncles were killed and she was orphaned. 14 years later one of the men who killed her relatives invited Pacifique to a reconciliation workshop. More than a year later she forgave him and he helped build her a house.



Theosphore

Confessed Killer, Ex-prisoner

Theosphore, the man who killed Pacifique's brothers, served ten years in prison for the crime. He seeks her forgiveness in a REACH reconciliation workshop, and in so doing, realizes she is homeless and builds her a home.



REACH Founder

He focuses on pushing survivors, perpetrators, and their families to interact through business and cultural opportunities to build relationships that can lead to reconciliation. REACH is a Christian organization that runs reconciliation and healing workshops across Rwanda.



REACH Pastor

Augstin is a pastor who works with REACH to help build reconciliation between survivors and perpetrators of the genocide. He has counseled Theoshore and Pacifique.



Rwanda Youth Healing Center Program Assistant

She compares Grace and Théophilla's very different reactions to similar experiences.



Genocide survivor, Rwanda Youth Healing Center Counselor

Théophilla lost her parents during the genocide. She has chosen to forgive the people who murdered her family. Théophilla is now married and expecting her first child.

COEXIST NOTE-TAKING SHEET⁴²

Distribute after students watch *Coexist*

Jot down what you remember about the people you met in the film. These notes will help spark your memory during class discussion.

Agnes: genocide survivor, REACH participant; leads group of Tutsi and Hutu women	
Grace: genocide survivor, Rwanda Youth Healing Center member	
Theophilla: genocide survivor, Rwanda Youth Healing Center counselor	
Solange: Rwanda Youth Healing Center program assistant	
Alexander: Agnes's neighbor; destroyed her home	
Reverend Kalisa: REACH founder, clergyman	
Pacifique: genocide survivor whose relatives were killed and is homeless	
Theosphere: killed Pacifique's brothers, seeks forgiveness	

⁴²Developed by Zoe Tarshis, Language Arts Teacher, Innovation Academy Charter School, Tyngsboro, Massachusetts

Augstin: a pastor who works with REACH	
Gregoire: Low-level genocide leader, serving life sentence	
Jean: Confessed killer, ex-prisoner	
Jean Baptiste: former perpetrator who kneels down during a REACH seminar	
Domitilie: Genocide survivor, Paul's widow	
Elisabeth: Genocide survivor, Paul's sister	
Tim: Director of African Studies at Boston University, Rwanda scholar	
Sam: Rwandan journalist and social commentator	
Marc: Rwandan peace activist	
Fatuma: Executive Secretary of National Unity and Reconciliation Commission	

STORIES OF FORGIVENESS

Janet Connors and Her Son's Murderers: My Forgiveness Was a Gift to Them ⁴³

Eight years ago...my son Joel's murderer was acquitted. What a blessing to stand before you today to tell you how I got my justice. I dedicate today to honor all victims and survivors of violent crimes:

those here today, those who couldn't get out of bed today;

those who wear the masks of survivorship, who pretend to get through each day, until they do;

those who struggle to put the pieces of their lives back together, and those who no longer have a life to put back together.

Let's especially hold the young people who have been stolen from us. When I speak my son Joel's name, I acknowledge there are many more young people whose lives have been taken from their families and community.

The murder of my son...

This is the most profound loss I have ever known. Though the stormy, ferocious surf that raged in the immediate aftermath of my son's murder has—for the most part—subsided, turbulent undercurrents still run through my soul. The continuous ripples course through my veins and even now as I stand before you, they shake me to my core.

Huge as the horrific taking of my son's life is, the problem of violence and the quest for peace is bigger than my individual loss. The waters that hold the possible solutions and resolutions are wider and deeper than my own healing.

My healing is tied to the healing of the community of which I am a part. My justice is bound to justice for that beloved community.

My story is not just my story: there are many who have travelled on similar paths.

I tell mine today to broaden the repertoire of options that victims/survivors have to choose from; to encourage survivors to follow their heart and remain confident as they determine their own healing needs and desires; to foster respect that those needs may vary greatly from survivor to survivor even within the same family.

Another reason I tell my story is because I believe in the hope and the promise of our young people; I believe in humanity and that there are very few truly evil people in the world; that

⁴³Janet Connors is a Boston mother, community activist, and Fellow at Suffolk University's Center for Restorative Justice. Adapted from her April 12, 2011 keynote presentation at the annual conference of MOVA (Massachusetts Office for Victims Assistance), which was delivered at the State House in Boston, Massachusetts. Permission granted to author in email on January 7, 2013.

even those few—who have become evil—were not born that way. It is on all of us in society to understand the root causes that allow evil forces to take hold of a human being.

I believe we as human beings hold within ourselves a core self, a good self, a best self, and while through the words that we speak and the things that we do we may stray very far away from that core of goodness, we can always return ourselves to that place deep inside of us.

I believe in community. I believe that justice is not only held in and dealt by the hands of the powers that be in the criminal justice system; I believe that justice is held in and dealt by the heart and soul of community.

Every time a young person is killed there is a hole in the fabric of our community. Those holes go un-mended; they are forever. Every time a young person is seriously harmed, incarcerated or deported there is also a hole in our community tapestry. Those holes have a possibility of being mended. When it comes to youth violence, we must heal our communities. When it comes to all violence, we have to heal the harms: the individual, the familial, and the societal hurts that have caused a rupture in the souls of those who respond to their own unhealed hearts by harming others.

We must help individuals heal and in turn address the harms of the collective community to which they belong. Restorative justice is a healing justice. Its practices offer an array of creative, alternative solutions, which bring us closer to our ultimate goal of “Victims No More—No More Victims.”

While I will continue to do my share to make needed changes in our systems, the pace of systemic response is slow. There is plenty of justice and injustice that happens in the course of each and every day in community. This is my truth; this is the story I stand before you to tell.

Background: I have been a community and social justice activist who has lived and worked with children and families in Dorchester all my life. I have worked with homeless families, families of prisoners, and families involved with social services. I have worked in positive youth development programs, family strengthening/ family support programs, abuse and violence prevention programs. And yet I could not keep my own son from being killed.

On January 31, 2001 my 19-year old son Joel was murdered. The grief and anger we held as family and friends of Jo-Jo was overwhelming. To prevent more violence, we held Circles with my son’s friends. We all expressed that grief and anger in these Circles. We explored together the very natural and human reaction to want revenge and ways of handling those feelings without causing any further harm. No harm to anyone else in Joel’s name. That was the mantra put forward. I asked the young people to let the system take its course. It was a huge leap of faith to do so myself and to ask them to do so as well. Many of us knew the system was not always trustworthy in our communities. The young people kept their agreements. No more harm....This is restorative justice.

Four young men were involved in the taking of Joel’s life. While all were originally charged

with Murder in the First Degree, in the end, three were convicted of manslaughter with sentences varied in length from 8 to 10 years, 10 to 12 years, and 18 to 20 years, depending on plea arrangements and agreements to testify or not. My son's murderer went to trial and was acquitted. He beat his case. We did not get justice. In spite of this the young people kept to their commitment. This began my personal journey in Restorative Justice (RJ), my journey to heal my spirit and to feel my justice.

Let me back-track to...

When my son was killed and four young men were arrested, I was overwhelmingly struck by the waste of five young people's precious lives. I wondered about their mothers, and how it must feel to be them. I could feel the foundation of my belief system starting to crumble. I could not reconcile the fact that we in a "civilized society" find justice in putting people in cages. Yet, I was glad they had been caught and I knew they needed to be held accountable somehow.

I was relieved that we did not live in a death penalty state; there truly was a burden lifted off my shoulders to know that a state-sanctioned murder was not going to take another person's life in my son's name. That level of revenge, legal or not, was not in line with my spiritual or philosophical beliefs. I did not see it as an option any more valid than if any of my children or their friends were to seek a harmful revenge.

I DID want his killers held accountable though, and I DID wonder: What was justice going to mean for me? Nothing brings my son back, not even the imprisonment for life of all the perpetrators, not all the horrible things that might happen to them in prison, none of it brings back my son. They are coming back though. They are coming back to community. What will they be like after incarceration? Will they come out and continue to do dirt? If so, will we in community lose out again?

As someone who had worked with children and families all my life, I had to ask myself, Where did we fail these young men that they could get to a place where they could routinely break into people's homes and kill someone?

Before arrests: I write in my journal, Who are these monsters? The next day, upon reflection, I write, No They Are Not Monsters. When I think of them as Monsters...I let them off the hook. Monsters are supposed to hurt people. People are not supposed to hurt other people. It is through holding them in their humanity that I hold them accountable. As talk in the community began to buzz, some of the names that came up were kids in families I had worked with over the years. In the end, none of them were actually involved but they were associated with those who were responsible for my son's murder. Like it or not, we are all profoundly inter-connected.

When we went to court we already knew the concept of closure was a myth, perhaps made up by therapists, promoted by the media, embraced by law enforcement and criminal justice system folks so they could move on to the next client, the next story, and sadly, the next victim.

In the course of these court proceedings, I was so aware of how much pain the families of these young men were in as well. There are no winners here. The situation is devastating to all involved.

Two of the families of these young men treated us terribly; conversely, the two families of the young men who had testified and I had powerful and beautiful exchanges. After my family and I had read our Impact statements, one of their mothers along with his grandmother, aunt and cousins expressed their sorrow to us. We all sobbed together and hugged. Another young man's parents expressed their sorrow to me in the hallway during a lunch break. When we returned to the courtroom, that mother and I held hands as her son was sentenced. She was sitting next to me on a bench...and our hands just extended to one another almost on their own. We were two mothers with broken hearts.

Whenever I think about how Joel's killer was acquitted, I can still hear my own holler erupting deep from the soul of my belly: "He got away with murder, he got away with murder!!!" In my attempts to reconcile this injustice, I searched my soul. I believe there is a purpose to every happening. I struggled to find what purpose could possibly be worth the taking of my son's life and now I had to find what purpose there could be to his murderer being acquitted.

We as a family met immediately after with detectives and people from the DA's office. I later met with his mother. I wanted to address some of her behaviors during the court process, to hear her admit that her son had killed mine, and to let her know that if her son were ever courageous enough to do so, I would like to meet with him. I met with the defense attorney because I do not understand how you can defend someone you know has murdered.

I cried and cried and tried and tried to make sense out of it all. I came to accept that he had got a second chance and that there must be a divine purpose as to why. I came to think of him as "another mother's son." I prayed that he would take advantage of this divine chance.

However, this young man has continued to do dirt in the community and is now serving time. He kidnapped someone, assaulted people on several occasions with a dangerous weapon, fathered two children (his second child born to its mother in Framingham State Prison). He escaped custody through the roof hatch of a transport van, robbed banks. He threatened people by saying "Do what I say or I will kill you. I have killed before." I can't tell you how much it turns my stomach to think that he has used what he did to Joel to threaten and intimidate others. He is totally out of control, in part, I believe, because he has never been held accountable for the murder of my son. I wonder if he has ever been held accountable for much of anything in his life. As human beings, we may need support and understanding when we make mistakes, but we also need to be held accountable when we do wrong. And you can't get

much more wrong than killing someone. Without accountability, we cannot move forward in a good way. For all that dirt he did; he received a sentence of 3 years and 3 years probation. I do not understand how this system works. I am left again to think and feel that it does NOT.

I wonder if my journey will ever take me to a restorative encounter with him. I have come to know that “You cannot get away with murder!” That understanding does not change my families’ experience with the system. We were not only disappointed in the outcomes of the system; we were disgusted by the process.

We not only felt that my son’s memory was not honored; we felt that his life was dishonored. We not only felt that justice was not served to us; we felt that a real injustice had been dealt to us. The system marched in right behind Joel’s killers and re-victimized and re-traumatized us. I knew then I had to make my own justice. I had to believe that wherever justice is interrupted, it can be at least partially restored. I had to trust that wherever dignity is taken away, it can be returned.

I sought my justice—restorative justice—and asked the Victim Services Director of the Department of Corrections to let me dialogue with the men jailed in my son’s murder. I was told that this was not a practice available through the DOC in this state (Massachusetts). I asked her how we could make it become one. She encouraged me to write a letter. I did so and my request was the first of its kind granted in this state. It is now a policy and an option available to other victim/survivors who may choose to do so. Just because something has not been done before does not mean that it cannot be done.

Some of you might be wondering...why somebody would want to meet with the person who assaulted him or her or killed someone they loved? There are many reasons.

Sometimes, survivors want to find out information that helps them understand what happened, what lead up to and followed the murder or assault. No one knows better than the victim and the person who caused the harm.

Sometimes, survivors want to directly address the person—not the judge—with the life altering impact their harmful actions have had.

Sometimes, as survivors struggle to make meaning out of their tragedy they want or may even need to understand HOW Could Someone Do This? WHY was it them or their loved one who was harmed? or WHAT was going on for the person who victimized them or someone they love?

Sometimes, survivors can ask for and receive some form of retribution, some measure of amends.

Survivors may want, to the extent possible, to reconcile an event that cannot ever be fully reconciled; or sometimes, but never as a required or even proposed outcome, survivors may—for themselves—want to offer forgiveness even for an unforgivable act.

For me, this was the right thing to do. For others, it may not be. My forgiveness was a gift to them; they did not pay their debt to community while incarcerated...it is upon re-entry that they truly pay that off. We need to help them come back in a good way and hold people returning from prison to community with a balance of support and accountability. Both these young men are keeping their commitments. This is restorative justice.

I now have the honor of working with youth in schools, holding Circles to resolve conflicts, ensure fair discipline, and build stronger learning communities. Many students know classmates, friends, neighbors, and relatives who were killed; they are the “forgotten survivors.” Their unmet needs foster continued cycles of violence.

TO ALL SURVIVORS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS I SAY REMEMBER

Though we cannot bring our loved ones back, we can and do bring them forward.

Lessons on Love, From a Rabbi Who Knows Hate and Forgiveness⁴⁴

Rabbi Michael Weisser of Lincoln, Nebraska shares the story of the relationship he and his wife Julie Michael created with Larry Trapp, the Grand Dragon of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, who used to call their home, mail them menacing pamphlets, and threaten their family. The couple reached out to Mr. Trapp, who was wheelchair bound and nearly blind. Kathryn Watterson's book about their relationship is titled *Not by the Sword: How the Love of a Cantor and His Family Transformed a Klansman*. Mr. Trapp eventually moved in with the Weissers, who helped care for him until he died there in 1992, less than a year after their first meeting. By then he'd shifted from a life of hate and bigotry to one of love and non-harmful behavior. *New York Times*, retrieved January 5, 2009.

I Forgave Him in Exchange for His Promise to Forgive Himself and Do No Harm⁴⁵

A ten-year-old child from a Romanian orphanage is adopted by an American family that had already adopted her two younger siblings and now includes a biological child. The recently adopted child, whom we will call Ana, learns English and begins to adapt to life in the U.S. With help from a counselor, she talks about the years of abuse she suffered by her biological father and step-mother in Romania. While intoxicated, they would beat and abuse her. Supported by her spiritual beliefs and her desire to be emotionally healthy, she thinks about forgiveness as a way of integrating the traumas into her life. Mature beyond her years and now a teenager, Ana begins to write letters to her Romanian relatives, including her biological father. In these letters, she asks him to stop drinking and commit no further acts of violence. She asks him to

⁴⁴<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/05/nyregion/05rabbi.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

⁴⁵Email Permission granted by Ana and her mother to author in email message on January 8, 2013.

forgive those who harmed him, to forgive himself, and to try every day to live his life, using her example, with gentleness, compassion, and love. She asks him to make amends to those he has harmed. As she does this, she takes a giant step in her own life by refusing to be defined by the moments of trauma she experienced but rather by her response to those experiences.

Once she reaches young adulthood, Ana and her mother travel to Europe and speak with aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and her biological father. Ana affirms the commitment to forgive her father and her expectation that he will keep his vows to make amends, remain sober, and do no more harm. Her Romanian family cannot believe she has traveled all this distance to personally forgive her biological father who used to beat her. During the visit, their conversations last into the night.

Now a college student, Ana is thriving. Her biological father in Romania remains sober and his children there are growing up free of abuse.

Store Owner Says He Protected Robber from Beating⁴⁶

A robber who threatened the owner of a New Bedford, Massachusetts convenience store found himself being protected by the very man he attacked, when neighbors grew angry and started to beat the suspect. The store owner, Juan Rodriguez, said of the robber, "I just hope this kid can clean up and make something of himself." *Boston Globe*, retrieved September 21, 2012.

Can Forgiveness Play a Role in Criminal Justice?

A Family Chooses to Forgive their Daughter's Killer⁴⁷

Two Tallahassee couples tell their story: the parents of nineteen-year old Ann Grosmaire, who was shot and killed by her boyfriend, Conor McBride; and the parents of Conor McBride, who took Ann's life. The victims' parents and the state attorney are breaking new ground in Florida and nationally by using the restorative justice victim-offender program in a case of homicide.

⁴⁶<http://www.boston.com/metrodesk/2012/09/21/new-bedford-store-owner-says-saved-robber-from-vigilante-beating/hpURzDyzj5kX9npliWgveL/story.html>

⁴⁷http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/magazine/can-forgiveness-play-a-role-in-criminal-justice.html?pagewanted=1&_r=4&hp

SAMPLE FREE WRITING OPTIONS

Choose one of the following six options and do free writing in your journal or notebook for fifteen minutes. If you finish before time is called, pick another option and continue writing.

Think of the people you met in *Coexist*. Make a list of those who most impressed you. How are they coping with what happened to them during the genocide? Describe all of the different types of emotional responses you noticed in the film.

Make a list of the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and values that contribute to genocide. Now review your list and identify those that are present in your school or community. Write about those that are most troubling to you.

Think about the victim-survivors you met in *Coexist*. Think of the victim-survivors you know in your community. What are the similarities and differences between the people in the film and those in your community? How can today's victim avoid becoming tomorrow's perpetrator?

Think about the role of bystanders. What pushes a bystander to become a perpetrator? What moves a bystander to become an upstander? Describe opportunities for upstanding that you or others have missed.

When have you been harmed by someone? When have you harmed someone? Describe both situations and how you felt. When have you protected someone from harm? When have you failed to protect someone from harm? Describe both situations and how you felt.

Who gets othered at your school? How did it start? Who does the othering? What form does it take? Who allows it to happen? What can be done to stop it?

KEY TERMS

Some terms have multiple definitions. This list can be used as part of a writing prompt.

Bystander – one who is present when harm is done to others but remains passive; he or she can become a perpetrator, a victim, or an upstander (*see Lesson 4*)

Coexistence – to exist together at the same time or in the same place; implies mutual tolerance despite differences

Compassion – emotional capacity to feel and express sympathy; feeling concern for someone else’s pain, plight, or suffering; the desire to alleviate suffering in others. Compassion is fundamental to human survival insofar as the well-being of others is essential to our own evolutionarily-defined survival

Dehumanization – reducing the “other” or “enemy” to less-than-human status; depicting the “other side” as inferior, unworthy, undeserving of empathy or protection; an essential component of violence and warfare; can be used when referring to either victims or perpetrators

Forgiveness – the action or process of ceasing to harbor resentment or wrath; to pardon an offender; often seen as spiritual act; usually refers to the person rather than the deed; can be granted by the victim and requested by the perpetrator, once wrongdoing is acknowledged; seen as key to rehumanizing the perpetrator; cannot be forced – is a choice; opens up possibility for human connection and empathy; a powerful force that can transform individuals, relationships, and communities; seeks to bring peace to forgiver; reduces anger, hurt, and depression; has been known to make it easier for survivors to feel connected to deceased loved ones; sometimes truth is given by perpetrators in exchange for the granting of forgiveness by victims; is most meaningful when victimizers make tangible and meaningful amends that have been discussed and agreed upon with victims

Genocide – according to the UN definition, it consists of “acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.”⁴⁸ Genocide scholar Ervin Staub defines it as the planned destruction and extermination of a religious, ethnic, racial, or national group “whether by directly killing them or creating conditions that lead to their deaths or inability to reproduce.”⁴⁹ Its “intent to destroy” differentiates it from ethnic cleansing, whose

⁴⁸[General Assembly resolution 260 \(III\) of 9 December 1948](#) (Prevention and Punishment of Genocide)

⁴⁹Staub, 100

purpose is to forcibly remove individuals of a particular group from a specific geographic location. According to Gregory Stanton, there are ten stages: classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial⁵⁰

Humiliation – a form of oppression that aims to make a person feel denigrated and reduced to a lower position in his or her eyes or others’ eyes

Othering – generally refers to the process whereby a select group of people is identified for persecution and mistreatment; once the “other” group has been targeted and labeled as the enemy, the group begins to experience isolation, scapegoating, and victimization due to an amplification of “us-them” thinking and behavior

Perpetrator – one who commits an offense or crime; one who does harm to others

Prejudice – negative judgment about others based on real or fabricated differences that leads to the privileging of one group over another, and can contribute to harmful deeds

Reconciliation – refers to a complex and slow process whereby healthy relations are restored between individuals or groups where conflict, distrust, hatred, and enmity used to prevail; can only happen if harmful deeds are acknowledged, apologies offered, and relations repaired; includes elements of truth, justice, mercy, mutual empathy and understanding, and peace; without it, many truces and peace accords unravel and become orphaned; implies learning to live with differences; overarching purpose of conflict transformation; a process that exists at different levels and stages of development; cannot be imposed but rather needs to be carefully and patiently cultivated

Rehumanization – bringing someone back into caring relationships, whether that person was a victim or perpetrator; restoring empathy, dignity, self-respect for victims and perpetrators⁵¹

Reparations – can take many forms; at their best, they constitute a sincere and compassionate response by former perpetrators who feel empathy for victim/survivors and want to address the harm that has been done to them

Scapegoating – blaming a person or group, sometimes to isolate them

Stereotypes – a set of traits that come to characterize an identity group, often based on inadequate knowledge or understanding of that group (derogatory stereotypes are a set of

⁵⁰<http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/tenstagesofgenocide.html>

⁵¹See Resource Section, Stories of Forgiveness

negative traits that are used to ridicule and demonize an identity group)

Tolerance – the act or capacity of enduring or putting up with opinions, practices, behaviors, attitudes different from one’s own

Upstander – one who is present when harm is done to others and takes action by speaking up and/or stepping in to protect a potential victim (*see Lesson 4*)

Victim – one who has been injured, harmed, mistreated, humiliated, oppressed, or killed. Many who have been harmed call themselves survivors, not victims

Violence – can take form of imperialist, civil, and interpersonal—all stemming from drive for economic resources and political power;⁵² can be analyzed in four modes: physical; sexual; psychological attack; and deprivation, with three-subtypes:⁵³

- **Self-directed violence** refers to violence in which perpetrator and victim are same individual.
- **Interpersonal violence** refers to violence between individuals.
- **Collective violence** refers to violence committed by larger groups of individuals and can be subdivided into social, political and economic.

⁵²Sulak Sivaraksa, “Buddhism and Contemporary International Trends,” in Kenneth Kraft, ed., *Inner Peace, World Peace Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 130.

⁵³See Violence Prevention Alliance, a network of WHO Member States: <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/en/>

RWANDA GLOSSARY

AGLI: African Great Lakes Initiative; an organization of the Friends Peace Team that promotes peace activities in the Great Lakes region of Africa and responds to requests from communities throughout Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. They focus on conflict management, peace building, trauma healing, and reconciliation.⁵⁴

AVEGA-AGAHOZO: a non-profit organization created on January 15th, 1995 by 50 widows who themselves are genocide survivors. They seek to support the children, women, elderly, and handicapped who experience hardship as a result of the genocide.⁵⁵

Book of Life: Rwandan playwright Odile Gakire Katese compiled what she calls *The Book of Life*.⁵⁶ It features some 100 letters from widows and orphans to their lost loved ones, but also letters written by perpetrators to their victims. Ms. Katese hopes the “Book of Life” project will continue to grow, extending to generations beyond and across borders.

Democratic Republic of Congo: (formerly Zaire) since 1996, many millions of men, women, and children have died from near constant war, and resulting disease and famine in this country located on Rwanda's western border.⁵⁷ Rwanda's army invaded the Congo in 1996 and 1998 to pursue the Hutu-led FDLR forces (*see entry on FDLR*). As of 2013, Rwanda's military continues to invade mineral-rich Congo to fight alongside the M23 militia. The M23 militia is a rebel group based in eastern Congo made up primarily of Tutsi seeking to overthrow the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mass rape, executions, and forced conscription of children are among M23's documented war crimes.⁵⁸ The fighting forces operate jointly under the command of Rwanda's defense minister. Rwanda's exports of minerals found in Congo have increased dramatically compared to domestic production.⁵⁹ Donor nations suspicious of Rwandan complicity in war crimes have suspended and redirected aid money formerly earmarked for Rwanda.⁶⁰ A peace deal was signed by eleven nations in February 2013.⁶¹

⁵⁴<http://aglifpt.org/index.htm>

⁵⁵<http://avegaagahozo.org/>

⁵⁶<http://professionaldreamers.rw/projects/the-book-of-life/>

⁵⁷<http://www.rescue.org/special-reports/special-report-congo-y>; number of deaths disputed at

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2010/01/post-1.html>

⁵⁸http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/843

⁵⁹http://www.enoughproject.org/files/ConflictMinerals_CongoFINAL.pdf

⁶⁰<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/mar/13/uk-aid-rwandan-government-programme>

⁶¹<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb/24/eleven-states-sign-congo-deal>

FDLR: Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda; a military and political group dominated by Hutu Power ideology and consisting of former leaders of Rwanda driven out of the country at the end of the genocide. Some members are still fighting today in eastern Congo. The current Rwandan government uses the FDLR activity as a justification for continued military invasions of Congo.

Gacaca Courts: community justice tradition re-imagined in response to the 1994 genocide. Developed to promote healing and help victims move on. Originally, the Gacaca Courts settled village or familial disputes. They were an informal means of solving disputes around issues such as theft, marriage, land rights, and property damage. After the genocide the Gacaca Courts tried genocide perpetrators. Only Tutsi could bring grievances against Hutu. Judges have no legal training. Those on trial are asked to confess. Witnesses were encouraged to come forward and the plaintiffs were pressed to seek forgiveness from the families of their victims. Each Gacaca court had nine judges and had the power to sentence criminals up to life imprisonment, but not the death penalty, which has been outlawed in Rwanda. The courts closed in 2012.

Genocide of 1994: in April 1994 the Rwandan military, along with militias and local leaders, perpetrated the genocide of 500,000 to 700,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu. The predominantly Tutsi RPF defeated the Hutu regime and ended the genocide on July 4, 1994, but some 2 million Hutu refugees—many fearing Tutsi retribution— fled to neighboring Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo). Human Rights Watch estimated that 10,000 – 40,000 Hutu civilians were killed by the RPF in retaliation for the genocide.⁶²

Juvénal Habyarimana: Hutu dictator who ruled Rwanda for 20 years. Assassinated in 1994,⁶³ igniting long simmering tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, leading to the 1994 genocide. At the time, Hutu said Habyarimana’s plane was shot down on orders from the leader of the RPF, Paul Kagame. Others, including the RPF, say Hutu shot down the plane themselves in order to start a war.

⁶²<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/Geno15-8-03.htm>

⁶³<http://www.nytimes.com/1994/11/12/world/unsolved-rwanda-mystery-the-president-s-plane-crash.html?sec=&spn=&pagewanted=3>

Hutu and Tutsi: the two social groups at the heart of the 1994 genocide. Historically, they are not tribes and the social differences between them are mostly occupational. When German and Belgian colonial scientists first encountered Rwandans in the early 20th century, they perceived physical differences between herding groups and hunting groups. Using racist theories, they propagated a myth that the two groups had different geographical origins and pronounced the taller Tutsi racially superior to the agricultural Hutu. The Belgians codified the differences into law, forced Hutu and Tutsi to carry ethnic identity cards, and allowed only Tutsi to pursue higher education and hold positions of power. Today, occupational differences remain between groups in Rwanda. Promoting the separation of the groups is considered a crime by the current government under Rwandan unity laws, but many Rwandans say deep-seeded distrust and resentment still exist along the same lines that once divided the people.

HROC: Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities, a program of AGLI; joins ten people from one side of a conflict with ten from the other in a three-day workshop to help restore broken relationships. In Rwanda they focus on bringing together Tutsi and Hutu.⁶⁴

Ibuka: umbrella organization for the survivor organizations in **Rwanda** representing them at national and international levels. In the Kinyarwanda language ibuka means “remember.” Was created in 1995 to address issues of justice and memory, as well as social and economic problems faced by survivors.

Interahamwe: *Those Who Stand Together* was one of several militias consisting of young men formed by Hutu political parties that perpetrated the 1994 genocide along with the Armed Forces of Rwanda.⁶⁵ During the genocide it was common for Rwandans to identify all militia as Interahamwe. Many members fled to Zaire after the genocide and have merged with other groups to form the **Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)**, a group still fighting today in eastern Congo.

Paul Kagame: current President of the Republic of Rwanda. Leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front during part of Rwanda's civil war and after the genocide. Once the RPF stopped the genocide in July 1994, he was designated vice president and minister of defense. In 2000 he was appointed president by his fellow ministers and members of parliament, and in 2003 he was elected president by the people. In 2010, Kagame was elected to a second 7-year term.⁶⁶

⁶⁴<http://aglifpt.org/Program/hroc.htm>

⁶⁵Straus, 27; Staub, 63-64.

⁶⁶<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/689405.stm>

Kirehe: district of Eastern Province. Its capital is Rusumo (Kirehe Town); a densely populated area where most people grow food for subsistence and trade. Site of REACH workshop featured in *Coexist*.⁶⁷

Kigali: capital and largest city in Rwanda with approximately one million people; situated near the geographic center of the country.

Kigali Memorial Centre: was opened on the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide; is built on a site where over 250,000 people are buried; its documentation centre houses a research library, archive, audio-visual testimony archive, and GPS mapping project.⁶⁸

Maraba Coffee Plantation: located in Southern Province. An association of coffee growers formed in 1999 to increase the productivity, quality, and market price of Rwandan coffee. Profits are divided and reinvested in the plantation. Researchers from other parts of Africa, the U.K., and the U.S. have supported Maraba and found overseas distributors, even helping market a coffee beer from the region that won a gold medal at the 2006 World Beer Cup.⁶⁹

REACH: an organization seeking to support citizens of Rwanda in their journey towards healing, reconciliation, and sustainable development. Their goals include: bringing together people involved in conflict, and providing them with opportunities for learning, truth-telling, healing, and forgiveness.⁷⁰

Rwandan Patriotic Front: (RPF) current ruling political party in Rwanda. Formed by refugee Tutsi in Uganda, first as the Rwandan Refugee Welfare Association in 1979, then as the Rwandan African National Union, and finally as the RPF in 1987.⁷¹ Fought against the Interahamwe, Hutu Power militias, and the government of Rwanda to take over the country and end the genocide. Refers to a Tutsi-led mass movement. After the genocide, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the RPF's military wing, was deliberately split off from the movement and ultimately became the foundation of the Rwanda Defence Forces.⁷²

⁶⁷<http://www.kirehe.gov.rw/>

⁶⁸<http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/index.html>

⁶⁹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maraba_Coffee

⁷⁰<http://www.reachusa.org/>

⁷¹Stephen Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), 48-50.

⁷²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwandan_Patriotic_Front

Rwanda: the Republic of Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. Located in eastern Africa just south of the equator, it is a landlocked country where much of the arable land is located at high-altitude. The country's main natural resources are coffee and tea. The overwhelming majority of the population engages in agriculture, either through terraced farming or cattle herding. While the official language is now English, the population speaks mostly Kinyarwanda and French. German and then Belgian colonial overlords exploited the Rwandan people and their natural resources, and they racialized the social difference between the country's two main groups, Hutu and Tutsi. The Republic of Rwanda was founded in 1962 with the departure of the Belgians during the great anti-colonial movement that swept Africa.

Rwanda Youth Healing Center: organization seeking to provide Rwandan youth with support to heal from psychological wounds of the genocide. They also focus on leadership skills and livelihood, and are open to all young people no matter what side they were on during the conflict.⁷³

Twa: sometimes referred to as the indigenous people of Rwanda, the Twa make up less than 1% of the population. Though they were not the main target of the genocide, many Twa were killed. Today they continue to be marginalized and discriminated against by the more numerous Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda.

⁷³<http://rwandahealing.org/>

COMPARATIVE DEFINITIONS OF GENOCIDE

The UN definition of genocide is contained in the 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*.⁷⁴ In Article 2 genocide is defined as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.

- **killing members of the group**
- **causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group**
- **deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part**
- **imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group**
- **forcibly transferring children of the group to another group**

Teachers, scholars, and activists have thought deeply about the UN definition of genocide and developed additional perspectives, three of which are presented here.

Barbara Harff <i>political scientist</i>	Helen Fein <i>historical sociologist</i>	Ervin Staub <i>political psychologist</i>
<p>Defines genocide as sustained episodes in which a state or its agents impose on a communal or political group “conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or part.”</p> <p>Definitions of genocide need to include the killing of political groups (politicide).</p> <p>Sees two categories of genocide, in which victim groups are defined primarily in terms of their 1. communal characteristics or 2. political status or opposition to the state.⁷⁵</p>	<p>Defines genocide as sustained, purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or indirectly, through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim.</p> <p>Political exclusion and discrimination of ethnoclasses contribute to genocide. Authoritarian states are most likely to use genocide.</p> <p>Genocide is often mislabeled as ethnic conflict.⁷⁶</p>	<p>It is genocide when a government or some group acts to eliminate a whole group of people, whether by directly killing them or creating conditions that lead to their deaths or inability to reproduce.</p> <p>Difficult life conditions, group conflict, and war create threat and uncertainty, and frustrate basic, universal, psychological needs. They are a starting point that can lead to mass violence such as genocide or mass killing.⁷⁷</p>

⁷⁴<http://www.un.org/millennium/law/iv-1.htm>

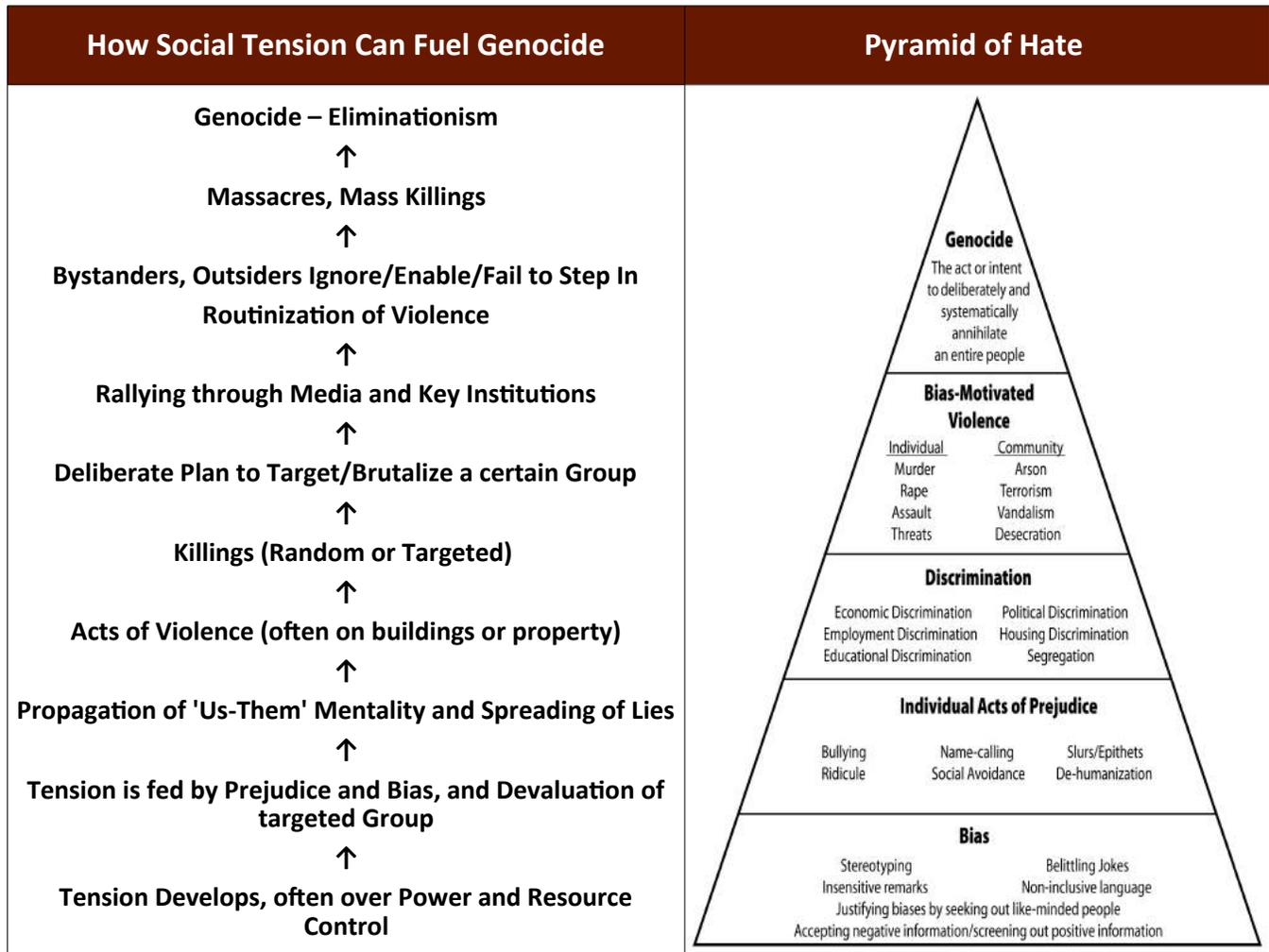
⁷⁵Barbara Harff, “No Lessons Learned From the Holocaust? Assessing the Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder Since 1955,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 58.

⁷⁶Helen Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage, 1993), 24.

⁷⁷Staub, 100-112.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ESCALATION OF GENOCIDE

Examine two visuals: *How Social Tension Can Fuel Genocide* and the *Pyramid of Hate*⁷⁸



Which categories overlap, which do not?

What accounts for the difference?

Given what you have learned about the history of the Rwanda genocide, identify the key variables in relation to Power and Resource Control: origins of the tension; Prejudice and Propaganda: myths and lies; Acts of Violence: how they began; and Planning of the genocide: by whom and how?

⁷⁸Anti-Defamation League and Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, with permission. "The Pyramid shows biased behaviors, growing in complexity from bottom to top. Although the behaviors at each level negatively impact individuals and groups as one moves up the pyramid, the behaviors have more life-threatening consequences. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviors on the lower levels as being acceptable or 'normal,' it results in behaviors at the next level becoming more accepted. In response to the questions of the world community about where the hate of genocide comes from, the Pyramid of Hate demonstrates that the hate of genocide is built upon the acceptance of behaviors described in the lower levels of the pyramid." http://archive.adl.org/education/courttv/pyramid_of_hate.pdf, p. 23.

THE TEN STAGES OF GENOCIDE

The Eight Stages of Genocide were presented as part of a briefing paper at the U.S. State Department in 1996 by Gregory Stanton.⁷⁹ They constitute a series of identifiable steps outlining the escalation of harm-doing that can lead to genocide and together provide a helpful framework for genocide research and prevention. In 2013 Stanton added Discrimination and Persecution to the original eight-stage model.

- 1. Classification:** a primary method of dividing society into 'us' and 'them.' While not a sign that genocide is on the way, genocide is impossible without an 'us' and a 'them.'
- 2. Symbolization:** words or symbols are applied to the 'them.' Again, genocide cannot proceed unless there is a way to tell people apart and thereby single out a particular group. In Rwanda the use of identity cards was imposed by Belgian colonial authorities.
- 3. Discrimination:** a dominant group uses law, custom, and political power to deny the rights of other groups. Those who are powerless may be denied full civil rights or citizenship.
- 4. Dehumanization:** the 'them' become outcasts and are labeled less-than-human. Hate propaganda is used in speeches and on the radio to target the victims and can contribute to genocide when it is not condemned and contained. It contributes to the superiority of one group over another. In Rwanda Tutsi were called cockroaches before they were slaughtered.
- 5. Organization:** to kill people in large numbers requires leaders, followers, obedience, plans, propaganda tools, weapons, and training. Sometimes it is the government that does this, but often it is militias. The killing might start at this stage, but it is not yet large scale. Genocide in Rwanda was well-organized by the military and well-executed by the Interahamwe.
- 6. Polarization:** laws are passed that forbid intermarriage or social interaction. The first people killed in genocide are not the outcasts themselves but those in the mainstream who speak up to protect them. The voices in the center are silenced through threats, arrests, and killing. With their death, the message of hate goes unchallenged. The targeted group gets scapegoated.
- 7. Preparation:** the outcasts are often separated from the rest of people – at roadblocks and round-ups, forced into ghettos, camps, and reservations. Their property is usually confiscated. They are forced to use identifying symbols.
- 8. Persecution:** victims are identified and singled out because of their ethnic or religious identity. Death lists are created. Victims may be forced to wear identifying symbols. Their property is seized and they may be segregated, deported to concentration camps, or confined and starved. Genocidal massacres begin.
- 9. Extermination:** the slaughter spreads quickly and can only be stopped by rapid intervention. It is usually committed by governments.
- 10. Denial:** the leaders of the genocide try to cover it up, downplay what happened, or tell lies, which helps create a smoke screen so the killings can continue. They blame victims and attempt to block investigations of the crimes.

⁷⁹Gregory Stanton, founder of Genocide Watch, served in the State Department from 1992 to 1999, and is currently Research Professor in Genocide Studies and Prevention at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University.
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