

HOLY CHAOS

**Creating Connections in
Divisive Times**



HELLO!

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Called to Love Beyond

getting to the heart of the matter



The Great Commandment

The Shema

Surah 4:36 in the Qur'an

Namaste

Ubuntu

And yet.....

“

*Love is like a lawsuit: to suffer harsh treatment is the evidence:
when you have no evidence: kiss the snake so that you may gain the
treasure.*

*That harshness isn't toward you, but toward the harmful qualities
within you.*

*When someone beats a rug, the blows are not against the rug, but
against the dust in it.*

Reflection

Does the call to 'love your neighbor' shape:

1. How you care for your family?
2. How you lead in your community?
3. How you view political and social issues?
4. How you vote?

(select as many as you would like)



First Things First

Religion

How do you define religion?

Politics

What is politics?

What's *Love* got to do with it?



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“

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Reflection

Would you name the congregation you serve as primarily:

- 1) Red
- 2) Blue
- 3) Purple



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Reflection

Would you name the community surrounding your congregation as primarily:

- 1) Red
- 2) Blue
- 3) Purple



Reflection

Would you name yourself as primarily:

- 1) Red
- 2) Blue
- 3) Purple



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How do the political realities
-in your congregation
-in your community
Impact the way you lead?

1. Rootbound: Taking Time to Think

“these experiences led to a deep desire to keep learning and understanding the brokenness I was feeling, and the brokenness of the world. I began to read voraciously in an effort to understand how our beliefs shape our actions, and how our actions shape our lives together, and how our experiences together shape our communities and our country.”



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Reflection

- Is there a formative experience you can point to that shaped the way you see the world?
- Identify a change you have experienced in your core values? What prompted that change?



2. Fear, Curiosity, and Showing Up

- ★ Building the skills to enter challenging spaces
- ★ Recognizing and navigating fear
- ★ Embracing and cultivating curiosity
- ★ Reaching out, and building *real* relationships



Reflection

Is your first reaction to fear typically

1. Fight?
2. Flight?
3. Freeze?



What are my hopes/goals? What is the best possible outcome? What is the worst possible outcome? Who *benefits* from my fear or inaction at this moment? Who *suffers* from my inaction? What are the risks in my possible responses? If I step into this space of fear will more 'good' be possible, or could more harm be caused?

I *am* in real physical danger.
Am I ok with that? Is this situation worth the risk?

I *am not* in physical danger, but I could be in emotional, spiritual, or relational danger. Is this situation worth the risk?

No, not helpful.

Yes, taking this risk furthurs my goals.

Yes, taking this risk furthurs my goals.

No, not helpful.

Stay calm and get out of the situation.

Stay calm, breathe, focus on "why" you are committed to this space, utilize tools for entering "fear" spaces.

Stay calm and get out of the situation.

Reflect. Were fears grounded in real threats? What was the worst that could have happened? What actually happened? Was anyone hurt by my action or inaction? Was anyone helped? What would I do or say differently? How can I push myself further in healthy ways?

Discerning Fear



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Reflection

What were you taught about *curiosity*?

1. It killed the cat?
2. It is a sin and can lead to damnation (think Eve)?
3. It changes our brain chemistry and helps us retain learning?



Cultivating Curiosity

- 1. When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.*
- 2. See monotonous situations as opportunities to pay attention.*
- 3. Resist fear and try something new.*
- 4. Dive into something that interests you.*
- 5. Read.*
- 6. Slow down and take your time.*
- 7. Practice asking “Why?”*
- 8. Practice saying less.*
- 9. Hang out with a child.*
- 10. Travel somewhere new.*



Showing Up

Seeing

- Implicit bias
- Intentional
- Slow down
- Vulnerability
- Assumptions challenged

Listening

- How do you want to be loved?
- What is your story?
- What are your hopes?

Acting

- Trust building
- Using our bodies
- Moving power
- Long term commitment



Reflection

Have you had a friendship:

- 1) Change the way you see the world?
- 2) Change the way you see yourself?
- 3) Introduce you to new experiences?
- 4) Shape the way you vote or understand politics?



3. Messing up

“The work of naming accountability, repairing, and working for healing in the face of our own shortcomings and failures amid centuries of systemic oppression requires a commitment to building relationships across our differences in the face of our imperfections. To be able to do this hard work of repair, we must have a primary orientation toward a right relationship and care for the well-being of others, and specifically of those beyond our family, tribe, or in-group. Because such work is not automatic for us, it must be built and cultivated deliberately over time.”



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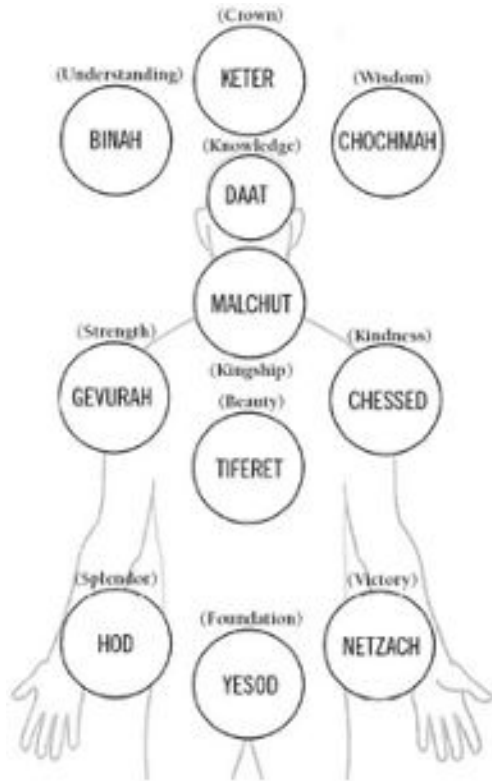
Reflection

When you mess up do you:

- 1) Feel defensive?
- 2) Feel angry?
- 3) Feel sad?
- 4) Run away?
- 5) Face it?
- 6) Apologize?
- 7) Work to make it right?



4. But what about my family?



The deepest work is creating connection across division with those we love....



In For the Long Haul

Rooted

What core values guide the way you move through the world? Your relationships? Your vote?

Open

What practices do you call upon when the going gets tough?

In this Together

How do you envision we move through our deep divides?

What are your concerns?

What are your hopes?



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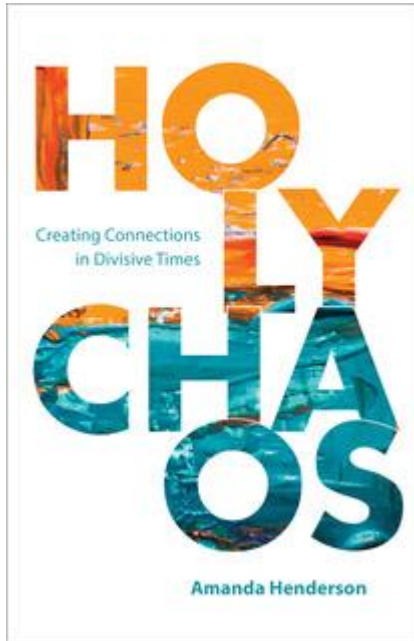
Reflection

Has this presentation:

- 1) Helped you think about the connection of religion and politics?
- 2) Inspired you to step into complex spaces?
- 3) Helped you feel more grace for yourself & others?
- 4) Renewed your commitment to connect across differences?



For Further Reading...

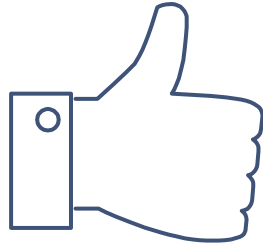


"I'm so glad this book is now available for you, because we need you, right now, to become an agent in the holy work of building connections in these divisive times."—**Brian D. McLaren, author/speaker/activist**

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THANKS!

Any questions?

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