



WATCH the Broadcast Premiere of the Academy Award-Nominated Documentary by Jason Cohen

HOST a Watch-Party in Your Living Room

USE this Watch-Party Kit to Deepen Discussions

FACING FEAR WATCH-PARTY KIT

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ABOUT THE DOCUMENTARY

Worlds collide when a former neo-Nazi skinhead and the gay victim of his hate crime attack meet by chance 25 years after the incident that dramatically shaped both of their lives. Together, they embark on a journey of forgiveness that challenges them both to grapple with their beliefs and fears, eventually leading to an improbable collaboration...and friendship. *Facing Fear* is an Oscar-nominated 23-minute documentary that explores their journey of forgiveness. www.facingfearmovie.com

PLANNING AHEAD

Through the power of Matthew and Tim's story, *Facing Fear* gives viewers a glimpse of some of the most painful and redemptive aspects of being human. It offers a valuable opportunity for friends, families, and colleagues to have thoughtful, caring, and productive conversations about how we grapple with trauma, forgiveness, and relationships in a complex, imperfect society.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to gather people in your home, church, or other communal space for an intimate discussion about these and related issues.



Remember: The film airs on pivot on June 3rd at 9pm
Check to see if pivot is in your area
at: www.find.pivot.tv

Check local listings: *Facing Fear* will also air on select public television stations, so see the *Facing Fear* www.facingfearmovie.com for airdates or call your local station.

Once you have the date and time for the broadcast, all you need to do is invite folks over, order a pizza or snacks, and you're ready to go!

TIPS TO DEEPEN DISCUSSION

Facing Fear is a powerful and moving film that is a perfect prompt for meaningful discussion in intimate and informal settings. But sometimes in familiar settings with people you know rather well, it can be easy to assume you know what they're feeling or thinking, or to fall into other unhelpful patterns. These kinds of habits can get in the way of more honest and even deeper discussions when the themes are sensitive or personal.

A great way to start fresh and on the right foot is to create "shared agreements" with your family and/or guests and review them before you watch the film together. This will help maintain an open and respectful atmosphere for the discussion. Below are a few

suggestions, but feel free to work together to create your own. When complete, ask your group to signal agreement verbally or by a show of hands.

Note: If you or someone close to you is participating in the conversation who identifies as LGBTQ, consider visiting the [PFLAG Straight for Equality \(www.straightforequality.org\)](http://www.straightforequality.org) page for resources and tools to help you and your group navigate the discussion with sensitivity and care.

SUGGESTED AGREEMENTS

1. We intend to listen with focus and attention.
2. We intend to allow others to speak without interruption, even when it may be difficult, and refrain from giving unsolicited feedback, advice, or commentary.
3. We intend to use “I” statements when we share.
4. We intend to be specific and avoid generalizing about people or groups.
5. We intend to balance sharing and listening, allowing everyone to participate, and we may pass whenever we wish.
6. We intend to give people room to disclose (or not) their personal beliefs, backgrounds or identity with the intention to better understand and empathize with each other.
7. We intend to assume good intentions on everyone’s part, agree that we may disagree at times, and learn together about respecting differences.
8. We agree that any personal information shared in this group is confidential.

PROMPTS FOR REFLECTION

The following prompts are designed to stimulate conversation and to encourage viewers to challenge, broaden, and deepen their thinking and perspectives. Feel free to reflect on each or just a few of them together as a group.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What is your initial reaction to the film?
- Did any moment or scene jump out at you in particular? What was it? And why?
- What, if any, insights did you gain about forgiveness?

GOING DEEPER

- At the beginning of the film, Matthew says: “I knew the only way I was going to get past it, was to forgive him. And that is a huge undertaking.” Do you agree? Why or why not? What do you think is necessary in order to forgive someone?
- In recounting the night he was beaten, Matthew said, “The words and what I saw were far more painful throughout my life than the boots and the blades.” What do you think he meant? Please explain.
- In reflecting on how his mother treated him and contemplating forgiving her, Matthew said, “I can’t judge her, because I don’t know what fractured life she came from. She never shared her story. And I didn’t walk in her shoes.” Why might the practice of considering another person’s life experiences be important to forgiveness? Please explain.
- Do you think forgiveness is central to a healing process? Consider your own life and experiences, has forgiveness played a similar role for you at times? Why or why not?
- Do you need an apology to forgive someone? Why or why not?
- If you were a friend or colleague of Matthew’s, how might you offer him support during his sensitive process of transformation?
- What do you think is necessary in order to forgive yourself? Please explain.
- Tim explained that he hadn’t forgiven himself because he felt so guilty. Consider a time when you felt really guilty about something, what affect did it have on your behaviors with others, your attitudes, ideas, etc.? How did you—or are you—working through it?



A portrait of Matthew Boger and Timothy Zaal from the film *Facing Fear*. Photo courtesy of Jason Cohen Productions.

- If you were a friend or colleague of Tim's, how might you offer him support during the sensitive process of transformation he began to go through? Please explain.
- In your experience, is there an end point to forgiveness? Please explain.
- In your opinion, what role and/or responsibility do communities or institutions have in supporting LGBTQ youth and their families?

Matthew explains that for him, one of the “gifts of forgiveness” was that he became less concerned with others' opinions of him. Can you think of other “gifts” that forgiveness could bring to your own life?

ACTIVITIES TO DEEPEN EXPLORATION

The following are two simple and easy activities that anyone can do to deepen their exploration of empathy and forgiveness. Take a look and consider incorporating either or both as part of your post-broadcast conversation.

Small Acts of Forgiveness (Approximate time: 15 minutes)

Forgiveness researcher, Fred Luskin, describes the practice of forgiveness as being like working out a muscle—your ability to forgive gets stronger the more you do it. By identifying the small acts of forgiveness we grant in our daily lives, it can help to underscore the importance of building our capacity to forgive and giving each other room to be unique and imperfect.

Step 1: Make a list of the small ways you practice or could practice forgiveness in your everyday life (for instance, when someone cuts in front of you on the freeway, when a family member breaches a confidence, when a friend is regularly late, or when a stranger is rude to you in public). Write down as many small acts of forgiveness (that you have offered others) as you can think of in a three-minute period.

Step 2: Each person is invited to share their list with the group.

Step 3: As a group respond to the following questions—

- Were you surprised by any of the incidents that came to mind?
- Did the exercise bring any insights?
- Are you more or less forgiving than you had imagined?

Exploring Empathy (Approximate time: 30-45 minutes)

Empathy, the ability to sense what someone else is feeling or experiencing, is an antidote to shame. Unlike judgment, which fuels shame and distances us from others, empathy can help us see another person as more than their actions—as complex,

fallible beings like ourselves. Use the questions below to move beyond first impressions or judgments, and instead to explore empathy with another person and their experience.

Step 1: Identify a subject position in the film you most relate to (Matthew, his mother, Tim, his son, a friend of Matthew's, a friend of Tim's, somebody from the Museum of Tolerance who Matthew and Tim have both turned to for help).

Step 2: From the subject position selected, each person is invited to share with the group their response to the following questions:

- How would you describe the feelings you have about your experience?
- What support would you need to help you process your experience?
- How do you relate to the concept of forgiveness from this position?
- Why is forgiveness challenging in this context?
- Why did you select this subject position?

TAKE THE PLEDGE



Pledge to be an ally to the LGBTQ Community

**take
part**

PFLAG is a great resource for families or friends who need additional support around LGBTQ related themes and issues that are personal. So consider reaching out, taking the pledge, and/or learning more at the PFLAG website. Visit: www.takepart.com/pflag.

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