

# BOOK CLUB KIT

*Simple Practices for*  
Solving Conflicts, Building Cooperation,  
*and Fostering Love*

# making great relationships

RICK HANSON, PhD

*New York Times* Bestselling Author of  
*Neurodharma, Hardwiring Happiness, Buddha's Brain,*  
*and Resilient*

# Discussion Questions

## Making Friends with Yourself

- Why is befriending yourself so important? What does self-compassion mean? What might that look like for you?
- Forgiving ourselves and admitting fault are key concepts in the book. Do you agree with their importance? Why?
- For a book about improving relationships, there's a lot of focus on improving one's relationship to oneself. Why is this important?

## Dealing with Difficult People

- The book suggests that having empathy for difficult people in your life helps break down barriers and overcome feelings of annoyance—or even hatred. Do you agree?
- After reading the book, how do you define “forgiveness,” and why is it so important?
- Talk about the “two wolves in the heart.” In what way do you identify that concept?

## Finding Peace in Long-term Relationships

- The author often points out that resolving quarrels or problems in relationships begins with us, with our own self-reflection and inner skills. Most people tend to point the finger at the other person when finding faults. Why is it so important that we look to ourselves instead?
- In what ways can the things left unsaid—the “undelivered communication”—be as destructive to a relationship as the things said out loud, sometimes in anger?

## Standing Up for Yourself

- The author says opening up to all aspects of ourselves, including the not-so-nice parts, helps us to be more natural and authentic with others. Do you agree with this?
- Self-criticism is one of the most prevalent and debilitating things people have to deal with. What would you now like to say to your inner critic?
- This part of the book begins with letting go of needless fear. How does “unnecessary anxiety” play a role in your relationships? What would help you deal with challenges while also feeling strong, calm, and confident in yourself?

## Effective Communication Skills

- The book suggests using a softer tone as a way of having a stronger impact on people, which seems counter-intuitive. What do you think it really means?
- How does talking about how you and your partner talk with each other help your relationship?
- The author says we sometimes need to “resize” a relationship. What’s an example of this working well for you in a past relationship? What might be a current relationship in which this would be useful for you?

## Relating to the World (and the Planet)

- Why is “telling the truth and playing fair” as important in our politics as it is in our homes, schoolyards, and businesses? What does it mean to you to tell the truth, and to play fair?
- In challenging times for our country and our world altogether, in what ways do you—or could you—still take heart?
- The author points out that we “vote” in lots of ways, not just at the ballot box. In what ways do you “vote” for the common good in your everyday life?

Facebook: rickhansonphd

Instagram: rickhansonphd

Twitter: drrhanson

LinkedIn: drrickhanson

YouTube: drrhanson

**#MakingGreatRelationships**



HARMONY