

9/12

from chaos to community



Discussion Guide

By DVD chapter

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Challenging questions for
Teachers/Professionals in the fields of:

- Psychology
- Psychiatry
- Social Sciences
- Disaster/Trauma Studies
- First Response Training
- EMT Training

For: Government Agencies, University
Professors and Volunteer
Organizations

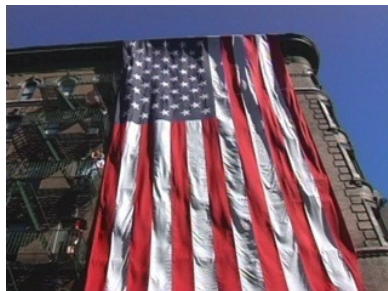


Chapter 1: “Ground Zero Dirt”

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Anniversary commemoration of 9/11, unfurling the flag at John and Denise’s apartment.



- What is the importance of having an anniversary reunion with people who shared a traumatic experience together?
- How is this a reflection of self-care?
- Who chooses to volunteer in a disaster?
- Is there a healthy and/or an unhealthy way to volunteer?

Chapter 2: “The Conversation Started”

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Steve discusses how volunteers made their way to the recovery area.

- How should volunteers approach or receive people (recovery workers in this case) who are dealing directly with a traumatic situation?
- What do you notice about their process of connection with the recovery workers?



Steve talks about “Disneyland” effect at Ground Zero.

- Who should work at a disaster?
- What is the public’s relationship to a disaster?
- Public trauma vs. Personal/Family trauma -- whose experience is it?
- How do you incorporate and respond to different experiences of the same event; volunteers, first responders, general public, victims’ families?



Anniversary memorial service at Ground Zero

Ritual

- How does Ritual help people get through the anniversary event of a disaster?
- What are different ways people remember or can be asked to remember?



Chapter 4: “Nothin But Love”

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Amalia discusses being asked by firemen to work with them in the pit.

- What was the psychological role that Amalia may have fulfilled for the firemen, when they (surprisingly) invited her to join them working on the ‘pile’ recovering victims?
- What may have driven Amalia to join firefighters in their grim search for remains?



Chapter 5: “Reunion”

9/12
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Steve confronts tipsy sailors having too good a time for his taste, on the anniversary of 9/11.

- How would you describe Steve’s response to the sailors in the street?
- Self-care: how does one identify his/her needs as separate from the needs of others?
- How do we all remain sensitive to those differences?

Chapter 6: “Fathers and Sons”

9/12
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Paul Geidel describes the search for his son’s remains.

- How did the act of searching for loved ones aid in the ability of parents to process the loss of their children?
- How does a parent put closure on the loss of a child when he/she is unable to recover remains?
- What was the importance of Paul finding other fathers like himself at Ground Zero?



Series of comments about listening process between volunteers and recovery workers.

- How does a care worker or volunteer listen with neutrality?
- How do volunteers take care of their own emotional needs in the process, especially if they are untrained professionals?
- What tools can people use to expel tensions resulting from ‘listening’ to others’ pain?
- What qualities did the volunteers have that created a ‘safe’ feeling for the first responders?

Chapter 8: “Things Just Took Off”

9/12
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Volunteers join to raise funds for a sick recovery worker.

- How do you view the two following comments:

- 1) “These incredible people took care of my husband for me.”
[Barbara]
- 2) “As the record shows, marriages that were on the rocks crashed.” [Steve]



- How does a traumatic event impact relationships? Can early intervention make a difference in the outcome?
- People naturally re-evaluate their lives following trauma. Are there interventions that can mitigate impulsive responses?
- What do the fundraising party at the bar and the comments of Barbara Geidel illustrate about the volunteer community?

Chapter 9: “Couples”

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A few instances of ‘true love’ that came out of the disaster of 9/11.

- Is this an example of good that can come from trauma?
- Is there a shared emotional bonding, good communication?
- Do you think these relationships will last?



Chapter 10: “Wish We’d Never Met”

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Final comments from recovery and volunteer workers from the Ground Zero community.

- At the end of a recovery/disaster relief situation, is there a sense of loss?
 - 1) How does one move on?
 - 2) How should recovery/volunteer workers be counseled regarding closure?
- Should people be permitted to invest themselves full time in disaster relief?
 - 1) What are the hazards?
 - 2) Should volunteers be monitored?



- How did the networking and care provided by the community in this film help to prevent PTSD?
- What would someone with PTSD look like compared to these people?