
With All My Heart: Torah for Our Times

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum

A J Street Book Club Companion for Friends, Family & Community

How to use this guide

This reading companion is for anyone who wants to read the following book and turn that reading into a real conversation — with a group of friends, a J Street chapter group, or a synagogue community.

You don't need to be an expert on Israel, Jewish history, or politics. You just need to be willing to read and to talk.

A few suggestions for a good book club conversation:

Start with what stayed with you — a passage, an idea, a moment that stuck.

Make space for disagreement — the best conversations don't end in consensus.

Connect the book to your own life — not just to the news.

You don't have to finish the book to have a meaningful conversation.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Rabbi Kleinbaum's first book gathers decades of Torah teaching shaped by her 32 years leading Congregation Beit Simchat Torah — the world's largest LGBTQ+ synagogue — through the AIDS crisis, September 11, marriage equality, and the turbulence of the present moment. Her Torah is defined by radical inclusion, prophetic courage, and a refusal to separate spirituality from social justice. She is known for holding what she calls 'multiple truths at once' — fierce love alongside fierce criticism, grief alongside hope.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Rabbi Kleinbaum built her career leading a synagogue for people who had been excluded from mainstream Jewish life. Has your own sense of belonging in Jewish community ever felt conditional? What would radical inclusion actually look like in the communities you're part of?
 2. Kleinbaum insists that you can't separate spirituality from social justice — that they are the same thing. Do you agree? Have you experienced moments where your spiritual life and your sense of justice felt deeply connected? Where they felt in conflict?
 3. Her Torah was forged in crisis — the AIDS epidemic, 9/11, political upheaval. How do you think crisis shapes religious teaching? What has the crisis of the last few years revealed about your own values or Jewish identity?
 4. Is there a piece of Torah — a text, a story, a teaching — that has genuinely changed how you live or see the world? What made it land for you?
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TO GO DEEPER

Consider bringing one of these prompts to close your conversation:

- What is one thing from this book you want to remember a year from now?
 - Did anything in this book make you want to take action — in your community, your relationships, or your own life?
 - What question does this book leave you with that it doesn't answer?
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