

HOPE KIT

ZIKARON BASALON

**Finding Resilience through Remembering
the Holocaust after October 7**



DEAR FACILITATOR,

Remembering the Holocaust takes on new meaning and nuance following October 7, 2023. This Zikaron BaSalon aims to meet the needs of our new reality. It is a tool to guide you in navigating the collective processing of the October 7 tragedy and its aftermath and find the hope within it. A collaborative effort between Zikaron BaSalon and the Tisch Center for Jewish Dialogue at ANU: Museum of the Jewish People, this distinctive Zikaron BaSalon gathering intends to foster a shared sense of narrative, community, and vision for the future. While perhaps not intuitive, participants are meant to walk away from this unique program with an intentional kind of practiced hope that brings about the resilience and strength we all need right now in navigating through this period.

Zikaron BaSalon, a social initiative commemorating the Holocaust, takes participants on a journey through time - remembering the past to shape our future.

Zikaron Basalon has three parts:

Remember the Past:

Listening to personal testimonies.

Feel the Moment:

Providing time for reflection, sharing, absorption, and processing.

Shape the Future:

Engaging in discussions about the impact of the Holocaust on our lives today and in the future.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE GATHERING

Setting

Transform the atmosphere by altering the setting to create intimacy and openness. Arrange the room in a way that facilitates visibility and connection, ideally forming a circle or half-circle.

Safe Space

Establish the foundation for a secure and open environment. If participants are unfamiliar with each other, we recommend brief introductions to create a sense of togetherness. For groups already acquainted, begin by posing a question that encourages participants to share and relate, fostering engagement.

Boundaries

It's essential to note that this is not a platform for political discussion or psychological or therapeutic activity. This gathering is a meaningful Mifgash with educational, emotional, and moral values.

FACILITATOR FRAMING

OPENING

Remembering the Holocaust takes on new meaning following October 7, a day which brought every Jew – in Israel and the diaspora – back into a shocking yet shared low point in our collective Jewish story. This period marks the lowest period of the Jewish people since the Holocaust. It follows one of the perceivably greatest periods to be a Jew with a thriving Jewish nation-state and Diaspora.

Now, in the dark period launched on October 7, all of us are looking for signs of Hope. **It is only with Hope that the modes of strength and resilience that sustained the Jewish people throughout time can be identified and exercised.**

Hope is born out of narrative – **How we tell our story.** Our story sits along a Jewish timeline, stretching across time and space. Understanding our story within this context provides a certain clarity and confidence within a low point. It allows us to explore the modes of resilience and strength that keep our people safe.

The narrative of the Jewish people is one of rising and falling and rising again. Every fall comes with the hope that the next rise will be higher than the previous one. It is this intentional telling of the story that holds the secret to the Jewish people's resilience. It includes our traditions, beliefs, text, language, community, and beyond.

Those amongst us with the strongest, most practiced muscles of resilience are our remaining survivors. Their testimonies are lessons not only on the horrors of the Holocaust and the need to ensure "Never Again"; **They hold frameworks for how to bring about the light within sustained and uncertain darkness.**

Today, we will hear a survivor's testimony. We will identify elements from their story that demonstrate resilience and strength. We will then consider what it would look like to take on these elements of resilience within our own narratives as inherited gifts that we can practice in this period and beyond.

To set the tone, consider introducing a text. See appendix.

REMEMBERING THE PAST

When we listen to a survivor's testimony, it becomes our responsibility (and indeed, honor) to uphold and preserve the memories of survivors and victims, drawing essential lessons for a better future. In the course of this gathering, we seize the moment to tap into the strength and resilience inherent in the survivors' narratives as a way to find hope in these challenging times.

For this part, you have the option to invite a Holocaust survivor, 2G, or 3G to share their life story or utilize recorded or written testimonies.

We recommend exploring the testimony of Dr. Edith Eger, a renowned psychologist and author. Her compelling testimony, recorded in 1995 in La Jolla, California, is taken from the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

Edith's Story: (Password: Eger)



Additional recorded or written testimonies can be found on the Zikaron BaSalon website. Instead or in addition to a survivor testimony, consider asking 2G or 3G to share their family's story. This is a way to practice intergenerational narrative, an increasingly important act as it falls to descendants of first-generation survivors to carry on their testimony.

Please find a few recommended questions for 2G or 3G sharing their story:

- 1 - How were you told their story? What did they say? What did they not say? How did you receive their story?
- 2 - How did their story impact you?
- 3 - Why and how do you think they survived? What lessons do you draw from that?
- 4- How have you and will you pass on their story?
- 5- What did you inherit (not in terms of physical possessions) from them?

FEEL THE MOMENT –

Building and sharing our oscillating narrative.

This part serves as a transitional period, providing time to come together and exchange personal narratives, ideas, and thoughts. Following your explanation, give participants a few minutes to consider their own oscillating narrative. Start by defining an oscillating narrative, its components, and its value. Then introduce the prompt. Provide paper and pens for notes. You can also provide them with This Timeline. Ask for a few individuals to share their stories with the group.

1 EXPLAIN AN OSCILLATING NARRATIVE AND ITS ABILITY TO GENERATE RESILIENCE

The Holocaust and October 7 both sit as two low points within the oscillating narrative of the Jewish people.

In the aftermath of September 11, Psychologists Dr. Marshall Duke and Dr. Robyn Fivush of Emory University discovered that youth who receive an oscillating family narrative are most resilient when faced with a crisis based on their understanding that they and their ancestors have navigated through challenging times, and the expectation that they, too, will experience low points. An oscillating narrative goes, "There were ups and there were downs, but because of x,y, and z, we got through it." This narrative generates confidence based on a strong "intergenerational self," a sense that one is a part of a narrative longer and larger than themselves.

See Appendix B for elements of an oscillating narrative.

2 PROMPT: YOUR OSCILLATING NARRATIVE

Articulating one's own experience of being Jewish is one of the most powerful ways to respond to outside antisemitism and internal confusion or pain. Our own personal experiences sit within a longer and larger Jewish narrative – a Jewish timeline. First, think of your own oscillating narrative – a few highs and lows from your own life and the lives of your ancestors that impact who you are and how you see the world.

Within your oscillating narrative is the Holocaust. The Holocaust –regardless of whether one is descended from survivors – is embedded (sometimes loudly and sometimes quietly) in the story timeline of every Jew.

From the Holocaust to October 7 and beyond, consider the elements of your own oscillating narrative – and how it connects to a larger and longer Jewish timeline. Take a few minutes to reflect on the question: **Growing up, where was the Holocaust in your story? How did you conceptualize it? How did your parents, grandparents, teachers tell you about the Holocaust and its implications for you? What does it mean to you today?** Reflect on this story. and consider how you would like to share it. This story can reflect complexity, discomfort, or any dissonance you might have or are experiencing around the Holocaust.

The facilitator should give five minutes for personal reflection, offering them the Timeline PDF to structure their story or simply write down their thoughts. If a group is larger than 10, consider breaking everyone into groups of three for each of them to share their stories. Bring the group back together, and ask for a few to share their stories with the group.

SHAPE THE FUTURE

The last part is an open discussion, providing an opportunity to explore the lessons learned as individuals and as a group or community. Our conversation today will specifically center around segments of the testimony that delve into themes of humanity, hope, resilience, and mutual strength.

You can choose from the provided questions or guide the discussion as you see fit:

STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

- 1 What are the tools of resilience you recognized in the survivor's story that helped them survive and remain hopeful? Do you have similar tools? How can you effectively use them in this period?
- 2 What can you learn from the survivor about resilience and hope?
- 3 Positive future thinking – the intentional act of looking forward to something in the future – is important for both mental health and physical well-being. How do you imagine "The Day After?" "Better times?" Can you visualize and describe such a reality?

*MacLeod, A.K. & Conway, C. Well-being and positive future thinking for the self versus others. *Cognition and Emotion*, 21, 1114-1124.

PROMOTING UNITY AND TOLERANCE

- 4 How has the Holocaust's impact on history affected your perspective on life and humanity?
- 5 How can we use the lessons of the Holocaust to actively work toward a more just and tolerant world?

WHAT NEXT?

A Personal Commitment: Practicing your narrative.

SHARE YOUR STORY.

Start by telling your own experience from October 7 until today, tell the story you were told by those who came before you, tell the story you told on October 6, consider the story you want to tell others about who you are, what you've experienced, and where you come from. Share on social media. #HopeKit @zikaronbasalon_global @anumuseum

CONSIDER THE NEXT GENERATION.

How do you want to pass on the lessons of the Holocaust to future generations as a part of your own story? This can begin as a personal practice. When ready, share this message with your family, team, and community.

EXERCISE YOUR "HOPE MUSCLES".

Even if you don't believe it at first, practicing this intentional narrative is a "hope muscle" that will strengthen your resilience over time. Host your own Zikaron BaSalon gathering with your friends or family. It will grow and spread, launching us towards a more just and whole global future.

WE HOPE YOU HAD A MEANINGFUL GATHERING.

We kindly ask that you take a few minutes to fill out a short feedback form so we can learn more about your experience.

To fill out this form please scan this QR code, [or click on the link](#)



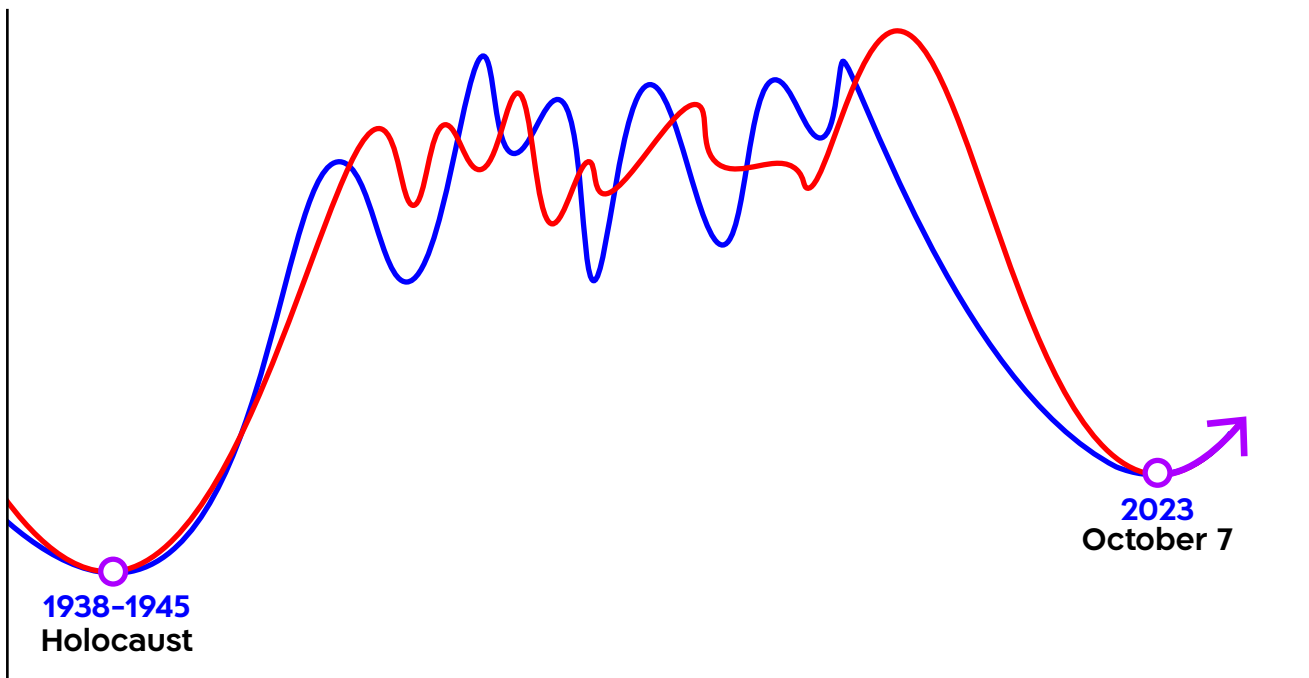
APPENDIXES

It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquillity will return again.

Anne Frank,

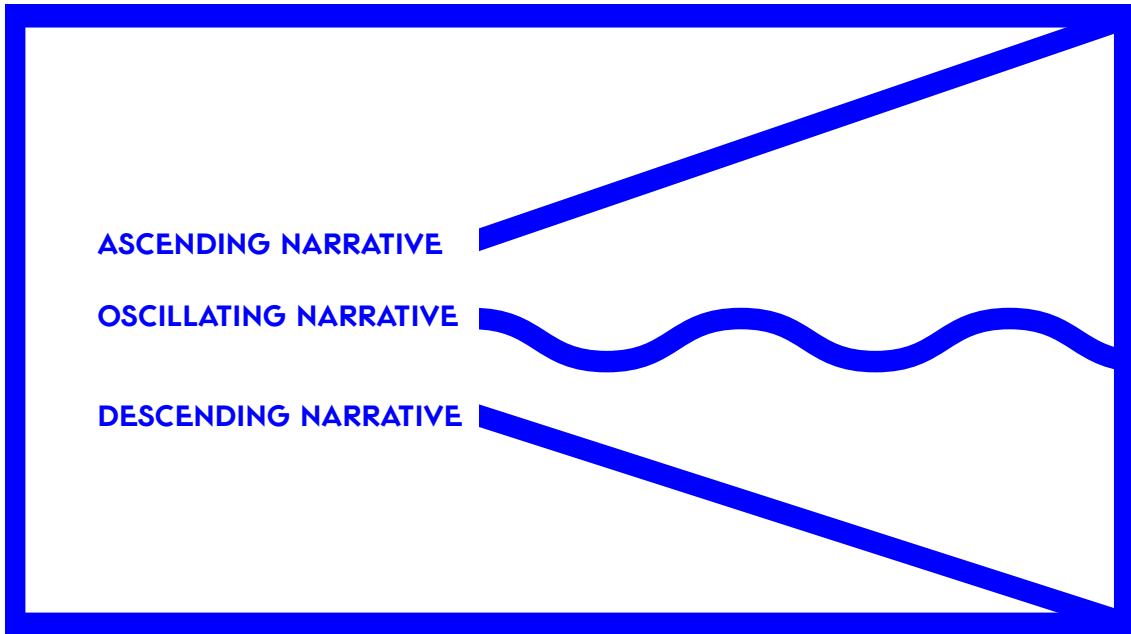
Anne Frank's optimistic perspective on life is remarkable. Despite her devastating circumstances, she has a profound sense of hope.

THE HOLOCAUST TO OCTOBER 7 IN OUR OSCILLATING NARRATIVE



ELEMENTS OF AN OSCILLATING NARRATIVE

- 1** It stretches through historical time. It requires one to understand yesterday to find hope in tomorrow. According to the Emory University study, individuals need to maintain a sense of coherence post-trauma. This can be done using "seder logic" - connecting the current crisis within a long arc of history: "This is a story about me, and the Jewish people who came before me and will come after me. We were present – in Egypt, at Mount Sinai, in the concentration camps, at the Creation of the State of Israel, at the Pittsburgh Tree of Life Shooting, and on October 7, 2023. Just like "we" got through it then, we will get through it now and in the future. More than just perspective, I have inherited the gift born of their suffering, their resilience, and strength."
- 2** This narrative is circular: A narrative can be expanded to include others in its scope. It can and ought to be framed in a larger global Jewish context. It inspires a narrative of solidarity beyond generational, political, or geographical divides. It's a story about me, the Jew to my left and to my right."
- 3** This narrative has sustained and uncertain low points: Within the "highs" and "lows" of this narrative, there are periods of quiescence. Following a turn, the story line doesn't immediately go up or down. In fact, in this space, we are in both an up and down – one has not fully let go of the high (the previous mindset and reality) and is still processing the shock and consequences of the initial fall. This creates great confusion - am I powerful or powerless? In this period, there are mini episodes (tracked by the day-to-day news cycle and our emotional ups and downs). In this floating period, one can begin to "look for land"-- to determine what signs we are looking for to symbolize that the plateau is coming to an end.
- 4** The narrative protects us from surprises: The idea that antisemitism could be eradicated with the State of Israel was a false expectation. Antisemitism will always exist – with every generation it takes on new forms and strains. Moving forward, accept this reality and function with greater clarity. "In our past, there were ups and downs, which tells me there will continue to ups and downs in the future."
- 5** The narrative embraces fundamental turning points: There was "the day-before" and "the day-after" October 7. The day-after narrative is already forming. With so much out of our control, we have autonomy in how we want to tell and harness this narrative.



EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL OSCILLATING NARRATIVE

