

— THE PSYCHOLOGY OF — A FEW GOOD MEN DISCUSSION GUIDE

*Moral Injury, Conscience,
and the Chain of Command*



A powerful story about orders and obedience—and what happens when duty collides with the truth inside.



An invitation to examine our own values, loyalties, and courage.



Because integrity is not the absence of pressure—it is action in spite of it.



★ ABOUT THE FILM

When a young Marine dies after a “Code Red” hazing incident at Guantanamo Bay, two Navy lawyers are assigned to defend the Marines accused of his death. As they dig deeper, they confront a culture of obedience, a code of silence, and a commanding officer who believes the ends always justify the means.



★ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ★

- 1 What does the film suggest about the benefits and dangers of obedience to authority? Where do we see each?
- 2 When, if ever, is it acceptable to follow an order that conflicts with your conscience? How does the film challenge that question?
- 3 What pressures keep people silent in the film? How do codes of loyalty or silence protect the group—and harm individuals?
- 4 How would you describe the moral injury experienced by Dawson? What might healing require for him?
- 5 Do you agree with Jessup's belief that he did “what was necessary”? What are the psychological costs of that belief?
- 6 Have you ever witnessed something wrong but said nothing? What factors influenced your decision?
- 7 What does Kaffee's journey teach us about courage, responsibility, and standing up for what is right?
- 8 How can institutions create cultures where people can speak up before harm occurs?

★ KEY THEMES



OBEDIENCE & AUTHORITY
When loyalty to rank overrides moral judgment.



MORAL INJURY
The lasting inner wounds of acting against one's conscience.



CODE OF SILENCE
Protecting the group through silence—and the personal cost of keeping it.



ACCOUNTABILITY
Responsibility does not end where orders are given.



COURAGE
The choice to speak up when the cost is high.

★ THINK MORE DEEPLY ★



How does military training prepare people for extraordinary situations—and why can it make unethical orders more likely to be followed?



What role does guilt play in moral injury, and how is it different from shame?



What helps people reconnect with their values after they have been compromised?



Who are the “moral courage” figures in your life—and what can we learn from them?

★ APPLICATION TO REAL LIFE ★

- ✓ Know your values. Clarify what you will and will not do, especially under pressure.
- ✓ Practice moral courage early. Small acts of honesty build the capacity for larger ones.
- ✓ Create safe spaces to speak up. Psychological safety prevents harm.



- ✓ Listen to your conscience. Discomfort is sometimes your inner guide.
- ✓ Take responsibility. Integrity includes owning what you could have done differently.
- ✓ Support those who speak up. They carry the cost so others can stay silent.

“*You want the truth? You can't handle the truth!*”

The film dares us to ask: Are we strong enough to seek it anyway?

FOR LEADERS, PARENTS & EDUCATORS

Use this guide to spark conversations about integrity, loyalty, and the courage to do what is right—especially when it is hard.



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Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.