

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MATRIX:

Reality, Agency, and the Choice to Wake Up

DISCUSSION GUIDE

For older teens and adults.

- Use this guide to reflect on perception, agency, and the stories we accept about reality.



1. BEFORE WATCHING

Set the stage and open curiosity.

- Have you ever had a moment when something you assumed was true suddenly looked different?
- Why might people prefer a comforting story over a painful truth?



2. WHILE WATCHING

Notice perception, avoidance, and choice.

- What makes the familiar world feel safe, even when it may be limiting?
- How do different characters respond to the burden of knowing more?
- Where do you see the tension between choice and helplessness?



3. AFTER WATCHING

Reflect and make meaning.

- What does it mean psychologically to 'wake up'?
- Why does believing your actions matter change how you live?
- What costs come with greater awareness?



4. REFLECTION / REAL LIFE

Bring it into your own life.

- Where in your life are you tempted to avoid what you already know?
- What story about yourself or the world might be limiting your agency?
- Try this: Name one small action this week that reflects the belief that your choices matter.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

The wish to wake up is not only about discovering truth. It is about recovering agency. People change when they begin to believe that their choices matter, even in a reality that is imperfect, uncertain, or painful.



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.

Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.