

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Psychology of POCAHONTAS

Historical Erasure and Why Accurate Memory Matters

“The story that was not hers to tell was told anyway, by people who had not lived it, for audiences whose comfort the telling was organized to protect.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



Create a respectful space where everyone can listen, reflect, and learn.



Speak from your experience using “I” statements and be open to others.



This is a conversation about history, identity, and responsibility—approach it with humility and care.

1 THE STORY WE KNOW VS. THE STORY THAT WAS



- What did you know about Pocahontas before learning the real history?
- How does the Disney version differ from what actually happened?

2 THE PURPOSE BEHIND SANITIZING HISTORY



- Why do you think the film changed or left out important parts of her story?
- How does simplifying history make it easier for some people to feel comfortable?

3 THE IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



- How might it feel for Indigenous communities to see their ancestor's story rewritten or minimized?
- What are the effects of having your history misunderstood or ignored?

4 MORAL COMFORT AND AVOIDING DISCOMFORT



- How does the film allow viewers to enjoy the story without facing the painful parts of history?
- What does “moral comfort” mean, and how might it show up in our lives?

5 ACCURATE MEMORY AS AN ACT OF RESPECT



- Why is it important to tell history accurately, even when it's hard?
- How does honoring the truth help us build trust and understanding?

6 WHAT WE CAN DO MOVING FORWARD



- How can we make sure we don't repeat the harm of erasing or romanticizing someone's story?
- What steps can we take to learn from Indigenous voices and support their stories?

THE TAKEAWAY

We can't change the past, but we can choose how we remember it. Accurate memory is how we honor those who lived it and commit to a better future.



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Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.

