

A RECKONING IN BOSTON

A POST SCREENING GUIDE

by essentialPARTNERS®

The purpose of this discussion guide is to help you dive deeper into the film and its themes as well as your personal experiences and perspectives. The goal of the discussion outlined below is to share your own experiences and to better understand one another. The purpose is not to debate, persuade, problem-solve, or come to a consensus.

COMMUNICATION AGREEMENTS

Documentary films like *A Reckoning in Boston* prompt rich discussions and evoke passionate responses. Communication agreements can help support understanding, even when disagreements of perspective arise. They help create a space that feels safe-enough to share openly and engage across differences. We recommend the following:

- So people feel invited to share but not compelled: It's OK to "pass" if you are not comfortable or not ready to respond
- So people don't make assumptions about others' experiences: Speak for yourself, from your experiences, and not on behalf of a group or about anyone else in the room – use "I" statements
- So people feel fully heard: Let people finish speaking, don't interrupt or talk over one another
- So there is time for everyone to be heard: Use a time limit and speak one at a time (or when there is no time limit, do your best to share the airtime)
- So people feel free to speak about what is important or personal to them: Respect the confidentiality of other people's stories and opinions.

A DISCUSSION MODEL

First, review the communication agreements together. Introduce yourselves by sharing your name and why you are joining the discussion. Aim for about a minute each (you can even use a timer). Together, choose a few discussion questions from the list below. You might choose one or two questions from the first set and then one or two questions from the second set. A clear structure supports a good conversation. Here's one model:

1. Read the discussion question out loud
2. Give people a minute to think and/or jot down some thoughts
3. Give each person two minutes to share their response
4. Take a three-breath pause between speakers

Once everyone has responded to the questions you chose, have a freer conversation. Take turns asking each other to expand on, dive more deeply into, or clarify what they already shared. Avoid questions that try to persuade or debate, or "more of a comment than a question" questions. Remember the communication agreements. Leave a few minutes at the end of your time for final thoughts, to close the conversation, and to remind people about confidentiality.



Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions About the Film

- Share a moment in the film that personally impacted you. What does that moment—and its impact on you—reveal about your own story or values?
- Where in the film did you find yourself feeling curious, surprised, or uncomfortable? What about that moment felt aligned with or disconnected from your own experiences or perspectives?
- Which moment, story, or person in the film shifted, questioned, expanded, or challenged your core beliefs and values? How and why?

Discussion Questions About the Themes: Community, Race, and Equity

- By telling a story about housing development and access, the film asks questions about what a community is and who it is for. Can you share the story of a time that you felt like you belonged to a community and the story of a time when you felt like you were on the outside of a community? How, if at all, has the film impacted your thinking about what a community is and who it is for?
- Racial inequity is a central theme of this film. Reflect on your own upbringing. Can you share a story about an experience at home, school, or work that deeply influenced your understanding of race or racism? How did that experience shape your perspective? How did the film deepen or shift your perspective—if at all?
- Kafi describes her relationship to the land as a healing force in her life. She builds an urban farming cooperative with a mission to create “environments of health” for women of color in working class families in Boston. How would you describe your own vision of what an environment of health looks like for you? For your neighbors? For your city?
- The film makes clear the significant wealth disparities between Black and White families in Boston. How does socio-economic difference between you and others in your community impact the way you interact, feel about yourself, or feel about your place within your community? Where, if at all, do you feel compelled to engage with your own reckoning with—or understanding of—economic inequality?

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