

Chapter 12. Questions Raised by Teachers during the Sessions

<https://doi.org/10.33989/pnpu.1095.c3934>

This chapter includes some questions that were also addressed in Study Guide Part 1 published in 2024. However, after exploring teachers' lived experiences in this book—including fear, loss, exhaustion, relationships, energy, and daily educational practice under ongoing war conditions—these questions may now be understood in a different way. Rather than seeking quick solutions, the questions in this chapter invite reflection on how to continue living and educating as life is, amid uncertainty.

The answers presented here are not instructions, but reference points shaped by dialogue, shared experience, and practical wisdom developed together with teachers. This chapter is based on questions raised by teachers during the lectures and the responses we offered at that time. Readers may find that they share similar questions. Our answers may not be complete or definitive; nevertheless, it is our sincere hope that reading them will feel somewhat relieving and help you find ways to make everyday life a little more manageable.

1. Relationships

Q1-1: How to avoid or respond to nervous breakdowns of family members, or coworkers, or students?

A1-1: It is important to recognize early signs of stress, such as mood swings, irritability, or withdrawal, which may signal an approaching breakdown. By noticing these changes, you can offer support before stress becomes overwhelming. Often, simply being there to listen without judgment can help ease the burden and prevent emotional overload. Your calm presence can help others feel more grounded in stressful moments. Show patience, take deep breaths, and maintain a steady tone, as your composed demeanor can positively influence those around you. Encouraging regular breaks to rest and recharge is also essential, as constant pressure can quickly lead to burnout. Set clear boundaries and manage workloads to ensure that

expectations are realistic and manageable. Checking in regularly with family, coworkers, or students helps gauge their stress levels, allowing you to address concerns early and foster a supportive, proactive environment for mental well-being.

Q1-2: In literature or history lessons, teachers use examples from past military events. There are often children in the class who suffered during the Russian-Ukrainian war, they lost their home or relatives. Don't such examples cause additional trauma to children? Maybe it is better to avoid such examples? How to not cause additional psychological trauma to children?

A1-2: Yes, teachers should be very careful about this. Not all students will react the same way. Some may find comfort in shared experiences, while others may feel overwhelmed. Carefully select materials and examples that are educational but less likely to provoke distress. Avoid graphic descriptions of violence or personal stories that closely mirror students' experiences, and emphasize stories of overcoming adversity, acts of courage, and efforts toward peace and reconciliation.

Advance notice is also important. You can let students know when sensitive topics will be discussed. This gives them the opportunity to prepare emotionally or opt out if necessary. You can also provide alternative assignments or activities for students who may find the content too distressing.

Q1-3: How to overcome emotional burnout and unwillingness to communicate with people?

A1-3: We think most teachers feel burnout sometimes because your work is helping people who are exhausted. I am very sorry for that. Please acknowledge and accept your feelings of burnout as a valid response to prolonged stress. Reflect on specific sources of burnout, whether they stem from work, relationships, or obligations, to address them more effectively. When you are unwilling to communicate with people, we think you can escape for a while. Set clear boundaries to protect your energy by limiting commitments and politely declining additional responsibilities. Prioritize

interactions with supportive people, and let close friends, family, or colleagues know you're feeling burnt out—they may offer greater understanding if they're aware of your situation. Also reduce digital overload by setting limits on social media and screen time, as constant connectivity can amplify stress. Healing from burnout takes time, so give yourself space to recover without pressure. By making mindful choices about how you spend your time, you can regain control, renew motivation, and reconnect with others.

Q1-4: Negative consequences for health from constant feeling of danger and uncertainty during war.

A1-4: Yes, the constant feeling of danger and uncertainty during war may have effects on health. For example, increase blood pressure, heart disease, sleep disturbances, digestive issues, anxiety, depression, PTSD, impaired concentration and memory, reduced cognitive flexibility, chronic pain and muscle tension etc.

If you are experiencing these things, it may actually bring some comfort to recognize that they are triggered by the war. Understanding the cause may help provide some relief. Trust in the natural resilience of people and believe that, once the war ends, gradual recovery will follow.

Q1-5: How to survive the pain of losing a loved one and not to think about this loss constantly?

A1-5: It is very painful. You have to allow yourself to experience all emotions that come with grief—sadness, anger, even numbness—without judgment, as expressing these feelings can be cathartic. Be patient with yourself, knowing that healing takes time and there is no "right" way to grieve; give yourself permission to take things one day at a time.

Do you remember our learning about “ambiguous loss”? Rather than choosing “either A or B”, “both A and B” is better. In other words, you don't need to try to forget that person. Keep them in your heart. There will be pain, but over time, they

will settle quietly in your heart and become a part of you. Move forward in line with the values you shared with them.

You can do a lot of activities, but please let go of the idea of “getting over it” and instead focus on carrying the loss in a manageable way. Set small goals to move forward, like trying something new or connecting with others, while honoring their memory through positive actions. Healing from loss takes time and self-compassion, but by embracing these steps, you can find a balance between remembrance and moving forward with peace and purpose.

Q1-6: How to keep the relationship with my husband who is in the army?

A1-6: You find it hard, and I agree with you. I feel your deep love towards him.

When constant direct communication isn't possible, you can use symbolic methods to maintain relationship. For example, write letters or keep a journal to record your daily life and feelings for your husband. Let him know how much you appreciate his sacrifices and dedication, and acknowledge the important roles you both play. You can share these with him when you reunite. You might also synchronize certain activities, such as agreeing to look at the night sky at the same time, to create a shared sense of connection. Wearing matching bracelets or rings can also serve as a simple but effective reminder of your bond. If possible, sending thoughtful and care packages, can remind him of home and reinforce your support.

Looking forward to reuniting can keep your spirits up. Plan future activities or trips together to create something positive to anticipate. Additionally, connecting with other military families can provide a supportive community that understands the unique challenges you face, offering comfort and friendship.

Q1-7: How to tell the truth to a person, if you know that he or she will get angry?

A1-7: So you have to treat with these angry people in your work, and it is exhausting. Delivering a truth that might provoke anger is challenging, so it's best to start by choosing a calm, private setting. This helps create a space where the person feels

safe and less likely to respond defensively. Additionally, timing matters—try to have the conversation when they're not already stressed or distracted, which will make them more receptive.

Begin by acknowledging that the information may be difficult to hear, using phrases like, "I know this might be upsetting." This shows respect for their feelings from the start and helps set a tone of empathy. Empathy is crucial; recognizing their perspective can make them feel respected, even if the message is hard to accept. Finally, give them time to process the information. If they react strongly, suggest returning to the conversation when they're ready. Following up later can show that you're there to support them, even if the initial reaction was one of anger, helping to maintain trust in the relationship.

Q1-8: How to build a relationship between people who are in the center of military events and people who are far away from the war? The feeling of guilt does not disappear ...

A1-8: You feel guilty but not only you feel like this. A lot of people at a distance feel guilty or helplessness, while people in the war zone might feel isolated. Openly acknowledging these feelings can build a sense of safety in the relationship. Avoid comparing hardships, as this can unintentionally diminish each other's experiences. When you feel guilty about being away from the conflict, express it honestly without making it the main focus, which helps keep the conversation centered on the experience of people you want to help. Accepting the limits of your help is also key. Recognize that some things are beyond your control; you may not be able to change their circumstances, but you can offer love, comfort, and stability. I think you are channeling guilt into positive actions, like volunteering or raising awareness. Remember that guilt doesn't necessarily mean you're doing something wrong, and practicing self-compassion is vital for your own well-being and in supporting others. Lastly, give each other time to adapt, as intense experiences can reshape relationships. Be open to how your relationship may grow and evolve through these

challenges, and be patient with the process. Building a connection across different realities can be difficult, but with empathy, understanding, and time, it's possible to create a strong, supportive bond.

Q1-9: If a person is often nervous, hysterical, throwing everyone off balance, how do relatives communicate with him or her? Pretend that nothing is going on? But no one can easily keep the balance in wartime.

A1-9: When communicating with someone in an emotional state, acknowledge their feelings calmly to show empathy without escalating stress. Staying neutral and setting boundaries, like saying, "I want to support you, but it's hard to help when things get intense," can keep conversations constructive and grounded. During calmer times, discuss boundaries openly and gently encourage them to express fears or frustrations in a supportive way. Addressing issues when emotions are stable can help prevent future outbursts, and asking, "What would help you feel a bit safer right now?" can shift focus to manageable steps. Maintain empathy without absorbing their stress. Compassion paired with boundaries allows you to be supportive without compromising your well-being, helping you stay steady without getting drawn into their negativity.

Q1-10: If a person is constantly in the state of "everything is lost, we are all going to perish", how to communicate with him or her? Is there a point to persuade him or her or to ignore him or her, to limit communication?

A1-10: When someone is persistently in a state of hopelessness, engaging with them requires careful balance. Begin by acknowledging their feelings without agreeing with their negative beliefs. Validating statements like, "I see you're feeling scared or hopeless," can help them feel understood without reinforcing their pessimism. Avoid arguments, as contradicting their beliefs may intensify their defensiveness; instead, gently steer the conversation toward grounded, manageable topics. Shifting the focus to practical matters can redirect their energy from despair to action. For

instance, ask, “What would help make today feel a bit better?” Encouraging present-moment focus, like small mindfulness practices, can also help anchor them in something positive. It’s equally important to protect your own emotional health by setting boundaries, especially if their negativity begins to affect your well-being. Taking breaks or limiting the depth of your engagement can allow you to remain supportive without feeling overwhelmed. Lastly, remember you’re not responsible for changing their outlook. Suggesting professional help, if they’re open to it, can provide them with additional support, and you can subtly encourage positive distractions, like favorite hobbies, to help ease their mindset. Protecting your mental health while showing empathy enables you to maintain a supportive relationship without allowing their pessimism to drain you.

2. Morita therapy and children

Q2-1: Is Morita therapy used only for adults or can it be used for children?

A2-1: Yes, Morita therapy is also applied to children. If they understand and agree to the concepts of Morita therapy, then therapy will be helpful to them. Morita Therapy is especially helpful to children with neurosis, and these children often better understand and be more agree to it.

3. Anxiety, panic attacks and fear

Q3-1: How to deal with a panic attack that occurs suddenly?

Q3-2: When events occur that I cannot control but affect my life, I start to get nervous, my hands shake, my heart races, and my breathing is rapid. How can I pull myself together, not harm my health and stop being afraid?

Q3-3: Every time I hear the news about the deaths of Ukrainian patriots, strong and determined, each of whom was a bright personality, my heart shrinks, my hands drop, and I want to scream out loud.

Q3-4: When information about the shelling and casualties appears, I feel panic on a physical level.

Q3-5: How to reduce the fear of driving?

A: Your anxiety and panic attacks have different inducements, such as negative events uncontrollable, deaths of your admired people, bad news of the war. You feel yourself uncontrollable physically and mentally, and this uncontrollable feeling then make you blame yourself and increase the anxiety and fear. Do you remember the two vicious cycles we learned? One is “attention and sense”. You took your attention on the sense of body, then you have more symptoms. Another one is “contradiction of thoughts”, that you think you shouldn’t have fear while having fear is natural. According to Morita Therapy, we don’t focus on the treatment of panic attacks. First, please know that your symptoms are not diseases of the body, they are from your mental state. Second, we have methods to do. Our lesson “Coping with fear and anxiety”, please go over it. Third, believe in your natural healing power!

And for each teacher, I would like to say something. Teacher Q3-1, you said about burying dead people every day and your family member was in the army. Try to talk to him in your heart, or write something to him and keep them, they also will help you. And do something good for him. Teacher Q3-2, what kind of things do you feel uncontrollable? Maybe you need to separate things into controllable and uncontrollable ones. The war changed a lot of things into uncontrollable ones. Try to expect and do things you can control. Teacher Q3-3, Ukrainian patriots have fortitude, even they died, their spirits will be remembered and pass on. They affected you and you can believe that there are a lot of people like you, encouraged by them, that these people including you, will save this country. Teacher Q3-4, the information of the war is not good really. But you have to move on, life is moving on every day. Do things you can. If the information makes you sick, sometimes shut them off and surrender yourself to the God. Teacher A3-5, you have fear of driving. What’s it like? How about trying to drive a short distance, to somewhere you really

want to go or need to go? If you can endure, continue to drive longer. If not, stop and try next time.

4. Loss and pain

Q4-1: One of my family members is dead. I am in abroad and will go back to my hometown a few months later. How to ease the pain from the loss, how to overcome fear of loneliness. I want to keep living, to enjoy every day, but the pain and fear are destroying me.

A:4-1 You lost both your family member and your loving hometown, and have to live in a foreign country. You have experienced nearly 2 years occupied situation. Your family member worked for the government, which made you have to hide him from the Russians and be always worried. After so many terrible events, you gained the freedom again while he died. That is a too painful experience! You cannot hope. Anyone in your situation will feel like that. Now you can go back to hometown but it is no longer a loving place as it used to be. You may face more painful things again. But you are working, taking care of your students. You want to enjoy daily life again, which means you still have the strength and desire to seek happiness. Please acknowledge that it is the situation made you feel so painful and lonely, not your fault, and you couldn't prevent the bad things. Acknowledge your feelings to this family member and other people. Maybe you have ambivalence feelings, because he might sometimes sacrifice himself or your family, for other people's welfare. Please don't blame yourself for anything including your feelings. You can both keep him in your heart, and enjoy your own life, enjoy every day. You needn't forget him, and don't consider being happy is a betrayal to him. He wanted you be happy. Future is ambiguous. You needn't look into the future if you cannot. Just do something you can. Coming back to hometown and see the belongings of him will make you painful, it is true. But if it is the reality, you have to go into it. Try to do some preparation for coming home, something good, something you love to do. God will also prepare for you something good as well, although you don't know at this moment.

5. Guilt

Q5-1: How can a person who lives far away from the shelling get rid of guilt and feels that he or she is not helping those who are fighting or those who have suffered enough?

Q5-2: How do you come to terms with the fact that you can't bring back the past and accept what is today without pain? My parents' story...Two years ago, they were full of energy, and now they have aged like ten years. I constantly think about whether I could have saved my parents.

A: Teacher Q5-1. I think you have enough reason living far away. It's not your fault. Everyone should do things he or she is able to do, which is the best way to contribute to Ukraine. You cannot control other people's thinking, as well as your feeling of guilt, so try to acknowledge your guilt, please. Meantime, tell yourself that you are doing good things for Ukraine, and give the love to yourself which others couldn't. Teacher Q5-2. Your parents' story is very sad. And I am moved by your love to them. We all have time regretting that we could have done better in the past, while in each time, we have already done the best. Everyone has his faith. Someone has a happy childhood while others don't. Someone has success in life while others have a lot of failures... Your parents have their own lives, as well as a kind daughter worrying about them. Do things you can, to love them. You cannot change or control things uncontrollable.

6. Lethargy

Q6-1: As long as there are urgent things to do, I do them. But as soon as I come to a stop, I don't want to do anything else, my hands give up, my mood is bad, I don't want to communicate with anyone. I just want to lie down and sleep, although I don't really want to sleep.

A6-1: You are working hard, helping the students, and raising up your family. You are tired, exhausted. Your body wants you to lie down and take a rest, and sometimes

your mental state does it too. If you don't really want to sleep, how about move your body a little? For example, do some exercises or just map the floor. Once you start moving your body in a slow and rhythmic fashion, your autonomic nerves will adjust. Try this and remember that concentrate on what you are doing, but not thinking about other things while doing it. Be HERE and NOW.

7. Hates

Q: During the war, how can one not "stoop" to hating everything Russian? Are there any methods for distinguishing between "friends" and "foes" without being consumed by hatred?

A: Distinguishing between friends and enemies without hatred is very difficult. Because in our evolutionary processes, we hate the enemies and have fears of the enemies help us to fight or flee, and then we survive. Hate is natural, and adaptive in evolution. But too much of them will also destroy us. Accept the hate in yourself or in other people as a natural thing, but don't be absorbed in it. Leave the hatred circumstance, if you feel uncomfortable.

8. Protect yourself

Q8-1: How do I learn to protect myself and not give my energy to strangers?

A8-1: Maybe you help people who you don't know well, and you may sacrifice yourself. Why can't you reject them? Think about it. Is it something related to your inner conflicts?

Q8-2: I have noticed that I work very hard during the war to think less about the war. How can I learn to switch to rest?

A8-2: Most of you may have the same problem. Try to leave your environment for a while and do something different, a small trip to the country side, or go to see some old friends, or start painting or something new, or something you liked 20 years ago. Try to leave your routine for some time.

Q8-3: How to accept, to come to terms with the destruction during the war of the main value - human life and health?

A8-3: We can acknowledge it but cannot accept it. You can tell yourself that “This situation is not right. I feel angry and am afraid of, and everybody here feel the same way. I am not alone”. The destruction during the war of the main value - human life and health is not acceptable, never. Acknowledge it means you can feel pain, and try very hard to hold on, and wait for the end of this.

9. Past, future and now

Q9-1: It's hard for me to let go of the terrible past that constantly worries me. I am also scared of the future, which is unknown. I would like to learn to live today, now, and enjoy what I have.

A9-1: It's really hard to let go the past events. Have you ever seen the American film “Superman”? In the last, the superman gave a kiss to his lover and let her forget all happened between them, to help her let go of the past. We all want this kiss. But we have another magic tool— kiss from the Time. Time can ease our pain, little by little. When the terrible past comes to you again, acknowledge your negative feelings, and hold it for a while. Tell yourself 'That horror cannot hurt me now. At this moment, and here, I am safe'. Imagine a dear person is hugging you and what will he or she say to you at that time. You are tired, exhausted, but are making progress and gaining survival wisdom and courage. Don't blame yourself not being able to always doing the right thing and enjoy the life you're having now. You're in the progress of improving your psychological condition.

Q2-2: How to stop living in "rose-colored glasses" and unfulfilled hopes?

A2-2: Please, don't stop hoping. Our hopes may be fulfilled at once or in a period of time, but they are seeds, when the season comes, they grow up and become reality, like trees. Rose-colored glasses are not bad, if they sometimes give us happiness.

Keep them in the bottom of your heart and do what you can do now. Wait for the day they become useful again. That day will come.