Group Guidelines

Over years of practical experience, we have developed a set of guidelines for using *Reading Between The Lines* in a group setting:

- **Focus on the text.**  
  *Reading Between The Lines* is an invitation to enter into the story. It is not a group for exegesis, theology, discussion, or therapy. If the focus begins to wander, come back to the text.

- **"I statements" are encouraged.**  
  The goal is to explore how you respond to the text. This is not to discount tradition and the scholars; but to say that here it is how you hear, feel, think about, and react to the text that is of primary importance.

- **Pauses between responses are important.**  
  A subtle reminder that we are not in a discussion group. The aim is to engage the text rather than one another. What we hear others say can be crucial. Why they say what they do is a conversation that can take place over coffee later.

- **The goal is not consensus, agreement, or a right answer.**  
  The richness and value of the experience may depend upon the very opposite.

- **There is no expectation that you explain, justify, or defend anything you say.**  
  This may be hard to remember; even if you are working through *Reading Between The Lines* alone.

- **Silence is part of the process/ silence can be pregnant.**  
  Alone this may simply be about taking your time and allowing some in-between spaces. In the silence there is a chance not only to ponder what others have said, but to hear the echo of your own voice.

- **Allow space for others to speak**  
  The richness of the discussion depends on hearing different voices and different perspectives, not just one.

- **You can change your mind as often as you like.**  
  "How do I know what I think until I hear myself say it?" In this process, once you hear what you have said, feel free to change your mind not once but over and over again.

- **Honestly try the nonverbal exercises.**  
  This is not an art or theater competition. Silence your inner critic and be prepared to be amazed and enlightened.

- **What is said in the RBTL group stays in the group.**  
  In the group, we touch sacred ground in ourselves and each other. Have the respect for the group and yourself to honor that confidentiality.

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For more information on our method and resources, or to place an order, please visit our website:  
www.educationalcenter.org ; call our office at 704-375-1160, or send an email inquiry to:  
info@educationalcenter.org