



MIRAVA BOOKS

People Are More Than Labels

Distinguishing people, actions and responsibility during
conflict

English edition

Free excerpt

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Distinguishing people, actions and responsibility during conflict

English edition · Revised edition · October 2026

This book is for people whose relationships are divided by war, borders and hostile messages. It offers precise language and voluntary ways of engaging, rather than an obligation to befriend, forgive or sympathise with wrongdoers. Condemning aggression and holding people accountable for specific acts remain compatible with respect for human dignity. The examples are fictional. Read one chapter at a time and choose an exercise that does not require unsafe contact. The text was prepared with artificial intelligence assistance and edited for this edition.

MIRAVA · Text and translation prepared with AI assistance.

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01

How a Label Replaces a Person

A label looks like a description but often quietly changes the question. “What did this person do?” becomes “What do people like that do?” A passport, language or birthplace does not tell you which decisions a person made. Clarifying individual responsibility also does not remove organisations’ and states’ responsibility for their actions.

After terrible news, Sergei notices the thought, “They all want to harm us.” He does not force himself to stop feeling angry. He rewrites it: “I am angry with those who committed this act and those who support it.” He leaves his conclusion open about people whose actions he does not know.

“Everyone,” “nobody” and “they” are reasons to clarify the subject, rather than bans on strong feelings. Who acted? What happened? How is involvement known? If the answer is unknown, write that down. Do not fill a gap with someone’s background or replace a concrete accusation with endless talk about the world’s complexity.

Name four things separately: the event, a known participant, the consequences and your boundary. For example: “This person justifies destroying homes. I will not continue speaking with them.” This is firm and precise. It requires neither closeness to strangers nor proof that every group must contain an exception.

Exercise. Choose something you said or mentally repeated after the news. Underline the generalisation. Rewrite it while keeping the description of harm and naming a known participant. Then add “I do not yet know...” for missing information. Check whether the act you condemn and your own next action have become clearer.

This is a free excerpt. The complete PDF contains every chapter listed in the contents. Sales have not opened yet.

Further reading

[1] UNESCO — Global citizenship and peace education (further reading) · www.unesco.org

[2] UNESCO — Media and Information Literacy (further reading) · www.unesco.org