

# The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend our Broken Hearts and World

## Chapter 4 Come Alive

### 1. Threshold Moments

**Purpose:** *Mark the transition from daily life to sacred encounter.*

- Greet people with soft music, low lighting, and a visual centerpiece a photo of your loved ones on a table next to a lit candle.
- Opening prayer: *Let us pray. Loving God, thank You for this time together. As we reflect on what it means to truly Come Alive in your love and in the presence of others, open our hearts. Help us to recognize the ways You call us to show up and bring Your light to the world. Amen*

### 2. Sacred Sparks

**Purpose:** *Create curiosity and open hearts.*

- Pose this provocative question.
  - *Early in this chapter, a woman named Erin, who was suffering from breast cancer, asked a series of powerful questions (p. 64). The first was, “What is your soul calling you to do?” Reflecting on that, if you could ask one deep, soul-level question to the people of our world, what would it be—and why?*
- Have people whip around the circle with their answers.

### 3. Chambers of the Spirit

**Purpose:** *Share lived faith experiences in sacred listening circle.*

Invite everyone to share the answer to one or more questions.

1. When did you first realize that you believed in God?
2. Can you describe a moment when you felt a soul calling in your life?
3. When the director of the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs told Sharon Brous, “*I have a sense that you’d do more good for the world as a rabbi who gives a damn about the women and babies in Mozambique than as a seminary dropout, searching for a way to make a difference,*”—what wisdom do you see in that statement, if any?

4. Brous eventually pursued a double major to embrace the tension between scholarship and activism. What tensions—internal or external—have you faced, or are you currently facing?
5. One of Brous’s professors said to her, “*Go, be your own light. You’ll never truly shine in my shadow.*”—Are you living in someone’s shadow? What is your own light?
6. What is your purpose? And what are you waiting for?
7. Brous observes that people often live more fully and authentically when they’re facing terminal illness. She challenges us to live that way every day. Do you find that to be true in your own life?
8. According to Brous, on Judgment Day, God might ask us: “How well were you yourself?” Do you believe that’s a question God would ask? Why or why not?
9. Brous speaks of angels—messengers of the Holy One. Have you ever had an experience with such a messenger? She continues, “*We are the angels. The whole world is waiting for us.*”—What is the world waiting for you to do or become?
10. Near the end of the chapter, Brous wrestles with the classic theological conundrum: Why do good things happen to bad people, and bad things happen to good people? What is your own story with that mystery?
11. When have you been the mal’akh—the angel—for someone else?

#### 4. Intentional Sending

**Purpose:** *Leave inspired and committed to live the faith.*

- Use a ritual action:
  - Relight the candle
  - Invite everyone to share the one word or phrase they would like to take into the next week/month (depending how often you are meeting).
- Close with a prayer of sending... *God of presence, help us to live out the Amen Effect. Let us show up, be true to God’s calling, listen, and love deeply. May we bring life to those around us, and may your Spirit bring us to life in return. Amen*