

## *Positive Harmlessness in Practice*

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. The author states that “we do harm to others in denial of our actual interconnected reality, substituting instead an ‘us-them’ mentality that includes objectifying the other person or group” (p. 3). Would you agree from your own experience?
2. Regarding forgiveness, the author says: “The intention is not to pardon or pretend that everything is just fine...Rather, it is to recognize that we share a common humanity and that we all make mistakes, sometimes terrible ones” (p. 21). Do you think this is true? If so, what are the implications?
3. Which of the definitions of harmlessness in Chapter 2 do you most agree with? Why?
4. The author states that “we have no shared experience of living harmlessly” (p. 48). From your own experience, do you feel this is true?
5. The author proposes a daily Butterfly Shift practice to become used to behaving harmlessly. What do you think of this approach?
6. The author implies that we take for granted many of the service people who are helpful to us and do not notice specifically who they are and what they do. Thinking back over the past 48 hours, do you feel that this is true for you? How would your experience in the world change if you were consciously aware and appreciative of such help?
7. The author suggests that many of us have more emotional range when it comes to negative emotions than to positive ones. Do you feel this is true? Which of the positive emotions on page 98 do you experience on a regular basis?
8. The author suggests that we replace traditional psychological theories of maturing towards *independence* with an hypothesis that “our starting point is that we are energetic entities who have to learn to manipulate a physical body that starts out in an uncoordinated state” (p. 163) and that we mature towards *interdependence*. Would you agree? Why or why not?
9. Were you surprised by the information on violence against women? Do you think it is a problem in your country? If so, what could you do to help?
10. Did you take the Harmlessness Scale™? If so, did the results surprise you?
11. What did you find surprising about the facts introduced in this book?
12. How has reading this book changed your opinion of what is harmful or harmless?
13. Does the author present information in a way that is interesting and insightful? If so, how does she achieve this?
14. What one new fact did you learn from reading this book?
15. What part of this book inspired you in some way? Explain.
16. Did you find the exercises in the book helpful – why or why not? Which exercise in the book was the most meaningful to you?
17. Do you think the book will impact how you move forward in your life?
18. Will you read other books by this author? Why or why not?