



# THE CAFE NOW AND NOT YET

A COMPANION EXERCISE TO  
'RUMOURS OF A BETTER COUNTRY:  
SEARCHING FOR TRUST AND COMMUNITY IN  
A TIME OF MORAL OUTRAGE'

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**02**

Introduction

**03**

The Ten Words: The Decalogue

**05**

Set up

**06**

Activity

**09**

Table Instructions

**10**

Advice for Moderators

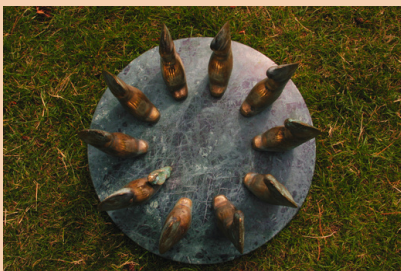
**31**

Summary Reflections

# INTRODUCTION

The *Café Now and Not Yet* is both an invitation and a call to action. In these pages you will find tools for a unique, "workshop" designed to inspire hope and reflection on creating a better country and thriving communities of trust.

In the 1980s, in Czechoslovakia, I met Palestinian students who passionately shared their dreams of liberation and self-determination. As I listened to their heady ideas I wondered if their dream was large enough. What, I asked them, would make their country better than their neighbours country. I challenged them to think beyond their dreams, questioning how their future country could address universal struggles like trust, corruption, and abuse of power. These conversations awakened my "moral imagination"—the ability to envision better realities.



Over three decades, I've found people from many different backgrounds share similar hopes for trusting and flourishing communities. This exercise inspires participants to imagine a better world—and leaves the world better for it.

***Now, I invite you to gather with others, in a café like atmosphere, to explore these ideas.***

# THE DECALOGUE THE TEN WORDS



The Decalogue is an ancient framework of moral principles that fosters trust, freedom, and community. They are often misunderstood as restrictive rather than liberating.

In my search for descriptions of goodness, I rediscovered some ancient wisdom, long forgotten and often misunderstood, that lays out a simple framework for trust and trustworthiness. A large group of people—recently freed from 400 years of enslavement—needed a set of moral principles to organise their lives together. They needed a framework that would set their expectations of each other and keep them free.

While meditating on this framework, a later king said, “Your law is a lamp unto my feet.” “I meditate day and night on them; they are like gold and honey.”

The dust of history has clouded our view. Our view of “commandments” is restrictive; our response is almost universally negative. Why would something liberating, glorious, and sweet become oppression and legalism? That’s for those of a more cynical disposition to answer. I discovered its potential to liberate and inspire. That is how we use it in our Cafe.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE EVENT

The Café awakens the moral imagination by encouraging participants to envision a just and meaningful world by exploring practical applications of goodness.

The purpose of the Café is to ignite the moral imagination so people can visualise a world where goodness flourishes. By doing this, we can better find hope and build just, meaningful communities.

Too often, conversations about the good life stay conceptual or are overly simplistic. The Café helps people dig deeper, using their imaginations to explore what right living might look like in practical terms.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE CAFE EVENT

In a relaxed café-style setting, participants gather in small groups to discuss the effects of following one principle described in the Decalogue, by asking the simple question: What would change *Economically*, *Sociologically* and *Psychologically*, if everyone in your town decided to keep one of them? A moderator guides the discussion, collects feedback from each group, and summarises the shared vision of a better society.





## SETTING UP “CAFE NOW AND NOT YET”

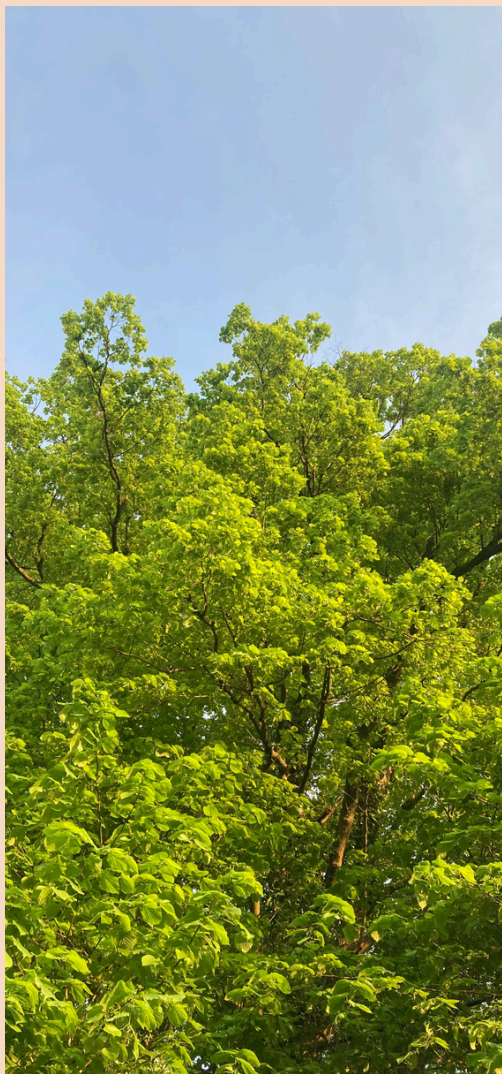
Simple, creative touches transform spaces into inviting venues for meaningful discussion, enabling participants to envision a better world.

Viennese cafés are known for being places to relax and talk. We aim to recreate an environment where people feel comfortable lingering and engaging in meaningful conversation.

The Café can be a standalone event or part of a larger gathering. It can also work during dessert at a formal dinner or as a casual group discussion. It can work over several evenings and be the basis for a meaningful book club.

Simple touches, like tablecloths, candles, and flowers, can transform even the duller meeting space into something inviting. Changing the usual setup helps create a fresh atmosphere. These details make the event memorable and help participants envision a better world. Some groups even print menus listing the principles for discussion. The setting doesn't need to be elaborate, but creativity adds to the sense of occasion.

# WHY IT MATTERS



The Decalogue offers a vision of freedom and community that inspires people to strive for goodness in daily life.

The exercise helps us see the Decalogue as a description of freedom, not restriction. It provides a vision of living in harmony—with ourselves, others, and a higher purpose. By imagining the good, we can begin to hunger for it daily.



## Introduction

15 MINUTES



The moderator welcomes participants and explains the purpose of the event. Begin with a thought-provoking question:

- “What would society look like if everyone willingly followed the principles of the Decalogue without compulsion? Could these ancient guidelines hold the key to a freer, more trusting society?”

Explain the exercise: Each group will discuss one word (or commandment) and brainstorm its potential impact in the following three areas:

- *Economic*: How might this affect money, resources, or systems?
- *Psychological*: How would it change how people think and feel?
- *Sociological*: How would it shape relationships and communities?

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# ACTIVITY



## *Group Discussion*

### **45-50 MINUTES**

Each table explores their assigned Commandment with guided questions (found later in this text). A group member takes notes to share during feedback. Encourage participants to think practically and avoid cynicism.

*Examples:*

- *Do not steal:* What would life be like if theft didn't exist? Would we still need locks, passwords, or security systems? The opposite of theft is generosity. What would a generous world look like?
- *Do not bear false witness:* Imagine a world where honesty was universal. What would change in courts, businesses, or relationships?

## *Feedback*

### **20 MINUTES**

Groups share their insights with other groups, focusing on the positive changes they envisioned. Encourage examples that show how these values could reshape everyday life.

Key takeaways often include:

- The growth of trust as the foundation for relationships and communities.
- A shift from managing “bad behaviour” to pursuing meaningful work.

## *Reflection and Closing*

**20 MINUTES**

The moderator wraps up with a summary of the discussions. Highlight how these principles are not just rules but invitations to a better way of living.



# TABLE INSTRUCTIONS

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Each table will dive deeply into one word of the Decalogue, exploring its potential to reshape society, relationships, and individual lives. The discussions will focus on three practical areas of life:

- 1. Economic:** How would this change financial systems, resources, or daily transactions?
- 2. Psychological:** How might this impact how people think, feel, or see themselves?
- 3. Social:** What changes would we see in trust, community, and how people interact?

This isn't just about imagining a world without harm—it's about picturing a world overflowing with goodness. Here's how each Commandment invites us to think and dream: These table instructions (one per table) can be used to frame the discussion.

The last six words are more practical for getting started.

# GUIDANCE FOR MODERATORS

- Encourage imagination : Push participants to think beyond abstract ideas and visualize real, concrete changes.
- Address cynicism : If someone says, “This will never happen,” remind them that this is about imagining what could be—not solving everything at once.
- Prompt creativity : Use examples to spark ideas, like a world without passwords for “Do not steal” or courts for “Do not bear false witness”.

# TABLE ONE

## PLACE YOUR TRUST WISELY

### **From the Decalogue:**

“Have no other gods before me.”

**Focus :** Be wise in who you trust.

Priorities of the Heart and Issues of power in society

- **Questions to Explore :**

- What “gods” do we serve today (e.g., wealth, success, technology)?
- How and to what extent do these “gods” bring lasting satisfaction or security?
- How does power work in our community/society?
- Are you free to exercise dominion or does someone dominate you?
- What might society look like if people placed ultimate trust in someone greater than us all, who doesn’t exploit or exhaust us?
- If you could change one thing in this area, what would it be?
- In what way could this “word” be understood as an invitation?

**Imagine :** A world where people’s priorities shift from chasing wealth or status to building meaningful lives rooted in trust, purpose, and community



ECONOMIC

SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE TWO

## DON'T LET FALSE IDEALS CONTROL YOU

**From the Decalogue:** “Do not make false images to bow down to them.”

**Focus :** Our human capacity for the gift of Imagination.

- **Questions to Explore:**

- What would life look like if imagination was used to create beauty, solutions, and connection instead of distortions and obsessions?
- What might change in advertising if the images we use were faithful to reality?
- How does an undisciplined imagination harm relationships and decision-making?
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**Imagine :** A city where art, innovation, and relationships reflect truth and goodness rather than fear or envy.

ECONOMIC

SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE THREE

## SPEAK WITH INTENTION AND RESPECT

**From the Decalogue:** “Do not take the Name in Vain?”

**Focus :** The gift of Integrity and meaning in Language

- **Questions to Explore :**

- Where do you experience the economic impact of empty words?
- What does it mean to speak with intention?
- How might society change if every word carried weight and truth?
- How can misusing words erode trust?
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**Imagine :** A world where people mean what they say, and say what they mean and their words heal instead of harm. How would relationships deepen, and trust would grow?

ECONOMIC

SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL



# TABLE FOUR

## HONOR REST AND RENEWAL

**From the Decalogue:** “Remember the Sabbath.”

**Focus :** Time, Rest and Work.

- **Questions to Explore :**

- What is your relationship to time?
- How does constant busyness impact mental health, families, and communities?
- To what deeper kind of rest might this Commandment point?
- How might society change if people honored the rhythms of work and rest?
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**Imagine :** A world where rest is not a luxury but a shared practice that restores relationships, creativity, and purpose.

ECONOMIC

SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE FIVE

## RESPECT THOSE WHO SHAPED YOUR LIFE

**From the Decalogue:** “Honour your father and mother.”

**Focus :** Respect and reconciliation.

- **Questions to Explore :**

- How do strong family relationships ripple out into communities for good and ill?
- What does it mean to honour parents (or primary caregivers) even when they fall short?
- Our parents (or primary caregivers) are the gateway to our history and how we learn our culture, value system and train our basic instincts. They describe who is “in” and who is “out”.
- How might forgiveness and understanding heal generational divides?

**Imagine :** A society where families grow stronger, not because they’re perfect, but because they nurture respect, accountability, and reconciliation.

ECONOMIC

SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE SIX

## CHOOSE LIFE IN EVERY FORM

**From the Decalogue:** “Do not murder”

**Focus :** Life and dignity.

- **Questions to Explore :**

- How does harm begin with anger, gossip, or exclusion?
- What would it look like to actively protect and uplift life- emotionally, relationally, and physically?
- How might communities flourish if human dignity was a core value?

**Imagine :** A world where conflict is resolved peacefully, relationships are healed, and life is honored in every form.



ECONOMIC

SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE SEVEN

## BE FAITHFUL TO YOUR COMMITMENTS

**From the Decalogue:** “Do not commit adultery.”

**Focus :** Trust and faithfulness.

- **Questions to Explore :**

- How does trust- or the lack of it- affect relationships and families?
- What would change if people were deeply faithful in their commitments?
- How might children and communities thrive in a culture of stability and trust?

**Imagine :** A world where relationships are safe havens of love and loyalty, providing a foundation for future generations.

ECONOMIC

SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE EIGHT:

## LIVE HONESTLY AND GENEROUSLY

**From the Decalogue:** “Do not steal”

**Focus :** Honesty and generosity.

- **Questions to Explore :**

- What forms of theft exist beyond taking possessions (e.g. time, credit, ideas)?
- How would life change if people no longer needed to protect their resources?
- What new opportunities might emerge in a culture of fairness and generosity?

**Imagine :** A society where lock, passwords, and security systems are unnecessary, freeing time and energy for connection and creativity.

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SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE NINE

## VALUE TRUTH IN ALL THINGS

**From the Decalogue:** “Do not bear false witness.”

**Focus :** Truth and trust.

- **Questions to Explore :**

- How does dishonesty erode trust in relationships and institutions?
- What would happen if truth-telling became the norm in every aspect of life?
- How might honesty transform politics, business, and personal interactions?

**Imagine :** A world where people trust each other without question, knowing words match reality.

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SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# TABLE TEN

## CELEBRATE WHAT YOU HAVE AND OTHERS' SUCCESS

**From the Decalogue:** "Do not covet"

**Focus :** Contentment and generosity

• **Questions to Explore :**

- How is coveting different from healthy ambition or desire?
- What are the hidden costs of jealousy (e.g., stress, conflict)?
- How might society change if people celebrated others' success instead of resenting it?

**Imagine :** A culture where generosity and gratitude replace envy, freeing people to enjoy what they have and share with others.



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SOCIOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

# SUMMARY REFLECTIONS

For a rich understanding of the implications of the Decalogue, and as preparation for the exercise, read or listen to “Rumours of a Better Country” by Marsh Moyle. Each chapter unfolds the possibilities of trust in a time of Moral outrage. Feel free to use the ideas in the book if you find them useful.

## **The Commandments: A Vision for Goodness**

The Ten Commandments are not just a list of rules but a blueprint for a life of trust, joy, and freedom. They show us what life looks like when lived in harmony—with ourselves, each other, and the world. By imagining a world where these principles are fully embraced, we gain a clearer vision of the good life and how to move toward it.



## 1. THE COMMANDMENTS AS A DESCRIPTION OF FREEDOM

The Commandments begin with this declaration:

*“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of slavery.”*

They are not chains but keys, unlocking a life free from fear, dishonesty, and harm.

True freedom isn't doing whatever we want; it's living in a way that nurtures relationships and builds trust. Imagine a society where people live generously, honour one another and seek the good of their neighbours. That's the freedom the Commandments describe—a life of flourishing, not just for individuals but for entire communities.

**Example :** Freedom thrives in trust. Without trust, we live in fear—locking doors, hiding resources, and guarding our words. But when trust grows, so do creativity and generosity.

## 2. THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

Imagining goodness is the first step toward living it. When we visualize a world where honesty, kindness, and rest are the norm, we awaken a hunger for what is possible. The exercise of imagining the impact of the Commandments isn't just theoretical—it's transformative. By picturing a world free from deceit, theft, and envy, we begin to see the practical steps to align our lives with those values.

**Example :** Imagine how much energy we could save if trust could replace bureaucracy. There is no need for passwords, notaries, or locks. This isn't just a dream—it's a glimpse of the world we can strive toward

### 3. THE WEB OF CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE COMMANDMENTS

The Commandments form a web of trust and goodness; they are not isolated. Each reinforces all others:

- **“Do not steal”** depends on truthfulness (“Do not bear false witness”).
- **“Do not covet”** is the antidote to envy, which drives dishonesty and theft.
- **“Honor your parents”** builds respect, which strengthens communities and families.

This interconnectedness reminds us that goodness is not about isolated acts but about living with integrity in all areas of life.

### 4. THE COMMANDMENTS AS A PICTURE OF THE KINGDOM

In the Lord's Prayer, we ask, *“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*

The Commandments give us a glimpse of that kingdom—a world where relationships are whole, trust is abundant, and goodness thrives.

This isn't just about what happens in the future; it's about how we live now. Every decision we make, every act of kindness, every step toward justice brings a piece of that kingdom to life.

**Example :** Jesus summarized the Commandments as loving God and loving your neighbor. This love is active—it looks like generosity instead of greed, truth instead of lies, and healing instead of harm.

## 5. WHY THE LAW STILL MATTERS

The Commandments don't have the power to make us good—but they show us what goodness looks like. They set standard that inspires us to grow, not in our own strength, but by seeking help from one another and, for believers, from God's Spirit.

By showing us the kind of world we long for, the Commandments point us toward the daily choices that make that vision real. They don't just reveal what's wrong; they reveal what's possible.

## 6 THE BIGGER PICTURE: BUILDING A BETTER COUNTRY

This exercise shows that goodness isn't just a lofty ideal—it's a practical, concrete goal. When we imagine a world shaped by these principles, we start to see the small ways we can live them out right now.

- **“Do not steal”** becomes an invitation to live generously.
- **“Do not bear false witness”** invites us to speak truthfully, even when it's hard.
- **“Honor your parents”** reminds us to value history, family, and reconciliation.

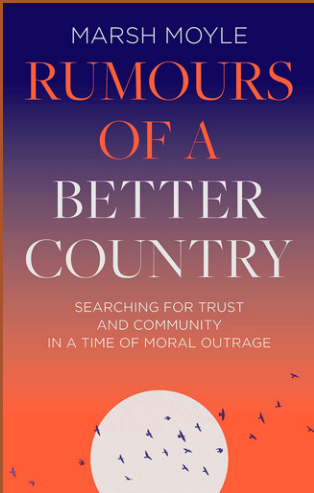
Each step matters. Every act of kindness, honesty, and respect makes the world more like the one we imagined.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CAFÉ EXPERIENCE

- **Hope is contagious :** Imagining goodness inspires us to believe change is possible.
- **Change starts small :** Grand visions are built on daily acts of trust and integrity.
- **We're all connected :** How we live impact everyone around us, for better or worse

**Closing Reflection :** The Commandments challenge us to dream boldly. They show us that goodness is not out of reach—it's waiting to be imagined, chosen, and lived.





This is a companion to the book “Rumours of a Better Country” by Marsh Moyle.

You can buy the book using this QR Code:



Or listen to the audiobook, narrated by the author here:



*Photos by David Schaupp and Erin Parker*