



FANDOM FORWARD ►

AVATAR

THE LAST TOOLKIT



Fandom Forward is a project of the **Harry Potter Alliance**. Founded in 2005, the Harry Potter Alliance is an international non-profit that turns fans into heroes by making activism accessible through the power of story. This toolkit provides resources for fans of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *The Legend of Korra* to think more deeply about the social issues represented in the story and take action in our own world.

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INTRODUCTION



Water. Earth. Fire. Air. Health. Environment. Destruction. Balance. In the world of Avatar we learn that - despite first appearances - all things are connected. The health of the natural (or, sometimes, spirit) world surely impacts our own health, and so too can our health impact the way we interact with nature. Discord within ourselves often leads to mistreatment of others, and that mistreatment often manifests in damage to the environment, too. We are all connected, to each other and to the world we live in, and in the search for balance we must consider the wellbeing of not only ourselves, but every living thing that surrounds us.

The journeys of Aang, Korra, and their friends and families are not easy. They are faced with overwhelming violence in the genocide of the Air Nomads, thoughtless destruction of the environment, and injuries to both mind and body. As the Avatar, both Aang and Korra learn that to bring balance to the world they have to bring balance to themselves, too.

In this toolkit we'll think about how Aang, Korra, and the Gaang tackled some of their biggest challenges, and the lessons we can learn from them that may be able to help us bring balance to our own world. Our world doesn't have an Avatar, so the quest for balance is up to all of us.

Let's get going - yip yip!

NOTE

Throughout the toolkit, we'll use the following format to cite specific episodes:

A=Avatar: The Last Airbender

K=The Legend of Korra

B=Book

E=Episode

Thus, the first episode of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* would be cited as A:B1:E1.

You can find a full list of recommended episodes in the Resources section.

FACILITATOR TIPS



Social issues can be tough to talk about, and the issues in this toolkit are no exception. As a member of Team Avatar and therefore a respected leader in this community, it's important that you follow some basic guidelines when leading any group through this kit:

1. Protect Your Team

Before you start, make sure everyone on your team feels safe and included. You never know what a particular issue may mean personally to someone or how a discussion may impact them. A great way to start is to set some guidelines as a group for what is and is not acceptable on your team. If things start to get too uncomfortable, don't be afraid to end a line of discussion or steer it to another topic. Remember that not all of us are ready to go on this kind of journey - make sure you let your team know you'll be participating in a discussion or action beforehand so that everyone can choose whether or not to participate.

2. Listen to Each Other

As Iroh said, "It is important to draw wisdom from many different places. If you take it from only one place, it becomes rigid and stale. Understanding others, the other elements, and the other nations will help you become whole." Or, in the words of another wise leader, "Why do boys always have to think that somebody has to be the leader?" (Thanks, Katara.) These issues are complicated, and different viewpoints are okay - take time to listen, let everyone speak, and challenge each other *without* devaluing each other's opinions or resorting to personal attacks.

3. Talk First

It's important to discuss issues before immediately taking action. Use the Talk It Out sections to think about these issues before deciding how you want to tackle them.

4. Don't Jump to Conclusions

Learn from Zuko's mistakes - don't assume you know everything about an issue, especially if there are people on your team who have personally experienced an issue or whose identity you are discussing. Allies are awesome, but it's more important for the voices of those who have lived these experiences to be heard. The best way to be an ally is to make sure those people have space to speak.

5. Take Action

When you and your team feel ready to jump in, use the Action suggestions to get started. If your team comes up with a different idea, that's awesome - don't be afraid to get creative!

6. Keep Learning

We've only begun to scratch the surface - like our world and bending itself, social issues are highly complex and constantly evolving. Take what you learn from this kit and continue to educate yourself on the issues.

Need Backup?

That's okay, there's a whole team of volunteers ready to help. Just send us an email at fandomforward@thepalliance.org - we're happy to answer questions or help you with facilitation or action items.

All Characters Are Flawed

We've done our best to represent the issues in this toolkit as accurately as possible, but because these issues are so complex there are bound to be things we missed or things you have different views on. If you find factual errors in this toolkit, please let us know!

REPRESENTATION



There are no white people in *Avatar* or *Korra*. The world and cultures portrayed in the show were inspired by a variety of **real-world cultures** in Asia, particularly China and Tibet, as well as Inuit culture in the case of the Water Tribes. Show creators Bryan Konietzko and Michael Dante Dimartino were strongly influenced by Asian animators and **worked directly with South Korean animation studios** to create the style of the show. In addition, they **worked with consultants** to bring cultural elements like traditional calligraphy and martial arts styles to life in a respectful and accurate way.

The fact that the series is so fantastic for racial and cultural representation only made the **whitewashing** in the *The Last Airbender* movie all the more painful. Not only were white actors cast in the lead roles of Aang, Katara, and Sokka (whose actor Jackson Rathbone **responded to the controversy** by saying he “definitely needed a tan”- yikes), but the only people of color cast in lead roles had darker skin tones and were playing antagonists like Zuko. This kind of **colorism** - associating good with lighter skin and bad with darker skin - is deeply entrenched in institutionalized racism, and has documented impact on the way we perceive people - to the point that in the United States children of all races are **more likely to associate darker skin tones with negative traits**. The situation was so terrible and the fan response so huge that the term **racebending**, now commonly used in fandom to refer to reimagining white characters as people of color, was coined.

Beyond racial and cultural representation, both *Avatar* and *Korra* are great at representing characters of different genders, sexualities, abilities, and body types. Katara calls out her brother Sokka for a sexist comment quite literally within the first five minutes of the show, and over the course of the first season Sokka is shown actively unlearning sexist ideas, eventually seeking training from the all-female Kyoshi Warriors. Throughout the series female characters are shown as leaders equal to their male counterparts, and Korra is unique for featuring a strong female protagonist in a cartoon not targeted to a solely female audience, a rarity in shows meant for younger viewers. Not only that, she also has an unusual body type for a female cartoon character, muscular and described by the creators as “the kind of girl you might meet on a snowboard.”



If that wasn't enough, Korra also became a canon bisexual character when the show's creators **confirmed** that her relationship with another strong female character, Asami, is canon (a relationship that is also interracial, another unique thing for American television).

In general, the characters in both series regularly defy traditional gender roles. Korra is tough, athletic, and impulsive, while Aang is a “scrawny bald vegetarian” who is a pacifist and often more emotional and empathetic. Each nation has both male and female leaders (whose ability to lead is not questioned based on their gender), and the Avatar is not bound by gender.



Finally, characters of different abilities are represented throughout both series. Toph is one of the heroes of *Avatar*, a brilliant master of earthbending who teaches the Avatar - in two incarnations, in fact. Toph’s blindness is shown not to be a detriment to her, and not something she has to “overcome,” but instead a part of her identity that gives her a unique perspective of the world and the ability to develop new skills. Teo, a character who relies on a wheelchair to get around, is a brilliant engineer who develops new equipment that allows nonbenders to fly. Ming-Hua is an accomplished water bender despite not having arms. These characters show that people of different abilities are diverse in their interests, skills, and accomplishments.

In keeping with the spirit of the show, we’ve done our best to be respectful of Eastern culture, spirituality, and religion in this toolkit. If you spot a place we’ve been unintentionally appropriative or disrespectful, please let us know!

WE ASKED JANET VARNEY, VOICE OF KORRA, HOW SHE FELT ABOUT THE SHOW’S IMPACT ON OUR WORLD - HERE’S WHAT SHE HAD TO SAY:

“I was, and remain, incredibly honored to have been a part of such an extraordinary show. The creators, Mike and Bryan, are just two of the most brilliant, sensitive, all-around awesome people I know, and the fact that they were committed to exploring themes that other shows might shy away from just makes me so proud. Through my adventures at comic cons all over the world, I’ve been lucky enough to come face-to-face with *The Legend of Korra*’s incredible fans, many of whom have shared brave personal stories with me about their own experiences with mental health, PTSD, joining the LGBT+ community, and more, and have cited things that happened on the show as inspiration or comfort on their journeys. In turn, the fans of our show have endlessly inspired me, and I hope Mike and Bryan’s legacy will live on and continue to bring people together to discuss, support and change the world!”



BOOK I HEALTH



*"YOU MUST GAIN BALANCE WITHIN YOURSELF
BEFORE YOU CAN BRING BALANCE TO THE WORLD."*

The Avatar's job is to bring balance to the world, but to do that they must also find balance within themselves. The heroes of *Avatar* and *Korra* are faced with this truth throughout their journey, constantly reminded that taking care of their own health - physical, mental, and spiritual - is critical in determining the success of their missions. Each Avatar must learn to balance all four elements, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each and what the elements contribute; this same principle can be applied to health. A balanced approach to health means looking at ourselves holistically - doing our best to take care of our bodies' physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Balance does *not* mean fixing, but understanding how to work *with* your body in order to maximize the unique skills and strengths that only you have.

When Aang is first freed from the ice, he's faced with situations that are understandably traumatic - he's lost all of his friends (well, except Appa and a certain Earth King), his culture has been wiped out, and he knows that he's supposed to be the one to find a way to end the war and restore balance to the world. That's no small list of things to deal with! Before Aang can truly start on his mission, the first thing he has to do is come to terms with all of that; sometimes this



is a painful process, and Aang expresses his anger and sadness often, but by talking through it with his new friends he's able to begin to heal and discover how to move forward.

Still, those kinds of experiences don't just go away - Aang's fear of losing more friends continues to be something he has to come to terms with throughout his journey to the Fire Nation. When Aang visits Guru Pathik at the Eastern Air Temple to learn how to control the Avatar State, he must face his deepest fears and learn to balance the traumas of his past. In order to heal, Aang must open his chakras. Chakras are a real belief in

our own world, and are thought of as pools of energy that connect the stream or creek of life energy within your body. For Aang, the process of opening his chakras is difficult, and involves examining and learning from his past experiences - as Guru Pathik said, "Life is messy, and things tend to fall in the creek."

Not everyone's journeys are the same. For Zuko, it takes a long time for him to realize the emotional and physical abuse he has suffered from his father. Zuko has the help of a trusted mentor, Iroh, to work through his feelings and be able to finally escape this abusive relationship. For Zuko, being able to face his father and tell him that he had seen his abuse for what it was

was the ultimate turning point, allowing him to begin rebuilding his life in a way that was true to himself.

Expressing those kinds of emotions in a healthy way is incredibly important in finding your own healing and balance. For Katara, learning the difference between closure and revenge for those who harmed her mother was a key moment in her own path to healing. When she finds the man who brought her mother to the Fire Nation, at first she's sure she wants to harm him in order to be able to find closure - but when the time comes, she realizes that's not the path she wants for herself, or one that will actually help her heal from the pain of losing her mother. For Katara, expressing all of the anger and pain that had been inside her without causing harm to others was the true first step in finding her balance. (A:B3:E16)

Much later in life, Katara is able to pass this wisdom on to Korra. After nearly being killed in the battle with Zaheer and the Red Lotus, Korra suffers tremendous post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as physical injuries that require her to go through extensive rehabilitation. Though the rehabilitation exercises help her regain her physical mobility, her emotional scars are much more difficult to heal. At first, Korra's course of action is to try to ignore her trauma, telling herself "You're just in my mind, you're not real." (K:B4:E2) While it may have been true that it was in her mind, that didn't mean it wasn't real pain, and simply ignoring it didn't help her heal from what she had experienced. As Katara tells her, "It's alright, let your anger and frustration flow like water." (K:B4:E2)



It's important to note that when we talk about "healing" we don't mean that everything just goes away - Katara and Aang will always mourn for their families, Zuko will always feel the sadness and pain of the abuse he suffered from his father, and Korra is forever changed by her experience with PTSD. The goal is not to ignore, forget, or "get over" that pain, but to learn to acknowledge it in such a way that your life can be balanced again.

In all of these cases the road to recovery involves not just the characters' minds, but their bodies and their spiritual selves. Physical activity and reconnection with their bodies can help them work through their thoughts and better connect with their spirit, connection with the spirit can help to heal both mental and physical wounds, and ultimately understanding their own mental state can help them fully embrace their physical and spiritual strength.

This kind of personal balance doesn't just work in the Avatar world. In our world we'd call activities to help us stay in balance **self-care**. Self-care is different for everyone (keyword: self), and sometimes it may take you a while to find the thing that works best for you. Aang had to experience this himself when he tried the many different suggestions of his friends - hot yoga, talking, screaming into a pillow, and acupuncture. For others, like Iroh, something like a hot cup of tea will do the trick; and, as he would say, "A moment of quiet is good for your mental wellbeing." Being an Avatar is tough work, and self-care is an important part of staying in tip-top shape for the journey. Remember that no one can stay in balance all of the time - it's a never ending process, and it's okay to find yourself out of balance now and again. The important thing is to remember that healing and health are a process, and the best way to tackle that process is different for everyone.

TALK IT OUT



- What is your own experience with mental health?
- The mental health problems that characters had gone through weren't named or diagnosed - what do you think this does to the story? Should they have been named? Should they have been discussed/explored more?
- Have you ever had an injury that took some time to recover from? What was the experience like for you? Can you relate to Korra?
- What are your self-care practices?
- "You mess things up in a very special way," Piandao said to Sokka. How can you reframe some of your negative experiences to positive ones?
- Take a burnout quiz, either **work-related** or more **general**. What were your results? Are you surprised? How can you manage your stress?
- Katara said, "The mind can be a powerful ally, or your greatest enemy." In what ways can your mind help or harm your wellbeing?
- Iroh said, "Sometimes the best way to solve your own problems is to help someone else." How does this fit in with self-care?
- How do the characters in *Avatar* balance physical, mental, and spiritual health? How do you balance your health?

TAKE ACTION



- Monk Gyatso helped Aang release some stress by making fruit pies together. You can use [this recipe](#) to do the same thing with some friends.
- Have a field trip with a friend, just like the Gaang with Zuko - go someplace that the two of you would enjoy, or maybe someplace where one of you can teach the other something new.
- Think about how the different elements can guide your self-care practices.
 - Water represents community and love. If you live near a body of water, watch how it ebbs and flows. No matter what, water always finds its way home.
 - Earth represents substance, strength, and endurance. Go for a hike, spend some time in a garden, or give a tree a good hug.
 - Fire represents power, desire, and creation. Do some freewriting, get some friends together for a (safe) bonfire, or practice some candle meditation.
 - Air represents freedom and detachment. Practice some breathing exercises and let your mind wander for a while.
- If you have a studio or classes near you, consider learning some of the martial arts that the different [bending styles are modeled after](#).
- Unfortunately, mental health services are often underfunded. Research services in your community and contact them to see how you might be able to support them.
- Support organizations that are working to end mental health stigma and improve mental health services, like [Project UROK](#) or [NAMI](#).
- Think about how you can encourage others to practice better health in your own community, whether that's your workplace, school, neighborhood, or even just your household. Share some of these ideas with others or challenge each other to mini health challenges.



ACTIVITY: TEA TIME

Purpose: In this activity, participants experience how sharing, processing, and listening can help clear and refresh the mind. This activity can be easily adapted for other questions to address specific situations.

Materials:

- Tea cups (or any kind of cup will do)
- Five different kinds of drinks (preferably ones that will mix well together!)
 - You can either use various teas and tea additions (milk, sugar, honey, lemon, etc.) or juice, soda, lemonade, etc. for non-tea lovers (just don't tell Iroh). Fun additions like fruit slices or whipped cream are also options for non-tea drinks.
- Label your five items as the following:
 - **Earth: Listen.** Ask someone near you if they will share with you a story, something that's bothered them, a piece of advice, or anything else they want to share. Do not interrupt them. Listen to their entire story, process, and thank them for sharing.
 - **Water: Let your emotions flow like water.** Ask someone near you if you can share with them something that has been troubling you. Let your worries, concerns, and stress out.
 - **Air: Breathe.** Take a moment to breathe deeply, paying attention to your breath as you inhale and exhale. Take as many breaths as you need to feel refreshed.
 - **Fire: Compliment someone.** What is it about that person that you see as a source of life and light? Compliments and positivity are a great source of empowerment, and can be a life force in times of darkness.
 - **Spirit: Reflect.** Take a quiet moment to yourself to think about anything that is troubling you. Is there anything just beneath the surface you hadn't realized was there? Or, take a moment to think about the things that make you really happy!

Instructions:

As participants enter, hand them one of the empty cups to use throughout the activity.

[5 minutes] Explain: Iroh shows all of us how to appreciate the calm and reflection of enjoying a good cup of tea - but you can't pour tea from an empty cup. In our own lives, it's easy to run out of energy without taking time to reflect and process, until we feel a little bit like that empty cup you're holding. That makes it hard to continue to do our best work and live our best lives. Around the room there are five stations - Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit. At each of these stations you must take a moment to reflect, process, listen, or share before you can fill part of your cup. Each of these stations has a different ingredient, and what your cup is filled with will change depending on how many stations you visit. For the next 20 minutes, take time to fill your cup in whatever way you choose. When everyone has filled their cup, we'll come back together to enjoy it together.

[20 minutes] Participants visit each station as they choose. Encourage participants to push themselves to visit more than one station, but don't force them to visit a station they don't want to.

[5 minutes] Ask the participants to finish whatever station they are at, and take their drinks back with them to sit together. It is preferable if participants can sit in a large circle.

Explain: Take a few moments to enjoy your tea in silence. Really think about the flavor you created, and all of the reflection you did to fill your cup.

[15 minutes] Ask: So how did your tea turn out?

Take some time to let people share and enjoy the fun of the different combinations.

Ask:

- What were these activities like for you?
- What was your favorite station? Did any station surprise you?
- How did it feel to take the time to refill your cup?
- How do you think you can take time to refill your cup in your daily lives?

Explain: Iroh said, "Sharing tea with a fascinating stranger is one of life's true delights." Thank you for sharing your tea with us today!

BOOK 2 ENVIRONMENT



*"WE'RE JUST IN THE PROCESS OF IMPROVING UPON WHAT'S ALREADY HERE.
AND, AFTER ALL, ISN'T THAT WHAT NATURE DOES?"*

"NATURE KNOWS WHEN TO STOP."

The Avatar has the ability not only to bend with all four elements, but to serve as a bridge between the Spirit World and the human world. But how did that ability begin? Well, with being kind to nature. The very first Avatar, Wan, stole firebending from a lion-turtle. At first he used it in anger, to fight other humans or fight back against the Spirit World. Once he used it to help a trapped cat-deer and started to take advice from the Spirits on how to use bending in harmony with them, he quickly became an extremely skilled firebender. But Wan still hadn't quite learned how to be in balance with the Spirit World - thinking he was helping, he interfered in the fight between the light spirit Raava and dark spirit Vaatu, and had to master all four elements and work in harmony with Raava in order to fix his mistake. (K:B2:E7)

In the world of Avatar, the Spirit World and nature are often one and the same. As discussed in [this essay](#), the Avatar Spirit is a reflection of the raw force of nature, and when that force is triggered for personal gain it never ends well; but when it is triggered in harmony with the human side of the Avatar it can be a powerful force for creation and protection.



The Avatar might have learned to work with and not against nature, but plenty others in the Four Nations have had a lot of learning to do since then. When the Fire Nation was waging war against the other three nations, they developed a lot of new technology without thinking about the consequences it would have on the environment around them. Their ships are powered with

huge amounts of coal, and by the end of the war their war factories have even polluted their own villages. In one village the Gaang visits, the river has become so polluted by a nearby factory that the villagers are sick and without food because of all of the contamination. Together, the villagers and the Gaang shut down the factory and get to work cleaning up the river. (A:B3:E3)

This kind of water and land contamination happens in our world, too. You probably heard about the **BP Oil Spill** in April, 2010, where over 170 million gallons of oil were leaked into the ocean off the Gulf of Mexico, killing thousands of animals and causing huge environmental damage to both the ecosystem and the humans who depend on the natural resources to make a living. But did you know that toxic leaks from oil harvesting are consistently happening all over the world? In particular, practices like **fracking** (a particular method of drilling down to release oil and gas) and harvesting tar sands (a mixture of clay, sand, and crude oil) have wreaked havoc on surrounding environments and the people who live there. Processing tar sands requires the removal of all of the trees and plants growing in the area, and a huge amount of water is harvested from nearby bodies of water. This process not only destroys natural habitats, but toxins are leaked back into the water from the discharge and into the air from the processing plants. These toxins have **been linked to higher rates of cancer and animal deformities** in affected areas. In Canada this process has disproportionately impacted indigenous peoples and their land, and the Indigenous Environmental Network has been at the front lines of campaigning against the practice.

In fact, people of color and those living in poverty are the groups most likely to be impacted by environmental destruction and pollution. Because these processes are exactly what you would think - dirty, unhealthy, and overall terrible - those who have the most power and wealth in society are able to keep it as far away from their own neighborhoods as possible. Think about it - you don't see the Fire Nation's capital city having to deal with a polluted river and no food. This is called **environmental racism**.



One hundred years later, Kuvira made the same mistakes of the Fire Nation by trying to harness Spirit energy into a weapon by chopping up Spirit vines - "Harvest these vines until there's nothing left." (K:B4:E7) The result is a massive backlash from the Spirit vines in Republic City, throwing the Spirit World and human world out of balance. In contrast, Toph is able to stretch her abilities further than ever before by working with the vines as they are in nature, rather than trying to turn them into something else for her own use - "I'm more connected to the world than you've ever been! The roots and vines ...

they run all over the world. I can see Su and Lin, Zaofu and Republic City. I see everything." Toph (K:B4:E3) She might have picked up some tricks from Hue and the swamp people, of course. Hue said it best when he explained "Sure, you think you're any different from me? Or your friend? Or this tree? If you listen hard enough, you can hear every living thing breathing together, you can feel everything growing. We're all living together, even if most folks don't act like it. We all have the same roots, and we are all branches of the same tree." (A:B2:E4)

The kind of thoughtless consumption that Kuvira displays happens in our world, too. It's estimated **that the world has already lost about 80% of its forests**, and in the Amazon about 15% of the forest has been replaced with pastures for **cattle ranching**, driven by an **overconsumption of meat**, particularly in countries like the United States - and that's just one example of the ways in which our environment is overused.

Overconsumption is practiced by individual people as well - have you ever thought about how much garbage you make? How much of that is plastic? Right now there's so much plastic waste in the ocean that there's a **new island made entirely of trash**. Because plastic never really goes away, it's been breaking up into smaller and smaller pieces that fish and even creatures as small as plankton are now eating. Doesn't sound very good for them, right? Movements like **zero waste** have been advocating for more thoughtful consumption by individuals and more eco-friendly packaging by companies so that we can reduce the amount of plastic garbage we create.

Sadly, vines aren't the only living things in the Four Nations that people try to use to their own benefit. Creatures of all kinds are often hunted, sold, or mistreated. The Fire Nation hunted dragons for sport to the point of near extinction, and killed the sky bison who lived with the Air Nomads.



We hate to break the bad news, but poaching is a huge problem in our world, too. All kinds of animals are poached and hunted, whether for sport or for parts of their bodies that humans have decided are valuable.

By their size and intelligence, elephants are maybe the closest things we have to our own sky bison (though without the flying, sadly). Elephants are extremely intelligent and display emotions like grief, joy, fear, and empathy. They play a big role in the African ecosystem - they help spread around the seeds of trees, their footprints create watering holes for smaller animals, and by controlling the tree population they make sure grasslands can thrive. They also happen to have ivory tusks, and for those tusks humans are killing them so quickly that at this rate **wild elephants will be extinct by 2025**. One elephant is killed every 15 minutes in Africa, primarily by poachers; **poaching** is the illegal hunting of wild animals. It happens a lot to sell animal products - like tusks and fur - for things like traditional medicine and fancy trinkets. The two largest markets for ivory goods are **China and the United States**.

Organizations like **Save the Elephants**, **iWorry**, and the **David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust** are working to protect elephants and save them from extinction.

TALK IT OUT



- What is your experience with environmentalism?
- Did you know about the extent of the elephant poaching problem? What do you think about it?
- Did you know about the plastic garbage island? What do you think about it?
- What kinds of things do you think you could do in your personal life to reduce how many natural resources you consume?
- What are examples of environmental racism from the Fire Nation, or other groups in the Avatar universe? Can you find any in real life examples?
- How can we learn from the Spirit World in Avatar? What is our Spirit World in real life?
- What do you think Aang would say to us about the way we treat our planet? What advice do you think he would give us?

TAKE ACTION



- Research ways that you can live in harmony with your local environment. You can find a lot of information from indigenous groups, local environmental organizations, and municipal parks.
- Visit a local natural history museum, zoo, or conservation center to learn more about how you can help protect species and their environment.
- See if your local zoos, conservation centers, or parks need help with tasks like cleanup or maintenance. These kinds of activities often take a lot of work but are critical in maintaining the quality of the habitats or diverting trash from the environment.
- Think about ways that you can personally improve your own consumption habits to live more in harmony with the world - there are good ideas at [Be Zero](#), or take a look at the Resources section in the back of this kit for many more.
- Take some time to research where your community gets its energy. These are usually unsustainable sources, and often have a direct impact on minorities and people who are impoverished. Research alternative energy initiatives in your area and see how you can support them.
- Visit a [secret tunnel](#). Through the mountain.

ACTIVITY: EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

Purpose: In this activity, participants observe how nature is connected throughout their community and consider what we can learn from nature about living in harmony with the world.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensils

Instructions:

Gather your group in an area outside.

[5 minutes] Explain: Toph, Aang, Korra, and Jinora show us how everything in nature is connected. The people of Republic City had to learn how to balance nature and human-constructed things so that they could live in harmony with the Spirit World. For the next 10 minutes, look around you and observe how nature has blended with our own community.

[10 minutes] Give time for participants to observe the area. If they are struggling, you can encourage them to look for things like plants growing in the cracks of pavement, birds building nests in buildings, bugs traveling over sidewalks, etc.

[15 minutes] Ask: Let's have everyone share some of the things they noticed. Once participants have shared, **ask:** what lessons do you think we can learn from the way that nature has integrated with the surroundings?

[5 minutes] Ask:

- What was this activity like for you?
- Have you ever stopped to think about how nature interacts with the human world before?
- Do you think you'll notice these things more now?

BOOK 3 GENOCIDE



*"WE'VE CREATED AN ERA OF FEAR IN THE WORLD.
AND IF WE DON'T WANT THE WORLD TO DESTROY ITSELF,
WE NEED TO REPLACE IT WITH AN ERA OF PEACE AND KINDNESS."*

Talk about a big topic. We won't possibly be able to cover all of the nuance and intersectional issues of genocide in the next few pages, but this particular kind of violence impacted so much of the world of Avatar we felt we would be remiss not to talk about it.

We've approached this section with Genocide Watch's [8 Stages of Genocide](#) in mind, and we recommend you read through it before you think about the connections we've highlighted here.

First, what do we mean when we say "genocide"? **Genocide** is the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic group or nation. Sometimes, **acts of genocide** are distinguished from genocide; essentially, there can be actions that are considered an *intent to cause* genocide even if the genocide was not "successful."

Genocide is **distinct** from a "normal" war because of the intent to destroy. Wars are generally fought for political or strategic gain, while acts of genocide are committed with the ideal that the targeted population is "other" and needs to be destroyed. Often acts of genocide are part of larger conflicts, but do not have to be.

In our world acts of genocide are distressingly common. Sometimes when these acts are successful, the genocide becomes a primary aspect of a larger war, as was the case in World War II. Most of us have learned about the Holocaust, in which **over 6 million Jewish people** were systematically murdered throughout Nazi-occupied Europe. In Asia, **another genocide was happening**, although we are not taught about this as much as the European history. Japan invaded its neighboring countries of China and Korea, giving the same reason of expanding its territory as Sozin would say to Roku: "We should share this prosperity with the rest of the world. In our hands is the most successful empire in history. It's time we expanded it." Japan was facing a period of strong nationalism, and turned to othering its neighbors. The Japanese Imperial Army committed both genocide and acts of genocide: they invaded nations, performed mass killings (such as the Nanking Massacre), used chemical weapons, tortured prisoners of war, performed human experimentation and military sexual slavery (the victims/survivors being called "comfort women"), and enslaved thousands of civilians for labor. These acts are called the Asian Holocaust.

In *Avatar*, Fire Lord Sozin began the war by committing genocide against the Air Nomads. The attacks against the Air Temples began not with an intent to conquer, but with a clear intent to destroy. In these attacks the Air Nomads were almost completely wiped out, and their culture

was destroyed with it. It is this act that compels the other two nations, the Earth Kingdom and the Water Tribe, to go to war with the Fire Nation.

CULTURAL LOSS & PRESERVATION

The events in *Avatar* are further complicated because we're actually seeing both the after effects of a successful genocide (the Air Nomads) and acts of genocide against the Water Tribe at the same time. In the first episode of the series, we see the Fire Nation has systematically removed and imprisoned (or killed) all of the Southern Water Tribe's benders, and its warriors have either been imprisoned or have left to fight in the war. The Southern Water tribe is not only small, but lacking in resources and probably on the edge of collapse. Sokka and Katara are each trying desperately to preserve their cultural heritage - for Sokka, their tribe's warrior traditions, and for Katara, water bending. Throughout the series, both of them experience a feeling of being disconnected from their heritage when they are unable to learn the traditions and skills of their people, and a lot of their motivation stems from wanting to preserve and return to their cultural roots.

Even after the war is over, these characters and their children feel an enormous amount of pressure to protect what's left of their culture and help rebuild it. This is particularly for Aang and his airbender son, Tenzin, who are quite literally the only airbenders left. Throughout *The Legend of Korra*, we see Tenzin struggling with the weight of that responsibility and how it impacts him emotionally.



Millions of people around our world are **dealing with that same emotional toil**. After Tibetans were forced from their homeland, they were **cut off from sacred sites and texts**, many of which were also destroyed. Tibetan refugees **worked very hard to preserve their culture**, and it is only because of their efforts that their heritage has survived today. Similarly, pretty much everywhere that European colonies were founded, the indigenous **communities there are working to preserve** their cultures after years of violence, destruction of cultural sites, and forced assimilation (for example, Native Americans in the United States, Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the **Cuarani** in Brazil, and even people who are **literally the last of their tribe**, just like Aang).

PROPAGANDA, INDOCTRINATION, & EMPATHY

When we learn about something like genocide, it's easy to lose faith in humanity - how could we let something like this happen? The truth is, there are many mechanisms that can ultimately result in this kind of violence against one another.



One of the most common problems is misinformation, which leads to a lack of empathy. Sometimes information - or misinformation - is intentionally designed to shift perspectives to a particular idea or point of view; this is called **propaganda**.

In *Korra*, the Equalists are a group of people who want to eradicate bending. They're driven by propaganda from their leader, Amon, that proposes that benders are in fact the source of all evil and unrest in the world.

Propaganda is also used by the “good” side sometimes - when the Gaang needs to convince the Earth Kingdom to help support the Southern Water Tribe, Varrick has Bolin star in “movers” (aka movies) as a Southern Water Tribe hero to help shift cultural opinion in favor of supporting them. (K:B2:E11)

Another way that perspectives are shaped and controlled is through **indoctrination**. Indoctrination is education that has a specific point of view based on ideology rather than facts, and is *not open to questioning* from those being “educated” (or indoctrinated).

In *Avatar*, when Aang enrolls in a Fire Nation school he quickly finds out that Fire Nation children are being indoctrinated at an early age. The students must recite an oath at the beginning of class: “My life I give to my country, with my hands I fight for Fire Lord Ozai and our forefathers before him. With my mind I seek ways to better my country, and with my feet may our March of Civilization continue.” (A:B3:E2) Then, they are given a quiz on the history of their “great March of Civilization.”

Teacher: Question one: What year did Fire Lord Sozin battle the Air Nation army?

Aang: Is that a trick question? The Air Nomads didn't have a formal military. Sozin defeated them by ambush.

Teacher: Well, I don't know how you could possibly know more than our national history book.



With the Air Temples so far from the Fire Nation and the amount of time that has passed, it's not hard to convince the majority of Fire Nation civilians that there was never a genocide at all, that the Fire Nation military defeated the Air Nation in a fair fight. And if they don't know the real story, it's much more difficult for them to feel empathy for the Air Nation.

In our world, history is often edited and filtered depending on who is teaching it. For example, in the United States public education system most children learn about the origins of Thanksgiving, a holiday supposedly celebrating the Native Americans and early European colonists (pilgrims) sharing food with each other. This story generally involves a lot of emphasis on how the two groups came together peacefully - especially for younger students; the full extent of the **Native American massacre** is rarely discussed or emphasized.

It's also important to remember that these ideas are often supported by close friends and family members (who were also indoctrinated in the system). Think about how difficult it is to disagree with your friends and family on a serious issue. Many people studying genocide have emphasized the importance of these social ties and the role they play in why people go along with such a violent act (Fuji, 2008). On the flip side, a lack of strong ties with those in the targeted group makes it much easier to dehumanize them, and a lack of exposure to questioning of the propaganda or indoctrination makes it difficult to develop conflicting ideas (Granovetter, 1973).



Zuko's journey throughout Avatar is a clear example of these processes in motion. Zuko was raised in the Fire Nation, and as the son of Fire Lord Ozai he had stronger familial pressure to conform to the ideals of the Fire Nation than anyone else. To go against what he had been taught was not just going against ideals, but against his own family. As Zuko begins to be exposed to more of the world he starts to develop a better understanding of the other Nations and is able to see them as people. He's confronted with the reality that what he has been taught may not be the truth. Additionally, his strong tie with Uncle Iroh and his development of ties with other people

outside the Fire Nation (such as Jin from the Earth Kingdom) helps him to develop empathy for those the Fire Nation has dehumanized. Eventually, his unlearning of the falsehoods he was raised with and development of empathy allows him to go against his family and help bring the Fire Nation into an age of peace.

What if you don't even know that acts of genocide are happening? It's easy to feel like genocide is something that only happens in history books, but there are many **acts of genocide taking place right now** - in **Bahrain**, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Syria, just to name a few. How many of these did you know about?

Too often, media coverage of genocide and acts of genocide can be like Ba Sing Se - "*there is no war in Ba Sing Se.*" In places where we have peace we have the luxury to ignore violence happening outside our figurative walls, but just like Aang and the Gaang were disgusted by what was happening in Ba Sing Se, we're pretty sure they'd be disappointed in the things we ignore in our own world.

REFUGEES

One major side effect of genocide and acts of genocide is refugees. A **refugee** is a person who has been forced to leave their country because of war, persecution, or natural disaster. Throughout their travels, the Gaang meets refugees from all over the world, all of whom are doing their best to find safety and shelter. Some move into now unoccupied areas, like Teo and his family at the Northern Air Temple, while others seek out help from peaceful places like Ba Sing Se. Unfortunately, when the refugees arrive to Ba Sing Se they quickly learn that their conditions will not improve by much - they are forced to live in the "**lower ring**" of the city, which is severely overpopulated and lacking in resources, and are not allowed entry into the upper rings of the city without a valid passport.

In just one example of this in our world, because of the acts of genocide in Syria **millions of people** have fled the country. But around the world, countries where these refugees could find

safety have turned the majority of them away, and public opinion in most countries is that the refugees should not be allowed in, whether for fear of terrorist connections (despite the fact that the refugees are fleeing terrorists themselves) or lack of desire to share resources.

The refusal to assist refugees isn't new - in fact it happened in WWII, when **public opinion was generally against** accepting Jewish refugees into the United States. Today, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum issued a statement urging for the acceptance of **Syrian refugees**.

LONG TERM IMPACT

Guru Pathik said, "The greatest illusion of this world is the illusion of separation." (A:B2:E19) The three books of this toolkit are connected in the same way these three topics are in reality. When acts of genocide occur, the trauma left on the health of the people and the environment is severe. It leaves scars - physical (like the scorched forest or the polluted river), psychological, and spiritual.

Attawapiskat is a remote Cree community of about 2,000 people in northern Ontario. Like all indigenous peoples of North America, they are survivors of the mass genocide that occurred when North America was colonized. Despite living in the economically wealthy country of Canada, Attawapiskat are living with **extreme flooding**, a **lack of proper fire services**, homelessness and danger of homelessness due to **damaged housing**, and an extreme lack of medical services in general, let alone mental health services. Attawapiskat is home to **mostly young people** under the age of 35. The community had **28 suicide attempts in March 2016, and 11 on April 9, 2016**. As one Canadian journalist **put it**, it is "a crisis of our own making."

TALK IT OUT



- Did you know about the Asian Holocaust? How did it feel to learn more about it?
- How much did you know about what really happened to indigenous peoples in North America?
- How do these things make you feel about the way history has been presented to you?
- Can you think of times you've seen propaganda in your own life? Do you think that entertainment like theatre (the Ember Island Players) or film (Varrick's movers) can be considered propaganda?
- Conversely, how do you think media can be used to combat prejudice and dehumanization?
- How do you think Firelord Sozin influenced the "othering" of the rest of the world?
- Have you had misconceptions about a particular group of people/identity/social location? What influenced you to change your opinion or see a different perspective?
- How do you think Aang felt when he realized that he was the last airbender on the planet?
- If you are a member of a culture that has experienced acts of genocide and are comfortable sharing, how do you feel that trauma has continued to impact you or your culture?
- After the Holocaust of WWII, "Never Again" became a popular phrase in reference to the prevention of future genocide - how can we make sure of this? Is this realistic? Does this kind of thing happen in cycles?
- How does the prevalence of genocide and acts of genocide in our world make you feel?
- How do you think we can work to prevent or stop acts of genocide?

TAKE ACTION



- Tales of Ba Sing Se: get in touch with an organization helping refugees/displaced communities in your area and see if you can talk to them to hear their stories from their own perspectives.
- Ask how you can help - many organizations working with refugees needs supplies, funds, and volunteers.
- Find out how you can take action with organizations dedicated to ending genocide and acts of genocide - **Genocide Watch** and **STAND** are great places to start.
- Find out how you can take action with organizations dedicated to cultural preservation. **Survival International** and **Cultural Survival** have suggestions.
- Think about how you can help address historical and intergenerational trauma from genocide and acts of genocide in your area. Search for the actions and movements happening right now for indigenous populations in your community, and ask them how you can help. It's **very important to ask** how you can be the best advocate for a community, but here are **some examples** of things one community has suggested.
- How much do you know about some of the cultures that are in danger of being wiped out? See what you can learn about them - whether it's a dance, food, or stories - and how you can advocate for them.
- Host a **Wan Shi Tong's Knowledge Exchange** - ask friends, family, or members of your group to research an issue, either a particular genocide issue or anything of their choosing, and come prepared with a piece of knowledge to exchange with others. Alternatively, if you or members of your group identify as belonging to a group that has been impacted by genocide or acts of genocide, ask if they are willing to share their personal story or experience for the knowledge exchange. Use the knowledge exchange as a way to spark discussion.

ACTIVITY: REBUILDING BA SING SE

Purpose: In this activity, participants utilize their knowledge of personal health, environmental care, and the impact of genocide and acts of genocide in order to imagine a Ba Sing Se that could better serve its community members.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensils

Instructions:

[5 mins] Explain: During the 100 Year War, refugees from all the nations came to Ba Sing Se to find safety. The city may have been safer than the outside, but it had some big problems.

If your group has recently watched episodes dealing with Ba Sing Se or they remember it from prior viewings, you can ask them to identify problems themselves. If not, here are some of the basic problems as outlined in this section:

1. It was difficult for refugees to enter, and when they arrived they were stuck in the “Lower Ring” where conditions were bad
2. It was impossible to travel to the Inner Rings, where people were wealthier and conditions better, without a passport
3. In order to try to protect the people of Ba Sing Se, the government denied any existence of war outside of its walls.

[20 mins] Ask: If you were going to redesign Ba Sing Se after everything you’ve learned, what would it look like? Make sure you think about:

1. The health and safety of the people
2. The environment in and around the city
3. The role the city may play during and after the war

Break participants into small groups and ask them to work together to redesign the city. You can choose whether to have them draw the city on a large sheet of paper, or simply make notes about what they would do.

[15 mins] Ask each group to present their design, explaining key changes they made and why.

[15 mins] With the entire group, talk through the activity. *Debrief for this activity is very important and should not be omitted.*

1. How did you make these design decisions?
2. How realistic or effective do you think the suggestions would be to implement?
3. Do you think these plans are complete? What input do you think we’re missing? *(If no one suggests it, point out that none of the groups had the opportunity to talk to the actual people they wanted to serve.)*
4. Did any of these designs encourage empathy building between people?
5. What responsibility do you think Ba Sing Se has in the war?
6. How did this activity make you feel?
7. Do you think we could implement any of these suggestions in our own communities?

RESOURCES



REPRESENTATION

'Airbender' Creators Reclaim Their World In 'Korra' - interview with show creators discusses Korra's nontraditional look

Asian Depictions in the US Media - blog about Asian representation in U.S. media

Asian Stylization - outlines some of the ways the show creators drew on Asian influences

Clark Doll Experiments - experiments on colorism in children

Every Single Word - a project by Dylan Marron that highlights the lack of diversity in film

Gender Roles in Avatar: The Last Airbender - analysis of gender equality in the show

The Last Airbender and the racebending controversy - article overviewing the film controversy

Nonsexist Alternative Language: Handbook for Conscious Writers - examples of gender inclusive language

Racebending - the organization founded by the protest of the whitewashing in *The Last Airbender*

'Twilight' Star Jackson Rathbone Hopes to Show His Range in 'The Last Airbender' - interview with Sokka actor Jackson Rathbone

The Whitewashing of Avatar: The Last Airbender - article overviewing fan reaction to whitewashing in film

"Whitewashing" from Last Week Tonight - episode where the whitewashing of *The Last Airbender* is discussed as an example

HEALTH

45 Simple Self-Care Practices for a Healthy Mind, Body, and Soul - list of simple self-care tips

5 Self Care Tips for Activists – 'Cause Being Woke Shouldn't Mean Your Spirit's Broke - tips specifically for activists

CareGivers Blog - tips on self-care, designed for those providing care to others

Everything Is Awful and I'm Not Okay: questions to ask before giving up - simple self-care guide.

Idaho State University Institute of Rural Health - resources on traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, and caregiving

The Importance of Self-Care - from the Canadian Department of Justice guide to working with victims of crime.

Mind Your Mind - for youth by youth, managing stress, crisis, and mental health

Mindcheck - interactive mental health information website

My Health Magazine - an interactive health literacy program at the University of Ottawa designed for young people, parents, and teachers

National Alliance on Mental Illness - mental health resources and helplines

Project UROK - organization working to end mental health stigma

Self-Care Starter Kit - from University of Buffalo

Self-Care Strategies for Your Mental Health - student resource from University of Michigan

ENVIRONMENTALISM

Bag It - documentary on environmental impact of plastic and other trash on the environment

Be Zero - overview of the Zero Waste movement

BP oil spill: The economic and environmental cost, 5 years later - article detailing the long term impact of the BP oil spill

Deforestation Statistics - basic facts about deforestation around the world

Environmental Justice, Explained - video explaining the concept of environmental justice

Even the Worst Laid Plans? - podcast on the Berkeley Pit

Gardeners of Eden - documentary on elephant poaching in Africa

Gasland - documentary on big oil companies and the impact of fracking

Global Climate Change Resources - NASA's list of resources on climate change

Great Pacific Garbage Patch - information on the trash collecting in the ocean

Live a More Sustainable Life - some basics from Dartmouth University

Pit Watch - information on the Berkeley Pit

River of Mud - documentary exploring the survivors of an environmental disaster in Brazil

SOS Mata Atlantica - Brazilian organization dealing with the preservation of the Atlantic Forest Biome

The Story of Stuff - an organization that focuses on the impact of physical items on the environment

This Changes Everything - book and film detailing worldwide climate change issues and movement

What is fracking and why is it controversial? - BBC article discussing both sides of the debate

GENOCIDE

Alpha Education - why teach the Asia-Pacific war

The Apology - a documentary about survivors of military sexual slavery in WWII in Asia

Cultural Survival - organization working to preserve cultures around the world

Diaspora, Immigration and Identity in "Avatar: The Last Airbender" - perspective from a diasporic woman of color

Lee Ann Fuji, "The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide," Security Studies 17, no. 3, July 2008, pp. 568-97.

Genocide Watch - organization focused on ending genocide and acts of genocide

Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," American Journal of Sociology 78, 1973, pp. 1360-80.

Jean Chrétien's comments on Attawapiskat criticized in Commons - article on the political discourse surrounding Attawapiksat

STAND - student organization focused on ending mass atrocities

Survival International - organization working to protect cultures in danger

Tibetan Aid Project - organization working to preserve Tibetan culture

The true tragedy of Attawapiskat - the desperate need for investment and education

The Uncontacted Indians of Brazil - some of the cultures currently in danger in Brazil

What Is Historical Trauma - overview of historical and intergenerational trauma

What Makes Genocide Different from Other Types of War? - difference between genocide, acts of genocide, and warfare

Young Navajos Stage 200-Mile 'Journey for Existence' - article detailing the walking journey undertaken by young Diné people

RECOMMENDED EPISODES

Avatar: The Last Airbender

Book 1: Water

Chapter 3: The Southern Air Temple - Genocide

Chapter 7: Winter Solstice, Part 1: The Spirit World - Environment

Chapter 10: Jet - Genocide

Chapter 12: The Storm - Health

Chapter 16: The Deserter - Health

Chapter 17: The Northern Air Temple - Environment

Chapter 18: The Waterbending Master - Representation

Book 2: Earth

Chapter 3: Return to Omashu - Genocide - "Does that look like the face of a killer to you?"

Chapter 4: The Swamp - Environment

Chapter 6: The Blind Bandit - Representation

Chapter 7: Zuko Alone - Health, Genocide

Chapter 9: Bitter Work - Health

Chapter 10: The Library - Genocide

Chapter 11: The Desert - Health

Chapter 12: The Serpent's Pass - Health, Genocide

Chapter 14: City of Walls and Secrets - Genocide

Chapter 15: Tales of Ba Sing Se - Environment, Representation

Chapter 16: Appa's Lost Days - Environment

Chapter 18: The Earth King - Health

Chapter 19: The Guru - Health

Book 3: Fire

Chapter 2: The Headband - Genocide

Chapter 3: The Painted Lady - Environment

Chapter 6: The Avatar and the Fire Lord - Genocide

Chapter 8: The Puppetmaster - Genocide

Chapter 9: Nightmares and Daydreams - Health

Chapter 12: The Western Air Temple - Genocide - reconciliation?

Chapter 13: The Firebending Masters - Health, Environment

Chapter 16: The Southern Raiders - Health

Chapter 17: The Ember Island Players - Genocide (propaganda)

Avatar: The Legend of Korra

Book 1: Air

Chapter 3: The Revelation - Genocide

Chapter 6: And the Winner Is... - Genocide

Chapter 8: When Extremes Meet - Genocide

Book 2: Spirits

Chapter 7: Beginnings, Part 1 - Environment

Chapter 8: Beginnings, Part 2 - Environment

Book 3: Change

Chapter 1: A Breath of Fresh Air - Environment

Chapter 7: The Original Airbenders - Environment

Book 4: Balance

Chapter 2: Korra Alone - Health

Chapter 3: The Coronation - Genocide

Chapter 4: The Calling - Environment

Chapter 9: Beyond the Wilds - Health

UNEXPLORED THEMES

As much as we'd like to, we can't possibly cover all of the incredible themes in Avatar and Korra within a single toolkit! We encourage you to think about other connections we may not have addressed - here are some of the things we noticed, and we're sure there are plenty more as well.

(Bender) Privilege

- How benders vs nonbenders represent privilege
- Being a bender or nonbender is not a choice, but something you are born with
- How Korra must learn to become an ally to nonbenders
- See [this article](#)

Economic Inequality

- The origins of the Avatar stem from economic inequality (K:B2:E7/8)
- The "rings" of Ba Sing Se
- The disparity between the North and South Water Tribes
- Disparities in Republic City - Mako and Bolin grew up on the streets, and their extended family is still relatively impoverished ("It's been awhile since we spent the night in a trash pile...It's just how I remember it." K:S3:B3)

Extremism

- In Korra the central villains are seen as evil because they take things too far. Unwillingness to bend (*pa dum psh*) to other ideologies or to compromise in any way makes them all bad leaders. All or nothing mentality ends badly for everyone
- "The problem was those guys were totally out of balance and they took their ideologies too far" Toph (K:B4:E4)
- Tenzin originally wanted the Air Nomads to be exactly what they were 170 years ago, he learns to compromise and that is the key to the revival of the Air Nation
- Jet and the Freedom Fighters do good things, but also take it too far by attacking innocents
- Korra eventually comes to understand and even accept some of Zaheer's ideas once they can have a reasonable conversation

International Conflict

- Both Fire Lord Sozin and Kuvira believe that they are helping other nations achieve their level of progress and success
- Particularly from Kuvira's perspective, she sees herself as liberating people by spreading her ideologies
- "Zaofu has always been a beacon of modern progress and now you can share that with everyone" - Kuvira echoes Fire Lord Sozin (K:B4:E5)
- "I'm gonna jump into my awesome train where we bring FREEDOM wherever we go" - Bolin (K:B4:E3)

Modernization vs Traditional Worlds

- Particularly in Korra, technology versus the natural world is an ongoing theme
- Technologies like the electrified glove Asami uses change the dynamic of benders and nonbenders
- Engineers like Teo are sometimes at odds with the traditional roots of their worlds (like the Air Temples and Air Nomad culture)

Oppressive Governments and Political Reform

- The Red Lotus
- Impact of removing leaders (like the Earth Queen) without plans for true reform led to Kuvira filling in the power gap
- Kuvira is a dictator - she literally makes people choose between death or pledging allegiance to her (K:B4:E1)
- Fire Lord Ozai's use of propaganda and indoctrination is oppressive to his own people

Use and Abuse of Power

- Should the Avatar actually have the right to do anything?
- Although they are both good and do the good work, Korra and Aang have absolute power which allows them to impose their views on the society they live in.
- Korra is often "ordered" around by political forces.
- See [this article](#).

Weapons of Mass Destruction

- Spirit vines weapon
- Power as morally neutral

THANKS



*"THE ROAD AHEAD OF US IS CHALLENGING.
A HUNDRED YEARS OF FIGHTING HAS LEFT THE WORLD SCARRED AND DIVIDED.
BUT WITH THE AVATAR'S HELP, WE CAN GET IT BACK ON THE RIGHT PATH
AND BEGIN A NEW ERA OF LOVE AND PEACE."*

This toolkit would not have been possible without the hard work (and honor) of our Gaang.

Avatar Emma Hollier
Avatar Janae Phillips
Avatar Marcella Raphael
Avatar Becca Simpson
Avatar Camille Talag

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JOIN A CHAPTER

Want to do more of this stuff? With friends? You can join a Harry Potter Alliance Chapter now- [find a chapter near you](#) or [submit an interest form](#).

Do you have fandom expertise to share? Want to help us make toolkits like this one? You could be our next Fandom Consultant- just email fandomforward@thehpalliance.org to ask about upcoming projects.

“THAT CAN'T BE IT! WHERE'S THE REST OF IT?”

