

# Scholars Circle Resource Guide

Double-sided

## From Vulnerability to Violence: The Pathways to Radicalization



### About Dr. Sophia Moskalenko

Sophia is a social and clinical psychologist studying radicalization, political violence, self-sacrifice, and disinformation. She is a Senior Research Scientist at Design Services Group (DSG), a Research Fellow at Georgia State University, and a subject matter expert at NATO, the European Commission, and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism's Behavioral Insights Hub. Dr. Moskalenko has published over 70 peer-reviewed academic papers and several books, including the award-winning *Friction: How Conflict Radicalizes Them and Us* and *Pastels and Pedophiles: Inside the Mind of QAnon*.

### DR. SOPHIA MOSKALENKO

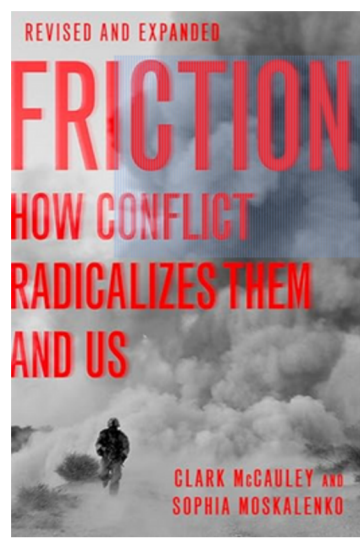
Senior Research Scientist, Global Expert for NATO and the UN, Award-Winning Author of 'Friction' and 'Pastels and Pedophiles'

*Friction* is a ground-breaking book that outlines twelve mechanisms of political radicalization that can move individuals, groups, and the masses to increased sympathy and support for political violence.



### SOPHIA'S UPCOMING LECTURES

- **Deadly Disinformation: The Role of Ideology in Political Violence**



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# Common Q&A's

## **Is terrorism a modern phenomenon?**

Terrorism as we understand it now (non-state actors using violence or threat of for political causes) is 150 years old. Every technique we see today among terrorist groups, from suicide bombing to “double-tap” attacks, to mass casualty attacks has been pioneered by the first-ever terrorist organization, People’s Will that emerged in the Russian Empire in the late 1800s.

## **Is there a profile of a terrorist?**

Research shows that the radicalizing pathways that bring individuals and groups to terrorism are many and varied. As a result, no terrorist profile is possible.

## **Are terrorists crazy, or evil?**

The vast majority of terrorists are psychologically normal, and terrorists who act as part of a group are more normal than an average person on the street (although the prevalence of mental illness is higher among lone wolf terrorists). Likewise, most terrorists are not “evil” in that they are kind and caring to the members of their group, community, and family. Their violent actions are often driven by a perception of threat and injustice to these groups they care about.

# Key Takeaways

- ☑ There is no “conveyor belt” from extreme beliefs to extreme action.
- ☑ Fighting extreme ideas requires different skills than fighting terrorists.
- ☑ Less can be more.
- ☑ Fewer enemies is better.

*The views expressed by the speaker don't necessarily reflect Chai Mitzvah's official position.*

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