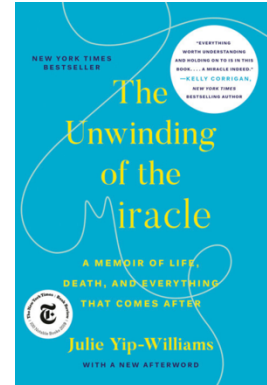


Discussion Guide

The Unwinding of the Miracle

By Julie Yip-Williams

1. The prologue at the beginning of “The Unwinding of the Miracle” was written in February 2018, one month before Julie Yip-Williams passed away, and directly addresses how Julie felt about looking back at her life in the face of death. How did this set the tone of the book for you?
2. The second chapter of the book features a letter from Julie to her young daughters Mia and Isabelle, and later in the book, there is a letter to her husband, Josh. Why do you think Julie decided to include these intimate personal communications in the book? How did it make you feel to read those sections?
3. After her diagnosis, Julie writes, “Fear for Josh and my loved ones seems to live in every molecule of my body... Whatever modicum of security I once felt is completely shattered. If cancer and bad shit struck once, they can and will strike again.” Have you ever felt this way after bad news or tragedy? How did you cope with this feeling?
4. Julie remarks that, post-diagnosis, she thought she would never again feel happiness “it its truest, unadulterated form” – but that her assumption was wrong. How did this shifting perspective resonate with you? Have you ever felt happiness after you were sure that you never would again?
5. In Julie’s writing about losing her friends to cancer, she examines the way illness is often referred to as a “battle” that can be won based on hope, personality, and determination. She asks, “Who has more courage? The cancer patient who presses on with grueling treatments ... or the cancer patient who simply walks away?” How do you define courage in a situation like Julie’s?
6. How does the transparency of Julie’s journey in *The Unwinding of the Miracle* contribute to the conversation surrounding terminal illness and death? Considering her devotion to transparency, did any questions remain for you that you would have liked to ask her before her passing?
7. How did this book impact your thoughts about medical care and end-of-life care?
8. How did Julie’s determination to create an identity for herself outside of her family’s view of her, which was fundamentally shaped by her disability, prepare her for her cancer?
9. Sometimes the people we’re closest to have the ability to hurt us the most. Discuss the beauty and the complexity of Julie’s relationship with her grandmother.
10. Have you listened to the podcast *Julie*, which supplements Julie’s story in the book? How did it affect your feelings about the book?
11. Do you think *The Unwinding of the Miracle* is more about life, or death?



Terms of Use: The discussion questions are attributed to [#ReadWithJenna](#) book club and can be found on the TODAY website at <https://www.today.com/read-with-jenna>. The questions have been reformatted for the NNLM Reading Club for educational purposes only.