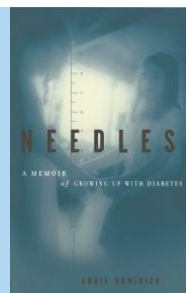


Discussion Guide



Needles: A Memoir
Andie Dominick

Scribner
1998
224 pages
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Diabetes

Summary

In a poignant memoir, a woman whose sister died at age twenty-one of complications from diabetes describes her attempts to reconcile the loss of her hero as she continues to struggle with the often painful and life-changing disease herself.

Questions

1. Because the sisters were both diagnosed with Type I diabetes, is it an inherited disease? Can anything be done to prevent the disease?
2. Losing a family member is distressing, but how did the death of her older sister, Denise, hold significant sway with Andie? How did her sister's death impact the choices Andie made as a young adult?
3. In the Chapter "Phamplets," Andie discusses the assumptions that both she and her medical providers "assume" about each other. What are some of these assumptions? How do these assumptions impact seeking or receiving preventive care or treatments?
4. In the Chapter, "Phamplets," Andie writes, "I think if there's a pamphlet about it, it can't be that rare." What does she mean?
5. Why does Andie feel reassured receiving her eye treatment at the University of Iowa?
6. Why does not talking about her disease, or dismissing her disease, ease other people's concerns? In the chapter, "Opening My Eyes", she writes, "Few of my friends take the illness seriously, because I never talk about it, never complain about it. Diseases aren't the topic of conversation with my friends." Does this strategy serve her well. How about others?
7. How does Andie incorporate alternative or integrative care? Does she believe the therapies will benefit her? How so? Describe her session with the energy healer in the chapter, "Healing Touch." What does Andie mean she writes, "The woman talked about healing, but I want to be fixed. I want to just be fine."
8. What is Andie's reason for electing to have a tubal ligation after accepting Doug's proposal of marriage? What does she fear? Are her fears reasonable? How did this decision affect their relationship?
9. In the chapter, "To Be a Woman," Andie writes, "A cure for diabetes. I don't even think about that. I just hope for advances in how to treat the complications of the disease." Why does she think that "a cure is too much to ask for."?

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