

THE BEAUTY OF THE FALL

BOOKCLUB QUESTIONS

1. A major theme in the book is around Conversations. Dan creates Conversation Works as a way to honor his son Zach who once said (page 168) 'You know Dad; the world would be a much better place if people talked more.' On page 202 Dan states, "my vision back at the start was to connect folks in meaningful conversations, to let the people figure out their own solutions, and to enable people to change the world one conversation at a time.' Do you believe as Zach stated that we need to have more conversations? As Dan's vision is that if we can get collective conversations on things that matter we can help solve the world's problems?
2. Domestic violence is another one of the themes in the book. Willow is both a survivor and an Advocate for Domestic Violence victims. On page 246 she outlines a plan to work to address the issue and greatly reduce the instance of domestic violence. Do you believe her plan could work? Have you experience, or know someone who has experienced domestic violence. How has that affected them, and has it resolved? Do you know where to look for help if you or someone you know finds themselves in such a situation? (Put a referral to the domestic violence hotline)
3. Dan blames himself for Zach's death. Yet, he does not want to punish the person who caused the accident. Dan also blames himself for what happens to Willow. What is it about Dan do you think that makes him blame himself? Not the persons responsible for what happened to Zach and to Willow?
4. Many people today are moving toward going 'un-plugged', or turning phones off, for meals, dates, meetings. Olivia had a rule in meetings where all cell phones needed to be turned off and put in a basket. This rule ultimately led to tragic circumstances for Dan and his family. Do you believe this is was and is a valid rule? What, if any, considerations do you think should be taken when implementing this rule for parents/care givers?
5. Dan practices self-harm in the book in a way of dulling his pain in regards to his son's death. This is a tough topic for many, one that many cannot conceive of doing. However, many people young and old today practice self-harm. Why do you think that is? Have you ever known anyone to do this? Has Dan's story given you any sympathy or understanding towards those who do this?
6. Dan and Olivia have a long history of a successful friendship and working relationship. Then things change, and Dan cannot forgive Olivia for her choices. Do you believe Olivia was justified in her action early on in the book, or should she have covered for Dan due to their history?
7. Olivia appears almost obsessed in the book in her quest to destroy Dan. Why do you think this is? How did you feel about the last conversation they had in the book on pages 330 – 334? Did that support your feelings reading the book about their perspectives or was it a surprise. Why?
8. One of the ways that Willow plans to help decrease the incidents of domestic violence is to work to change the laws regarding Prostitution in the United States. She believes adopting the Swedish laws in regards to Prostitution which arrest the Johns, and provide counseling and

education for the Prostitutes will help a great deal. What do you think? Do you believe this could help reduce domestic violence? Do you believe this is where the law should focus, on arresting the John's? Explain your thoughts.

9. Dan is clearly a very complicated man, one with many demons that he tackles in the book. His fear of losing yet another love causes him to do the one thing that insures he loses Willow. If you were Willow, would you have eventually forgiven Dan, or would you have chosen the path forward that Willow chose? Why?
10. Dan is a very caring man in regards to his friends and colleagues. Yet, in the book he shows an episode of complete rage, and lack of control. Do you believe Dan's actions were justified? What do you believe drove Dan to his actions? Is violence ever justified?
11. Dan and Katie have a unique relationship. It is based on financial transactions, yet there is more. This relationship is different than all the rest for both Dan and for Katie. How is that? What do you think it is about Katie that Dan is drawn towards? Why do you think Katie shows such loyalty to Dan? Is it about the financial transactions or something more? What?