

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE BRIDGE CLUB

1. Have you ever belonged to a group that has forged strong intimate friendships and remained a part of your life for many years?
2. The first chapter is very much an introduction to how these young women first evolved into The Bridge Club. The author felt it was important for readers to understand some of their early history before moving on to the particular issues in the remainder of the story. Did you feel this information was helpful in laying a foundation?
3. How does your age compare to these women? Did you share their experiences in the 1960's or are these women more your mother's age? If you are younger, are you nevertheless able to identify with some of the issues they faced through the years?
4. Describe the character to which you most related – her personality traits, motivations, inner qualities. Did you feel she handled the crisis in her life well? What qualities enabled her to support her friends through their particular situations?
5. Would you say all of the characters play equally important roles, but one or two stand out more than the rest? If so, who would you say does this?
6. Compare your feelings as to how the characters change by the end of the book? Did you relate to the camaraderie they continue to share as they age? What significantly have they discovered about themselves and how the world works and do you feel these are lessons common to most in our western society?
7. Talk about the book's structure. This is not a novel where a central plot weaves through each chapter, although there is the ongoing theme of support and friendship. Did you like the author's choice of presenting each woman's "SOS" as more of an individual short story?
8. What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps share dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character?
9. How would you respond if you were faced with the choice in the final chapter: (a) as the specific character (b) as a friend.
10. How did you feel about the ending and do you support the author not naming the particular character, even though she did include clues? Was the author's vision optimistic and does it inspire hope for the future?

11. If you could ask the author a question, what would it be? Have you read other books by the same author? If so how does this book compare? If not, does this book inspire you to read others?
12. Has this novel changed you – broadened your perspective? Have you learned something, been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world?

