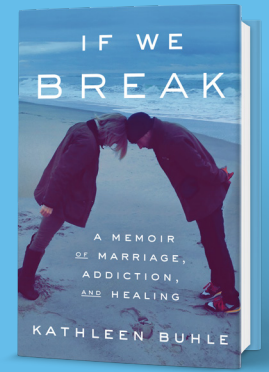


IF WE BREAK

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

KATHLEEN BUHLE



1. At the very beginning of the book, the author writes, “The question I couldn’t answer then was: How would I survive?” How do you think she answers it now?
2. Why do you think Kathleen felt insecure about her upbringing compared to Hunter’s? Why do we as a society put greater value on one type of family versus another?
3. Right before her wedding, Kathleen’s mother tells her, “Be careful what you tell your father and me about Hunter. You’ll forgive him, but it will be harder for us.” What do you think of this advice, as it pertains to the author? As it pertains to your own relationships?
4. What message does the memoir convey about identity? What roles do you assume at various moments throughout your life? What does it mean to be you?
5. With Hunter’s job offer at the bank in Delaware superseding her wish to move back to Chicago, Kathleen sensed the power shift in her marriage, and it would not be the last time his career took precedence over hers. In what other ways might gender dynamics come into play in the memoir?
6. As Hunter initially returns home and embraces his recovery, Kathleen admits she has no interest in looking back at the past, only forward. Why do you think she feels that way? Do you think you’d be able to adopt a similar mindset if you were in her position?
7. While Kathleen may have experienced uncommon events in her married life—like being on the national stage—there are many moments and insights that are more universal. Was there anything she experienced that you could relate to in your own life?
8. Kathleen becomes consumed with her husband’s sobriety—and his relapses. A sober coach tells her Hunter’s sobriety is not her full-time job. What other lessons about addiction and loving people suffering from addiction does the book impart?
9. So much of Hunter’s story and the dissolution of his marriage to Kathleen was covered in the media and highly politicized. Why do you think it’s important for Kathleen to get the opportunity to tell her own story?
10. After her divorce, Kathleen goes to court to change her name and reclaim her identity as Kathleen Buhle. What did this act mean to her in the moment? What aspects of Kathleen’s story did you find inspiring or empowering?