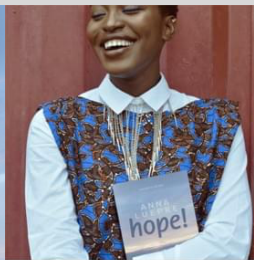
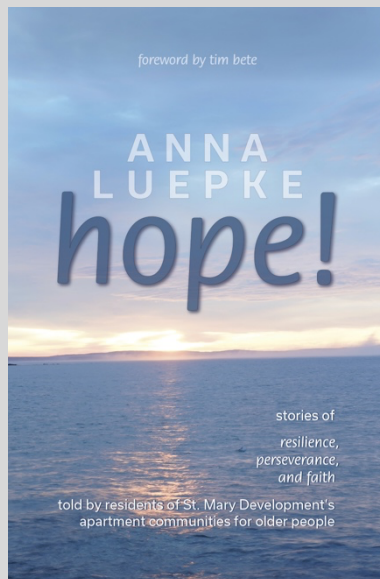


Hope!

Reflection Questions

for book clubs, groups, and individuals



Introduction

Hope! shares seven stories of resilience, perseverance, and faith as told by the residents of St. Mary Development's apartment communities for older people. Through hardships and struggles, their stories instill a sense of tenacity, dedication, love, faith, and hope that will stay with you for a long time.

The purpose of this study guide is to allow book clubs, groups, and individuals to reflect on their own lives. This reflection may be individual or as part of a group discussion. Reflection helps readers connect with each other and builds meaningful relationships that relate to the stories in the book. Each of us has a different life path and it's important to take time and understand how we are all connected to make a better world for everyone.

Author Anna Luepke's opportunity to write these stories changed her. She says one of the most difficult parts of the project was sitting in silence in her car, processing what she had just heard.

"It seemed trivial to return to my normal life after fully immersing myself in someone else's," she said. "It is difficult enough hearing these stories the first time, but I came home and listened to hours and hours of audio, piecing together what I had just heard. It was difficult to know what each of these incredible people I had just met had been through. It was hard to explain to my friends and family just how powerful these stories were to hear, and just how much they would change my life. Each and every one of these stories has stuck with me and will stick with me for the rest of my life."

Anna's words are a challenge to each of us. How often do we take the time to truly listen to someone else's story, not in an attempt to solve their problems, but just to understand who they are and to see their great inherent dignity? As Anna now asks herself when she meets someone new, "What stories do they hold? What more do I have to learn? I'll never know unless I ask."

You'll never know unless you ask. Those are very wise words. Words filled with hope for the future.

Let's Reflect!

The questions below can be used for group- or self-reflection. There is no particular order to the questions, so feel free to focus on the questions that are of most interest to you or your group. If you'd like, you can take time to write your answers before sharing and discussing them with others.

1. In the book, many residents talk about how they find hope. In what ways have you found hope in your life? How has having hope (or a lack of it) impacted your life?
2. Throughout the stories, residents shared the importance of being there for others, especially family and friends, but even strangers. In what ways do you help others? Is it difficult for you to act selflessly and put the needs of others ahead of your own needs? Think back on a time in your life when you put others first and describe how it made you feel.
3. Looking back on your own life, what advice would you give to your younger self and how do you think it would impact you now?
4. Many residents overcame significant challenges in their lives. When was a time in your life when you had to overcome a challenge? Did it make you a stronger person in the end?
5. How we are raised can have a significant impact on who we are as adults. Looking back on your childhood, what event or person helped shape the person you are today? How did they shape you?
6. Throughout your life, when have you felt most peaceful and joyful? Which events and/or people were part of your peace and joy?

7. Throughout the book, residents share their values and beliefs. What are some core values that you have and why they are important to you?
8. Reflecting on your life, when were there times that you felt like you had little hope? If you were able to overcome your hopelessness, how did you do it? If you couldn't overcome it, what do you think stood in your way?
9. What was your biggest take away from the stories? Which one do you think you'll remember most?
10. Did reading the stories change what you thought about older people, people with low incomes, or people with different life experiences from your own?

Resources

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