

BOOK CLUB GUIDE PART 1

There I Am

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

SECTION 1

Ch 1 Different Kinds of Smart

Ch 2 Black & White

Ch 3 Always Go Left

Ch 4 Chunky and My Other Best Friends


Ch 5 Itty-Bitty Fish



CHAPTER

One

THEMES

- We learn to conform to what we think people want us to be very early in life.
 - How early in life we begin to experience emotional trauma.
 - Our words have power and form a belief in us, even at a young age.
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FAVORITE QUOTES

"I learn that almost all people need to feel like they belong to someone, so I let them know that they are important to me."

"When I smile big, people like me, and even if I'm uncomfortable, I want to be liked."



QUESTIONS

What was your elementary and middle school experience like?

Can you recall a time when someone said something to you that started a belief system in you?

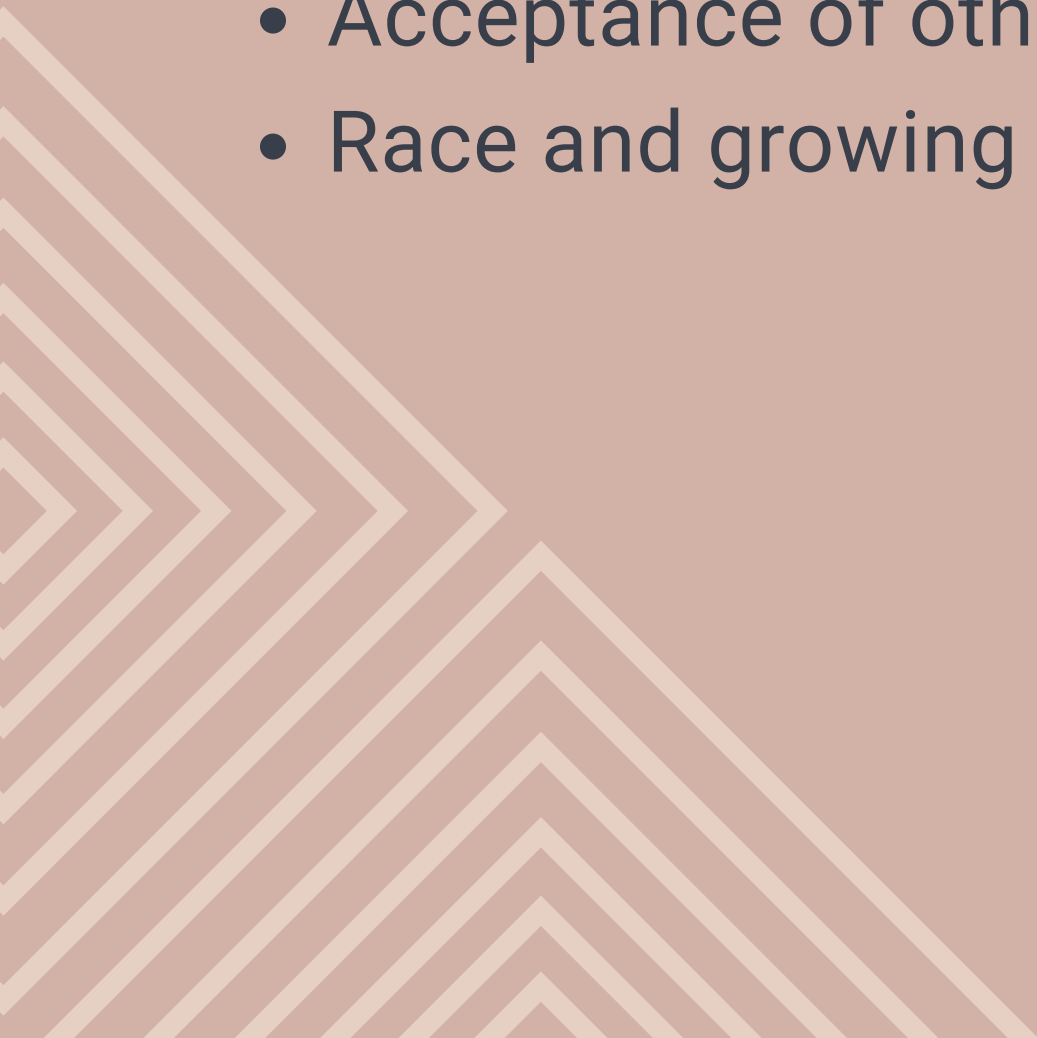
JOURNAL PROMPTS

Think back to yourself as a child. How did your little self receive love? In what ways did your little self need to be loved that she/he was not? Now take time to write out how you as an adult can love your little self in the way she/he needed to be loved then.

CHAPTER

Two

THEMES

- All the things we've known to be good in life might not be right.
 - Learning what it feels like to be different.
 - Acceptance of others with no judgment.
 - Race and growing up in small town America.
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FAVORITE QUOTES

I've been special plenty of times but never "different" and I'm surprised by how empty it feels.

Different isn't bad, but different can be complicated, it can be painful, it can even be scary.



QUESTIONS

What has been your experience with race growing up? Is that experience different from your present day?

Have you been in a situation where you felt different based on something you couldn't control?

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Think about and write down a few ways you can bring awareness to or fight systemic racism in your community.

CHAPTER

Three


THEMES

- The deconstruction of the narrative we've built. We all go through this! The oh shit, or aha moment where what seemed to be comes crashing down.

FAVORITE QUOTES

I will learn that love is not always a loud parade of a thing; it can be strong and silent.

I will learn that love is one person becoming undone for another. It's being stripped of the protective armor we've worked hard to fashion for ourselves to become the armor for somebody else. It's standing naked and shivering before what scares us the most to honor what it is that we love the most. This is the love that will transform me.



QUESTIONS

What are the moments in your life where you look "perfect" on the outside but know that everything is falling apart on the inside?

We all have moments that define our family and our life going forward, what are some of yours?

JOURNAL PROMPTS

After being crowned homecoming queen, Ruthie wakes up surprised she feels no different even after achieving all the things she thought would make her feel happy, worthy and fulfilled as a high-schooler. Take time to think through the markers in life you thought would make you feel worthy & validated. Maybe it was marriage, a job promotion, or having a child. What are things that have actually made you feel validated in life? What (if anything) has helped you remember your inherent worth? Belonging, connection, loving your inner child, etc.

CHAPTER

Four

THEMES

- No one person is ever just affected by pain, our whole community feels it.
- It's hard to face pain in our lives and can be easier to pretend nothing ever happened.

FAVORITE QUOTES

The accident doesn't just happen to me and to my family - it happens to everyone.

Sometimes when something bad happens, it's easier to pretend that it didn't.

When they found me slumped over the steering wheel the night of the wreck, there wasn't even a scratch on my skin. I looked pretty and calm, I didn't look like I needed saving but I felt it. I still do.

We don't get to choose the things that haunt us, the memories that linger, the uninvited feelings that follow us around. We may not want to see them, but eventually they make us look.

QUESTIONS

What are things that have happened to you or people in your community that have affected you all? How did people show up?

How does your family handle challenges?

JOURNAL PROMPTS

What is a hardship or trauma in your life that you have pushed under the rug and acted like it never happened? Would you take a few minutes to feel that pain, grieve the losses, let the anger be known?

CHAPTER

Five

THEMES

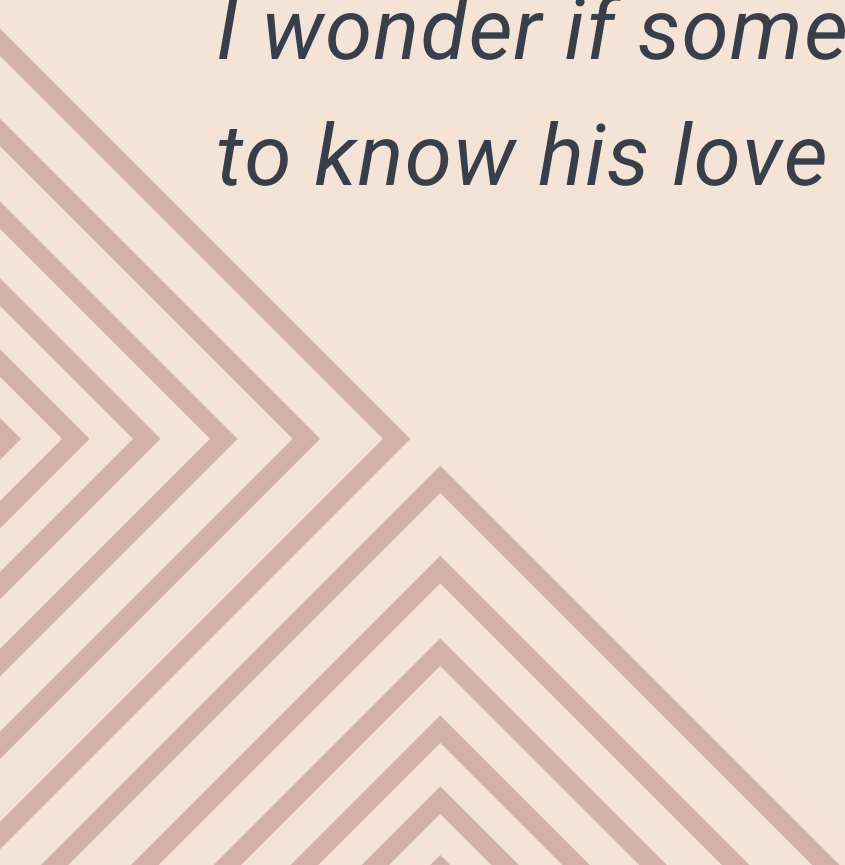
- The power of community.
- The start of a deconstruction of faith.
- Wanting to feel like a Christian but unable to make it happen on the inside.

FAVORITE QUOTES

I begin to wonder if being a Christian is more than just a thing that people do on the weekends.

The power of community will shape, astound, and sustain me.

I wonder if someone who doesn't see Jesus can teach him and I wonder if wanting to know his love is enough to speak of it.



QUESTIONS

Have there been times in your life that you have wanted something to be true of you but you haven't been able to make it real for yourself?

What are places or people in your life that have made you feel like you belonged?

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Find a quiet place and take some deep breaths. Are there areas in your life where you are living out of the perception you want to create and not the truth that is inside you? In your quiet place, come back to your true self and tell yourself it is safe to be seen.



THANK YOU

***We are so excited to read **THERE I AM**
with all of you during this wild season.***

HAVE A
QUESTION?

DON'T HESITATE TO REACH OUT!

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