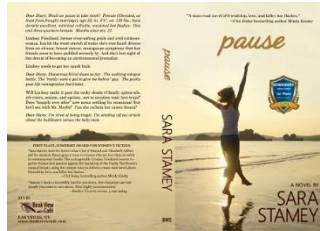


Discussion Questions for *Pause*



1. (From Brenda Miller, author of *The Braided Heart*) Could you relate to Lindsey's experiences with dating during a transitional time in her life? What have your own experiences been?
2. Lindsey refers to Joni Mitchell songs, including a lyric about laughing and crying providing the same emotional release. Do you agree? What about Lindsey's reaction to the Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young song "Love the One You're With?"
3. Author Sara Stamey has acknowledged some roots of this fictional story in her own life, and started the germ of the novel as journal entries during a difficult transition period. She was hoping that laughing at midlife absurdities would be healing. Does the device of Lindsey's diary entries work for you? Did you laugh at any entries?
4. How would you feel about mud meditation, as practiced by Lindsey and Newman in their hippie days?
5. (From Thor Hansen, paleontologist and husband extraordinaire): Do you agree with Lindsey's decision to break her confidentiality agreement with the hospital and alert her friend's family to the incompetent surgeon's bad record?
6. How do the recurring images of ravens work in the novel? In Pacific Northwest indigenous tales, Raven is the trickster, but also a healer and rescuer of humankind. Are there different tricksters in your own experience or background?
7. In the 1950s and 60s, Lindsey was raised as her dad's tough "boy" who could beat the neighborhood boys at fishing and chopping wood. How does that upbringing play out in her character and choices? Do you relate to her as what was then called a "tomboy"? How might present-day gender discussions view her differently?
8. Lindsey has a complicated family legacy. What strengths and weaknesses did she inherit? How did it influence her decision to marry Nick, and why did it take her so long to recognize Nick's abusive behavior?

9. Lindsey's best friends Megan and Crystal help her through rough times. Do you have friends who have helped you in big ways? How do friendships evolve, and sometimes reach an end point?
10. Does Newman feel sincere to you? Does he treat Lindsey fairly, as an equal? Does a "higher calling" trump personal relationships? Lindsey acknowledges that he taught her a lot that helped her. How do you view their relationship?
11. (From Susanne Paola Antonetta, author of *Body Toxic, an Environmental Memoir*) What do you feel about the way Sara Stamey handled the ending, without the "happy ever after" of finding the perfect mate?
12. How do Lindsey's love of the outdoors and her commitment to the environment open doors for her? Do her ideals also make her susceptible to wrong or risky choices?
13. Did your opinion of the book change as you read it? How?
14. Are there any characters you'd like to deliver a lecture to? Which character, and what would you say?
15. If you could ask the author one question, what would it be?