

Book Club Discussion Questions

On the Other Side

a spiritual memoir by Julie Jacky



About the Book

When Julie Jacky was thirty-eight, she felt shame and heartache as she took money out of her son's savings account to keep the lights on. After she climbed her way out of bankruptcy, she realized she needed to deal with other shameful secrets from her past that were holding her back and preventing her from becoming the person she wanted to be.

In the spiritual memoir, *On the Other Side*, Julie courageously shares her raw and vulnerable healing and forgiveness journey after childhood sexual abuse. As you read, you will witness Julie becoming aware of how minimizing the abuse kept her stuck in her past and affected her relationships with herself and others. Julie shows, through persistence, how she healed and transformed out of emotional numbness, pain, clutter, sickness, and just going through the motions—to taking her power back, freeing herself from her past, and redesigning her life into one she loves.

Regardless if you were sexually abused or not, this victorious emotional voyage will inspire you to take your own power back so you can experience the freedom that awaits you on the other side.

A Message From the Author



On the Other Side is intended to be read, grappled with, engaged in, and reflected on through courageous conversations with yourself and others. As you read my intimate stories, your heart will open up, you will feel a connection to me, a deeper connection to yourself, and you'll be reminded of your own life struggles and triumphs. You will also likely become aware of areas of your life that you've felt shame and embarrassment about – that you haven't fully healed from, yet. (You know, the ones you'd rather keep stuffed down and continue to ignore and pretend they don't exist. Yep, those.) That's why these book club questions were created – to help you engage at a deeper level with yourself as well as others in your book club as you read *On the Other Side*. I hope these questions inspire great connective conversation and healing.

♥ Julie

1. In Chapter One, Julie shares her one true sentence about taking money from her son’s bank account to keep the lights on. Later, she realizes that she “*still carried emotional baggage*” because she hasn’t yet faced the sexual abuse she endured as a girl. How do you think Julie’s journey would have been different if she had divulged her sexual abuse in her one true sentence instead? Do you think she would have been ready to take that step? Why or why not? What would you have done if you were in the same position?

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2. One of the first lessons Julie learns during her journey to healing is that being brave and vulnerable enough to open up and share her truths deepens her connections with other people rather than pushes them away. Why do you think this happens? When you’re vulnerable with other people, how do they respond? How do you respond when they’re vulnerable with you? How has this changed your relationships with them?

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3. At the end of the hallway scene in Chapter 2, Julie shared she never told anyone about the abuse while she was going through it. What did you think when you read that? What are some reasons why as a child she wouldn’t have told anyone? Is there a time in your childhood when you were afraid to speak up? Were you ultimately able to speak up? Why or why not?

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4. In Chapter 4 when Julie was at her therapy session and realized she couldn't relax what did you think about that? Could you identify with her? Why or why not? Are you able to easily relax? If not, do you know what stops you from being able to relax? What's one thing you could do to relax more in your life?

5. In Chapter 6, after a series of chiropractic appointments, Julie fully realizes the depth of the mind-body connection and *"how any physical symptoms we experience in our bodies are a result of emotions trapped in them."* How are the emotions she's hung onto since her childhood sexual abuse affecting her physically so many years later? Do you agree that some of the causes of our physical ailments can be attributed to stuck or negative emotions? Why or why not?



6. When Julie explains how her subconscious beliefs about food (as well as her body's prolonged period in flight-fight-freeze mode) caused her digestion issues, she says that the subconscious *"takes on messages from ourselves and others as truth and behaves accordingly; and when intense emotions couple with thoughts, the subconscious acts even quicker. The subconscious runs the show, and we can't change it until we become aware of our beliefs."* Besides diet and digestion, what are other areas of life where subconscious beliefs can impact you? How?

7. Part One of Julie’s journey shows her discovering how the lingering trauma from her childhood sexual abuse negatively impacted her relationships with her parents and romantic partners, including her ex-husband Dave, and then healing those relationships. How does each person respond to Julie’s apologies? How does Julie feel afterward? How do you think a person’s relationships with their loved ones can be affected by the secrets they’re ashamed of sharing?

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8. In Chapter 7, before Julie meets with her boss to discuss her performance review and her desired raise, she meditates on not only what she wants to say during the meeting, but also how she wants to feel. How does this help her convey her request as accurately and confidently as possible? How important do you think it is to consider how you want to feel when you prepare for an important conversation and ask for what you believe you’re worthy of receiving?

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9. Julie’s work on increasing her feelings of worthiness eventually leads her to ask for—and receive—a \$30,000 raise at her day job. Do you think this is a coincidence? Or is it a direct result of Julie tapping on and changing her beliefs about her sense of self-worth? Why? Do you find it difficult to ask for raises and other things that you believe you’re worthy of receiving? Why or why not?

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10. How difficult is it for you to maintain healthy boundaries? Or to say no to other people? If so, why? Did you relate to Julie’s struggles with drawing a “*line in the sand*” with her mother in your own way? What did you think when you read Julie’s bottom line about boundaries in Chapter 8? How can you set stronger, more compassionate boundaries for yourself?

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11. As Julie works on healing her relationship with her mother, she discovers how unkindly she had treated her mother because of her expectations of how she thought her mother would act. Do you think this realization made it easier or more difficult for Julie to apologize to her mother later in the book? Why? Have you ever treated someone you love with resentment because they didn’t meet your expectations? If so, what steps could you take to let go of those expectations and heal your relationship with that person?

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12. One of the pivotal moments in the book comes during Chapter Eleven, when Julie writes a letter to her abuser upon her mindset coach’s recommendation. Why do you think Julie was reluctant to write this letter? Why does Julie say in hindsight that the letter was a “*valiant effort*” at forgiving her abuser but wasn’t quite enough because she didn’t know how to “*didn’t lean in and truly feel the array of emotions or the pain of the experiences*” of her abuse? How difficult is it to forgive someone who has hurt you deeply in a physical, emotional, or psychological way?

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13. Another lesson that Julie learns during her journey of healing is to trust the guidance she receives from a higher power (in her case, God or the Universe) or from within. This is especially true during Chapters 12 and 13, when Julie follows the message she receives during a meditation and moves to Florida. Why do you think she’s willing to follow her intuition over her “logical mind,” even though she admits that doing so may have seemed a little crazy? Do you think Julie was crazy, brave, or both? Why? Have you ever made a decision or taken action based on divine guidance or your heart’s desires? What was the end result?

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14. How does Julie’s faith help her stay positive and persist through her house search in Chapter 13? Is it necessary to sometimes voice anger or frustration toward our higher power when things don’t appear to be working out? Do you think Julie’s verbal release of emotions helped her in the end? Why or why not? Have you ever vented your negative emotions to your higher power? If so, what happened afterward?

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15. During the “For My Closure” flashback in Chapter 13, Julie gets rid of possessions, furniture, and decorations she doesn’t like from her old house and adopts for her new home what she calls the Love Rule: “[N]othing could go into the new home unless I loved it.” How does this philosophy help her create a home she’s much happier with after her foreclosure, and again when she moves to Florida? How would your home change if you applied Julie’s Love Rule there? What items would you let go of? What would you bring in?

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16. In Chapter 15, when Julie shares the Anonymous letter she received in the mail did you begin to question Julie’s true character? Do you think she handled her response letter well? Why or why not? How did the letter writing exercise help her? Have you tried the letter writing exercise before? If you haven’t would you be willing to try it? Why or why not?

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17. Chapter 16, which introduces Julie’s abortions as a teenager and chronicles the healing Julie undergoes during Dr. Joe Dispenza’s retreat, is titled “*The Work Continues.*” How is this an appropriate title for the chapter, and not just for Julie personally? Do you think a person’s journey to healing and forgiveness ends on a clean, definite note? Or is it necessary to continue doing your personal work so you can keep growing and maintain the practices you’ve used to improve your life? Are you more willing to keep doing your personal work after reading Julie’s story? Why or why not?

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18. When writing about Florida, Julie frequently mentions how happy, free, full of life, and peaceful she feels there. What places (both at and away from home) have this effect on you? Why do you think this happens?

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19. One of the constants throughout Julie’s journey is the Emotional Freedom Technique (a.k.a. EFT or tapping). After taking a local community education class on EFT in Chapter One, she uses tapping to help herself relieve stress, increase positive feelings, and let go of negative feelings. Eventually she becomes a certified EFT practitioner so she can help other people using this healing modality. What hobbies, activities, or healing modalities do you engage in when you feel stressed or in need of an emotional lift? How could you use these and other gifts or talents you have to help others?

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20. Julie’s journey is full of mentors whose advice and guidance she incorporates into her life. She even devotes a short section at the end of the book to her mentors so readers can learn more about them. Which mentor do you think had the greatest impact on Julie? Why? Who are some of your mentors? What impact have they had on your life?

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21. According to RAINN.org, each year over 433,000 Americans age twelve and older have experienced sexual assault or rape. After reading Julie’s story, what do you think needs to be done in your country to decrease the stigma and better help survivors of sexual abuse? If you, too, are a sexual abuse survivor, what could you do today to help yourself heal from the past, speak up now, and take charge of your future?

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22. Throughout *On the Other Side*, Julie reveals the different types of therapy, coaching, and other tools and strategies that helped her confront and heal from her past and take responsibility of her life and future. Which modality do you think was most instrumental in her journey? Which one seemed to be the most challenging? Have you tried any of these strategies to help yourself heal or grow? If you haven't, which one would you be most willing to try? Why?

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23. What is your favorite quote, passage, or lesson from *On the Other Side*? Why?



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24. Why do you think the book is titled *On the Other Side*? What does the phrase mean to you after reading Julie's story? When you have worked through personal challenges and difficult emotions so you could heal, just as Julie did, what did you find on the other side? For example, Julie spoke of finding freedom and joy after working through the trauma that lingered after her sexual abuse.

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25. Why do you think it was important for Julie to share her story? How do you think writing this book may have helped her as part of her journey? How has it helped you?

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Resources

RAINN

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) has been around for over twenty-five years and is available to help you figure out the next steps to take on your healing journey. They have a plethora of resources on their website rainn.org. Some of them are free, while other links on their site connect you to resources that have a fee. For immediate help, call RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673. They are available 24/7/365.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

Call 1-800-273-8255 for free confidential support. You can also go to their website, suicidepreventionlifeline.org, to get help via an online chat and to read their FAQs.

About Julie Jacky



Julie Jacky is an author, speaker, and mindset coach and she is certified as both an Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) practitioner and a financial coach with over twenty years of business experience.

A self-proclaimed self-help and tapping geek, Julie has immersed herself in a bajillion coaching programs, workshops, trainings, and spiritual retreats over a twenty-year period on her quest to becoming the best version of herself. Now she coaches and teaches others what she has learned so they too can be the best version of themselves.

Julie loves living in Florida near the Atlantic Ocean. You can learn more about her and connect with her online at juliejacky.com.

