

Book Club Discussion Points

Ride the Elephant is a book about facing the metaphorical “elephant in the room” that we each have, and choose to ignore. We are uncomfortable when they are brought up and don’t want to talk about them. However, the elephants in the room lingers in our mindsets and cause great harm to the beliefs, values, and principles. The same beliefs, values, and principles that determine how we respond in every situation. It effects our relationships, our work, and our ability to experience joy and happiness.

Ride the Elephant is about personal self-reflection and awareness that will change your life, if you dare to seriously ponder the questions in Ride the Elephant. The conversations about questions in the book will require vulnerability and authenticity.

Here are a few questions that can be used to process the concepts in the book. Enjoy!

1. What does the metaphor “the elephant in the room” mean to you?
2. What are you afraid to bring up with your parents, children, friends, siblings, or in social settings?
3. Why do you avoid the elephant in the room?
4. How are you coping, adjusting or recalibrating to life changes? Has something been gnawing on you that you just can’t talk about, but its there lingering in your thoughts? Are you unaware that their may be an “elephant in the room?”
5. What beliefs have the strongest influence on what you do, those you have been taught to have or the beliefs you have acquired through the personal experiences of life?
6. We have all been told and expected to believe what our families and society expects us to believe. Is there a difference in what you are “supposed to” believe and what you truly believe deep down inside?
7. What are some of the beliefs you have that are lodged deep in your mind that originated from the uninvited opinions of others?
8. Do your core convictions emanate from beliefs that are true? What if they aren’t even true? What if they are misguided?
9. How are your beliefs revealed in your thought, words and deeds?
10. Why do we tend to blame and make excuses?
11. Is blaming and excuse-making just a reflection of the cultural norm?
12. Do you find yourself explaining, defending, and justifying your behavior? How come?
13. Do the excuses you use help remediate your anxiety and fears? Or do excuses actually create more anxiety and fear?
14. If blaming, excuse-making, victimhood, fear, presumption, and value-judging is at the core of unhealthy relationships, how can you avoid it? What can you do to change it?
15. What has a wishing mindset ever solved?
16. Do we embrace victims in an attempt to “put on a show” of our own virtue?
17. How do you overcome perpetual victimhood?
18. Are the significant people in your life keeping you stuck in your victimhood mindset or are they being your wise counsel and encouraging you to “ride the elephant?”
19. How do you ask all the people you have ginned up in your victim scheme to stop being a part of your charade?

20. How do you have personally responsibility for everything that happens in your life?
21. How are you responsible when it is clearly not your fault?
22. Some of us lament the pain and suffering in our personal history, some of us find meaning and purpose from it, what determines the two distinctly different responses?
23. Is there some one you just will never forgive? Is that person you?
24. What is the cost of unforgiveness?
25. What you fear says a lot about what you believe and what you believe says a lot about what you fear. What does that mean?
26. We often make decisions out of fear, how do your beliefs allow you to be controlled by your fears?
27. Do your beliefs cause your fear or do your fears cause your beliefs?
28. How can clarifying the distinction between feelings and beliefs help you mitigate fear-based choices?
29. Is anxiety a fear-based belief or is anxiety a “justifiable” fear?
30. When is anxiety a treatable disorder and when is it an excuse to not have to be personally responsible?
31. Is anxiety a medical condition requiring medical treatment or is it the feelings we have that have emerged by our own doing as we face the challenges of life?
32. Is your help always helpful? When is it not helpful?
33. How is the mindset of the presumptuous different from the mindset of the curious?
34. What is it about our nature that causes us to think we know what others should do and that they need to hear about it from us?
35. Have you been taught what to think or taught how to think?
36. When we presume - “Our kids can’t do hard things,” what is it costing them? What message are we sending?
37. Instead of critically thinking something through, isn’t it easier to go along with what others are choosing to do?
38. How does one become a better decision maker?
39. How can a person become a skillful critical thinker?
40. Would you rather be right or would you rather be in a relationship?
41. As a boss or manager, how would you create esteem building experiences in the workplace?
42. What good does it do to teach and profess the truth when your student (child) experiences it as dogma? Is there a worthier stance to take than declaring “I’m right and you’re wrong!”
43. What would need to exist for you to STOP one-upping the conversation of others?
44. Is it value-judging when pretty much everyone in your tribe agrees with you?
45. How do you STOP participating in the prejudices of collective value-judging with your friends who have always done it?
46. Is teaching others to make good judgments a license for you to be judgmental?
47. Do you call out the gossipers in your life? If not, why not?
48. When I am finished talking about someone, did what I have to say about the person make them look better or worse
49. Who have I rallied to my side to support my hate and vitriol toward another person?

50. Have I been hooked into the hatred scheme by a vengeful blamer, and why have I gone along with it as a willing accomplice?
51. Is wanting and seeking the approval of others a good thing?
52. If I stop giving approving praise to my children out of the fear that I will make them dependent on it as an adult, how do I acknowledge and encourage my children's appropriate behavior and achievement?
53. Does giving "praise" help create a more intrinsically motivated person?
54. How do you STOP being motivated by expectations of others and start being inspired by something that emanates from within?
55. How does a person transition from being motivated by the expectation of others to being inspired by personally held core convictions?
56. Is your motivation emanating from your own personally held core BVP, or from the BVP of others that have been projected onto you as expectations and conditional acceptance?
57. What are the feelings associated with "true success?"
58. What would need to exist for you to stop your attempts to control and manipulate your children?
 - a. Your students?
 - b. Your employees?
 - c. Your friends?
59. Has "shoulding" on others become a virtuous behavior?
60. When you find yourself being stuck in a relationship, in which you are being controlled and manipulated by others, what would need to exist for you to put a stop to it?
61. Agreements are not expectations and expectations are not agreements. What does this statement mean?
62. How do agreement based relationships and non-agreement based relationships get conflated?
63. Do you do more telling than asking?
64. Has communication become the art of navigating through the dogma that others expect of you, instead of the expression of your own convictions?
65. Can another person make you feel mad, sad, hurt, angry, apathetic, and depressed without your permission?
66. Can you really understand someone else's true emotion?
67. Can we even legislate morality and civil behavior? Do we have to write a law for every offensive behavior?
68. When is your help enabling and when is it not?
69. Do you believe that everything happens for a reason?
70. What would need to exist for you to find the value and meaning in all situations?
71. What more is there to learn from the situations of your life?
72. Some of what you believe comes from decisions you made as a child. How relevant are those decisions now that you are an adult?
73. How do your experiences alter or confirm your beliefs, values, and principles?
74. How do you change the negations (negative self-talk) that are rattling around in your mind?

75. Will you free yourself from the shackles that hold you in bondage and “Ride the Elephant” to personal freedom and true success?
76. If you wrote a book what would exist in the table of contents?
77. What stories will you tell?
78. Who would you write the book for?
79. What would you want the reader to get from your book?
80. How could Ride the Elephant be used by you as life goes forward?