# Book Club Questions

1. In Joe’s youth, he admired and envied Mr. Kimbal, the self-proclaimed, “self˗made man.” Do you think he was also able to become a self-made man?
2. How much difference do you think the “bones” or decor of a house makes in the happiness or unhappiness of a home? Why?
3. Youth are conscripted into the army because they are at the optimal physical age to serve a national purpose. What do you think the purpose of Joe’s life is? Are you awaiting a greater purpose to be realized in your own life or do you think your time has passed?
4. What kind of sacrifices did each person in this household have to make to gain a loving community?
5. Considering the phrase, “familiarity breeds contempt,” why do you think the relationship between Lynn and Mr. B worked so well?
6. What is the value of the gift Mr. B’s children gave him by helping him to stay in his own home in his later years?
7. What do you think about the amnesty given to the German aerospace engineers in America?
8. “I told Polish jokes in elementary school, Mr. B. I never meant anything by them. Everyone was doing it. I didn’t even know any Poles until sixth grade.”

“Well, that’s the thing about communication. You might not intend any harm when you are speaking, but other people who hear your words may experience terror or pride or laughter depending upon their perspective. Communication is a funny thing. It’s got to be thoughtful. If it’s not, then an awful lot of forgiveness or alienation takes place.”

Did Joe and Lynn’s discussion regarding intentional communication have any effect on you?

1. Which of Mr. B’s characteristics do you find most important in life: Exploration, Integrity, Dependency on fact and evidence, Humor, Hard Work, Bettering Oneself, Generosity or Meekness?
2. Can you name the risks described Mr. B experienced in this story? What kinds of things did you learn from Joe about his needs?
3. How do you think being married to Maudie, an educated doctor’s child, with a family title and privilege, affected Mr. B?
4. Do you think the elderly Byks’ determination to help their children throughout adulthood was beneficial or detrimental to their relationship?
5. Can you name some ways Lynn changes in her year living with Mr. B?



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