

Book Club Discussion Points for *Nordies at Noon*

One of the goals in writing *Nordie's at Noon* was to get people talking about breast cancer and associated issues. As authors, we imagined personally answering questions and discussing issues at book signings and after speaking at various events. Then, much to our delight, several book clubs notified us that our book was their “selection of the month”!

Because there are many ways to review and discuss a book, we wanted to create our own list of discussion points, to help serve as a resource for potential topics. If you have suggestions for other discussion topics, please email them to us at info@nordiesatnoon.com.

Thank you for selecting our book—we hope you find it inspirational and educational, and we wish your book club enriching discussions!

–The Nordie Girls

General Thoughts

- _ What are your initial impressions of the book? Is there a particular story line, chapter or situation that stands out for you?

- _ Each author found her lump by performing a Breast Self Exam (BSE). Do you perform a monthly BSE? If so, did you begin doing so before or after reading the book? In what ways can you promote breast health to your friends and family—and most important, with yourself?

- _ Patti, Jana, Jennifer, and Kim have distinct personalities and made different choices throughout their experiences. Is there one author with whom you most identify and if so, in what ways?

Chapter Stories and the Authors

- _ When diagnosed, each author had to tell others about her diagnosis. What was difficult about this? Whom did they notify? How did notifying people (or not) affect the cancer experience of each author?

- _ Breast Surgery: Kim and Patti both opted for TRAM flap reconstruction surgery, while Jen and Jana opted to use a prosthetic breast for a few years before making the decision to move forward with breast reconstruction using implants. How did the different authors come to their choices? What do you think you would choose and why?

- _ Many people know someone who has gone through chemotherapy. Discuss your impressions of chemotherapy treatment. What did *Nordie's at Noon* change or not change about your impression of chemotherapy? If you have had chemotherapy, did you relate to the authors' experiences?

- _ Jana wrote that she often uses humor to deal with difficult situations. Did you find that any of the other authors used humor as well? What parts of the book did you find humorous?

_ If you were faced with some of the choices the authors faced in *Nordie's at Noon*, what do you think would be the most difficult choice for you? Which would be the least difficult choice to make?

_ The authors spoke about choosing the most aggressive treatments offered to them since they believed these treatments would help them survive the disease. What were some of the emotional and physical drawbacks of these treatment decisions? Have you had to (or would you) make similar treatment decisions? What was the impact of your decisions?

_ The authors speak to feeling like they were “losing their femininity” after losing a breast to surgery. Do you think that part of the reason is because our society is “obsessed with breasts”? If so, in what ways do you find this to be true in our culture? If you do not believe it to be true, why not?

_ Kim, Jen and Jana looked to their husbands for support, but also worried about how their spouses would feel about having a wife with one breast. If you are married or have a partner, how do you think this person would react? Patti, being single, faced very different relationship and intimacy issues. Describe the difference in the issues, and the experience/s Patti faced as a single woman. If you are single, how do you think you would handle the issues she faced?

▪ In the “Motherhood” chapter, Kim and Jen discuss their fears about their children potentially growing up without them, while Jana and Patti discuss their inability to bear children due to side effects from their treatments, but discussed adoption as an option instead. What decisions do you think you make if you were each of their situations? What factors would play a role in your decisions on becoming a parent whether it is naturally, or by adoption?

_ Kim, Jana and Jen write about their feelings and experiences during the last two weeks of Patti's life. Have you ever experienced a similar situation with a family member or friend? If so, what could you relate to, and what was different? What are your thoughts about choices you would make if you or a family member/friend only had two weeks to live?

Further Reflection

_ Each author describes their faith and relationship with God throughout *Nordie's at Noon*. What are your thoughts on the presentation of faith and spirituality in *Nordie's at Noon* and the role it played in the lives of each author? Do you have similar beliefs? If so, in what way(s)? If not, what are your thoughts on faith or religion as it relates to serious illness?

_ Breast Cancer is a life-threatening disease which some would consider a personal crisis. Reflect for a moment on how you have handled a similar personal crisis in the past, and how you might handle such a crisis in the future. What/whom would you turn to for strength? How would you involve friends and family?

_ Patti talks about two choices she made during her recurrence. 1) The choice to live and not be afraid to die and 2) The choice to make a difference and come out of cancer a better person. What are your thoughts on her choices, and what are examples of how she lived with these choices?

_ “Life is good”! Do you agree or disagree with this concept, as it relates to your life? If so, how? If not, why not?

Other Thoughts

_ Have you ever participated in any ‘breast cancer fundraising or survivor events’? If so, share about something or someone that was memorable or inspiring at the event. After reading the book do you feel inspired to participate more actively with such activities? Why or why not?

_ Do you know if you have a family history of breast cancer? Do you know your risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer at your particular age? Do you know your risk for developing breast cancer if you do not have a family history of the disease? Does knowing this information influence your perception on whether or not breast cancer “can happen to you?” Has reading *Nordie’s at Noon* changed your perception of the reality of breast cancer?

_ Is there a “breast cancer topic” that was not presented in *Nordie’s at Noon* that you think would be important to discuss?