Journey to Resilience: From Trauma to Healing

A book club guide that lets you explore how you feel and think about your own life experiences and daily experiences as a parent while reflecting on the book *What Happened to You?* by Dr. Bruce Perry and Oprah Winfrey.

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. As members of your community what tools, people, resources do you have that have/can help when times are hard?

2. As parents, what are some ways you ensure that your children don't question if they matter?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. On page 22, after discussing her own childhood struggles, Oprah says; "If we want to understand the oak, it's back to the acorn we must go." What do you think of when thinking about looking at the acorn?

2. Have you ever asked yourself, "Am I enough or am I worthy? In relation to your parenting? Describe yourself as your child sees you.

3. How are Oprah's childhood feelings of guilt, not feeling loved, and not wanting to be a burden similar to those of your own childhood feelings? Have those feelings stuck with you into adulthood?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite way to bring comfort to your child?

2. How will you really connect with your child this week?

3. When life is crazy busy and chaotic how might you slow it down if even for a few moments this week?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. What does balance mean to you and in what ways do you attempt to live a regulated life?

2. On page 55, Oprah asks Dr. Perry what happens when a baby doesn't get positive nurturing responses. Dr Perry responds by saying "This is one of the central problems in our society; we have too many parents caring for children with inadequate supports." What kind of support would be beneficial to you and members of your community?

3. On page 47, Dr. Perry explains rhythm is essential to a healthy body and mind and that rhythm can be experienced in activities such as swimming, music, dance and walking. What is something rhythmic that you enjoy doing and when was the last time you did it?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. Are you a people pleaser? How does this affect you and your life? What steps are you/ have you taken to change this?

2. How do you pick up on your child's sense of rhythm or how do you build it into your day?

3. What do you do as a family when your rhythm gets thrown off?

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where do you go or what do you do to find a sense of calm on your hard parenting days?

2. Who is your go to person when you just need a sense of balance and what makes them special or unique to you? How do they support you in your parenting?

3. What is your reward bucket and what do your kids have as their reward buckets? (See pages 62–63.)

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INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. What does love mean to you?

2. How do you like to show love to your child?

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DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. What is your most memorable "Cheerios" moment? (See pages 81 and 82.)

2. Page 92 shares about how children act out or get labels and why we need a trauma-informed system. What have you seen/experienced in regards to staff being trauma informed?

3. As a parent, what trauma have you experienced? When you experienced that trauma did you feel like you were in a constant state of fear/unknown? What steps have you taken to heal?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you like to be loved?

2. What is one of your proudest parenting moments when you felt "present, attentive, attuned, and/or responsive?" (Page 81)

3. Who makes up your parenting flock and how might you connect soon? (Page 85)

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. How can families integrate and normalize the importance of mental health for them and their children?

2. In your family in what ways do you promote asking for help?

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DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. What worries does your ACE score bring up? What steps can/are you taking to prevent these same occurrences from happening in your child's lives?

2. How do you support your family in addressing and processing trauma or hurt as they happen?

3. How were you supported or not supported in your early parenting years? What impact do you think that has had on your child?

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you release the "pressure" you feel while parenting?

2. What helps you to bond with someone?

3. What will help you to take that step back from being reactive to asking "what happened to you?"

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. On page 140, Dr. Perry explains that 20 years ago trauma was not considered to be a factor in someone's health. What do you think can/should be done to further the discussion on trauma as a factor in one's health and advocate on behalf of mental-health?

2. How much do you know about your family's history and how does that shape who you are today?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. What fears do you have as a parent?

2. What fears do you have that you believe to be generational?

3. Have you had the opportunity to explore "what happened?" How did you do this? What resources did you use/have?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your dream for your child in regards to how they navigate the challenges of life?

2. How will you check where your responses/reactions are coming from?

3. What is your "dot"/word that you are going to hold onto for this week?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. What does belonging mean to you and how do you help your child feel that?

2. What does belonging mean to you and how do you help your child feel that?

3. When/where do you do your best reflective thinking?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. How has your mind and body protected you in a time when you were in a dissociative state? (When there was "inescapable, unavoidable distress and pain".) (Page 169)

2. How do you cope with dysregulation? How does your child cope? What helps you regulate/coregulate with your kids?

3. How does trauma or hurt impact you personally in regards to your health, mind, and reactions and responses as a parent?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How might you stop and reflect during your everyday parenting moments?

2. What intention or purpose do you want to focus on with your child this week?

3. How do you teach people how to treat you? (Page 180)

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. Who is your community? Who has helped you in your healing process and helped you become resilient as a parent?

2. On page 206, Oprah says, "You're not meant to raise children isolated and alone." Do you agree with this? How do you share the role of raising healthy and resilient children with others?

3. Do you allow time for your children to talk when they are ready after something difficult happens? What are the challenges in this as a parent? How do you know when they are ready? How do you practice reflective listening?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. What life challenges have helped you build resilience and empathy?

2. What steps are you taking/ hope to take to develop post-traumatic wisdom for you and your child when and if you feel isolated and alone?

3. Dr. Perry shares on pg. 203, "A healthy community is a healing community, and a healing community is full of hope because it has seen its own people weather–survive and thrive." What does this mean to you and do you agree or disagree?

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are some intentional ways you challenge yourself and your child? What are some positive challenges you can create?

2. How are you going to move from what happened to you to what are you going to do now knowing that information?

3. How could you give your child support and opportunities to build their resilience and empathy? What does that look like in action?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. What is your definition of "trauma-informed"?

2. In what ways do you see systems being impacted by trauma? What work do you think needs to be done to change systems to further address the impact of trauma? What role do you play in advocating for and creating these changes?

3. What hope do you have for the work of trauma?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. Have you or your child ever been in a setting (such as a medical appointment, school, etc.) in which trauma was not considered a factor, even though it should have been? How did this make you feel? What could have changed to prevent this?

2. As humans we have natural judgements and biases that we make based on our experiences. How do you address some of these as a parent?

3. Why do you think we live in communities that are sometimes divided? How do you talk about that with your child?

4. How do you help make it okay to help your child talk to you related to race, bias or other challenging topics?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you teach your child about self-awareness?

2. How might you and your child show compassion this week?

3. What makes your community unique and how might you explore that more with your child this week?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. On pages 255 and 256, Dr. Perry discusses resilience building. In what ways do you build resilience amongst your family and community?

2. What makes strong relationships? How do you use these in your parenting?

3. How do you and your children benefit from your community? What organizations/groups are your family involved in that provide your children beneficial services/support? (How are you connected? See pages 261–262, and share your research.)

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DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. When your child is struggling emotionally what do you see happen to his or her health? How do you build long-term health and wellness for them?

2. How does looking at and knowing the answers to these two questions impact what you do as a parent?: 1) How do your child spend their day/time? and 2) Who are their friends and where do they feel safe? (Page 250)

3. As a parent you may have times where you experience a lot of stress and are lacking your positive social relationships. How do these times impact your responses as a parent and what do you do to try and get back to those relationships?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who do you miss talking with the most and why?

2. What are your "techno-hygiene" plans? (Pages 268–269)

3. What is your favorite thing about watching your child play with a friend?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. How do you give back to yourself?

2. What do you feel our community needs the most right now?

3. What is the hope you hold on to for your child?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. Who are some people in your life that have allowed you to "make it"? How has that impacted you as a parent?

2. How have you re-written the script? What lessons do you hope your children are learning from you?

3. What do you want included in your life "script"?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is a simple action, such as tucking your child(ren) in or slicing fruit that you do that shows mother/father love?

2. What do you want to do with your child this week and why would you choose to do that?

3. What is one step you can take this week to move forward?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. What was your favorite piece from the epilogue?

2. What stood out to you from the epilogue?

3. What message about hope for you as a parent did you take away from the epilogue?

REFLECTION JOURNAL

DIVING DEEPER QUESTIONS

1. After reading and thinking about the book *What Happened to You?* what knowledge, wisdom, or hope are you taking away?

2. Do you believe that "what happened to you can become your power" as Oprah shared? (Page 298) Why or why not?

3. Describe the parent you wish to be without comparing yourself to other parents. What are the traits you would have? How would you be supporting, loving, playing and growing with your child?

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What might you do now as book club is coming to a close?

2. How might you share this information with other parents you know?

3. What is your biggest strength as a parent?