

This Time Could Be Different

Book Club Discussion Ideas



1. How did you feel at the end of *This Time Could Be Different*? What would you say to a potential reader or book club who is considering whether this story might be a good fit for them?



2. Have you ever found yourself outgrowing a part of your life that once made you happy? How did you first become aware that you might be ready for change? What happened next? What, if anything, was easy? What was hard?



3. Have you ever decided to exit a part of your life without knowing exactly what would fill the gap that change created? What was that experience like for you?



4. Often, we are told that at a certain point in life, change is impossible. Or, alternatively, that change is easy, simple and without fraught. Khristin has said in multiple interviews that in her experience—and every experience is different—neither of those statements was true for her. What's been your experience with change?



5. In one particularly potent session, Madeline's therapist tells her, "Each of us lives by a set of stories that tells us who we are in the world. They tell us what we're supposed to do if we want to be 'good'. What we deserve. What it's safe to have and what is not....As we age, we have the chance to decide whether those narratives really fit or whether we want something different." Have you ever found an old and deeply embedded story about yourself that you decided to change? What happened?



6. Madeline's therapist gives some suggestions to help Madeline figure out if there's a way to meditate that works for her. Did any of these resonate with the group? Did anyone come up with any other suggestions that helped?



7. Throughout the story, Madeline and Emma have to reset their friendship in many ways. Have you ever had to do that with a good friend? What happened?



8. Many of the secondary characters in the book are supportive of Madeline and Emma as they change and grow, while some of the secondary characters are not. Have you had to deal with people who didn't support your choices to change? How did you handle that? What happened?



9. At one point in the story, Olivia suggests to Madeline that holding a positive memory, even a tiny one, can be helpful as she ventures toward what feels impossible. As you think about a change you'd like to make for yourself, can you find a memory or two that help?



10. In the story, Madeline finds herself revisiting some of her most painful childhood memories as she moves in new directions. Khristin has said that in writing her books, she's had to do the same. What's been helpful for you when change required you to journey back through painful moments of your past? How were you able to let them go?

Note – please be mindful in discussion that this question may be triggering for some and that discussing the painful events themselves isn't necessary. What helped people move through the events is what may be useful to others. Please ensure no one feels pressured to share personal experience they are not ready to share.



11. A seemingly insignificant moment becomes quite pivotal for Madeline when she attends her first yoga class, fails to excel, and somehow enjoys herself anyway. Have you had an experience like that? Where you knew you were not excelling at something in any legitimate way yet still felt nourished by the experience?



12. Khristin has said in multiple interviews that she writes her stories for younger versions of herself. What would you say to younger versions of yourself—Ten years ago? Ten months ago? Ten days ago?—if given the chance?



13. In a piece she wrote for *Shepherd.com*, Khristin said, “I’m a novelist who was first a reader. For me, books are windows, showing the world through lenses that I haven’t experienced before. In difficult moments, they’ve been lifelines, proof that I’m not alone and happy endings (at least happier) are possible.” Were there moments in *This Time Could Be Different* that did this for you? If not, what books have?

