

READING GUIDE



1. *Everyone But Myself* begins with Julie's anxiety attack about her allergies and going into anaphylactic shock. Have you ever had an anxiety attack or worried about your health in a similar way? What was that like for you? What do you think it was like for Julie?

2. While talking about the few days after her panic attack, Julie talks about *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel A. van der Kolk. Had you heard of the "window of tolerance" before? How have you seen this manifest in your own life? Have you read *The Body Keeps the Score*?

3. When Julie and Mando were in Amsterdam and Paris, Julie's anxiety seemed to disappear. She even admitted she wasn't quite ready to return. What is a place that relaxes you, and why? How could Julie incorporate some of what made Amsterdam and Paris so relaxing into her everyday life?

4. Julie realizes she needs help and the first call she makes is to her OB-GYN, an initial step she refers to as "strange." Sometimes, when a person is struggling, their first step can be unorthodox, but if it helps, that is what is most important. How did the meeting with Dr. Cooke help? How did it make things more difficult?

5. Before Julie finds her therapist, Kim, she goes through a difficult process trying to find a therapist altogether. Have you ever had a difficult time accessing mental health care? Why is it important that people have easy access to mental health support? How could mental health support be more accessible in your community?

6. Julie says that "If hope is a drug, its hangover is despair." Have you ever had moments like the ones she described? How do you feel about her statement—do you agree or disagree?

7. When Julie is first trying to reconnect to joy, she purchases a puzzle and settles down to do it on her own. What brings you joy? How do you reconnect to it when it has been missing in your life?



8. After a session with Kim, Julie writes that she was thinking about herself as carrying a heavy backpack filled with worry rocks and that Kim had given her permission to throw one of those worry rocks out. If you were to think about the worry rocks you have, is there one that you could throw out? How would that change things for you?

9. After her father's surgery and Gina's death, Julie vows to spend more time doing the things that bring her joy, and even joins a yoga class. What do you think returning to yoga felt like for her? Have you ever returned to something that you had not gone to in a while? What was that like for you?

10. Eventually, Julie learns to ask herself the question she asks everyone else: What do you need?

How did you see Julie begin to ask herself this throughout the book? How do you understand what you need in your own life? How do you give yourself permission to perform small acts of kindness for yourself, as Julie did?

11. Near the end of the book, Julie discusses some of the difficulties that people with mental health issues face in our current healthcare system. Do you agree or disagree with her thoughts? How could we improve how people access mental health?

12. What are some tiny acts of love that you can provide to the people in your life? What are tiny acts of love they can provide for you?

13. How did this book make you feel? What did you like best about it?

14. Did you struggle while reading any sections of this memoir? Why or why not?

