

# Tier 1 — Warm Conversation

## Discussion Questions

*For Funny You Should Ask... and Now What Are We Talking About Here? by Tim Gamble*

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### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

*The questions are the door, not the room. Ask them plainly and let the group answer in whatever direction they take it.*

*A companion Facilitator Notes document has a second layer for each question. Use as much or as little as the room wants.*

*Save the last question for the end — each book changes how you read the other, and so does hearing how everyone else read them.*

1. Tim says his mother marveled that he didn't tempt fate so much as *taunt* it. Do you know someone in your own life who seems to live a little charmed?
2. Which story made you laugh out loud? Which one caught you off guard and turned quietly moving?
3. Sandy asked Tim to promise he'd be the one to die first, because she couldn't bear the thought of speaking at his funeral. What's the most surprising way you've ever seen love show up in a marriage?
4. Tim writes about being "nineteen and zero" — nineteen arrests, no convictions. If you had to sum up a wild stretch of your own younger years in one line like that, what would it be?
5. Strangers keep appearing at exactly the right moment throughout both books — a cop, a judge, a ticket agent, an insurance adjuster. Has a stranger ever shown up for you at exactly the right time?
6. If you could sit down with Tim and ask him to tell you one story that isn't in either book, what would you want to know?
7. Which of the two books did you read first, and did it change how you experienced the second one?
8. Tim's mother gave him *Harold and the Purple Crayon* as a child, and it comes back around decades later with his own son. Is there a book, object, or small tradition that's traveled through generations in your own family?
9. If you had to describe reading these books to a friend in one sentence, what would you say?
10. Knowing what you've all just learned from each other, do you think you'd read the books again in a different light?

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*This guide doesn't end so much as run out of room. There's more here than one evening can hold — more stories, more angles, more of what each of you noticed that the others didn't. That's not a flaw in the guide. It's the book's own argument: there's no tidy ending, only more to discover. Come back to these questions anytime. They'll still be waiting, and so will the parts of the books you haven't found yet.*

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## Facilitator Notes

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### A NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR

*These aren't answers — there aren't any, not for a book like this. Each note gives you a little more to stand on, then ends with a sharper question you can ask word for word if the room needs somewhere further to go.*

- 1. Taunting fate.** A charmed life could be about luck, or about how someone chooses to respond when things go wrong. Sandy's version of the same evidence was less romantic than his mother's — "an angel on your shoulder" versus "you're fortunate to still be here." *Which read do you believe, and does it change how you see the risks Tim took?*
- 2. Laugh out loud / caught off guard.** This is really a question about the book's whole technique — humor and grief sitting in the same sentence. *Was there a moment where you weren't sure whether to laugh or not, and what does that tell you about how the story was told?*
- 3. Sandy's request.** This one conversation is the reason *Now What* exists at all. *Why do you think Tim said yes so quickly — and what would it take for you to ask something like that of someone you love?*
- 4. Nineteen and zero.** Playful, but it opens a real question about self-mythology — the stories we choose to tell about our younger selves. *What tends to get left out of the highlight-reel version of a life, and why?*
- 5. Strangers at the right moment.** This pattern runs through nearly every chapter of both books. *How many strangers can you remember helping Tim across just one book — and does the number surprise you?*
- 6. What isn't in the books.** Tim has said he deliberately left some stories out, including one entire summer he calls "before Sandy." *What do you imagine might be missing — and is a memoir obligated to tell everything?*
- 7. Reading order.** *Now What* is the newer, recommended starting point; *Funny* is the origin story. *Did the second book you read change how you understood the first?*
- 8. The purple crayon.** A quiet, lovely detail. *What's your own family's version of it — a book, an object, or a small tradition that keeps getting handed down?*
- 9. One-sentence description.** A good closer for the room. *Say yours out loud — then ask whether any two people landed on the same sentence.*
- 10. Closing question.** Hold this until the group has actually talked. *Now that you've heard how everyone else read these books — has your own reading of either one actually changed, or have you simply found other people who see it the way you do?*

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*There is so much here left to be discovered — in the books, and in the room.*