

BOOK CLUB STUDY GUIDE WITH ANSWER KEY

Funny You Should Ask ... **Tim Gamble**

TRUE TALES OF
RESILIENCE, LAUGHTER AND LIFE LESSONS



Book Club Study Guide

Book Club Study Guide for **“Funny You Should Ask ... Tim Gamble”**

An Engaging Exploration for Book Club Members

Welcome & Overview

Welcome to Tim Gamble’s world—a candid, humorous memoir about finding meaning in life’s ordinary moments. This guide is designed to spark thoughtful conversation and personal connection. As you read and discuss, consider how Tim’s quirky, resilient outlook might mirror or challenge your own experiences.

Facilitator Tips:

- Start with a brief overview of the memoir’s structure (the question-based format) and encourage members to share their first impressions.
- Use the interactive activities to break the ice and invite everyone to participate.
- If discussion lags, refer to the prompts in the Answer Key for deeper context.

I. Getting Started: The Big Picture

1. First Impressions

- a. What first drew you into Tim’s storytelling? Was it his humor, honesty, or another element?
- b. How did the question-based format (e.g., “Where did you go on vacations as a child?”) shape your reading experience?

Interactive Activity: In small groups, share one sentence that best captures your first impression of Tim’s voice.

2. Tim’s Life in a Nutshell

- a. Identify one key story (e.g., the bonfire party or meeting Sandy) that, for you, sums up Tim’s character. Why does it stand out?
- b. How do these stories reflect resilience and creativity in the face of life’s challenges?

Breakout Discussion: Ask each member to share a personal “defining moment” from their life and discuss similarities with Tim’s experiences.

Transition Note: These initial questions set the stage for exploring the memoir’s underlying themes. Reflect on how first impressions evolve as you consider deeper layers.

II. Digging Deeper: Themes and Stories

3. Laughing Through Life

- a. In which story does Tim’s humor shine the brightest (e.g., the “floor wax” quip)? How does humor help reframe challenges?
- b. Can you recall a time when humor helped you overcome a difficult situation?

Group Activity: Write a quick “haiku” that captures a humorous moment in your life and share with the group.

4. Taking the Reins

- a. Tim often asserts, “If it is to be, it is up to me.” Where do you see this philosophy in action within his stories?
- b. Share an example from your own life where taking charge of a messy situation led to a positive outcome.

5. The Unexpected Journey

- a. Choose a story that epitomizes life’s unpredictability (e.g., Drop City or Jeremy’s birth). What does it reveal about embracing the unexpected?
- b. What’s a “you just never know” moment from your own story?

Creative Prompt: Imagine you are writing a short memoir. What would your “unexpected journey” chapter be titled?

Transition Note: *Reflect on how Tim’s life teaches us to find strength and humor even in uncertainty, paving the way for deeper connections in our relationships and self-growth.*

III. People and Connections

6. Family Ties

- a. How do Tim’s depictions of his mom (e.g., her resourcefulness) and dad (e.g., his disciplined yet distant nature) inform our understanding of his roots?
- b. Discuss Sandy’s evolving role—from their first meeting to motherhood—and how it shapes Tim’s narrative.

Interactive Discussion: *Pair up and compare one family dynamic in the book with a family tradition or memory of your own.*

7. Strangers and Kindness

- a. Tim encounters kindness in unexpected places. Which encounter resonated most with you and why?
- b. Share an experience where a stranger’s act of kindness made a difference in your life. **Facilitator Tip:** Encourage members to explain how these moments of kindness influence their outlook on community and connection.

Transition Note: *Moving from personal history to relationships, consider how interactions with both family and strangers weave together to form Tim’s life tapestry.*

IV. Reflecting and Sharing

8. What Hits Home

- a. Which story or idea in the memoir resonates most deeply with you and why?
- b. If you were to add a chapter to Tim’s memoir answering one Storyworth question (e.g., “What’s your biggest risk?”), what would you write?

Interactive Activity: *Have members jot down their ideas on index cards and then share a few with the group.*

9. Book Club Debate

- a. Tim’s raw, unpolished style—does it make the memoir more relatable or is it a barrier to understanding? Take a side and share your perspective.
- b. Do you see this memoir as a celebration of a “life well-lived,” or does its focus on small joys over grand achievements fall short?

Debate Tip: *Divide the group into two teams and have a friendly debate, then reconvene to discuss common ground.*

10. Wrapping Up: Final Thoughts

- a. What is your biggest takeaway from Tim’s stories—humor, resilience, or another insight?
- b. Would you rate this memoir as a “life-changing” read or simply an entertaining collection of anecdotes? Explain your rating.

Closing Activity: *Conduct a round-robin where each member shares one lasting lesson they plan to apply in their own life.*

Final Note: *End the session by inviting members to share any final thoughts or “aha” moments. Optionally, bring a personal object or photo related to a memory inspired by the book for a brief sharing circle.*

Answer Key for the Book Club Study Guide

“Funny You Should Ask... Tim Gamble”

I. Getting Started: The Big Picture

1. First Impressions

- Key Points:
 - Tim’s humor (e.g., jokes about fines or quirky mishaps) and candid honesty are immediately engaging.
 - The Storyworth question format creates a mosaic-like narrative that feels spontaneous and personal.
- Expected Responses:
 - Members might note that the casual tone feels like a conversation with a friend, which sets the stage for open discussion.

2. Tim’s Life in a Nutshell

- Key Points:
 - Stories like the bonfire party or meeting Sandy encapsulate Tim’s mix of humor, initiative, and resilience.
 - These anecdotes illustrate how personal challenges and creative problem-solving have defined his journey.
- Facilitator Guidance:
 - Encourage comparisons between these stories and personal anecdotes shared by members.

II. Digging Deeper: Themes and Stories

3. Laughing Through Life

- Key Points:
 - Humor is used as a coping mechanism (e.g., the “floor wax” incident or humorous retellings of mishaps) that transforms adversity into an opportunity for levity.
- Expected Responses:
 - Members should be able to articulate how humor softens life’s hardships, linking this to their own experiences.

- Group Activity Outcome:

- The haiku exercise is designed to distill humor into a creative expression, highlighting individual perspectives.

4. Taking the Reins

- Key Points:

- The mantra “if it is to be, it is up to me” underlines Tim’s belief in proactive personal responsibility.

- Expected Responses:

- Participants might share personal stories of taking control during chaos, paralleling Tim’s career risks or travel adventures.

- Facilitator Guidance:

- Highlight examples from the text that clearly demonstrate this philosophy.

5. The Unexpected Journey

- Key Points:

- Tim’s anecdotes (e.g., the surreal experiences at Drop City or the unexpected miracle at Jeremy’s birth) capture the unpredictable nature of life.

- Expected Responses:

- Members should recognize that life’s unpredictability is a recurring theme, prompting them to share similar “unexpected” moments from their lives.

III. People and Connections

6. Family Ties

- Key Points:

- Tim’s reflections on his parents reveal both inspiration and the seeds of his independent spirit.

- Sandy’s evolving role highlights her integral influence on his personal growth and life’s direction.

- Expected Responses:

- Members may compare these dynamics with their own family experiences and discuss the impact of family on personal development.

7. Strangers and Kindness

- Key Points:
 - Encounters with kind strangers (e.g., the cab driver in New York) reinforce the idea that compassion can be found in unexpected places.
- Expected Responses:
 - Sharing personal encounters with kindness can deepen the group's appreciation for small, meaningful acts of generosity.
- Facilitator Tip:
 - Ask follow-up questions to draw out how these moments influenced members' worldviews.

IV. Reflecting and Sharing

8. What Hits Home

- Key Points:
 - Personal resonance will vary; some might be moved by the raw emotion of Jeremy's birth, while others may connect with Tim's creative expressions.
- Expected Responses:
 - Encourage members to explain why certain stories resonate and how they inspire change in their own lives.

9. Book Club Debate

- Key Points:
 - The unfiltered, raw style of the memoir is a double-edged sword: it is both relatable and, at times, challenging.
- Expected Responses:
 - Responses should explore whether the candid style enhances the authenticity of the narrative or hinders clarity for some readers.
- Debate Guidance:
 - Use this section to foster a balanced discussion by having each side present concrete examples from the memoir.

10. Wrapping Up: Final Thoughts

- Key Points:
 - The core takeaway is that life’s challenges are best met with humor, resilience, and personal accountability.
 - Tim’s memoir redefines success as a blend of personal growth, authentic living, and finding joy in the everyday.
- Expected Responses:
 - Members should be able to articulate a clear, personal takeaway and justify their overall rating of the memoir.
- Facilitator Tip:
 - Summarize the discussion by inviting each member to share one actionable lesson they plan to apply.

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