

Movie Discussion Guide

ME BEFORE YOU

Based on the bestselling book by JoJo Moyes, *Me Before You* is a bittersweet film telling the story of Lou Clark, a small-town English girl, who becomes a caretaker for Will Traynor, a wealthy banker who was recently paralyzed. Lou, played by Emilia Clarke, is hired by Will's family to be his personal aid. Will, played by Sam Claflin, is angry about how his life has turned out and takes it out on those around him, but he slowly begins to be charmed by Lou's infectious personality and optimism. Lou strives to change Will's outlook on life as he has made preparations to end his life. Will strives to help Lou live boldly and not settle for the ordinary. Featuring a stellar English cast, *Me Before You* is a tender film dealing with complex issues and emotions.



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Programming Suggestions

This discussion guide is designed to facilitate educational programs after viewing the film *Me Before You*. Its purpose is to generate discussion based on social issues found within the movie and for program participants to reflect on themes that may be pertinent to them. Therefore, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to questions in this guide.

The discussion facilitator may choose to utilize one of the following activities as a means of developing discussion:

- Create a bulletin board focusing on physical disabilities. Include information on spinal cord injuries as well as images, articles and statistics related to this topic.
- Invite a member of your campus disability services office discuss accommodations on campus for students with disabilities.
- Invite a member of your counseling department discuss the issue of suicide on college campuses. Include in the discussion the ethics of assisted suicide.
- Post a timeline of the history of assisted suicide including important dates and events related to this topic. Encourage residents to share their thoughts and to research the topic further.

An important consideration in choosing any facilitation option is that all students have an opportunity to participate. Be aware that many of the topics addressed in the film are not often talked about in public settings. Students who attend the program may have varying degrees of comfort level with the discussion.

ISSUES

DISABILITY
FAMILY
RELATIONSHIPS
SUICIDE

Discussion Questions:

- How does Lou Clark change over the course of the film? Why do you think she changed?
- How did Lou impact Will Traynor and his outlook on life?
- How does Will change over the course of the film?
- Discuss how Lou and Will's relationship evolved over time. Can you think of a situation where a relationship you had changed so dramatically? Discuss.
- As the film begins, Lou loses her job. Her father is also unemployed. How does unemployment impact family expectations, obligations and relationships?
- Can you think of a situation where someone you know has had to postpone plans due to family obligations? Discuss.
- Will Traynor lived a life of privilege and excitement prior to his accident. How did he change after the accident? Do you think his response was normal? Why or why not?
- How do you think the story would have changed if Will had not been born into a wealthy family? Does money play any part in how Will was able to react to his disability?
- Initially Will was hostile towards Lou. When did his attitude towards her change? Why do you think it changed?
- Will's former girlfriend and best friend visit Will and share that they are now in a relationship. How did Will respond? Do you think his response was appropriate or justified? How would you respond in this situation?
- As she leaves, Will's former girlfriend says that someone can't be helped until they are willing to accept help. Discuss this idea. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Discuss Will's doctor, Nathan, and how he supports Will. How does he support Lou?
- Discuss Lou's relationship with her boyfriend Patrick. Do you think that Lou loves Patrick? What about Patrick loving Lou? Why or why not?
- How does Patrick react to Lou's relationship with Will? Do you think Patrick took his relationship with Lou for granted?
- Can you think of a situation where you or someone you know took a relationship for granted? Discuss what happened.
- How does Lou's family support her? Discuss her relationship with her sister and her parents.
- Discuss a special relationship you have with a member of your family.
- Lou discovers that Will has made arrangements to end his life via assisted suicide. Discuss how Lou attempts to show Will how much he has to live for.
- Discuss your opinion of assisted suicide. Do you think there are situations where assisted suicide should be allowed? If so, under what conditions?
- Do you think Will's parents made the right decision by letting their son choose to end his life? Why or why not?
- Do you think that Will made the right choice to end his life? Why or why not?
- Lou set out to provide Will with experiences to show him how wonderful his life could be. Do you think there was a chance for Lou to change Will's mind?
- Can anyone really change someone's mind once it is made up? Discuss.
- At Lou's birthday party, Will surprises Lou with bumblebee leggings. Can you think of a gift that you have received that has special meaning? Discuss.
- As Lou continues to create opportunities for Will, we begin to see Will pushing Lou to strive for more, experience more, be more. How did Will help Lou begin to realize her abilities, her strengths and her courage?
- Lou, Will and Nathan go to a resort together. It appears that Lou and Will are a happy couple, but Will shares with Lou he plans on going through with the assisted suicide. Discuss Lou's reaction to this.
- Will's rationale is he can't be the person he was and he can't give Lou the things she deserves. Can you understand his feelings?
- Lou decides to join Will and his family as he completes the assisted suicide procedure. How would you have handled this situation?
- Will tells Lou to "Live boldly. Push yourself. Don't settle." How does she embrace this challenge?
- How will you live boldly, how will you push yourself and how will you not settle?

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