

We were supposed to begin our discussion of Pipher's book, Women Rowing North – Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing as We Age, in April but postponed this topic as we tried to adjust to the pandemic and stay-at-home orders. Many of us will have essentially stayed home for 6 months when we have our first Zoom meeting (the new normal) to begin talking about this book in September.

The following questions are merely suggestions for things that members of each group might want to discuss. Another option would be to talk about the things that particularly resonated with each member of the group from each chapter.

In addition, each chapter starts with a small collection of quotes. Which, if any, provoked strong emotions of agreement or disagreement for you and why?

Questions for Meeting #1 (September 10, 17, 21)

Chapter 1: A New Stretch of the River

In what ways does the pandemic represent a new lifetime within our lifetime?

Not only can we not go out to buy a pound of purpose but we now have to think about the risks associated with going out to buy a pound of anything. Have you found a sense of purpose that works for you during the pandemic? In what ways, if any, is it different from what you had in mind or were doing before March?

In what ways have you adapted (or not adapted) to our new circumstances?

How are you doing in terms of resilience and acceptance now as compared to where you were in March and April?

Chapter 2: The Lay of the Land

Do you have negative or positive images of women (in general) who are 10 years older than you are?

Are you aware of ageism in yourself?

Do you feel as though you are growing old? If so, in what ways?

What can we do during the pandemic to "claim our power and secure respect for older women"?

In what ways have you advocated for women?

Questions for Meeting #2 (September 24, October 1 and 5)

Chapter 3: The Worn Body

How do you feel about the changes that have occurred in your body as you have aged?

How do you think that living through this pandemic compares to things your parents experienced in their lifetimes?

As you have aged, do you feel that you have gained a deeper understanding of your parents, grandparents, or other older people who influenced your life?

Do you talk about health with others? In what way?

What would your own healing package include?

Have you had dark times in which you turned towards “singing” to get through? If so, what form did your “singing” take? Has the pandemic been one of those dark times for you?

How do you balance doing things that are good for you and doing things that are important to you?

Have you had to learn how to accept help gracefully without accepting any more than is necessary?

Do you try to build your future one good day at a time?

Do you believe that as our bodies show wear with age that we “can learn to make everything workable”?

Chapter 4: Intensity and Poignancy

Are you surprised to be the age that you are? What age does your mind tell you that you are if it is different from your biological age?

If we have learned one thing from the pandemic, it is that our routines won't go on forever. Has this changed the way you think about the rest of your life?

How did the story about Frank's last visit with Mary and Jim in Nebraska affect you?

Have you found that you experience less anger and anxiety and have better coping skills as you have aged?

Questions for Meeting #3 (October 8, 15, 19)

Chapter 5: Caregiving

How have caregiving experiences affected your life? Do you feel that you were raised to be self-sacrificing?

How do you define happiness? How has the pandemic affected your sense of happiness?

What do you do that gives meaning to your life and how does that connect to your sense of happiness?

How do you take care of yourself when you have emotions that bother you?

Are you finding moments to dance? In what way?

Chapter 6: Swept Away

What do you think/how do you feel about death?

Do those who will be making decisions when you are dying know what you want? Do you know what they want if the situation is reversed?

Have you tried using the go wish cards (<http://www.gowish.org/gowish/gowish.html>)?

Hospice teaches that there are five essential conversations: "Please forgive me. I forgive you. I love you. Thank you. Goodbye." Have you had these essential conversations with someone who was in the process of dying?

Have you read *Being Mortal*? If so, did you think about the kind of death you envision for yourself?

Have you experienced profound grief? Did you have role models for healing?

During the pandemic, we have all grieved for things that we have lost by having to stay at home. Did this chapter help you think about your pandemic losses from a different perspective?

Chapter 7: Loneliness and Solitude

Pipher talks about spending less time with others as we age, which is even more the case during the pandemic. How are you spending your alone time?

How have other people's decisions affected your life in terms of loneliness?

How are you staying connected with others?

Rare Women was started to build a community of friends. Has that happened for you? Do you have other groups that fulfill the same purpose?

What things do you enjoy doing alone?