

Emergence: Labeled Autistic by Temple Grandin
IDASL Book Report Questions

Complete both sections.

Section One

Discuss a minimum of **3** of these questions.

1. People usually say that autistic children cannot be helped to learn and modify behavior. How does Temple Grandin refute that assertion?
 2. Various people looked past Temple's disabilities and assisted her. Give examples of the people in her life that helped her find ways to succeed.
 3. What was the reaction of some of the professionals to Temple's "Squeeze Machine"?
 4. Discuss some of Temple's strategies to cope with sensory problems and anxiety.
 5. Discuss how Temple's mother is not valued as an expert on her daughter. Discuss how her mother decides to follow her own knowledge and instinct about Temple, leading to better care and education.
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Section Two

Discuss a minimum of **one** of these questions.

1. In the foreword, it is stated that Temple Grandin is a "recovered autistic individual." What do you think about this description? This quotation from her website, www.templegrandin.com, reads: "Dr. Grandin has become a prominent author and speaker on the subject of autism because "I have read enough to know that there are still many parents, and yes, professionals too, who believe that 'once autistic, always autistic.' This dictum has meant sad and sorry lives for many children diagnosed, as I was in early life, as autistic. To these people, it is incomprehensible that the characteristics of autism can be modified and controlled. However, I feel strongly that I am living proof that they can" (from *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*)." Is the term "recovery" the same as "modified and controlled?" (This notion intrigues me—I think Temple still grapples with autism. Just because someone wears eyeglasses to see better doesn't mean he/she no longer has myopia.)
2. As a professional in your field, how does being able to "think outside the box" help those individuals with disabilities and their families you will serve?
3. Temple's family evidently has major resources to pay for private schooling and therapists. Discuss the possibilities for disadvantaged children who have been diagnosed with autism to receive the supports and services they need—i.e. agencies funded by state, community services, etc.

Getting Life: by Julie Shaw Cole
IDASL Book Report Questions

Complete both sections.

Section One

Discuss a minimum of **3** of these questions.

1. Identify and share examples from the book where Emily experiences the philosophy of independent living?
2. Identify and share Emily's various living arrangements? How does this change throughout the book? Using examples from the book, discuss how living in a community setting with the appropriate supports and services enhanced Emily's quality of life as opposed to living in a nursing home.
3. Identify and share modes of transportation Emily uses? How does this change throughout the book? How much control or choice in transportation options does Emily have?
4. Share examples of social and recreational activities Emily experiences? How do these change throughout the book?
5. Share some of the barriers Emily faced that limited her choices? Share an example of a barrier that could be easily addressed and eliminated? How could the barrier be eliminated? Why do you think so many were resistance to Emily moving out? Discuss the various responses from the characters in the book, i.e. the director, Emily's aides, including her friend, George, a fellow resident of the nursing home.
6. Identify examples where Emily uses self-determination skills she has developed that allows her to pursue something she wants?

Section Two

Discuss a minimum of **one** of these questions.

1. Though *Getting Life* is a work of fiction, Julie Shaw Cole based many of Emily's experiences on real circumstances she had encountered while working as an Independent Living coordinator. What were some of your reactions to some of Emily's experiences in the nursing home? Did they challenge some of your beliefs about what nursing homes represent?
2. Some of Emily's experiences are abusive, and some fall into the category of neglect. Why do you think Emily and others with disabilities have a higher risk for being victims? Why do you think that people in society don't want to believe people of disabilities are victims?
3. Though many of you won't become an Independent Living coordinator like Sarah Cohen who helped Emily move out of the nursing home into a community setting, how can understanding the Independent Living Philosophy how you better serve individuals with disabilities and their families in your chosen profession?

Strong at the Broken Places: Voices of Illness, a Chorus of Hope by Richard M. Cohen
IDASL Book Report Questions

Complete both sections.

Section One

Discuss a minimum of **two** of these questions.

1. Having a chronic illness/disability doesn't erase individual choice or personality. Discuss why you think societal attitudes about chronic illness/disability are painted so broadly—everyone who has mental illness is like _____ (fill in the blank). Using examples from the book, discuss how having a chronic illness/disability does not totally define that person.
 2. Using examples from the book, discuss some of the differences that someone with a very visual disability/chronic illness from someone who has an “invisible” disability/chronic illness.
 3. Using examples from the book, discuss the differences and similarities between someone who has had a chronic illness/disability from an early age from those who are diagnosed when they are adults?
 4. How do different support systems work for the people in the book, i.e. family members, doctors, friends, community agencies.
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Section Two

Discuss a minimum of **two** of these questions.

1. Richard M. Cohen entitles his book *Strong at the Broken Places: Voices of Illness, a Chorus of Hope*. He chooses the word “illness” rather than the word “disability.” Why do you think he chooses this word? Are there differences from someone who has a chronic illness from someone with a disability? How does chronic illness and disability relate?
2. Richard M. Cohen has a chronic illness, multiple sclerosis (MS). Do you think this book would be different if the author didn't have MS? Did you find the author always agreeing with the five people he wrote about in the book?
3. As a future professional, how will you help those you serve find their “voice?”
4. Share your thoughts and feelings you had as you read the book.
5. Do you think there is something “isolating” about illness? In your future profession, in what ways will you “connect” to individuals with disabilities and their families?

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman
IDASL Book Report Questions

Complete both sections.

Section One

Discuss a minimum of **3** of these questions.

1. Anne Fadiman chooses to subtitle this book “A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures.” Do you agree with this subtitle? Lia Lee’s epilepsy was a biological fact. Why do you think this fact led to a “collision of two cultures” when it was diagnosed?
 2. Using examples from the book, discuss how the concept of disability is culturally defined.
 3. Describe how in the book having an openness to others’ perceptions helps foster “cultural competency.”
 4. Drs. Neil Ernst and Peggy Philip are consummate doctors. They believe in giving the best, and sometimes most complicated, care possible. Discuss how Lia's drug regimen creates confusion and leads to Lia’s parents believing that the drugs were not healing their daughter’s “soul”.
 5. Why do you think the doctors only saw the parents’ failure to follow the drug regimen as “noncompliance,” resulting in Lia being placed in foster care? Do you view Foua Yang and Nao Kao Lee as abusive or neglectful parents?
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Section Two

Discuss a minimum of **one** of these questions.

1. Some disability scholars believe there is a “disability culture.” In your opinion, can the concept of cultural competency be applied to someone with a disability? As a future professional, how can you value the viewpoints of someone with a disability or his/her family members?
2. Why do you think disability is not exclusively tied to a physical condition?
3. Anne Fadiman is the narrator of the book, piecing the story together after Lia has the “big one,” the seizure that leaves her in a vegetative state. Do you find Fadiman giving an unbiased view, painting neither Western medicine nor Hmong culture as a “hero” or a “villain?”