

# BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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*For*  
***AFTER THE WIND: Tragedy on Everest, One Survivor's Story***  
***by Lou Kasischke***

**Awards & Reviews for AFTER THE WIND**

**GOLD MEDAL:** Benjamin Franklin Book Award: Nonfiction

**WINNER:** National Indie Excellence Book Award: Adventure/Memoir

**BRONZE MEDAL:** Foreword Reviews' Book of the Year Award

**WINNER:** Shelf Unbound Best Independently Published Book

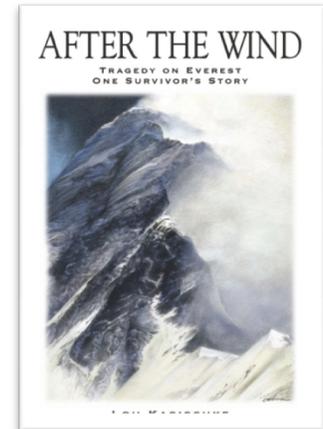
**“Kasischke's miraculous account of survival is paired with the love story of his connection with his wife Sandy. Intense and profound.” – *Midwest Book Review***

“Eye-opening . . . with evocative illustrations.” – *Publishers Weekly*

“A thoughtful, well-written love story . . .” – *BlueInk Reviews* (starred)

“Vivid and intimate . . . an unforgettable survival story.” – *Kirkus* (starred)

**“Kasischke's perspective of what happened . . . may shock those who have relied on *Into Thin Air* as the most accurate account.” – *New York Book Festival Award***



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1. What do you think draws people to such extreme high risk challenges as climbing Mount Everest?
2. Can you see from the story what individual qualities or attributes enable them to endure extreme suffering and hardship to achieve their goals?
3. Because of the high risks, what responsibility do they have to the other team members? How about to their families back home?
4. Why do you think Rob Hall, as team leader, continued to climb to the top after it was too late and past the safety turnaround time? Why did some of the team climbers follow? Why did some not follow?
5. Do you think embedding in the team a writer for publicity and business promotion added to the risks and influenced leadership decision-making, especially on summit day?
6. What do you think the roles of both the leaders and the climbers are on these expeditions? Should both be held responsible for the outcome? How does ego, peer pressure, and ambition come into play here? How about the quest for publicity? Should the leadership be mixing together business and climbing safety decisions?
7. It came out early that the assistant leadership team was inexperienced for an Everest climb. Would a stronger leadership team have resulted in a different outcome?
8. What if, after six weeks of climbing you were close to the top (minutes away), but it's too late by all measures to continue. What would you do? Is turning back defeat or good climbing?

***continued . . .***

9. It's easy to understand what prepares you to have the physical strength needed to face the challenges of climbing a mountain of rock, snow, and ice. But what prepares you to have the inner strength needed to face conflicting pressures within yourself to make a hard choice? Where can you go for the needed inner strength?
10. Do you find it ironic that a majority of the climbers who died were the most experienced?
11. Why do you think Lou included the episode about Bruce Herrod on the evening of May 9? What does it contribute to the story?
12. Why do you think the aftermath reports clung to the false idea that a storm was the cause of the tragedy? Was it simply that a storm makes for more dramatic storytelling? Or was it for some other reason, such as distraction from human error as the cause?
13. Do you see the story as having any meaning for non-climbers in facing their everyday life challenges, especially making hard choices? What lessons from the story would parents likely pass on to their children? Would how to find the strength to say no be one of them?
14. Do you see anything from Lou's experience that's inspirational?
15. Do you think it's ironic that, at the pivotal life and death moment, thinking about others saved Lou's life?
16. Lou dedicates his book, "To Sandy, A Story I Can Tell." Can you see from the events the idea of "living a story you can tell" as having meaning and guidance in everyday life?
17. Lou writes about the sources of inner strength to make hard choices, and that for him what mattered the most was the power of a personal relationship — the influence of his wife Sandy's love and his promise to only live a story he could tell. Discuss the other sources of inner strength that Lou writes about.
18. Lou called it the still, small voice of the heart. But how would you explain the drama ("uncommon moments," according to Lou) of the beating heart and sheer silence as Lou made his decision to turn back?
19. This is a very personal story to Lou. How did you feel about Lou and his wife Sandy at the start of the book? Did your feeling change as you read? How did Lou's views of himself change through the pages? How did his relationship with Sandy change by the end of the story?
20. In the book, Lou is also asking questions. See pages 234 and 235. What do you think about these questions?

***AFTER THE WIND: Tragedy on Everest, One Survivor's Story***

**By Lou Kasischke (Published by Good Hart Books)**

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