

Need a little help discussing AN ARROW THROUGH THE HEART? Or your personal experience with traumatic change? Here are a few questions and topics you can print out and use as a guide in your book club or classroom, with family and friends—or even in a little private chat with yourself.

Have more discussion ideas?

Please do send them to me, using the contact form on the BUY CONTACT page of my website, www.deborahdawheffernan.com. Thank you!

1. What is a survivor?
2. When did Deborah's way of coping with her sudden, massive heart attack (catastrophic change) first become apparent to you? Describe and discuss her approach. How is it similar to or different from the way(s) you have handled catastrophic change in your life?
3. Discuss the immediate impact of Deborah's heart attack on her husband, siblings, step-children, father, and friends.
4. How have you reacted to the illness of someone close to you? How have others you've observed? What is it like not being able to "fix" the problem for a loved one?
5. A bookstore owner described ARROW as "a sensible woman's guide to complementary medicine." What complementary therapies did Deborah try or incorporate? How did her medical team respond? When and why did her doctors approve or disapprove of complementary therapies? What has been your experience in combining complementary and allopathic (modern/conventional) medicine?
6. Characterize Deborah's interactions and relationship with her medical team. How is it similar to or different from your experience?
7. What can medical practitioners learn from this case? What can patients learn?
8. Identify and list the practical tips that Deborah sprinkles throughout the book about preparing for and managing hospitalization and convalescence. For patients? For care givers? How do these tips apply to other situations involving catastrophic change?
9. Describe Deborah's recovery path and compare/contrast it with other books you have read about medical recoveries.
10. Have you played any of the roles of the people in ARROW? How did the experience affect or change you?

11. Why do you think that we seem to be hearing, only recently, about women and heart disease even though cardiovascular disease has been women's #1 killer for decades?
12. Are you a SCAD survivor or do you know someone who is? How is recovering from a spontaneous coronary artery dissection different from recovering from other heart attacks? What does the SCAD survivor cope with afterwards that may be different from other heart attack survivors? How has your SCAD experience affected your total life—body, mind, and spirit?
13. How does Deborah handle the unknown? How do you?
14. Why do you think Deborah chose to structure her book chronologically, spanning several seasons on a lake in western Maine?
15. What role does nature play in your life? How do you feel when you are in nature? How, specifically, can you increase the presence of nature in your daily life?
16. Discuss anger and depression as reactions to catastrophic change. How did Deborah address her anger and depression? How do you?
17. Not all partners react supportively, as Jack did, to a spouse's illness. Discuss.
18. What is it like to take care of a loved one who is seriously ill—and to do this over a long period of time? How does it challenge you? What have you learned? Do you have advice for patients and caregivers?
19. Discuss Deborah's spirituality.
20. What is the impact of love on health in *ARROW* and in your own experience?
21. What impact has this book had on your thinking about your own life? How has this book changed or moved you? Give specific examples.