

CONTENT WARNING

This guide discusses themes of parentification, family burden, and the emotional difficulty of leaving.



ABOUT THE FILM

CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) follows Ruby Rossi, the only hearing member of a deaf family. She has been her family's interpreter and bridge to the hearing world since childhood. When her passion for music collides with her family responsibilities, Ruby must decide how to honor both.



THEMES TO NOTICE



Parentification
When a child takes on adult responsibilities.



Loyalty and love
The powerful pull to stay for those we love.



Individuation
The difficult work of becoming your own person.



Family growth
Learning to function and thrive without relying on one person.



PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES



What might it feel like to be Ruby—to love your family deeply and still long for something of your own?



What might it feel like for her parents knowing they need her, but also wanting her to be happy?



What dreams or passions in your life deserve more of your time and energy?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CODA

Parentification and the Difficult Work of Leaving

Loving your family.
Choosing your own life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

What are some ways Ruby has taken on adult responsibilities in her family?

2

How does parentification affect Ruby's childhood and choices?

3

What pulls Ruby toward staying? What pulls her toward leaving?

4

What would it feel like to be the person your family relies on the most? What would it feel like to leave?

5

How does Ruby's family grow over the course of the film?

6

What does the film teach about love, loyalty, and independence?

GO DEEPER



How can families balance caring for each other with supporting each member's individuation?



When is helping your family an act of love, and when does it become a burden you were too young to carry?



What fears can show up when we think about pursuing our own dreams?



How can families build each other up so no one has to carry everything alone?

ACTIVITY: TWO CHAIRS

Place two empty chairs facing each other. One chair represents "My Family's Needs." The other represents "My Own Dreams."



Sit in the chair of your family's needs. What do they ask of you?



Move to the chair of your own dreams. What are you longing for?



Find a middle space. What would balance look like for you?

TAKEAWAYS

- Love your family—and also yourself.
- You can honor your loved ones and still pursue your own path.
- It's okay to grow in different directions.
- Families become stronger when everyone is allowed to grow.
- You don't have to carry everything.
- Your dreams matter.



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Understanding
minds.



Strengthening
connections.