

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

Survivor Guilt, Grief, and the Work of Therapy

Use this guide to reflect on grief, emotional distance, survivor guilt, and the healing power of being seen.

DISCUSSION GUIDE



1. BEFORE WATCHING

- What happens to a family when grief is present but rarely spoken aloud?
- Have you ever felt responsible for something you could not fully control?
- What helps a person feel emotionally safe enough to tell the truth about how they are doing?



2. WHILE WATCHING

- How does Conrad carry guilt after the loss, and how does that guilt shape the way he sees himself?
- What do you notice about Beth's emotional distance, and how does it affect the family?
- How does Calvin try to hold everyone together, and what does it cost him?



3. AFTER WATCHING

- Why is therapy so important for Conrad's recovery?
- What changes once pain is spoken instead of managed in silence?
- In what ways can grief freeze a family, and what begins to thaw it?



4. FAMILY REFLECTION

- When someone is struggling, what helps them feel seen rather than judged?
- What is the difference between appearing fine and actually healing?
- Try this: name one feeling you tend to hide, and one safe person you could share it with.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

Sometimes the deepest wounds in a family are not caused only by what happened, but by what could not be spoken. Healing begins when grief is shared, survivor guilt is understood, and someone feels safe enough to be fully seen.



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Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.