

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE LAST OF US

Grief, Attachment, and the Weight of
Loving Someone Specific

DISCUSSION GUIDE

When you're
lost in the
darkness,
look for
the light.



1. REFLECTION

Look within.
Start the conversation
with yourself.

- What part of the story moved you most—and why?
- What emotions did you feel throughout the series?
- What does this story make you think about in your own life or relationships?



2. CONNECTION

Build understanding
through shared
perspectives.

- How would you describe Joel and Ellie's relationship?
- How does their bond evolve over time?
- What moments stood out as turning points in their connection?
- How do loss and experience shape the way they relate to each other?



3. THEMES & INSIGHTS

Explore the deeper
psychological themes
at play.

- How does the show portray grief that doesn't "get over"?
- In what ways does Joel protect himself from feeling?
- How does Ellie's need for belonging show up?
- What is the difference between protecting someone and controlling their destiny?
- What does the series suggest about love, sacrifice, and moral complexity?



4. TAKEAWAYS

Bring the lessons
from the story
into your world.

- What can we learn about resilience from Joel and Ellie?
- How can we hold space for grief without letting it shut us down?
- What does healthy attachment look like in your life?
- What would it mean to lead with love and integrity when choices are hard?



5. TRY THIS

Practice something
meaningful this
week.

- Write a letter to someone who has impacted your life.
- Have a conversation about grief, fear, or hope with someone you trust.
- Do one small act of kindness for someone, no strings attached.
- Make time for connection—even if it's just showing up.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The story leaves us with
hard questions on purpose.
There's rarely a single right
answer—only the choice
that's right for you.

GROUP GUIDELINES



Listen with
respect.



Share honestly,
but only what
you're comfortable
sharing.



No fixing,
no judging.
Just be present.



What's said
here, stays
here.



Take care of
yourself and
each other.

REMEMBER

Healing happens in
connection. You don't
have to walk your
journey alone.



"You keep finding something to fight for." — The Last of Us.



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
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Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.