

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WHAT ABOUT BOB?

Discussion Guide for Parents & Kids

Frank Oz's What About Bob? is a funny and heartfelt story about a patient whose life improves through connection—while his therapist, who needs to be admired, falls apart.

Use these questions to spark meaningful conversations with the kids in your life.



BEFORE YOU WATCH



Look at the poster or trailer.
What do you think the movie will be about?



What does it mean to be a “good patient” or “good therapist”?



What are some things that help people feel safe and connected?

When is it hard to ask for help?

AFTER YOU WATCH: BIG PICTURE

- 1 What was your favorite part of the movie? Why?
- 2 What is the movie really about beneath the comedy?
- 3 How did Bob change from the beginning to the end?
- 4 How did Dr. Marvin change from the beginning to the end?

★ THEMES TO EXPLORE TOGETHER ★

1 DEPENDENCY & ANXIETY



- ★ What are some fears Bob has?
- ★ How does his need for reassurance show up?
- ★ What might it feel like to be Bob?

2 THE NEED FOR CONNECTION



- ★ How does the Marvin family respond to Bob?
- ★ What helps Bob start to feel better?
- ★ Why do you think belonging is so healing?

3 THE NEED TO BE ADMIRER



- ★ What does Dr. Marvin need from others?
- ★ How does he act when people don't admire him?
- ★ How is his need different from Bob's need?

4 BOUNDARIES MATTER



- ★ Why do boundaries matter in relationships?
- ★ What happens when boundaries are crossed?
- ★ How can good boundaries protect everyone?

5 THE POWER OF ACCEPTANCE



- ★ Why is acceptance so important for Bob?
- ★ How does the family show him acceptance?
- ★ How can we show acceptance to others?

6 THE GREAT INVERSION



- ★ Why does Bob get better while Dr. Marvin falls apart?
- ★ What does this tell us about connection vs. admiration?
- ★ What was the biggest lesson of the movie?

FINAL THOUGHT



If you could give Bob one piece of advice, what would it be?

If you could give Dr. Marvin one piece of advice, what would it be?

Remember:

We all need connection.
We all want to matter.
What helps us most is being known, not just admired.



ACTIVITY IDEA

Create a “This Is Me” collage with things you love, people who support you, and places where you feel safe and accepted.



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.

