

Reading Group Guide: *Love At The Speed Of Email*

Topics and questions for discussion

Home

1. Throughout the book, Lisa ponders the concept of home. What are some of the words and places she associates with home? What conclusions does she eventually come to about home?
2. Lisa and Mike write about “the internal and unwinnable war between the longing for adventure and home.” Do you feel that Adventure and Home necessarily stand in opposition to each other?
3. What do you associate with the word *home*? What are some of your earliest memories of home?

Travel and change

4. Lisa travels a lot. What are some of the gifts this travel gives her? What are some of the costs?
5. How have your own travels helped you see the world differently?
6. Lisa asks herself this question: “At what point does a constant stream of change *blunt* our ability to feel and connect to the present and to ourselves?” What do you think? What are some other things that blunt your ability to feel and connect to the present and yourself?

Alternative lives

7. How did Lisa feel about turning 30? Have you struggled with any of your birthdays? Why?
8. In *Alternate Lives*, Lisa says: “The basic economic principle of opportunity cost holds just as true in relation to the wealth of time as it does for money. By choosing this, I am giving up other lives – different lives that would shape a different me.” Do you daydream about an alternate life for yourself? What do your alternative lives look like?
9. In *Spinsters Abroad*, Lisa says: “I am starting to catch myself wondering ... whether ... I’ll wake up in fifteen years and still believe that it was worth it – this choice that I have made again and again throughout my twenties to pursue adventure and novelty and helping people in faraway lands rather than stability and continuity and helping people in a land I claim as mine.” Are you making a choice like this – a choice you wonder whether you’ll still believe it was worth it in the future?

Love

10. In *The Shadow of the Golden Dome* Lisa writes believing that love was more of a campfire than a lightening bolt. Do you believe in love at first sight?
11. In *Chasing Silver Dollars*, Lisa writes, "A soul mate, I believed, would meet me on a visceral, darker level. He would have an instinctive understanding, borne out of experience, of the elements that made up my own particular potpourri of angst – constant change, the guilt of privilege, too much witnessed suffering, a battle between hope and cynicism, and a search for God that wouldn't let you rest even during times when you weren't at all sure you believed in God. There would be the companionship of keenly felt questions." Do you believe soul mates exist? What makes a soul mate for you?
12. Do you think that Lisa could have handled the situation with Jason and Ryan better? How? What lessons have you learned from your own misjudgments in previous relationships?
13. What are some of the benefits and pitfalls of long distance relationships?
14. In *Shock and Awe In Love*, Lisa asks: "Just how sure did I need to be to make a commitment of this magnitude?" What do you think? How do *you* know when to say yes or no in crucial moments?

Faith, hope and passion

15. In *The Internal and Unwinnable War*, Mike asks Lisa this question: "How have your ideas about faith changed over the past 10ish years? How have your ideas about faith expanded and contracted as you've come face-to-face with tragedies of human existence and as you've encountered people from different cultures and worldviews and faith walks?" How did she answer it? How would you?
16. In *Hope Chases Us*, Lisa and Mike write to each other about hope and passion. What makes you feel hopeful? What about passionate?

A couple of extras

17. What role has reading played in Lisa's life? What role has it played in yours?
18. What do you think about the way that Lisa handled the situation with Travis? Have you ever encountered a situation where you expect mental illness was involved? If so, how did you handle it?
19. Do fairytales exist in "real life"?

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