

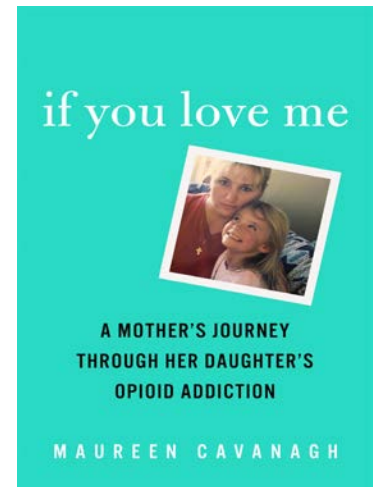
if you love me

A Memoir

By Maureen Cavanagh

ABOUT THIS GUIDE:

If You Love Me tells the story of a mother who suddenly finds herself struggling to save her daughter from the grips of substance abuse disorder. The conflicts and choices made by Maureen as a mother and an advocate raise many interesting themes for discussion. The questions below are designed to enhance your reading group's conversation about *If You Love Me*.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are some things that Maureen and Katie's journey has taught you about the language of substance use disorders and ways to change the stigma around them?
2. What do you think people who haven't dealt with their own, a family member's, or a friend's substance use disorder can learn from *If You Love Me*? How can the book be used as a learning tool and a resource for understanding?
3. How does the title *If You Love Me* relate to Maureen and Katie's relationship? Why do you think Maureen chose this as the title?
4. Did any of the actions taken by Maureen or Mike to get Katie into treatment surprise you? Would you have done the same if you had been in their shoes?
5. Maureen created Magnolia New Beginnings to combat the lack of support from existing organizations and for-profits. What has *If You Love Me* taught you about the state of mental health treatment and the things you can do to help correct some of the issues facing a seemingly broken system?
6. The opioid epidemic is not new, nor is it the first time that addiction to a substance has caused crisis. Why do you think these epidemics occur? Can you think of parallels between the opioid epidemic and other epidemics in recent history?
7. Do you think substance use disorder is a medical problem or a problem of will power? How has this book changed or confirmed your thoughts?
8. After reading Maureen and Katie's story, are you hopeful for the future of substance use disorder treatment and for those you know battling the disease?

9. Family is one of the most important resources you can have when battling a substance use disorder. How do you think the presence of Maureen, Randy, and Mike in Katie's life or the absence of her brother affected her journey?
10. Maureen begins to notice that there is something wrong with Katie after the spoons in her house begin to disappear. What does this tell you about the actions of those with substance use disorders? Why do you think Maureen's tipping point was physical change that had to do with her own surroundings rather than a personal change seen in Katie's mannerisms or behaviors, and how do you think their close relationship may have prevented Maureen from noticing Katie's changes?
11. Social media is used as an outlet for Maureen as she begins her journey to learn all she can about substance use disorders to help her daughter Katie. Why do you think social media, as opposed to in-person meetings, has become such a successful way to connect with others who are experiencing similar trials? Can you think of ways that social media may also be detrimental to healing and moving forward?
12. What are some ways that you, as an individual or with your community, can help address the opioid epidemic? Can you brainstorm projects that would help raise awareness about substance use disorder or pressure your local government to step up treatment initiatives and support programs? How can you reach out to neighbors or loved ones who may be struggling to talk about these issues or get help?