

Apple and her mom emigrated from the Philippines when she was little. She can hardly remember anything about her homeland or the father she lost. All she has of her dad is a cassette tape of the Beatles' album *Abbey Road*. When Apple faces challenges - her friends turning on her, her mom refusing to let her buy a guitar - the songs on that tape are her refuge. She can't wait to become a real musician, to play all those songs and ones that she writes, too.

As you read, you might think and talk about how Apple finds the strength to stand up for herself against Alyssa, a girl who used to be her friend and who is now more interested in being popular than anything else, and her mom, who discourages and prohibits her from pursuing music. What gives Apple her inner determination and perseverance? Where do you get *your* perseverance and will to keep going when a situation is particularly challenging?

On the following pages, you will find some suggestions for how your book club meeting might go. Feel free to use whichever of these questions and tips works for your club, and substitute as you wish. The best book discussions develop organically as people listen closely and respond to each other.

Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes

Before girls and grown-ups arrive, the hosts might consider whether nametags might be helpful. If any of the people in attendance might not know each other, think about what you can do to put people at ease, and set a warm tone. Leave a little time for a "soft start" during which people can arrive, snack, and catch up or meet each other.

Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes

For today's ice-breaker, we're going to try something different: a group power pose!

Some research suggests that standing in a powerful, expansive pose - some people call this a "superhero pose" - can make a person feel more confident and even help them perform better on a task. The idea became famous when Amy

Cuddy, a social psychologist at Harvard, gave a TED talk on the topic, called “Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are.” (Cuddy’s TED talk is about twenty minutes. If the group wants to watch it and discuss together, that could be fun. Otherwise, it could be a fun video for girls and grown-ups to watch on their own later.)

So, let’s try it all together and see how we feel. Everyone stand up and get into a power pose. This is a pose that makes you appear bigger and take up more space. Try spreading your feet a little wider than normal and holding your arms out to your side or fists on your hips. Raise your chin. Puff out your chest. Breathe deeply.

Now, hold this pose for two minutes. Afterward, discuss how it felt. Did it make you feel more confident? What if you were trying out for a sports team, or meeting with a teacher to discuss a grade? Do you think this pose would help you feel more prepared to tackle a challenge or an important conversation?

Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so

You might decide to start the discussion with every member saying her favorite part of the book before reading discussion questions. Some groups might have time to get to all of these questions, but many groups will pick one or two questions and spend the whole meeting discussing those. Feel free to come up with your own discussion questions, or bring up any ideas that came up while you were reading. Again, whenever possible the parents should let girls drive the conversation.

- How does Apple feel at Alyssa’s party when Jake is making fun of her? How does she respond? How do her friends respond?
- Apple says that everyone has at least three Interesting Facts (IFs) about them. What are three or more IFs about you?

- What is Apple’s friendship with Alyssa like? Do you have any experience with a friendship like that?
- Apple feels insecure and embarrassed about friends coming to her house, because her mom is so different from other moms. Why does she invite Evan over for dinner? What’s different about her friendship with Evan?
- How do you think Apple feels when her mom tells her “music is a waste of time?” How would you feel if someone said that to you about your goal?
- What are some of the different times Apple stands up for herself in the story?
- How do you see Apple changing over the course of the book?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

On page 196, Evan explains to Apple that he doesn’t care what others think of them. He says, “I don’t listen to anything [other people] say, because I know that whatever they think about me is wrong... But you think they’re right.”

Ignoring what others think is not an easy thing to do. Many people hesitate to act in a way that others might think is weird or wrong. Yet, if we let others’ ideas rule our actions, we are abandoning our truest selves.

Talk in pairs or as a group about whether you tend to feel worried about what others think of you, or whether you are comfortable acting however you’d like, no matter how others respond. Or, maybe, it’s more complicated than that. Maybe certain people or situations feel safe, like you can be yourself, but in other situations you feel the need to be careful.

Share your experiences. Think about how it has felt to you in the past to be true to yourself. What helped you to do that? In what ways can the members of this group support each other so that everyone has space to be who they are, not who someone else has decided they should be?

Closing, 5 minutes

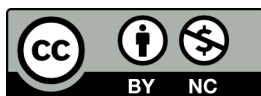
Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your April meeting. Happy reading!

Further Reading

If you really loved this book, and you'd like to read more books like it, here are some suggestions. If there are other books you would like to recommend, we'd love to hear them! Please share them on our **Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook Group** bit.ly/GLbookFB so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

Lalani of the Distant Sea by Erin Entrada Kelly (and other wonderful novels by Ms. Kelly) - This book is inspired by Filipino folklore, and tells the story of Lalani, who embarks on a dangerous quest to fulfill her destiny.

Strange Birds by Celia C. Pérez - This story about the beauty of friendship features four very different girls who join forces to right an injustice. (Also, if you haven't read Ms. Perez's book *The First Rule of Punk*, it's an excellent book about self-expression and cool zines. It was a Girls Leadership Book Club pick two years ago.)



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