

Rebecca Faye Smith Galli

AUTHOR

Rebecca (Becky) Faye Smith Galli was born into a family that valued the power of having a plan. With a pastor father and a stay-at-home mother, her 1960s southern upbringing was bucolic—even enviable. But when her brother, only seventeen, died in a waterskiing accident, the slow unraveling of her perfect family began. Though grief overwhelmed the family, twenty-year-old Galli forged onward with her life plans—marriage, career, and raising a family of her own—one she hoped would be as idyllic as the family she once knew. But life had less than ideal plans in store.



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BOOK CLUB KIT

Discover additional materials from Becky inside this kit to help make your book club a success!

Suggested Discussion Questions

General

1. Why do you think this title was chosen for the book?
2. How does the Prologue's first sentence set up the major themes for the book?
3. Why do you think each chapter begins with a quote? What are your favorites?
4. How has this book affected you? Do you feel changed in anyway? Has it changed your opinion about any of the topics covered? Has it changed the way you think about your own life story?
5. What do you think equipped Becky to handle the series of losses? What resources did she use? What did you want to know more about?

On Living with Uncertainty:

1. What do you think of Trish's "parallel paths" concept for dealing with uncertainty? (p. 83, p. 192, p. 176.) Could this approach be helpful in a situation in your life?
2. "Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional," (p. 177.) Do you agree? How did Becky try to manage suffering?
3. An informational meeting about a new autism therapy (p. 213) prompts Becky's involvement in the three-year effort to found the non-profit, Pathfinders for Autism. At the time of the meeting, she still had great hopes of walking again. Why do you think she chose to get involved despite the weighty family issues and her own uncertain prognosis? Have you witnessed or experienced similar pursuits while waiting for clarity? What were the benefits?
4. In the scene where she sees herself as Self One and Self Two (p. 205,) Becky writes, "But underneath the veneer of adjustments, I was mourning the premature death of a life so full of promise, a loss that made no sense." What do you think is the significance of her conclusions? (p. 206.) Could her approach be helpful with dealing with uncertainty in your life?
5. What did you learn about life from the wheelchair? What surprised you? What did you want to know more about?
6. Has anything changed in the way you think about autism, epilepsy, paralysis, or disabilities in general?

On Grief and Loss:

1. "Grief is as unique as your fingerprint," (p. 25.) "Grief is a strange companion," (p. 58.) How is this demonstrated in Becky's family? Have you experienced something similar?
2. When Becky's father tells his family, "Take care of yourselves" (p. 229,) were you surprised? What were you expecting? Why do you think instructed them this way?
3. Becky describes the hurtful things people have said to her while trying to comfort her (p. 185, p. 238.) Have you had similar experiences? How did you respond? What are better things to say or do?
4. What did you think of Becky's mother's reaction to the phrase, "How are you?" (p. 239.) How does she "rethink possible" with her new response?

On Dealing with Anger:

1. From the Black Chair philosophy (p. 20) to statements like, "Come from the hurt, not the anger" (p. 99,) and "Unresolved anger fixates us in our point of pain" (p. 219,) why do you think this emotion is featured so frequently? What do you think of each statement? Is the Black Chair philosophy practical today?
2. Was Becky's anger with an insensitive social worker (p. 80) justified? What do you think of her father's remarks about how others make us feel? Have you had similar experiences with professionals?

On a Complex Family Life and Love:

1. Why does Becky struggle with her ex-husband remarrying even though she initiated the divorce? (p. 199.) Why does she finally decide to develop the relationship with his new wife? (p. 218.) Who benefits? Have you experienced or observed others who have taken a different approach? What were the consequences?
2. In divorce situations, children are often used to accomplish "unfinished business with former spouses" (p. 200.) Do you agree? Why do you think this happens? Becky writes,
I wondered if instead of teaching our children what is wrong with our ex-spouse, maybe, just maybe, we could try to teach them what is right about him or her. After all, we married that person and loved him or her enough to have a family. From a child's view, we could be the one that's looking stupid. "If he's so bad, then why did you marry him?" they could ask. But they don't (p. 220.)

On a Complex Family Life and Love: (continued)

What do you think of this line of thinking? Why is it hard to see our children's point of view?

3. In the wedding day letter, what is the role of love? (p. 306.) How could that affect our expectations in our relationships? Our ability to accept what we don't understand?

For additional discussion questions for writers and faith-based audiences, visit Becky's website or email her.

Include Becky in Your Book Club Meet Up



Skype with Becky

Invite Becky for a virtual meetup for your book club.

Reach out at rfsgalli@gmail.com



Send Becky Your Questions

Did some unanswered questions come out of your book club meet up?

Send them to Becky and she'll respond!



Invite Becky to Your Book Club

Becky lives in Baltimore, Maryland. If you're local to the area, reach out and invite Becky for a possible in-person gathering.

Rebecca Faye Smith Galli



Rebecca (Becky) Faye Smith Galli, author of *Rethinking Possible: A Memoir of Resilience*, is a weekly columnist who lives in Baltimore, Maryland and writes about love, loss, and healing. A Morehead-Cain Scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Becky was employed by IBM, where she was the recipient of the Golden Circle award for marketing excellence. Surviving significant losses—her seventeen-year-old brother’s death; her son’s degenerative disease and subsequent death; her daughter’s autism; her divorce; and nine days later, her paralysis from transverse myelitis, a rare spinal cord inflammation that began as the flu—that have fostered an unexpected but prolific writing career.

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