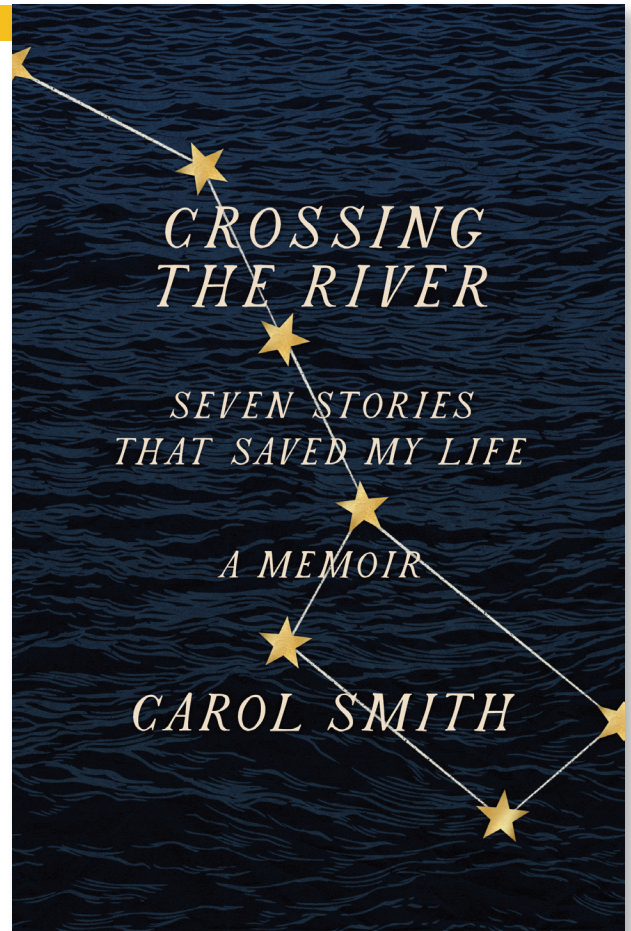


## INTRODUCTION

In *Crossing the River*, Carol Smith recounts how she faced down the crippling loss of her son through reporting on people coping with their own challenges, whether a life-altering accident, injury, or diagnosis. These are stories of survival and transformation, of people confronting devastating situations that changed them unexpectedly. A mixture of memoir and reporting, this book is about posttraumatic resilience in the face of grief and how other people's stories can help us through the most devastating experiences.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What story reported on by the author had the most impact for you and why?
2. Which profile, if any, did you relate to most and why?
3. Could you have covered the stories the author did? How did this book make you feel?
4. How would you describe the author's personal journey throughout the book?
5. "Crossing the river" is a metaphor that illustrates the experience of navigating grief; how would you describe the other side of that "river"?
6. Many people feel a guilt over surviving when a loved one dies. How can we deal with that feeling? Why is it easier for some than others?
7. What do you think friends or family who are supporting a loved one through a loss can learn from this book?
8. When has someone else's story helped you come to terms with something in your own life? Why do you think storytelling helps us in this way?



# ABRAMS PRESS • READERS DISCUSSION GUIDE

## READER PRAISE

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“Smith’s debut is a powerful and unflinching look at loss, grieving, and finding life afterward.”

—KATHLEEN K. (York, ME)

“I absolutely loved this memoir!”

—AMBER H. (Asheville, NC)

“Beautifully written and one that book clubs can use to discuss deeply.”

—PEGGY K. (San Marcos, CA)

“This book is at the same time personal and universal.”

—LAURIE W. (Sunnyvale, CA)

“*Crossing the River* is FULL of lessons on living life to the fullest, coping with everyday pain and disappointment, and being the best mother, father, sister, brother, friend, and neighbor you can be. I found myself marking passages that I felt would make ME more alive, more aware, and more secure in this world today. I have read many books which lend themselves to be gifted to others; this one does as well.”

—DEBRA C. (Vienna, GA)

“*Crossing the River* is a sober, hopeful reminder that we’re not all as separate as we sometimes think.”

—RORY A. (Ventura, CA)

“Wow! What a poignant, painful journey into hope . . . I highly recommend this book.”

—JANINE S. (Wyoming, MI)



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