

## Book Club Questions – The All You Can Dream Buffet

The Foodie Four are women of different ages, sizes, and backgrounds, yet they all come together in friendship and all those differences melt away. Do you think the thing that brings them together keeps them together, or is there much more to their connection than their love of food and sharing it on their blogs?

Each woman has a troubling family background, which is one of the reasons why they find a sense of family with one another. In your opinion, which woman's family situation is the hardest? Why?

The All You Can Dream Buffet is a book about love, friendship, and new beginnings. Out of the four main characters, did one resonate with you the most? What about this character spoke to you?

Early in the book, Ginny has a scene where she sees her lifelong friends having deliberately excluded her from their meeting at the coffee shop. These "friends" turned their back on Ginny the minute they learned about her successful blog through a feature in a national, popular magazine. Many women in our society tout a policy of supporting other women, yet so many times women are the first to tear other women down. Why do you think these "friends" turned on Ginny? What do you think they could have done instead?

All four women achieve a kind of fame and success in the blogging world, but their lives offline are ordinary, complicated and full of real-life problems. In some ways, the women turn to their online communities to find validation, encouragement, and acceptance lacking in their everyday lives and end up forging wonderful and fulfilling connections with the people who follow them. Have you found any online connections that have become important to you? Which groups/people have you contacted/followed? What made you reach out to them and what have you gotten out of these interactions?

Ginny and Ruby find hope and possibility in meeting Jack and Noah. Val finds a similar chance with Paul towards the end of the book. Are these men rebounds for the women, or are they just what the women need to move forward with their new lives? What do these men provide for these women?

Ginny's husband has a car accident and the responsibility she has felt in her old life calls her back home. She asks herself about the bounds of decency and what she owes her husband after all these years, and not just her husband, but her mother and daughter, too. What were your feelings about this part of Ginny's story? What does she owe and to whom?

Ruby has a similar conflict with Liam, the father of her unborn child. What responsibility does she have to him? Should she have told him about the baby?

Lavender played a huge role in the women's lives—not just in bringing them together at her farm, but giving them the encouragement to be brave, supporting their decisions, and uplifting their lives. In many ways, Lavender's strength and independence rubbed off on the other women. Did this influence really come from Lavender? Could it have also come from Ginger, and then paid forward both through Lavender's friendship and Ginger's mystical influence?

Ginny admonished herself many times throughout her driving adventure for not getting out of Kansas sooner and seeing different parts of the country. The majesty and diversity of our country's landscape awes her with its lush differences—the looming mountains, rushing rivers, and rolling oceans are all new and beloved experiences for someone who has been so deeply rooted in the plains. Have you gotten the chance to see different parts of our country? What things have struck you about the differences in our landscape?

Do you follow any blogs? Which ones are your favorites and what about these blogs draws you to them? With the proliferation of other social media sites, are blogs as relevant as they once were?

The All You Can Dream Buffet includes blog posts from each of the foodie bloggers featured in the book. Did you like the introduction of their posts as part of the story? Do you think these posts introduced relevant information about their characters, or do you think Barbara could have shared this information in the telling of the story?