

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR *One Body One Heart*

Be sure to PREVIEW the film before you present it to a group for discussion.

If you have fifteen or more people viewing the film, we suggest that you break the large group into smaller discussion groups of three or five so that everyone is able to share both their ideas and their experiences comfortably, rather than trying to share with the entire group, which some people find daunting. Have a set of questions for each group, and ask that someone moderate each group. If time is short, the moderators could choose a few questions they think are most pertinent for their group. You might want to leave time at the end for the moderators to share with the larger group how the small groups went.

1. What struck you the most about this film? What was helpful or interesting to you about the way Bob “Kaku” Gunn is dealing with his illness?
2. Have you had experience with a life-threatening illness, either yourself or someone close to you? Was your faith or your spiritual practice helpful in coping with it? How so?

Where have you found emotional support? Where has support been lacking? Has the support and/or lack of support surprised you?

3. Bob tells his teacher, Pat “Enkyo” O’Hara, that having a serious illness is “like living in limbo,” because “how do you make plans when you don’t know what tomorrow will bring?” And they agree that really everything is “tentative.” Do you agree?

Pat suggests that not knowing what tomorrow will bring is not only true but it can be a positive experience. What do you think she means when she says, “This is a completely interconnected, inter-relational universe, and where you sit in it is one aspect of all that is going on. And there’s a wonderful place to rest there, within that kind of not knowing.” Have you ever experienced “not knowing” to be a place to rest? Would you like to?

4. Bob tells us that his brother who has cerebral palsy and could never walk was his “first teacher.” Do you know anyone whose acceptance and courage in the face of difficult odds has inspired you in your life?
5. In helping him deal with his illness, Pat emphasizes the importance of “being where we are, exactly where we are, and not denying how we’re feeling.” Later, Bob comments, “there is something healing about being in the ‘now’.” Is this true for you? Do you agree with Pat when she says, “Sickness is the greatest teacher!” What has been your experience with sickness?

6. In describing his meditation practice as a source of courage, Bob says, "When we sit (in meditation), the first thing we're dealing with is what our mind is doing: images, thoughts, body sensations and feelings. And it's in learning to not react to that -- but to be aware of it -- that we learn acceptance of what is, and that's an incredible source of courage, because it means there's nothing we can't face. It's all part of life." Do you have a meditation practice? Contemplative prayer? How have you found it to be helpful?
7. Pat describes being with their friend Sybil when she was dying and how Sybil "was able to simply be with what was there, and what was there was the letting go and flowing into her dying." Have you ever thought of death as letting go and flowing? What would it take for you to think of death this way?

Talking about others she's been with who are dying, Pat says she has learned that "it's not so scary if one is present to that moment to moment -- 'Ah, this is what's happening. This is where I am'. They are able to soothe themselves but also those around them, very powerfully. And that's the self that meets death directly, because that's what is happening now." How is *the self that meets death*, different from *the self that thinks about it when we're healthy* and is fearful?

Have you been with family members and friends who faced their death in ways that you found helpful or inspiring? What was it like for you to be with them?

How would you like your family and friends to support you as you face death? How has your faith or your spiritual practice been helpful in thinking about death in general and your own death in particular?

8. For Bob and Pat "sickness, old age and death" are aspects of a spiritual path. Is that true for you? If not, and if it became true for you, how do you think it would change your life?
9. Is there one thing you hope to take away from the film and from the discussion to continue to think about and/or do?