

Military Spouse Journey ★ Book Club

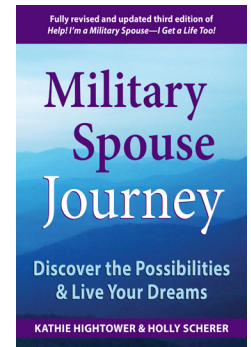
GETTING STARTED GUIDE

For additional support starting your Military Spouse Journey Book Club, please contact Elva Resa Publishing: staff@elvaresa.com, 651-357-8770

SETTING UP YOUR BOOK CLUB

Book clubs and discussion groups are a valuable way to foster friendships, share ideas, and create a sense of community. Whether you are in an existing group or creating a new one, here are a few suggestions to consider.

- **Who do you want in your group?** How many members do you want? How will you invite others to join? You might start by inviting people you already know and ask them to invite someone new. Post a flyer on the community board at your local bookstore, library, or housing office. Bring an invitation to your family readiness group meeting or use social media to promote upcoming events.
- **Where will you meet?** You might meet in members' homes, at a local school, church, bookstore, coffee shop, or restaurant. Choose a relaxing place that will encourage discussion with few distractions.
- **How frequently will you meet?** Select a time period that allows members to read the material and reflect before your next meeting. Once a month or every other month is a common frequency to fit into busy lives.
- **Who will moderate the discussions?** Asking members to volunteer ahead of time helps to include everyone in the group. Having different facilitators or discussion leaders each meeting gives you different perspectives and helps keep the responsibilities manageable for members. Consider asking a gentle time keeper to help your group stick to the time you've allotted for the discussion. Create an environment where everyone has a chance to contribute and feels comfortable sharing insights.
- **Consider offering food and beverages.** Take turns hosting and providing snacks. Make it more interesting by matching the snack to the ideas presented in the book.
- **Choose a discussion format that works best for your group.** Based on how often your group plans to meet and how much reading and the participants can accomplish between meetings, decide ahead of time how many sessions you can devote to this book. A few format options to consider:
 - » Assign one or two chapters or sections for each meeting. Meet as many times as it takes to finish the book.
 - » Discuss the entire book in one sitting. Give yourself at least 3-4 hours. Ask participants to complete some or all of the exercises from each chapter or section before the meeting.
 - » Select chapters or sections that appeal to your group, and meet once for each chapter or section selected.
 - » Create a Dare to Dream Team with your book club members, talk about the book in your first meeting, then use the book as you encourage and support each other to follow your dreams.
- **Get to know each other.** Before the first book discussion, share with each other about your military life, family life, hobbies, and interests.



In the **Military Spouse Journey Book Club** you will:

- » Read an inspiring book that will get you energized and ready to follow your dreams!
- » Explore your passions, strengths, and goals.
- » Discover possibilities for the life you want to live—right here, right now.
- » Create an action plan to move forward, even when you think it's impossible.
- » Learn five keys to happiness you can apply every day, anywhere.
- » Tap into the richness and possibilities of the unique military lifestyle.
- » Build valuable friendships and support systems along the way.
- » Have fun sharing with other military spouses!

Find the book at:
MilitaryFamilyBooks.com

Military Spouse Journey ★ Book Club

JOURNEY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Based on the book *Military Spouse Journey: Discover the Possibilities & Live Your Dreams* by Kathie Hightower and Holly Scherer

OVERVIEW

This discussion guide takes you step by step through the book *Military Spouse Journey: Discover the Possibilities & Live Your Dreams* by Kathie Hightower and Holly Scherer, published by Elva Resa Publishing. These questions are just a guide; we encourage you to explore others based on your group's interests.

Use the helpful tips from *Military Spouse Journey* to live your dreams right now. By talking about each section and sharing your personal experiences, you'll benefit even more from the book's key messages and exercises.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Keys to Happiness—Introduction, Chapters 1-2:

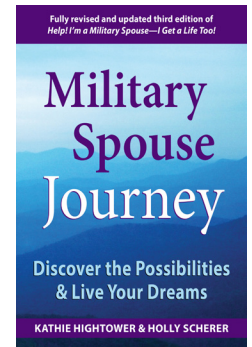
1. Life is a journey. What is one important thing about your journey as a military spouse so far? What is your dream? What does the title of this book mean to you?
2. Do you agree with the five keys to happiness? How have you seen these keys work or not work in your military life? What crutches of military life (deployment, PCS moves, family obligations, etc.) have you used as an excuse to not pursue what you want in life?
3. The authors were inspired by other military spouses who followed their dreams. Share the story of your mentor or role model.

Define Your Journey: Ideals, Strengths—Chapters 3-5:

1. Why is the whole-istic approach important? What are your whole-istic dreams?
2. In addition to family and friends, name one thing you are grateful for.
3. What does “as is” mean to you?
4. From the “My Ideal Life” activity, share some of the ideals you wrote down and dream items you can add to your environment now.
5. Share two of your greatest strengths from the “My Strengths” worksheet.

Define Your Journey: Goals, Action Steps—Chapters 6-7:

1. Which life exploration exercise (Life/Bucket List, Hearts Desire File, Virtual Treasure Map) appeals most to your personality? Did it help you define your journey and set goals?
2. What goals did you write down? What are some potential actions you can take to get started?



“What brings you joy is that you identify what you want in line with your values, and you take action to get it.”
—Chapter 2, p. 9

“To create a life that works for you within this military life, you have to open yourself up to the possibilities... It's important to learn to automatically ask...‘What is possible here?’”
—Chapter 8, p. 73

Discover Possibilities: Dream Teams—Chapters 8-9:

1. Have you been a part of a dream team or similar group? What attributes were most helpful? What might cause a dream team to malfunction? What makes a good dream team member? Why is it important to find team members who are unlike you?

Activity: Dream Big Brainstorm

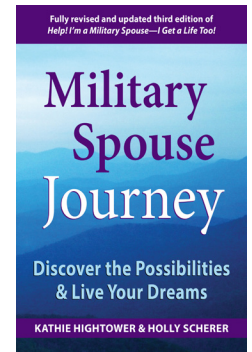
- » Write down your big dreams, crazy or not, on a piece of paper. Put everyone’s dreams in a bowl or basket. Draw one out.
 - » As a group, brainstorming ideas, steps, ways to make the dream come true. Write down all the ideas, crazy or not. Take a photo of the completed page or board, and text or email to each “dreamer.”
 - » Continue brainstorming with each participant as time allows.
2. What are potential second and third right answers for you?

Take Action for Careers and Relationships—Chapters 10-16:

1. What are some simple joys in your life? How do your career, personal, and family goals reflect those joys?
2. What have you discovered about yourself and your dreams while reading this book and going through the exercises? At this point in your life, are you more focused on career options, family life, volunteering, or something else? What actions can help you take action toward your dreams in this area?
3. How do your relationships affect your dreams and how you approach going after your dreams?

Access Faith, Hope, and Gratitude—Chapters 17-23:

1. What role does faith play in your life? How can faith help move you toward your dreams?
2. What are some ways you can use your strengths for the greater good?
3. How has military life uniquely prepared you for your ideal life?
4. What ideas from this book can you apply right away to your life?



“The happiest people are those who have strong relationships and strong positive support structures. That can be your spouse, your family, your friends, a church group ...”
—Chapter 13, p. 143

“You can craft a life that works for you as you move with the military, and it can be a rich, full, satisfying life. Start today!”
—Chapter 23, p. 249
