

Questions for Educators and Counselors

- **Identity** On page 128, Roxy says, “You can believe in whatever version of me that makes you happy.”
 - Was there ever a time in your life where you allowed yourself to be “invisible” to someone important?
 - Who did you feel that way in relation to?
 - Can you imagine what Roxy was feeling when she said this, and what she meant to communicate?
- **The Original Wreck** Tommy’s life is told through identifying the “wrecks” in his life.
 - What was an original wreck in your life?
 - Who were the people that supported you?
 - Did anyone pull you from that wreck? When did you know they were helping you?
- **Resilience** Nan says, “It’s never too late to put your gloves back on,” (Page 164).
 - Was there a time when you were “emotionally bleeding”, but you were able to “put the gloves back on?” Or maybe you didn’t and wish you did?
 - What is the significance of the metaphor of *pruning* in relation to Tommy at the end of the book?
 - Tommy learns how to prune the roses to make them grow. When have you ever done “pruning” in your life?
- **“Negative Coaster”** Larry tells Duke, “You’re on the negative coaster, little man,” (Page 154). Larry talks about making an effort to look for the good when things hard, and that it’s easier to be down on yourself and feel hopeless than it is to look at the good and figure out what is actually working. He calls this “dancing with the devil”.
 - Has there been a point in your life where you danced with the devil?
 - Have you gotten on the negative coaster? How did you get off?
- **Distress and Eustress** *Distress* is stress that negatively affects you and *eustress* is stress that has a positive effect on you. Not all stress is bad for you, and learning the difference is essential. Eustress is what energizes us and motivates us to make a change. It gives us a positive outlook and makes us capable of overcoming obstacles. Distress often feels overwhelming and crummy. The way we *experience* stress depends a lot on our mindset. For example, Tommy experiences distress around relationships and interferes with his ability to initially connect with Duke. Roxy promotes *eustress* by encouraging Tommy to ride the rollercoaster with no hands (Page 39) and go nightriding on bikes (Page 148).
 - Find examples of *distress* and *eustress* in the book for the following characters:
 - Duke
 - Tommy
 - Roxy
 - Charlie
 - Where in your life do you experience *distress* and *eustress*?

What do you think are the benefits in knowing the difference?
Our own experiences of anxiety can impact how we see things, or “mindset”.
Where have you labeled it *distress*, where in hindsight, it could have been labeled
eustress? What got in your way? What might have helped?