



## **BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION**

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- 1) What are the main themes of the book?
- 2) Was the interweaving of Ismail's and Cheryl's individual voices and experiences an effective way of telling the story of their ALS experience? Why or why not?
- 3) Does *One Blink at a Time* show that a person who is completely paralyzed and using a portable ventilator 24-hours-a-day can live a happy and productive life? If so, what are some examples of ways the book illustrates this? What are your own thoughts about using a ventilator? Did the book change or reinforce any of your feelings about this topic?
- 4) Do you identify with Ismail's struggles? Do you relate to his determination and positive attitude? What specifically do you relate to and why?
- 5) Do you identify with Cheryl and her challenges of being a caregiver for her husband? What are some specific things with which you identify? Explain why.
- 6) Both Ismail and Cheryl describe how their love has helped them through hard times and kept them going. Ismail states that he wants to continue to be with Cheryl as long as he can. Do you think that love and a strong marriage can play a part in motivating a person to live longer despite his or her physical condition? Why or why not?
- 7) Ismail describes losing some of his friends in the early years of his journey with ALS. He also talks about his close friend, Phil, who has been like a brother to him for 52 years and has stuck with him throughout his journey. What role can strong friendships play in overcoming challenges and living a happy life?
- 8) Cheryl and Ismail describe some positive experiences they had with excellent doctors and medical professionals, as well as some unfortunate encounters. What do you feel are the most important things a medical professional should understand and do when dealing with someone with a debilitating or fatal disease?
- 9) Technology has played a major role in Ismail and Cheryl's journey. What technologies have played key roles in helping Ismail to communicate, to continue to work, and in extending his life? What new technologies are on the horizon that can be helpful to Ismail and others with similar challenges? What are your feelings about these technologies?
- 10) In the chapter "The Power of Ice Buckets," Ismail says "I love the Ice Bucket Challenge. For the first time, most people now know what ALS is...." Do you agree with Ismail? How much did you know about ALS before the Ice Bucket Challenge? Did the challenge increase your awareness of the disease? Explain.