



SUPPORT GROUP DISCUSSION

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- 1) Have you personally experienced a life-altering challenge? Describe your challenge. How did you deal with it? Do you relate to Ismail and his reactions and emotions as he deals with living with ALS? What specifically do you identify with? How and why?
- 2) Have you been a caregiver for someone who was ill or disabled? In what ways can you relate to Cheryl's experiences as a caregiver? How were your experiences similar to Cheryl's? In what ways were they different or unique? What are some ways you take care of yourself?
- 3) Do you think Ismail's optimism and positive attitude have contributed to his long-term survival and quality of life? In what ways do you feel such an attitude can be important to others with life-altering challenges?
- 4) In the chapter "Everything's Under Control—Not!" Cheryl describes being overwhelmed when Ismail first came home from the hospital on a ventilator. Have you ever felt overwhelmed by a challenging situation? What did you do to regain control?
- 5) Have you had experience hiring and/or training others to care for your loved one? What do you think are the most important things someone can do when hiring, training, and living with caregivers?
- 6) Cheryl and Ismail describe some positive experiences they had with excellent doctors and medical professionals, as well as some unfortunate encounters. What advice would you give to medical professionals who care for people with debilitating or fatal conditions?
- 7) Did you learn any helpful strategies in the chapter "Surviving the Hospital"? How do you plan to incorporate these strategies the next time you or a loved one is hospitalized?
- 8) 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?
- 9) 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? What do you think are the most important things for a person to think about when deciding whether to use a ventilator? Did the book change or reinforce any of your feelings about this topic?
- 10) 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?