

Discussion Guide: Chasing the Show by Pete Hall

Dear “not-so-young” Adult Reader:

Thank you for choosing this book! I’ve written it for Young Adults and their “not-so-young” adults to read and discuss together. In this Discussion Guide, I’ve included two sets of questions:

First, it’s important for you to consider your role in supporting, mentoring, raising, teaching, coaching, motivating, guiding, nurturing (you get the picture) the Young Adult(s) in your life, so there are some prompts just for you.

Second, I’ve added the questions that the Young Adult(s) will encounter in their version of this Discussion Guide. You might consider posing these questions to generate some meaningful and impactful dialogue with the Young Adult(s) in your life.

You needn’t answer and/or ask all the questions, of course. The point of authentic discussions about a book – and about life – is that they’re honest, open, and reflective. In the perfect world, you’d enjoy the story, you’d find a way to discuss it with the important Young Adult(s) in your life, and the subsequent interactions would spur you to happier, more productive, and stronger bonds.

*Note: If you’re reading this on your own, great! Consider these to be some possible self-reflective questions you could ask yourself if you choose. And if you reflect more powerfully through writing, feel free to grab a journal and a pen and get to work! That’s something I did for years and years, and it ended up helping me to become an author.

Enjoy! And if you have feedback on this Discussion Guide, [please let me know!](#)

Pete Hall

Prior to opening the book

For You:

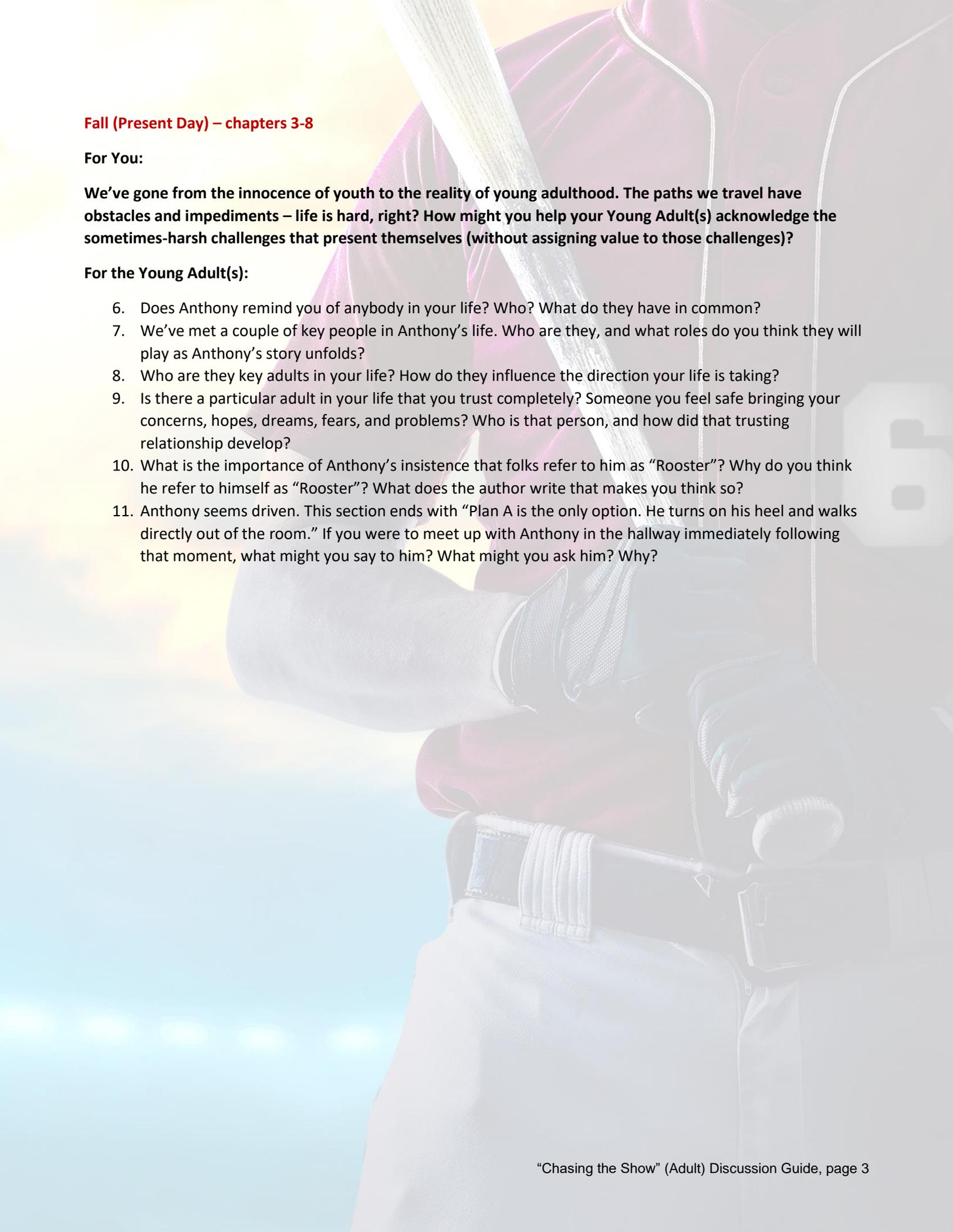
In what role(s) are you entering this book? With whom will you be reading it? Perhaps you're a coach launching a book-study with your team, an educator reading it with a class or group, a parent reading it with your child, or something else entirely? Maybe even a combination of the above. The first step for you will be to establish purpose in reading. Take a few minutes and consider *why* you've selected this book and what outcomes you hope to realize by reading it and discussing it with the Young Adult(s) in your life.

For the Young Adult(s):

1. Why did you pick up this book? What prompted you to begin reading this book in the first place?
2. After reading the back-cover blurb and/or the "Note from the author," how do you think you'll be able to connect with this story? Why do you think that?
3. What do you think this book is about? What predictions might you make about what happens?

Summer (10 Years Ago) – chapters 1-2

4. What emotions do you feel as you read this introductory section? How does the author attempt to elicit those emotions from you?
5. What are some early hypotheses you can make about the dynamics of Anthony's family? How do they interact? What are they like? What can you infer about them based on this introduction?

A person wearing a red jacket and white pants is holding a baseball bat. The background is a bright sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with a large white number '8' visible on the right side.

Fall (Present Day) – chapters 3-8

For You:

We've gone from the innocence of youth to the reality of young adulthood. The paths we travel have obstacles and impediments – life is hard, right? How might you help your Young Adult(s) acknowledge the sometimes-harsh challenges that present themselves (without assigning value to those challenges)?

For the Young Adult(s):

6. Does Anthony remind you of anybody in your life? Who? What do they have in common?
7. We've met a couple of key people in Anthony's life. Who are they, and what roles do you think they will play as Anthony's story unfolds?
8. Who are they key adults in your life? How do they influence the direction your life is taking?
9. Is there a particular adult in your life that you trust completely? Someone you feel safe bringing your concerns, hopes, dreams, fears, and problems? Who is that person, and how did that trusting relationship develop?
10. What is the importance of Anthony's insistence that folks refer to him as "Rooster"? Why do you think he refer to himself as "Rooster"? What does the author write that makes you think so?
11. Anthony seems driven. This section ends with "Plan A is the only option. He turns on his heel and walks directly out of the room." If you were to meet up with Anthony in the hallway immediately following that moment, what might you say to him? What might you ask him? Why?

Winter – chapters 9-16

For You:

Two major events occur in this section. First, Anthony has a rather staggering interaction with his doctor. Second, Anthony's parents have dinner with Jay and Sandy Young, a psychologist-counselor couple. You may want to read these sections in advance – and prepare yourself for any of the myriad ways a Young Adult may react to them. How might your Young Adult(s) interpret these sections? Be careful not to insert your beliefs and opinions too soon, for that may influence how your Young Adult(s) might respond. Instead, give them time and space to process.

For the Young Adult(s):

12. Anthony has begun to spend time with Elena. How would you classify their relationship so far? Why do you think so?
13. What emotions did you observe Anthony experience prior to, during, and after his appointment with Dr. McGregor? What emotions did you have as you read that section?
14. What is the point Dr. McGregor was trying to make? How else might he have conveyed the severity of the course of action Anthony requested?
15. Would you consider the interaction between Dr. McGregor and Anthony to be sexual harassment? Why or why not?
16. Mrs. A reaches out to offer support to Anthony. What are your thoughts about how he responds?
17. Why did Anthony's mom reach out to the school psychologist, Jay Young? What was their goal in arranging this dinner meeting? What was the outcome?
18. What emotions did you experience as you read this section?
19. If you were to summarize this section (or the book up to this point) in one, succinct sentence, what would it be?

Spring – chapters 17-46

For You:

As you read through the various interactions between Anthony and the people in his life (his parents, teacher, coach, best friend, classmates, teammates, etc.), what are your takeaways so far? Are there bits of advice – and/or counter-examples – that you might use in your interactions with your Young Adult(s) right now? What are they? How might they play out?

For the Young Adult(s):

20. When the high school counselor calls Amanda, she requests Anthony's post-graduation plan. What is Anthony's post-graduation plan? If you were to fill out the forms for him, what would you write? If you were to advise Anthony about his future, what would you say? What would you ask him?
21. How does Anthony respond to questions about his future? What do you think this indicates about him?
22. In chapter 22, Anthony and Nick go to the park and just play baseball together. Does this change your impression of Anthony? Why or why not?
23. What adult in Anthony's life makes an impression on you? Why? How is she or he helpful, and how does Anthony respond? Are there things she or he could do differently to have a greater impact on Anthony?
24. Which of the adults in the story thus far remind you of someone in your life? How so?
25. When Coach Shepard scolds Anthony following his game-winning grand slam, was Anthony justified in being frustrated? Why or why not?
26. During the movie scene, what do Anthony and Elena each think is going on, and what does each want to happen? When things go bad, do you find yourself siding with one or the other? Do you think they handle things the right way? Can you put yourself in the other character's shoes? How does each feel about the other as the night ends?
27. Do you have a friend like Simon, someone who will spit truth at you when you need it? (See pg. 138 for a reminder.) If so, how does that relationship impact you? If not, how might you imagine responding to someone who gives you raw feedback?
28. What are your impressions of the Johnny and José party debacle? Which part(s) of that saga can you best identify with? Thinking of the people involved (Anthony, Johnny, José, Coach Shepard), could you justify each person's actions? How might this have impacted the team if any one of the above had handled the situation differently?
29. Jay Young shares a bit about the human brain and how it directs the development of a teenager like Anthony. Can you relate? Have you ever felt like you're ruled by your limbic system? When? How did you get yourself "regulated" after that experience?
30. Anthony and Elena take a slow path to becoming a "couple." What makes them a good pair for each other? What are some of their challenges? If you could pull each of them aside at a point in the novel to have a heart-to-heart, when would it be and what would you say? As the story moves on, how does their relationship evolve and what can be learned from their experience?
31. How does Anthony view being a teammate? What would be good about having Anthony as part of your team or group, and what would be challenging? Is there someone in the book you would choose instead? Why?
32. The Vineyard Mountain High School baseball team experiences quite a bit of success. Anthony's season is tremendous as well. What does this mean for his future? What predictions can you make about where baseball will lead him next?

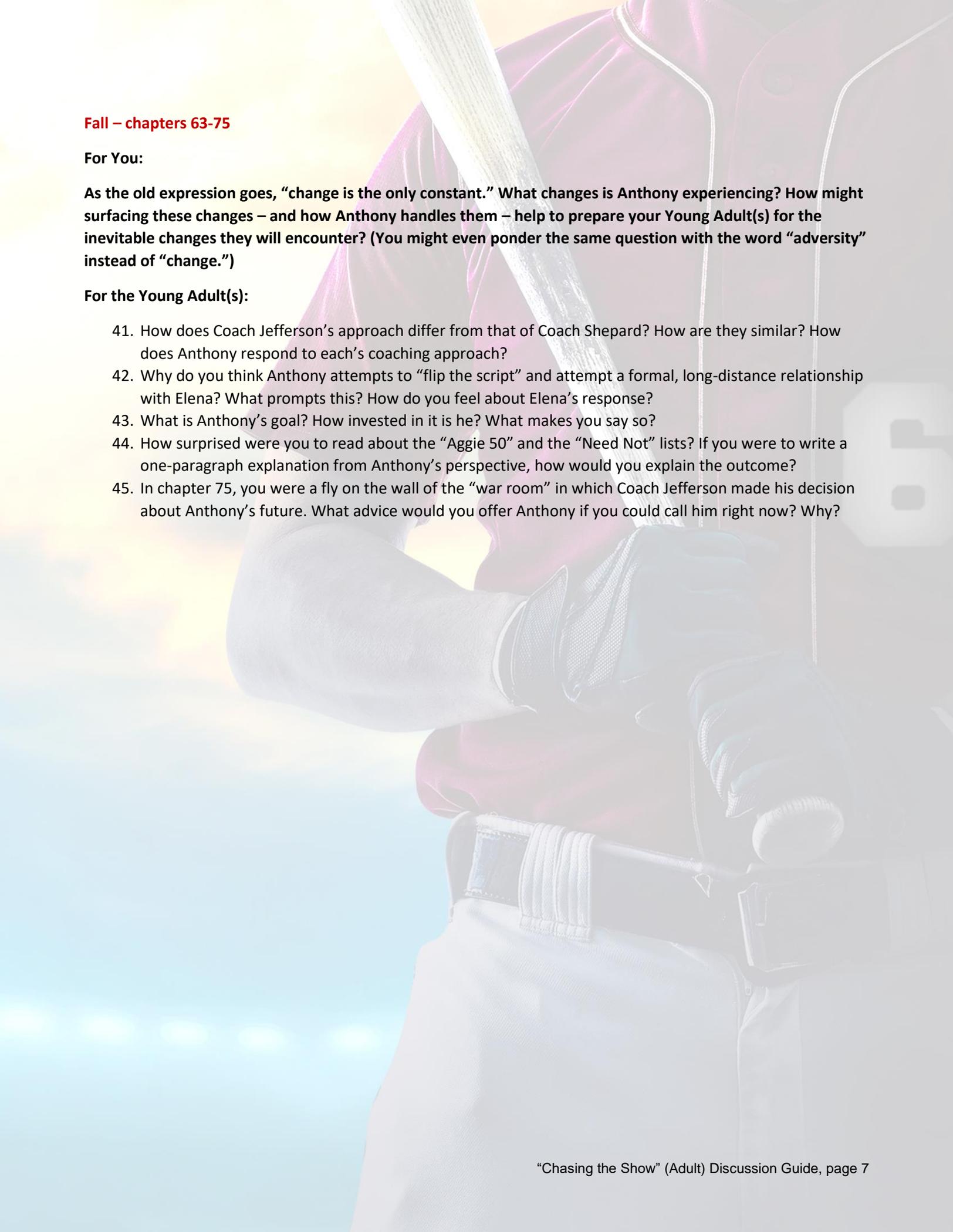
Summer – chapters 47-62

For You:

“Plan B” is an emerging theme. This is an appropriate time to begin discussing your Young Adult(s) future plans, goals, dreams, fears, and ideas. Again, refrain from assigning value; rather, simply listen and ask for more information. Use Anthony’s hyper-focus as a launching-point for these conversations.

For the Young Adult(s):

33. Is Anthony coachable? Why or why not?
34. Having some behind-the-scenes information about how scouts (and detailed metrics) view Anthony is very enlightening. Unfortunately, Anthony isn’t privy to it. If you were able to insert yourself into the story and talk with Anthony right now, what would you tell him? What advice would you offer? What questions would you ask?
35. How engaged have Anthony’s parents been in ushering Anthony through this period of his life? Is this too much? Not enough? Just right? Why do you think so?
36. How would you describe Anthony’s relationships with his family members? Who does he turn to? What do these people offer him in terms of strengths and limitations?
37. How does Anthony balance the other social events of his life with baseball? Where do prom, graduation, the all-night party, and others fit in his worldview?
38. In chapter 55, Anthony seems to take the results of the Major League Baseball draft in stride. Is this how you expected him to respond? Why or why not?
39. Jay and Sandy Young reiterate the importance of a contingency plan (Plan B) to Anthony’s parents. What do they mean? How might Anthony’s parents broach this subject with Anthony in a way that allows him to hear their supportive intentions? What might you say, if you were in Anthony’s parents’ shoes?
40. As the summer ends and Anthony prepares for the next stage of his journey, what changes do you expect for him? What might remain the same? How is he prepared to embrace those changes? How will he handle the things in his life that might remain consistent?



Fall – chapters 63-75

For You:

As the old expression goes, “change is the only constant.” What changes is Anthony experiencing? How might surfacing these changes – and how Anthony handles them – help to prepare your Young Adult(s) for the inevitable changes they will encounter? (You might even ponder the same question with the word “adversity” instead of “change.”)

For the Young Adult(s):

41. How does Coach Jefferson’s approach differ from that of Coach Shepard? How are they similar? How does Anthony respond to each’s coaching approach?
42. Why do you think Anthony attempts to “flip the script” and attempt a formal, long-distance relationship with Elena? What prompts this? How do you feel about Elena’s response?
43. What is Anthony’s goal? How invested in it is he? What makes you say so?
44. How surprised were you to read about the “Aggie 50” and the “Need Not” lists? If you were to write a one-paragraph explanation from Anthony’s perspective, how would you explain the outcome?
45. In chapter 75, you were a fly on the wall of the “war room” in which Coach Jefferson made his decision about Anthony’s future. What advice would you offer Anthony if you could call him right now? Why?

Winter – chapters 76-85

For You:

What advice and guidance would you offer Anthony in this time of his life? What does *he* need from the adults in his life? How does this relate to the needs (now and future) your Young Adult(s) might have? How will you remain focused on your role (as you described it at the beginning of this book-study journey)?

For the Young Adult(s):

46. Anthony's relationship with Nick is unique, and they've been buddies for years. How would you characterize their friendship? What interpersonal dynamics influence their interactions? Do you relate more to one or the other of these two characters in a friendship you currently have? How so?
47. How does Anthony handle his new reality in college?
48. The five stages of grieving are explained in the seminal resource, *On Grief and Grieving*, by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, M.D. and David Kessler. Jay and Sandy Young share them with the Sumners. Do you agree that Anthony is grieving? Why or why not? What might be a helpful way to offer support to Anthony in this moment?
49. Why doesn't Anthony answer when Grampa Sumner calls?
50. Anthony has the opportunity to connect and talk with many of his hometown influences: Coach Shepard, Elena, Mrs. A, his parents...how does he respond to them? What do you think Anthony needs right now?
51. Anthony has the opportunity to connect and talk with many of his hometown influences: Coach Shepard, Elena, Mrs. A, his parents...how do they respond to him? What do you think each of them needs right now?

Spring – chapters 86-91

For You:

What are your takeaways from this story? As a trusted adult, what do you plan to do with the information and insights you've had during your reading and discussions with your Young Adult(s)? How might you guide your Young Adult(s) to consider the takeaways also? It's okay if your takeaways are different – celebrate the dialogue and the connections! Though the book ended, the journey is just beginning!

For the Young Adult(s):

52. The author provides numerous metaphors throughout this book. Pick one and analyze it: What does this represent? Why is it included? How does it impact the story?
 - a. Descriptions of trees and weather
 - b. Bumblebees
 - c. The peculiar knocking sound in Anthony's pickup
 - d. Bryan Pendleton
 - e. The absence of physical descriptions of almost every character
53. As Anthony progresses through his first year of college, how does he change and how does he stay the same? What external and internal forces affect him?
54. Anthony seems to thrive with kids: facilitating the youngsters at Aggie baseball camp, coaching youth basketball, even meeting little Derek at Richey's Market way back in chapter 28. Why do you suppose this is important? What does this tell you about Anthony?
55. Anthony's epiphany occurs in chapter 87, following a brief interaction with Coach Jefferson, followed by a phone call to Mrs. A. How did you respond to that, as a reader?
56. How do you define success? What do you believe are some essential traits someone needs to be successful? What do you believe are some essential steps they can take to be successful?
57. Are there characters in this story that you can relate to more than others? Are there characters that are familiar to you (perhaps because they're like kids or adults you know in your real life)? Who are they? What about them leads to this connection/understanding?
58. Mrs. Andrews and Mr. Sorensen have different ideas about the use of "ma'am" and "sir." What messages do their positions send Anthony? What is your take on this topic?
59. As Mr. Sorensen would ask, "What do you want from life? And what are you prepared to offer life?"
60. Are there questions that remain unanswered as the book ends? What are they?
61. If you could go back in time to any point of the story and give one character one piece of advice, who would you choose and what advice would you share? Why do you say so?
62. What's next for Anthony? If you were to write chapter 92 in this book, what would you include? Why do you think that's what follows?
63. What lessons did Anthony learn from his experiences? How do you know? How will this impact his future?
64. What lessons did Anthony miss during his experience? How do you know? How will this impact his future?