

## **Discussion questions for After Elise:**

\*The prologue takes place five years into the future. What questions do you have after reading the prologue?

\*In chapter one, Teri alludes to the fact that she's restless and feeling out of sorts. How does this feeling influence Teri's reaction to the accident?

\*The reader finds out in chapter eight the legal results of the accident. Why do you think the author structured the story that way? How would the story have been altered if the reader didn't know until the end of the book if Teri was found guilty?

\*Teri is not charged in the criminal case and is able to settle the civil case with their insurance money. Do you think she should have been found guilty? Discuss the ways that Teri suffers because of the "innocent" judgement?

\*As Teri retreats from her family, Carly begins to act out. In what ways does she act out and how much is about the accident? How much is about her specific relationship with her mother? Did Carly's actions influence how you felt about Teri?

\*In what ways is Jimmy impacted by the accident? How did Jimmy make you feel about Teri? About Len?

\*How do you feel about Teri's time in the hotel away from her family?

\*Teri acknowledges that she's depressed but refuses to go on an anti-depressant. Why does she do this? What advice would you give her?

\*Len is used to "fixing" depressed people. How does he try to fix Teri? What gets in the way?

\*The book follows the therapy of one specific patient, Gretchen. Why do you think the author focused in on one patient? What does the reader learn about Dr. Len Berger from this patient's therapy sessions?

\*How do you feel about Selia's offer to Rozlynn? Could the plan have worked out?

\*Teri's new job helps her to begin to heal, however, her family disapproves. What do you think?

\*Selia says everything she does is done out of love. What do you think about the ways in which she shows this love?

\*Teri finally confesses a deeply held secret to the rabbi. Does this change the way you view Teri? In what ways?

\*The story takes place in St. Louis in 2003. In what ways does the timing influence the characters and the story? In what ways does the St. Louis setting factor into the story?

\*In what ways does Teri grow and change? How much of the change is due to the accident?

\*There are three mother-daughter relationships in the book: Selia and Teri, Teri and Carly, Rozlynn and Elise. In what ways is each relationship examples of “complicated love”? In what ways are the three different relationships the same? Different?

\*What surprised you most in the novel?

\*Were there choices the various characters made with which you strongly agree or disagree?