



ACADEMIC DISCUSSION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Louie, Louie, a portrait of a man living with Parkinson's disease, provides an extremely insightful look into the physical and psychosocial challenges of this illness and the human will to survive. The story of Louis Salzman honors both the uniqueness and determination of a man living with Parkinson's disease while he reshapes his life and relationships with his family.

For health care professionals, a dialogue of the movie can evoke an awakening of what is really significant to those living with chronic illnesses and how people live what is important to them. A scholarly dialogue of this film can assist health care professionals; nursing students, medical students, social workers and others to enhance their understanding of our responsibility to preserve the dignity of the person no matter what the diagnosis.

In addition, Louis' story augments our knowledge of the coping skills individuals develop in the face of catastrophic events. Finally, the movie is an obvious

portrayal that individuals do not live infirmity in isolation but share both the opportunities and constraints in their journey with those close to them.

Hopefully, the following suggested discussion questions will serve as a guide to stimulate dialogue regarding the human aspect of living with a chronic illness and related disability.

- Dr. Dolores Huffman

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When asked about what he would say to people just finding out that they have Parkinson, Louis states that he would tell them,

“You got a long road. A hard road. An ugly road. But make the best of it. You need a sense of humor. Have fun.”

- Would you agree with his advice?
- What surprised you when viewing Louis’ experience of living with Parkinson’s disease?
- How would you describe his “long, hard and ugly road”?
- How did he “make the best of it” and “what fun” was evident in his story?

2. What were the concepts associated with chronic illness/ disability/palliative care so apparent in Louis story?

3. Describe Louis’ greatest physical and psychosocial challenges.

- How did he overcome or attempt to overcome these challenges?
- What typical signs and symptoms associated with Parkinson’s disease did Louis exhibit?
- What medication side effect was the family least prepared to encounter?

4. Examine adaptive/coping responses by Louis in his will to survive.

- Provide specific examples to support your answer.
- What did his family have to say about his

adaptive/coping strategies?

5. Depending on your specific discipline, identify priority concerns/issues related to Louis' diagnosis.

- What therapeutic interventions would you suggest to

address these concerns/issues?

- What specific education would you include in Louis plan

of care in promoting his health and the health of his family?

6. Identify a common theme that appeared to assist Louis during this time of his life.

7. Examine the sources of support for Louis that are apparent in the film. Describe a scene in the film that readily exemplifies his support system.

8. Discuss Louis' statement, "A man should be able to do what he wants to do and when he can't function and live a good quality life, then it time to say good bye".

- How would you evaluate Louis' quality of life?
- Discuss how your philosophy of life agrees or differs from Louis.

9. The rabbi introduces us to Louis' life by using the analogy of his always humming a tune as a symphony of his life.

- Create a metaphor (symbol, image) for Louis story.
- Draw /Explain your metaphor.

10. If you were to give Louis' story another title: • What would that be? • What is the rationale for your choice?

11. Bruce (his son) discusses that his father only trusted immediate family; Ann and Cynthia (his daughters) dialogue about his living alone.

- What environmental concerns or issues would you address in working with Louis and his family during his socialization into the community and living alone?
- What recommendations would you make to attend to these concerns or issues?

12. What new opportunities did Louis' journey provide for him that gave meaning and joy to his life?

- For his family?

13. In the movie, there are many pictures of Louis and his family. Discuss his role change as his life progressed.

14. At the National Parkinson's Foundation website, they suggest "maintaining a positive attitude is one of the healthiest things you can do in response to a diagnosis of Parkinson disease".

- In what ways did Louis reflect a positive attitude?

15. Describe Louis' family's response to his health status.

- Discuss the family dynamics when Ann was talking to Cynthia about the responsibilities of care giving and how angry she was with her siblings for depriving her of

experiences with her own children.

- How would you intervene if requested to assist the

Salzman family with the challenges of care giving?

- What strategies could you suggest for children not living in close proximity to a loved one that can ease the strain

of the primary caregiver in providing care?

- Discuss how the events in Louis' life affected his family

and their relationship to each other.

16. At the end of his life, Louis whispers to his family to "let me go".

- His daughter states she is not sure that they did the right thing (not putting their father on life support).
- How would you respond to her statement?

17. What did you learn about yourself from viewing *Louie, Louie*?

- How will you use your personal insight gained from Louis' story in your professional practice?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dolores M. Huffman, R.N., PhD, an Associate Professor of Nursing at Purdue University Calumet in Hammond, Indiana, has been a nurse educator for more than 37 years. In her academic career, she has taught rehabilitation nursing and palliative care.

In addition, she has professional experience as a home health nurse. In that capacity, she has witnessed the challenges associated with living with chronic disease, including persons living with Parkinson's disease.

Dr. Huffman earned her nursing baccalaureate degree from Indiana State University, and her master's degrees from Saint Xavier University, Chicago, IL and Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN. Her nursing doctorate is from Loyola University, Chicago.



About Media Projects

Louie, Louie: A Portrait in Parkinson's won a Gold Remi award at the 39th Annual WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival, one of the most significant independent film festivals in North America.

Filmmaker Cynthia Mondell also received a CINE Golden Eagle award for the film, which is recognized internationally as a symbol of the highest production standard in filmmaking and videography.

This documentary was produced with contributions from the Harold Simmons Foundation, the Michael L. Rosenberg Family Foundation, HRH Foundation and Irving Cable.

Established in 1978, Media Projects, Inc. is dedicated to producing and distributing films addressing topics of social concern. MPI films have won numerous national awards, been selected for prestigious theatrical screenings in the United States and abroad, and have aired

on PBS and national cable networks.

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Louie, Louie: A Portrait in Parkinson's

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