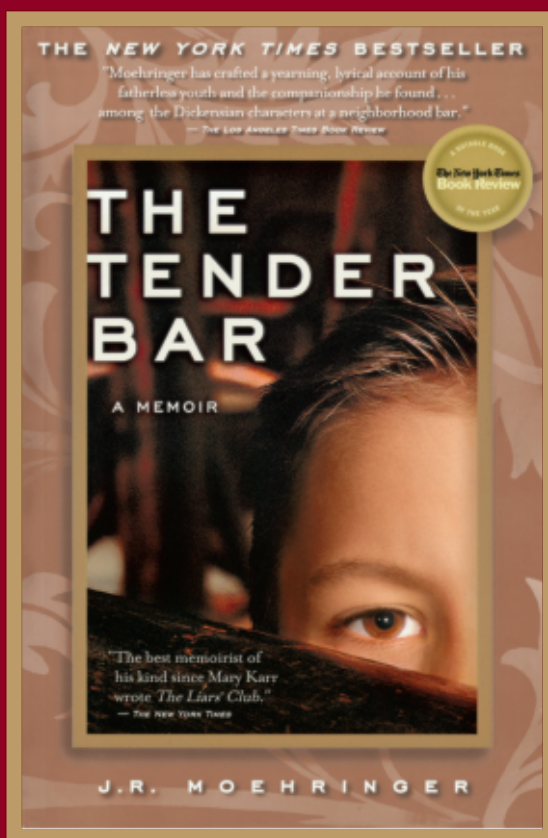


BOSTON COLLEGE

DISCERNMENT
MAKING GOOD DECISIONS BY
EXAMINING AND ATTENDING
TO OUR RELATIONSHIPS



**FIRST YEAR ACADEMIC CONVOCATION 2008
WITH AN ADDRESS BY J.R. MOEHRINGER**

GO SET THE WORLD AFLAME!

THE JESUIT MISSION

Jesuit Catholic Education is a process that has three key parts: being attentive, being reflective, and being loving. It results in the kind of good decision-making that St. Ignatius called “discernment.” The goal of Jesuit education is to produce men and women for whom discernment is a habit.

We can think of discernment as the lifelong project of exploring our experience, giving it meaning, and living in a way that translates this meaning into action. We can also think of this process as something that we focus on with special intensity at particular moments in our lives—during the four years of college or when we have to make important decisions. When we discern, we want to do so freely and with a sense of what God is calling us to do.

Through the practice of discerning, we grow in being able to imagine how we are going to live our lives. We discover vocations. The novelist and theologian Frederick Buechner describes vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” When we arrive at this place and understand the fit between who we are and what the world needs of us, St. Ignatius urges us to be unafraid to live with the consequences of this realization and to respond with generosity and magnanimity, because this is the way that we can love as God loves.

We are not solitary creatures. From the womb, we live in relationships with others, growing up in cultural, social, and political institutions that others have created for us. To be human is to find our place in these relationships and these institutions, to take responsibility for them, to contribute to nurturing and improving them, and to give something back. Jesuit tradition uses the Latin word *magis* or “more” to sum up this ideal, a life lived in response to the question: How can I be more, do more, give more?

Men and women at this institution, of which you, “the class of 2012” are now a part, must begin to examine their lives, as J.R. Moehringer did: “*I was always the beneficiary of her restless courage. I’d been so focused on getting in, I’d failed to appreciate my mother’s genius for getting out...I understood that every virtue I associated with manhood—toughness, persistence, determination, reliability, honesty, integrity, guts—my mother exemplified.*” We cannot pay attention to our experience and reflect on it without realizing how our own lives are connected with the dreams of all those with whom we share the journey of human existence, and therefore with the economic, political, and social realities that support or frustrate their dreams. This is why Jesuit education is so often said to produce *men and women with and for others.*

Excerpts taken from the *Pocket Guide to Jesuit Education.*

A HISTORY

The First Year Academic Convocation began as a call for a new ritual called First Flight; whereby, members of the Boston College community might best welcome each incoming class into the academic conversation already resounding throughout the Heights. Begun as an effort of student and faculty collaboration, the event has grown from a commissioning of first year students to a bracketing procession—seniors now follow the same route on their day of graduation as they too are welcomed into the greater community of graduates, professionals, and alumni.



Convocation and Graduation ceremonies on campus.

It is our hope that in the four years that pass between the Convocation and Graduation, our young men and women will, with a thoughtful, informed, and loving gaze, look more closely at the world around them. Ultimately, we hope that they will have begun to ask, as developmental psychologist Erik Erikson did, “Who am I, and how do I fit into this world?” The best way to get to that point of discernment is to engage in the act of conversation. The First Year Academic Convocation is an event, but it is also a discussion, a literary experience centered on the vital issues put forth in a program facilitated by the Office of First Year Experience called Conversations in the First Year.

All incoming students have been issued a book and the charge to begin engaging in conversations with faculty, staff, and their fellow classmates, that we might struggle together to be active and to be loving as a community of learners. These conversations begin in early fall with the First Year Academic Convocation. In the past, Dr. Paul Farmer, through Tracy Kidder’s work *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, asked students to examine how our commitment to educational excellence can allow us to better form a true vocational life, centered in service by looking beyond the comforts of wealth and basic health care to those who enjoy neither luxury. Democratic Presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama

addressed students in the context of his memoir *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, wondering aloud just how we might close the “empathy gap” present in American society today particularly surrounding questions of race and identity. Republican Presidential candidate Senator John McCain addressed students on the topic of service and leadership in both the public and private sphere. Last year, Jeannette Walls shared her astonishing memoir, *The Glass Castle*, detailing her nomadic childhood. In this remarkable memoir, Jeannette Walls illustrates the power of love and redemption.

As a class, each of you will have the opportunity this year to prepare for this conversation by engaging in *The Tender Bar*. J.R. Moehringer has truly found his way, and through his memoir we can examine ourselves to see if we are heading toward a similar enlightenment. Through this memoir, J.R. Moehringer exemplifies the Jesuit ideals of discernment. Although his path was not easily obtained, his reflective, loving, and honest depiction of his life give us a clear indication of the many obstacles that we will need to confront as we enter into adulthood.

It is our hope that this guide will help to ignite your passion and curiosity. Make no mistake, Boston College expects a great deal from you, its newest students. You will in turn bring your intelligence, energy, imagination, and compassion to create an even greater Boston College and realize the fruits of your education to your life and work. You are vital to the mission of this university. Our task is to support you in the realization of your goals and dreams with us and beyond Boston College.



*J.R. Moehringer (pronounced Mo-ringer) is a former Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. He was the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing in 2000 for his portrait of Gee’s Bend, Alabama, an isolated river town where many descendants of slaves live and where a proposed ferry to the mainland threatened to change the community. He was also a Pulitzer finalist for feature writing in 1998 for his magazine piece “Resurrecting the Champ,” which chronicled heavyweight boxer Bob Satterfield’s glory days—and his demons. “Resurrecting the Champ” was recently adapted for a film starring Samuel L. Jackson and Josh Hartnett. J.R. has claimed many other honors as well, including a 1997 Livingston Award for Young Journalists. Moehringer’s first book, the memoir *The Tender Bar*, was a *New York Times* best seller. He lives in Denver, Colorado.¹*

¹From www.tenderbar.com

THE TENDER BAR—REFLECTIONS

“We went there for everything we needed. We went there when thirsty, of course, and when hungry and when dead tired. We went there when happy, to celebrate, and when sad, to sulk. We went there after weddings and funerals, for something to settle our nerves and always for a shot of courage just before. We went there when we didn’t know what we needed, hoping someone might tell us...Most of all we went there when we needed to be found.”

As J.R. examines his life by finding clarity and perspective, he discovers his place in the world. By witnessing this journey, we are able to take measure of ourselves and look to apply his hard-fought realizations to our own lives. The passion, depth, and openness through which he explains his life enable us to see the complexity of our own lives.

A memoir is in many ways a journey into one’s self. This self-directed pursuit requires a close examination of our past and present to understand our future. This ability to know one’s true self is at the heart of our own discernment. As a form of writing, a memoir highlights key moments or events from one’s life. Deliberate choices have to be made through the writing. The examination of these events typically has brought forth deep contemplation from the emotional core of the writer. The English novelist Anthony Powell said, “Memoirs can never be wholly true, since they cannot include every conceivable circumstance of what happened. The novel can do that.” As we begin our reading, we need to also look at the choices that Moehringer has made. What do those choices tell us about human nature and what human beings need? It is also important to look to identify his reflections and growth throughout the memoir.

As we begin to examine ourselves and our personal relationships, we need to be aware of how stereotypes and falsehoods are always battling against us as we reach for our own dreams. In this memoir, J.R. Moehringer shares his search for self-understanding, discerns a vocational calling, confronts loneliness and disillusionment, exposes the allure and effects of alcohol in our culture, defines himself as a man, comes to love himself, and appreciates his family. It is this frank depiction of his life that we can use as a marker to guide us through the difficult times that inevitably confront each of us. This memoir chronicles Moehringer’s connection to a local bar, which becomes the setting for his search for meaning: “While I fear that we’re drawn to what abandons us, and to what seems most likely to abandon us, in the end I believe we’re defined by what embraces us.” If we can embrace the lessons in this memoir, we can begin the conversations and reflections that will enable us to live a wholesome life.

BEFORE YOU READ: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Before you read the book, examine your self-understanding by reflecting on yourself and how you relate to others. Here are some questions to help you get started:

What events, experiences, or people have influenced or shaped who you are today and who you want to be?

How has your relationship with your family changed since you were young? How do you envision it changing over your four years at Boston College?

How have you located and found a community outside of your family? How does one feel connected to a community? Can you become lost in this search for consecutiveness?

How has the search affected your development? What are the expectations that groups have for you?

When have you lost a sense of who you are in order to conform and fit in with others?

Can you think of someone whose life you have impacted, for better or worse?

How would you describe your identity now? Are you open to changing yourself in your time at BC?

When in your life have you felt superficially judged by others? When have you judged others, perhaps prematurely? How have issues of class affected your growing up?

How does faith shape who you are and how you interact with others?

In what ways, if any, has alcohol affected your relationships with family and friends? How do you foresee alcohol affecting your relationships at Boston College?

Is the culture surrounding drinking different for men and women? What stereotypes are reinforced by a culture of alcohol?

Whether it be alcohol, drugs, gambling, or other, addiction can be a powerful force. What kind of external forces can or already control your life?

How do you begin to search for your own self-understanding?

What are your goals for your time at BC? What are your ultimate life goals?

A WAY TO APPROACH THE TEXT:

The Tender Bar takes place in the town of Manhasset, Long Island, which is the back drop to Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. The narrator of the *Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway, is armed only with the sage wisdom that his father imparts to him: "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone just remember that all the people in the world haven't had the advantages that you've had." While Nick Carraway has to learn to navigate the decadence of the 1920s Jazz Age, J.R. matures in the self-consumed 1980s. Without the benefit of a father's wisdom or the gift of advantages, J.R. Moehringer searches for direction, motivation, and guidance, finding them in his sanctuary, a local bar. In many ways, this tale is a modern day search for the American Dream.

As you begin to read through Moehringer's memoir, it is important to identify key moments in his writing that he deliberately chooses to share with the reader. Each chapter and story represents a conscious choice made by the writer. It is important to think about some key moments and images: his life within the bar and how it changes over time, his relationship with the women in his life, his connection with Bill and Bud, his impressions of Yale and *The New York Times*, his complex relationship with his father, and his ability to find perspective on his life. It is also important to reflect upon how we impact others' lives in positive and negative ways. Relationships usually provide interactions, which affect both individuals—each person takes something from the other. This impact can often happen without our realization. What does J.R. take and share with his mother, his grandmother, his cousin McGraw, his girlfriend Sidney, and the other men at the bar? Are these effects positive or negative?

It is our hope that the thematic organization of the textual-based questions will begin to probe you to think about the academic relevance of the text while connecting you to a series of much larger questions which will be discussed throughout the entire year.

SEARCHING FOR SELF-UNDERSTANDING

“I took something from every man in Steve’s bar. I was master at ‘identity theft’ when that crime was more benign...The bar fostered in me the habit of turning each person who crossed my path into a mentor, or a character, and I credit the bar, and blame it, for my becoming a reflection, or a refraction, of them all.” (p. 9)

How is our character shaped and molded during our life? How do we adapt to new surroundings and how do we look to adapt to this new culture?

“I became a prodigy at selective listening, which I thought was a gift, until it proved to be a curse. Life is all a matter of choosing which voices to tune in and which to tune out, a lesson I learned long before most people, but one that took me longer than most to put to good use.” (p. 17)

How does one learn to listen to his or her own voice?

“You’ve got to admire anything that tries that hard to keep its balance.” (p. 109)

In what way does J.R. aspire for balance?

“If only our arms would quit falling off.” (p. 109)

J.R. sees the bar as the fulcrum in this balance. What works against this balance?

“Over time there would be more security blankets, people and ideas and particular places to which I would form unhealthy attachments. Whenever life snatched one from me, I would recall how gently my mother pared away my first.” (p. 24)

Why do we cling to others for security? What are our security items? Are patterns of behavior a form of security?

“My father was an improbable combination of magnetic and repellent qualities. Charismatic, mercurial, sophisticated, suicidal, hilarious, short-tempered—and dangerous from the start.” (p. 38)

Is J.R. like his father? How is he different? How do we search for our own identity while comparing ourselves to our parents?

“My best guess was that I was neither boy nor man, but something in between. In limbo...I wondered if shedding boyhood was something like amnesia, if you forgot yourself and your old life, forgot all the familiar things you thought you would never forget, and started fresh. I hoped so...And I wished there were someone I could ask.” (p. 144)

How is a mentor important in our own personal growth? How can we find one? What role do mentors have in our college experience and our search for identity?

“I went into the world, worked and failed, fell in love, played the fool, had my heart broken and my threshold tested...each rite of passage felt linked to the last, and the next, as did each person I met.” (p. 8)

How does life become a collection of relationships, which begin to shape and form our character?

DISCERNING A CALLING

“I loved those books at first sight, and it was my mother who had pre-disposed me to love them. Beginning when I was nine months old, and continuing until I started school, my mother had taught me to read...like nothing else, words organized my world, put order to chaos, divided things neatly into black and white. Words even helped me to organize my parents. My mother was the printed word—tangible, present, real—while my father was the spoken word—invisible, ephemeral, instantly part of memory.” (pp. 57-58)

What impact does his mother have on his childhood? Why does it take J.R. so long to value her impact on his life? How can books serve as a form of connection to others, and a way to make sense of the world? How has reading shaped your life?

“I didn’t know sentences could be made like that. Cheever did with words what Seaver did with fastballs.” (p. 117)

J.R. starts with a passion for baseball because it represents manhood and

his absent father. What were your passions as a child? Why were you drawn to them? How have they helped you to evolve? How do we begin to define our interests and find passions that are part of us waiting to be discovered?

“Every book is a miracle. Every book represents a moment when someone sat quietly—and that quiet is part of the miracle, make no mistake...it was no accident that a book opened just like a door.” (p. 117)

How do Bill and Budd begin to inspire and allow J.R. the freedom to discover his calling?

“My days were controlled by teachers; my future was in the hands of heredity and luck. Bill and Budd promised, however, that my brain was my own and always would be. They said that choosing books, the right books, and reading them slowly, carefully, I could always retain control of at least that one thing.” (p. 117)

How do you plan to use your four years of college? What type of education do you hope to gain?

“You feel intimidated because you started life with a seven-two.” (p. 180)

J.R. seems to think that he was dealt a bad hand in life. How is this used as a “security blanket” to justify his lack of sustained effort at Yale? How does this impact his success?

When J.R. meets the priest on the train, they talk a great deal about his life and his calling. The priest makes reference to Saint Augustine's *Confessions* and quotes Yeats:

"The fascination of what's difficult has dried the sap out my veins and rent spontaneous joy and natural content out of my heart." (p. 201)

How does this conversation bring about J.R.'s epiphany about his calling in life? How would J.R. relate to the life of Saint Augustine?

"Make yourself happy...that's the way to make mother happy." (p. 201)

Why are some things so obvious to others and not to us? What distorts J.R.'s perspective? What are the things that cloud our own calling? Why is it so hard to see what makes us happy? What distracts us?

"My inability to see life in anything but black and white prevented me from understanding my contradictory self. Yes, I wanted to loaf and lean against bars, but I also wanted to strive and succeed, to make lots of money to be able to last to take care of my mother. Failure was so painful to me, so frightening, that I was trying to appease it, make an accommodation with it, rather than fight it head on...I'd developed a dual personality." (p. 219)

How do we understand and reconcile conflicting impulses? Where does

J.R. succeed and fail in this regard? How does Sidney help J.R. to see this duality and motivate him to apply to the *Times*? Can we live a conflicted life and be happy? Can we be afraid to fail and afraid to succeed? Where does that leave us?

CONFRONTING LONELINESS AND DISILLUSIONMENT

When J.R. reaches out to his father, he realizes that **"my father was nervous, more nervous than I, and telling stories was how he steadied his nerves...but he was hiding behind that voice."** (p. 148)

What are the facades that we embody or incorporate into our lives?

"I never anticipated how different my schoolmates would be from me. Aside from the tangibles...what I noticed that first day was their self-confidence." (p. 163)

How is our confidence built? Are we too confident in our abilities? What effect does that have on us? Is failure such a bad thing? What is J.R. likely to be thinking of when he describes the "confidence" of other students? How does wealth/success, or the perception of it, create confidence? What other factors can create confidence, or the appearance of it?

Like Nick Carraway from *The Great Gatsby*, J.R. is a great observer of other people, but he never really looks inward. Why are we afraid to examine ourselves?

EXPOSING THE ALLURE AND EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL IN OUR CULTURE

“Americans invest their bars with meaning and turn to them for everything from glamour to succor, and above all for relief from the scourge of modern life—loneliness.” (p. 5)

Why do so many people in our world feel alone? Why do people turn toward drinking to ease this loneliness?

“We measured time by them, and found some primal comfort in the knowledge that whenever one closed, the curtain would rise on another...drinking at home was the mark of an alcoholic. So long as you drank publicly, not secretly, you weren’t a drunk.” (p. 7)

What are the cultural myths that are created around drinking alcohol? In what ways do you envision alcohol as part of your college experience? Is it romanticized in a way that is harmful or unrealistic?

“Everyone has a holy place, a refuge, where their heart is purer, their mind clearer, where they feel closer to God or love or truth or whatever it is they happen to worship...its image clouded by that special reverence children accord those places where they feel safe.” (p. 8)

How do our childhood perspectives create idolism and a need for belonging which can distort our understanding of our surroundings and

ultimately ourselves? How has our culture created a mythology surrounding the party life?

“The two critical tests of a man’s mettle, Sheryl believed, were women and liquor. How you reacted to each, how you managed each, went a long way to determine your manliness quotient.” (p. 130)

How does Sheryl’s view on life begin to define J.R.? Is this cultural view perpetuated from your perspective? How is it formed? How do we become part of it? Reject it?

The idea of being a man is a theme that J.R. constantly searches for throughout his adolescence. How does the bar help create this notion and how does it simply confuse him further?

“Real men certainly don’t miss their moms.” (p. 136)

Why is J.R. so afraid to connect with his mother? What is he afraid of, and why doesn’t he look to her for more mentorship? How does the bar fill this void?

“It was the gesture, the timeless gesture. Buying another man a drink. The whole barroom was an intricate system of such gestures and rituals. And habits.” (p. 178)

How does the bar culture impact our lives here on campus? How does it

become a ritual in the life of a college student? What are the side effects? Can Publicans be an active contradiction of itself? Can it give and take away?

The bar Publicans satisfies **“that underrated human need—distraction.”** (p. 252)

What are the distractions that it provides? How does the drinking culture distract students here at Boston College?

J.R. also sees the bar as **“the Aladdin’s Lamp of Long Island.”** (p. 254)

What are the wishes that the bar fulfills? Does it simply fill needs? What do we hope that drinking alcohol will provide for us? How does the quest to simply fill needs prevent us from finding any form of enlightenment?

“I no longer made any pretense of drinking to bond with men, or to blunt the cares of the day, or participate in male rituals. I drank to get drunk...The bar had filled every need I’d ever had, and needs I didn’t know I had, and now I need one more thing.” (p. 342)

What leads to this realization? How do we realize when our drinking reaches a stage that we can no longer handle? Where can we go on campus for support?

“I didn’t want to admit that the bar could be an obstacle to success, just as I didn’t want to examine too closely my difficulty unwinding at the end of a long day...I wondered if it was hope.” (p. 291)

How do fear and a lack of hope push us toward drinking?

DEFINING ONE’S SELF

“Its dozens of men melding into one enormous male eye looking over my shoulder provided that alternative to my mother...they all shared one antiquated idea about manhood. My mother and the men believed that being a good man is an art, and being a bad man is a tragedy, for the world as much as for those who depend on the tragic man in question... but as a boy I noticed only its improbable assortment of good and bad men... I heard them again and again that the differences among them were great, but the reasons they had come to be so different were slight.” (p. 9)

How do we make correct choices so that we can become good men/women? How much of our upbringing affects this? How much of the child remains in the adult?

“Manhood is mimeness. To be a man, a boy must see a man.” (p. 39)

Does J.R. really need this archetypal man? Is there such a thing? Are men and women’s perspectives different on this quest? How does a woman receive help to define herself? How are the journeys different?

“Real Men take care of their mothers.” (p. 232)

What is it in Grandma’s life that makes her impart this lesson to J.R.? Does he achieve this?

“Sinatra’s voice...is the voice most men hear in their heads. It’s the paradigm of maleness. It has the power that men strive for, and the confidence. And yet when Sinatra is hurt, busted up, his voice changes. Not that the confidence goes away, but just beneath the confidence is a strain of insecurity, and you hear the two impulses warring for his soul, you hear all that confidence and insecurity in every note, because Sinatra lets you hear, lays himself bare, which men so seldom do.” (p. 308)

Why do men create facades that they feel must be worn? What are men protecting? What are they hiding? What are the facades that women wear? How do men and women perpetuate these facades?

“People just don’t understand how many men it takes to build one good man. Next time you’re in Manhattan and you see one of those mighty skyscrapers going up, pay attention to how many men are engaged in the enterprise. It takes just as many men to build a sturdy man, son, as it does to build a tower.” (P. 201)

What roles do men play in raising J.R.? Why do the women in the memoir have a much greater impact on his life? Why does it take him until the end of the memoir to realize that his mother was “my beacon, calling me back to the words, the simple words. It has been my great fortune in writing this book, as in entering

this world, to have had her as my primary source.”? (p. 370)

“I had to do a better job of managing my time and emotions, especially the latter. In the past I’d led with my heart, displayed my desperation like a badge of honor. I’d thought I was being honest, but I’d been a sucker.” (p. 208)

Why is it so easy to become caught up in the emotion of a moment and lose one’s self in the process? How do we find balance?

APPRECIATING AND UNDERSTANDING FAMILY AND ONE’S SELF

“I didn’t understand why I wanted to write about Publicans, why I loved Publicans. I was afraid to understand, and so I was doing little more than rearranging words on a page, an exercise ultimately as meaningless as the Wordy Gurdy.” (p. 280)

How does the writing of this memoir embody the ideal of discernment?

“All the classic defects converged in me—inexperience, impatience, perfectionism, confusion, fear.” (p. 280)

How can we look to grow as people without first looking at our own failings? Why is this process so painful?

“The idea that errors were stepping stones to truth never once occurred to

me, because I'd absorbed the ethos of *The Times*, that errors were nasty things to be avoided...when something was wrong with me I lost my nerve, my focus, and my will." (p. 280)

How can we learn from J.R.? How do we identify our own misgivings and deficiencies? If it was not his ability as a writer that prevented him from finishing his book, what was it?

McGraw "was experimenting, exploring, finding himself, and finding his way by trial and error to a kind of truth." (p. 288)

Why is it that J.R. can see this in others, yet he can't achieve what he wants? How does he grow to respect and admire McGraw? How does he almost prevent McGraw from achieving success?

"I told myself that I wanted to see how well I could do with the men as my mentors instead of my mother, that it was healthy for a young man to distance himself from his mother, but in truth I was distancing myself from unfulfilled promises, from the awful guilt I felt over failing to take care of her." (p. 279)

How was his calling in life connected so deeply with his mother? Why was he afraid to look there? What prevented him?

"I was always the beneficiary of her restless courage. I'd been so focused on getting in, I'd failed to appreciate

my mother's genius for getting out...I understood that every virtue I associated with manhood—toughness, persistence, determination, reliability, honesty, integrity, guts—my mother exemplified." (p. 345)

What is it that we are looking for from our families? What does J.R. discern at this moment of the memoir?

"All this searching and longing for the secret of being a good man, and all I needed to do was follow the example of one very good woman." (p. 346)

How is his mother the hero of this memoir?

"I could hear the laughter. I could hear the voices from the last night, from every night...We used to haunt this place, and now it will always haunt us." (p. 361)

How does returning back home after the attacks on 9/11 change J.R.'s perspective on his life? How has reading this memoir changed your perspective on your own life?

"I needed and wanted for nothing." (p. 354)

What brings about his moment of clarity? How has J.R. shaken free from all the demons of his past? How do you respectfully move beyond the people in your life that have had such an impact on it so you can discern your own direction?

FAITH

“Do you know why God invented writers? Because he loves a good story. And he doesn’t give a damn about words. Words are curtains we’ve hung between Him and our true selves.” (p. 202)

Why is the priest’s advice so powerful at this moment? How can we apply it to

our own lives? What role does faith play in J.R.’s life? Why does he not spend more time discussing it?

How do you plan to lead the next four years of your life? What lessons can we take from this memoir and apply to our lives? How do you plan on exploring your faith? How do you plan on finding your way?



As you finish the memoir and enter into your first year of college, it will be important to examine the decisions that you make while here at BC. Taking time to reflect upon your motivations, your desires, and your fears will give you a much better perspective on your life—where you came from, where you are presently, and where you are heading. Boston College hopes to partner with you during this journey through the careful discernment of the intellectual, spiritual, and social components that affect you during your undergraduate journey.



Go Set the World Aflame!



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**CONVERSATIONS IN THE FIRST YEAR:
A PROGRAM OF THE OFFICE OF THE
FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE**