
DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Unthinkable



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- 1 Have you ever survived a life-or-death experience or had to evacuate because of a possible emergency? What was that like? Did anything surprise you about your behavior—or that of the people around you?
- 2 Amanda focuses on three phases that most of us go through in all kinds of disasters: denial, deliberation and the decisive moment. Have you ever experienced a period of denial as your brain tried to make sense of a possible threat?
- 3 What do you think are the most likely disaster risks you face, given where you live? Are those the ones you worry most about?
- 4 The equation for dread helps explain why we worry about some risks more than others. How do the risks you face (and the ones you worry about most) rank based on this rough equation? $Dread = Uncontrollability + Unfamiliarity + Imaginability + Suffering + Scale\ of\ Destruction + Unfairness$
- 5 Which of the stories in this book stayed with you or reminded you of an experience you've had?
- 6 Turn to the appendix titled "How to Boost Your Survival Odds" in the paperback version of the book. Going through these six action items, which ones do you feel you're already doing—and which ones might merit more attention?

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- 7 What are the biggest barriers to doing these things in your own life and community?
- 8 How else could your community build resilience and prepare for the risks you face?
- 9 The Covid-19 pandemic turned all of us into disaster survivors. Do you remember going through any periods of denial or deliberation?
- 10 What were three things that surprised you about the experience of living through a global disaster? If you could go back in time, what would you tell your pre-pandemic self about how to manage?