

A Different Dream for My Child Summary and Interview Questions

For years, Jolene Philo's son was hospitalized many times as he battled a life-threatening birth defect. Far from home, without friends and family to support them, Jolene and her husband felt utterly and completely alone. Today, support networks for parents of critically or chronically ill children have improved, but most only provide for urgent physical needs. The devotional meditations in this book address the spiritual needs of these parents as the author shares her own life lessons, as well as those of other parents who have walked this road. No matter how difficult the road, Philo says, you do not have to lose hope.

1. Why did you write a book on the topic of serious childhood illness and the needs of parents of seriously ill children?
2. When a child has serious illness or condition, the focus is on the child, but the parents must need support, too. What kind of support do they need?
3. Friends and family often want to do something for the parents of a seriously ill child, but don't know what to do or how to approach the parents. What suggestions do you have for them?
4. The outward changes in the lives of parents of very sick children are visible. But what internal changes do the parents experience? How does it affect them spiritually and emotionally?
5. What about the rest of the family - siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins? How are they changed? What support do they need?
6. One of the difficult realities of life is that not all children survive their illness. What if the unthinkable happens and a child dies? How can those parents work through their grief and recover?
7. If it's hard to approach the parents of a seriously ill child, it's doubly difficult to know what to say to parents who have lost a child. How do we approach them? What should and shouldn't we say and do?
8. If you could choose one statement of comfort or encouragement that readers come away with after reading *A Different Dream*, what would it be?