

STUDY GUIDE FOR IN WARM BLOOD:
PRISON & PRIVILEGE, HURT & HEART
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PARENTING

- Does the larger society have an obligation to help parents raise “spirited” young men and women? How?
- Is corporal punishment a cultural practice? Are there times when it is acceptable? Who decides?

PRIVILEGE

- Rodney’s privilege allowed him to serve 3 months on a 15 year sentence for a crime he did commit. Is the judicial system equitable? Fair?
- What did DarRen gain from the power/privilege of his family when he was a youth and teen?

ROLE OF SOCIAL SERVICES/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES/SCHOOLS/JUVENILE JUSTICE

- What could/should adults have done for DarRen as he faced abuse and escalating mental illness?
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THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE...

- What would you do to feed your children?
- Is a person ever the worst thing they have ever done?
- Have you ever done something that could have gotten you locked up?

MEDICAL ETHICS

- Should prisoners be allowed to participate in human drug trials for the greater good, and/or as part of redemption for their crimes?
- Should a person who is behind bars be permitted to give informed consent?

EQUITY IN SENTENCING

- To what degree should a person’s life experiences and age be considered when s/he is being sentenced for a crime?

- How much discretion should judges have? (Wisconsin's Truth in sentencing is an example of lack of discretion.)
- Why does the U.S. lock up so many young black males? (The War on Drugs is only one piece of this equation.)

PUNISHMENT VS. REHABILITATION

- Is incarceration itself the punishment? Should corrections officers be permitted to (allowed to) give further punishments?
- Is solitary confinement ever an appropriate punishment?
- Should the inner-workings of corrections facilities be more visible to the public?
- What professional trainings should corrections personnel have to interact with prisoners?
- Are there "super-predators" who cannot be redeemed and should be incarcerated or at least separated from others?
- How important are the educational programs, jobs, hobbies, and visitation for prisoners? Should these be available to people with life sentences?

FORGIVENESS

- Can we forgive people who have made mistakes? How?
- Can one feel compassion without pity or judgment?
- What can DarRen do to forgive himself for his crime? Can he help his victim's family forgive?

TELLING THE STORIES/HISTORIES

- The book moves through the seasons, from depression in winter to hopefulness in spring. Is this effective?
- Does the use of humor soften the trauma and pain in the story? Does this increase our compassion for everyone involved?

Why write a book like *In Warm Blood: Prison & Privilege, Hurt & Heart*?