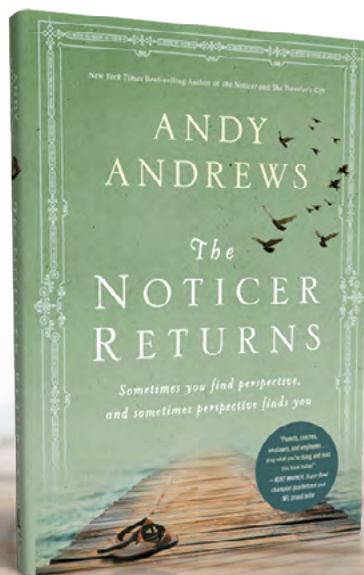


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READER'S GUIDE



ANDY ANDREWS

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*“Your choices,  
your words and  
every move you  
make, are  
permanent. Life is  
lived in indelible  
ink, boy. Wake  
up. You are  
making little,  
bitty brushstrokes  
every minute you  
walk around on  
this earth. And  
with those tiny  
brushstrokes, you  
are creating the  
painting that  
your life will  
ultimately  
become—a  
masterpiece or a  
disaster.”*

— Jones

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## Chapter 1:

1. Have people who gave you guidance ever disappeared from your life? What did you do in their absence?
2. Why do you think people make assumptions about Jones’s race?

## Chapter 2:

1. Do you ever say, “This is just the way I am?” If so, what do you say it about? What steps could you take to change?
2. Do you agree with Jones that “little things” matter? Why or why not? If so, list some examples.
3. When was the last time someone “pushed you in the pool”? How did you react? Did your reaction help or harm the situation?

## Chapter 3:

1. Chapter Three opens with Andy describing why he feels trapped. What do you do when you feel trapped?
2. Think of the last negative emotion you experienced. Write down at least three actions you could have taken (or maybe did take) to “lead” that negative emotion, as Jones described.
3. Why do you think Jones returned? What do you think he did during the five years since Andy last encountered him?
4. Why do you think time seems to pass slower or faster in different situations?
5. Has your thinking ever been challenged in the way Jones challenged Andy’s thinking all those years ago? How did it happen for you?

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*“In order to produce results that are wildly outside the average—to produce results that are extraordinary—you cannot afford to think like average people think. You cannot act like average people act. You cannot be what average people are . . . which is normal.”*

— Jones

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## Chapter 4:

1. “In a way, Jones knew, every journey started in the dark.” What does this sentence mean to you?
2. What do you think is at the root of Baker Larson’s struggles? What type of thinking led him to his current place in life?

## Chapter 5:

1. How did Jones know Baker’s name?
2. Baker asked Jones why they were together. What do you think is the meaning behind their meeting?
3. Define what you think “normal” means. Does your life fit that definition? Why or why not?
4. Do you expect yourself to do something great with your life? Why or why not?
5. What type of results have you been getting in your life? What could you do differently to change those results?

## Chapter 6:

1. Bart and Kelli moved several times before deciding to settle in Fairhope. What made you decide to live where you live?

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*“The  
quality of  
our answers  
is always  
determined  
by the  
quality of  
our  
questions.”*

*– Jones*

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## Chapter 7:

1. Jones says: “We think we are paying attention, but the sun doesn’t seem to move. So because nothing seems to be happening, we quickly become bored and look away.” Does his analogy apply to any areas of your life? Which ones?
2. Do you have children of your own or are there children you influence? If so, do you believe you’re doing the very best you can as their parent or influence? Why or why not?
3. Answer Jones’s question: “What do today’s parents agree is the gold standard for raising children?”

## Chapter 8:

1. Why do the people at Jones’s parenting class appear to be anxious and confused?
2. Do you have a habit of choosing to act patiently? If not, what steps can you take to begin choosing patience more often?
3. As a child, what standards did your parents set for you? If you have children, are you currently setting those same standards? Why or why not?
4. What results do you want for your child? Make a list like the parents in the book did. (Even if you don’t have children, still do this exercise.)

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*“Every decision you ever made—the best ones and the worst ones—were at their base, merely a product of your thinking at that time. It is one’s thinking that governs the decisions one makes every day.”*

— Jones

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## Chapter 9:

1. Chapter Nine opens with Jones describing a “principled process.” What principled processes exist in your life? What process are you currently engaged in because you know it works?
2. What results are you after in your own life? Make a list. What processes will get you to those results?
3. Do you know people who “march to the beat of their own drum” like Christy? What do they do specifically that sets them apart?
4. What does it mean to “walk on,” as Jones uses the phrase?

## Chapter 10:

1. Is it important for parents to agree on everything when it comes to how they are raising their children? Why or why not?
2. What do you think of the group’s list of standards? What would you add? What, if anything, would you remove?
3. Make a list of the best and the worst decisions you’ve made in your life. For each one, ask yourself: What line of thinking led me to this decision?

## Chapter 11:

1. Jones says, “Most folks look for their car keys with more energy than they search for the wisdom that can change their lives.” Why do you think that is?
2. Baker was surprised by the idea that Jack could learn something from him. What do you think someone could learn from you?
3. How do you respond to confusion?
4. Make a list of things that you want to do but think you can’t do. Now, add “...yet” to the end of each one.

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*“Simple logic says that by paying careful attention to our choices from this point forward, we can create a future we choose instead of a future that ‘happens.’”*

– Jones

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## Chapter 12:

1. When Jones is talking about Jack, he says, “He has been through the fire—several times, in fact—and the Jack Bailey you see now is a product of that fire. He has allowed himself to be molded and shaped.” What “fires” have you been through in life? In what ways did they mold and shape you?
2. Jones tells Mary Chandler she is forfeiting the lessons her mother still has left to teach her. Is there someone in your life from whom you think you have nothing left to learn? Make a list of possible things they still might be able to teach you.
3. What “butterfly effect” do you want your life to create? What do you want to leave behind?

## Chapter 13:

1. What do you do when you’re stuck?
2. Do you want an average life or an extraordinary life? Write down the reasons for your choice.
3. Think of a situation in your life that you would currently describe as bad. Now, how could you turn that bad situation upside down and describe it as good? What are the positives that could come out of it?
4. How do you define the word “value”?

## Chapter 14:

1. What do you think Jones means when he says, “...she is experiencing something incredible that gets better, until there is everything,” regarding Darrel’s dying wife?
2. Why do many people have a natural fear of death?
3. What do you think happens when a person dies?

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*“When a society grows comfortable with the idea that there can be many standards, the people have in effect accepted the reality that there will be no standard.”*

– Jones

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## Chapter 15:

1. What value do you currently provide to people? What value are you not currently providing that you could provide if you wanted to?
2. How can you prove the value you just listed to others?
3. What competition are you currently facing? How can you find a way to “play the game” at an entirely new level?

## Chapter 16:

1. What does the word “culture” mean to you? Describe your personal culture.
2. Is it possible that our society could end up like Rome? If so, how?
3. Do you agree with Jones’s assessment of the “greatest generation”? Why or why not?
4. Is there anything you do because it’s part of your culture? Are there any other reasons why you do it? What results do other people get who have done what you are doing?

## Chapter 17:

1. What did you learn from Jones’ class that you want to implement in your own life? What specific steps will you take to implement those things?
2. What do you think your reputation is? Does it attract or repel opportunity? Why?

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*“Every step  
you take is a  
step of faith.  
If you can’t  
see in front  
of you, walk  
on, and just  
believe.  
Don’t  
despair.”*

*– Jones*

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## Chapter 18:

1. Are there any areas of your life in which you’re focusing more on the doubts than anything else? How are those doubts helping you? What do you need to do to tune them out?
2. Jones says, “For it is only when you obey that, eventually, you begin to understand.” In what areas of your life do you need to obey more?
3. Do you believe it’s possible that miracles could be awaiting you? Why or why not? Where does your faith need to be placed in order to arrive at a time of miracles in your life?

## Chapter 19:

1. Where do you think Jones went?
2. What do you think the meaning of the jubilee is?
3. How is it that Jones is “always around,” even when he’s not present? What do the characters mean when they say this?

## Epilogue:

1. Are there any regrets you know you need to avoid in your life? What specific actions can you take today to avoid them?
2. “If darkness is winning the battles, my friend, it is because light is not doing its job. You are light. So wake up.” What can you do to wake up and create more light in the darkness?