

Laurel's Diary

by Gina DiMarco

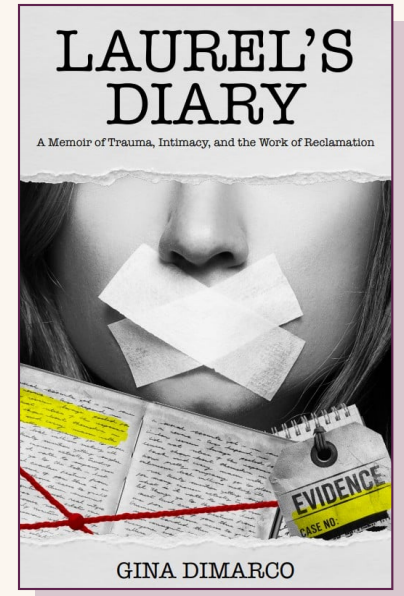
PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

About the Guide

Use this memoir's diary entries, messages, and later reflections to examine trauma, meaning-making, relationships, and help-seeking. It offers a first-person account for analysis, not a clinical case record.

Content Note

The memoir describes sexual assault, distress, intimacy challenges, and difficult encounters with support systems. Readers may pace themselves and choose which passages to discuss.



Discussion Questions

- 01** Compare First Meetup and Early Setbacks and Success (pp. 18–21) with Diary: April 13 (pp. 29–30). How do Laurel's bodily reactions and her explanations of them differ?
- 02** In The Audio Recording (pp. 58–59), how does a lawyer's comment change Laurel's interpretation of the recording and her subsequent behavior?
- 03** Laurel describes "multiple Laurels" in her email to Chris (pp. 65–67). What can you describe from her account without assigning a diagnosis?
- 04** In Early Setbacks and Success (pp. 20–21), how do Chris and Laurel interpret the same silence differently? What changes during their repair?
- 05** Compare Laurel's benchmarks for progress (p. 65) with Diary: Entry 19 (pp. 117–119). Who defines improvement, and how do her criteria change?
- 06** Read Soliciting the Psychologist (pp. 91–92) and Breaking Up with the Psychologist (pp. 120–124). How do fit, cost, autonomy, and trust shape help-seeking?
- 07** What does Letter to the Advocacy Group (pp. 87–90) reveal about the effect of promised support that Laurel says was not delivered?

Narrative and Memory

READ The Audio Recording, pp. 58–59

Track the lawyer's comment, Laurel's repeated listening, and the nightmares. Separate what the narrative reports from a proposed psychological explanation.

Relationships and Repair

READ Early Setbacks and Success, pp. 20–21

Compare Chris's reason for leaving with Laurel's experience of it. Identify the actions that later restore communication and choice.

Body and Threat

READ Diary: April 13, pp. 29–30

Notice Laurel's fear, freezing, and need to see Chris. How does the passage complicate a simple reading of consent or comfort?

Help-Seeking and Systems

READ Letter to the Advocacy Group, pp. 87–90; Diary: Entry 19, pp. 117–119

Compare the support Laurel expected with what she says she received. What would safety, choice, and collaboration look like in each setting?

For Class Discussion

Keep interpretations tied to passages and distinguish what Laurel reports from what a reader infers. Let students choose which passage to analyze; personal disclosure is never required. Her experience with one psychologist does not establish how therapy works for everyone.

Short Analysis Exercise

Choose one passage. In three columns, record (1) what the text shows, (2) one psychological interpretation, and (3) what further evidence you would need.

Continue the Conversation

Invite Gina DiMarco for an author Q&A, keynote, or campus presentation on the themes of Laurel's Diary.

Learn more or inquire: www.gina-dimarco.com