

Becoming

by Michelle Obama

Book Club Discussion Questions

"I'm an ordinary person who found herself on an extraordinary journey. In sharing my story, I hope to help create space for other stories and other voices, to widen the pathway for who belongs and why." - Michelle Obama

1. Mrs. Obama begins her book with a story about making cheese toast on a quiet night at home, a few months after leaving the White House. Why do you think she chose this story to begin her memoir?
2. Mrs. Robinson was tough, with high expectations for her children, and believed in letting them learn from their own choices. How did this parenting style shape Mrs. Obama? What's the balance between discipline and trust?
3. Mrs. Obama's grandfather, Southside, filled his home with music and laughter. How do early memories like these influence us as adults? What sensory memories from your own childhood have stayed with you?
4. Reflecting on her Chicago neighborhood, Mrs. Obama writes, 'Failure is a feeling long before it becomes an actual result.' How did this mindset shape her mission as First Lady? How can we help others break that cycle?
5. How did the influences of her mother, Marion Robinson, and her TV role model, Mary Tyler Moore, shape Michelle Obama's identity and approach to life?
6. When a school counselor told her she wasn't 'Princeton material,' how did Mrs. Obama respond? How can we resist internalizing other people's limitations?
7. In high school, Mrs. Obama felt she represented her neighborhood; at Princeton, she felt she represented her race. Have you ever felt responsible for representing your community?
8. Michelle writes about being a 'box checker' in her youth but later learning to 'swerve.' What does that mean to you? How do you adapt when life shifts unexpectedly?
9. Mrs. Obama highlights mentors like Valerie Jarrett and Susan Sher. What did she learn from them about finding fulfillment and balance? Who are your mentors?

10. What factors convinced Michelle Obama to support her husband's run for president despite her reservations about politics? Would you have made the same choice?
11. The role of First Lady has no formal job description. How did Mrs. Obama redefine it? If you wrote the role's description, what would you include?
12. Michelle Obama candidly addresses stereotypes like the 'angry Black woman.' Why is this label harmful, and how can society challenge such biases?
13. Michelle is a meticulous planner. How did her father's example shape her approach to life? Are you a planner or more spontaneous?
14. In the epilogue, she writes, 'I've never been a fan of politics, and my experience over the last ten years has done little to change that.' Were you surprised by this? What role should politics play in social change?
15. Why do you think Michelle Obama chose the title 'Becoming'? What does 'becoming' mean to you personally?

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