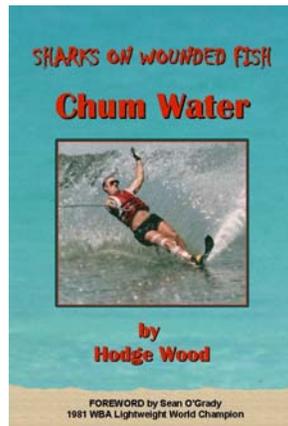


# Study Questions



1. What is the author's biggest loss in Chapter 1 - Gaffed? How does the loss compare to the life of a fish?
2. How does the Lynyrd Skynyrd band's plane crash spiritually relate to the story?
3. What comparison is drawn to fish in the two sub-chapter's, "Live Well," and "On the Stringer?"
4. What is a Stryker Frame? What do you think it feels like to live in one for weeks?
5. Why would Nurse Abuse and Nurse Assistant Slurspeech mistreat patients?
6. What difficulties would Mike Kuns face on a daily basis at the VA Hospital?
7. After two months in the hospital, what are the biggest surprises just prior to leaving on the medevac flight to Memphis?
8. Spare Parts -- Where do they come from and what good are they?
9. From the story, describe where and how football is a part of life. What benefits did the author get from playing football?
10. Chapter 2 - Gutted: When "A Fish Returns to Water," why did he become "Stink Bait?"
11. In the sub-chapter, "Getting Taped Up to Play," there is relevant importance to the game of football and life ahead. Can you describe these relationships?
12. How had life changed for Barbara from the visit in sub-chapter, "Crazy On You" until the end of sub-chapter, "Disability Took Nothing Away?" Why was Walter not equally changed?
13. Can you identify examples of the five elements of grief (shock, anger, denial/bargaining, depression, acceptance - as defined by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross) in the episodes that play out during Chapter 4 - Nursing? Why was nursing so important in recovery?
14. In Chapter 5 - Schooling, there are several metaphors used to compare fish as humans. Can you define them?
15. What is the "Cock of the Walk?"
16. "Sea World" is a big place. Can you describe the new and old habitat that the author experiences or reflects back upon during this final chapter?
17. What is this story about? Is it about losing and finding love, or returning to water ski, or about a private but triumphant struggle back from catastrophic injury? Define why the author parallels all three.
18. Does the story end? Why was the author following the red dots? What else do you think might happen later?
19. Would you describe the book sad or humorous?
20. What are the biggest challenges a person faces with a spinal cord injury?