



Unwind Discussion Questions

1. How would you feel if you discovered you were going to be unwound? What would you do? If you didn't want to go along with it but couldn't run away like Connor and the others in the novel, what other options might you have?
2. Both Connor's parents and Lev's parents signed one of their children over to be unwound, but for very different reasons. Which is worse in your opinion, to unwind an out-of-control kid, or to raise a child from birth to be a tithe?
3. Both Connor and Lev had siblings. How do you think their siblings felt about their parents' decision to allow their brothers to be unwound? How would you feel if your brother or sister were scheduled to be unwound?
4. How would you feel if you were in an accident, or had a rare disease, and you could be cured only if your damaged organs were replaced by parts taken from unwound teens? What would you choose to do? What if you were certain to die if you refused the parts? What if it wasn't you, but someone you loved who was in an accident? Would your answer be different?
5. While being transported to possible safety, some of the kids on the run wonder, "Would it be better to die or be unwound?" If given the choice, which would you choose? Why?
6. Another question the kids in the book discuss is, "If every part of you is still alive but inside someone else, are you alive or are you dead?" They also wonder if consciousness can exist even if it's spread out, and if the soul remains intact. What do you think?
7. Risa is assigned to play in a band at a Harvest Camp, performing upbeat tunes while teens are marched to their unwinding. Risa is conflicted: She knows playing in the band will keep her alive longer, but it's at the expense of others, and her joy at having her fingers on a piano is matched by the horror of knowing what's going on around her. How would you feel in this situation? Would you accept the position?
8. What positive consequences do you imagine would be realized by a society where unwinding exists? What are the negatives? Do you think the negatives outweigh the positives, or the other way around?
9. The bully, Roland, makes life hard for Connor and Risa from the time they meet him. What do you think of his ultimate payback? Did you think it was fair? Was it satisfying, or did it make you squirm (or both)? Why?
10. Imagine that you are approached to join the Clappers, the novel's futuristic terrorists. How would you respond? What would you tell them?
11. In the story, the practice of "unwinding" came about because of advances in transplant technology and the outlawing of abortion. In your opinion, is unwinding a teenager ethically any better than aborting a pregnancy? Why or why not?

About The Author



Award-winning author Neal Shusterman grew up in Brooklyn, New York, where he began writing at an early age. After spending his junior and senior years of high school at the American School of Mexico City, Neal went on to UC Irvine, where he made his mark on the UCI swim team, and wrote a successful humor column. Within a year of graduating, he had his first book deal, and was hired to write a movie script.

In the years since, Neal has made his mark as a successful novelist, screenwriter, and television writer. As a full-time writer, he claims to be his own hardest task-master, always at work creating new stories to tell. His books have received many awards from organizations such as the International Reading Association, and the American Library Association, as well as garnering a myriad of state and local awards across the country. Neal's talents range from film directing (two short films he directed won him the coveted CINE Golden Eagle Awards) to writing music and stage plays – including book and lyrical contributions to “American Twistory,” which is currently played in several major cities. He has even tried his hand at creating Games, having developed three successful "How to Host a Mystery" game for teens, as well as seven "How to Host a Murder" games.

As a screen and TV writer, Neal has written for the "Goosebumps" and “Animorphs” TV series, and wrote the Disney Channel Original Movie “Pixel Perfect”. Currently Neal is adapting his novel Everlost as a feature film for Universal Studios.

Wherever Neal goes, he quickly earns a reputation as a storyteller and dynamic speaker. Much of his fiction is traceable back to stories he tells to large audiences of children and teenagers -- such as his novel *The Eyes of Kid Midas*. As a speaker, Neal is in constant demand at schools and conferences. Degrees in both psychology and drama give Neal a unique approach to writing. Neal's novels always deal with topics that appeal to adults as well as teens, weaving true-to-life characters into sensitive and riveting issues, and binding it all together with a unique and entertaining sense of humor.

In His Own Words

When I was a kid, I wanted to be everything: a writer, an actor, a doctor, a rock star, an artist, an architect, and a film director. I had a teacher who said "You can't do that! You'll be a jack of all trades and a master of none!" But I had it worked out: I'd be a jack of seven trades, and master of three.

Then, in ninth grade I had an English teacher who really made a difference in my life. She saw my love of writing, and challenged me to write a story a month for extra credit. Since I desperately needed extra credit in her class, I took her up on the challenge, and by the end of ninth grade, I really began to feel like a writer. That's when writing emerged above all my other interests as my driving passion.

When I was sixteen, our family moved from Brooklyn, New York, to Mexico City, and I spent my last two years of High School there. Having an international experience changed my life, giving me a fresh perspective on the world, and a sense of confidence I might not have had otherwise.