

Discussion Questions for FACE TIME

1. FACE TIME starts with Charlie McNally and her mother trying their best to talk to each other—but they're not quite communicating. Why do you think they have such a difficult time understanding each other? What makes it so difficult for mothers and daughters to connect?
2. No question Charlie McNally is devoted to her work as a TV journalist. When she's called in to do breaking news—with less than an hour to spare—she's stressed, but she's on the job and pulls off the difficult live shot without a hitch. Would you be interested in a profession like that?
3. Early on in the story, Charlie must choose between her personal life and her professional life. She and her new boyfriend have planned a romantic weekend on Cape Cod—but now it looks like she's going to have to cancel. If your new love interest had to make the same decision, leaving you behind, would you understand? Would you be proud of him or her? Or would you resent it?
4. Charlie's facing a brand new challenge in FACE TIME—as she says, how do I get an eight-year-old to fall in love with me? As a 46- year-old woman, it's not unlikely that she would be dating someone who has a daughter. How well do you think she manages with Penny? What advice do you wish you could give her?
5. Charlie's given a great story lead from the Constitutional Justice Project. Of course, this is modeled on the Innocence Project, which has worked to exonerate people who have been wrongly convicted. She soon finds out that there are many more motivations than justice in this situation. What does Oliver Rankin want? What does Oz want? What does Will Easterly want? What does Tek want? What do Charlie and Franklin want? What does Dorinda Keeler Sweeney want?
6. And more mother daughter-relationships: Colleen Keeler and her daughter Dorinda. Dorinda Keeler Sweeney and her daughter Gaylen Marie. Charlie and her mother. Charlie and Penny. All of the relationships change—and many of those involved learn something about themselves, as well as something about their mothers. What struck you about this? Did it make you think of your mother—or your daughter—in a different way?
7. Why is the book called Face Time? Hank says there are three reasons.
8. Charlie is facing a lot of pressure from the TV world, pressure to stay young-looking. Do you notice when women on television are looking "older"? Do you look at men the same way? What do you think about that?

9. It seems, in the end, that Dorinda has forgiven Will Easterly. What did you think about that? Could you have forgiven him?

10. Do you have a secret signal with your mother or daughter?

Bonus question!

What do you think will happen to Charlie and Josh in the next book, AIR TIME? (Secret for book groups: Someone gets married. Someone gets pregnant. And someone is not what they seem. Charlie goes undercover and in disguise, into the glam but dangerous world of fashion counterfeiting. And she must decide: In life—and in love—how do you tell the real thing?)