

FULL OF MYSELF

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What is your biggest takeaway from this memoir? What is the thematic significance—literal and symbolic—of the title?
2. In *Full of Myself*, Austin reflects on her journey of self-discovery. What were the biggest challenges she faced along the way? What are some of the challenges you have faced on your own journey?
3. Austin describes a process called the “emptying.” Has there been a time when you’ve witnessed this ask of Black women? In what ways have you been asked to need and want nothing, to be hollow and malleable?
4. According to Austin, being a Black woman in our country means “working during the day to put food on the table and then protesting all night to make America do better.” What does it look like for you?
5. Discuss our societal expectations of Black women. In what ways are Black women held to a double standard? For example, Austin writes: “Now I was being a strong Black woman, again, by trying to power through my panic and fear and worry and sadness. I didn’t set out to be a strong Black woman, and yet strength is what I demanded from myself. I was conditioned for it.”
6. In what ways did Austin learn to be, quote, “full of herself”? Tell a story of a time when you felt full of yourself. What do you notice about that situation or experience?
7. Austin writes: “The work of self-possession is the justice work we have been made to undervalue.” What does self-possession mean to you? Why are we taught to undervalue it?
8. Austin ends the book talking about the freedom of skinny-dipping, which felt like a big risk. Do you have any risks you have taken or could take to become fuller of yourself?
9. Do you discount how injustice exists in your body? How would the absence of racism, homophobia, patriarchy, etc., change your life? How would things change in your everyday life if the world loved you?
10. In the book, Austin divides each section by saying, “I love myself when I am . . .” Finish this sentence for yourself.

