

When Truth Lies: A Journey with Schizophrenia
Questions and Topics for Discussion
for family members, friends and professionals

1. In the prologue, Russ Anders gives Kevin his explanation of how he views schizophrenia. The action takes place in 1989. Is his explanation still useful today?
2. Should Russ have been more aggressive in getting Kevin to cooperate with treatment?
3. Kevin sees his voices as a natural part of life. When we go through developmental stages like puberty do we fully understand the changes taking place? Do we seek help or a guide?
4. Kevin and Wendy spend all of their time together. Kevin's parents don't like it. Should young people avoid this type of intense relationship? How outside the norm is Kevin?
5. Kevin's parents initially believe that drugs may be the reason for his problems. Is this reasonable for them to assume? Should they have questioned him about his drinking?
6. What questions would you have asked the doctor when Kevin went to the hospital with his first psychotic break? What would you have asked Kevin?
7. Kevin is taken advantage of by Wilson. Is it a common experience for people with mental illness to be taken advantage of? Does the illness sometime limit maturity?
8. Most large state hospitals are now closed but seclusion rooms and physical restraints are a standard part of treatment in many hospitals. Are they necessary?
9. Arts and crafts are still part of many treatment programs. Are these useful or demeaning?
10. Was Brenda McBride, the social worker at Gannon, a bad person or part of a bad system?
11. Kevin left his family to live in a commune, which is unlikely to happen today. However, young people, post hospitalization, many rather live with friends than at home. How can we make this a positive experience?
12. Kevin's family tried to help him adjust to his illness and fully supported him, yet he still left. Was there anything different they could have done?
13. Many seriously mentally ill people take to "the road." Is there any way to prevent it? Is there a way to maintain contact?
14. Kevin seems to benefit from long term hospitalization. Should this be an option for some people with serious mental illness?

15. Was it OK for Dr. Mrs. Narayan to get her needs met with her professional relationship with Kevin?
16. Carol violated all professional boundaries with Kevin. The relationship worked out for a long time. Is it sometimes OK for therapists and patients to have social aspects to their relationship?
17. Stress brings on symptoms. Were there times when Kevin's illness got worse due to stress?
18. Kevin sometimes takes medication, and sometimes does not. Is anosognosia, the inability to know he is ill, part of Kevin's symptom pattern?
19. Kevin joins the hundreds of thousands of mentally ill people who live on the streets of our major cities. If we just wanted to help Kevin, what could we do?
20. Was Kevin labeled at any point? Did the label help or hurt?
21. Schizophrenia is a biological illness. Did any of the talk therapy work?
22. The support of loved ones is very important. Is there evidence that Kevin had good support?
23. Is Kevin, in any sense, a hero? What sort of heroic things did he do?