

## *Breaking Cover* Discussion Questions

1. When Michele was growing up, she never imagined being a spy. She says, “If you had told me twenty years ago that my calling would involve traveling to war zones or dealing with insurgents, I would have thought you were crazy” (page 1). As you reflect on your own life, have you accomplished or done anything that you would never have dreamed of growing up?
2. Name two or three examples of how God began preparing Michele for her role in the CIA from a young age. How did God get you ready for your current occupation or life stage?
3. Michele describes how the CIA “seemed like a place where only the world’s most sophisticated and smartest human beings applied—not normal people like me.” Have you ever chosen not to pursue an opportunity because you felt unqualified or too “normal”? If being “normal” were not an obstacle, what opportunities would you pursue?
4. When Michele applied for a CIA analyst position only to lose it with no explanation, she was crushed. Much later, she learned that if she’d joined the CIA as an analyst, she could not have transferred into a role as an intelligence officer, and she realized that God had kept her from the analyst job to prepare her for something much better. Have there been situations in your life where you could see God’s intervention only in hindsight? Explain.
5. Early in her CIA career, Michele wondered whether she had what it would take to excel in the agency. Her friendly, outgoing nature, for instance, made her very different from many of her coworkers, and she was told that women weren’t cut out to recruit and handle sources. What was the turning point that convinced her she could be very effective in her work? How might you use what others perceive as a weakness in you to your advantage?
6. Michele encourages readers to trust their intuition. Describe a time when following your gut led you to make a wise decision or prevent something bad from occurring.
7. Michele explains how she learned the importance of looking beyond people’s outward appearance or story to connect to their deepest needs and desires. Tell about a time someone has done that for you. How did that affect you?
8. Michele mentions numerous ways that working for the CIA was different from how it is usually portrayed in movies and on TV. Which of these differences stood out to you the most? Did anything about her portrayal of the CIA surprise you?
9. Michele tells many stories that show the strong partnership—both on and off the field—between her and her husband, Joseph. Which one stood out to you most, and why?
10. Michele describes several situations in which she needed to “get off the ‘X’” (see page 49 and chapter 8) and take uncharacteristically bold action to protect herself or someone else. Have you ever felt the need to “get off the ‘X’”? What bold actions did you take?

11. Michele's years working in difficult and dangerous countries made her a much stronger agent than if she'd been given comfortable assignments in safer countries. She writes, "The challenges I had faced working in [REDACTED], Iraq, and Saratoga had transformed me from a naive young recruit with an inferiority complex to a mature, highly experienced officer capable of succeeding in the most hostile and exacting environments. The assignments I had once perceived as a never-ending string of punishments were actually amazing career builders" (page 149). What strengths have you gained from going through difficult seasons?
12. Give at least one example of how Michele and Joseph's CIA experience equipped them through the grueling process of vetting and then moving about 150 Iraqi IDPs to their new home in Slovakia.
13. Though it's doubtful most of us will ever be able to travel to the Middle East to directly help those affected by the fighting there, how has this book broadened your understanding of ways you might be able to support and encourage those living and working in countries like Iraq and Syria?
14. Name one key insight you will take away from *Breaking Cover*. How might it affect your work, family, or thinking?