



Discussion Guide

A Road Called Down on Both Sides

by Caroline Kurtz

Imagine the author's father declining the invitation to go to Ethiopia with his young family. The circumstances of her childhood would have been different. Might there have been deeper differences in her life as well? Might her personality have been shaped differently? How so?

The author grew up physically in Ethiopia. What part did the United States play in her growing up? How did that influence take place?

The author's generation of missionary, diplomatic and business families' children were studied by psychologists to figure out why some adjusted to life when they returned to the US and why some did not. What do you think the studies might have discovered?

Many young people say about their parents, I would never do that to my children! How did a vow like this turn out for the author? How did it turned out for you?

What advantages did the author have upon returning to Ethiopia to work as an adult?

How might the author have been a different parent to her own third culture kids, in the area of culture adjustment, than her parents were to her? Why?

Do you think the author's family the decision to stay in Addis Ababa when Tigrayan guerillas were approaching was made based on faith, wisdom, or foolishness?

Can you apply the title of the book as a metaphor for the author's life between two cultures?

In what ways have you bridged cultures—race, class, ethnic background, politics? Did it make your life richer or harder—or both?