

**Momentum: A Memoir**  
**by Emily Brown**

1. Do you feel that everyone has a need for belonging, and how is Emily's experience similar or different from how you would describe your own search or that of a family member or friend?
2. On her life journey, Emily lived in different cities, as well as traveled to Guatemala and other places. Do you think that such experiences are useful in building a meaningful life, for example, through the simple fact of moving, or from what you can learn from living in other locations?
3. Thinking about Emily's difficult relationship with her mother and when she was threatened during the gun episode, what would your reaction have been and is there anything that these experiences might say about why some women stay in difficult relationships?
4. Emily immigrated to Canada from the United States. Leaving your home country for a more distant one, is a different and more life changing experience than shorter forms of travel. Many immigrants move far away from their homelands and from countries that are very different than North America. What are your thoughts on how Emily's experiences may or may not compare to your own or other experiences of immigration?
5. Emily eventually strengthened her sense of belonging as she met her husband and created her family. How easy do you think it is to overcome difficult early childhood experiences as you build your own close loving relationships with friends and family, however that is defined by you?
6. In the later part of her journey, Emily found herself searching for belonging in the corporate headquarters of large financial institutions. Workplaces may or may not be sources of belonging and stress. What are your thoughts about whether meaning and identity can be found in today's work environments?
7. Throughout her life Emily chose the path to leave difficult situations that she hoped she would have found a place to belong and to move on to find something new, even though others may have chosen to stay and make it work. In your experience how

can you know when to leave and move on? What kind of emotional effect do such hard decisions create?

8. Many women who are trying to break out of a conventional gender relations find it challenging to balance their own personal independence with their obligations to their children as mothers. Do you think Emily was too harsh in judging her mother's desire to free herself from some of the traditional responsibilities of motherhood? Do you have similar experiences with your own mother?
9. Emily's father played a traditional role of working very hard to support his family financially, while building his own career. Despite being a family psychiatrist, he chose to have a relatively hands off relationship with his children and their relationship to their mother, before and after their divorce. Should he have behaved differently? Do you think father's today are behaving differently?
10. The theme of resilience is evident in Emily's book, but also more broadly in today's fragile world. Emily found that she had to work long and hard to build her identity and sense of belonging. She experienced many changes and failures along the way. Ultimately, she found her strength to be resilient within herself. When you experienced a lot of change where did you look for your source of resilience?
11. How does the social position and occupations of one's parents affect the type of conflicts associated with growing up and how you respond to them through your life.
12. Emily was ultimately looking for community and meaning. Often, we look to parents, teachers, leaders and other role models for inspiration and yet, they may fall short. How much hope should we place in such sources of inspiration? Did the negative experiences Emily encountered while at the same time fighting for her own identity make you more, or less optimistic about personal relationships?
13. Emily hopes that her memoir will inspire others to write and share with each other their own life stories. Do you think it was courageous or naïve for her to divulge so much of her personal life journey? Did her style of writing contribute to or inhibit this type of sharing of personal feeling and experiences?
14. Why do you think the title of the book is Momentum? Emily spent a long time thinking of alternative titles to her story. Can you think of a different book title that would capture the essence of her story?