

A FRAGILE HOLD

Living with multiple sclerosis and other uncertainties

RUTH COTTON

A Fragile Hold is a memoir from Ruth Cotton who tells how an incurable disease and progressive disability led her to a more mindful way of living, finding equilibrium, solace and grace.

BOOK GROUP QUESTIONS

1. In what ways, if any, did you relate to Ruth's experience of living with MS, and the other uncertainties in her life?
2. What is Ruth's attitude to her MS? How does it change over time?
3. How did COVID-19 restrictions affect Ruth? What strategies did she use to protect her mental and emotional well-being? How successful were they?
4. Ruth writes often of 'clearing things out', 'making space' in her life. Do her concerns resonate with you, and if so, how?
5. How important is Ruth's neighbourhood to her, and why?
6. Like many people, Ruth and her husband moved 'to be closer to family', when both were 67. What are the benefits and risks of doing this, especially at their age? Has it worked for her, and if so, why?
7. What are the key relationship groupings in Ruth's life? How do they differ? What do we learn from the roles they play in her life?
8. What function has journal writing played in Ruth's life? What factors may have influenced her in deciding to cease this practice?
9. What have you learned about the losses one suffers as a result of disability, and/or a chronic health condition? How do Ruth's losses affect how she sees herself, her confidence, and her participation in an active life?
10. What does the image of a hummingbird on the front cover symbolise about Ruth's personal situation? What other elements of the cover communicate something about the book itself?