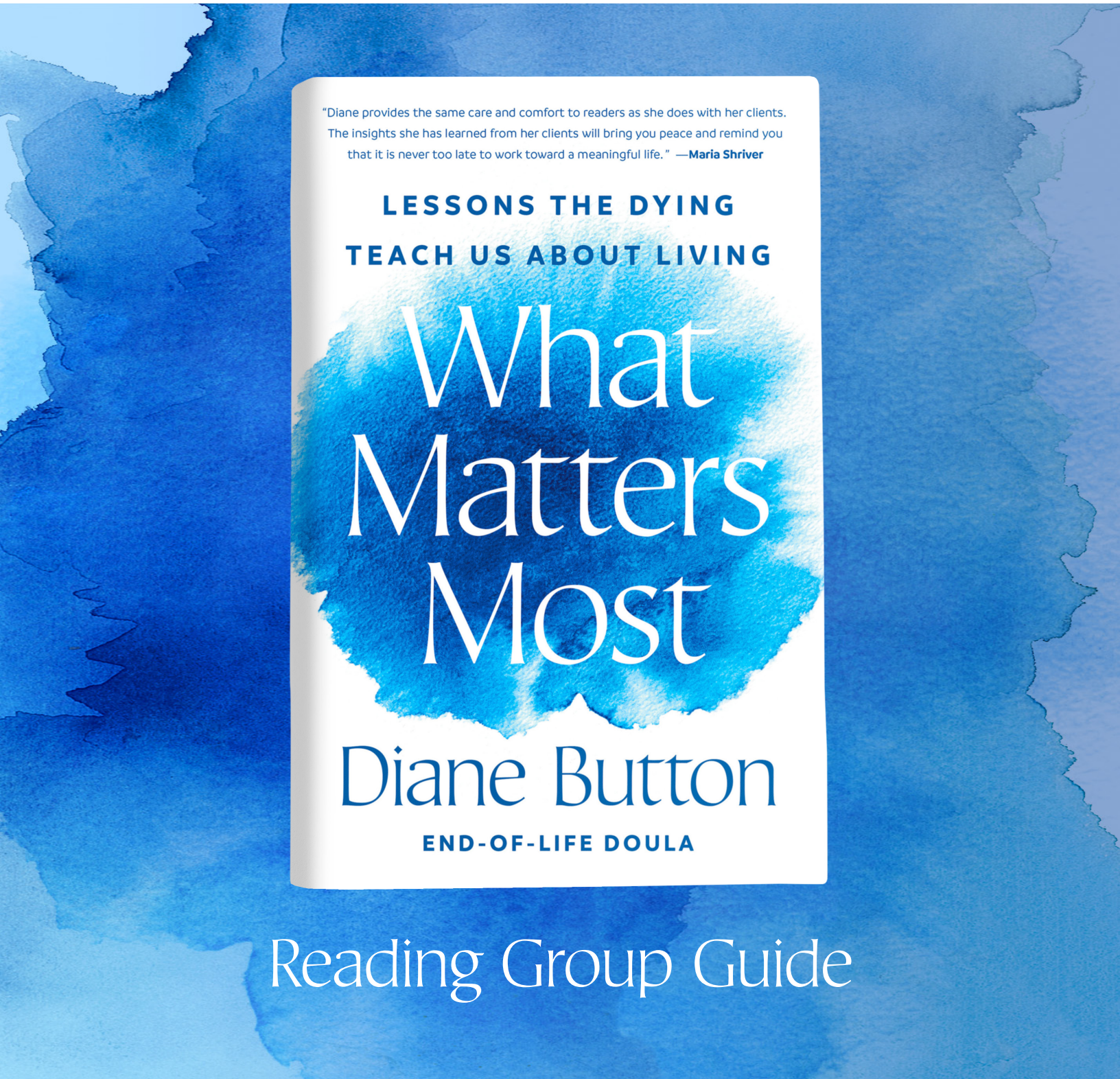
MARIA SHRIVER

PRESENTS

THE OPEN FIELD

A PUBLISHING IMPRINT

BOOKS THAT RISE ABOVE THE NOISE AND MOVE HUMANITY FORWARD



Reading Group Guide

Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. During his last dinner with family, the author's grandfather said, "When I die . . . I'm really going to miss . . . mint jelly." Even though the author longed for something deeper, this was the perfect response from her loving but reserved grandfather. What about you? Who would you want at your last gathering? What music would you play? What would you want to eat, or do? And how would you complete the sentence, "When I die, I'm really going to miss . . ."?

2. Remember, you don't have to build a hospital wing to make a difference in this world. We need kindness now more than ever. In the chapter "Jesus Makes Casseroles," we learned that small, everyday acts of kindness can have so much meaning. A little boy gently placed a tangerine into the hands of a dying neighbor; strangers delivered casseroles to the author when she had cancer. Share about a time you did something kind for someone. How did it make you feel? What acts of kindness can you do for others in your family or in your community?

3. In the chapter "The Ordinary is Everything," we learn how important everyday moments are to creating a beautiful life. How do you spend an ordinary day? What are the high points?

4. Everyone leaves a legacy, whether they intend to or not. How do you think people will remember you? What words will they use to describe you?

5. The author shares a story about Candace, who determined that she was in search of contentment, which she felt would bring lasting peace. She believed this was more attainable than the elusive search for happiness, which was fleeting. Using that model, what makes you happy in the moment? What brings you lasting contentment?

6. What is your own relationship with death and dying? Have you been with others at the end of their lives? Have you allowed yourself to grieve? How have your experiences, or lack thereof, around death and dying impacted your perspective on how you might approach your own end of life?

7. The appendix of *What Matters Most* contains exercises for you to explore your own feelings about life, death, and what matters most. Which ones were the most inspiring, eye-opening, or meaningful for you?

8. How might you live differently after reading the many lessons in *What Matters Most*?