

## Lost in Thought

*Zena Hitz*

### Discussion Questions

1. Hitz discusses how parts of her time in graduate school made her feel disillusioned and disconnected. She felt “bound by invisible but powerful threads” (page 7). What are some of the “invisible but powerful threads” she experienced? Have you had a similar educational experience?
2. Hitz says that “real learning is hidden learning” (page 23). What does she mean?
3. Hitz discusses the benefits of learning for its own sake. In what ways do you participate in modes of learning without having a specific outcome in mind? In an age of distraction, how do you make time for leisure and learning?
4. Hitz argues that higher education should be investing in human development that isn’t marketable. Do you think the sole purpose of education should be and/or is to get a job?
5. What role do you think work plays or will play in your life? Does your job define you? Does it define others? Do you judge others based on their profession or type of job? What makes a good job good?
6. Hitz says “politics on campus should be rare, and almost always extracurricular.” Do you agree? Should politics have a place in classrooms?
7. Hitz expresses a worry that the style of learning that interests her is useless—why is she no longer worried? Do you think that pursuing learning for its own sake can make the world a better place? How?
8. “Failure is perhaps the best-trod route to inwardness,” says Hitz. What does she mean? Have there been moments in your life when failure helped you cultivate a more robust inner life? Is failure necessary for growth?
9. Hitz draws on an eclectic array of philosophers, writers, scientists, and theologians in her book, from Plato to Elena Ferrante and Malcolm X. Why do you think she does this? Do they all have something in common? Who are some people that inspire you?
10. “Intellectual life is not an elite property but a piece of the human heritage, it belongs first and fundamentally to ordinary human beings.” Do you think the education system currently is elitist? If so, is there a way to make it feel more “ordinary”? If not, in what ways does it appeal to the masses?
11. After reading this book, do you want to give more time and attention to your intellectual life? How might you do so?