

Slam

In the movie *Slam*, Ray must make a decision. His decision calls into question all his beliefs about what is fair and what life is all about. Please look at the following list of questions that came up in the movie and see if any of them relates to your life. Pick one and discuss it thoroughly, then move on to Part II and discuss that.

Part I

1. Ray says he sold weed to survive, the prisoner in the writing class says if his family was hungry he would hold up a store. Other people in the movie clearly disagree and say personal responsibility requires not using those excuses to do things that are wrong. When a decision must be made between what is right and what seems necessary at the time, how do you make that decision? What are you weighing on each side? (Think of concrete examples.)
2. Ray says what he did was not a big crime, people are doing things much worse than what he did. He does not feel the punishment fits the crime. Why does Lauren press him so hard to accept responsibility? What does she think he will get out of going to prison? When you take responsibility and accept consequences what can that do for you as a person? What can refusing to take responsibility do for you as a person?
3. Ray's mentor in prison, Hoffa, tells him that real power is winning the war without violence, winning the war before it even starts. What do you think he means by that? He says that Ray did that by using spoken word on the yard when a fight was about to start. Why was he so impressed with that? What did Ray's words do to change Hoffa's thinking? What kinds of things can you do to affect other people's thinking?
4. When the prisoner in the writing class reads his poem "Why" he describes the crime that landed him in prison. He talks about the ten years he's spent in jail. What realizations has he made in prison? If he did not go to prison for that crime, how would it have affected his growth as a person? Do you think he's changed in prison and, if so, how? Has anything in your life profoundly changed your thinking? Explain.

Part II

A philosophy of life is the beliefs that make you who you are, and cause you to behave in certain ways. A person without beliefs reacts to what happens to them and never really gets control over their own destiny. What beliefs do you think you have that you think will allow you to control your destiny and lead a good life? Explain thoroughly with examples.