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## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Developed by Heartland Truly Moving Pictures to accompany *Everybody's Fine*, recipient of the Truly Moving Picture Award, an honored distinction given to films that unlock the vast potential of the human spirit and enable us to view stories that display courage, integrity and hope, taking entertainment to a higher level.

[www.TrulyMovingPictures.org](http://www.TrulyMovingPictures.org)

[www.EverybodysFineMovie.com](http://www.EverybodysFineMovie.com)



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## Introduction



### One Film Can

Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, a non-profit organization, recognizes and honors films and filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life. We believe that one film can move us to laughter, to tears, or to make a difference. *Everybody's Fine* is a movie that demonstrates that **One Film Can**.

### Synopsis

Frank Goode (Academy Award® winner Robert De Niro) has spent his adult life working in a local wire factory earning every dollar he can to support his family. Recently retired, he realizes that over the years he has spent too little time with his four children and that it's time to reconnect.

Frank's late wife was always his main point of contact with his kids but he decides that it's now his responsibility to keep an eye on them. He is inspired to invite the whole extended family for a barbeque weekend. Preparations go well until one by one, such is modern life, they all have good reason to cancel.

Despite a strict warning from his doctor, Frank takes matters into his own hands and packs a bag before setting out on a journey across the US with the intention of surprising each of his children and wallowing in their success and happiness.

Frank travels to see his son David 'the artist' in New York, his daughter who is 'high up in advertising' in Chicago, his son Robert 'the orchestral conductor' in Denver and finally Rosie his youngest who is a 'dancer in a Vegas show' but before long it becomes clear to Frank that his children are not quite as happy or successful as his wife had always reported.

Returning home from a journey that ends with the revelation of a family tragedy, Frank has the insight and confidence to report to his wife that despite everything "everybody's fine."

A heartfelt dramatic comedy *Everybody's Fine* presents a family picture that is all too common in our modern world. Parents and siblings living hundreds of miles apart, too distracted with the stress of modern life to find time to call each other and too preoccupied with their own family and friends to find time to visit home.



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## Family



*Everybody's Fine* is a film that examines many of the struggles that families go through as they try to watch out for and protect the ones they love.

Use the following points to discuss relationships in the film and those in your own life.

### Discussion Points:

- What part of the film did you identify with most? For what reason?
- Whether a mother, father, sister, brother or child, there are situations that everyone can identify with and understand. What are some universal responsibilities that you think the different family roles assume in order to make families function?
- Think of your family members. How do you relate with them each in different ways and why do you relate to them differently?
- Have the dynamics in your family changed over time? For what reasons?
- Do you believe Frank's wife shielded the truth from Frank about their children, or do you believe that as a mother she really believed that each of her children were slightly more successful and happy than what they were?
- Consider the way you describe your family members to other people. Is the way you talk about your family members different than the way you describe or think about others who aren't related to you? If so, how is it different? Why do you believe this is the case?

## A New Perspective



Frank's perspective on some things changes with the death of his wife. After her death he reevaluates the relationships he has with each of his children and decides to visit them, and in doing so gets to know each of them differently.

### Discussion Points:

- Have you ever had an event impact your life in the way Frank's wife's death affected him? What was this event and how did it impact you?
- Did watching Frank's journey bring you any insight or perspective on the ways families interact or how the differences between generations can lead to misunderstanding?
- What part did the flashbacks of Frank interacting with his children play in the film?
- Considering your perspective on people, events and situations today, do you understand past events differently? How?
- *Everybody's Fine* centers around one family and how everyone communicates within that family. Frank spends all his life working on telephone wires, the very instrument of communication, but Frank lets most of the communicating be done by his wife. Think about Frank's interaction with a passenger on the train as he describes his pride in his work on the telephone lines. Is there any object you view with that same sort of appreciation that others might not understand? Why?

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## Get Involved



*Everybody's Fine* is a film that deals with the intricacies of family life as well as the differences between generations, whether between parent and child or grandparent and grandchild. This film offers many insights into these differences in interactions and understanding. Understanding is sometimes the key to solving differences and developing better relationships with others.

Use the following suggestions to reach out to others -- either relatives or community members who you may not always understand, simply because of the differences in your perceptions.

### **Suggestions:**

- Take the time to interview a family member from a different generation. Determine the similarities and differences between the way each of you communicate with others -- what forms of communication you rely on most and why. How does this impact who each of you communicate with, the frequency with which you communicate and the depth of communication you have?
- To fully understand some generational differences that exist, take time to volunteer in an organization that deals with people from a different generation than you. If young, think about volunteering in a retirement community or nursing home. If older, think about working in a youth mentoring organization or afterschool program.
- Use this film as a way to open up dialogue in your family. Take time to align your impressions of family members with the way they self identify. Do you see your family members the way they see themselves? If not, how can you start dialogue to remedy this?





## Moving Moments

*Everybody's Fine* has been honored as a Heartland Truly Moving Picture Award-winning film. This award was created to honor films released theatrically that align with Heartland's mission to recognize and honor films and filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by artistically expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life.

These award-winning films are made up of moving and inspiring moments – those moments that cause you to think, see something in your life differently or be inspired to do something. These moments are what make the movie and its message remain with you well after you've left the theater.

Think about *Everybody's Fine*. What were the moments that stood out to you? How did they make you feel? How will they cause you to think about things differently in the future? Share those moments with others at [www.TrulyMovingPictures.org](http://www.TrulyMovingPictures.org). Simply create a membership or login if you already have one and then search the movie list for *Everybody's Fine*. You can leave your review of the movie or thoughts about your Truly Moving Picture in the "Review" section.



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