

Read Global

The Alchemist Discussion Questions

Adapted from questions supplied by ReadingGroupGuides.com and Goodreads.com

Ice breakers: On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this novel?

Which character would you like to have dinner with?

1. The book begins by giving “the boy’s” name as Santiago—and then never uses it again. Why?
2. At the start of his journey, the gypsy woman she asks Santiago for one tenth of the treasure in return for interpreting his dream. Then the old man requests one tenth of his flock up front as payment if he shows him the path to the treasure. How do these payments differ?
3. Have you ever had “beginner’s luck” that encouraged you to carry on with something challenging?
4. What lessons did the boy learn while working for the crystal merchant?,
5. When he talked about the pilgrimage to Mecca, the crystal merchant argued that having a dream is more important than fulfilling it...
6. How does the Englishman's search for the alchemist compares to Santiago's search for a treasure? How did the Englishman and Santiago feel about each other?
7. Why do you think the alchemist chose to befriend Santiago, though he knew that the Englishman was the one looking for him?
8. At one point the alchemist explains to Santiago the secret of successfully turning metal into gold. How does this process compare to finding a Personal Legend?
9. How can bad omens be differentiated by the hardships one has to face relentlessly to the path of his/her destiny?
10. Why did Santiago have to go through the dangers of tribal wars on the outskirts of the oasis in order to reach the pyramids? At the very end of the journey, why did the alchemist leave Santiago alone to complete it?
11. Earlier in the story, the alchemist told Santiago "when you possess great treasures within you, and try to tell others of them, seldom are you believed." At the end of the story, how did this simple lesson save Santiago's life? How did it lead him back to the treasure he was looking for?
12. Why was this entitled *The Alchemist* rather than being named after the main character?

Closing: Did this discussion change your 1-10 rating for this book?