

# Book Club Kit

# LICENSE TO PARENT



How My Career as a Spy  
Helped Me Raise Resourceful,  
Self-Sufficient Kids


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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Part One, Christina debunks Hollywood depictions of espionage. How has her explanation of life at the CIA surprised you (or not)?
  2. In Chapter Four: Be Prepared, Christina discusses the importance of family meeting spots and alternate transportation. For their family, it's motorcycles, but she also suggests different transportation methods like e-bikes, bicycles, and scooters. Do you have a family meeting spot? What alternative transportation will you use, if necessary?
  3. In Chapter Five: Get Off the X, Ryan describes a story about how he “froze” at the CIA's operational training facility, the Farm. Have you ever been in an emergency scenario in which you've frozen or wished you'd done something differently? Explain.
  4. In Chapter Six: Look Without Looking, Christina shares how she and Ryan began sensitizing their kids to their surroundings as young as two and three years old when they started pointing out makes and models of vehicles on the road as well as landmarks. What are some ways you can incorporate these principles into your daily life with your kids?
  5. In Chapter Seven: Defend Yourself, Christina talks about the term “You went rogue,” which is when either she or Ryan makes a unilateral choice about their kids without pre-coordinating. They have an agreement to call each other out when one goes rogue and that the responsible party will own up and apologize. (Of course, life is messy, and it doesn't always go that smoothly!) How do you and your partner handle situations like this? Do you have a term or way to identify it?
  6. In Chapter Eight: You Me, Same Same, Christina shares how the most successful CIA operations officers are the ones who have an array of interests from which to draw when building a relationship with their intelligence asset. It's with this in mind that she and Ryan seek to expose their kids to a variety of interests to make them well-rounded. What are some new interests you can introduce to your kids?
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**7.** In Chapter Nine: *The Pen Is Mightier Than the Sword*, Christina describes just how important writing and oral communication are when it comes to espionage. How do you think technological advances like texting and social media have impacted kids' ability to communicate well? In what ways have you seen this play out in your kids' lives?

**8.** In Chapter Ten: *Plant a Seed*, Christina explains her initial hesitation about teaching their kids CIA persuasion techniques but ultimately decides these are valuable skills that can be used for good. Do you agree? Why or why not?


**9.** In Chapter Eleven: *Consider the Source*, Christina and Ryan emphasize the importance of vetting your source, and in Ryan's case, identifying a fabricator. This issue feels more important now than ever. What are some ways you plan to teach your kids how to identify facts and educate them about the mindsets and biases that we all have?

**10.** In Chapter Twelve: *Navigating Technology*, Christina identifies a spectrum when it comes to parents and their kids' access to technology, with some parents not allowing any access because it's a slippery slope and others taking a *laissez faire* approach. Where do you fall on this spectrum and why?

**11.** In Chapter Thirteen: *Take Ownership*, Christina and Ryan discuss the incredible amount of responsibility the CIA gives its officers from the get-go. They seek to emulate this approach with their kids. What sorts of ways have you begun introducing independence and responsibility to your children?

**12.** In Chapter Fourteen: *Protect Your Assets*, Christina and Ryan talk about how trust and loyalty are at the very foundation of the CIA—and in the way they parent. In the key principles, Christina suggests using the phrase “I promise” sparingly and apologizing to your kids. Do you agree? Why or why not?

**13.** In Chapter Fifteen: *Perfection Is the Enemy of the Good*, Christina shares how social media can sometimes make parents feel like they don't measure up. How have you experienced this in your life? What have you done to combat this?



# QUICK TIPS TO RAISE RESOURCEFUL, SELF-SUFFICIENT KIDS



## Teach Your Kids How to Spot and Avoid Danger

1. Listen to your gut.
2. Visualize your escape route.
3. Listen to alarms and warning signals.
4. Run, hide, fight.
5. Ignore authority figures, if necessary.

## Tech Safety Tips for Kids

1. Don't overshare personal information online, especially with people you don't know.
2. Be aware of how predators can use information about you.
3. Guard your future.
4. Protect yourself from cyberbullying and stand up for others.

## How to Prepare Your Kids for Emergencies

1. Make survival kits together.
2. Know how to improvise.
3. Get back to basics.
4. Designate a family meeting spot.
5. Consider alternative transportation.
6. Look for opportunities to teach them CPR and first aid.



# VESPER MARTINI COCKTAIL

## The “James Bond” Martini

At CIA Headquarters, we often referred to happy hour as “Vespers”

### INGREDIENTS

3 ounces gin  
1 ounce vodka  
½ ounce Lillet Blanc  
lemon twist, for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

Fill a cocktail shaker or mixing glass with ice cubes, then pour the gin, vodka, and Lillet over the ice. Stir until well-chilled, about 20 seconds.

Strain the drink into a chilled cocktail glass and add the lemon twist garnish on top.

Recipe from Real Simple  
[realsimple.com/food-recipes/browse-all-recipes/vesper-martini-recipe](https://realsimple.com/food-recipes/browse-all-recipes/vesper-martini-recipe)

