

Offline Discussion Topics for General Reading Groups

1. Compare the experiences in *Offline* with the ones you have at your job.
2. Would you like to have Lucy Merriweather as your boss? Why or why not?
3. If you were Bartleby's boss, how would you have dealt with him?
4. Lucy has a box of cherished possessions she keeps on her desk, such as the clay figurine her daughter made. What cherished possessions do you keep on your desk?
5. Lucy struggles to keep a balance between her personal and professional lives. How well do you think she did it? How do you do it?
6. Brenda Halsey tells Lucy, "The less you know about your employees, the better. Unless an employee's personal life affects their on-the-job performance, it should be of no interest to you." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
7. Describe a corporate merger you've experienced. How does this experience compare with the one in *Offline*?
8. Pick one of the characters in *Offline* who most resembles you or someone you know at work. Which character is it and how does that person compare?
9. Suppose you were an employee at eUniLink when *Offline* took place. How would you have reacted to the events of the story?
10. At the Friday Fun Day, Khadija wouldn't wear shorts and Raghu wouldn't eat lunch because of their religious beliefs. Is there anything work-related that you would refuse to do because of your religious or personal beliefs? What if your job depended on it?
11. At the end of the story, Lucy cries, "Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!" What do you think that line means in the story? What does it mean to you?
12. The story ends shortly before the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. Describe your experience of that day and how it changed your life.

Questions

If you have questions about using *Offline* in your reading group, contact me at matthew@matthewarnoldstern.com. Put READER GUIDE in your subject line.