



## *Pushing the Limits of Transformation* Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Who doesn't love a whole new start? The chance to reimagine and remake our home, our job, our neighborhood or ourselves. And what about those among us who can pick up any raw material and hammer it into a work of art? Humans stretch themselves all the time to transform what was into what could be. Get ready to discover what humans can accomplish by pushing the limits of transformation.

### *The Martian*

**Andy Weir, Fiction.** Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there.

After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he's alive - and even if he could get word out, his supplies would be gone long before a rescue could arrive.

Chances are, though, he won't have time to starve to death. The damaged machinery, unforgiving environment, or plain-old "human error" are much more likely to kill him first. But Mark isn't ready to give up yet. Drawing on his ingenuity, his engineering skills - and a relentless, dogged refusal to quit - he steadfastly confronts one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after the next. Will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome the impossible odds against him?

- Who knew potatoes, duct tape, and '70s reruns were the key to space survival? How does each of these items represent aspects of Mark's character that help him survive?
- Did you find the science and technology behind Mark's problem-solving accessible? How did that information add to the realism of the story? How does science contribute to our understanding of enlightenment? Do you think there are aspects of enlightenment that science can't address?
- How does the author handle the passage of time in the book? Did he transition smoothly from a day-to-day account to a span of one and a half years? How does he use the passage of time to build suspense?
- What are some of the ways the author established his credibility with scientific detail? Which of Mark's solutions did you find most amazing and yet believable?

