



Welcome to the Conversation!

I'm thrilled that you've chosen *The Right Side of Happiness* for your book club journey. This book isn't just a guide to mindfulness; it's an invitation to explore your inner world, challenge old habits, and embrace a more joyful and intentional way of living.

To spark meaningful discussions and deepen your connection with the book's themes, I've prepared thought-provoking questions designed to inspire reflection and personal growth.

Whether you're sipping tea with friends, hosting a lively group discussion, or sitting in quiet contemplation let this guide be your companion as you explore the many ways mindfulness can enrich your life

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General Questions

These questions are designed to encourage introspection, foster personal growth, and spark meaningful conversations among book club participants. Each question invites participants to engage deeply with the book's themes and apply them to their own lives.

Mindfulness and Awareness

- The book discusses the practice of observing without judgment. Reflect on a recent situation where you found yourself judging someone or something. How might mindfulness have influenced your perspective?
- Annamarie shares moments where pausing to notice her physical sensations helped her manage stress. What might the practice of checking in with your body entail for you? What might you discover if you did?
- The concept of being present is central to the book. What daily habit could you transform into a mindfulness practice to anchor yourself in the present moment?

Self-Compassion and Reflection

- The book prioritizes self-compassion. Can you recall a recent moment when you were especially self-critical? How might you rewrite that inner dialogue with more kindness?
- Reflecting on your own “imperfections,” or those aspects of yourself for which you judge critically, what would it look like to fully accept them as a part of your unique journey? How might this impact your relationships with, and perspectives of, the people around you?
- Annamarie talks about recognizing the stories we tell ourselves. What is one recurring harshly critical story you tell yourself, and how might you reframe it if you were counseling yourself like you would a best friend?

Emotions and Emotional Regulation

- The book explores managing emotions mindfully. When was the last time you reacted emotionally rather than responding thoughtfully? What might a mindful response have looked like, sounded like, felt like in your body?
- Annamarie suggests that anger can be a teacher. Think of a time when you felt angry. What was the underlying need, principle, or value that the anger was wanting to reveal?

Interconnectedness and Relationships

- The book highlights the importance of listening deeply. How often do you listen - truly listen - without preparing your response, evaluating the speaker or circumstances, or making assumptions? How might improving your listening skills enhance your relationships and understanding of what's happening?
- Think about a time when someone really listened to you and you felt completely understood? What did they say or do that made you feel that way? How could you do the same for someone else?
- Annamarie describes the power of gratitude in relationships. Who in your life deserves a moment of gratitude today, and how might expressing it strengthen your bond?

Resilience and Growth

- The book shares stories of vulnerability and resilience. Think of a time when you overcame a significant challenge. What strengths did you discover in yourself?
- Annamarie emphasizes embracing discomfort as a path to growth. What is one area of your life where stepping outside your comfort zone might bring meaningful growth?
- The book discusses the idea of letting go. What is one thing you're holding onto that no longer serves you, and what steps could you take to release it?

Intentional Living and Values

- The book talks about living with purpose. What really matters to you in life (your values), and do your daily choices match up with those things?
- Reflect on a choice you made recently. Was it aligned with your long-term goals and values, or was it influenced by habit or external pressures?

Discovering Joy and Gratitude

- Annamarie describes finding joy in small moments. What was the last small moment of joy you experienced, and how did it impact your day?
- Gratitude is a recurring theme in the book. What is one thing you are grateful for today, and how can practicing gratitude daily transform your outlook?

Shaping Your Mindset

- The book discusses shifting your thinking to embrace possibilities. What limiting belief about yourself or your potential are you ready to let go of? When was a time when you proved one of your personal doubts wrong and succeeded in spite of your fears and doubts? What do you want to acknowledge yourself for?
- Have you ever reacted to something without thinking—like snapping at someone or getting overwhelmed—and later wished you had handled it differently? Mindfulness is about creating a little space between what happens to you and how you respond. How do you think taking a moment to pause and breathe before reacting could help you handle tough situations with a clearer mind and more confidence?

By Chapter Inquiries and/or Journal Prompts

Introduction

1. How does the concept of mindfulness as a tool for self-reflection and breaking habits resonate with your current struggles or routines? Can you identify a specific habit you'd like to approach with greater mindfulness?
 2. Annamarie describes mindfulness as creating space for intentional living. How would you define living intentionally, and what would that look like for you in your day-to-day life?
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Chapter 1: An Introduction to Mindfulness

1. Annamarie shares her journey from identifying as a “seeker” to embracing mindfulness. In your life, are there areas where you find yourself seeking rather than accepting? How might mindfulness change that perspective?
 2. Mindfulness is described as “setting up camp where you are.” What are some simple ways you can anchor yourself in the present moment during stressful or mundane tasks?
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Chapter 2: The Benefits of a Mindfulness Practice

1. The book discusses how mindfulness helps us identify and break negative thought patterns. Can you share an example of a thought pattern you'd like to change? How might mindfulness help you approach this?
 2. The metaphor of the brain as a “funhouse mirror” is used to describe distorted perceptions. What areas of your life might feel distorted, and how could mindfulness help you see them more clearly?
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Chapter 3: Overcoming Barriers to Mindfulness

1. Fear and discomfort are natural when starting a mindfulness practice. Have you experienced resistance when trying something new? How did you overcome it, and how might this inform your mindfulness journey?

2. Annamarie suggests practicing mindfulness with a mental health professional or trusted group if you've experienced trauma. How does community or guidance play a role in your personal growth?
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Chapter 4: Incorporating Mindfulness into Everyday Life

1. The book highlights how even small mindfulness practices can create significant change. What daily activity could you transform into a mindfulness practice (e.g., eating, driving, or brushing your teeth)?
 2. Reflect on a time when you felt overwhelmed. How might pausing and engaging in a mindfulness practice, like noticing your breath or physical sensations, have shifted your experience?
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Chapter 5: Building Resilience Through Mindfulness

1. Mindfulness is described as a way to create emotional "space" for conscious choices. Can you identify a recent situation where you reacted out of habit rather than intention? How might mindfulness have helped?
 2. Annamarie discusses building resilience by embracing emotions rather than avoiding them. How comfortable are you sitting with challenging emotions? What might help you embrace this practice?
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Chapter 6: Finding Joy in the Present Moment

1. The idea of "right here, right now" emphasizes joy in the present. Can you think of a recent joyful moment that you fully appreciated? How might you create more of these moments?
 2. Annamarie writes about the science of happiness connected to mindfulness. What role does happiness play in your mindfulness goals, and how do you measure it in your life?
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Chapter 7: Mindfulness and Relationships

1. How has mindfulness or a lack of it affected your communication or relationships? Are there specific relationships you would like to approach more mindfully?

2. The book discusses mindfulness as a tool for vulnerability and honesty. What fears or barriers do you face when being vulnerable, and how might mindfulness help you overcome them?
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Chapter 8: The Mindful Path Forward

1. The Annamarie encourages readers to explore their unique mindful path. What practices or habits resonate most with you from the book, and how do you plan to incorporate them into your life?
2. The book closes with the idea of embracing imperfections. How might you apply this concept to a current challenge, and what impact could it have on your well-being?

Questions Created for the Unitarian Church

These questions are designed to provoke thoughtful discussion and draw connections between the principles and themes in *The Right Side of Happiness*. Each invites readers to consider both the book's teachings and their own spiritual or ethical journeys.

General Reflection and Personal Growth

1. The book discusses mindfulness as a practice of being fully present. How does this align with the 1st Principle: recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person, including yourself?
2. Annamarie shares stories of managing self-criticism and embracing self-acceptance. How does this practice encourage spiritual growth, as emphasized in the 3rd Principle?
3. Reflecting on the book's guidance on breaking negative habits, how might mindfulness help in a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning," as stated in the 4th Principle?
4. How does the practice of gratitude explored in the book resonate with your understanding of interconnectedness and the 7th Principle?

Relationships and Community

1. The book emphasizes compassion toward oneself and others. How does this challenge us to practice the 2nd Principle: justice, equity, and compassion in human relations?
2. Annamarie highlights the importance of listening and being fully present in conversations. How can this approach transform how we engage in congregations or communities?
3. The concept of loving-kindness meditation is introduced in the book. How might this practice enhance your efforts to build a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all, aligning with the 6th Principle?
4. How does the idea of embracing vulnerability, as discussed in the book, deepen your relationships and encourage greater acceptance of one another?

Broader Ethical and Spiritual Contexts

1. Annamarie describes moments of doubt and resilience during her mindfulness journey. How do these stories connect with the idea of drawing strength from transcendent experiences, as suggested in the Sources?

2. The book speaks to breaking free from judgmental thinking. How does this reflect the wisdom found in humanist teachings to heed the guidance of reason?
3. How might the mindfulness practices in the book inspire actions that confront powers and structures of injustice with compassion, as outlined in the words and deeds of prophetic people?
4. In what ways does the book's emphasis on interconnectedness reflect the spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions?

Practical Applications

1. What mindfulness practice from the book resonated with you most, and how might it help you embody the UU Principles in your daily life?
2. The book emphasizes observing emotions without judgment. How can this skill support a more democratic and thoughtful approach to group decision-making, reflecting the 5th Principle?
3. How does the book's message about living intentionally inspire you to honor the sacred circle of life and live in harmony with nature?

Challenging Assumptions and New Perspectives

1. The book encourages examining and reframing habitual narratives. How does this challenge assumptions and open pathways for deeper personal truth and meaning?
2. Reflecting on Annamarie's journey of self-discovery, how might the process of mindfulness foster a sense of humility and wonder, as emphasized in many spiritual teachings?
3. The book discusses pausing to recognize beauty and wonder in the everyday. How might this practice deepen your awareness of the "mystery and wonder" that UU Sources speak of?

Deeper Connections to Principles and Sources

1. Reflect on a time when mindfulness helped you approach a conflict or challenge with compassion and justice. How does this relate to the UU Principles or Sources?
2. Annamarie writes about finding joy in small, intentional acts. How might this philosophy help foster a more profound respect for the interdependent web of existence?