

# Book Club Discussion Guide

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## The Art of Noticing by Rob Walker

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Discover how to wake up to the world around you and renew your creative spark.

**QUOTE** | “Anybody interested in thinking creatively seeks (needs) to notice what has been overlooked or ignored by others, to get beyond distractions and attend to the world.”

**QUESTION** | Do you think of yourself as a noticer?

**QUOTE** | “We know we’re distracted, and we yearn to see the world more clearly.”

**QUESTION** | What are you wishing you would notice more of?

**QUOTE** | “A hypereffective schedule designed to maximize productivity is, in fact, more likely to distract you from what’s important than help you discover it.”

**QUESTION** | Why do you think this is true? Have you experienced it?

**QUOTE** | p.16 - “They created a manifesto that advocated the power of story but was notable for its emphasis on restrictions—against lighting and filter tricks or other special effects, among other limitations.”

**QUESTION** | Should we impose more rules on our scrapbooking to improve the authenticity of our stories?

**QUOTE** | p.19 - “Start with Slow Art Day’s ten-minute benchmark. You’ll get a glimpse of what drives Irwin’s remarkable process: You’ll see details you missed, you’ll draw new connections, and you’ll reconsider first impressions.”

**QUESTION** | Do you find yourself rushing when doing something “fun?”

**QUOTE** | p. 23 - “Sit by an office window that you hardly bother to glance through anymore or on your own front porch. The determined repetition of the same view over time will likely reveal something that is not really the “same view” after all.”

**QUESTION** | Have you tried this type of exercise? What have you noticed?

**QUOTE** | p. 26 - “She thought about how she framed what she saw. She made physical Polaroid-size frames, acrylic with a dry-erase surface—like portable windows.”

**QUESTION** | Do you typically look at the world like you are looking through a camera lens?

**QUOTE** | p. 36 - “Duchamp repurposed existing words and images and with a simple gesture redrew a boundary between the everyday and the elevated: Art is what I say it is.”

**QUESTION** | Do you claim the title of artist?

**QUOTE** | p. 41 - “However you feel about it, suppose the next time you were tempted to capture a snapshot of an appealing or interesting scene, you drew it instead? You’ll find that drawing helps you slow down and enriches what you see.”

**QUESTION** | Can you imagine drawing some of your memories as part of your scrapbooking?

**QUOTE** | p. 52 - “You may learn something about yourself in what you notice.”

**QUESTION** | What is one thing you have learned about yourself when examining what and how you scrapbook?

**QUOTE** | p. 53 - "Spend your next social outing with one eye toward what you would do, how you would move, if you simply had to get away, as unnoticed as possible, in five minutes."

**QUESTION** | Do you already do this?

**QUOTE** | p. 55 - "Look for flickers of human individuality amid the routine of the everyday. Imagine how that flicker could be amplified and extended, how a fleeting moment can be remade into an unforgettable one."

**QUESTION** | Have you scrapbooked a much deeper story based on a mundane moment?

**QUOTE** | p. 62 - "It takes only a moment to stop and pick something up to determine whether it's interesting. The discards of others can be windows into lives you'd never otherwise see—fragments of stories that open us to wonder and curiosity."

**QUESTION** | Does this type of ephemera interest you or do you have enough of your own?

**QUOTE** | p. 73 - "You notice some feeling within you—*anxiety, joy*, doesn't matter. Identify the specific sources of that feeling."

**QUESTION** | Do you find it easy or difficult to identify what you are feeling?

**QUOTE** | p. 86 - "Sometimes what we need is the confidence to believe that what we notice actually matters: After all, if nobody else ever mentions it, we might think it's just not that important. Get over that feeling. It's precisely the stuff everybody else has missed that ought to make us think twice."

**QUESTION** | Do you ever feel the need to justify the value of scrapbooking to others?

**QUOTE** | p. 93 - "A significant moment deserves a considered prelude."

**QUESTION** | What is one way you can slow down to better experience the moments of your life?

**QUOTE** | p. 102 - "These participants described connecting with the landscape, appreciating and re-evaluating the familiar cactus, achieving a natural calmness."

**QUESTION** | Have you spent time observing nature?

**QUOTE** | p. 104 - "Imagine taking a snapshot, and then continue on your way."

**QUESTION** | Do you ever leave your camera at home?

**QUOTE** | p. 121 - "This sounds dangerous, because it is. Climbing around sewer systems and abandoned buildings can entail not just the evasion of guards and cameras but actual physical risk."

**QUESTION** | Do the more "crazy" ideas in this book interest you or not?

**QUOTE** | p. 153 - "Inviting a loved one, a friend, or even a stranger to record a meaningful interview with you just might turn out to be one of the most important moments in that person's life—and in yours."

**QUESTION** | Have you ever interviewed a family member as part of your memory keeping?

**QUOTE** | p. 156 - "We are doing this because we are all going to die, and we want some things about us to persist."

**QUESTION** | What do you most want to persist?

**QUOTE** | p. 169 - "Do not consult photographs or diary entries; just remember. In particular, try to remember the odd, small moments—not just the spectacular cathedral, but the young man you glimpsed in the hotel lobby. Concentrate on what lingers in your memory, however apparently inconsequential. Write down everything you can recall."

**QUESTION** | Are you interested in trying this?

**QUOTE** | p. 229 - These exercises and meditations were designed expressly to help you decide what you want to care about—and thus what and whom you want to care for and attend to. This at its core is the art, and the joy, of noticing.

**QUESTION** | How has tending to something impacted your life?

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