

# BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

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## Slow by Brooke McAlary

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Close out your year with gentleness by learning new strategies for embracing imperfection and living at a slower pace.

**QUOTE** | p.ix - "What's more, they were saying that this life of less stuff, less stress, fewer obligations, and fewer pressures was actually a life of more—more time, more energy, more freedom, more joy, more presence, more connection, and more health."

**QUESTION** | What is one thing you would like more of in your life next year?

**QUOTE** | p.xix - "There is no one right way, and the only one that matters is the way that works for you."

**QUESTION** | Is this smart advice or a cop-out on being prescriptive?

**QUOTE** | p.8 - "And the bigger, unspoken question was: What kind of a life would I need to live in order for people to say the things I wanted them to say about me?"

**QUESTION** | Have you ever tried an exercise in writing your own obituary? If so, how did it make you feel? If not, does it interest you?

**QUOTE** | p.12 - "By placing these priorities at the forefront of my mind, I have slowly created a life aligned with my values that are important to me and my family, a life aligned with my Why."

**QUESTION** | Why do you think it is difficult to feel in alignment with your purpose?

**QUOTE** | p.17 - "In short, I began paying attention to the inputs in my life and started to understand that I was capable of improving the quality of those inputs—enjoying

more of the things that made me feel better and less of the things that didn't."

**QUESTION** | What is one thing you know makes you feel better?

**QUOTE** | p.21 - "Don't get me wrong—inspiration is a wonderful tool to light a fire under us. But if all we do is sit there and let it burn our pants, then it's not at all that helpful is it?"

**QUESTION** | Are you an inspiration hoarder?

**QUOTE** | p.44 - "Clutter is deferred decisions. It's the physical manifestation of procrastination."

**QUESTION** | With this definition in mind, what type of decisions are hard for you?

**QUOTE** | p.47 - "We fear the loss of identity that comes from realizing we're no longer the crafty person or the snowboarder, the suit-wearing corporate or the comic-book collector, so we keep the things that tie us to that story, too afraid to look too closely lest we see how much we've changed."

**QUESTION** | What identity are you currently hanging on to?

**QUOTE** | p.52 - "If you find yourself completely stuck, unable to declutter for no discernible reason, you could be on the verge of a big breakthrough."

**QUESTION** | How can you apply this to scrapbooking? What kind of breakthrough might be possible?

**QUOTE** | p.64 - "The key is to make it as easy as possible to get started. Small steps taken consistently will see you make more progress over time than the occasional big push, even if they feel insignificant in the beginning."

**QUESTION** | What is a small next step you can take with your scrapbooking stuff?

**QUOTE** | p.72 - "Nothing about life is the stuff we accumulate. It's the people, the memories, the kindness, the relationship."

**QUESTION** | As a scrapbooker creating something tangible, how can you reconcile this?

**QUOTE** | p.73 - "I don't want slow living to become synonymous with decluttering, but I do want it to become synonymous with intention."

**QUESTION** | How do you define "slow?"

**QUOTE** | p.79 - "I detest the fact that even a well-adjusted adult can spend time on Instagram swinging wildly from self-acceptance to self-flagellation."

**QUESTION** | What do you think is one thing we can all do to reduce this impact on ourselves and our kids?

**QUOTE** | p.84 - "Perspective helps us to care less about the crap that doesn't matter and recognize how luck we are that these are in fact our problems."

**QUESTION** | Do you think scrapbooking helps us make the world a better place... or is it just a privilege?

**QUOTE** | p.90- "The sharing economy is growing at a rapid pace, and the idea of sharing resources is starting to take hold in the mainstream."

**QUESTION** | How could this concept help a scrapbooker who wants to have options, but prefers to own fewer things?

**QUOTE** | p.103 - "To extricate ourselves from the ever-revolving cycle of want-buy-declutter-want-buy-reclutter, we need to figure out what's worth caring more about and what's worth caring less about."

**QUESTION** | What's worth caring about when it comes to your scrapbooking supplies? What's not?

**QUOTE** | p.117 - "I didn't realize it at the time, but this awareness, this tapping into the tiny details of life, was strong enough to gradually lift the plates of my armor and eventually wash them off."

**QUESTION** | Is there anything that has helped you become more mindful?

**QUOTE** | p.118 - "To her, I was special and important enough to invite into her arena of play, time and time again. Me. Imperfect, awkward me."

**QUOTE** | p.163 - "Slow living is about quality time and making things count. These conversations matter."

**QUESTION** | What is one small action you can take to be more present with your family members?

**QUOTE** | p.127 - "The act, the process of creating, brings us to the present moment, allowing us to leave behind the concerns of our past and worries for the future. Making, rather than consuming, is a beautiful act of mindfulness."

**QUESTION** | What do you notice when you scrapbook?

**QUOTE** | p.132 - "So often, I will have a breakthrough in these moments of silence, as my thoughts, which need time to roll around in silence and put themselves in some kind of order, gradually work themselves out."

**QUESTION** | Where/ when do you have breakthroughs?

**QUOTE** | p.178 - "I disconnect in order to hold my daughter's hand and tell her stories and brush her cheek as she goes to sleep and never document those moments anywhere other than my own memory."

**QUESTION** | Where/how do you draw the line between memories you document and ones you don't?

**QUOTE** | p.183 - "The biggest culprits behind the endless scrolling: boredom, procrastination, emotional discomfort, self-sabotage, self-loathing or dissatisfaction, habit, looking for someone or something to inspire me."

**QUESTION** | Why do you typically scroll?

**QUOTE** | p.189 - “In fact, selfishness? Bring it on. Because I’ve realized that in order to leave the world a better place than I found it—to be compassionate and caring—I need to be strong, I need to be vulnerable, I need to be healthy and vital and full of good stuff like kindness and generosity and laughter.”

**QUESTION** | Has anyone ever said that your scrapbooking (or another self-care activity) was selfish?

**QUOTE** | p.193 - “When I was about twelve, a very mean girl took up residence inside my head. She stuck around for many, many years, whispering butter words to me, convincing me that I wasn’t good enough, causing me to question my abilities, my worth, my place in the world.”

**QUOTE** | p.230 - “I used to revel in guilt, secretly loving that it gave me ammunition to hate myself viciously at every turn for my failure to be everything to everyone at every moment.”

**QUESTION** | Do you have a mean girl inner voice?

**QUOTE** | p.198 - “I still crave change. I still work toward improvement. Contentment simply brings slowness to those changes. It brings quality, not quantity.”

**QUESTION** | Do you need to slow your pace of change?

**QUOTE** | p.200 - “It’s taught me about words and building worlds and what is it to be human, but it’s also taught me that I will find time for things I am passionate about.”

**QUESTION** | What has reading taught you?

**QUOTE** | p.215 - “I subscribed wholeheartedly to the myth of work/life balance... and somehow the exhaustion, the discontent, the comparisons, the guilt, the shoulds would simply disappear when I reached this nirvana of a balanced life.”

**QUESTION** | Do you believe in balance?

**QUOTE** | p.226 - “Getting organized (enough) is a way to do more of the important and less of the unimportant.”

**QUESTION** | In terms of your scrapbooking supplies or your creative workspace, what would organized enough look like for you?

**QUOTE** | p.232 - “There will be seasons in life that feel too busy, too full, too complex, and sometimes even too difficult.”

**QUESTION** | How can you better roll with these seasons as a scrapbooker?

**QUOTE** | p.242 - “I tell you this because there is delicious liberation in acknowledging that our efforts will be imperfect, embracing it, and moving forward anyway, in understanding that there will be missteps along the way and to start walking in spite of them.”

**QUESTION** | What is one imperfect way you’ve approached slow(er) living in the past?

**QUOTE** | p.252 - “The problem I realized quite quickly was that by putting all these together, to present them as the way to do living, is to paint a detailed portrait of a new set of Joneses.”

**QUESTION** | Does slow(er) living feel attainable?

**QUOTE** | p.254 - “Every time you make a seemingly insignificant shift towards your Why, every item you let go of, every deep breath, every kindness, every positive choices adds up to the creation of a life centered on what’s important—to you.”

**QUESTION** | What’s your next tiny step?

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