



# THE JOY CHOICE

## Book Club Discussion Questions

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Before your Book Club discusses *The Joy Choice*, you can have members take the [Hidden Eating and Exercise TRAP quiz](#).

Depending on the goals of your discussion, you could stick to the higher-level general questions (directly below) or dive deeper into the details of the content from each chapter.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. After reading the book, what are some new insights about why you or others you know have had difficulty sustaining exercise and/or sticking with a more intentional way of eating?
2. Michelle suggests that when we try to adopt healthier eating and exercise in order to lose weight, we are inadvertently introducing forces that can sabotage our efforts. Did her concerns resonate with your experiences? Why/why not?
3. Did you learn anything surprising from taking the Hidden Eating and Exercise TRAP quiz on Michelle's website?
4. Which of the TRAPs did you score highest on?
5. Which ideas from *The Joy Choice* might help you prevent or successfully deal with your biggest Decision TRAPs?
6. Did the book's ideas give you any insights into how you might prevent or overcome the common decision disruptors to making healthier choices?
7. Why do you think Michelle named the ultimate strategy for sustainable change "the Joy Choice"?
8. Michelle contends that picking the "perfect imperfect option" at an exercise or eating choice point is the recipe for sustainable success for most people. Does this idea feel like a relief and helpful, or does it feel just plain wrong, like it's going to take you in the wrong direction? Why do you feel that way?
9. Now that you have read *The Joy Choice*, what do you think is the single idea that might be most helpful to you as you move forward on your journey of lasting change with healthier eating and/or exercise?
10. Were there any ideas in the book you disagreed with? If so, what were they and what experiences have you had that inform your perspective?
11. Did living through the pandemic inform how you think and approach healthier eating and/or regular exercise? If so, how?
12. What's your "burning question" for Michelle, after reading the book? If your group could ask Michelle any question what would you want to know and why? (If you [email Michelle](#) this question, she will respond back to your group within 30 days.)

## INTRODUCTION

1. Did you resonate with the idea that it's not actually your fault that you (or others you know) have found it difficult to stick with your healthier eating and regular exercise goals? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
2. Have you ever initiated regular exercise and/or healthier eating plans when you're in a "motivation bubble"? If so, what happened?

## CHAPTER ONE

1. What were your reactions to Michelle's critique of habit formation?
2. Why does Michelle suggest that unhabiters need a different strategy for exercise and healthy eating than habiters?
3. Do you think you're more of a habiter or unhabiter when it comes to healthy behaviors? Why? Is that different than in other areas of your life?

## CHAPTER TWO

1. After reading about the role of chaotic schedules and multiple needs in thwarting healthier lifestyles, did you notice any ways that your experiences might have aligned or contrasted with that perspective?

## CHAPTER THREE

1. When you think about your exercise or eating decisions being at the mercy of driving and resisting forces, does it increase your understanding of your past in-the-moment choices? If so, how?

## CHAPTER FOUR

1. After reading about the Temptation Decision Disruptor, did you recall any memories that might have been thwarting your eating or exercise decisions? Have you tried to name these memories when they arise so they don't overpower your choice?

## CHAPTER FIVE

1. According to Michelle, why do we so often rebel against our own plans to exercise or eat in healthier ways?
2. Do you ever rebel against your own plans to eat in healthier ways or exercise more? If so, which ideas in the chapter reflect the reasons why you rebel? Were there any ideas in *The Joy Choice* that you think might help you to not rebel going forward?

## CHAPTER SIX

1. Are you someone who almost always puts their own self-care needs (exercise plans, eating intentions, sleep, etc.) behind the needs of others and/or your work? If not, what strategies do you use to balance your needs with those of others? If you do, did the book give you any ideas about how you can better manage these choices, and what are they?

## CHAPTER SEVEN

1. In what ways has all-or-nothing thinking gotten in your way with exercise and healthy eating?
2. Do you have any ideas about how to prevent the Perfection Decision Disruptor from thwarting your choices going forward?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

1. When you read the description of the “choice point” (situations that arise that tend to derail our eating or exercise plans), did that concept feel helpful or unhelpful for your eating and exercise paths? Why?
2. When you consider your past experiences, which types of “choice points” have most commonly come up for you with exercising and healthy eating? Do they differ between exercising and eating in healthier ways? If so, how?
3. What is an example of “trade-off” thinking that you might do in your daily life when you need to pivot? Is that different from what you do with eating and exercise? If so, how?

## CHAPTER NINE

1. What did you think about Lois’ Joy Choice about her swim in this chapter? Did it give you any ideas for your own life?

2. Did learning about the limitations of our working memory executive function give you any insights into past challenges with exercise or eating decision-making?

## CHAPTER TEN

1. In the Play chapter (about the flexible thinking executive function), Tom is faced with an eating choice point at the party. How did you feel about the Joy Choice he picked? Have you ever chosen to make a similar choice at an event like that? Why/why not?
2. According to the research and stories Michelle presented, how does flexible thinking create consistency in exercise and healthy eating?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. In the chapter about the inhibition executive function, Michelle discusses the research suggesting that when we learn how to think about our exercise or eating choices as actions that align with our values and support our sense of self, we are more likely to consistently make these choices. Does this idea seem helpful? Why/why not?
2. What are your reactions to the following quote (p. 149): "When our eating and exercise choices affirm our sense of self, and our needs, priorities, and preferences, we no longer need to control ourselves because now we want to protect them."
3. When you eat in healthier ways or exercise, have you noticed that your mind and/or body feels differently than when you choose the alternatives (not following your desired eating or exercise plan)? If so, give an example.
4. This chapter talks about the complications presented by exercising or changing your eating in order to lose weight. Did any of the reasons discussed resonate with you? If so, how? Did you disagree with anything on this topic? If so, what was it? Did reading about these complications impact your intentions going forward? If so, how?
5. What do you think about Michelle's suggestion to press pause on trying to lose weight and experiment with adopting a healthier lifestyle for other reasons, such as feeling your best and/or becoming the best you can be?

## CHAPTER TWELVE

1. Have you started using the POP Decision in your own life? If so, what are you noticing when you use it?

2. Are you using any strategies to remember what POP stands for so you can recall it at a choice point? If so, what are they? If not, could you try any of the suggestions in the book?

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. In the Learning Lasting Change chapter, David used “metacognition” at his “meh” choice point. As a result, rather than rowing, he chose to do a different physical activity that was more appealing. Have you ever made a similar choice? If so, how did it make you feel in that moment? Did it impact your exercise choices going forward? If so, how?

## EPILOGUE

1. Why does Michelle call the Joy Choice the “ever-changing sweet spot of lasting change”?
2. How does that idea cultivate lasting changes in exercise and healthier eating?



Thank you for selecting *The Joy Choice* for your Book Club! I hope your members both enjoyed reading it and found the discussion helpful for advancing on your path of lasting change.

Warmly,

*Michelle*