How to Live a Good Life

Reading Group Discussion Guide
INTRODUCTION

How to Live a Good Life is the brainchild of Jonathan Fields. We were going to say all kinds of fancy things, like he founded Good Life Project, is an award-winning author, has taught everything from yoga to entrepreneurship and all sorts of other blah blah blah, fancy things. But, if you've already picked up the book or know his work, what you really know is that he is a father, a husband, a maker and a teacher. He loves to learn, to create and to share. Even shorter, he's on a mission to incite possibility. That's what the book is really all about. And, we hope this immersive “Do the Book” guide helps take you from reading to gathering and acting.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE AND HOW TO DO A HTLAGL DISCUSSION GROUP

Unlike a work of fiction, or the kinds of personal growth books that you think about, but require no action, How to Live a Good Life is rooted in action. So perhaps a better title for this document would be “A Reading and Doing, Discussion and Action Accountability Guide.” But that title seemed too long. :)

Of course, just like all important things in life, there's no one RIGHT way to do this book. We have seen people around the world create different structures and systems for working through the material in this book with other groups of people. These have ranged from sprawling monthly accountability brunches, to super geeky book buddy spreadsheets, to facebook groups and more. If you find a way to do this book that works for your group, that's perfect. Here's a couple of suggestions of formats to help you get started.

30 Day Challenge: As a group pick a start date and go through the book alternation between the 3 buckets for 30 consecutive days. This is an intense way to do the book, for sure, and you'll want to meet regularly throughout the month to support each other and check in.

Bucket Deep Dives: Do a deep dive into each bucket for 2-4 weeks before moving on to the next one.

*Note: whichever format you choose, make sure to build in a little bit of time before you jump into the meat of the book to get to know each other, do the Bucket Snapshot, read the introduction and get your group set up. And allow a little time at the end to wrap things up, share what you've learned and what's next.
DISCUSSION PROMPTS

INTRODUCTION

When you took the snapshot assessment of your buckets, were you surprised by the results or did they match your expectations? How will this snapshot affect how you approach (or approached) the rest of the book?

How do you like to be held accountable for taking actions around things that are important to you? In what ways can this group best support you in creating your good life?

Which bucket excites you the most? Intimidates you? Maybe even scares you? Why do you think you have those reactions to the buckets? What might you take on in the face of that?

In the introduction, Jonathan talks about a formative experience in his childhood as he helped his mom jump back into her art. He also talks about who this book is for, someone who realizes they are living a busy, reactive, autopilot life. Do you see any aspects of your own life in that story and description? In what ways have you been living on autopilot?

If you were to pick up something from your past that you once loved or start a new pursuit now, what might that be? If you weren’t too busy to do the things that let you shine and feel like your best self, what would you do?

THE BUCKETS OVERVIEW

VITALITY BUCKET

What level is your vitality bucket at? How do you feel about that?

Do you have a sense for what the biggest things are that contribute to it being at that level (positive and negative)? Of those contributing factors, which do you feel most in control of, or which “could” you become more in control of?

Why do you think the vitality bucket is the first one presented in the book?
The description of vitality includes both body AND mind. When you think of vitality, does that surprise you? How much attention have you paid to both over the years?

Reading this description of vitality, which areas are you most satisfied and least satisfied with? Why do you think that might be?

- energized
- fit, strong, and flexible enough to participate in life
- as free from pain, disease, and disability as possible
- aware of and capable of being in the moment
- optimistic about the future and what it holds
- peaceful and calm, able to dissipate stress
- able to bounce back from adversity
- immersed in a process of growth
- grateful for what’s right in life
- fueled by a sense of meaning
- happy

What actions are you willing to commit to, before we leave today, in order to fill this bucket a little bit more?

**CONNECTION BUCKET**

What level is your connection bucket at? How do feel about that?

When you think about your ideal social and emotional connections, what do you notice? Do you prefer a few very close, deep friends? Lots of friends scattered around the globe? Friends you talk to every single day? Is your social life and connections ideal? In what ways could it be improved?

Do you have a sense for what the biggest things are that contribute to it being at that level (positive and negative)? Of those contributing factors, which do you feel most in control of, or which “could” you become more in control of?

When you read the description of connection, what reaction do you have? Does anything surprise you?

- we give love and receive love, without condition
- we belong - we’re seen, understood, and embraced by friends with shared values, interests, and aspirations (and sometimes culture)
we are connected to something bigger than ourselves, be it natural or ethereal

When we think of connection, we often always think about connection to something bigger than ourselves. Why do you think that’s part of the connection bucket?

What actions are you willing to commit to, before we leave today, in order to fill this bucket a little bit more?

CONTRIBUTION BUCKET

What level is your contribution bucket at? How do you feel about that?

Do you have a sense for what the biggest things are that contribute to it being at that level (positive and negative)? Of those contributing factors, which do you feel most in control of, or which “could” you become more in control of?

When you read the description of contribution, what stands out or surprises you about it?

- contributing to the world in a way that is meaningful, that matters, and that makes you feel like you matter
- doing the thing you’re here to do
- feeling a calling that’s pulling you from ahead rather than pushing you from behind
- being lit-up along the way, absorbed in that semi-trance state beyond emotion, where time ceases to exist and you feel like you’re channeling pure consciousness
- feeling like you’re accessing your full potential, your strengths, your gifts, the deepest parts of your humanity, leaving nothing unrealized or untapped
- fully expressed, seen, and heard

For some, contribution is expressed in what they do for a living, but for a lot of people it’s expressed as a hobby, art, or the way they care for their family. When you think about contribution, in what ways are you drawn to contribute to the world?

Is it currently the thing that also allows you to earn a living? If not, are you okay with that, or would you prefer it to be? What might you do in order to make it your living, if that is what you desire?

What actions are you willing to commit to, before we leave today, in order to fill this bucket a little bit more?
THE LAWS OF THE BUCKETS

When you read the three laws of the buckets, what do you notice about them? How might these laws affect the way you approach the rest of the book?

**Bucket Law #1** is “The buckets leak.” How do you feel about this? What do you notice about the way your own buckets leak? What reminds you that they need refilling? How low do they get before you notice they need refilling? What might you put in place to help remind you to refill your buckets before they get too low?

**Bucket Law #2** is “Your emptiest bucket will drag the others down with it.” What is your reaction to this law? Do you notice yourself putting off one bucket, hoping it won’t drag down the other buckets? How has that been going?

**Bucket Law #3** is “The buckets never lie.” What do you notice about this law and the results from your assessment? Are you being honest about the levels you’re starting with?

For those not exploring a longer-term deep-dive group experience, invite participants to agree on a way to become accountable to action. This can take the form of accountability partners or smaller groups or anything else that feels well-aligned.

Explore ways to fill each bucket that might allow everyone to come together and participate as a group on a regular basis.

Then, agree on a timeframe to both gather again, and create regular check-in mechanisms (daily or weekly texts, calls, emails or anything else that works).

Before ending, have everyone share gratitude for one thing. This can be done in smaller groups, if the main group is larger and there is not enough time to go around the entire circle.
LEVEL UP YOUR READING GROUP

Some thoughts on fun things to do when you gather.

1. Try starting and/or ending each meeting with a meditation. You can use the recorded meditations at goodlifeproject.com/bookinsider as a reference point.

2. Dance break! Half way through, take a 1 song dance break. Everyone commits to move enthusiastically for the whole song, and remember that it’s a Judgement Free Zone!

3. Make green smoothies together, or take turns bringing green smoothies and other healthy treats to the group. Don’t forget to share your recipes with each other!

4. If your group is small enough to make it work, try doing one of your discussion meetings on the move, walking outside, and preferably through nature.

5. An alternative to a walking discussion is to bring movement into the room - hula hoops, a rebounder (tiny trampoline), balance boards, and jump ropes are easy ways to make movement fun. Set up movement stations and discuss the book while playing and moving your body.

6. Do a quick gratitude check in. This is a great way to begin or close the discussion. Go around the circle and have everyone share one thing they're grateful for.

7. Bring art supplies and color, paste, paint, doodle, and make while you talk.

8. Make your meetings electronics free - no cell phones or ipads or laptops. Notice how it feels to be away from your devices for a couple hours.

9. Turn your discussion group into a chance to fill your contribution bucket by taking on a group service project in your community.

10. Share your discussions and your results! Share in the Good Life Project Community Facebook page to inspire other GLeePers, and on social media using the hashtags #goodlifeproject and #goodlifebook.
FOR THOSE EXPLORING A LONGER-TERM GROUP WITH A COMMITMENT TO EXPLORE ALL THE BUCKETS TOGETHER:

VITALITY BUCKET

CHAPTER 1: WAKE UP

Reading the two versions of how your day might go, which one is closer to how your life looks now? Which scenario would you rather live?

As a group, pick one of the pre-recorded mindfulness practices at goodlifeproject.com/bookinsider and practice together as a group, or before you meet. What do you notice about the practice? How does it make you feel? What might your life be like if you incorporated mindfulness into your daily life?

Did you try the bonus options - to go push free for 24 hours, and to set up awareness triggers? How did those go? If you did not try them, what got in the way for you?

CHAPTER 2: MAKE EXERCISE MORE FUN THAN SEX

What kinds of movements can you come up with as a group that would be fun, maybe even more fun than sex (don’t limit yourself to what seems possible, just brainstorm all the movement options)?

Which of these sound fun to you? Which could you see yourself incorporating into your life?

As a group or before you meet, spend 10 minutes moving in any way you want - jumping jacks, yoga, hula hoop, dance party, roller skating, or pogo stick hopping! Or even just a peaceful walk. How do you feel after moving for 10 minutes? How might you incorporate more movement into your daily life?

CHAPTER 3: SNOOZE TO LIVE

How much sleep do you get most nights? If you are getting less than 7-8 hours, what
might be at the root of this? (note, remember that if you have a medical condition that's affecting your sleep, it's best to work with a professional who can help you get the care you need to get the sleep you need!)

Do you go to bed and wake up at consistent times each day or does it vary widely?

Do you have a sleep ritual? What might you create either as a sleep ritual or as a change to your bedroom to help create a conducive sleep environment?

What comes up for you when you think about committing to getting enough, consistent, quality sleep? Are you worried about getting everything on your To Do list done? Or excited at the prospect of feeling rested?

CHAPTER 4: TAKE A GREEN DAY


If you've had green smoothies in the past, did you like them? Why or why not?

What do you think it would take for you to incorporate regular green smoothies into your life? How can you include your roommates, loved ones, children, co-workers or friends in your green smoothie adventure?

CHAPTER 5: GET YOUR GRATITUDE ON

What's one thing you are grateful for in your life in general or one thing you are grateful for today? Why did that happen?

If you were to write a letter to someone expressing your gratitude for them in your life and/or something they've done for you, who would you write that to? What would you say to them?

Is it possible for you to write that letter and send it or visit them and read it? Would you be willing to do it?

What's something you are grateful to yourself for?
CHAPTER 6: DANCE LIKE NOBODY’S WATCHING (BECAUSE THEY’RE NOT)

What do you think and feel when you hear the sentence “Before you can choose joy, you have to choose you?”

In what ways have you really chosen yourself? In what ways have you not? How do you think that’s affected your ability to be joyful?

What’s one part of you that’s longing to see the light of day? If you knew you couldn’t fail, and that no one would judge you, what would you do?

What’s one TINY thing you could do to get a little closer to that sharing that person with the world?

What’s one giant, nuclear dance like nobody’s watching option you COULD (no commitments) take to choose yourself fully in the world?

As a group either before you meet, or together DURING your discussion group - have a one song dance party!

CHAPTER 7: OWN THE UNKNOWN

What would you love to do or create or have that you’re not pursuing because it’s not a sure thing? What would your life look and feel like, how would it be materially different, if you got what you wanted? What are you waiting for? What is one thing you could do to get closer to that life?

When you think of something that you want to pursue but haven’t because it’s uncertain, what ways can you begin to change the story of that thing and who you are in the story? Try running through some of these questions as a group or in pairs. What do you notice when you answer these questions?

- What’s the worst that might happen?
- How likely is it to happen, really?
- How would I recover if it did happen?
- What might I learn that would put me in an even better position moving forward?
- What’s the most likely outcome?
- What’s the best possible outcome?
CHAPTER 8: TAKE A FOREST BATH

When you think about the idea of “forest bathing” or shinrin-yoku, what do you think and feel? Is this something that instinctively makes sense to you or is it surprising?

In what ways can you add more greenery to your life? Can you escape to nature? Can you add some plants to your home or workspace?

Before you meet, spend some time in nature and listen to the guided audio for “noticing” as you move through nature. What do you notice? How do you feel afterwards?

Bonus opportunity: Bring a plant or plants to your discussion group, or if it’s possible with the location and weather, meet outside in a park, on a beach, or in a forest. If you meet outside and it’s feasible, you might consider listening to the “noticing” audio together.

CHAPTER 9: UNFIX YOUR MIND

Reading the description of fixed and growth mindsets on page 91, do you think you are more fixed or growth minded? How do you feel about where you land on that spectrum?

What’s one thing you frequently say you can’t do, aren’t good at, or don’t have the capacity to do? How does it feel to add a “yet” to the end of that sentence?

CHAPTER 10: TAKE THE SLOW LANE

Do you notice yourself rushing around often? How does that leave you feeling? Do you think it helps you get more done in a day?

Looking at your to-do list for today or tomorrow, what really matters? What can you say no to?

What might happen if you slow down?
CHAPTER 1: DISCOVER YOUR SOCIAL SET POINT

What’s your social set point? Are you an extrovert? Introvert? Ambivert with a slight leaning one way or the other? How do you feel about where you land on that spectrum?

What kinds of things fill your tank and what things drain it? How can you be more intentional with what you spend your days doing so it’s more filling activities and fewer draining ones?

For things that drain you that you can’t get out of, what can you plan to recover right afterwards?

CHAPTER 2: FIND YOUR PEOPLE

Who are your people? If you already know who they are and where to find them, list them out!

If you aren’t sure who your people are, share with the group answers to these questions: What do they value? What histories and stories might you share with them? What do they like to do with their time? Where do these people hang out?

In what ways can you commit more fully to spending time with your kind of people? Can you go to meetups? Host events? Ask friends for introductions? Or just make plans to regularly get together with the people you love?

CHAPTER 3: CULTIVATE COMPASSION

Before you meet, or as a group, listen to the loving kindness or metta meditation in the book insider page. How do you feel after doing this practice?

What might happen if you made compassion a regular focus of your time and energy?

What are other ways you can create structures in your life for growing your compassion for yourself and others?
CHAPTER 4: LOOK UP!

Do you notice that you check your phone when you are bored, standing in line, in the bathroom or just on auto-pilot? How do you feel about that?

Try keeping your phone in your pocket or bag for the whole time your group is meeting. Is it weird to not have your phone within eyesight?

What might you do with yourself if you don’t have your phone with you to occupy your brain?

If you were to call someone just to say hi and catch up, who would you call?

CHAPTER 5: THE 60 MINUTE LOVE BOMB

Who is someone you might want to begin a deep friendship or romantic relationship with? Would you be interested or willing to do the 36 questions with them?

What thoughts do you have, excitement, or concerns about sharing vulnerable parts of yourself with someone?

Bonus opportunity: Pair up and answer the questions with each other!

CHAPTER 6: FIND YOUR FOUR LOVES

Have you ever thought of love as being something more than a romantic thing? In what ways do you see the 4 loves in your own life?

What relationships fill your companionate love (deep friendship)? How much nurturing have you given those relationships in the last 6 months?

What relationships fill your compassionate love (caregiver/unconditional love)? How much nurturing have those relationships gotten in the last 6 months?

What about attachment love (security love)? Who fills that role for you and how much have you nurtured it in the last 6 months?
Finally, what about romantic love (sensual love)? Who fills that role for you, and how have you nurtured it in the last 6 months?

What could you do in the next 24 hours to nurture one or even all 4 kinds of love in your life?

CHAPTER 7: WHAT’S YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE®

As a group or before you meet, take the 5 Love Languages Test. Of the 5 languages (physical touch, receiving gifts, words of appreciation, quality time, acts of service), what’s your main love language (or love languages if you have a couple that are closely tied)?

Is it what you thought it would be? What do you feel about that being your love language?

In what ways do you like to give and receive love from others? How do the people you love like to feel that love expressed from you? How could you share these results with the people in your life so you can support each other in giving and receiving in the ways that fill everyone up more?

CHAPTER 8: DIAL IN TO SOURCE

When you think about a connection to source, to something bigger than yourself, what comes to mind? What was a time you felt most tapped into that feeling? Where were you? What was going on around you? Were you alone? With others?

Was a connection to source a strong part of your childhood? What about now? What has changed or stayed the same about your connection to source?

What can you do to create more of that feeling in your life in the next week?

CHAPTER 9: VANQUISH THE VAMPIRES

Are there energy vampires in your life that you can let go of by directing them to another resource or service, or just stepping away from the relationship? Are there people who drain you but who you can’t or aren’t willing to walk away from because they are family or there’s another complicated dynamic?
When you think about this person, or someone like the needy person described in this chapter, do you find yourself judging them? What would it be like if you held compassion for them? How would that change your experience of them?

Who are the energy beacons in your life - people who leave you feeling energized, who radiate light and leave you full every time you see them? How can you invest more time and energy in those relationships to help counter the people who drain you?

CHAPTER 10: UNCAGE YOUR CONVERSATION

When you read Jonathan’s description of how he used to be at parties—does that sound like you? Are you more the “hide in the kitchen” type, or “talk to strangers” type? Or somewhere in between?

When you are in conversations with people, are you focused more on giving or receiving? How often do you give people your undivided attention?

What kinds of questions could you ask people that might lead to deeper, more interesting conversations?

How does it feel when someone listens deeply to you in a conversation?

CONTRIBUTION BUCKET

CHAPTER 1: SPARK YOURSELF

When you think about the idea of having a passion or purpose, as opposed to pursuing things in life with passion and a sense of purpose, what comes up for you? How do you feel about the different ways of looking at those concepts?

When you look at the different types of sparks (curiosity, fascination, immersion, mastery, and service), does one stand out to you more than the others as a driving force in your life?

How might you be able to weave more of the things that spark you into your days?
CHAPTER 2: KNOW WHAT MATTERS

As a group, or before you meet, make a list of your basic values. You can use the list in the book to start from, or just free form it.

What are the top 5 values for you on that list? Remember, this isn't about what you THINK they should be, it’s about what is truly most important to you.

How can you take each value and turn it into a sentence that gives it context and definition?

What would your life look like if you made decisions based on what these values?

CHAPTER 3: TAP YOUR STRENGTHS

Before you meet, take the VIA Survey of Character Strengths and the Clifton StrengthsFinder 2.0

What are your top VIA Character Strengths? How do you feel about those results? Do they match your expectation of yourself?

What are your top strengths according to the Clifton StrengthsFinder 2.0? How do you feel about those results? Do they match what you would have predicted?

In what ways are these different strengths expressed in your life right now? Are there ways you could change your routine, or circumstances in your life to incorporate more of your strengths?

CHAPTER 4: FIND YOUR KILLER APP

When you think about what your killer app might be, what comes to mind? Do you know immediately what it is or is it something a bit more hidden for you?

When you think about how you are perceived and the feedback you’ve gotten over the years, what do you find that people come to you for? Where do they see you offering substantial value? And what do they thank you for?

If you’ve asked these questions of people in your life already, share what they told you with the group. Where their answers surprising to you? How do you feel about what they said?
When you think about what your killer app is, what are 5 ways you might be able to better integrate it (or them if there’s more than one) into how you contribute to the world?

CHAPTER 5: GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD

Have you ever had an idea and then later saw that someone else had executed on it? What was that like for you?

Do you notice that you wait before taking action? What gets in the way of going for it?

What’s one idea that you have that you’ve been mulling over in your head? Something that you’d love to see happen that would matter to you and to whoever might experience it?

What’s one step you could take to actually get that idea out of your head and into the world?

CHAPTER 6: WOOP IT UP

When you think about what it takes to accomplish your goals, and the science behind the WOOP method, what do you think and feel about that? Are you surprised that thinking about an obstacle can be helpful for accomplishing your goals?

What’s one goal or wish you might try this method out with? What would be the outcome? The obstacles? What kind of plan could you create?

If you have used the app or the template on the book insider page, how did that go?

CHAPTER 7: GIVE TO GLOW

What do you think about the difference between “failed givers” and “successful givers”? Do you notice places in your own life where you have been one or the other?

Thinking about the difference between “sprinkling” your giving and “chunking” it, what do you notice? Are you surprised at the differences in experiences between the two ways of approaching giving?
What would it be like if you picked a day and did your own Give30 day? If you have tried this already, how was it?

**CHAPTER 8: PRACTICE THE LOVING NO**

What is it like for you to say no to people when they make requests of you? Is it different depending on who the person is or what the request is? Do you say yes even when you mean no? How does that affect your life?

What’s a request you are currently dealing with that you know you should say no to, but haven’t yet? Or something you are doing and don’t really want to continue, but haven’t said so? What would your life be like if you had time free that you would spend on that thing?

How can you say no to that thing with gratitude, honor, and compassion?

**CHAPTER 9: LOVE THE JOB YOU’RE WITH**

What are some things in your life that you have to keep doing, regardless of whether it fills you up? Could be your job, house cleaning, caring for others. Do you experience those things as meaningful? Why do you think you do or don’t experience them that way?

What are ways that you could take these tasks and make them as beautiful, meaningful, and wonderful as possible? What would your life look like if these tasks, obligations, and relationships were sources of joy and meaning for you?

What ways can you take on more of the “right” responsibilities in these areas and let go of the ones that you can pass off?

**CHAPTER 10: THINK RIPPLE NOT WAVE**

Think about the kind of work that sparks you. How might you pursue that work in a way that leads to meaningful outcomes but minimal complexity? What could you do that will give you the greatest reward and allow you to spend the greatest amount of time doing the parts that light you up?
What are 3-5 simple things you might do or create that could serve as a drop in a pond that might ripple out and make a difference without your having to be involved?

How would your life be different if you focused on creating ripples with your work instead of waves? How do you feel when you think about that concept?

**BRINGING IT HOME**

Did you notice that money and happiness weren't touched on in the book? How do you feel about that?

When you look at your snapshot of the buckets now, where are they? How does this compare to where they were at the beginning of the book?

What can you do to take this work deeper into your life, on a daily basis? What’s one or two actions you’ll take this week to set yourself up so that this discussion group is just the beginning?

How has this experience been for you? What would you like to share with the group around your journey, what you are grateful for, or anything else to feel complete?
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

Congrats on getting to this point. Our greatest hope is that the ideas in this book inspire you to not just “do the book,” but to begin to build these ideas and activities into a daily practice that will transform your life. To help with that, we have created two great resources for you.

First is the Good Life Project community, if you have not joined yet, please be sure to head on over to goodlifeproject.com/community. It’s an amazing group of likeminded and supportive people from all over the world who are there to help each other rise.

Second, we have created a beautiful companion practice journal designed to build on the first 30 days and help you cultivate a deeply nourishing daily good life practice. Inside it, you will discover a set of daily prompts and actions, a simple 7 minute morning practice and 5 minute evening practice that serve as powerful tools to rewire your life for optimal vitality, deep connection and meaningful contribution. You can find out more about it and order your copy HERE.