

Book Club Discussion Guide

Nine Rules in Nine Weeks



Thank you for reading *Tranquility by Tuesday*! This guide is designed for groups who wish to try building the nine *Tranquility by Tuesday* rules into their lives over the course of a few months, just as the *Tranquility by Tuesday* project participants did. By working through the book together, you can hold yourself accountable for building new habits or strengthening the ones you have.

To make this process work best, I would recommend setting a weekly meeting time. You will need to schedule ten meetings (ten meetings on the same day of the week equals nine weeks between the first and the last one). If you're not sure when to meet, I'd recommend sometime on Friday, because it's a good time to think about the upcoming week as a whole, and it tends to be a lighter day for many people. You can meet virtually or in person, or some combination of the two (e.g. in person for the first meeting, then virtually, then in person again after 3-4 weeks, and so forth).

I have included assignments and questions for each meeting, but feel free to use these as a starting point. You can let the discussion go where it is most fruitful.

You might also want to set up a way, such as a group text, to send each other encouragement in between meetings. You can answer questions, provide suggestions, and celebrate whatever tranquility you achieve. Good luck!

All the best,

Laura



Week One

Before the first meeting:

- Keep a time log for 24 hours. (You can use the time-tracker at the end of this guide, or create your own.) If you'd like to track for longer, that's great!
- Reflect on your time log. What do you like? What do you want to change?
- Take the Time Satisfaction Quiz in the appendix of *Tranquility by Tuesday*. Since the quiz asks about “yesterday” and encompasses your personal and professional life, it's helpful to take this quiz on a day when you worked the day before (i.e. take the quiz between Tuesday and Saturday if you work Monday through Friday). Add up the numerical value of your answers, and write down this initial Time Satisfaction Score.
- Read the introduction and the chapter on Rule #1: Give yourself a bedtime in *Tranquility by Tuesday*.

At the first meeting:

- Share your discoveries from your time log. What do you like about your schedule? What parts are stressful or chaotic? What do you want to change?
- Overall, how satisfied are you with your time? Reflect on your answers to the Time Satisfaction Quiz. You might share your Time Satisfaction Scores, or at least see if people are in the same range.
- What is everyone hoping to get out of the *Tranquility by Tuesday* project?
- Discuss Rule #1: Give yourself a bedtime. What do your sleep habits look like now?
- When do you wake up most weekdays, and why?
- How much sleep do you need? How sure are you about this number?
- What bedtime makes sense for your life? Mathematically, what should your bedtime be, counting back the amount of sleep you need from the time you need to wake up?
- How much time do you need before your bedtime to relax and get ready for bed? What do you do during this wind down time?
- What might keep you from going to bed at your bedtime? What tends to disrupt your sleep patterns? How do you plan to address these challenges?
- Decide together on ways to check in and hold each other accountable for following Rule #1 this week, and for following future rules during future weeks.



Week Two

Before the second meeting:

- Read the chapter on Rule #2: Plan on Fridays

At the second meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the first week (as you implemented Rule #1: Give yourself a bedtime). How did observing a bedtime affect your life?
- What challenges did you face in implementing a bedtime?
- How did you deal with these challenges?
- If you weren't able to observe a bedtime, or weren't able to do so most nights, what prevented you from doing so?
- Did you need to modify Rule #1: Give yourself a bedtime? How? How likely are you to continue using this rule?
- Do you have a morning routine? What does it look like? What feasible morning routine would make you excited to get out of bed?
- Discuss Rule #2: Plan on Fridays. What does your planning look like now?
- Would Friday planning work for you? If so, when on Friday? If not, what other time would you like to try? (Ideally, choose a time shortly after the meeting so you have time to see the effects.)
- How long do you think it will take you to plan using the Tranquility by Tuesday approach of looking at the categories of career, relationships, and self? Do these categories make sense for you? Would you choose different ones?
- What benefits do you think you would see (or do you see) from a designated weekly planning time?
- What obstacles might keep you from a regular planning practice?
- How can you address these challenges?



Week Three

Before the third meeting:

- Read the chapter on Rule #3: Move by 3 p.m.

At the third meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the second week (as you implemented Rule #2: Plan on Fridays). How did planning on Friday (or your chosen planning day) affect your week? You might share pictures of your planner or wherever you took notes.
- Describe any challenges you faced while trying to plan your week (looking at the three categories of career, relationships, and self).
- Did life go according to plan? How did you deal with anything challenging or unexpected?
- Will you modify the rule to Plan on Fridays? How likely are you to continue using the rule in your life?
- If you haven't already, start creating a List of 100 Dreams. You can take a few minutes to start making this list as part of the meeting, and then share a few items from your lists with each other.
- Discuss Rule #3: Move by 3 p.m. On average, how much do you exercise these days? What do you do and when do you do it? Do you think this rule's stipulation to exercise in the first half of the day makes sense or not?
- What sort of physical activity could you do for 10 minutes before 3 p.m. on an average day? Think about today: When could you do this activity today? Or, if it's past 3 p.m., when could you do 10 minutes of activity on a day like today?
- Looking ahead to tomorrow's schedule, when could you do 10 minutes of activity tomorrow?
- What challenges might keep you from building more physical activity into your life?
- How can you address these challenges?
- Would you be able to try going outside for a few minutes each day as well? How might you do that?
- Revisit the previous rules. Are you continuing to observe a bedtime?



Week Four

Before the fourth meeting:

- Read the chapter on Rule #4: Three times a week is a habit

At the fourth meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the previous week (as you implemented Rule #3: Move by 3 p.m.). How much physical activity did you build into your life? When did you generally do this activity?
- What effects did you see in your life from moving by 3 p.m. most days?
- What challenges did you face while implementing Rule #3: Move by 3 p.m.?
- How did you deal with these challenges?
- Did you need to modify this rule? How likely are you to continue using it in your life?
- Did you manage to go outside for some time most days? What was that experience like?
- Discuss Rule #4: Three times a week is a habit. List some activities you'd like to do more frequently in your life.
- Choose one activity to focus on for the next week. When did you last do this activity?
- Looking forward to the next week, when do you think you could do this activity? List at least three times.
- What challenges might prevent you from doing your chosen activity three times a week? How can you address these challenges?
- Revisit the previous rules. Are you continuing to observe a bedtime? Did you do your weekly planning?



Week Five

Before the fifth meeting:

- Read the chapter on Rule #5: Create a back-up slot

At the fifth meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the previous week (as you implemented Rule #4: Three times a week is a habit). Remind each other which activities you chose to focus on. Did you spend more time on these activities this week than you had in previous weeks? How much more time?
- What was the impact of aiming to do your chosen activity three times per week?
- What challenges affected your ability to do this activity three times per week?
- How did you deal with these challenges?
- Did you need to modify this rule? How likely are you to continue using this rule in your life?
- Talk about a “realistic ideal week.” What would your realistic ideal week look like? In what ways is your current life close to the ideal? In what aspects is there a bigger gap?
- Discuss Rule #5: Create a back-up slot. Think back over the past few weeks. Have you had to skip something fun or important because something else came up? What was the priority and what came up?
- Look to the upcoming week. When could you build at least two hours of open space into your life? Identify a primary spot. Identify a secondary spot.
- What challenges might keep you from building open space into your life? How can you address these challenges?
- Revisit the previous rules: Are you continuing to observe a bedtime? Did you do your weekly planning? Did you move by 3 p.m. most days?



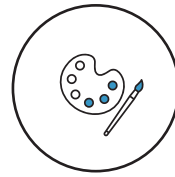
Week Six

Before the sixth meeting:

- Read the chapter on Rule #6: One big adventure, one little adventure

At the sixth meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the previous week (as you implemented Rule #5: Create a back-up slot). Remind each other of the back-up slots that you built into your schedules, and why you chose those times.
- What effects did you see in your life from building open space into your schedule?
- What challenges did you face while trying to build in back-up slots?
- How did you address these challenges?
- Did you need to modify the rule? How likely are you to continue using this rule in your life?
- The bonus strategy this week suggests asking what you'd do if things went wrong...or if things went fabulously right. Discuss some over-the-top good scenarios (for instance, a social media post goes viral in a good way and so you have the world's attention, or you suddenly have the opportunity to give away \$50 million...). What would you do?
- Discuss Rule #6: One big adventure, one little adventure. What "big adventures" (taking a few hours), would you like to try in the next month? Share several.
- What "little adventures" (taking about an hour) would you like to try in the next month? Share several.
- Looking back over the past week, did you have any adventures, big or little? What were they?
- Choose one big adventure and one little adventure to do in the next week (if you already have one scheduled, tell the group about it). When do you plan to experience these adventures?
- What obstacles might keep you from having these adventures (or adventures more generally)? How can you address these challenges?
- Revisit the previous rules: Are you continuing to observe a bedtime? Did you do your weekly planning? Did you move by 3 p.m. most days? Did you do your chosen activity three times last week?



Week Seven

Before the seventh meeting:

- Read the chapter on Rule #7: Take one night for you

At the seventh meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the previous week (as you implemented Rule #6: One big adventure, one little adventure). What big adventures did you experience? What little adventures did you experience? Start the meeting by sharing photos and stories!
- What effects did you see in your life from doing things that were out of the ordinary?
- What challenges did you face while trying to have one big adventure and one little adventure? Did anything make it difficult for you to plan adventures into your life, or to have the adventures you planned?
- How did you address these challenges?
- Did you need to modify the rule? How likely are you to continue using this rule in your life?
- Discuss Rule #7: Take one night for you. Do you have any recurring fun-for-you commitments outside of work and family? This discussion group counts! Do you have any others?
- If you don't already have a regular fun-for-you commitment outside of this group, what would you do with one night off (or an equivalent amount of weekend time) per week? Discuss ideas that people are interested in trying or have experimented with in the past.
- What would you need to do to make this commitment happen? Or if you do have a fun-for-you activity, how do you make this work in your life?
- Even if it does not work to commit to a regular activity immediately, look at the upcoming week and identify a few hours where you can do something that is not work or taking care of family. What would you look forward to? How can you protect this time?
- What might prevent you from taking one night off? How can you address these challenges?
- Revisit the previous rules: Are you continuing to observe a bedtime? Did you do your weekly planning? Did you move by 3 p.m. most days? Did you do your chosen activity three times last week? Did you create a back-up slot or build in open space?



Week Eight

Before the eighth meeting:

- Read the chapter on Tranquility by Tuesday Rule #8: Batch the little things

At the eighth meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the previous week (as you implemented Rule #7: Take one night for you). Did you take a few hours off from work and family responsibilities this week? What did you do with this time? If you didn't take one night off, do you have an idea for something you can do in the upcoming weeks?
- What effects did you see from taking one night (or a few hours) for your interests?
- What challenges did you face while trying to take some time for your interests?
- How did you address these challenges?
- Did you need to modify the rule to take one night for you? How likely are you to continue using this rule in your life?
- Discuss Rule #8: Batch the little things. Look back at the past 24 hours. What small tasks made it onto your daily to-do list? Do you complete these things as soon as you think about them? How much time do you estimate these tasks wind up taking?
- Look at your schedule. When could you schedule a time to batch the little things? Would you prefer a smaller window each day or a bigger one each week? Look at this question for both administrative tasks and for regular household chores.
- What might prevent you from batching the little tasks in your life? How can you address these challenges?
- Revisit the previous rules: Are you continuing to observe a bedtime? Did you do your weekly planning? Did you move by 3 p.m. most days? Did you do your chosen activity three times last week? Did you create a back-up slot or build in open space? Did you have one big adventure and one little adventure?



Week Nine

Before the ninth meeting:

- Read the chapter on Tranquility by Tuesday Rule #9: Effortful before effortless

At the ninth meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the previous week (as you implemented Rule #8: Batch the little things). Did you designate a window for batching the little things? How did this go for work tasks (or personal tasks that must be done during business hours)? How about for home chores?
- What effects did you see in your life from batching the little things? Was there any change in the level of “mental load” that you felt you were carrying?
- What challenges did you face in trying to batch the little things?
- How did you address these challenges?
- Did you need to modify the rule to batch the little things? How likely are you to continue using this rule in your life?
- Were you able to “let a little thing go?” What small tasks would you like to drop completely? What do you think would happen if you did?
- Discuss Rule #9: Effortful before effortless. What are your favorite sorts of effortful fun — that is, fun that requires some planning, coordination, or mindfulness?
- What leisure activities do you typically do at night in the hours before bed, or during downtime on weekends?
- How much time, in minutes, do you estimate you spend on social media on a typical day? How about on television? How do you feel about your relationship with screen time?
- Choose a form of effortful fun to do before screen time. What will this be? What logistics need to happen for you to do this effortful fun first?
- What challenges might you encounter in doing effortful fun before effortless fun? How will you address those challenges?
- Revisit the previous rules: Are you continuing to observe a bedtime? Did you do your weekly planning? Did you move by 3 p.m. most days? Did you do your chosen activity three times last week? Did you create a back-up slot or build in open space? Did you have one big adventure and one little adventure? Did you take one night for you?



Week Ten

Before the tenth meeting:

- Track your time for 24 hours. (You can use the time-tracker at the end of this guide, or create your own.) If you'd like to track longer, that's great!
- Take the Time Satisfaction Quiz in the appendix of *Tranquility by Tuesday*. Add up the numerical value of your answers. Compare your answers now to your answers at the beginning of the nine weeks. Did anything change?

At the tenth meeting:

- Share your discoveries from the previous week (as you implemented Rule #9: Effortful before effortless). What sort of effortful fun did you choose to do before effortless fun? Did you manage to engage in more effortful fun than before?
- What effects did you see in your life from making time for effortful fun?
- What challenges did you face while trying to do effortful fun before effortless fun?
- How did you address these challenges?
- Did you need to modify the rule to do effortful fun before effortless fun? How likely are you to continue using this rule in your life?
- Revisit the previous rules: Are you continuing to observe a bedtime? Did you do your weekly planning? Did you move by 3 p.m. most days? Did you do your chosen activity three times last week? Did you create a back-up slot or build in open space? Did you have one big adventure and one little adventure? Did you take one night for you? Did you batch the little things?
- Reflect on the *Tranquility by Tuesday* project. What was your favorite rule? Take a vote! What was your least favorite rule?
- Have you observed any changes in your life overall from when you started the project nine weeks ago?
- Share intentions about rules you plan to continue using in your life. How will you hold each other accountable?

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