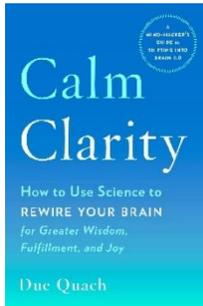


Book Club Discussion Guide

Calm Clarity: How to Use Science to Rewire Your Brain for Greater Wisdom, Fulfillment, and Joy

About the Book



Calm Clarity: How to Use Science to Rewire Your Brain for Greater Wisdom, Fulfillment, and Joy by Due Quach combines personal narrative with insights from neuroscience and ancient wisdom traditions to provide practical tools for transforming trauma, changing reactive patterns, and experiencing alignment and wholeness.

“Calm Clarity tells Due Quach’s story of transformation, weaving her rich life experience with in-depth scientific insights from across diverse fields. Due has created practical and accessible tools for readers to not just be inspired by her transformation, but to set off and experience their own profound changes as well.”

—Sharon Salzberg, New York Times bestselling author of *Real Love* and *Real Happiness*

“Due Quach has given us an exceptional gift—she’s taken research on neuroscience and mindfulness and made it easy to understand. But more than that, she’s used this research to build a set of practices that will help you to optimize your nervous system and rise to the challenges you face. And she’s done this with a keen awareness of the social realities of our time.”

—Paul Zelizer, founder of *Awarepreneurs*

I. Facilitator Notes

This study guide can be used to support multiple book club sessions, offering 25 questions grouped thematically rather than strictly by chapter. Please guide your session(s) by choosing 4-6 questions that will prompt your book club members to have a rich and meaningful discussion as they unpack their insights from reading the book. There is no need to discuss all the questions.

- **Create space for vulnerability:** Given the book's focus on trauma and personal transformation, establish group agreements about confidentiality, respect, and the option to pass on any question.
- **Integrate concepts and experiences:** Encourage both intellectual engagement with the neuroscience concepts and lived experiences and insights.
- **Encourage action:** Consider ending each session with commitments to try specific practices before the next meeting.

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II. Discussion Questions by Theme

A. Personal Journey of Transformation

1. Due Quach's story begins as a refugee from Vietnam experiencing poverty and trauma. How does her personal journey inform the credibility and accessibility of the Calm Clarity program? What aspects of her story resonated most with you?
2. Due discusses trauma and PTSD through a neuroscience lens. How does this scientific framing help reduce stigma around mental health struggles? What new insights did you gain about trauma and healing from this book?
3. The author writes about being "Poor and Traumatized at Harvard." How do her experiences shed light on the intersection of trauma, socioeconomic status, and academic/professional success? Have you witnessed similar dynamics in your own life or community?
4. The concept of "transmitting versus transforming pain" appears in the book. How do we as human beings unconsciously transmit our pain to others? What does it mean to transform pain, and why is this important for changing reactive patterns?
5. Crisis and constraint as a catalyst: The loss of health insurance and the need to wean herself off medication and therapy motivated Due to use neuroscience to develop mind-hacking techniques as a means of self-directed healing. In what ways can a crisis or constraint become a catalyst for exploring or pioneering unconventional approaches?

B. The Calm Clarity Framework: Three Patterns of Brain Activation

6. Brain 1.0 (Fear and Self-Preservation): When have you found yourself operating from Brain 1.0? What triggers tend to activate this state for you? How does it manifest in your thinking, emotions, and behaviors?
7. Brain 2.0 (Reward Chasing and Instant Gratification): Discuss examples of Brain 2.0 thinking in modern life. How does our culture encourage Brain 2.0 patterns? What are the long-term costs of operating primarily from this state?
8. Brain 3.0 (Wisdom and Wholeness): What does it feel like when you're in Brain 3.0, where your actions align with your core values? What external and internal factors support you to access this state?

Book Club Discussion Guide

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C: Transforming through Neuroscience and Spiritual Growth

9. Neuroplasticity is central to the book's message. How does understanding that we can "rewire" our brains change your perspective on personal growth and healing? What evidence from your own experience affirms this possibility?
10. The author emphasizes that we can "exercise and strengthen Brain 3.0 like a muscle." What does this metaphor reveal about the nature of personal transformation? How is it different from simply "thinking positive" or "trying harder"?
11. The author's exploration weaves together ancient spiritual wisdom and modern neuroscience. What are the tensions between these knowledge systems and how do they complement each other?
12. Due describes her transformation from "skeptic to mystic." How did applying scientific thinking and research in her exploration of spiritual practices lead her to new realizations and insights? What role can science and skepticism play in guiding genuine spiritual growth?

D: Practical Application

13. The Calm Clarity program has been used with diverse populations, from inner-city teenagers to corporate executives. What makes this framework accessible across different backgrounds? How might you adapt its lessons and insights for your specific context?
14. Recognizing Brain Patterns: How can developing awareness of which brain pattern you're in increase your capacity to create changes in your life? Share a recent example of when you became aware that you were reacting in Brain 1.0 or Brain 2.0 and made a shift.
15. The research on meditation and mindfulness is a key component of the Calm Clarity program. How did the scientific insights Due shared change your perception and experience of meditation and mindfulness?
16. The book provides specific mind-hacking techniques. Which practices or exercises have you tried? What has been most effective for you, and what changes have you experienced?

E: Broader Implications

17. The book addresses transforming individual trauma while also touching on collective and intergenerational trauma. How can the Calm Clarity framework apply to families, communities, organizations, or society at large?

Book Club Discussion Guide

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18. The Calm Clarity framework as a tool for social analysis: How can connecting general patterns of thinking and behavior to Brain 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 shed light on current events, social movements, and societal challenges?
 19. How does leadership capacity arise from steering brain development? In your perspective, what qualities distinguish leaders? How are these qualities impaired or enhanced by activating Brain 1.0, Brain 2.0, or Brain 3.0?
 20. Is it possible to change society by making conscious efforts to interact in Brain 3.0? How are Brain 3.0 interactions different from Brain 1.0 interactions and Brain 2.0 interactions? What could be the ripple effects of more people interacting in Brain 3.0 with each other and with larger systems?
 21. What does a collective shift into Brain 3.0 mean to you? What would an organization or a society look like if its members operated primarily from Brain 3.0?
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III. Closing Questions - As you finish the book:

22. What is the most important insight you're taking away from *Calm Clarity*?
 23. What is one concrete change you want to make in response to what you've learned?
 24. How might you share these insights and tools with others in your family, workplace, or community?
 25. Take a moment to consider the relationship between this book and other works on neuroscience, mindfulness, or trauma healing you've read. What shared themes and insights emerge?
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IV. Optional Activities

A. Journaling Prompts to Deepen Reflection:

1. What pain am I carrying that I might be unconsciously transmitting to others?
2. What patterns in my life reflect reactive Brain 1.0 or Brain 2.0 thinking?
3. Where have I experienced genuine transformation, and how did it happen?
4. Imagine: What could my life look like in one year if I start using Brain 3.0 to consciously engage with people and make important decisions in alignment with my Inner Sage?

Book Club Discussion Guide

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B. Suggested Exercises to Explore and Discuss as a Group

Exercise 1: Observe Your Brain States

Keep a journal for one week tracking how your pattern of brain activation changes at different points throughout the day. Note what triggers Brain 1.0 and Brain 2.0 and what helps you return to Brain 3.0.

Exercise 2: Your Values and Your Actions

Make a list of your core values. Then examine a recent challenging situation: To what extent did your actions align with these values? Did reacting in Brain 1.0 or Brain 2.0 take you out of alignment with these values?

Exercise 3: Practice Mind-hacking

Try one of the techniques from the book for two weeks. Share your experience with the group: What did you notice? What did you find easy? What did you find challenging? What surprised you?

Exercise 4: Rewire Your Brain through Storytelling

Share a personal story of adversity or struggle. Practice telling it using the Brain 1.0/2.0/3.0 framework. How does this increase your awareness of the impact that your storytelling has on your brain?

V. Additional Resources

- Visit calmclarity.org to learn more about Calm Clarity [virtual workshops and events](#), scholarship programs to take these workshops, and explore available [resources](#) such as guided meditations and concept papers.
- Watch *The Portal* documentary to see Due and others describe their powerful journeys of transformation. It is available for free at <https://entertheportal.com/>