

Marlborough Public Library Adult Book Club

July 8 or 10, 2025

Life in Five Senses by Gretchen Rubin

Questions abridged from:

https://gretchenrubin.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Discussion_Guide_General_and_Sense_Specific_Life_in_Five_Senses.pdf

1. Gretchen Rubin begins *Life in Five Senses* by admitting, “I felt stuck in my head—disconnected from the world and other people, and also from myself.” Have you ever experienced this feeling of disconnection?
2. Did *Life in Five Senses* make you more aware of your own foreground and background senses? Did it inspire you to do more to cultivate your senses? To engage more deeply with the neglected ones?
3. In your family, what senses are discussed or emphasized most? How did your upbringing shape your current relationship to the senses?
4. Gretchen Rubin describes many ways that she uses her five senses to connect more deeply with the people she loves. How do you connect with others through the senses?
5. What changes might you make in your home or office to make the space more energizing, comforting, or pleasing to your senses? How might you make it easier to focus, create, relax, or stay productive? Do you prefer to focus on adding more pleasant sensations, removing unpleasant sensations—or both?
6. The author repeatedly emphasizes that each of us lives in our own sensory world, with our own complement of senses, and that it’s very important to recognize that people experience sensations in different ways. How might you bring this principle into action in your own life?
7. Gretchen Rubin notes that, “Just as we can minister to the body through the spirit, sometimes we can minister to the spirit through the body.” Do you agree? How might our senses aid us on a spiritual or soulful level?
8. *Life in Five Senses* can be read as an antidote to the pressures and temptations of modern technology. Do you think that technology helps or hinders our engagement with our five senses?