



All the Feels

Discussion Guide

ELIZABETH LAING THOMPSON

#ALLTHEFEELS



Dear Reader,

!! Am! So! Excited! (Sorry. Big-feeler warm-fuzzy moment.) The only thing better than growing in your emotional life is growing closer to other people at the same time! I'm thrilled that you are using *All the Feels* as a way to connect with your emotional side, with your Creator, and with other Christians.

In this discussion guide I have provided three to four discussion questions per chapter in *All the Feels*. This is not meant to be a rigid guide, but rather a starting place to get the words—and feels!—flowing. Feel free to adapt this guide and the questions however you need to. You probably won't have time to talk through every question for every chapter—the number of questions you get through just depends on the size of your group and their chattiness level!

If your group only meets a few times, you may not be able to discuss every chapter in the book—you may choose to highlight certain topics that are most applicable to your group's goals and needs, and select discussion questions that apply to your chosen topics.

Before each meeting, ask everyone in the group to read the chapter(s) you plan to discuss. At the end of this guide I have also offered a few optional "Feel Your Way Forward . . . with Friends!" and "Feel Your Way Forward . . . with God!" activities. These provide practical ideas for incorporating what you are learning into your daily life and meaningful ways group members can connect outside the scheduled meetings. They are meant to be helpful and fun suggestions, not burdensome duties, so use them however you choose!

Please know that you are always on my heart and in my prayers. I'd love to meet your group on social media or in person! My big-feeling heart absolutely adores connecting with readers—I'd love to see a picture of your group and to hear a bit about how your discussions are going! To arrange for me to visit your group in person or online, please reach out through the contact page on my website, ElizabethLaingThompson.com.

I'm excited for you to grow together! Honored that you have chosen *All the Feels* to help you on that journey. Eager to hear how it's going. Thrilled, humbled, tickled pink . . . well, you know. All the feels.

All my love,

Elizabeth Laing Thompson




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Practical Tips for Group Discussions

- 1** Before each meeting, ask everyone in the group to read the chapter(s) you will be discussing. You can discuss one chapter at a time or combine two or three—whatever works for your group’s schedule and chattiness level! If you cover more than one chapter in a meeting, you will probably need to limit yourselves to one or two discussion questions per chapter.
 - 2** Several discussion questions are provided to accompany each chapter in *All the Feels*. You may not have time to discuss every question—just choose the topics that best suit your group’s goals and needs, and have fun! If your group is large, you may want to break up into smaller groups for some of the questions. (Some of the questions are designed to be discussed in smaller groups of two or three; others are designed for discussion in groups of people who share the same feeling type.)
 - 3** After the discussions, you will find some optional activities to help your group connect in meaningful ways outside the discussions. These provide practical ideas for incorporating what you are learning into your relationships and your walk with God. They also encourage personal application and relational connections among group members. They are meant to be helpful and fun suggestions, not burdensome duties, so use them however you wish! Choose whichever activities most appeal to you and your group.
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Discussion Questions by Chapter



Part One:

How should we feel about our feelings?

Chapter 1: Welcome to our world

1. What personal growth would you like to experience as you read this book and attend this group? How would you like to feel? Who do you hope to become?
2. What role do your feelings currently play in your faith walk? How do you feel about bringing your emotions to God?
3. If you could change one trait about your emotional makeup, what would it be? Why?

Chapter 2: Embracing Your Emotional Gifts

1. What kind of feeler are you? What do you most enjoy about your feeling type? What do you find most challenging about it?
2. What strengths does your emotional disposition give you? How might you use those gifts to honor God and love people?
Alternate: Instead of having each member share about their own strengths, have group members share about one another's emotional strengths and how God is already using them.
3. Describe a time when you have used your emotional disposition to help someone else. How did you feel afterward?

Optional extension activity: Encourage each group member to find a prayer partner from the group who shares their feeling type. Even if they can't meet in person, they can share prayer requests and pray for each other.

Chapter 3: The Happy House

1. How were feelings addressed in your home growing up? Were they encouraged? Drawn out? Ignored? Shut down? How do you see your growing-up years influencing the way you express your feelings at home today?
2. Describe the way you would like your home to feel. What would you like the predominant mood to be? What environment do you want to create in terms of people being able to express their feelings, and what steps can you take to foster that environment?
3. Answer the questions that apply to your feeling type. (Depending on the size of your group, you may want to break into smaller discussion groups according to feeling type.)

BIG FEELERS:

When you feel emotionally overwhelmed, how do you typically respond at home? (Some people withdraw into their own thoughts and feelings, becoming quiet and lost in thought; others explode all over the house; others use some combination of the two.) How would you like to respond? How can you give yourself time and space to recharge so you still have emotional energy to give?

STEADY FEELERS:

You likely spend a lot of time giving to others, but what would help you feel like your emotional needs were being acknowledged at home? When you feel emotionally overwhelmed, how do you typically respond?

RELUCTANT FEELERS:

How can you help create a validating, welcoming environment that invites your more emotional loved ones to be open with you? How can you be intentional about sharing your feelings and emotionally engaging with others at home?

Chapter 4: When Darkness Comes Knocking

1. How can you tell the difference between healthy grief and unhealthy grief in your life?
2. Describe a time when you have gone through a season of sadness, and it was necessary.
3. Have you ever avoided grief in a time when you needed to be sad? What happened as a result?
4. How can you tell when dark feelings have overstayed their welcome? Be as specific as you can.

Optional extension activity: Pair up and discuss with a partner (this can be done either during the group meeting or sometime during the week): What does grief look like for you? Is it loud? Quiet? Do you look to people for support, or do you grieve privately? Do you hide your feelings, or do you wear them on your sleeve (and all over your entire outfit)? Do you eat your feelings, or exercise them out?

Chapter 5: I Can't Help the Way I Feel...Or Can I?

1. The Bible tells us to set our minds on things above (see Colossians 3:2). What does that look like? How might doing so affect your emotional well-being?
2. Do you find it difficult for you to reset your thoughts? Why or why not? What helps you to refocus your thoughts on godly things?

3. Read as a group:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! . . . Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. . . . And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:4, 6-9

4. What do we learn about God when we consider the kinds of topics he wants us to focus on instead of anxiety?

5. Go through each adjective in in Philippians 4:6-9 (true, noble, right, etc.) and discuss examples of things that would match that adjective. You can have a free-for-all discussion, or you could assign each person one adjective from the list and ask them to share one to three things that fit their adjective.

6. At the end of the discussion, go around and share how you are feeling. How did having a discussion centered on all these positive things affect your mood?

Optional extension activity: Choose one adjective per day from the Philippians 4 list as your theme for the day. Meditate on things that fit that adjective all day long!

Chapter 6: Facts vs. Feelings

1. Feelings hold different powers over different people. Some of us are tangled up in insecurity; others are overwhelmed by perceived injustice; others are tripped up by discouragement (and the list goes on). Which specific feelings make it most difficult for you to think clearly and find the facts?

2. Read 1 Kings 19:1-18 and discuss:

- What was Elijah feeling, and why? What evidence did he have to support his feelings?
- What do you notice about how God dealt with Elijah at first when he was down, and what can we learn from that?
- What do you notice about God's solutions for Elijah when it was time for him to come out of the cave?

3. Workshop a few feelings as a group. Split into pairs or threes and assign each small group a feeling (anger, joy, peace, patience, insecurity). Find as many scriptures as you can to address that emotion and share your findings with the group.

Part Two:

What Specific Feelings Tend to Trip Us Up?

Chapter 7: Anxiety: When Thoughts Go Blender

1. What are your anxiety triggers, and why? (Triggers include conflict, money worries, job or school stress, health, worries about specific people in your life, etc.)
2. What does anxiety look like for you? How do you act when you are anxious? How do you feel? What happens in your relationships? What kind of "what ifs" do you indulge in?
3. Describe a time when you were anxious and God took care of you. Now . . . when you remember the devotion and care God has already shown you, how does that change the way you view your current problems and worries?

4. Go around the circle and have each person describe a “what if” scenario that makes them anxious. (For example: “What if I lose my job?”) Now counter that fear by coming up with an “even if” statement that helps them to view it differently. Each person can come up with their own “even if,” or the group can help them brainstorm. (Example: “I will be okay even if I lose my job, because God will provide, just as he has always done.”)

5. Share a Scripture that helps you know God cares about you.

Optional connection activity: Encourage group members to connect with someone in the group who shares similar anxieties and encourage each other—for example, text each other a Scripture or pray together over the phone. (Yep, you have to overcome anxiety if you want to be vulnerable in a new relationship—it will be worth it!)

Chapter 8: Borrowing Burdens: What's Yours Is Mine

1. Go around the room and take turns reading the types of burden borrowers. After reading, go around and share what kind of burden borrower you are most tempted to be.

Types of burden borrowers:

THE LISTENER:

This person says things like, “Knock, call, text, or carrier-pigeon me anytime, day or night. I will always be there, always listen. I may not be able to give advice or fix your problem, but please, dump your every feeling into my all-absorbing ears. I can take it.” (Meanwhile, the Listener cannot actually take it. The Listener struggles to sleep, eat, and remember their own name. The Listener’s other relationships suffer. The Listener feels drained, exhausted, and occasionally resentful with a side order of guilt and self-loathing.)

THE WEEPER:

A close relative of the Listener, the Weeper listens and weeps alongside hurting souls. They take “walking in their shoes” to a whole new deep-down-in-the-soul-not-to-mention-the-tear-ducts level. When a friend bleeds, the Weeper also needs a transfusion.

THE FIXER:

Not only does the Fixer listen, they are determined to fix it, doggone it! The Fixer researches and ponders, prays and plans. Gives advice. Offers support, food, housing, money. Checks in. Seeks updates. Wrings hands. Follows up. Rewrites the plan. Prods and nudges. Hand-holds. Never. Lets. Go.

THE IT'S- SOMEHOW- MY- FAULT- ER:

This sensitive soul suffers from a kind of survivor's guilt that makes them feel overly responsible for others' sufferings. They are plagued by thoughts like, *Why them and not me? They are more righteous/responsible/health conscious/fill-in-the-blank than I am—so why are they suffering instead of me? Maybe if I suffer with them, I can somehow alleviate the injustice—or better yet, show God how unfair this is.*

THE DOWN- IN- THE- DITCH- TOGETHER- FOREVER BORROWER:

This person says, “If you fall into a ditch, I’m jumping down there with you every time.” This kind of hard-core devotion is sometimes admirable, but it may get us into trouble when a loved one enjoys making ditches their permanent home.

THE I- WON'T- BE- HAPPY- TILL- YOU'RE- HAPPY BORROWER:

This burden borrower makes an internal vow, perhaps unconsciously, forbidding themselves from being happy until their friend/boyfriend/spouse/parent/child/whoever is happy. Their sufferings and joys are inextricably intertwined. And heaven help this poor sensitive soul when they make this pact with every person they love. If every person they love must be happy all at the same time in order for them to be happy, you can imagine (perhaps from personal experience) how often this person allows themselves to be happy.

2. How can you continue to love others and share their burdens without borrowing their pain in unhealthy ways?
3. How do you know when you are overstepping the bounds of healthy compassion and sorrow sharing and entering the realm of burden borrowing? What does burden borrowing look like for you?
4. What one thing could you do differently to lighten the burden you carry?

Optional connection activity: Pair up with someone this week. Share a burden you are currently carrying, and pray for each other all week. Pray for each other to handle the burden well, to turn it over to God, and to find peace and joy.

Chapter 9: Cynicism: (Too) Great Expectations

1. In which areas do you struggle most with cynicism: Relationships? The church? Your view of yourself? The world in general? Why are those areas so difficult for you?
2. Describe a time when God gave you a second chance. How can you extend that kind of grace to others—or to yourself?
3. Describe a time when you saw God bring about good even through a time of suffering. What did you learn from that time?
4. What do you most look forward to about heaven? How does it comfort you in the midst of present disappointments to anticipate the beautiful life that awaits you—a life free from sin, sorrow, and sickness?

Chapter 10: Idealism: Finding Joy in the Midst of Imperfection

1. Go around the circle and ask each person to fill in the blank with one of the “happiness rules” they have made (or are tempted to make) for themselves:

I can finally be happy when . . .

Life will be peaceful when . . .

My life will be good when . . .

Now go back around the circle and ask everyone to reframe their sentence:

I can be joyful even though . . . because . . .

God can give me peace even while . . . because . . .

My life is already good in spite of . . . because . . .

2. In what relationship or setting could you give do-overs a try? How might do-overs change things for you?

3. Habakkuk 3:18 says, “I will rejoice in the Lord”; Paul tells us the same thing in Philippians 4:4: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” What does it mean to rejoice “in the Lord”? How can we find joy in God even when life isn’t at its most joyful—or isn’t joyful at all?

4. Describe a time when you have rejoiced in the Lord through hardship.

Chapter 11: Guilt: What It Demands from You

1. Describe a time when you experienced the grace of God. How did grace change you?

2. How does living in grace affect your relationship with God? Your relationship with other people?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-13. Unpack the differences between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow: How specifically are they different? How can you tell if your sorrow is worldly or godly?

4. Describe a time when you gave in to worldly sorrow. How did you feel, and how did those feelings affect your perspective, your relationships, and your effectiveness for God?
5. Now describe a time when you sinned but repented with godly sorrow. How did you feel, and how did those feelings affect your perspective, your relationships, and your effectiveness for God?
6. How have you seen God's grace at work even when you've had to deal with the consequences of past sins? In what ways has God shown kindness to you? In what ways has he alleviated some of the hardships or heartache?

Part Three:

How Do Emotions Work in the Real World?

Chapter 12: The Potential in Your Prayer Life

1. What do you most enjoy about God? What practices (or places or perspectives) help you to feel emotionally close to God?
2. How do you feel about bringing your most intense emotions to God? Do you think he wants to hear them and help you resolve them? Why or why not?
3. How can you share more of your daily life with God? What would that practice look like for you? What would it feel like?
4. How does surrendering to God's will and ways in prayer enable us to more fully experience the other aspects of our relationship with him (enjoying God's presence, worshiping, sharing life, etc.)? What do you need to surrender to God in prayer?

Optional connection activities:

- Create a group worship playlist: Ask each group member to suggest a worship song that helps them to connect with God emotionally, and create a shared playlist!
- Find a prayer partner from the group. Set up a time to pray together as consistently as you can for as long as the group meets—once a week is a great goal. If you can't meet in person, share prayer requests and pray for each other.

Chapter 13: A Big Feeler's Guide to the Bible

1. Which type of doubt do you most struggle with: theological or personal? Why?
2. How do you feel about yourself when you doubt? How do you think God feels about you?
3. How does it feel to realize that many godly people in Scripture wrestled with doubt? How does that realization change your perspective on your own questions?

Chapter 14: Harnessing Emotions in Relationships

1. Which relationship struggle do you most relate to: feeling insecure, being angry, dealing with old wounds, being easily offended, making things too much about you, or wanting to talk about every feeling? How might you begin to work on that?
2. How might you begin sharing more of your feelings—the good and the bad—with God?
3. What is going great in your relationships? What do you wish were different?
4. How can you employ the gifts of your feeling type in your relationships?

Chapter 15: Input Overload

1. What earthly things tend to take up a lot of your thoughts? How can you either think less about those things or bring God into your inner dialogue?
2. How does social media affect you? How would you describe its influence on your faith? Your relationships? Your spiritual and emotional health?
3. We talked about different categories of relationships in our lives (inner circle, daily circle, shoulder-brushing circle, etc.). Which person or group of people in your life would you like to devote more emotional energy to? How might you make room for that change?
4. What one change would you like to make in your social media habits?

Optional extension activity: Take a day or a week off of social media. (Breathe slowly; don't panic. This is optional. Heh heh.) Take some time to journal afterward: How did you feel about your time away? What did you learn about yourself? How was your emotional state and walk with God different? What adjustments do you want to make to your social media habits going forward?

Chapter 16: Sharing Your Emotional Gifts with the World

1. Describe a time when you felt most fulfilled. What role were you playing, and why did it bring you so much joy? How did it complement your feeling type?
2. Take a moment to dream out loud as a group: If you could do anything with your life, what would it be? Don't just think "career"; think also about roles you'd like to play at home or in your church, and consider ways you'd like to contribute to your family or community. Why does that role appeal to you? (You may want to read these questions aloud, then give everyone a few minutes to think and write down their answers before they share. Or you could give everyone the questions ahead of time and ask them to bring their answers in ready to share.)

3. Optional deep dive for any participants who are considering a new role or position: Break into groups of two or three, and have participants workshop these questions together. Participants could do this during one of your discussion sessions, or they could meet on their own time.

- Does this role or position bring out the best in me? Why or why not?
- Do I like the person I am when I fill this role?
- Am I the Christian I want to be when I hold this role? Am I the friend/roommate/student/spouse/parent/caretaker I want to be? Why or why not?
- Is the stress inherent in this role something I can learn to manage by disciplining my thought patterns and implementing healthy boundaries (emotional boundaries, time boundaries, etc.)?
- Are the rewards of this position (and remember, rewards come in many forms—relational, emotional, occupational, financial, and so on) worth the emotional cost?

Chapter 17: How God Feels about Feelers

1. Go around and share about each person in the group: How have you seen this person grow emotionally? What do you most admire about the way they use their emotional gifts?

2. How have you grown in your understanding of your emotional gifts during these discussions? How are you still hoping to grow as time goes on?

3. Moving forward, how might you use your emotional strengths to honor God and love people?



Feel Your Way Forward...with Friends!

**Optional Activities for
Connection and Application**



These activities are meant to be done with a friend from the group.

1. This activity would be great to suggest at the first meeting, though you could suggest it at any time: Ask someone from the group to meet for coffee. (It doesn't have to be coffee—it can be lunch or ice cream or something else—but conversations always go better with coffee. Just saying.) Use the opportunity to be open about your emotional journey and needs, and to give to your friend—to find out what's going on in their life, what their feeling type is, how they want to grow, and how you can encourage them.
2. Find a prayer partner from the group. Set up a time to pray together as consistently as you can for as long as the group meets (once a week is a great goal). If you can't meet in person, share prayer requests and pray for each other.
3. *Pairs well with chapter 7.* Encourage group members to connect with someone in the group who shares similar anxieties and encourage each other—for example, text each other a Scripture or pray together over the phone. (Yep, you have to overcome anxiety if you want to be vulnerable in a new relationship—it will be worth it!)
4. Pair up with someone from the group and take turns texting or emailing Scriptures that help you to see or feel God's care.
5. *Pairs well with chapter 12.* Create a group worship playlist: Ask each group member to suggest a worship song that helps them to connect with God emotionally, and create a playlist!



Feel Your Way Forward...with God!

**Optional Activities for
Personal Application**



These activities are meant to be done independently.

1. *Pairs well with chapters 2 and 16.* Journal an answer to these questions (and have fun—don't be afraid to dream!):

What specific purposes do you think God has in mind for your life and your emotional gifts?

What purposes might he have in mind for your current season of life? Who can your particular strengths bless?

2. *Pairs well with chapters 2 and 17.* Pay attention to little encouragements God sends you each day to show you his love. (We're talking about small things here: a card in the mail, free lunch for no reason, even getting that parking space you prayed for!) Spend a week writing them down every night before bed, and thank God for them again the next morning.

3. *Pairs well with chapter 5.* Choose one adjective per day from the Philippians 4:8-9 list as your theme for the day. All day long, make a point to notice, meditate on, and thank God for things that fit that adjective!

4. *Pairs well with chapter 6.* Find three Scriptures that speak to whatever feelings you are grappling with most in this season of your life. Write them down and keep them with you to read whenever you need their message. Consider memorizing one—or all three!

5. *Pairs well with chapter 12.* Find a psalm that describes your current emotional state and gives you the words you need to pray. (The prayer prompts at the end of each chapter in *All the Feels* are great options.) Read the psalm you choose in several Bible versions to give you a fuller understanding of its meaning. Pray through your psalm every day this week. There are many ways to pray through a psalm: You can simply read it to God. You can also read a verse or two, pause to add your own thoughts, then read the next verse, and so on, all the way to the end.

6. *Pairs well with chapter 12.* Find a special place with God—a place where you can enter his presence and bring him your heart. A place you look forward to going to meet with your Father. Jesus went to Gethsemane—where can you go?

7. *Pairs well with chapter 15.* Take a day or a week off of social media. (Breathe slowly; don't panic. This is optional. Heh heh.) Take some time to journal afterward: How did you feel about your time away? What did you learn about yourself? How was your emotional state and walk with God different? What adjustments do you want to make to your social media habits going forward?



Suggested Schedules for Group Meetings

8-Week Schedule

6-Week Schedule

4-Week Schedule



POSSIBLE SCHEDULE FOR AN EIGHT-WEEK GROUP

Week 1

Chapters 1–2

Week 2

Chapters 3–4

Week 3

Chapters 5–6

Week 4

Chapters 7–8

Week 5

Chapters 9–11

Week 6

Chapters 12–13

Week 7

Chapters 14–15

Week 8

Chapters 16–17

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE FOR A SIX-WEEK GROUP

For a six-week discussion group, you can either go through the book chronologically, covering an average of three chapters a week, or you can go through the book topically. You won't have time to discuss every question offered in this guide; you can select the questions that best suit the needs of your group.

Six-week group schedule:
chapters in order

Week 1:
Chapters 1–3

Week 2
Chapters 4–6

Week 3
Chapters 7–9

Week 4
Chapters 10–13

Week 5
Chapters 14–15

Week 6
Chapters 16–17

Six-week group schedule:
chapters grouped loosely by topic

Week 1: What kind of feeler are you, and how do you want to grow and give?
Chapters 1 and 2

Week 2: The thought-feeling connection
Chapters 5 and 6

Week 3: Emotions and relationships
Chapters 3, 8, and 14

Week 4: Grappling with challenging emotions
Chapters 4, 7, 11
(You could include chapters 9 and 10 in this discussion if you have time.)

Week 5: Spiritual practices
Chapters 12, 13, and 15

Week 6: Feeling your way forward: Using your emotional gifts
Chapters 16 and 17
(You could also go back to chapter 2 and review the descriptions of each feeling type's gifts.)

POSSIBLE SCHEDULE FOR A FOUR-WEEK GROUP

If your group only meets four times, you won't have time to discuss all seventeen chapters, so I recommend a few discussions centered on a few related chapters.

Week 1: Your feeling type and taking charge of your feelings
Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6

Week 2: Grappling with challenging emotions
Chapters 4, 7, 8, and 11
(You could limit this discussion to chapters 4 and 7 if you want to focus on anxiety and depression.)

Week 3: Emotions and relationships
Chapters 3, 14, and 16

Week 4: Spiritual practices
Chapters 12, 13, 15, and 17



**May God bless you
and your group!**

ELIZABETH LAING THOMPSON

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