

Book Club Discussion Guide

STOP YOUR SPIRAL: Your Emotional Emergency Brake

Clayton M. Myhill | Gary Press | June 2026

For book club leaders, reading groups, and anyone brave enough to talk about their emotional wiring out loud.

Before You Start

This guide is designed for a single 60–90 minute discussion. You don't need to use every question — pick the ones that fit your group. The best conversations happen when someone says “that was me” and means it.

Suggested format: - Icebreaker (5 min) - Part 1: Recognition (20 min) - Part 2: The Tools (20 min) - Part 3: The Personal Stuff (20 min) - Group Activity + Close (10–15 min)

Icebreaker: Meet Your Gary

Go around the room. Everyone answers one question:

“What’s your Gary signal — the thing your body does when stress arrives before your brain catches up?”

(Eye twitch, jaw clench, restless leg, chest tightness, stomach drop, shoulder hunch. Everyone has one. Most people have never named it.)

Part 1: Recognition

These questions explore the “I’ve been doing this my whole life” moments.

1. Clayton writes that “Sam is you. Sam is me.” Was there a moment reading this book where you thought *that’s exactly what I do*? What was it?
 2. The book argues that most of us have been “emotionally improvising with broken equipment.” Do you agree? What does your broken equipment look like?
 3. Conference Room Lisa makes a meeting feel like a cage match. Who’s your Conference Room Lisa — and what situation brings out your worst emotional autopilot?
 4. Clayton describes driving Sam’s truck for two years knowing it was broken. What’s the emotional equivalent you’ve been driving too long?
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Part 2: The Tools

These questions dig into whether the framework actually works — and where it doesn’t.

5. The Emergency Brake is Stop, Drop, Roll. Has anyone tried it since reading? What happened? (Be honest — “I forgot immediately” counts.)
 6. The EDFI (Emotional Dumpster Fire Index) runs 1–5. What level are you today, right now? What level were you last week at your worst?
 7. “Name It, Tame It, Reclaim It” asks you to identify the emotion before managing it. Is that easy or hard for you? What emotion do you have the hardest time naming?
 8. The book says that above EDFI Level 3, your only job is getting capacity back — not solving anything. Does that feel like permission or like giving up?
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Part 3: The Personal Stuff

These go deeper. Only use these if your group has trust.

9. Clayton writes openly about his marriage ending, his reactions at 3am, and the gap between knowing better and doing better. Did his honesty make the book more or less credible to you?
 10. Was there a moment in the book where you felt *seen* in a way that made you uncomfortable? What was it about?
 11. The book’s core message is that permission comes before information — you need to know it’s okay to struggle before you can learn to navigate. Did you feel like you needed that permission? Do you still?
 12. If you could hand this book to one person in your life (without explaining why), who would it be?
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Group Activity: Your Navigation Card

Takes 5–10 minutes. Everyone fills in their own version.

Give each person a blank card or piece of paper. They fill in:

MY EMERGENCY NAVIGATION CARD

My Gary signal: _____
 My go-to spiral trigger: _____
 My EDFI right now: ___ / 5

When I'm above Level 3, the one thing that
 actually brings me back down: _____

The person I'd call at 2am: _____

Optional: Share one line from your card with the group. No pressure.

Closing Question

One final question to end the session:

“What’s one thing you’re going to do differently this week — even something small — because of this book?”

Not a resolution. Not a life change. Just one thing. A reaction you’ll catch. A pause you’ll try. A Gary signal you’ll notice instead of ignoring.

That’s enough.

Want the Author at Your Meeting?

Clayton is available for book club Q&A sessions (virtual or in-person for Calgary-area groups).

Contact: clayton@emotional-navigation.com **Website:** www.emotional-navigation.com

Quick Reference for Discussion Leaders

If your group skews analytical: Focus on Part 2 (the tools). Let them debate whether the framework holds up.

If your group skews emotional: Focus on Part 3 (the personal stuff). Let them share.

If your group is new to each other: Stick to Part 1 (recognition) and the icebreaker. Don’t push vulnerability with strangers.

If someone gets emotional: That’s the book working, not the discussion failing. Pause. Let it be. Move on when they’re ready.

If someone says “this doesn’t apply to me”: Ask them Question 4. Everyone has a truck they’ve driven too long.

“You’re not behind. You’re about to get the upgrade.” — Stop Your Spiral, Chapter 2

Download this guide: www.emotional-navigation.com/bookclub **Order the book:** www.emotional-navigation.com/books/stop-your-spiral

Gary’s right eye approves of group discussions.