

DR. UMA'S CALM YOUR MIND WITH FOOD READING GROUP GUIDE

This reading group guide for Dr. Uma Naidoo's *Calm Your Mind with Food* includes an introduction, discussion questions, and ideas for enhancing your book club.



INTRODUCTION

In this groundbreaking guide, nutritional psychiatrist Dr. Uma Naidoo presents cutting-edge research about the ways anxiety is rooted in the brain, gut, immune system, and metabolism. Drawing on the latest science on the connection between diet and anxiety, Dr. Naidoo shows us how to effectively use food and nutrition as essential tools for calming the mind.

Along with guidelines for creating your own personal anti-anxiety meal plan and dozens of supernutrient-forward, delicious recipes, *Calm Your Mind with Food* will help you boost your immunity, reduce anxiety, and enhance your overall mental well-being.

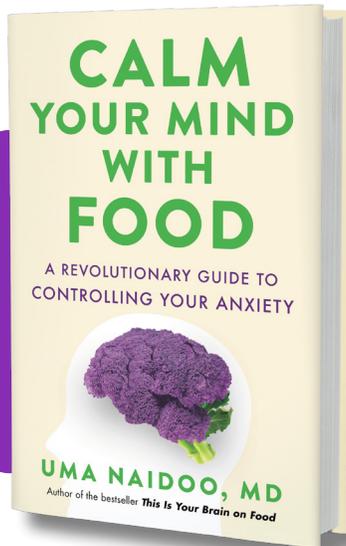
QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Before you started *Calm Your Mind with Food*, what did you already know about your gut microbiome and/or its connection to the brain? What were you hoping to learn?
2. Throughout the book, Dr. Uma Naidoo references the biopsychosocial model of anxiety and all its contributing factors—from genetics, nutritional factors, and history of trauma to sleep quality, chronic diseases, and more. We know that many factors impact anxiety, what are you hoping to heal through food?
3. We learn about several patients throughout the book who are struggling with both physical ailments as well as anxiety. What are other factors, as described in the case studies, that may indicate that gut health is contributing to mental health?
4. "Plato famously described reason and emotion as two horses pulling us in opposite directions, creating the conception of human judgment as a tug-of-war between our rational "head," and

our passionate “heart.” (Location 496-533) The gut is also famously associated with thoughts and feelings. Can you think of examples from the book or your own experience where your gut indicated a connection to thoughts and feelings?

5. Chapter 4 delves into inflammatory responses the body can have to food, injuries, etc. It’s “a protective process persists even in the absence of threats, wreaking havoc on the body it’s supposed to safeguard.” This definition has a lot of overlap with how anxiety was discussed in Chapter 1. What were some links between anxiety and inflammation that were outlined in this book?

6. In Chapter 10, Dr. Uma took you along on a hypothetical grocery shopping trip. She proposed many healthy alternatives and additions you can make to your meals to build the core of your antianxiety diet. What swaps can you foresee making?



7. In Chapter 11, Dr. Uma discussed the Blue Zones: “In 2004, National Geographic reporter Dan Buettner set out to discover the places in the world where people live longest, hoping to glean insights into the secrets of longevity. His team’s research revealed five places with the highest percentage of residents who live past one hundred years old: Loma Linda, California; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; and Okinawa, Japanese.” With the group, discuss the connection between longevity and anxiety.

8. In Part 1 of the book, Dr. Uma established the science behind the connection between diet and anxiety. In Part 2, she puts that knowledge into practice with the Six Pillars to Calm Your Mind.

Which pillars will present challenges? Which pillars do you feel confident about?

9. “Diets are meant to provide frameworks for self-improvement based on your personal needs. Research demonstrates that shame, self-criticism, and perceptions of inferiority make you lose self-control and undermine the effectiveness of what you are trying to achieve by changing your eating habits.” (location 3422) Dr. Uma goes on to outline important steps you should take and mindsets you should be aware of when reframing your relationship with food. How do these mindsets help someone’s relationship with food? How can they be a detriment to that relationship?

10. “I must confess I love everything in the kitchen, from the food itself to each tool and utensil I use. It’s my playground and my canvas, and it brings me joy and a sense of calm. It’s my happy place.” (Location 3488) Is the kitchen your happy place? What intimidates you about getting started on the recipes in this book? What excites you?

11. In Chapter 13, Dr. Uma shared four easy techniques she learned in her culinary training (Location 3531). Have you tried any of these techniques before? What are some of your favorite kitchen tricks and cooking hacks?

12. What strategies from the book do you plan to add to your own anxiety-fighting plan? Are there any barriers? If so, discuss solutions with the group.

ENHANCE YOUR BOOK CLUB

Visit umanaidoomd.com/collections/food-for-mood and take part in the Food for Mood Campaign.

Chapter 14 is dedicated to recipes to calm your mind. Host a potluck and make a recipe from the book to share with your book club!

It's time for a pantry raid: In Tilo's story, hidden sweeteners impacted not only the results she saw on the scale, but also how she felt about them. Have book club members bring their favorite snacks. Using a list of names for sugar, how many different names of sugar/sweetener can you find?

