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THE NEXT CHAPTER NETWORK  
FACILITATION GUIDE

MONTH ONE

# Reclaiming *Joy*

*What lights you up that you've forgotten?*

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Turn the page. With purpose.

# Welcome to Your Chapter

Congratulations on starting something meaningful. By gathering this group of women, you've already done the hardest part. What follows is a simple, guided framework for having conversations that go deeper than the usual catch-up — conversations about who you are now, what you want, and what this next chapter could look like.

This guide has everything you need to facilitate your first Chapter Night. No training required. No expertise needed. Just a willingness to show up, be real, and hold space for each other.

## WHAT TO EXPECT TONIGHT

- About 2 hours of guided conversation, followed by dinner together
- Everyone checks in and shares what's happening in their world
- One topic surfaces organically and the group goes deeper on it
- Each woman connects the topic to her own life through an experience share
- You close with one takeaway each, then head to the table

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Choose a comfortable, private space — someone's living room, a quiet corner of a restaurant, anywhere you can talk without being overheard
- Ask everyone to put phones away (or at least on silent and face-down)
- Have this guide in front of you — it's your roadmap for the evening
- Facilitation can rotate monthly — whoever hosts can facilitate, or choose someone who enjoys it
- There are no wrong answers. There is no homework. There is only showing up.

# Ground Rules

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Read these aloud at your first meeting. In future months, the facilitator will give a brief reminder at the start of each Chapter Night.

**1. What's shared here stays here.**

Everything said in this room is confidential. We don't share each other's stories, struggles, or personal details outside this group. Not with partners, not with friends, not on social media. This is a vault.

**2. Share from your own experience.**

When someone opens up, resist the urge to fix, advise, or solve. Instead, listen — and when it's your turn, share from your own life. "I've felt that too" is more powerful than "You should try..."

**3. No cross-talk during shares.**

When someone is sharing, the room is theirs. No interrupting, no side conversations, no jumping in. Give each woman the gift of being fully heard.

**4. Be honest, not performative.**

You don't need to have it figured out. You don't need to sound wise or put-together. The most valuable thing you can bring to this group is the truth about where you are right now.

**5. It's okay to pass.**

If a prompt doesn't land for you or you're not ready to share on a particular topic, you can simply say "I'll pass this time." No explanation needed.

**6. Protect the energy.**

Start on time. End on time. Stay present. This is a commitment to each other — treat it like one.

# Tonight's Flow

Month One: Reclaiming Joy

1

## Opening Ritual

5 minutes

Welcome everyone. Read the ground rules aloud (first meeting) or give a brief reminder (future meetings). Then go around the circle:

*"Share one thing — big or small — that brought you a moment of joy this week."*

Keep it to 30 seconds each. This is a warm-up, not a deep dive.

2

## Check-In

5 minutes per person

Go around the circle. Each woman shares what's happening in her world right now — the highlights, the hard parts, what's taking up space in her mind. The group listens without interrupting.

*"What's your update? What's alive for you right now?"*

Listen for themes. Notice what resonates across the group. One of these updates will likely become tonight's deeper topic.

3

## Go Deeper

15–20 minutes

Based on what came up during check-ins, the group selects one topic that feels timely and relevant. The woman whose update sparked it shares more deeply — her experience, what she's feeling, what she's wrestling with. The group asks follow-up questions to understand, not to fix.

*Facilitator: "It sounds like [topic] is resonating tonight. [Name], would you be willing to go deeper on that?"*

If the topic relates to this month's theme of Reclaiming Joy, great. If it doesn't, that's fine too — the best conversations come from what's real and present in the room.

Tonight's Flow (continued)

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## Experience Share

5 minutes per person

Now everyone connects to the topic from their own life. This is the heart of the Chapter Night format. Each woman shares her own experience — not advice, not analysis, just her story.

*"How does this topic connect to your own life? What's your experience with this?"*

Remind the group: no cross-talk during shares. Each person gets the floor. If someone's share sparks a thought, hold it — you'll have dinner for the free-flowing conversation.

5

## Closing

5–10 minutes

Go around the circle one final time. Each woman names one thing she's taking away from tonight — a thought, a feeling, a question, an intention.

*"What's one thing you're carrying with you from tonight?"*

Thank everyone for showing up. Remind the group about confidentiality. Then head to dinner together.

## Dinner

The structured part is over. The connection continues.

No agenda. No prompts. Just food, laughter, and the kind of conversation that happens after you've gone deep.

## IF THE CONVERSATION NEEDS A NUDGE

Most nights, the conversation will flow naturally from check-ins. But if the group needs a little help, here are prompts tied to this month's theme:

- When was the last time you did something purely because it made you happy — not because it was productive or expected?
- What's something you used to love doing that you've quietly let go of? What stopped you?
- If you had a completely free Saturday with no obligations, what would you do? (Be honest — not aspirational.)
- Is there a version of joy you're chasing that doesn't actually belong to you?

# This Month's Text Rhythm

Between Chapter Nights, your group will receive weekly texts from The Next Chapter Network. Here's what's coming this month:

## WEEK 1: THEME DROP

This month's theme — Reclaiming Joy — arrives with a reflection question and a curated resource (podcast, article, or quote) to sit with during the week.

## WEEK 2: TRY THIS NOW

A small challenge: Do one thing this week purely because it brings you joy. Not because it's productive. Not because someone needs you to. Just because it lights you up. Text your Chapter what you chose.

## WEEK 3: CHAPTER NIGHT

Your group meets in person using this facilitation guide. Followed by dinner.

## WEEK 4: REFLECT + LOOK AHEAD

A closing prompt: What surprised you about exploring joy this month? Plus a preview of next month's theme.

### FROM THE NEXT CHAPTER NETWORK

*Thank you for gathering these women. Thank you for being brave enough to say "let's go deeper." The next chapter is better when you write it together.*

Turn the page. With purpose.