

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER THAN THIS

JESSICA N.
TURNER

Rise From
Disappointment,
Regain Control,
and Rebuild a
Life You Love

Book Club Guide

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

I'm thrilled that you have decided to read, *I Thought It Would Be Better Than This* for your book club. I wish I could join you in person, to share a meal and talk with each of you about your this. I hope this book club kit can serve as a kind substitute.

It includes some questions from each chapter for you to discuss, name cards that you can print out for each member, a link to exclusive recipes from Caroline Chambers', "What to Cook When You Don't Feel Like Cooking", my Spotify playlist full of songs that I mention in the book (plus a few others), a link to an Amazon storefront for book club essentials, and more!

Thank you for being a part of this movement to heal and grow from our disappointments. I pray your gathering is full of grace, laughter, and hope.

Love,
Jessica

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER ONE

1. What is your *this*?
2. Discuss a time when you went through a both/and moment.

CHAPTER TWO

1. How did Jessica's reframing of trauma to include *What happened to you?* shift your thinking (if at all)?
2. Have you ever thought about fire as being helpful? In what ways has the fire in your story been helpful to you?
3. Jessica shares four tactics for moving through pain—acknowledge it, talk about it, comfort yourself, and pray. Which of these tactics resonated with you and why?
4. Are you someone who struggles with staying present? If so, how did Jessica's story inform why that is a helpful practice?

CHAPTER THREE

1. Have you ever been afraid to speak up about something hard in your life? What helped you to stop holding it in?
2. What has your experience been with therapy? Was it helpful?
3. What is a time when sharing your experience helped someone else?

CHAPTER FOUR

1. If you have gone through grief, what was helpful during the hardest periods?
2. On pages 52-53, Jessica shares three lies about grief. What lies have you believed?
3. What strategies about grief resonated with you? Have you tried any of them?

CHAPTER FIVE

1. On pages 66-67, Jessica shares what forgiveness isn't. Have you ever believed the "not" statements she shared?
2. Share a time when forgiving someone was healing for you.
3. Have you ever found it difficult to forgive yourself? What did you do to overcome those feelings?
4. Did you do the 360-degree examination of your life? If so, what did you discover?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER SIX

1. How do you feel about the word control? Do you agree with Jessica that you can regain control over parts of your life?
2. What is a longing you have for your life that you have not acknowledged or shared with someone?
3. On pages 86-88, Jessica offers three exercises for articulating the dreams for your life—the “What I Want” chart, the vision board, and the values assessment. Which of these was most helpful and why?
4. How was being a student of your disappointment helpful?

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Do you ever feel lonely? What stood out to you about the loneliness epidemic in America?
2. What are ways you invest in friendship in your life?
3. What makes it challenging to invest in friendship?

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Would you say you love yourself or you are working on falling in love with yourself?
2. Have you ever struggled with loving your body? If so, what has been challenging?
3. What are ways you care for yourself?
4. What do you think about the concept of worthiness? Do you believe you are worthy of good things?

CHAPTER NINE

1. Have you struggled with unhealthy habits during times of disappointment?
2. What ways do you incorporate movement in your days? Do you struggle with this or find it easy to prioritize?
3. During busy seasons, do you find it tough to rest and get enough sleep? If so, what strategies are helpful for making this attainable?
4. How did you score on the report card at the end of the chapter?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER TEN

1. What new experiences have you had after a disappointment or season of grief?
2. Did you take the personal inventory of your habits on page 151? What stood out to you?
3. What would you include on an experience bucket list?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. What creative practices do you find life-giving?
2. If you struggle to know what creative practices you would enjoy, what discovery suggestions that Jessica provided were helpful? Did you do any of them?
3. Jessica wrote about trying pottery and while she struggled, it was a positive learning experience. Have you ever tried a new creative outlet and struggled with it? What did it teach you?
4. Are you a journaler? If so, what form of journaling do you practice and what do you enjoy about it?

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. What spiritual practices do you have in your daily life?
2. Share a time when you asked someone to pray for you and how it made you feel.
3. Share the blessing you wrote for your current season.
4. Name three things you are grateful for right now.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. In what ways have you accepted your circumstances and how has this acceptance made things easier?
2. How do you look at your younger self? Do you struggle with judgment of her or are you able to look at her and her situation with compassion?
3. What is an area of your life that has been rewired and how has that affected you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. What is your view of love? Did the different types of love that Jessica shared resonate with you in any particular way?
2. Share about the SWOT analysis exercise and what it showed you.
3. Jessica talks about discovering that she is her home. How did this section make you think? Did you have any aha moments?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. What new path, like the Anti-Ruts, are you creating for yourself and your life?
2. Jessica did a photo shoot with the word brave written across her chest. What word would you write across your chest?
3. Jessica shared five principles for stepping into your next chapter. Which one stood out to you and why?

GROUP ACTIVITIES

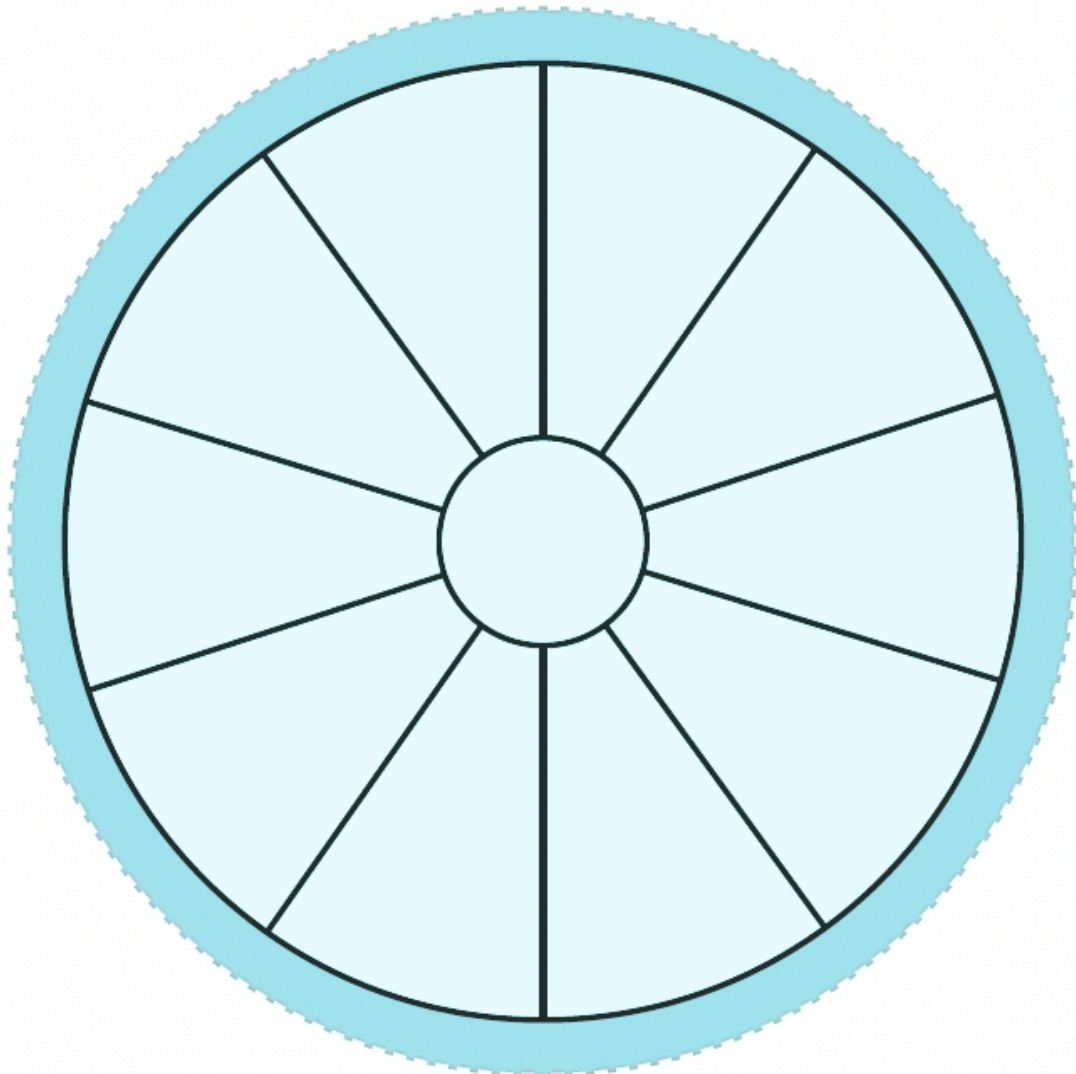
The book walks readers through several activities to help with their healing process. These activities would be perfect to do as a group, or to do outside of book club and then come together and talk about.

ACTIVITY

NAME YOUR *THIS*

To name your this, start by trying to determine the core expectation or ideal that you had. What did you think would be better? Imagine that your core expectation or ideal is the hub of a bicycle wheel. For me, the hub of the wheel was marriage (because I never thought it would end).

Next, consider other related better-than-this expectations extending from the hub like spokes of the wheel. There are other expectations that are unmet because of the disappointment that is the hub.



There are no wrong answers here. Consider your core pain points related to your disappointment. It is critical to identify and acknowledge these spokes because they help you understand the breadth of your pain. You will likely have five to ten spokes. For each spoke, use this phrasing:

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

I thought _____ would be better than this because

GROUP DISCUSSION

As a group, discuss everyone's this and what the wheel helped them notice. What feelings or insights arose with the exercise. Use the space below for notes and reflection.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

ACTIVITY

CREATE A VISION BOARD

Jessica wrote in Chapter 6, "...you get to take the reins back on your life and create a life you love." One of the exercises she mentions is creating a vision board to take inspiration from your goals. Collect a bunch of magazines, some scissors, a glue stick, and enough poster board for everyone coming to book club and spend the evening creating your own vision boards. Consider these questions as you flip through the pages of the magazines and find images and words to cut out and glue on your vision board:

- **What words describe the life you want to have?**
- **What words describe you?**
- **What images reflect the life you yearn for?**
- **What images look like the dreams of your heart?**
- **What feels daunting and impossible, but you want to make it a reality?**

I am usually surprised by the way a project like this helps me codify what I want. This vision board will become a visual reminder for you to cling to when you are moving forward in the months to come.

ACTIVITY

IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES

Also from Chapter 6, this exercise will help you articulate your values. Take the time to write down five to ten values that you hold close, then narrow them down to two or three. Consider what you value around relationships, work, and so on. These values serve as guides for your life and future decision-making.

I VALUE:

MY TOP VALUES:

1

2

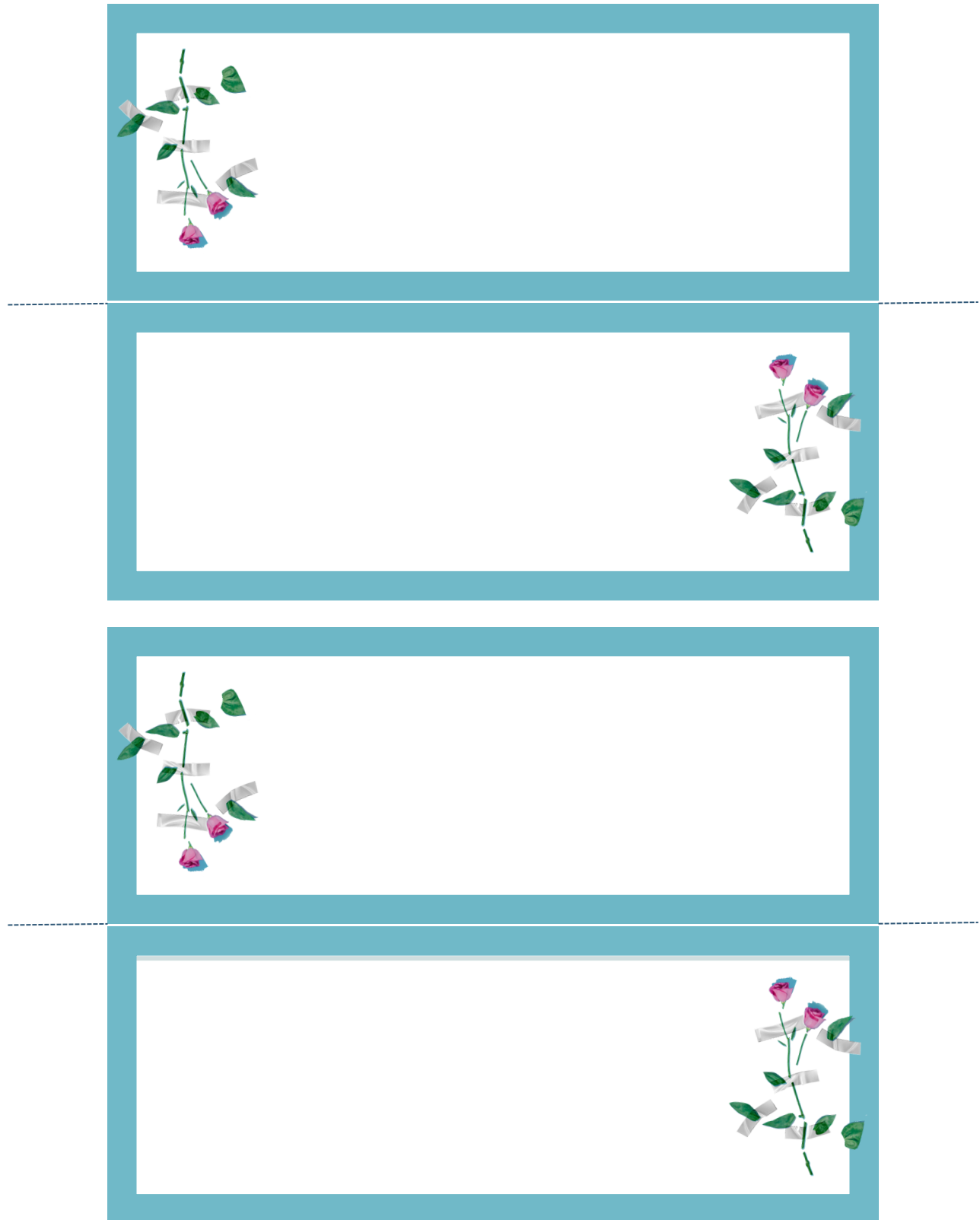
3

Here are some values to help you get started. (For a larger list, check out Brené Brown's [free printable](#) for her book, *Dare to Lead*.)

- Acceptance
- Accountability
- Achievement
- Bravery
- Commitment
- Compassion
- Courage
- Creativity
- Discipline
- Faith
- Family
- Financial stability
- Fun
- Independence
- Kindness
- Loyalty
- Openness
- Respect
- Security
- Time
- Travel
- Vulnerability

NAME CARDS

Here's a printable template for you to use as name cards for table seating or even name tags.



Fold at the dashed line

RECIPES

Here's a link to exclusive recipes from Caro Chambers, ***What to Cook When You Don't Feel Like Cooking*** that you can make if you're the host. If your book club is potluck style, reach out to a few members and give them each a recipe for a meal to bring to the meeting.

Recipes included are:

[INSERT RECIPE NAMES]



I love ordering wine from First Leaf because it's affordable, award-winning and everyone loves it. Here's a link to order.

NO BAKE CHERRY CHEESECAKE

My family's no bake cherry cheesecake is super easy to make and always a hit.
[Click here for the online recipe.](#)

INGREDIENTS

Graham Cracker Crust

- 1 1/4 cups finely ground graham cracker
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup melted butter

Cheesecake Layer

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 8oz package of cream cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 1 8oz container of cool whip
- 2 cans of cherry pie filling



INSTRUCTIONS

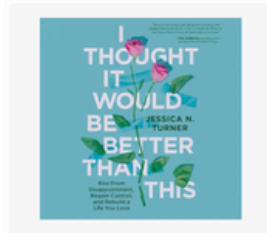
1. Mix the graham cracker ingredients and press into a greased 9x13 pan
2. Beat the cream cheese and gradually beat in sugar.
3. Blend in sour cream and vanilla
4. Fold in cool whip, blending well
5. Spread over crust
6. Chill for 2 hours or more
7. Pour two cans of cherry pie filling over the top before serving

AMAZON STOREFRONT

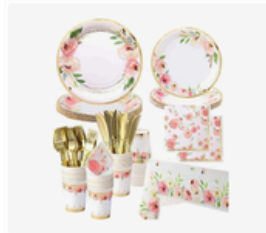
Every book club gathering needs the perfect accessories! I've created a list of items that I believe would be essential for your time together. Find the list [here](#).



Funmemoir
Funmemoir Book Club
Decoration Banner - Read...
\$9⁹⁹



Jessica N. Turner
I Thought It Would Be Better
than This: Rise from...
\$0⁰⁰



Winoo Design
Floral Paper Plates and
Napkins Party Supplies -...
\$23⁹⁹



Winoo Design
Winoo Design Pink Floral
Tablecloth Disposable - Pin...
\$6⁹⁹



BLUE PANDA
BLUE PANDA 80 Pack
Vintage Floral Paper Plates...
\$19⁹⁹



Boosolo
Floral Party Supplies bridal
shower paper plates and...
\$23⁹⁹



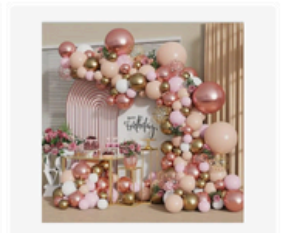
Whaline
Whaline Floral Tableware Set
Pink Flower Rose Gold Foil...
\$21⁹⁹



Newtay
12 Pcs Library Due Date Card
Book Coaster, Book Cover...
\$11⁹⁹



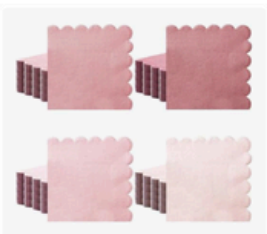
Leapig
100 pack Pink Mix Cocktail
Napkins with Gold Foil...
\$13⁹⁹



Blocesa
Rose Gold Balloon Garland
Kit, Nude Pastel Pink Metal...
\$13⁹⁹



Winoo Design
100 Pink Napkins - 4
Assorted Designs l 3-Ply...
This item may be unavailable in
this color, size, or style.



Zhanmai
Zhanmai 100 Pack Cocktail
Napkins 5 x 5 Inch Scallop...
\$13⁹⁹



SmilerSmile
40pcs Floral Paper Napkins
Watercolor Floral Guest...
\$8⁹⁰



Sparkle and Bash
50 Pack Pink Paper Dinner
Napkins with Gold Foil...
\$10⁴³



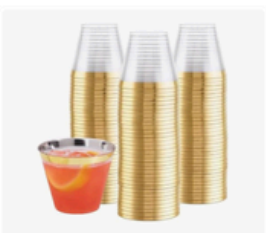
Homy Feel
Homy Feel Rose Gold Glitter
Plastic Rose Gold Wine...
\$23⁹⁹



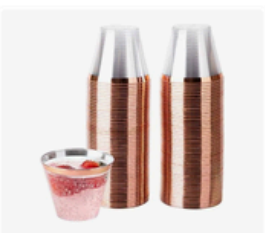
TOSSWARE
TOSSWARE POP 9oz Flute,
Premium Quality, Recyclab...
\$12⁹⁹



Ziliny
Ziliny Disposable Stemless
Glasses 12oz Crystal Plasti...
\$26⁹⁹



Prestee
Prestee 100-Pack Gold
Rimmed Plastic Cups - 9oz...
\$18⁹⁹



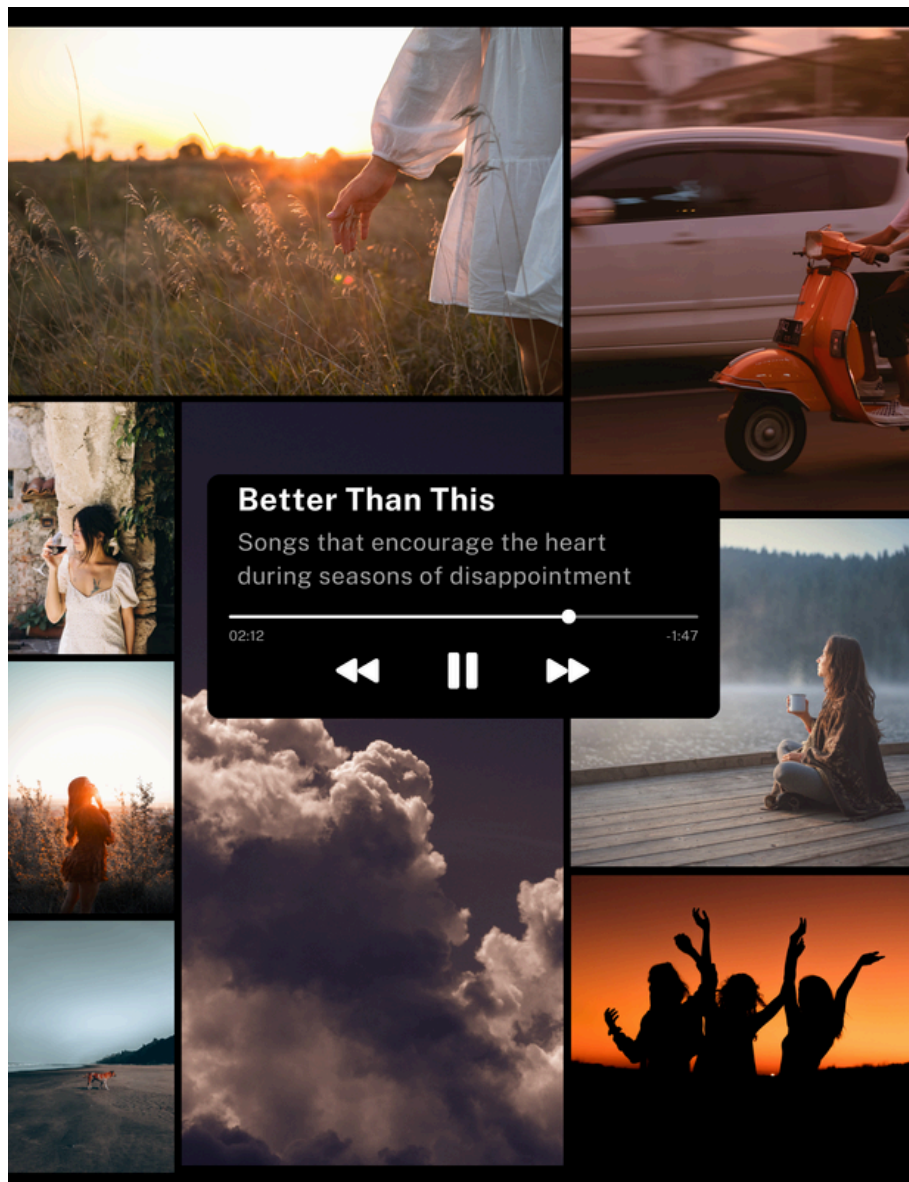
PLASTICPRO
PLASTICPRO 9 oz Disposable
Plastic Party Cups,Old...
\$20⁹⁹



TELDRASSIL
TELDRASSIL 4Pcs(26 FT)
Artificial Rose Vine Fake...
\$20⁹⁹

SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

While reading the book, you will have noticed that music played (no pun intended!) an important role in my healing process. I've created a playlist for you that you can have on in the background during your book club. I've included all of the songs mentioned in the book and several more that I love. I hope these songs become as meaningful to you as they are to me.



A BLESSING FOR HARD DAYS

God, everything feels hard right now.
Bless my heart, which feels fragile and tender.
Bless my home, which is full of chaos and mess,
but also love for my kids and myself.
Bless my body, which feels weary and stressed.

May I know that you are with me, even when I
feel alone and sad.
Will you show me a glimmer of your presence?
I am tired of hoping.
I am desperate for something new and better.

Bless me where I am today and give me the energy
to keep going.
I know that better days are ahead, but today is not
a better day. Today is a hard day.
Be with me in it.



PREORDER 10 COPIES!

You know me, I love a great deal! If your book club orders TEN copies of *I Thought It Would Be Better Than This*, I will join your book club gathering on a 30 minute Zoom call! (this only applies during the months of April and May 2025).

