

Brandi Sellerz-Jackson

Questions for Discussion

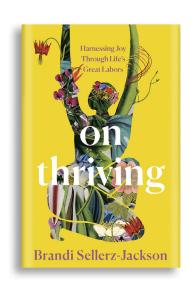
- 1. With this book, Brandi Sellerz-Jackson shares the radical self-care, reparenting, and healing practices that have shaped her own life and allowed her to thrive. Take a moment to talk, as a group, about whether the themes of *On Thriving* resonate for you, and how.
- 2. Brandi works as a birthing doula—literally, in her support of new parents, and also as a self-described "life doula" by helping all of us labor "through our days as we attempt to capture our joy and hold it close." Discuss the four labors that Brandi outlines in this book. Which, if any, are you pushing through right now? And how, if at all, did the advice and wisdom in *On Thriving* help you along the way?
- 3. Consider the ways in which Brandi uses plant symbolism throughout *On Thriving*. Talk about how we humans reach toward, or even demand, the light and nourishment we need to grow.
- 4. How does the author suggest we go from simply surviving to thriving? Does her advice feel real to you? Do you trust her voice—and wisdom? Talk about Brandi's vision, and if and how it rings true to you.
- 5. Define what thriving means to each of you. What makes you thrive? You may choose to put your answers on paper and share them anonymously if doing so allows for greater comfort or ease of communication.





Questions for Discussion

- 6. Brandi writes about the callouses she has from a difficult childhood. What rituals did she pick up as a child in order to survive? What about you: how did you overcome your early wounds? What does *On Thriving* suggest you do to make peace with the past and be your best self in the present?
- 7. Brandi writes that she knew that she was on a path toward thriving when, one day, she found herself saying out loud: "I love my life." How did she arrive at this place? How can you (that is, if you haven't already)? Talk about what it takes to experience joy in the face of despair and disappointment.
- 8. Brandi shares that there is "no such thing as an arrival at thriving, but rather a constant journey of unpacking and packing what you need for the adventure ahead." Talk about the journal prompts in *On Thriving*. How, if at all, did they help you along your journey? You may choose to share some of your writings with the group as well.
- 9. Did reading this book make you feel close to the author—was hers the voice that of a best friend? Or did Brandi function more as an expert, like a therapist? Talk about Brandi's storytelling techniques and your reading experience. How, if at all, did this book "speak" to you? Did it make you feel seen?
- 10. Why do you think the act of sharing our stories is healing in and of itself?
- 11. If there's one question you could ask Brandi—about her background or current life, her writing process, what she hopes readers will take away from *On Thriving*—what would it be?





Affirmations are short statements that can help brighten your outlook on the world when you say them to yourself. When you're experiencing one of the four great labors of life you can use these affirmations to increase your self-esteem and improve your mental wellness. Repeat these short phrases when you need them.

I will provide softness where life has been hard.

I am available to make intentional decisions in uncomfortable conditions.

My worth is not found in my work or productivity.

Working harder will never make me enough for others and especially myself.

Perfection does not serve me. It shackles me. Today I set myself free.

My existence is not too much. My normal is worthy of celebration. My best today is my best. I leave room and kindness for my humanity.

I do not have to be good at something to enjoy it.

My joy is reason enough.

I have a right to joy. It is mine.



Survival vs. Thriving Tools

Thriving within our mental health requires that we switch out our toolset. Until this point, we've used the tools adapted and afforded to us for our survival when our toolkit for thriving looks a bit different.

SURVIVAL TOOLS

Recognizing our survival tools is key to moving forward in our mental health journey. Survivor tools are often what we use to mitigate triggers and attempt to keep ourselves safe. Survival tools are directly connected to our initial wound.

COMMON SURVIVAL TOOLS INCLUDE:

FEAR OF BEING SEEN • SELF- SABOTAGE
BUILDING WALLS • ANXIETY

Write down the survival tools you've used in your own life:							



Survival vs. Thriving Tools

THRIVING TOOLS

Our thriving tools are actions and rituals we use to live a life rooted in our healing instead of our trauma responses. These tools demand desiring to thrive and relish on this side of paradise, not merely survive it.

THRIVING TOOLS CHECKLIST:

SEE YOURSELF AS WORTHY • NAME YOUR TRAUMA HEALTHY BOUNDARIES INSTEAD OF WALLS MINDFULNESS

Write down the thriving tools you use in your own life:							
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The ON THRIVING Playlist

Journey in Satchidananda • Alice Coltrane

Ants to You, Gods to Who? • André 3000

Pata Pata • Miriam Makeba

So What • Miles Davis

Whatup • DOMi and JD Beck

Watermelon Man • Herbie Hancock

Contusion • Stevie Wonder

My Favorite Things • John Coltrane

I Say a Little Prayer • Aretha Franklin

Djurkel • Pino Palladino & Blake Mills

Nostalgia • Samara Joy