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## 6 Reasons the Engage Book Club Moved the Needle for RiverFront Women

### Why Join or Start a Book Club

As an adult, I constantly find myself chasing the high I would get from attending a Scholastic Book Fair in elementary school. The endless possibilities lining the shelves. The smell of new books. The small rush of endorphins from creasing the spine for the first time when you open to page one. The promise of a new adventure to begin at bedtime when you sneak the flashlight under your covers to discover the land of Terabithia, immerse yourself in magical tales with Roald Dahl or chase danger with hobbits in Middle-earth.

The nostalgia from our youth is hard to rival, especially as we get older, and our rampant imaginations are often challenged by our seemingly never-ending list of adult responsibilities and obligations. One way that I have held tight to reading and forcing myself to carve out the ever illusive “me time” is by joining book clubs. Books clubs are nothing new, but the pandemic did seem to inspire even more options for book clubs due to the skyrocketing usage of virtual platforms for hosting and joining these gatherings from the comfort of our homes (and pajamas). Most importantly, virtual book clubs also offered readers the opportunity to be closer to others, if not physically, than emotionally, through the power of written word.

The reasons to join a book club are numerous, but listed below are my top six reasons to, hopefully, convince you to join one, if you are not a member of one already.

### 6 Reasons to Participate in a Book Club

**1. Book club is not just about books:** While reading a book is generally the reason we come together for discussion, the book club in and of itself is also about connecting and getting to know each other. It is a place where we can meet new people and offers time to build and reinforce relationships. In the workplace, participating in a book club can also boost teamwork skills by helping to build stronger working relationships and trust. Engage book club member, Cheron Smalls summed this up nicely when asked why book club was meaningful to her:

*“I always appreciate that a book club pushes me to read things I may not have selected myself. Our Engage book club does that but it also gives me the opportunity to hear insights and perspectives from my colleagues. I get to hear their thoughts on topics that just don’t come up in typical work conversations. It creates opportunity for understanding and connection.”*  
- Cheron Smalls, Director of Human Resources & Talent Management

**2. Stress relief:** You aren’t being graded at book club. You are free to come as you are and to communicate your thoughts without fear of saying the wrong thing. Participating in a book club also gives you a break from the norm and allows you a chance to unwind from the grind of your day-to-day activities or responsibilities. The informal setting that a book club provides can be a blessing. Here at RiverFront, we also try to be respectful of personal schedules as well. We often meet during the lunch hour or toward the end of our working day so that our discussions do not conflict with at-home responsibilities. To quote Rebecca Felton, another Engage book club member:

*“Everyone has a different schedule, but it feels really good to accept that calendar invite.”*  
- Rebecca Felton, Senior Market Strategist

**3. Understand diverse perspectives:** Since you do not always get to pick what is read, you are encouraged to read other genres and educate yourself on different topics and/or cultures. In turn, the more perspective you gain, the more you grow. Fellow book club member, Emily Krause, said it best when asked why our book club was meaningful to her:

"Our book club has challenged me to read books that may be outside of my normal reading preferences. They have expanded my knowledge, given me new perspective, and challenged me to think in new ways. The discussions have pushed me to reflect on a deeper level and my fellow book club members have enlightened me to see things from a different point of view." - Emily Krause, Chief Marketing Officer

**4. Make you more confident and comfortable in professional discussions:** Book club offers a safe place to engage in content discussion. You are not judged for what you say or how you say it. In fact, you are often encouraged to speak up to offer your unique perspective. You gain practice speaking in front of a group, and practice equals confidence down the road when you may have to speak in front of another group of your colleagues.

**5. Pushes you to make a commitment and stick with it:** We've all heard that books are brain food, yet many of us struggle to sit down and actually finish reading them despite our best intentions. With a book club, you are held accountable with a date that your book needs to be read by so that you are prepared for the upcoming discussion. If you believe in the many benefits of reading but have a hard time developing the habit of reading, public commitment to a group might be just the accountability you need.

**6. Snacks are often provided:** For those still not convinced by any of the above reasons to join a book club, knowing you will get some good snacks is a tasty reason to at least tag along. Perhaps some tea and crumpets with your English lit? The only thing better than books is food and books.

Here at RiverFront, our women's group, Engage, has been reading and meeting together for book discussions (sometimes virtually) since early 2020. We have tried to alternate our reading between fiction and non-fiction and have covered a variety of topics. Leading and participating in these discussions has truly been one of the greatest joys of my tenure with RiverFront so far (and not just because the meetings usually come with snacks).

In my previous [Engage article](#), I mentioned that our book club read "American Dirt", by Jeanine Cummins. Since then, we have also finished "Caste", by Isabel Wilkerson and "The Vanishing Half", by Brit Bennett, in 2021. Looking ahead to 2022, our book club has committed to read and discuss two books. Since we have yet to choose what our books will be, we would really appreciate any feedback from our readers on what books have impacted them that we might be able to add to our list of choices. **Is there a book you've read that's made an impact on you? [Please share your suggestion here.](#)**

RiverFront founded [Engage](#) in 2019 with the goal of changing and improving the experience for women in financial services. The mission of Engage is to engage women in our industry through mentorship, education, and support.

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