

## Books

# Reading retreats offer a chance for book lovers to unplug



[Ashly July](#) · Posted: Jul 17, 2019 11:28 AM ET | Last Updated: July 17



Reading retreat attendees share quiet moments eating, reading and enjoying books together. (Fotyma, Shutterstock)

[comments](#) 

Reading retreats are exactly what they sound like. For anyone looking to have a weekend of distraction-free reading with other book lovers, they offer a unique shared reading experience.

Organizer Elenna Mosoff says she was inspired to create her reading retreat while on honeymoon with her wife Lindy Zucker. The pair decided to disconnect from the constant scrolling and messaging of everyday life and came back refreshed and inspired to share that feeling with other time-strapped book lovers.

Their next event is happening [July 26-28 in Cobourg, Ont.](#), and is hosted in partnership with BooknBrunch, an organization dedicated to creating a community centred around the love of two things — food and books.

[CBC Books](#) spoke to Mosoff about how reading retreats work.

## How it works

"The reading retreat is for people who want a weekend of dedicated reading time away from their families, away from distraction, away from their own homes. It's a space for people to come and read side-by-side, sometimes in silence, sometimes engaging in discussions or sharing what they're reading, and everyone can read their own book.

“It's a space for people to come and read side-by-side, sometimes in silence, sometimes engaging in discussions or sharing what they're reading.”

- Elenna Mosoff

"My wife and I are foodies, so there are snack boards and drinks and various things while you're reading. You don't have to lift a finger except to flip a page."

- [19 Canadian writers to watch in 2019](#)

## Group discussions



Organizers Elenna Mosoff (L) and Lindy Zucker (R) were inspired to host a book retreat after unplugging and enjoying quiet reading together on their honeymoon. (Submitted by Elenna Mosoff)

"In the evenings over dinner, we do structured conversations. On the first night of our last retreat, everybody shared a passage of a book that had influenced them in their lives and we discussed the passages. On the second night, we had a book club-style discussion over the book that we'd chosen in advance for everyone to read. Some people hadn't read the book when they showed up but they spent their free reading time reading it. By the time the discussion rolled around, they were ready to talk about it.

"You bring a group of people who enjoy reading together over a weekend, where everyone's in their comfiest clothes, so many discussions happen. The amount of books people had read and

the amount of books people had in common was amazing. There was fodder for all kinds of discussion around being a literary person and being a person who likes to read."

- [The CBC Books summer reading list: 33 books to check out this season](#)

## Disconnect to connect

"My wife and I were on our honeymoon in December and we agreed that we were going to be mostly offline on our trip. We wanted to read a whole bunch of books that had been on our bookshelves for a long time. The absence of scrolling and being online all the time led us to realize how much we loved reading and how it was a thing that was definitely missing in our day-to-day lives.

“The absence of scrolling and being online all the time led us to realize how much we loved reading.”

- *Elenna Mosoff*

"While we were doing all this reading we thought, 'Wouldn't it be amazing for other people to have dedicated reading time and space for this purpose?' It was about helping create space for people to do a thing they say they want to do more of but rarely do because they're so distracted."

- [Silent book clubs allow book lovers to read alone, but together](#)

## The rewards

"At our last retreat, a bunch of them were parents. They felt it was nice to have that space for themselves and to not have to think about their food or their sleeping arrangements or anything. They also said it reminded them how important reading was for them.

"I hope people take away a sense of self in terms of what they need for themselves — like time and space. I hope people walk away refreshed from connecting to something they may have used to do a lot. That was what happened with me. My younger self was an avid reader. I'd read a book in the car, a book on the stairs, a book in the kitchen — I was always reading. But in this digitized, connected world it's a thing that I haven't done as much as I'd like. It's almost a return to a younger self."

- [A guide to Canadian literary festivals](#)

*Elenna Mosoff's comments have been edited for length and clarity.*