

LEAN IN



LEADERS CONFERENCE CIRCLES DISCUSSION GUIDE

Joanne Lipman: After #MeToo—
How men and women can work
together for change

Overview

INSTRUCTIONS

Individually or as a group, watch Joanne Lipman’s video, “After #MeToo: How men and women can work together for change” (available at leanin.org/joannelipman). Use the questions below for a group discussion on the themes and ideas shared in her talk.

ABOUT THIS VIDEO AND GUIDE

A former editor in chief of *USA Today* and a best-selling author, Joanne Lipman shares insights from her acclaimed book *That’s What She Said: What Men Need to Know (and Women Need to Tell Them)*. In this guide, you’ll find activities to help you reach out to men and show them the barriers women face at work.



Meeting Guide

1 Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

STEP 1: ICEBREAKER

👥 Group activity

🕒 5 minutes or less

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with one another and ourselves.

Use this icebreaker to see how your Circle members feel about the way men at their workplace understand gender bias. Read out the statements below and have members raise their hand if they relate to the experience.

Raise your hand if

- You've ever felt that a man you work with doesn't understand gender bias
- You've ever tried to talk to a man you work with about gender bias

STEP 2: MEMBER UPDATES

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action Update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting; the goal of a One Action is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

For example, a member update might go like this: *"Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action Update]."*

2 Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

🕒 Approx. 60–120 minutes for all activities

Activity 1: Discuss your reactions to the talk

 Group activity

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

1. What most surprised you about Joanne's talk?
2. Did any of the experiences she describes really resonate with you? What were those experiences, and how do they relate to your life?
3. What's one key takeaway from her talk that you'd like to share with someone else? With whom would you share it?

Activity 2: What do you want men to know?

🕒 Approx. 30 minutes

In her talk, Joanne gives examples of the ways in which women experience bias, which most men are not aware of. This activity helps you brainstorm the things you'd most like men to know about women's unequal experience.

STEP 1

Joanne's research found many ways that women make extra efforts to fit in with male-dominated workplaces. For example, some successful women lower their voices, behave extra assertively, style themselves to look less threatening, or wear a particular type of clothing to fit in.

- Think about your own experience. Have you ever felt you had to make extra effort as a woman to fit in with a male-dominated work culture?
 - Make a list of these experiences.
 - Then go around the Circle and share one of them with the group.

STEP 2

Joanne also talks about how unconscious bias shapes our awareness of what women can do at work.

- Have you or your friends experienced unconscious bias because of your gender? Jot down a short list of these experiences. For example:
 - Have you had your expertise questioned more than men on your team?
 - Have you been overlooked for an opportunity because of your gender?
 - Have men at your company organized a social event without inviting any women?

STEP 3

- Review your two lists and then draw a circle around two or three things that you most want men to know about your experience of the workplace.
- Share these two or three items with your Circle.

Activity 3: Brainstorm how to reach more men

 Approx. 15 minutes

Many men aren't aware of the inequality women face. Joanne mentions a survey in which most men said that obstacles to women's success are largely gone.

Since a lot of men don't see the basic problem, it's tough to start a discussion with them on specifics. This exercise is designed to generate ideas for how to reach men and enlist male allies.

1. Have you made efforts to bring men on board? How did it work out?
2. What has stopped you from reaching out?

Activity 4 (optional): Practice talking to men about bias

🕒 Approx. 30–60 minutes

If you're interested in enlisting men to help combat gender bias, we highly recommend our activity [50 Ways to Fight Bias](#). It's a set of cards that spark real conversations about specific everyday examples of gender bias and offer research-backed recommendations for what to do.

You can use the cards with your Circle or plan a separate meet-up that includes men.

For more advice on how to talk to men about bias, see Lean In's tips for [men at work](#), [dads](#), and [men who want to support their partners](#).

3 One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 5 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

This time, you might commit to engaging men in conversations about bias.

SHARE YOUR ONE ACTION WITH YOUR CIRCLE

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following statement:

- Over the next month, I commit to taking one step to help men learn about the barriers women face at work. That step is...
- Examples:
 - Invite a man to your women’s meeting.
 - Talk to a man you know about your own experience of unconscious bias or of changing your own behavior to fit into a male work culture.

Move quickly from member to member, and consider cheering one another on as you go.

4 Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

STEP 1: FINALIZE LOGISTICS OF YOUR NEXT MEETING

👥 Group activity

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting, including day and time, location, and food and drink responsibilities. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who is going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting so you can brainstorm improvements going forward.

STEP 2: CLOSE ON AN ENERGETIC AND INSPIRATIONAL NOTE

👥 Group activity

🕒 5 minutes or less

Think of one small moment of joy you can plan for this week. Go around your Circle one by one and share what you'll do.

CONGRATULATIONS ON A GREAT MEETING.

About Lean In Circles

Lean In Circles are small groups that meet regularly to learn and grow together. They're a place for sharing ideas, gaining skills, seeking advice, and showing solidarity. Most of all, they're a place where we help one another become our very best selves. Starting a Lean In Circle is one of the best ways to build your skills while helping others. To find out more visit leanin.org/circles.