

LEAN IN



LEADERS CONFERENCE CIRCLES DISCUSSION GUIDE

Bozoma Saint John: Acceptance and Healing

Overview

INSTRUCTIONS

Individually or as a group, watch Bozoma Saint John's video "Acceptance and Healing" (available at leanin.org/bozoma). Use the questions below for a group discussion on the themes and ideas shared in her talk.

ABOUT THIS VIDEO AND GUIDE

Bozoma Saint John is chief marketing officer at William Morris Endeavor and former chief brand officer at Uber. In this video, she talks about how she was able to find healing after the deaths of her husband and baby daughter. Her talk is an empowering message about how we can take even the greatest pain and use it to make us stronger. In this discussion guide, you'll find exercises to think about ways that we can take our difficult experiences and use them to motivate us.



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.

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 defeated by a difficult experience and struggled to do your job
- You've ever felt that a difficult experience made you stronger at work

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. 50 minutes for all activities

Activity 1: Discuss your reactions to the video

👥 Group activity

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

1. What most surprised you about Bozoma's talk?
2. Did any of her experiences 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: Use setbacks to help you grow

👤 Individual and group activity

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

Bozoma talks about how the deaths of her daughter and husband strengthened her ambitions to succeed and excel in her career. She also talks about how other kinds of pain—for example, harsh feedback or failure at work—can give us fuel to grow and excel. This may be something we can all do, in one way or another.

- Write down one or more recent events that you found challenging, either in your personal or professional life. This can be an experience of criticism or failure at work, or a conflict or disappointment outside of work.
- Then, for each list item, write down as many reasons as you can why it might make you stronger or give you fuel to push forward with your goals.
- If you feel comfortable doing so, share one of these examples with your Circle.

Activity 3: Reflect on how adversity contributes to your greatest success

 Individual and group activity

 Approx. 15 minutes

- Write down three to five of your greatest professional achievements or times when you were proud of your work.
- When you were working toward these achievements, were you inspired by any painful or difficult life experiences? If yes, write down the experience and how it motivated you.
- Go around the Circle and have everyone briefly explain one way in which a difficult life experience contributed to a later success.

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.

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...

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.