

Conversations About Women in the Workplace: Breakout Group Notes

Lean In Session 7: Seek and Speak Your Truth

5/1/2014 in the Laurel Room, California Endowment (1111 Broadway)

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Upon arrival, participants were asked to use sticky dots to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with statements written on flip charts and positioned around the room.

In the large group setting, participants were asked to provide observations about the responses across the spectrum for the topics below and discuss these points of interest. Participants then chose which topic they wanted to explore more in-depth and organized themselves accordingly for smaller group discussions.

The smaller groups were asked to address the discussion questions and then the room as a whole discussed possible solutions in areas that seemed to illustrate the greatest need/demand. (Due to time constraints, solutions were not discussed for all topics.)

Topic 1: Authenticity

Dot Poll:

- I show up authentically as a whole person at work.

For Discussion:

- How do you decide what to bring forward when you're at work?
- What do you think would happen if you showed up authentically as a whole person?

Finding Solutions:

- What can we do as individuals to be more authentic at work?
 - What can we do as a collective to encourage more authenticity at work?
1. Understand balance between professional and personal.
 2. Self-awareness – encourage greater authenticity in others.
 3. Openness of emotion – model expected (welcomed) behaviors.

Topic 2: Communication

Dot Poll:

- I am comfortable promoting my ideas and achievements.
- I am comfortable communicating my strengths.
- I am comfortable communicating where I need to improve.

For Discussion:

- What keeps you from being comfortable promoting or communicating your ideas, achievements, strengths, and improvement areas?
- What would enable you to feel more comfortable?

Finding Solutions:

- What can we do as individuals to get more comfortable with communicating our ideas, achievements, strengths, and improvement areas?
- What can we do as a collective to make it more comfortable for others to communicate their ideas, achievements, strengths, and improvement areas?
 1. Have someone else give input to the accomplishments on our resumes.
 2. Think long term – promote your long-term goals in the review process.
 3. Step up to opportunities to promote yourself when you have public opportunities, like speaking.
 4. When we're turned down, don't take "no" as the final answer. Think creatively and consider the benefits of compromise, or try again with stronger points/evidence.

Topic 3: Emotions

Dot Poll:

- I am comfortable sharing my emotional state with my coworkers.

For Discussion:

- What level of showing emotion is appropriate in the workplace?
- What makes it appropriate to share emotion?
- What are some appropriate and inappropriate ways to share emotion?

Finding Solutions:

- How can you respect your and others' boundaries and space (physical, emotional, etc.) while still allowing yourself and others to show up as authentic people?

Topic 4: Feedback

Dot Poll:

- I am comfortable asking for and receiving feedback.
- I am comfortable giving feedback of all kinds.

For Discussion:

- Do you actively solicit feedback? If so, has it made you a better employee?
- Do you offer feedback to others?
- How could giving and receiving feedback improve you or the work environment/product?

Finding Solutions:

- What do you need to feel more comfortable giving and receiving feedback?
- What can you do to help others feel more comfortable with giving and receiving feedback?

Topic 5: Speaking Up

Dot Poll:

- I speak up even when I am uncomfortable doing so.
- I feel safe being honest at work.

For Discussion:

- What situations make you the most uncomfortable to speak up or be honest at work?

- What do you expect to happen if you speak up or are honest about what you feel/think?

Finding Solutions:

- What do you personally need to feel comfortable and safe speaking up?
- How can you contribute to creating a safe place for others to speak up and be honest?
 1. Imagine you are advocating for someone else.
 2. Advocate for the people who are counting on you.
 3. Mantra: "I am valuable. Here is what I bring; this is the value of my contribution."
 4. Seek an external point of view, or someone within UCOP who would have a different perspective. Solicit viewpoints from both men and women.