

BEYOND BIAS: A Discussion Guide

What follows are some questions to start a discussion about *Beyond Bias*. There is no magic to these questions, just a way to get a conversation going.

PART I: GENDER INEQUALITY TODAY

Chapter 1: Extent of Gender Inequality

- Based on your personal experience, are you surprised by the statistics that show that gender inequality is still a pervasive problem in a large number of organizations today? Does it ring true in your organization?
- The “cumulative effects” simulation we discuss on pg. 13 captures people’s attention. What was your reaction? Do you believe micro-inequalities exist in your workplace, e.g., a difference in the assignment of plum projects, access to networking or mentoring, or criteria used to evaluate women versus men for advancement?
- Did any of the cartoons in this chapter resonate with you? Which ones? Reprise this question for each chapter.

Chapter 2: Causes of Gender Inequality

- Does leadership in your company believe that the organization is a true meritocracy? Do you? Have you been a part of or overheard conversations where women’s lack of advancement is blamed on the women- either their competency, decisions, or desire to advance?
- Have you personally seen – overtly or subtly – any of the “5 Gender Myths” play out in your workplace?
- Does the distinction and interaction of structural versus individual biases ring true for you?
- Do the 4 specific biases identified in this chapter (affinity bias, gender bias, out-group bias, or status quo bias) resonate with you? One more than the others? If so, which?

Chapter 3: Impacts of Gender Inequality

- Have you been part of a team where you tangibly felt the benefits of diverse perspectives? What was it and how did it work?
- Conversely, have you seen problem-solving, or innovation stilted by a lack of diversity or by the manifestation of the 4 biases discussed in Chapter 2 (affinity bias, gender bias, out-group bias, or status quo bias)?

PART II: WE HAVEN’T MADE MUCH PROGRESS

Chapter 4: There Are No Quick Fixes

- Were you surprised by the discussion of the pros and cons and ultimate impact (or lack thereof) of mandates or disclosures?
- Do you have any experience where these have been tried on either a compulsory or voluntary basis and worked/ not worked?

Chapter 5: Diversity Training Doesn't Work

- This chapter is one of the most eye-opening in the book for many. What has your experience been with “de-bias-the-individual” training, if any?
- What is your reaction to the common types of “fix-the-women” training?
- Do the arguments made in this chapter persuade you more, less, or not at all that too much focus is on individual training and not enough attention is being paid to structural discrimination in efforts to eliminate gender inequality?

Chapter 6: Men Aren't Involved

- What is your reaction to the premise that too many men are AWOL in the battle against gender inequality?
- Of the 5 reasons offered on page 81 that men are not sufficiently involved, does one more than another ring true for you? Is any other major reason missing in your opinion?
- Does the combination of addressing the above concerns men have expressed combined with the three principals presented at the end of the chapter present a compelling enough way to encourage men to be more involved? If not, what is still missing in your opinion?

PART III: THE PATH

Chapter 7: The PATH

- On first blush, what is your reaction to the four components of the PATH program?
- Does one component stand out more than another to you as a particularly impactful way to reduce or eliminate gender inequality in the workplace?
- Conversely, does one component feel harder to gain support for or implement?
- What do you think the overall response would be if this program were proposed at your organization? Why?

Chapter 8: Prioritize Elimination of Exclusionary Behavior

- What is your response when you read that 73% of American women report experiencing persistent exclusionary behavior at work?
- Are the descriptions of exclusionary behavior offered in this chapter recognizable to you?
- Intervening as a bystander can be difficult. What are your thoughts on the proposed suggestions (page 125)?

- Do you feel the overall plan laid out in the chapter will help eliminate exclusionary behavior? Is anything missing in your opinion? What would be the hardest part of the plan to implement?

Chapter 9: Adopt Discrimination-Resistant Methods of Personnel Decision-Making

- What is your reaction to the 7 approaches laid out in this chapter to avoid discrimination-resistant decision-making? Could you see them being adopted in your organization?
- What would be the hardest of the 7 suggestions to implement? Why?
- Would you add anything to the suggestions made here?

Chapter 10: Treat Inequality in the Home as a Workplace Problem

- What is your reaction to the proposition that inequality in the home is a workplace problem?
- Do you feel the overall plan laid out in the chapter will help efforts to end gender inequality at work?
- What would be the hardest part of the plan to implement?
- Would you take away or add anything to the suggestions made here?

Chapter 11: Halt Unequal Performance Reviews, Career Advice, and Leadership Opportunities

- Do you feel the overall plan laid out in the chapter will help women advance more equally to men? Why or why not?
- What would be the hardest part of the plan to implement?
- Would you take away or add anything to the suggestions made here?

PART IV: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Chapter 12: Making the PATH Changes

- Having now read through the PATH program in detail, what do you think the overall response would be if this program were proposed at your organization? Why?
- Does one component stand out to you more than another as a particularly impactful way to reduce or eliminate gender inequality in the workplace?
- Conversely, does one component feel harder to gain support for or implement?
- What do you think of the John Kotter quote on page 218? Do you think the PATH program has the teeth to overcome resistance and make “change stick?” What will be the biggest obstacle as you see it?

Chapter 13: The Promise of PATH

- Do you agree with the premise that workplace gender inequality will have positive effects on other areas of society?