

A UNITY PODCAST
LOOKING UP

Discussion Guide: How to Be Brave

Please use the questions below to guide your discussion after listening to the corresponding episode of Looking Up. The goal of the discussion guides is to build community and support learning about an important topic in women's leadership development. We've included a few suggestions to read further if you want to learn more.

Begin:

Establish norms. Take a moment to affirm the importance of a safe space, explain what that looks like in a group discussion like this, and name other conditions necessary for a comfortable discussion where everyone can contribute with authenticity and vulnerability.

Discuss:

1. What messages did you hear about risk taking growing up? Did you have any early brave role models? How did that shape your beliefs about taking risks? Do you agree with Rachel that the pressure to please others may limit your comfort with risk taking?
2. Try the **"sit like a man, sit like a woman"** exercise. What do you notice about your body in each position? What do you think this exercise illustrates about gender norms (the unwritten rules we all learn about how boys and girls are supposed to look and act)? Do you relate to feeling pressure to make your emails seem **"nicer"** with exclamation points and emojis?
3. What did you think of Kelly's statement that being a minority in the workplace raises the stakes of risk taking? Had you considered this before when you reflected on the experience of underrepresented groups?
4. Consider Rachel's point that confidence is built by proving something to yourself -- about yourself -- that you didn't know before. Think back to a moment in your past where you were brave. What did you learn about yourself that you didn't know before? How did it change you?
5. Do you relate to having a fixed mindset or a growth mindset? (People with a fixed mindset are more likely to feel they have to succeed at everything they do, or else they think they're not smart or capable; people with a growth mindset believe they will have to practice and grow incrementally over time).
6. Consider a risk you want to take, at work or in your personal life. Share it with the group if you're comfortable, and try out the questions Rachel suggests: What are some smaller, lower stakes steps you can take that would make you nervous but not terrified? What is the worst that can happen? Can you live with that? What are three ways you might still come out ahead, even if you fail? Why does the challenge matter to you in the first place? How do these questions affect the way you think about your risk?
7. What strategies have you used in order to summon your courage and take a risk? Where did you learn these?
8. Rachel and Kelly discuss defensive pessimism, or expecting the worst as a way to manage the stress of taking a risk. Do you relate to this? How has it helped you? How might it limit you? What could you do instead?
9. What would you do if you weren't afraid?

Close: What will you take from this conversation going forward?

Go Further:

Brene Brown, [Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead](#)

Reshma Saujani, [Brave Not Perfect: How Celebrating Imperfection Helps You Live Your Best, Most Joyful Life](#)