

Discussion Guide: Caregiving in a Pandemic

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. The show's guest, Lauren Smith Brody, is talking about parenting, but her work applies to anyone trying to balance caregiving with work from home. Lauren shares how the pandemic forced her to balance work and family obligations in new and exhausting ways -- and to be more open about that challenge with her clients. How has caregiving reshaped the way you work? Have you been more open or vulnerable about your caregiving responsibilities with colleagues? What has that been like for you?
2. Lauren argues that the pandemic has pushed many heterosexual couples into a more traditional arrangement, where the woman does most of the domestic work and privileges the man's career over her own. Do you relate to this, and what do you think about it?
3. What are the upsides of how visible our caregiving responsibilities have become?
4. Are there any downsides?
5. How do you practice self-care right now? Has the pandemic changed the way you think about what nourishes your body and spirit?
6. Lauren, Rachel and Kelly talk about the guilt that so many caregivers feel -- the sense that they are failing at work and failing at home, because they can never give enough in either place. Do you relate to this? What strategies have you tried to manage these feelings (for example, rethinking your expectations of yourself)? Have you observed any tension between employees who balance caregiving and work, and those who don't? What do you think about this?
7. If you were in charge of addressing this problem, how would you approach it?

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

Go Further:

Lauren Smith Brody, [The Fifth Trimester: The Working Mom's Guide to Style, Sanity and Success After Baby](#)