

## Discussion Guide: Sharing Our Strengths

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 self-promotion when you were growing up? Who conveyed those messages to you? Think about peers, family members, teachers or other important adults in your life.
2. How have those messages shaped the way you think about self-promotion -- and whether or not you do it?
3. In the episode, Rachel and Kelly discuss how women are more likely to believe their work should speak for itself, rather than having to tell people about it. Do you relate to this?
4. If you are comfortable sharing your strengths with others, to what do you attribute your comfort? Where did you learn this skill? How has it helped you in your career?
5. In the episode, Kelly and Rachel suggest that self-promotion can accomplish more than telling people about your skills and gifts. For example, they say it makes it easier for people to offer you new opportunities, and can signal to others that you're ready for the next step in your career. Does thinking about self-promotion this way change the way you feel about it?
6. What did you think of Stanford professor Carol Dweck's statement, **"If life were one long grade school, girls would rule the world?"** Do you connect with the argument that girls learn one set of rules about how to succeed in school, then encounter a reversal of those rules at work?
7. Women face a double bind: if they don't share their strengths, they miss out on the chance to let others know what they are capable of. However, many women are penalized when they do speak up and self-promote. What can be done about this? What do you think about the strategies Kelly and Rachel suggest to navigate this tension?
8. According to McKinsey, highly qualified women of color are less likely than white women to get credit for their accomplishments. Black women in particular are less likely to have their work accomplishments promoted by managers and are less likely to receive opportunities to showcase their work. How does **"double jeopardy"** -- the experience of having two underrepresented identities -- affect a woman of color's ability to self-promote, and the way she's received when she does? What can we do to support women in this position?
9. What strategies have you used to share your strengths with others?
10. What is something you're proud of accomplishing at work in the past six months? [Do a go-around if possible]

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

### Go Further:

**Luvvie Ajayi Jones**, [Professional Troublemaker: The Fear Fighter Manual](#)

**Sally Helgesen and Marshall Goldsmith**, [How Women Rise: Break the 12 Habits Holding You Back from Your Next Raise, Promotion or Job](#)

**Jo Miller**, [Woman of Influence: 9 Steps to Build Your Brand, Establish Your Legacy and Thrive](#)