



Book Club Discussion Guide

Lead: How Women in Charge Claim Their Authority

By Ellen M. Snee EdD

Thank you for choosing to read *LEAD* for your book club. I have compiled some questions from three broad topic sections of the book. These are meant to get some meaningful conversations started. You may also decide to read the book by chapter and complete and discuss the end-of-chapter L.E.A.D. (Learn, Engage, Articulate, Do It) exercises together. Whatever your method, I wish you success in claiming your authority. – Ellen

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SECTION ONE:

Relationship to Self

- Do you have a clear idea of “what you want,” whether it be in your career or your life? If yes, discuss with the group the steps you want to take to make your goal a reality. If no, discuss with the group what ideas you now have to identify: Where would you like to yourself in one year? In three years?
- Share a time when you were explicit about what you wanted — a change in jobs, a promotion, a better relationship with a boss, or a seat at the table — and how you were able to make it happen or what roadblocks you encountered.
- How do you manage your own inner voice – is it a positive voice of encouragement or a voice that diminishes your confidence in your competence? Do you have any strategies now for how to manage these voices?
- Do you have a mantra or saying you use to encourage yourself on or celebrate your success? What is it? If you don’t have one, think of a phrase you might tell a close friend or family member when they need some encouragement and consider using it for yourself too.
- Have you ever suffered from imposter syndrome? If so, how did you overcome it?

SECTION TWO:

Relationships With Others

- Who are the individuals in your life who can help you to recognize when you are ready for a challenge, even if you are wary of your abilities? How can you let them know you want their honest feedback?
- Do you work with, report to, or manage other women? What expectations do you have with these women that you don't have with male co-workers, bosses, or subordinates?
- How do you experience differences in identity characteristics between you and other women at work? What have you learned that helps you strengthen bonds across differences? How do you support other women who are different from you? How do you experience support across difference?
- When friction arises in a work situation or project, are you quick to ask yourself, "What did I do wrong?" or do you recognize that another person or persons may share in the responsibility of the outcome?
- Why is important to connect and communicate with executives and departments throughout your company? Can you share an experience you have had that illustrates how a simple connection with someone in your company led to a greater outcome for your career?

SECTION THREE:

Self and Systems

- Women tend to feel confident that the results they have produced and the responsibilities they have assumed will pay off in the form of future promotions. How has that been part of your experience? Have you learned that there is more to promotions than performance? If so, how did you learn that?
- How often do you have career conversations with your boss? How do you make these conversations happen? What makes them successful? What can you do if they are not part of your normal experience?
- How well known are you beyond your team and organization? What can you do to increase your visibility to executives across your company?
- How well networked are you beyond your company? How can that elevated presence increase your success within your organization?
- How much time do you spend each week on networking? How do you introduce yourself beyond your job title? Practice with your group and introduce yourself in a way that explains the impact you want to have on others and in the world.