

BOOK CLUB GUIDE FOR BETTER ALLIES



Better Allies

Allyship is considerably more daunting when attempted alone. If you're looking for a next-step activity that can connect you to other like-minded colleagues, coworkers, and friends, consider forming an allyship book club that launches by reading and discussing *Better Allies: Everyday Actions to Create Inclusive, Engaging Workplaces* by Karen Catlin. This guide applies to both the 1st and 2nd editions.

Here are questions to consider. (Some require pre-work, so send them to participants ahead of time.)

Icebreaker: How would you fill in this sentence? "I want a more diverse and inclusive workplace because _____."

Question 1: How well do you know your own privilege? Using the quiz in Chapter 1, examine your privilege. As you review this list, keep a tally. Note any items that surprise you and make you wonder, "Does anyone actually face this challenge?" Discuss these items with the group.

Question 2: Discuss a recent experience in which you saw discriminatory or inappropriate behavior and didn't step in or speak up. What held you back? Do you feel more equipped to intervene now?

Question 3: In Chapter 1, you'll find descriptions of roles that allies can play. Which one sounds most like you? Which one do you admire most? If you were to push yourself to take on another ally role in addition to the one you play naturally, what would it be?

Question 4: Chapter 3 offers some advice for approaching challenging discussions around privilege, bias, and discrimination. Do you wish you could have one of these discussions with your supervisor, colleagues, or direct reports? What's the heart of the issue? How can you apply the guidelines offered in this chapter? Be honest, and ask for help and input from your fellow book club members.

Question 5: Think about your professional and personal networks. Are they "just like" you? Think about gaps and how a more diverse network could have a positive impact on your professional goals.

Question 6: Which microaggressions do you witness or experience on a regular basis? (See Chapter 5 for examples.)

Question 7: Think about your meeting culture. Do you regularly experience or witness idea hijacking, "manterruptions," showboating, or assignment of housework to women or other colleagues from underrepresented groups? What's one thing you can do in the coming week to shift the culture in a more inclusive direction?

Question 8: Chapter 9 (1st edition)/Chapter 8 (2nd edition) is all about how seemingly "harmless" phrases and words can actually be insulting, discriminatory, and hurtful. Do any of the terms discussed in this chapter pop up at your own workplace? Do you feel comfortable stepping up and asking that they be eliminated or replaced?

Question 9: Of the industry events you've attended, which ones have showcased speakers and panels that felt inclusive and representative? Which ones disappointed you? When you consider attending a conference, do you screen the speakers ahead of time?

Question 10: Before the club meets, review the careers page on your company's website and a recent job description. Using the best practices in Chapter 10, identify ways you are set up to attract diverse candidates, and brainstorm ideas for improvement. If possible, bring them up on a laptop and discuss as a group.

Question 11: Are you now (or have you been) a mentor to someone with less experience? How about someone with less experience and a very different background, lifestyle, or identity than you?

Final Lightning Round: What action will you take going forward to create a more inclusive workplace?

(Consider asking someone to be your "accountability buddy" to check in and help ensure you make progress.)