

DISCUSSIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Facilitator Guide

Description

“Learning with Every Try” focuses on the experiences of two co-workers who are sharing experiences that demonstrate how we can learn to create extraordinary moments in our life and work. These stories offer participants' with techniques that motivates and engage others. Participants will discuss how navigating diversity of thoughts and actions into being more inclusive can impact our company and our communities.

Objectives

Participants will be challenged to:

- Begin new dialogues on issues facing our co-workers and our communities
- Learn how to be brave (*as we listen to Sudiksha's (**pronounced: Soothe-iksha**) and Ray's stories and what others share within their debrief discussions*) and lead from where you are
- Support Ameren's efforts to build a more inclusive workplace and community

Target Audience

This program is intended for groups, organizations and people interested in building inclusive communities through dialogue and discussion.

Tips for Facilitating

As a facilitator, your role is to encourage discussion. Considering the opinions and points of view presented in this presentation, focus discussion on those conversations and thoughts that affect inclusion, respect, and valuing others. To best facilitate the discussion, **carefully review the video and prepared materials in advance of presentation.**

Guidelines:

- Review all presentation materials and the video in advance of your session.
- As you begin the session, establish ground rules for sharing (**see *Ground Rules Samples***).
- Stress the need to be respectful of others.
- Set expectations for the session by sharing the objectives (**see *Objective Section above***) and agenda.
- Actively manage time to allow sufficient discussion of the topics highlighted in the video.
- You may encounter off topic comments in your session. Prepare to steer the conversation back on topic. An example of something you could say might be “***That is an interesting comment. Let’s discuss it further after the session to allow time to cover discussion items more directly related to the video.***”
- At the conclusion of the session, thank everyone for their participation.

Materials and Equipment Needed

Presentation: “*Learning with Every Try*”

Click on link: [Learning with Every Try](#)

Wi-Fi or data connection is needed to view video

Laptop with Video Screen for showing video via virtual platform (*i.e., Microsoft Teams Applications*)

Facilitator Guide

Participant Booklet

PowerPoint Presentation

Time Requirements

Teams Meeting Log-in Preparation: 5 - 10 minutes

Video: 9:13 minute runtime

Discussion Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Presentation

Introducing the Program

Welcome participants. Explain that the story they are about to hear focuses on how individual, team or group performance in business, or in life overall, can be improved with the addition of new or different skillsets. It features two Ameren co-workers, Sudiksha [***pronounced: Soothe–iksha Joe-shi***], and Raymond. Each share their story about how we can be even more impactful as leaders and as people by recognizing and creating 'learning moments.'

Tell the group that you will be asking questions following the video.

As a facilitator, your role is to encourage discussion. Considering the opinions and points of view presented in this presentation, focus discussion on those conversations and thoughts that affect inclusion, respect, and valuing others.

Provide Sample Ground Rules for Discussion

Facilitators, encourage people to be involved as active listeners and participants. No one else knows another person's thoughts and personal experiences as well as that person. Suggested ground rules are below. The bracketed portions are optional, so, feel free to include or not.

Participate	I encourage you to participate. [You will find you will get more out of the program, likely, enjoy it more and hopefully, even have a little fun.] <i>Note to Facilitator: give advance notice that you will be calling on co-workers by name to ensure you have their attention and to avoid embarrassing co-workers.</i>
Respect	We expect everyone to be respectful. [Not everyone may agree with each other, but when we are respectful, we establish, maintain and even improve the way we relate to one another.]
Open	We hope you will be open.
Educate	We're here to learn and to inform, but we are all students of diversity, equity and inclusion. [Some may not have any experience participating in discussions of this nature or on these topics. And some may not have done so in a work environment. So, we expect understanding as we learn and find ways to talk about these issues, because some of us may not feel we have the "right" words to share our thoughts.]
Share	Sharing our experiences, respectfully, can help us connect with each other. Doing so, also can help us build trust.

As you ask questions, remember to allow people time to think before they respond. Do not jump in too quickly with your own answers. The role of the facilitator is to generate discussion. Ideally, you will be neutral and not share your perspective.

Group Discussion

For large audiences (more than 10-12 people), consider dividing into smaller groups to discuss questions. Key points from each small group can be shared with the larger group and captured on the flip chart at the conclusion of their discussion

Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the messages you heard in the video related to courage and evolving?

Possible Answers:

- Courage asks us to take what is different and sometimes uncomfortable and make it a part of how we do business, a part of our culture and a part of who we trust and rely upon.
 - Courage is the ability to do something that you know may be difficult; yet, you are open to learning different ways of doing things.
 - Evolving involves being open to learning different ways of doing things.
 - When we have a common goal, everyone puts in the cooperation and collaboration to be successful.
 - It takes courage to be true to who you are – may not fit in, but it doesn't mean you should give up/give in/compromise on who you are.
2. In the first story, Sudiksha talked about mentoring underrepresented students to help prepare them for their graduate studies. She also stated that she hadn't realize how much she needed the experience and what she would learn from the experience of helping others. Have you had an experience where you offered to help someone and you wound up learning or growing from the experience? Maybe during a volunteer opportunity?

Possible Answers:

- Open Responses
3. As Sudiksha talked about mentoring underrepresented students to help prepare them for their graduate studies, how many of you are or have been a mentor or mentee at work? What did you like about your experience? What could be the benefit to others if they have a mentoring program they can join?

Possible Feedback:

- It gives both an opportunity to build rapport and trust.
- It provides guidance and encouragement.
- It develops skills and competency.
- It improves confidence and communication.
- Can help both co-workers be even more effective.

4. In the second story, Ray stated "*everyone is not the same but if the results are the same, I think we win.*" How can embracing what makes us different help us find the courage to evolve and progress?

Possible Answers:

- You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to face barriers.
- You appreciate what makes you different and original.
- You appreciate what makes the other person different and original.
- You are more courageous when you build your life around what you do best.
- Sometimes, there is more than one way or approach to solving a problem or reaching a solution.
What makes you different is the key to let your voice direct your life.

5. Who can share an example of a time when you "evolved" by seeing someone doing something VERY differently from you, but got the same results? Did you begin to adopt or do things his/her way?

Possible Answers:

- Open Responses.

6. What does the statement "*if you are not always learning, you are taking a step backwards,*" mean to you?

Possible Answers:

- Listen to understand.
- Share learnings.
- Utilize technology to readily communicate with others – don't be afraid to FaceTime or turn on your video on Teams calls.
- Expand and nurture your network – reach out to others to gain new perspectives.
- Practice diversity of thought – ask others for advice, counsel, and feedback.

7. Ray reinforces that "*change is going to occur.*" And that some people can be a part of the change, others can work within the change, and others can grow with the change. For those of you that often see a change coming or are a part of it early on: what tips can you share with us to help others be more aware of change that is coming to help others evolve, grow, and perhaps adopt or adapt change; sooner rather than later?

Possible Answers:

- Open Responses.

Review Objectives

Participants will be challenged to:

- Begin new dialogues on issues facing our co-workers and our communities
- Learn how to be brave (*as we listen to Sudiksha's and Ray's stories and what others share within their debrief discussions*) and lead from where you are
- Support Ameren's efforts to build a more inclusive community

Closing Comments

Conclude the session by sharing your organization's or group's policy statement or position on diversity, equity and inclusion. Be sure to thank the participants for their contributions to discussions and for their time.

Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete a brief survey on *Discussions Across Differences* video series:

Click on link: [2022 Discussions Across Differences](#)



Let's keep the dialogue going.