



What Now?

A Woman's Guide for Creating Her After-50 Future

DISCUSSION GROUP TIPS

Forming your Group...

1. Start with who you know - your over 50 friends, coworkers, and family - women you'd enjoy meeting regularly with to share and discuss over-50 topics.
2. Think about logistics - meeting location, length, time, day, frequency, number of members, refreshments.
3. Float the idea and details so far with your list of desired members. Determine their interest and availability.
4. Be open to others' logistics ideas. Someone may offer up their house, know of a restaurant, suggest a different day and time that works better for all. Group email works well for this preliminary planning.
5. Get your calendars together and schedule your first meeting.

Leading your Meetings...

1. Decide on the meeting format and agenda.
2. Determine "ground rules" and share with members. (confidentiality, avoid cross-talking and advice giving unless requested, participation, being on time, etc.) These could be developed as group.
3. Email meeting notice and agenda out to members, reminding them to bring their What Now Guide and notes related to the upcoming topic.

Example:

- After settling in, each person has 3 minutes to introduce themselves if needed, check in and update the group on what's happened since the last get-together.
- Discuss the chosen topic and each person shares (this can be voluntary) related insights.
- Refreshment break
- Each person has 3 minutes to share their intentions to be complete by next meeting or what a-ha's they gained from this meeting.

- One person reads an inspiring quote from the Guide or elsewhere to close up the meeting.
 - Facilitator reminds all of next meeting details and upcoming topic (or email this out as soon as possible giving ample time to prepare)
4. Manage the discussion, referring back to the ground rules whenever needed. Get comfortable with 1) asking questions to open people up to talking and 2) knowing what to say when someone dominates the conversation. Gentle reminders to ensure everyone is heard is an invaluable facilitation skill.

Maintaining your Group...

1. Stay in touch. Email between meetings, create a Facebook group and post regularly, encouraging responses. Plan and go on outings together between meetings (make sure all members are invited). Communicate any and all changes and updates to the group.
2. Invite others to join after discussing with existing members. This group can be very personal so confidentiality and comfort with each other are absolutely necessary.
3. Be open to different ways to come together. It can be challenging to get everyone together in the same room so consider alternating physical meetings with virtual ones - conference calls, Facetime, webinars. Discuss options with the group.
4. Honor each person's path. Building and keeping trust in a discussion group is essential to its success. Regular reminders about confidentiality and acceptance of others go a long way to ensuring group cohesiveness. We all come with a unique set of skills, choices and experiences. Focus should be on changing oneself, not others.
5. Set an example of honesty and optimism. Be the leader members feel comfortable coming to with their ideas and excitement.

Copyright © 2019 by Debbie Lousberg. All rights reserved

Reproduction of this document in its entirety is permissible, however, parts may not be reproduced for use in other publications or documents without express written permission from the author and a reproduction of the book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever is subject to copyright. For information or permission, please contact the author via email at info@debbielousberg.com.