

# Conversations About Women in the Workplace: Breakout Group Notes

## Session 3: Sit at the Table

1/9/14 in Franklin 5320, 39 participants

Facilitators: Luanna Putney and Margaret Wu

Participants were divided into groups and given topics from the *Lean In Discussion Guide* (<http://bit.ly/19VY12a>).

The groups were asked to answer the questions and to share a few takeaways about their topic at the end of the meeting. Takeaways included observations, tactics, and motivational statements.

### Topic 1: Sitting at the table

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Where do you usually sit in a classroom or conference room—in the middle of the action? On the sidelines? Are you nervous about drawing attention to yourself?

1. Go to meetings early to get a seat
2. Check to see who will be there (Look in the Scheduling Assistant in Outlook)
3. Be strategic about where you sit and with whom you sit (for example: sit next to someone you'd like to know better and introduce yourself before the meeting - rather than sitting next to a familiar colleague.)
4. Be prepared to engage (Prepare in advance; take a moment to focus and calm yourself if needed.)
5. Get invited to key meetings (don't be afraid to ask to join a meeting even if you weren't invited!)

### Topic 2: Impostor syndrome

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Have you ever felt like a fraud at school or at work? What makes you feel less insecure and more confident?

1. Ask for constructive feedback
2. Prepare questions/comments in advance
3. Reframe how you talk about yourself

### Topic 3: Attributing success

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When men succeed, how do they account for their success? How do women account for their success? Why does it matter what people attribute their success to? When you succeed, to what do you attribute your accomplishments?

1. Accept praise
2. Say a positive, work-related comment to your female colleagues, such as "You did a great job with coordinating that meeting."
3. Support your staff, such as supporting at least one professional development opportunity per year.
4. Encourage your female colleagues to take on tasks outside of their comfort zone, such

as facilitating a group, approaching a Director for an informational interview.

#### **Topic 4: The cost of insecurity**

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Have you passed on opportunities because you felt unsure or insecure? Have you seen others pass on opportunities they should have seized?

1. Take risks
2. Go for it!
3. Visualize your goal
4. “What’s the worst that can happen?”
5. Keep your interview skills current and go to informational interviews
6. Find a champion to push you
7. Believe in yourself

#### **Topic 5: Taking risks**

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When have you challenged yourself? Did you succeed or fail? Did it make you more likely to challenge yourself in the future?

1. Engage in activities outside job
2. Step out of your comfort zone
3. Be open and start conversations
4. Be supportive
5. Network to find supportive people
6. Build confidence – find an ally, good posture, change speaking patterns