

Walking on Broken Glass

Book Club Discussion Guide

Purpose

This guide is designed for personal or professional book clubs. Sessions can be tailored to your group's size, time constraints, and comfort level with vulnerability. Feel free to select questions and focus on topics that resonate most with you, or tackle all of them, perhaps in multiple sessions.

Opening Question

What drew you to this book? What were you hoping to gain from reading it?

Chapter 1: Why the System Feels Rigged

What was your reaction to learning about women whose contributions were "ignored, downplayed, or erased"? Why?

The authors discuss how the pay gap compounds over time, affecting long-term financial security. What surprised you? How might it impact your decision-making going forward?

The author's note "the problem isn't that women don't ask for more money. The problem is what happens when they do." What have you seen when people have negotiated for pay or promotion?

Chapter 2: The World is Optimized for Men

Discuss the "second shift" and "mental load." How does this invisible labor show up in your life? What would change for you personally, if this work were redistributed or valued differently?

The authors note that "even other women can reinforce patriarchal norms in pursuit of their own survival." When have you seen this happen? When have you done it yourself?

On Chapter 3: Women Are Poorly Served

The chapter highlights how products, systems, and policies were built for men. What's an example you've personally encountered at work, in healthcare, or in daily life?

Women control \$31.8 trillion in global consumer spending. How could you use your purchasing power more intentionally to support women-led businesses? Have you done this in the past? Why or why not?

On Chapter 4: The Workplace Isn't Fair

"Goldilocks Syndrome" and the "Double Bind" describe impossible standards women face. Share a time when you felt criticized for being "too much" or "not enough."

Have you ever had an idea ignored or dismissed in a meeting, only to see someone else raise it later and be praised? What did you do (or wish you'd done)?

On Chapter 5: Rejecting the Old Expectations

The "good girl" vs. "difficult woman" binary shapes how women are judged. When have you felt pressure to stay in the "good girl" box? What happened when you stepped outside it?

The chapter discusses how women are conditioned to perform emotional labor and "office housework." Have you felt this? What would happen if you stopped? Have you ever tried?

On Chapter 6: Politics with Purpose

Many of us were taught that hard work and integrity are enough to get ahead. When did you first realize that wasn't true? How did that realization change your approach?

Where does your organization fall on the spectrum from "minimally politicized" to "pathologically politicized"? How does that environment shape who succeeds?

The authors say it's possible to be politically savvy and keep your integrity intact. Do you agree? Share examples of navigating this balance.

On Chapter 7: Recognizing a Takedown

Has anyone experienced or witnessed what the authors describe as a "takedown"? Not looking for details, just raise your hand.

The book describes signs that could signal a takedown. What red flags resonated most?

If you've been through a takedown, or supported someone who has, what do you wish you'd known earlier?

On Chapter 8: Supporting the Sisterhood

The book says that three women at the table is the tipping point where real change begins. Have you experienced this? What shifts when there's more than one woman in the room?

Scarcity mindset has often led women to view each other as competition. Have you felt this or ever acted with this belief? What would it take to shift behavior?

The authors ask us to reflect on "the ways we may have helped or hindered other women throughout our careers." Take a moment for silent reflection, then share (if comfortable): where have you fallen short? Where do you want to do better?

On Chapter 9: Claiming Power, Creating Change

Women direct 83% of U.S. consumer spending and are projected to control \$30 trillion in assets by 2030. How can we wield this power more deliberately?

The Nicole Kidman example (committing to work with female directors) shows how leadership decisions can influence outcomes at scale. What's one decision you control that could create ripple effects?

The authors discuss formal and informal coalitions as sources of power. If you don't have one, what would it take to build one?

On the Conclusion: Be Yourself. Be Great. Make a Difference.

"If you can't help others, then get out of the way. Someone else needs a passing lane." These are strong words. What do they bring up for you?

What does it mean to "challenge your own behaviors within the patriarchy"? Where will you start?

Closing Reflection

Go around the circle:

What's one thing you're taking away from this book?

What's one concrete action you're committing to?

How can this group support each other going forward?

Facilitator Tips

Create Psychological Safety

Establish ground rules: confidentiality, no interrupting, "Vegas rules"

Acknowledge that some topics may be triggering; give permission to step out if needed

Encourage vulnerability but don't force it

Manage the Conversation

If someone dominates, gently redirect: "Let's hear from someone who hasn't shared yet."

If the group is quiet, try smaller breakout pairs before bringing the discussion back

Watch for body language—some people may want to share but need an invitation

Handle Disagreement

Tension isn't bad; it means people are engaged

Redirect to curiosity: "Tell me more about why you see it that way."

If things get heated, pause and remind the group of shared goals

Make It Actionable

End with concrete takeaways

Encourage participants to try one small thing before the next meeting and report back

Celebrate wins, even small ones