

Guide

Making Lemons Out of Lemonade:

Post-Election Conversation Using the Black-ish Episode 'Lemons' as the Prompt

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Making Lemonade out of Lemons

On Jan 11, 2017 ABC TV network aired the *Black-ish* episode “Lemons” that adeptly and, some may say controversially, addressed the post-election discussions that are taking place and in many instances, NOT taking place, in workplaces around the world. From our perspective, this post-election episode was delivered in a non-threatening, lightly comedic way. It brilliantly weaves in diverse perspectives on highly sensitive topics and tensions around race and gender that have engulfed us. This particular episode also provides an excellent prompt for a dialogue in your organizations about the post-election climate.

Diversity Best Practices recently [shared Digging Deep: Tips and Tools for D&I Champions](#), and [Turbulent Times calls for Bold Action](#), two resources on the DBP website available to support organizations in having productive discussions about challenging subjects. Sometimes, a piece of pop culture, like the *Black-ish* episode, serves as a great starting point for these conversations. Below are some suggestions for how you might structure a discussion using the *Black-ish* “Lemons” episode as your prompt.

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Potential Audience: Team meetings, Diversity Council meetings, ERG meetings, leadership meetings

Set Up:

Position the event around how social events effect team productivity, inclusion and collaboration. Share the latest research (DBP research report) on the value of diversity on teams to innovate and solve problems. This is an opportunity to talk candidly and honestly about how we are feeling about the issues facing our country and the current political and social climate. A possible outcome beyond the dialogue is agreement or suggestions on how to engage in difficult topics.

- 1) Set Ground Rules:
 - a. Respect each other’s viewpoints
 - b. Listen actively
 - c. Assume positive intent

- d. Have the group brainstorm additional norms that might be unique to the context for the conversation
- 2) Introduce the Black-*ish* episode “Lemons” which addresses the post-election climate, issues of race and gender and how these can impact the workplace.
- 3) Instruct the group to listen carefully to the characters, their perspectives and reactions.
- 4) Invite participants to notice their own personal reactions to characters, both positive and negative.

Discussion:

Sample questions to pose to the group:

- What are your initial reactions to this episode? (This is a warm up question so, you can allow each person to give a quick one word response if you choose)
- Was there a particular comment or comments that really impacted you? What was it and why?

FACILITATOR NOTE: If your participants do not raise it, you may want to ask:

At one point Dre is asked, “don’t you even care about what’s going on?” this is the point where Dre states “for all my life things haven’t worked out for me, so excuse me if I don’t feel bad for you.” What went through your mind during or after that segment?

- Which character do you most relate to? Why? How has it impacted you?
- Do these scenarios play out in our workplace today? If yes or no, what impact is it having?
- Is the conversation on racism, sexism (fill in the blank) an important one to have in the workplace? How can we ensure we are listening to opposing views?
- One of the main themes of the episode is acknowledging difference, respecting those differences and figuring out how to move forward to work as a team. How do we ensure that we can continue to work as a team, even if we disagree on some issues? What are some strategies we can adopt to make this happen?
- In what ways can we “make lemonade out of lemons” during challenging times? What role does this group have in creating a space where people are able to have these difficult conversations and in ensuring that they are productive?

- What role does leadership have in creating an inclusive environment during these times? What actions would you like to see more of?
- What role do we each have as colleagues in creating an inclusive environment during these times? What actions would you like to see more of?