PUT YOUR DREAM TO THE TEST

10 Questions to Help You See It and Seize It

LUNCH & LEARN FACILITATOR GUIDE

Based on the book by John C. Maxwell
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How to Use this Resource

Purpose
Thank you for your desire to guide people in their personal leadership growth. As a facilitator of a weekly Lunch & Learn group, you will find great satisfaction in walking with others as you grow together. John Maxwell asserts that “personal and organizational effectiveness is proportionate to the strength of leadership.” In order to become better leaders, each of us must personally grow as leaders and, as a result, we help others to follow suit.

This Facilitator Guide is designed to help you steer the process, encourage discussion, and model effective leadership to your group. Whether you are new to facilitation or have extensive experience, it is important that you take time to read through this guide before beginning your weekly Lunch & Learn group.

There are two benefits from reading through this facilitator guide. First, you will see that a lot of the preparation has been done for you, and it will challenge you to think of other creative ways to facilitate the group. Second, if you decide to let others facilitate, which is strongly recommended, they can read the guide themselves to prepare for upcoming Lunch & Learn sessions.

Ultimately, Lunch & Learn groups are a great method for encouraging personal development and getting to know people in a setting you would not normally experience together.

Creating an Environment with Values, Goals, and Expectations
When you start your Lunch & Learn group, it is important that you create an environment built with values, goals, and expectations. People need to know what they are committing to, and they want to feel like they can contribute to the formation of the group. This will create a sense of ownership. As you begin to meet, it’s your responsibility as facilitator to outline expectations and form some of the framework for the group. From there, allow other members to make their contributions as well. Here are some of the core values, goals, and expectations you can include in your initial meeting before diving into the content.

Values
• **Relationship** – As the group meets, some great relationships will begin to be built. Challenge the group to realize that this is an opportunity to build and invest in one another during the length of the group, an opportunity they may not have otherwise had.

• **Respect** – During the time together, there will be great conversations and different points of view. This is okay and part of what creates a healthy dialogue. Every member of the group should feel that their input is respected and valued.

• **Value** – There will be different personalities in the group. Every person should be allowed to express their opinions and know it is place where they can do so. They should trust that nothing shared within the confines of the group will be met with hostility or aggression.
• **Safe group** – What is said in the group should stay in the group. Most organizations are forbidden by law to have employees promise confidentiality, but the group should commit to keeping its environment a safe place for discussion.

• **Other values** – Ask the group members if there any other values they would like to add to make the group their own.

**Goals**

• **Explore and integrate the content** – Each person should make a commitment to preparing for the group each week in an effort to become a better leader.

• **Ready for the discussion** – This is not a class, so it is vital that each person contribute, as the facilitator’s role is just to bring structure to the communication—not to teach. The facilitator will at times ask probing questions, but group members are encouraged to ask their own questions as well.

• **Other goals** – Ask the group members if there are any other goals they would like to add to make the group their own.

**Expectations**

• **Commitment** – Each group member should make a commitment to the group and to themselves that they will actively participate in the group, be on time, come prepared, and engage in the discussion.

• **Time** – Decide on a consistent time and place to meet each week that will allow you to have a great discussion and eat within an hour.

• **Amount of Material to Cover** – Calculate how many weeks you will spend on this book and cover the appropriate number of chapters per week in order to finish the book. (Note: The Facilitator Guide builds out each chapter as a facilitation unit, but it is common that you will need to cover more than one chapter a week. Combine materials according to the number of weeks you have to cover the material.)

• **Communication** – Ask group members to e-mail you if they plan to be absent at any time so you can plan appropriately.

• **Facilitation** – We recommend that you give everyone a chance to facilitate, but you know the group best and can decide what might work well for your particular group.

• **Other expectations** – Ask the group if there any other expectations they would like to add to make the group their own.

**Concluding Value**

As you wrap up your discussion about values, goals, and expectations, it is extremely important to emphasize that the Lunch & Learn group is not a session for complaining. Instead, the sessions are to objectively talk about the subjects and how one can apply the subjects into one's life or team. By directing
the discussion to be constructive and positive, it will help members focus on changing their immediate spheres of influence. The Lunch & Learn group is not a group to vent about people or problems. Yes, there will be discussions about the workplace and implementing the ideas into one's life, but everyone must be mindful to keep these conversations at an objective level instead of an emotional one. True leadership confronts issues and does not foster the growth of division and strife, so at times you will need to gently redirect the group to keep conversations from spiraling downward.

**Facilitator Responsibilities**

Lunch & Learn groups need some administration work for them to be successful. The facilitator should be responsible in the following areas:

- Recruit people for the group if necessary.
- Define with group members the structure and formation of the group in terms of values, goals, and expectations.
- Be prepared to lead members through the agreed upon amount of material each week. Also, prepare your facilitation materials prior to the group meeting each week.
- Coordinate a consistent time and place to meet. You will also need to communicate with the group from time to time for administrative reasons.
- E-mailing the questions to group members prior to the Lunch & Learn session may help with group discussion.
- Motivate group members toward self-examination, reflection, and action planning with respect to the topics.
- If necessary, provide feedback on the Lunch & Learn group to other leaders within your organization.

**Facilitation Tips**

Here are several practices that may help your Lunch & Learn group.

- Tips for good questions:
  - Ask questions that evoke feelings, thoughts, and insights.
  - Ask questions that require personal examples.
  - Ask questions that stimulate people to apply what they are learning.

- Read all the assigned work prior to meeting. Make notes in the margins of the book and record questions as they arise. Feel free to use your own questions as you like, instead of the questions in the Facilitator Guide.

- Creative activities – Incorporate other ways to promote discussion and change things up from week to week. For example, if you find an article related to the topic, bring it for everyone to read at an appropriate time and use it as part of the discussion.
The Structure of the Facilitator Guide

Weekly Lunch & Learn groups are facilitated group discussions. You will not be lecturing or teaching the group, but encouraging members to discuss what they have been learning. Within each chapter of the Guide are opening questions and some facilitated questions, but they are to be used as conversation starters or to bring the group back on track as necessary. Plan to share your own reflections, experiences, and questions, but limit your input. You should only be talking about 10 to 15 percent of the time. Stimulate others to share, listen attentively when they speak, and affirm discussions based on other group members’ questions and insights. The following structure is provided to help take some of the pressure off you as a facilitator, but we encourage you to build upon this structure. You know your group best, and you can create even more intentional and relevant questions based on your group members and work environment.

Main Point – The main point section of each chapter is to help you frame the chapter as you read and prepare for the Lunch & Learn group. It will aid you in refining your questions and activities each week.

Opening Question Options – Each of these questions are designed to begin discussion or to help people in your group get to know each other better.

Facilitation Question Options – These questions are designed to probe the group with some of the major concepts from each chapter.

Wrap-up – The wrap-up section is left blank for you to jot down some of the topics that were discussed so you can summarize and positively reinforce the ideas at the end of the Lunch & Learn session.

The Weekly Challenge – Have group members’ share how they are going to apply the concept that week into their personal life somehow during the week. Take note of what every person says so you can encourage them in their personal growth throughout the week.

Final Thought

As the facilitator of the Lunch & Learn group, remember that there is a need for structure, but don't allow your structure to get in the way of personal growth. Lunch & Learn groups are for personal development, and getting through all the material should not be the goal of every group session.
Put Your Dream to the Test
by John C. Maxwell

Introduction

In *Put Your Dream to the Test* John C. Maxwell helps you transform your dream from a vague notion of an ideal future into a clear picture of where you’re headed in life. The book serves as a tool to diagnose your odds of achieving your dream. Each chapter, John's presents a single, incisive question prompting you to refine your dream and to solidify your plan for achieving it.
CHAPTER 1

The Ownership Question:
Is My Dream Really My Dream?

Main Point

Many people pursue dreams they have not generated themselves. They structure their lives to meet the expectations of others rather than building their careers around the passion burning inside of them. People who allow others to define their dreams seldom achieve anything significant. Lacking an authentic sense of ownership, they give up easily when challenges arise.

Opening Question Options:

1. If your parents or guardians could have dictated your career path, in what profession would they have placed you? What did you dream of doing with your life when you were a child?
2. If you attended college, what was your first major? Why did you select it? If you did not attend college, what was your first job after high school? Why did you choose to work there?

Facilitation Question Options:

1. What is your dream job?
2. What has been the most fulfilling moment for you thus far in your career? Why was it fulfilling?
3. What strengths do you have? In what activities do you regularly excel?
Wrap-up:

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The Weekly Challenge:

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CHAPTER 2
The Clarity Question:
Do I Clearly See My Dream?

Main Point
A clear and compelling dream gives direction and meaning to life, yet often people allow their dreams to remain vague and unformed. The more specific people are about their dreams, the more clearly they understand why achieving it is so important to them. Clarifying the vision reveals a person’s sense of purpose. Bringing a dream into focus takes effort, but ultimately only those who see their dream are able to seize their dream.

Opening Question Options:
1. How often do you remember what you dreamed about the night before? Are the dreams you have while sleeping usually vivid or vague?
2. Have you ever had eyesight problems and needed glasses or contacts? If so, at what point did you realize that your vision wasn’t clear?

Facilitation Question Options:
1. Why do you think most people neglect fleshing out the details to their dreams?
2. What advantages are gained by spelling out the details of your dreams and putting them in writing?
3. How often do you dream about the future? What mental prompts could you create to keep your dream in the forefront of your mind?
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CHAPTER 3
The Reality Question: Am I Depending on Factors within My Control to Achieve My Dream?

Main Point

Dreams, by definition, do not have origin in reality. Rather, they are birthed in the imagination through hopes and desires. Yet, there must be some actual evidence that achieving the dream is possible. The more unrealistic your dream, the more you will be tempted to rely on luck to make it a reality. By concerning yourself with things you can control, you empower yourself to succeed, and you reduce the role luck plays in determining your future.

Opening Question Options:

1. Do you consider yourself a lucky person? Why or why not?
2. What do you think causes leaders to lose touch with reality?

Facilitation Question Options:

1. What positive habits in your life are helping you to move closer to your dream?
2. What new habit could you form in order to make even more progress toward your dream?
3. How does your dream line up with your natural strengths?
Wrap-up:

The Weekly Challenge:
CHAPTER 4
The Passion Question: Does My Dream Compel Me to Follow It?

Main Point
Without passion you may run out of steam before you reach your dream. Passion gives you the energy to push past adversity. Passion also sparks initiative, propelling you to move out of your comfort zone. Finally, passion fuels fun. People who enjoy their work have far better odds of reaching their dreams than do those who are indifferent.

Opening Question Options:
1. Which of your hobbies are you the most passionate about? Why?
2. Think about the teammates and leaders you’ve worked with during your career. Who stands out as being particularly passionate? What made his or her passion evident?

Facilitation Question Options:
1. Is your personality excitable, or do you tend to be more laid back? How does your natural temperament affect your passion?
2. What activities fuel your passion to achieve your dream?
3. Over the last year, has your level of passion to achieve your dream diminished, increased, or stayed the same? Explain.
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CHAPTER 5

The Pathway Question:
Do I Have a Strategy to Reach My Dream?

Main Point

Many people live with a disconnection between where they are and where they want to go. They have a dream, but they’re clueless about how to make the dream happen. Strategy bridges the gap by identifying the key people, skills, and resources required to bring the dream into being. By translating a lengthy journey into smaller steps, and by creating mile markers to chart progress, strategy inspires action.

Opening Question Options:

1. When you’re traveling somewhere for the first time, how do you lookup directions (iPhone app, GPS, physical map, etc.)? Have you changed the ways you find travel information over the past few years?
2. Do you set written goals? Why or why not?

Facilitation Question Options:

1. Have you identified the next step on the journey toward your dream? If so, what is it?
2. What actions should you take every day to get closer to your dream?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how strategically do you use your time in pursuit of your dream? Presently, what is the biggest time-waster in your life?
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CHAPTER 6

The People Question:
Have I Included the People I Need to Realize My Dream?

Main Point

The notion of a self-made person is a fiction. Every successful person leaned heavily on others along the way. Knowing this truth can free you to admit your need for help and to begin searching for it. When forming your team, character and competence are your greatest recruiting tools. People buy into the dreamer before they buy into the dream.

Opening Question Options:

1. Do you prefer to work closely with a group of people or by yourself? Why?
2. What qualities make you a valuable teammate?

Facilitation Question Options:

1. Who is currently on your dream team? What role does each team member play?
2. Consider the following three facets of your dream team. Which area is the strongest? In which area do you need to recruit more help?
   a. Encouragers: people who inspire you
   b. Truth-tellers: people who give you honest feedback
   c. Complementers: people who are skilled in the areas where you are weak
3. When you need big-picture advice regarding your vision, whom do you consult? Why?
Wrap-up:

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CHAPTER 7

The Cost Question: Am I Willing to Pay the Price for My Dream?

Main Point

Every journey toward a dream is personal, and as a result, so is the price that must be paid to achieve it. Taking hold of a dream means letting go of other opportunities. Along the way, you’ll be forced to make difficult sacrifices. Regardless of the unique costs you will have to pay, all dreams carry the price of overcoming fears, dealing with criticism, and working hard.

Opening Question Options:

1. Other than a home or car, what is the most expensive item you’ve purchased in life? What justified your decision to buy it?
2. What sacrifices have you made so far in life to pursue your dream?

Facilitation Question Options:

1. Not all sacrifices are worth making. What are you unwilling to give up in order to reach your dream?
2. What costs do you anticipate having to pay over the next couple of years in order to move closer to your dream?
3. Which of the following prices do you have the hardest time paying? Why?
   a. The price of criticism.
   b. The price of overcoming fear.
   c. The price of hard work.
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Chapter 7

Wrap-up:

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Main Point

Most people stop themselves from reaching their potential. They lose faith in their abilities and begin to doubt whether they have what it takes to achieve the dream. Tenacity begins by winning the battle of the mind, and then it overflows into action. People who end up seeing their dreams come true do not quit when they’re tired or when they appear to be stuck. Instead, they press on, past fatigue and through resistance, until they arrive at their goal.

Opening Question Options:

1. Why do you think people abandon their dreams and settle for something else in their lives?
2. When you’re feeling exhausted, what inspires you to keep moving on in pursuit of your dream?

Facilitation Question Options:

1. What five things can you do over the next month to bring you closer to your dream—no matter how small the progress?
2. What time frame do you have for achieving your dream?
3. What negative thoughts threaten to hold you back from accomplishing your dream? How can you change your mindset in order to reap the benefits of positive thinking?
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CHAPTER 9

The Fulfillment Question: Does Working toward My Dream Bring Satisfaction?

Main Point

Achieving the dream involves more than what you accomplish. It's also about who you become along the way. Seldom do people experience the exact fulfillment of their dream. If you're only content with bringing about the ideal picture of your dream, then you'll be forever disappointed. Celebrate your growth through the journey and share your successes with the people beside you. Find contentment, not in perfection, but in the process of chasing after a noble dream.

Opening Question Options:

1. Has your dream morphed through the years or stayed pretty much the same? Explain.
2. Do you draw more satisfaction from accomplishing tasks or connecting with people?

Facilitation Question Options:

1. How would you define personal “fulfillment”?
2. In what ways have you celebrated important milestones on your journey toward the dream? Why is celebration important?
3. Would you describe yourself as a perfectionist? Why or why not?
Wrap-up:

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CHAPTER 10

The Significance Question: Does My Dream Benefit Others?

Main Point

Early on in leadership, we want to make our mark. We're ambitious to do something significant for ourselves, and unless we're careful, our drive for success can become a debilitating selfishness. As we mature, we begin to sense the limitations of a life lived purely for ourselves, and we shift our focus to adding value to others. We come to recognize that the richest possession is one that outlives us: the legacy of a life lived on behalf of others.

Opening Question Options:

1. Who has added the most value to your life professionally? How?

2. Is it a bad decision to add value to a person who cannot repay you? Explain your answer.

Facilitation Question Options:

1. How do you want to be remembered by your teammates? What words would you like them say about you during your last day at the office?

2. How do you measure success?

3. Who will benefit from the accomplishment of your dream?
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