

LEAN IN

ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

# CENTERED LEADERSHIP PART 2: FRAMING

# Overview

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The Centered Leadership model will help you lead with impact, resilience, and fulfillment at work and in your life. There are five parts to Centered Leadership: Meaning, Framing, Connecting, Engaging, and Energizing.

Framing, the focus of this meeting, is one of the most exciting, because we learn to understand and accept our fears (reducing their power over us) and ultimately to shift the underlying mindsets and behaviors that have created this pattern.

## Meeting Goals

- Understand your triggers and fears to reduce their power
- Learn how to pause in moments of conflict
- Develop strategies for facing your fears and shifting your mindsets

## Pre-Meeting Prep

- Watch “Framing” individually or as a group [leanin.org/framing](http://leanin.org/framing)
- Remind everyone to bring a copy of this PDF
- Remind everyone to bring her One Action update (if you’re doing this)



### Brought to you in partnership with...

Joanna Barsh, director emeritus McKinsey & Company and author of *Centered Leadership* and *How Remarkable Women Lead*, along with McKinsey & Company.

# Meeting Agenda

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🕒 Approx. 130-140 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

(Please note: This is one of our longer meetings, and we love the way the activities build on one another. However, you can always skip an activity or spread the agenda over two meetings—whatever works for you!)

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- 1 Check-In** 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes  
Warm up, catch up, and get going p.4

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- 2 Education Activities** 🕒 Approx. 85 minutes  
Learn from experts and one another p.5
  - **Activity 1: Key Takeaways** 🕒 Approx. 5 minutes  
Take a few minutes to review the core concepts of the “Framing” video p.5
  - **Activity 2: Personal Reflection** 🕒 Approx. 25 minutes  
Identify how you respond physically and emotionally to difficult situations p.7
  - **Activity 3: Strategies for Pausing** 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes  
Reflect on the ways you find your “center” in the moment p.10
  - **Activity 4: Facing Your Fear** 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes  
Identify your fear and how this affects you and the outcomes you achieve p.11
  - **Activity 5: Shifting Mindsets** 🕒 Approx. 25 minutes  
Reframe your difficult situation to achieve a better outcome p.14

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- 3 One Action** 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes  
The little push you need to go for it p.16

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- 4 Wrap-Up** 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes  
What’s next and a few final words p.19

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- Optional Member Materials**  
One Action Update p.21

# Meeting Guide

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## Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

### Step 1: Icebreaker

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with ourselves and one another. One by one, fill in the sentences below and share them with your Circle. Listen carefully as each member takes a turn and say thank you when she's finished. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

- Today I am feeling ...
- A difficult situation that I want to explore further today is ...
- What's possible for me if I can manage my fears is ...

### Step 2: Member Updates

👥 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action update, share it with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting; the goal of a One Action is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

**For example, a member update might go like this:** *“Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action update].”*

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## Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

🕒 Approx. 80 minutes for all activities

### Activity 1: Key Takeaways

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Before you jump into today's meeting, review the key takeaways of our "Framing" video individually or as a group:

#### **We all have difficult situations, but we can learn to manage our experience**

We all face upsets or difficult situations where we do not operate at our best. We do not get the outcome we most hope for, and as a result, we feel bad. While we cannot control the outcome, we can choose the experience we want to have.

#### **Start with self-awareness**

As you think about your upset, try to step outside yourself to see the movie of the event unfold. Notice how you feel physically—this is an important clue to what is being triggered in you. Notice how you are feeling emotionally, too. Without judgment, get curious about what is happening in you and the messages it is sending to others.

#### **Identify your triggers, fears, and unmet needs**

As you think about a few of these situations, you may begin to see a pattern of what triggers you—and what gets triggered in you. Deep down, what are you most afraid of? We all have fears, and when they get activated, we tend to lose control of our emotions and behaviors. If you cannot recall fears, think about your deepest needs. In difficult situations, what needs of yours are threatened or unmet?

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## Activity 1: Key Takeaways (cont.)

### **Your amygdala at work**

In the heat of the moment, we operate without self-awareness, because we are in the grips of what is called an amygdala hijack (when that region of the brain signals the release of cortisol and adrenaline that activates our defense system). Thousands of years ago, we were kept alive by our amygdala responding to perceived physical threats. It continues to serve that purpose today, but it does not distinguish between physical and emotional threats. Either type kicks it into action before the executive brain can process what's really going on. It takes about six to ten seconds for your “thinking brain” to reengage.

### **Learning to pause to understand yourself**

When you pause, you give your thinking brain the time it needs to assess the situation. In that time, you can see yourself in your own movie with detachment—and start to understand what is actually going and why you are upset. As you assess the best way forward, you have the choice to experience the upset differently. That freedom to choose opens up a window for learning.

### **Learning to pause to understand others**

We judge one another by what we see—the words said, behaviors exhibited, and actions observed. But we don't know what the other person in a conflict is thinking or feeling but not expressing—this includes her values and beliefs and, deep down, her unmet needs and deepest desires. When you pause, you create time to think through what's behind her upset and may gain insight that helps resolve the conflict.

### **Reframing takes practice**

If you gain more self-awareness when you are upset, that's already a great start. If you also pause in that moment, you will be able to step back and think about what is really happening in you and others.

Whether you pause in the moment or reflect after a conflict, you will see more choices for how to respond to the situation. Having choices helps you shift from victim to being in charge of your own experience—and be more effective.

Simply put, when you choose to shift your mindset, new behaviors emerge naturally. Perhaps you might end up enjoying the challenging situation because it helps you grow faster. Imagine that!

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## Activity 2: Personal Reflection

🕒 Approx. 25 minutes

### Step 1: Reflect on a difficult situation

👤👤 Pair activity

🕒 5 minutes per partner, 10 minutes total

As individuals, spend several minutes thinking of a situation when you were not at your best and did not get the outcome you wanted—choose one that really made an impact on you.

Then break into pairs and describe the situation briefly to your partner, using the following questions as prompts. (You can also switch meeting guides and have your partner take notes for you below.)


- What is happening?
- Who is involved?
- What are you are doing (or not doing)?
- What you are saying (or not saying)?


Then switch roles and repeat the exercise.

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## Activity 2: Personal Reflection (cont.)

### Step 2: Identify your reactions

 Group activity

 10 minutes

The first step to reframing is self-awareness, or recognizing the clues that indicate you feel threatened. Reflect back on your difficult situation and identify your physical and emotional symptoms. Make note of them below. Check all that apply and add your own.

#### Common Symptoms:

##### Physical Symptoms

- Sweaty palms
- Increased heart rate
- Dizziness/faintness
- Butterflies
- Pit in the stomach
- Flushing/turning red
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

##### Feelings/Thoughts

- Anxiety
- Shock/disbelief
- Anger or defensiveness
- Embarrassment
- Intolerance
- Confusion
- Blame
- Retaliation
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_


Then go around your Circle one by one and share one physical and one emotional symptom. If you hear one that you experience but forgot to note, take a moment and add it to your list of symptoms.




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## Activity 2: Personal Reflection (cont.)

### Step 3: Identify broader patterns

 Individual activity


 5 minutes


Now step back and think about other situations that tend to trigger a negative reaction in you—the types of conversations or behaviors that derail you from being your best. How are they similar to the difficult situation you already shared? How are they different? Are they with the same person or with different people? What is the pattern you are seeing? For example, perhaps you'll discover you get nervous when speaking to senior members of your team or whenever you're challenged in a meeting.

Take a moment and note the pattern below:

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## Activity 3: Strategies for Pausing

 Individual activity

 Approx. 10 minutes

Once we are self-aware, the second step to reframing is to learn to pause in the moment. When we avoid our natural urge to fight or take flight, we give our thinking brain an opportunity to kick into gear.

List the ways you find your “center” in the moment.

Some examples:

- Smiling
- Counting to ten
- Taking a few deep breaths
- Feeling your feet on the floor

Then go around your Circle one by one and briefly share your favorite one or two strategies for pausing and centering.

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## Activity 4: Facing Your Fear

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

### Step 1: Share your biggest fear

👥 Group activity


🕒 5 minutes


In big letters, write down one fear or unmet need that rises to the top for you in the following box. When you're done, hold up your paper so everyone can see it. Look around your Circle and match up in pairs who have the same (or similar) fears.

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## Activity 4: Facing Your Fear (cont.)

### Step 2: Explore how fear works

 Pair activity

 5 minutes per partner + 5 minutes for debrief, 15 minutes total

Understanding how fear works is the first step in working through it and shifting your mindset.

With your partner, take turns asking each other the following questions. As you answer, jot down notes you want to remember for yourself:

How does this fear serve me well?

How does this fear limit me?

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## Activity 4: Facing Your Fear (cont.)

When I am feeling this fear, what do I do or not do? How do I act? What is my body doing?

When I behave this way, what is the likely outcome?

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## Activity 5: Shifting Mindsets

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

### Step 1: Try to reframe your difficult situation

👤👤 Pair activity

🕒 5 minutes per partner, 10 minutes total

You've accomplished a lot so far. You've reflected on a difficult situation, perhaps feeling the trigger of it again. You've recognized your symptoms, uncovered the types of situations that trigger you, and identified strategies for pausing. You've reflected on how your biggest fear impacts you. Now it's time to practice shifting your mindset so you can be at your best when you experience difficult situations.

Return back to your pairs from Activity 2, when you shared your difficult situation.

Think back to that situation and talk through the following reframing questions with your partner. They are designed to help you shift your mindset so you can see the situation differently. (Feel free to jot down personal notes in the space below.)


- What can I learn from this situation?
- What do I want to happen in this situation?
- What is my true intention?
- What can I do to bring about a better outcome?


Then switch roles and repeat the exercise.

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## Activity 5: Shifting Mindsets (cont.)

### Step 2: Reflect on the power of reframing

 Pair activity

 5 minute per partner, 10 minutes total

Now spend time considering how reframing can help you in the moment; use the following questions to shape your discussion. (Feel free to jot down personal notes in the space below.)

- What would I have discovered in my moment of upset if I used the questions in step 1?
- What would have I said or not said, done or not done?
- How would I have felt physically and emotionally?
- Do I think it would have affected the outcome? If so, how?

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## One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 20 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

### Step 1: Identify the experience you want to create

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Reflect on the type of situation that most triggers you and the mindset that you want in that moment.

**For example, you might say:** “When I meet with senior team members, I want to create the experience of feeling connected and like a peer.”

Complete the following:

When I ...

*Describe difficult situation*

I want to create the experience of ...


*Describe new mindset*



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## One Action (cont.)

### Step 2: Write down the pause techniques you'll use

 Individual activity

 5 minutes

Take a moment to consider what technique(s) you could use to pause in the moment.

**For example, you might say:** *“When I’m in a difficult situation, I will take a breath and tell myself that challenges help me learn and grow.”*

Now choose one that you intend to use and complete the following:

When I’m in a difficult situation, I will ...


*Describe pause technique*

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## One Action (cont.)

### Step 3: Share your One Action with your Circle

 Group activity

 1 minute or less per member

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following using your responses from steps 1 and 2:

- When I ... *insert your difficult situation*
- I want to create the experience of... *insert your new mindset*
- To help me accomplish this, I will... *insert your pause technique*

I plan to practice this before our next meeting and I will report back on my progress.

Move quickly from member to member, and consider cheering on one another as you go.

**Housekeeping Note:** We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. On page 21 of this PDF, you'll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update.

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## Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

### Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

👥 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting: day and time, location, food and drink. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who's going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting and brainstorm improvements going forward.

### Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

👥 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes or less

To punctuate the end of this meeting, go around your Circle one by one and complete the sentence: I am feeling ...

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# Congratulations on a great meeting.

See the following page for an optional member activity.

# One Action Update

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Use the following prompts to give your One Action update during your next meeting. You can even prepare your answers ahead to maximize your time with your Circle.

- In a recent difficult situation, I tried:

- What worked well:

- What I'm still working on: