



# GETTING STARTED GUIDE

## Welcome to The Way Back Movement!

Before your first gathering, review this guide to successfully create a safe space for your tribe and learn how to handle anything that might come up.

Ensure each tribe member has access to the content (paperback book or online access). Many members (especially introverts) will connect more deeply by reading along in gatherings and having the sparks and kindling for reference outside the gatherings.

# 1 Make the Space Safe



## You!

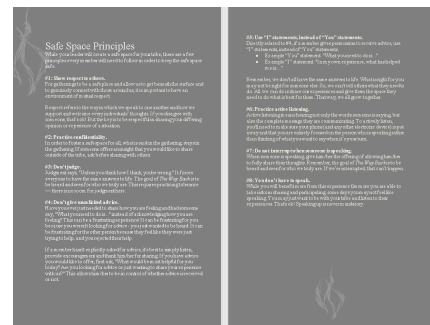
Have you ever heard of mirror neurons? If not, you'll learn about them in your Way Back journey. But, in a nutshell, people will reflect how YOU feel. If you are anxious or stressed, they will feel that. Take a few moments to get into your zen mode - stretch, do a power pose (again, you'll learn about this soon), be silent, drink your coffee or tea, or whatever you need to do to bring your peaceful, calm self.

## Location

Where are you going to host your gatherings? If virtual, choose the appropriate video-conferencing tool. If in-person, try finding an enclosed room, rather than an open space. People will be sharing their thoughts about many topics, and need to feel that only the people participating can hear them. You may also choose to have light music playing in the background and think about lighting. Sometimes natural light is the best light!

## Beginning the Gathering

Begin your first gathering by reading the "Safe Space Principles" found on page 1 of each volume.



## 2 Lead With Confidence

Use these tips to lead your first gathering and handle any situation that comes up.



### Give them a voice.

Some people are rarely heard. One of my favorite stories is from a team member who didn't see himself as a leader until he joined a tribe. It took a while before he decided to begin reading, but once he started, his confidence began to build, and he came to realize he had leadership capabilities that he had never realized before. He is now a very successful leader in his organization.

Asking tribe members to volunteer to read gives them an opportunity to share their voice. Remember, though, some people are introverted, and they may not enjoy reading out loud or it may take a while longer for them. That's ok! No forcing allowed.



### "People aren't saying anything!"

Scenario: The volunteer just read today's spark. You, as the facilitator, ask, "What thoughts do you have? Who would like to go first?" and...NOTHING! Now what? Let the silence breathe. People are often afraid of silence. Some people hate it so much they talk constantly to make sure it never has room to exist! But, not you. You'll say something like, "let's gather our thoughts for a few moments. When someone has a thought or idea, feel free to share." Then, sit. And wait.

If you believe people are truly having trouble connecting to the day's spark, or getting started, you can lighten the mood a bit by saying something like, "Don't everyone talk at once! Sheesh, you guys!" You can also offer your own thoughts to get the conversation going. The power of one simple thought is truly incredible. Offer yours, and watch as the ideas start flowing.



### "Well, that was inappropriate..."

Sometimes people might, how do you say..."overshare." When that happens, it's important that they do not feel threatened or called out in front of the everyone. But, if you're in a workplace, it's important that boundaries are established. So, what do you do?

As the leader, simply find the first available pause and say something like, "Thank you so much for sharing. What other thoughts do we have on this topic?" Then, look around at others to see if someone has a thought. Otherwise, you can offer a thought by saying something like, "One thought I can offer is.... Does that resonate with anyone?" This easily shifts the conversation away from the original inappropriate statement.



## Humans have emotions.

Some topics might really hit home with an individual. You will get so good at facilitating a safe space, that people will really think about the topic and may become emotional. So, what do you do?

Well, how do you react when a friend gets emotional? You'll do pretty much the same thing here. Don't judge. Be sympathetic. Listen. Offer a tissue, if necessary.

If you're in a workplace and the rare circumstance where you feel that a situation has the potential to be dangerous, refer the person to HR or an employee assistance program (EAP).



## "Hey! Stop interrupting me!"

People often get excited about the sparks, which is a great thing! But, sometimes excitement may lead to talking over each other. As the leader, be on the lookout for who began talking first and simply say, "Let's hear from Mia and then we'll hear from Brandy." You can even add a little humor by saying something like, "Wow - we've got a lot of thoughts on this one!"

Don't leave the group to fend for themselves - you are the gatekeeper (aka peacekeeper) to an orderly gathering where everyone feels heard. If someone continuously interrupts, say something like, "Oh wait a moment, Dan. Let's allow Rick to finish his thought. But, then I really want to hear what your thought is - so hold onto it for a moment."



## Steer away from advice.

The purpose of these gatherings is to connect with others - not to give advice. Remember, this is about being seen and heard for who we truly are.

- If members start providing unwanted advice to an individual: softly steer the conversation in another direction
- If members start providing potentially wanted advice, model the use of "I-statements" to make it less authoritative. Example: "I'm not sure what's best for you, but when I've found myself in that type of situation, one thing that I found helpful was..."

### 3

## A Smooth Ending

### Provide a 2 minute warning before time is up.

This tactfully lets people know there is time for just one more thought. If you do this every gathering, it will eliminate people looking at their phone to see what time it is. They will begin to trust that you'll let them know when it's time to go.

### Say, "Thanks!"

People offered their thoughts and were open to being vulnerable. This is something a lot of people have a hard time with. Remember to thank them for doing so, and for joining in. Let them know you're looking forward to seeing them again! This might be the most important they will feel all day (wow - you are incredible!).