

## *Playing Big* Book Group Guidelines

- **Confidentiality.** Because *Playing Big* is a book about personal development, the discussions will be more engaging if people feel safe to share their stories and their personal experiences. Let participants know they should feel free to share about their own learning and experience with other people in their lives, but to not share about the experiences of fellow book group members.
- **Attentive listening.** Listening is powerful. Give your full attention to your book group members when you listen to them. Put phones and other devices away for the session. A good guideline to keep in mind is this: listen so closely and attentively to the words they are saying that you could repeat them back if you needed to. Listen not just for the words, but for what you hear in the tone of their voices as well.
- **Don't give advice or attempt to fix.** It's often part of women's habitual ways of loving to give lots of advice in an attempt to be of service. However, the core emphasis in *Playing Big* is on each woman learning to turn to *her own* inner wisdom. Instead of giving advice, you can respond with support, with empathy, or with an honest, "Here's what has worked for me," rather than, "Have you thought of y?" or "How about z?" or "I would recommend x." If you notice that another group member is asking for advice, don't give it! Instead, turn them back to applying the ideas in the book to their question. For example, you might ask them, "What would your inner mentor do in that situation?" or "What if you used one of the tools for unhooking from criticism here?"
- **Ask powerful questions.** Ask your fellow group members short, open-ended questions to help them find their own answers. Ask "What" questions of less than seven words. "What else do you notice about that?" "What do you feel most excited about here?" "What's an alternative way to look at that?"
- **Question your inner critic.** Your inner critic might show up as you participate in or facilitate the group, saying things like: "You don't have anything to share," or "These other women are so much more x (smarter, further along, etc.) than you," or "That sounds obvious. Don't say that." Recognize this voice as your inner critic – not a voice of wise or rational thinking! As best you can, dismiss, dismiss, dismiss that voice and jump into the sandbox, sharing your thoughts, questions, reactions.