

# Impact Networks: Discussion Guide

Thank you for picking up this book. Our greatest hope is that it will support you in some way, large or small, to co-create a positive impact with others.

The process of cultivating impact networks can never be fully understood or complete. There are many ways to go about this work, and our opportunity is to practice and learn in community with one another. To this end, we have developed the following questions for you to consider as you progress in your collaborative work. You can certainly reflect on these questions individually. However, we believe these questions will be most impactful when considered in conversation with a community of your peers.

We recommend holding your conversations over three sessions, each focused on a different section of the book. Hold enough space in each session to dig deeper into any reflections that arise as you progress through the list of questions. These questions are a starting point for your conversation; they are meant to inspire further conversation and to help you integrate what you learned from the book into your life and work.

We also recommend that you start each session with a focus on relationships: consider beginning your first session with the True Stories exercise, described in chapter 7, or, at the very least, start with a simple personal check-in. You might find it helpful to draw from the list of “Framing Questions for Small Group Conversations” found in the Converge Network Toolkit at [converge.net](http://converge.net).

## **Session 1 -- Introduction through Chapter 3: Understanding Networks**

1. Where do you see networks alive within your life and work?
2. What do you see as strengths and limitations of hierarchies? Of networks?
3. What would it mean to you to apply a network mindset to your work (for instance, in your approach to working with others, in your leadership, in how you think about strategy, etc.)? What would change? What would stay the same?
4. If you are already involved in a network, which of the Five Cs described in chapter 3 feel the strongest? Which needs the most attention?

If you are not currently involved in a network, where might you anticipate resistance when inviting people to adopt a network approach such as the Five Cs outlined in Chapter 3?

## **Session 2 -- Chapter 4: Leading in Networks**

1. Which of the four network leadership roles outlined in chapter 4 feel most aligned with your natural strengths?

2. Which principles of network leadership resonate most with you? Which feel most challenging to put into practice?
3. Which dynamic tension is currently most present for you in your life and work?
4. What would it look or feel like to let go of control and emphasize greater levels of trust and self-organization in your work? What holds you back from doing this? What would change if you could do this more?

### **Session 3 -- Chapters 5 through 10: Cultivating Networks**

1. If you were to catalyze a new network, how would you characterize the common purpose that would bring people together? Given that purpose, who would need to be involved?

If you are already involved in a network, what is its purpose? Who is currently participating in the network, and who else may need to be involved that isn't already?

2. Where have you seen the power of trusting relationships in your work? What ideas do you have for strengthening trust?
3. What techniques have you used (or would you like to try) for helping people combine their diverse perspectives to develop a shared understanding of the system?
4. If you are a funder, what would it look like to invest in networks in your work? What gets in the way? How would that be different from what you or your organization are currently doing?

### **Putting it Into Practice**

*Following are three network practices we suggest you try out with your book club or in your place of work:*

1. Try the *True Stories* exercise described in chapter 7 with your book club group, network, or team. If you have 8 or more people in your group, split up into smaller groups to have more intimate conversations. Consider using the framing question "Why do you do the work you do?" Then, reflect or report back with your book club group: What surprised you? What would you like to repeat? What might you do differently? *You can find the full facilitation guide for True Stories in the Converge Network Toolkit at [converge.net](http://converge.net).*
2. Try the *Rapid Coordination* exercise described in chapter 8 with your book club group, or with your network or team. Then, reflect or report back with your book club group: What surprised you? What would you like to repeat? What might you do differently? *You can find the full facilitation guide for Rapid Coordination in the Converge Network Toolkit at [converge.net](http://converge.net).*
3. Try using the consent decision-making process described in chapter 10 with your book club group, network, or team. Consider practicing with a decision where the stakes are

relatively low. Then, reflect or report back with your book club group: What surprised you? What would you like to repeat? What might you do differently?