

Podcast Discussion Guide

[Leading Through Polarization: Managing Boundaries Inside and Out](#)

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Guest Speaker: **Mason Donovan**, Managing Partner, The Dagoba Group, [LinkedIn Profile](#)

Podcast Conversation Digest:

In the podcast, the speakers explored the nuanced dynamics of workplace interactions, focusing on how language and behavior can create micro-exclusions—subtle actions or words that marginalize individuals or groups. They discussed the importance of recognizing the difference between intent and impact, emphasizing that good intentions do not always equate to positive outcomes. The conversation also highlighted the challenges posed by political polarization in workplaces and how leaders can navigate sensitive topics to foster an inclusive culture. Key strategies discussed included creating safe spaces for dialogue, encouraging inclusive language, and implementing policies that promote respect and understanding among team members.

Utilize the following discussion prompts to extend the podcast learning with your team members.

Discussion Prompts:

Section 1: Understanding Micro-Exclusions

- 1. What are Micro-Exclusions?**
 - How do you define micro-exclusions in the workplace?
 - Can you share an example of a micro-exclusion you've experienced or witnessed? What was the impact on individuals or the team?
 - *Reflecting on the podcast: What examples were shared regarding micro-exclusions, and how did they resonate with your experiences?*
- 2. Intent vs. Impact:**
 - Why is it important to distinguish between intent and impact when discussing workplace behavior?
 - Have you ever found yourself in a situation where the intent behind a comment was misunderstood? How did it affect the team dynamics?
 - *From the podcast: How did the hosts illustrate the concept of intent vs. impact?*
- 3. Language Matters:**
 - Discuss instances where language (e.g., calling adults "kids" or women "girls") has affected the workplace culture.
 - How can we encourage more inclusive language in our interactions with colleagues?
 - *Consider the podcast's insights on language: What phrases or terms did they highlight as problematic?*

Section 2: Addressing Political Conversations

1. Navigating Sensitive Topics:

- How can we address sensitive topics, such as political discussions, in a constructive way?
- What strategies can individuals use to redirect conversations that make them uncomfortable without escalating tensions?
- *Referencing the podcast: What strategies did the hosts suggest for handling political discussions in the workplace?*

2. Role of Leadership:

- As a leader, what proactive steps can you take to create a respectful workplace culture?
- How can organizations establish clear policies around discussing sensitive topics?
- *What examples from the podcast exemplified effective leadership in navigating sensitive conversations?*

3. Creating Safe Spaces:

- What does a “safe space” for discussion look like in your organization?
- How can leaders facilitate open dialogue while ensuring everyone feels respected and heard?
- *Reflect on the podcast’s discussion on safe spaces: What elements were identified as essential for fostering these environments?*

Section 3: Building an Inclusive Culture

1. Policies and Training:

- What kind of training can be implemented to help employees navigate difficult conversations and promote inclusivity?
- Discuss the importance of having a clear organizational mission that aligns with diversity and inclusion efforts. How can this influence employee engagement?
- *How did the podcast address the need for training and clear policies?*

2. Feedback Mechanisms:

- How can individuals and teams provide feedback on inclusivity initiatives in a constructive manner?
- What channels should be in place to address concerns related to micro-exclusions or discomfort in conversations?
- *What feedback mechanisms were discussed in the podcast, and how can they be applied in your workplace?*

3. Empowering Employees:

- What are some simple techniques employees can use to advocate for themselves or others when they notice micro-exclusions or exclusionary behavior?
- How can we encourage team members to assume good intent when navigating misunderstandings?
- *From the podcast: What empowerment strategies were shared, and how can they be implemented?*