

HOW TO LEAD:

The Wallflower

EASILY OVERLOOKED BECAUSE YOU NEVER HEAR HER SAY ANYTHING

DO'S & DON'TS

DO *this*

... *Not* THIS

Help group members refrain from

- Interrupting.
- Steering the conversation their own direction.
- Finishing this person's sentences.
- One-upmanship.
- Discomfort with quiet spaces in conversation.
- Overreacting or personal critiques, which can communicate a lack of emotional safety.

Let a more dominant or talkative personality run group conversation.

Invite the person or couple for coffee or dinner to build trust and intimacy. In your interactions

- Give space for them to thoughtfully respond.
- Consider a quality-time activity to break the ice (board games? A walk? bowling?).
- Start conversation with sharing meaningfully, then ask deeper questions about the introvert's personal journey.

Follow norms of the "extrovert ideal." Being a good speaker isn't the same as having wise, thoughtful ideas. Introverts can be focused, reflective, circumspect—even better listeners. What innate value does your wallflower add?

Ask for their input amid group conversation. Then draw out more of the Wallflower's heart:

- What was that like for you?
- What are you afraid will happen?
- What do you hope will happen?
- What do you wish would happen?

Fail to discern: What lies beneath their natural reticence to speak? How could you create more comfort? If you don't understand what lies beneath, "getting them to talk" can grow more important than the person.

Privately ask a friendly, thoughtful group member to quietly help your Wallflower feel welcome.

Force them into the spotlight. There are likely reasons they're uncomfortable sharing extensively. Respect privacy and be patient! Their lack of sharing or comfort ≠ your failure.

Earn their trust and respect through emotional intelligence, organization, thoughtful responses, and a gentle approach. Share conversation topics beforehand via group email.

Feel like group conversation is the goal or that the wallflower has nothing to say. Instead, ask one-on-one for more feedback.