



Woven Playbook





Welcome to **WOVEN!**

WOVEN was created by women who have benefitted greatly from speaking their truth in a group of women and truly being heard. The concept is simple, but it is simply life changing. A **WOVEN** circle can help you feel less alone, help you get to know who you really are at this point in time, and support you to make the important decisions that allow you to fulfill your greatest potential. The **WOVEN** experience is characterized by:

- **Authentic speech:** **WOVEN** is a community in which you can say what is really true for you and to be heard without judgment.
- **Connection:** When we hear each other's truth, we form bonds with each other that help us feel seen and companioned.
- **Humility:** We believe that while our lives may look very different from the outside we are all very similar inside – and we are all kind and humble with each other
- **No agenda:** Our only agenda is to connect with each other, to be there for and listen to each other. We are not here to network or to build a skill.
- **Fun:** Finding ways to be playful together and celebrate is central to the **WOVEN** experience.
- **Full-Range:** **WOVEN** encourages us to express our full range of emotions—there is no woman that doesn't experience all shades of the emotional color spectrum at one time or another. Sometimes exploring the darkest, or most shameful parts of ourselves gives us the freedom we need to feel the expanse of our joy. And we celebrate each other's joy just as much as we witness each other's pain. Both laughter and crying can be transformational.
- **Uniqueness:** Each **WOVEN** circle is as unique as the women in it. It can be expansive or intimate, full of friends or open to women who have never met each other before. **WOVEN** invites your ongoing co-creation in making your **WOVEN** experience the one that you need most.

1. What is a **WOVEN** circle?

Woven circles are face-to-face and heart-to-heart gatherings of women throughout the world for the purpose of sharing, fun and transformation. Most women experience a sense of camaraderie and “really being heard” that helps them grow and change in new and exciting ways.

2. How do I start a **WOVEN** Circle?



- Each WOVEN circle has a host or hosts that initiate the circle. The host does not need to be the leader of the circle, but simply the woman that begins the organizational process of inviting members and clarifying basic WOVEN values. The intention is that all members of the circle will actively participate in decisions regarding topics, members, meeting times, and circle size. At least one member of the circle needs to participate in WOVEN host training and be familiar with WOVEN principles so that the circle can be as successful as possible. WOVEN host trainings are provided online.

What are you looking for in a circle?

Consider what it is that you want to receive from your WOVEN circle. This can vary greatly, which is why each circle is unique. You may be looking for:

- Intimate connection and emotional support
- Support from other women in your profession
- Support for issues at your life stage
 - a. 20's/30's groups
 - b. Women who are dating
 - c. Finding your purpose or profession
 - d. Newly married
 - e. New parent
 - f. Menopause and Midlife
 - g. Thriving with Age
 - h. Finding Life/Work Balance

How do I find the right circle size for my needs?

Depending on what you are looking for in a circle, you may want a larger group of women that have wider perspectives or a smaller, more intimate circle that can do deeper sharing. Consider how much time you have to meet and therefore how much time each of you has to “check in”. Generally, you will need at least 5 members to have an ongoing group that is meaningful, as everyone needs to be absent from time to time. If you have more than 30, it is difficult to have anything by a very casual personal check-in. Keep in mind that it's always easier to start small and expand than to wish you could shrink a larger group. It is also true that some members who are initially interested will not stay so.

Who do I invite to join my circle?

**What kinds of women am I looking for?**

You want to find women who can commit to confidentiality, listening without giving advice, and showing up regularly for circle meetings.

How much commitment do I need to have from members?

We recommend that each potential member commit to attending at least 4 circle meetings before deciding to stay or go. In addition, each member should be willing to commit to attending a certain percentage of meetings to keep intimacy and continuity in the group. Depending on the character of the circle, this can range from 50% to 90%. In a small, intimate circle, 50% attendance would make it very difficult to maintain intimacy and continuity, but this may work for a more casual, larger circle setting. The host should decide what works best in the beginning and then the circle itself can vote on parameters for attendance. Our experience is that a high level of commitment to the circle is what best predicts the success of the circle. In most circles, attendance is expected unless there is a significant illness of self or loved one, or the member is actually out of town.

The gift of diversity—*how to have a rockin' Woven circle*

Circles with members of similar age, class, ethnicity and values can feel easier to form and run. But the truth is that most of us find that some diversity of opinion, age and experience adds a tremendous richness and liveliness to group sharing and discussions. Consider finding women that you enjoy but who are different from you, to join your circle.

Where do I find members?

- Ask women from other groups that you are a part of: sports groups, book clubs, dance classes, volunteer activities, classes at school.
 - Ask your 3 best friends and their 3 best friends
 - Ask other parents from your school or preschool
 - Ask current or past co-workers that you like
 - Ask anyone who comes to you for advice or you go to advice to
 - Inquire on local online boards, forums, or blogs
 - Set up a group on meetup.com

Determining a frequency of meeting that works

Depending on the goals of your group, you may want to meet anywhere from twice weekly to four times a year. The average WOVEN circle meets once or twice a month. It is generally easier to have a fixed day for meeting so that everyone knows the date in advance and can plan around their WOVEN circle time. For example, “We meet the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 7pm.” Having a set time prevents someone from having to coordinate



everyone's schedules for each meeting. That said, when coordination needs to happen, using scheduling devices, such as a doodle poll, can save time and trouble in finding a mutually agreed upon time. Do consider what impact your meeting time will have on who can attend. For example, meeting on a weekday during the day often excludes women who work or students, but meeting late at night or on weekends can be difficult for stay-at-home moms.

How long should our meetings last?

This is an important question to address with the circle members as the circle forms. We usually recommend 90 minutes-3 hours as an hour is a bit too short and more than 3 hours can be difficult for members to plan for on a regular basis. Highly relevant here is how long each member speaks during the meeting (see "who speaks when" below). Do you want a circle that is "flexible" if many women have a pressing need to speak or do you need a circle that is always timely so that you can return to your other duties?

Location, Location, Location

You want a location that is private, so that women can speak frankly. This could happen in a public space, such as a restaurant or bar, if there is a private area available. Finances are also a consideration here as members may be impacted by fees for rental or the necessity of buying food or drinks out. Community room spaces can be great, when available. Likewise, meeting at a member's home can work well if the space is private. Do be sure there are bathrooms available for members to use or it can be a very short or uncomfortable meeting! Meeting outside or having an "active" meeting while hiking or biking are other options—depending on the purpose of your group.

Staying connected to the wider WOVEN network

Our WOVEN circles have the opportunity to connect with the wider WOVEN community through our Woven Facebook Page and our private Facebook group for Woven Hosts. We host online trainings and gatherings as well as in-person events.

ARE YOU READY TO START OR JOIN A WOVEN CIRCLE?

Let us know! Email us admin@wovenweb.com

We'll be in touch and provide you with what you need to start or join a circle!



You'll be able to access Our Full Woven Playbook which contains the additional following sections:

1. How do I Run a WOVEN Circle Gathering
2. What Happens in the Circles
3. Circle Presence
4. The Lifecycle as a Group
5. Managing Conflict in the Circle
6. Woven Circles Changing the World
7. Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix

Guidelines

Kickoff agendas

Over 100+ Powerful Questions