

# *Empowering* DIFFERENCES

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*The 10 Empowering Actions  
to Leverage Change*

WORKBOOK

# Acknowledgements

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# Welcome

Empowering Differences is the intentional action of using power and authority for yourself or others while positioning ways in which you are not the same as the people around you.

Using your differences, what makes you unique, to empower yourself and others to move your career forward.

Follow author, Ashley T Brundage, as she puts Empowering Differences into action. She has been on her own journey of self exploration and was forced to find out how she fits into this world. She started her careers as a means of survival and has quickly risen through each position. She celebrated her authenticity, empowered herself, and others, to create a stronger community.



## About Ashley

Ashley T Brundage is the Founder and President of Empowering Differences. While seeking employment at a major financial institution, she self-identified during the interview process as a male to female transgender woman and subsequently was hired. She was offered a position and started as a part-time bank teller and worked in various lines of business before moving to VP, Diversity & Inclusion in less than 5 years. Ashley recently celebrated 18 years of marriage to Whitney and together they have two biological sons; Bryce, 15, & Blake, 13.

Since beginning transitioning in 2008, she has worked tirelessly to promote awareness and acceptance of gender identity and expression. She serves on the Corporate Advisory Council for the NGLCC-National LGBT Chamber of Commerce, and is the co-chair for NGLCC's global Trans+ Inclusion Task Force. In 2019, she was named one of the Top 40 under 40 in the LGBTQ community nationally by Business Equality Magazine, and also been interviewed in several publications and media outlets, including a recent feature story with Bloomberg BusinessWeek. Lastly, she was named to the National Board of Directors for GLAAD in July of 2019, GLAAD accelerates acceptance globally for the LGBTQ+ community through all forms of Media.

# How It Works

The concept of Empowering Differences brings together what makes you unique with how to use that to grow in your life and empower others along the way.

To achieve self-empowerment, you have to really understand what makes you different, unique, what only you offer the world. You then use that to empower other people to be their best self, encourage them to understand their differences, share their story with the world.

This is accomplished in 2 parts:

**Self Assessment:** You will spend time going through the questions and answering them, then reflecting on what you have learned.

**Empowering Actions:** Once you have completed the self-assessment and really taken a look at your answers, you will put them into action. Using the second part of this workbook- The 10 Empowering Actions, you will learn how to bring it all together.

# Ground Rules

- You must understand yourself and who you are before you are able to do anything
- Once you understand yourself, you are able to understand other people's lived experiences and identities
- You then take the knowledge that you have learned and put them into action in the right situations
- Once you are able to understand yourself, others, and how to use your differences strategically, you can then empower others to do the same

## Notes



# Self Assessment

## *Step by Step on how to research your differences*

To have a solid baseline for knowing your differences and using that to understand others, we're going further into the first ground rule: understanding yourself. The first part of this is taking a deeper look into yourself and knowing how different aspects of your identity affect you on a daily basis, then understanding how your differences affect you in the eyes of others. Having a solid understanding of oneself, you're able to build confidence in who you are. To gain that confidence and understand yourself, you need to research and know your differences. The next few pages will take you through the research process outlined in the steps below:

- 1) Taking the self assessment
- 2) Digging deeper into the identities you want to research, the most prevalent
- 3) Understanding which communities you are apart of and community connections
- 4) Framing it all together, how to use this research at the right moments, leading into showcasing your authenticity

You will then use these discoveries from your research and apply it to the ground rules and throughout each empowering word lesson.

# Self Assessment

These are the questions you will use to evaluate during the self-assessment over the next few pages.

## Organize Your Differences

- What are the visible differences that you have?
- When are they the most visible?
- What are the invisible differences that you have?
- When are they the most invisible?

## Your Privilege

- Do you see yourself as having privilege?
- If yes, what privileges? If no, why not?
- How does your privilege or lack of influence others?
- What is intersectional about you?

## About You

- Who are you?
- What do your differences mean to you?
- What do your differences mean to the people around you?

## Evaluate Your Comfort Zone

- Do you have the ability to travel, either to different states or out of the country?
- Where have you traveled to and how were you able to afford traveling?
- What have you gained from other cultures?
- What other experiences took you out of your comfort zone?

## Empowerment

- Have you ever been empowered?
- How often do you empower others?
- Do you donate to diverse non-profit orgs that empower others?
- What communities do you see yourself a part of?

## About You

- Where do you fit into society?
- What other questions did you explore in your self-assessment?
- What identities would you want to or not want to highlight and why?
- How do you showcase your authenticity?



# Self Assessment

Organize Your Differences:

What are the visible differences that you have?

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When are they the most visible?

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What are the invisible differences that you have?

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When are they the most invisible?

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# Self Assessment

Evaluate Your Comfort Zone:

Do you have the ability to travel, either to different states or out of the country?

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Where have you traveled to and how were you able to afford traveling?

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What other experiences took you out of your comfort zone?

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# Self Assessment

Your Privilege:

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If yes, what privileges? If no, why not?

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How does your privilege or lack of influence others?

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What is intersectional about you?

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# Self Assessment

Empowerment:

Have you ever been empowered?

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How often do you empower others?

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Do you donate towards diverse non-profit organizations that empower others?

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What communities do you see yourself a part of?

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# Self Assessment

About you:

Who are you?

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What do your differences mean to you? What do they mean to the people around you?

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What identities would you want to or not want to highlight? Why?

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How do you showcase your authenticity?

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What other questions did you explore?

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# Put it into Action

Now that you have completed your self-assessment, you know more about yourself and can better understand other people's experiences.

Now we will take a look at the 10 Empowering Actions and how to put them into action.

For each word, there is content explaining the action and an exercise to help you better understand and dig deeper into how to put it into action. Use this content along with the lessons in the videos to dive deeper into effectively using each action to grow yourself and leverage your change.

# 10 Empowering Actions

*Empower*

*Inspire*

*Educate*

*Inclusion*

*Motivate*

*Invest*

*Mentor*

*Influence*

*Access*

*Enlighten*

*Notes*



# Lesson 1

Empower



# Empower

## Giving Power and Authority to Yourself and Others

The first Empowering Action sets you up to have the ability to get the things you need to become stronger and more successful while using your differences as an advantage. Combining this research and defining your perceived weaknesses leads to your ability to have everyday empowering actions.

Empowering Differences: Using power and authority for yourself or others while positioning ways in which you are not the same as the people around you.

Your differences are a perceived weakness, when you begin to highlight them, you create the central core of what will take you to the level of empowering your differences. In order to empower yourself, you will need to first think about what you perceive to be a weakness.

What are your perceived weaknesses?



Really think through your perceived weaknesses, you will use this discovery to reframe your view of yourself, then empower yourself and others.

Once you have this list, take your largest perceived weakness from your differences and begin there. Perception is not reality in this case., your so-called weakness is your ultimate selling point., begin to highlight this item in every way possible.

Empowering Data: What is the buying power for your community? What is the economic output of your diverse community/?

# Empower

How do you use your differences as an advantage?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How can you empower others?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What is your everyday empowering action?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What are some inclusive spaces?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Empowering Data: Using your self-assessment research data for the economic output.

Empowerment Audit: Analyze if your actions align with your words.



# Lesson 2

*Inspire*

# *Inspire*

Sharing your story can encourage others to do the same. Think through your background: what obstacles you have overcome and how what you did to overcome them. Write some notes below, include details and how you felt while going through that experience. If you do not feel as though you have a story to tell yet, use this to write notes on other stories you have witnessed or what you want your story to become.

## *Tell Your Story*

Using the details of your brainstorming above, begin to frame out how you will share your story. What is your goal in sharing your story? What message do you want people to take away?

# Share Your Story

What are your key takeaways from your story?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What about your story inspires others?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Write your story:

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Who will you tell your story to? Use this self discovery to tell your story and inspire others.



# Lesson 3

Educate

# Educate

The third Empowering Action is the foundation to create change. The willingness to constantly learn will lead you to better understand others and yourself. Through this journey, you will learn more about yourself and use that to educate others about what makes you unique, but you will also be modeling how others can use it to share their knowledge.

Part of educating yourself includes learning the language, which may be key phrases and terminology, learning more inclusive and appropriate phrases, or an entire language.

There have likely been people before you who have leveraged this difference to grow themselves, use that community as a resource. Read relevant educational materials and publications, including ones with varying perspectives. Also search for conferences, online courses, networking events, etc., that may help you.

Another resource is to search for any laws, legislation, or celebration days in your community..

*\*Pro Tip: Make education personal by expanding your lived experiences.*

You can also use your lived experiences and new found knowledge to educate others, you can be the resource people may come searching for. Think about what helps you on your journey: what you were missing, what you wish was available, and use that to create more resources for others.

# Educate

How will you educate to make the biggest impact?

Who can you educate to make the biggest impact?

How can you use education to help others?





# Lesson 4

## Inclusion

# Inclusion

The fourth Empowering Action teaches us about the power of representation and belonging.

We see inclusion in culture, by showing people they belong, and with representation in leadership. Culture can be found where you work, live, and socially engage. Every area has different offerings. Educate yourself as to what is available and consider engaging in a group or activity that is outside your comfort zone.

Belonging creates a sense of inclusion. Non-verbal communication is a key element, attire and attitude can also affect whether an environment is or feels inclusive.

Being mindful that you are including everyone and that no one feels excluded in any way because of a certain identity that they may have. This can be through small things like trying to make sure that a diverse co-worker feels included and comfortable mingling and talking with the rest of your team. On a larger scale, this can be making sure that there are LGBTQ+ protections in place and that those employees aren't excluded in any way.

*\*Pro Tip: To measure your team or coworkers assessment of your level of inclusion, please consider a full 360 degree feedback panel.*

Remember how privilege is tied to inclusion and how you understand the level of inclusion you provide for others. This means you need to take the time to reflect on any privileges that you may have, then think about how you can use those to make the environment safer for those less privileged.

# Inclusion

Imagine an inclusive world. What does that look like?

Who is there? What are people doing?

***\*Pro Tip: When creating a panel and/or using expert opinions be sure to include diverse perspectives.***

What would need to happen to make your world a reality?

What do you do now to make others feel welcome?

How can you use inclusion to help others?



# Lesson 5

Motivate

# Motivate

The fifth Empowering Action takes us through relationships and speaking up.

## Allyship

Allies support, create change, and advocate.

What are 4 ways you can be a better ally and motivate others?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## Strategic Engagement

Create goals and engage with others to reach them.

What are the 4 ways you are going to motivate yourself strategically this week?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## Relationship Building

Plant seeds and nurture your inner circle.

What are 4 things you can impart on others to impact the relationship?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## Encouragement

Speak up and encourage others.

What are 4 ways to provide positive encouragement for someone who needs motivation?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*\*Pro Tip: Utilize motivational data, the numbers behind the change that occurred, to create strategic engagement for your peers.*

# Motivate

Who are some motivational leaders?



List some characteristics they all have in common. How do they motivate? What did they accomplish?



How do successful motivational leaders represent themselves? How do they build relationships? What motivational words and actions did they use?



How can you motivate others?





# Lesson 6

Invest

# Invest

The sixth Empowering Action showcases resource allocation. How do you measure the impact of an investment? List investments you have made that had an impact in those areas.

Investment in Your Career:

Investment in Your Personal Development:

What investments are you making to drive change? How do you invest in others?



# Invest

Time, Treasure, and Talent are key elements of an investment. What you exchange for your time, what you exchange for your money, and what you exchange with your ability/expertise has an impact on your career development. Inventory what you hold in these categories.

Time



Treasure



Talent

*\*Pro Tip: It is important to diversify your personal, professional, and financial investments.*

The most important element of investment is ROI. What is the return on your investment?

Thank about the return you see when you invest in yourself. Do you see growth?



*Lesson*

7

*Mentor*



# Mentor

The seventh Empowering Action is a shared journey of exploration and development. To understand mentor, we look at mentorship basics and programming, managing the relationship and SMART mentorship.

A mentor is someone who spends one on one time with you and exchanges time for the learning experience. A sponsor is someone who invests in you without spending that time with you.

SMART Mentorship is the key to managing your process, below write out your goals for each part of SMART:

Specific-

Measureable-

Achievable-

Realistic-

Timely-

*Pro Tip: You do not have to follow a Mentor's advice, but it is important to listen and evaluate it.*

What mentor programs are you aware of that are open to you?



# Mentor

Traits of a mentor:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Traits of a mentee:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What do you offer as a mentor?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What do you offer as a mentee?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Who can you mentor? Where can you start to help others?





*Lesson* **8**  
*Influence*

# Influence

The eighth Empowering Action is the effect on character, development, and behavior.

## *What is Influence?*

The key to affect how others see you. Think about how you influence others and how you can affect others. It can be where you spend time volunteering, what role you have in the community, what you do for work.

Your influence is everything you do.

Imparting your influence will help you accelerate your career quickly.

## *How can you change perception?*

Every role you have in your life offers influence to someone.

Non-verbal communication is a key factor in your influence and affecting people's perspective.

Changing hearts and minds through using all the 10 Empowering Actions.

## *Tools to change perspective:*

- Changing Hearts and Minds
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Your Voice
- Through Other Influences

*What are the key ways you provide influence? Think of what makes you who you are, what positions you hold.*

# Influence

Your brand consists of you and/or your company. Think about your goals and your path, what is your brand? Is it you or a company? Or both?



Thinking specifically about your brand cultivation, what do people think about you? What feedback do you receive or do you think you would receive?



What are your takeaways on influence? Are you planning to change your advocacy? Or partnering with more or different people? What is your strategic influence?





# Lesson 9

## Access



# Access

The ninth Empowering Action is the way in which you connect with others for future growth. It takes us through accessibility and equity, networking, sponsorship, and leveraging your contacts.

Physical access and language access fall under accessibility. Think about these things: can others hear, see, communicate, understand the language, enter a room, participate, etc? Using this in a positive way can impact your career. Empowering Differences is built on paying it forward.

To really utilize access, you need to make yourself accessible. People have to be able to connect with you to engage.

Take an assessment of the accessibility in your daily life: what can you access ,what would you change for others, or what do you already offer for others.

Notes on accessibility:

## Develop a Networking Plan

Think about the best way to engage and leverage available groups. What would be the best group to join? What is your networking style? How can you step out of your comfort zone? Groups to consider:

- Online
- In Person
- Communities you are involved in
- Professional networking groups



# Access

Sponsorship is one of the most important contributing parts to Ashley's career growth.

She leveraged connections and offered to help them and pay it forward. Then delivered on the agreement and cultivated the relationship.

***Pro Tip: Understand that different people will have differing needs for strategic access.***

Who can you reach out to be a sponsor? Use the 10 Empowering Actions to help build your list

What are your barriers to access?

What do you have access to that could help others?



# Lesson 10

Enlighten

# Enlighten

The tenth Empowering Action leads others to greater knowledge and understanding.

Enlighten takes us through emotional connections, trust, creating an "aha" moment, and navigating emotional topics.

Enlighten brings together the previous nine Empowering Actions and the knowledge and understanding to make this happen in your life. It is the combination of education and understanding through the emotional connection, trust, compassion, and support.

To really apply enlightenment, you have to listen. Listening creates a connection and can build trust. It will also tell you how and when to navigate an emotionally charged topic. You also have to build trust to be an advocate, people must want to listen to you and believe you before you can impact change on a larger scale.

Look at leaders who you trust. What do they do that you want to also show? What makes you trust them? How can you be a leader that builds and creates trust in others?

Your "aha" moment is when everything clicks and falls into place and creates enlightenment.

*Pro Tip:*

*Utilizing enlightenment will lead you to better overcome obstacles.*

What is the connectivity between heart and mind for you? This drives the enlightenment of others.

# Enlighten

Notes on the key reminders of Enlighten:

Heart and Mind

Listening:

Overcoming:

Research:

Advocate for Change:

Storytelling:

Allies:

Trust:

Leadership:

Notes:

What common ground elements do you have? Especially with others outside your diverse community.

# Enlighten

How do you prioritize creating your "aha" moment

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How did you influence others to find their "aha" moment

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What is your "aha" moment?

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What are your rules for navigating emotional topics:

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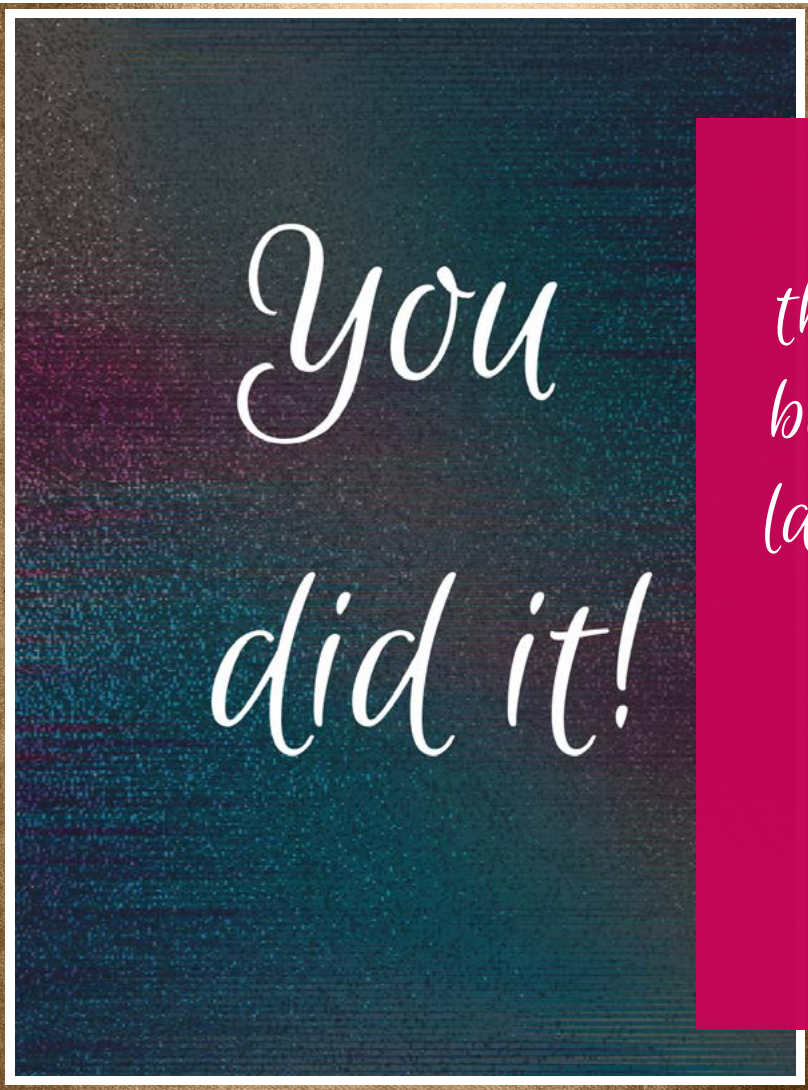
What will you do now that you are enlightened? How will it change how you move forward?

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You  
did it!

*"Utilize each negative that you encounter as a building block to have a larger platform to stand on and be seen and it will lead to more empowerment"*

Ashley T Brundage

Congratulations on completing the workbook!

This is a great personal accomplishment that will also help you professionally.

We created this workbook with the intention of empowering you to really assess yourself, your career, your lifepath, your contribution to others, and how to impact change on all of those. We hope you now have a greater understanding of your interaction in the world and how you can use your differences, whether you knew them going into this or found them in your assessment.

Connect with us and let us know what you learned and how you used your differences to leverage change.

Sincerely,

*The Empowering Differences Team*