

Discussion Guide

These questions are not meant to be answered well. They are meant to be answered honestly. Use them in a book club, in a leadership offsite, in a recovery meeting, or on a long walk alone.

Three things before you start. Anyone can pass on any question, without a reason, and a pass is not a failure to participate. What is said in the room stays in the room, including who said it. And if a question opens something bigger than the room can hold, the Resources section at gamefacedown.com has real places to take it.

If you are on your own, start anywhere. If you are in a group, start somewhere easy. The question that scares you most will still be there in an hour, and you will be in better shape to answer it.

Chapter 1: The Tunnel

What is the story you have been telling yourself about why you cannot stop?

What would change for you if you let yourself call it burnout out loud?

What does the tunnel look like from inside it? What can you still see, and what have you stopped being able to see?

Chapter 2: Broken on Sunday

What was your breaking point, and did you call it that at the time?

What did you have to lose before you let yourself ask for help?

What does asking for help cost you, and what does not asking cost you?

Chapter 3: The Identity Tax

How much of who you are at work depends on what you keep hidden?

What sentence have you been editing every time you walk into a room?

Who gets the unedited version?

Chapter 4: The Performance Review Your Depression Would Write

If your inner critic wrote you a performance review, what would it say? Whose voice does it sound like?

What grief have you converted into a story about yourself instead of letting it be grief?

What is the hobby or the break you have been putting off because your inner reviewer says it is not productive enough?

Chapter 5: Twenty Seconds

What is the hard thing you have been calling something easier?

What have you told someone in a version they could handle, and what was the version you didn't say?

Who would you tell first, and what has stopped you so far?

Chapter 6: Boundaries or Else

Where in your life is your "yes" doing the work your "no" should be doing?

What boundary do you keep renegotiating with yourself?

What would change if it were non-negotiable starting tomorrow?

Chapter 7: The Quota Carrier

Whose rules are you following right now, and did you have any part in writing them?

What number do you check first thing in the morning, and what does that say about where your self-worth lives?

If the leaderboard disappeared tomorrow, what would still be true about the work you do?

Chapter 8: Don't Judge the Moment Too Soon

What season are you in right now that you have already decided is bad?

What is a season you misjudged at the time, and what did it turn out to be?

What does patience look like when it is being required of you, not chosen?

Chapter 9: The Shield That Was Perfect

What is one thing your team already knows about you that you think you're hiding?

What would your team see if you took it off?

Who showed you what leadership could look like without it?

Chapter 10: The Slip Is the Warning

Which version of yourself takes more energy to maintain than the actual version?

Who has standing permission to ask if you are pulling away, and have you told them?

When did the healing stop being for other people and start being for you?

Chapter 11: The Fairy-Tale Forecast

When pressure hit your team last, what got exposed about your culture?

What did you do under that pressure that you wish you had not?

What is your culture teaching people without anyone saying it out loud?

Chapter 12: When Everything Hits at Once

What are you carrying right now that nobody in your work life knows about?

What are you carrying right now that you have not named?

Who could hold a corner of it with you if you asked?

Chapter 13: The Word That Was Never True

What word do you call yourself that was never true?

Where did you learn the word, and who benefits from you continuing to believe it?

What would it look like to refuse the word out loud, the way Leslie did?

Chapter 14: The Ikea Couch

If your life were the company, what would the last four years of headcount and budget tell you about your actual priorities?

What have you already traded for success, and did you decide to, or did it just go?

What is the question you ask yourself when ambition is pulling you somewhere you do not want to go?

Chapter 15: Just Kidding

What is the mask you have been wearing the longest, and when did you first put it on?

What did you learn to call a personal failing that turned out to be a symptom?

What have you said as a joke that you meant completely?

Chapter 16: The Rebuild

When did you stop being interested in your own life, and what would it take to get interested again?

What did you have to put down in order to pick up the harder work?

If the person who knows you best described the version of you they see underneath, what would they say?

Across the whole book

Which of the fifteen did you recognize fastest, and what does that tell you?

What conversation has this book made you want to have, and with whom?

What would change about how you show up tomorrow if you let one less thing stay hidden? And if you are in the middle of it right now and none of these questions have a past tense you can use, what is the one thing you would need to be true by Friday?