

## Introduction:

When you are engaged in a conversation with someone who holds differing or opposing views from you, it can be difficult to see past your own viewpoint and understand where they're coming from. This lesson challenges you to set aside your own beliefs and attempt to truly listen to a perspective different from your own. You will first reflect on your own beliefs related to three hot-button issues of your choosing. Then, you will be paired up with someone who has opposing beliefs. You will each take turns listening to the other detail their views on the subject and then analyze how you felt and what you learned.

## Participant Instructions:

1. Before our synchronous Zoom meeting, complete the Setting Yourself Aside survey. This survey serves a dual purpose in the context of this activity: 1. To enable you to reflect on your own beliefs and values. 2. To assign you a partner with different beliefs and values.
2. Watch Celeste Headlee's "[10 ways to have a better conversation](#)" TEDTalk and be prepared to discuss the following questions:
  - What do you think was the best piece of advice that Celeste offered about conversations?
  - What did you learn about listening from this TEDTalk?
3. Now you will get practice what you learned about listening from the TEDTalk with someone who holds an opposing viewpoint to you. You will be placed in a breakout room with your assigned partner based on the Setting Yourself Aside Survey. Once there, you should begin by saying to each other, "I don't aim to change your mind, but I hope you can open mine." Then, one of you should specifically detail your views on the subject while the other listens. Switch roles and repeat.
4. Once you have finished, you will return to the main room, and we will debrief as an entire group using the following questions:
  - How did you feel (both as you were speaking and listening)?
  - Which of Headlee's tips did you actively try to incorporate into this exercise?
  - What did you learn about your partner and their viewpoint?
  - What did you learn about yourself and your viewpoint?
  - While listening, how effective were you at setting yourself aside?
  - How could you apply what you did in this activity to real-world experiences?
  - In the future, how might you change how you approach conversations with people who disagree you?