

# Women Seen and Heard Virtual Film Festival

## TIPS FOR A LIVELY DISCUSSION

### About the Virtual Film Festival

The authors of the **Women Seen and Heard** books are hosting their very first Virtual Film Festival as a way for women to stay connected while sheltering in place. Every week in May, we will recommend provocative and timely films and provide you with a [relevant Discussion Guide](#). All you have to do is find a few film-loving friends and schedule a weekly meeting (feel free to bring a glass of your favorite libation) and be prepared for a lively exchange of thoughts and ideas. Most of these films are available on Amazon or Netflix, although additional fees may apply.

### Before Your Virtual Meeting

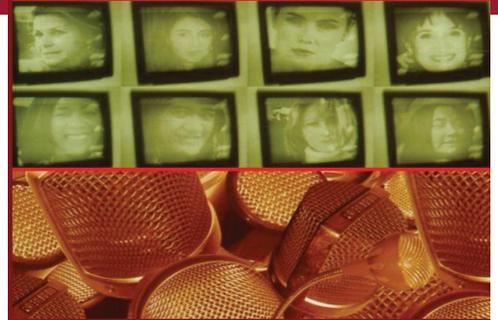
Encourage everyone to watch the film a few days before your meeting and [download the free Discussion Guide](#). This will help get everyone's creative juices flowing. Use the questions as prompts to jump start the conversation. Structure the group in such a way that it keeps everyone engaged – either ask someone to be the facilitator or come up with a format that is sure to keep everyone engaged and allows the conversation to flow smoothly.

### Tips for a Lively Film Fest Discussion

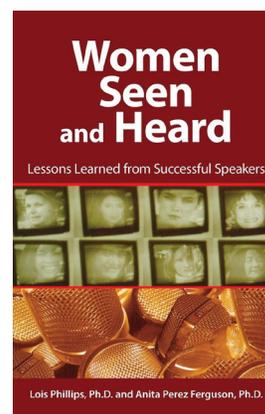
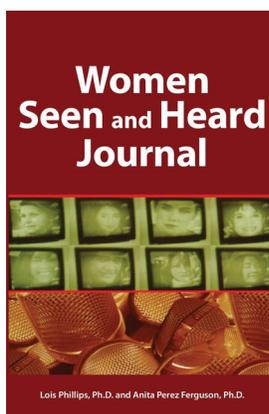
1. It's essential that everyone rent the film and watch it in advance of your meeting. The films should be available via Amazon.com or Netflix.
2. The Facilitator/Organizer establishes and emails the link for an online meeting.
3. Everyone should review the [Discussion Guide](#) produced for that week's film.
4. [The Discussion Guide](#) provided will keep things moving if someone facilitates the discussion. Without a single facilitator, the discussion guide acts as a structure to follow to keep things moving. Don't let anyone dominate!
5. Individuals might select a question that they like from the guide. After people weigh in with either general reactions, or specific aspects of the film they liked (or didn't), the discussion can be a "free for all." That's where you "follow the breadcrumbs!"
6. If you know one another's backgrounds well, the facilitator (or anyone) can ask a specific participant to address a particular question that is relevant to their experience in politics, business, professional life, government, etc.

Please feel free to provide us with feedback and comments on how your group enjoyed the film on the [Women Seen and Heard Facebook Page](#) (and if you haven't already Liked our page, be sure to do so and invite others to do the same!)

## Women Seen and Heard Journal



Lois Phillips, Ph.D. and Anita Perez Ferguson, Ph.D.



Click on the covers to  
purchase the Women  
Seen and Heard books  
from Amazon.

# Women Seen and Heard Virtual Film Festival

## DISCUSSION GUIDE The Contender

## Women Seen and Heard Journal



Lois Phillips, Ph.D. and Anita Perez Ferguson, Ph.D.

### Discussion Questions

These questions are merely suggestions, so don't limit yourself to them. Given the unique makeup of your group, encourage new topics to emerge. Be sure to ask, "What else are we missing here?"

1. Share with everyone your reaction to the film (in general). Did you like the acting, the production values, the writing, and the twists and turns in the plot?
2. This film is about women and power in a male-dominated political system. Where is the double standard revealed?
3. The plot had twists and turns. What were the surprises in the plot? Did they work?
4. We see people change their stripes during the film. Who were the victims, the villains, and the heroes? Did the roles change as the plot progressed?
5. Laine Hanson's nomination is tough because she needs "perfect credentials." How does this double standard ring true in today's political world?
6. As women advance into managerial or leadership roles, they need to have credibility as tough enough for the job. Have you ever had to compete for a position in which you felt publicly exposed or particularly vulnerable? If so, explain why.
7. Senator Hanson navigated a male-dominated world. Consider the way she relates to these groups of men (see additional questions below). How did her behavior illuminate both her character and her strengths, and her vulnerabilities?
8. Discuss her relationships to members of her family, including her son, her dad, and her husband.
9. Discuss her relationship to the political players in terms of her staff aides, the Congressmen, Chief of Staff, and the President.
10. A female FBI agent appears but she seems suspicious. What was your initial reaction to her? What assumption did you make about her? How did she figure into the plots twists and turns?
11. There are private conversations that are negotiations and public speaking that is confrontational. In what ways and when was Laine Hanson a "commanding presence?"
12. The film is 20 years old. Is the film dated? Why or why not?
13. What is the single best thing about the film? Why would you recommend it (or not)? And in what ways might 20 or 30 year olds benefit from seeing it?

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# CALENDAR & SCHEDULE

The producers of these films are not in any way meant to be presented as endorsing the **Women Seen and Heard** books. The films are being suggested because they align with the message of our books, specifically women's challenges communicating with decision-makers in male dominated sectors.

## The Contender

Navigating the endorsement process is tough and many believe it's torturous for a woman whose private life will be scrutinized with a magnifying glass. Ugh! Why not escape with a bit of a thriller about the endorsement process? The Contender, starring Jeff Bridges, Joan Allen, and Gary Oldman, holds up very well over time. People who are in their 20s and 30's likely never saw it, so do recommend it! Those over 40 will find it chilling in its relevance to current events. Watch the trailer and see what you think!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9bC0mg\\_nJY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9bC0mg_nJY)

[Click here for the Women Seen and Heard Discussion Guide for this film.](#)

## Equity

Equity is a fictional corporate thriller in the vein of Margin Call. It follows Naomi Bishop, an ambitious and aggressive senior investment banker working on a series of Silicon Valley IPOs in hopes of becoming the head of her division. The Atlantic said it was long overdue as a film exploring the motivations, aspirations, and drawbacks of being female on Wall Street. Watch the trailer and see what you think!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xg2TSp5tJy4>

[Click here for the Women Seen and Heard Discussion Guide for this film.](#)

## Ms Sloane

Ms Sloane is a 2016 political thriller about Elizabeth Sloane, the most sought after and formidable lobbyist in D.C. The film is set in the high-stakes world of political power-brokers. When asked to help oppose a bill that imposes regulations on firearms, she instead joins a scrappy boutique firm that represents the backers of the law. Her defiant stance and determination to win makes her the target of powerful enemies who threaten her career and the people she cares about. Watch the trailer and see what you think!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMUkfmUu44k>

[Click here for the Women Seen and Heard Discussion Guide for this film.](#)

## Hidden Figures

The film is based on "Hidden Figures," by Margot Lee Shetterly, which does justice to the role of African American women mathematicians and engineers at NASA in the mid-20th century. We follow the actors portraying Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson who somehow navigated the segregated and sexist workplace environment while applying their intellectual brilliance to the array of technical problems facing the NASA team which is scrambling to send an astronaut into orbit.

<https://youtu.be/RK8xHq6dfAo>

[Click here for the Women Seen and Heard Discussion Guide for this film.](#)

## The Assistant

"The Assistant" is a brand-new film about power dynamics in the workplace. The film takes place over one very long day, when the young heroine comes to sense that something may be "off," not only with her boss, but also with the company he created. She starts her job in a culture that protects/ ignores/denies what is really going on in the office. It is a film that many align with the #METOO movement. Julia Garner's acting (seen recently on the TV series Ozark) is stellar as she tries to understand the nuances and minefields in her new workplace. Watch the trailer and see what you think!

<https://www.amazon.com/Assistant-Julia-Garner/dp/B0844J2MFZ>

[Click here for the Women Seen and Heard Discussion Guide for this film.](#)