

Feminist Leadership & Sisterhood

Hosted by Françoise Moudouthe (African Women's Development Fund)

When asked participants to share what sisterhood means to them, they shared words and phrases like emotional support, being seen, friendship and encouragement - but also accountability, shared anger, growth and challenge. To see the full word cloud [click here](#).

As it turns out, sisterhood is full of contradictions - and that's exactly what we explored in our eight and final session in Feminist Leadership: Eight Weeks of Exploration, with African Women's Development Fund CEO Françoise Moudouthe.

In our personal journeys as feminist leaders, where does sisterhood live? Is it a responsibility, a joy, a pain?

Françoise Moudouthe

"There's a tension in feminist spaces between the need for growth and the need for accountability."

Contradictions of sisterhood

- Sisterhood is often taken for granted in feminist spaces, yet (or perhaps due to that) we don't actively foster it
- Women sometimes discriminate against other women in the name of sisterhood - for example, white women assuming Muslim women are oppressed and in need of saving
- Sisterhood is seen as a gift we are lucky to receive rather than a responsibility we all have to one another
- Many seek feminist spaces because they want to grow and feel safe to ask questions, yet this process is not always tolerated
- Feminist spaces are also where you can 'let your hair down' but at the same time where you will be held accountable

Key takeaways and questions

- Sisterhood is not about liking or getting along with everyone, but respecting them
- We should remain aware of how the term 'sisterhood' can feel exclusionary ('community care' may be an alternative, see [The Colour Factor](#))
- Sisterhood is not a state but an action; we must continually practice it to grow it
- What would leadership look like if we centred it not on a singular leader, but a collective notion of sisterhood?