



**Change begins with conversation.** Watching *The Big Flip* is a step towards understanding gender bias and its affects. But real change happens when we go on to have honest and meaningful conversations on how those biases manifest in our communities, and open our hearts and minds to listening to and understanding each other.

# Using this Guide

This guide covers a range of issues related to gender expectations and bias—topics that have come up in screenings, workshops and discussions around *The Big Flip*.

The discussion prompts are intentionally crafted to help a wide range of audiences think more deeply about the issues in the film, and to encourage people to share personal experiences. Rather than rushing through all the topics, we encourage you to choose one or two that best meet your event goals, and the needs and interests of your audience.

And be sure to leave time to consider taking action. Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even in instances when conversations touch on deeply personal and difficult experiences.



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# From the Filmmakers



#### Izzy:

I made The Big Flip to save my marriage.

A few years before the film, I had become an "accidental" breadwinner wife. My husband, fed up with his job of 12 years, had quit to start his own business. I was supportive as I wanted him to pursue his dreams as I pursued mine. But when his new business didn't pan out, and he had a hard time getting a job, things got difficult. Slowly, insidiously, our feelings for each other devolved into a stew of resentments, guilt and frustrations.

That's when I did some research and found all sorts of studies on situations like ours. On the bright side, we were not alone—40% of American working wives out-earn their husbands. But I also learned that husbands whose wives make more money are less happy, while wives who make more money are less happy. This raised the biggest red flag—divorce is 40% more likely when the wife makes over 60% of the household income.

That's when I stopped myself. These stats are useless to me. They might be helpful for academics and politicians, but for those of us who are living this day to day, they don't help at all.

People like Paige and me, we need stories. We want to meet other men and women who are living this, see what they are doing. We want to find hope in their successes, and solace in each other through the failures. We want to learn from each other's mistakes so we can turn things around and change those damn statistics.

#### We are making this documentary to understand what it takes for love to endure in the big flip.

#### Paige:

I had been paying most of the bills in my family before our first child. But I never really thought about who was the breadwinner. Until I was eight months pregnant with our son and uncertain how bills would be paid after he was born.

That was when Izzy showed up with her *big flip* statistics and asked me to help her with this documentary. I was intrigued, but I still wasn't convinced her findings applied to my family.



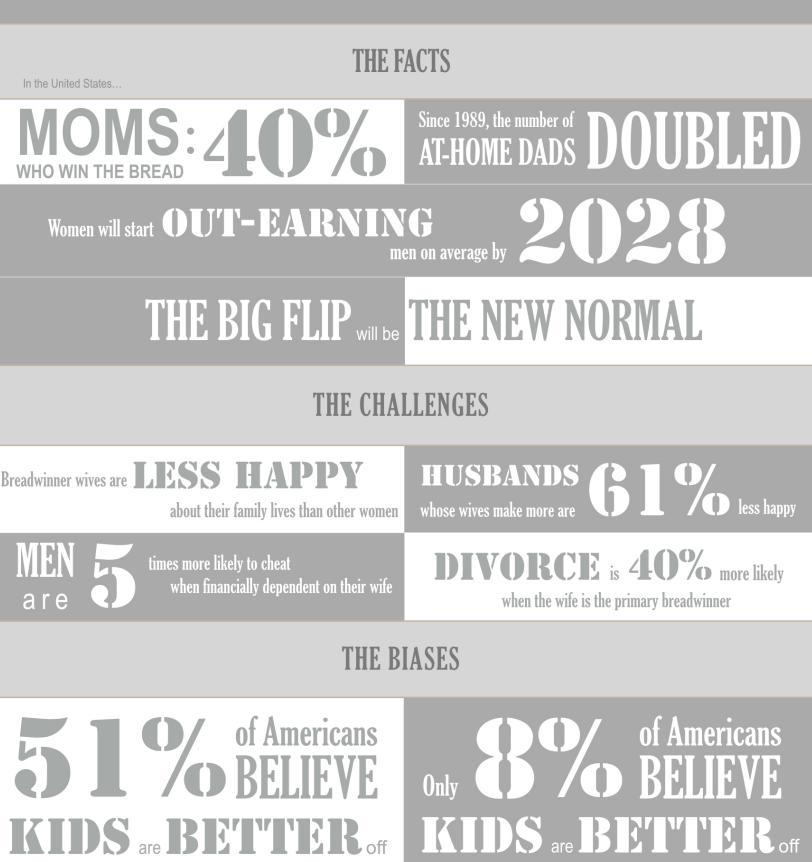
It wasn't until my husband and I were in the process of buying our first home, and the mortgage lender told us that my husband's income wasn't going to matter—that we really understood the financial roles in our family. Suddenly it became real for us both... as did the fights about money, time, chores and egos.

Working on this project and hearing other women voice the same concerns I was having in my family helped me develop the vocabulary and the tools I needed to talk with my husband.

We want to share these conversations with other families, to help women and men, wives and husbands, mothers and fathers realize that they are not alone, and that by sharing these conversations we can all grow and thrive in this new social structure... and that love can endure.



# Big THE NUMBERS Flip behind the stories



The Big Flip is a quest to change the negative numbers and find out what it takes for love to endure. **THEBIGFLIP.COM** 

Click here for details on data sources.



MOM AT HOME than at WORK

THEBIGFLIP.COM 5

with DAD AT HOME than at WORK

# The Families & Their Background



With baby number 4 on the way, Bonnie and Chip (Portland, Oregon) are working through a delicate transition. Bonnie has been frustrated by how much she has to do at home while being the primary breadwinner. Chip is obligated to walk away from his flailing business to step up at home—and struggles with an identity crisis.



**Chuck and Amy (Washington, D.C.)** are comfortable with Amy as the main earner and Chuck supplementing. But when Chuck is laid off, the loss of income is keenly felt in this modest middle-class family.



Julee and Ross (Nashville, Tennessee) see their flip as temporary while Ross launches his career as an actor. They are moving the family across the country to Los Angeles with high hopes for his opportunities in California.



**Fred and Robyn (Seattle, Washington)** are stuck in a rut. They fell in love as young, carefree snowboarders. But 15 years and 2 kids later, Robyn feels trapped as the sole income provider. Meanwhile Fred, his professional snowboarding career over, struggles to find his role in the work force.

Over 18 months, *The Big Flip* follows the lives of these four "flipped" families as they navigate the trials and triumphs of at-home fatherhood and mothers as main breadwinners. In a world where the majority of Americans still believe kids are better off when mom stays home, and that a good father is a provider, how will these families fare? Will resentments and doubt fester? Will love endure?



# Introducing the Film

## A FEW THINGS YOU'LL WANT TO SAY WHEN INTRODUCING THE FILM

- + Introduce yourself
- + Thank everyone for coming

+ Explain why you're excited to show this particular film, ideally using a personal story that ties to the core message of the film

- + Thank any sponsors or co-sponsors for their help and involvement
- + Mention that there will be a discussion afterwards

**TIP:** Do your introduction in "headline" format. Nothing brings down the energy level of a room more than a series of introductions that are too long. We encourage you to start the film ASAP.

# Sample Introduction

Welcome to our screening of The Big Flip! My name is [name] and I'm excited to welcome you to this special event. It was important to me to bring this film to you because [insert your personal reason for supporting the film or the cause].

If you have seen the trailer or heard director Izzy Chan talk about the film, you will know that this documentary explores a growing trend in America—the rise of breadwinner wives, and dads as primary caretakers. But beyond that, it's a film that explores issues of gender bias, and the challenges that families face when they defy conventional expectations.

We chose to bring the film to our community because it educates us about an important change that's happening in our communities and across the country. But it's a change that we know little about, even those of us who live the Big Flip, because it's often hidden and we don't really talk about it.

To give you a sense of what's to come: the film runs about 65 minutes, after which we will be hosting a discussion to explore the various topics highlighted in the documentary, hear your reactions, and drill down on themes that are relevant for our community.

Without further ado, The Big Flip!

**TIP:** Bring a cue card with brief 3-5 word reminders for what you want to say



# General Tips

## TIPS FOR LEADING A DISCUSSION

- + Dialogue, not debate. The Big Flip can evoke strong emotions for some people. Passionate comments should be welcome, but if the conversation overheats, remind your audience this is a dialogue and NOT a debate! Dialogue means exchanging ideas, learning from one another, and active listening. This is NOT a debate for people to stake out a position and try to convince everyone else that you are right and they are wrong.
- + **Speak for yourself.** Encourage people to speak only for themselves and not to generalize or presume to know how others feel.
- + **Macro or personal focus.** Be mindful of whether your audience/environment is better suited for a macro-level discussion or an intimate session where people can share personal struggles.
  - The bigger and more diverse the group, the better geared it is for talking about big picture issues and brainstorming ways to affect change on a macro-level—as a community or an organization.
  - The smaller the group and the more commonalities audiences share with each other (e.g. all women, or all big flippers), the easier it will be for people to open up and dive into personal struggles and desires.
  - If you have a big group but your desire is to create more intimate, personal discussions, break people up into smaller discussion groups.
  - Be aware that having supervisors and their direct reports in the same group may make it feel uncomfortable to dive into intimate, personal discussions.
- + Save time to talk about solutions. Make sure there is plenty of time to brainstorm next steps. Some groups may be motivated to jump right into planning, while other groups may need more time to process what they've just viewed—be flexible but keep the "next steps" in mind. Even the most difficult discussions will feel better if we make time to think of how we can affect positive change.
- + Be mindful of diversity in family set-ups. Because of its focus on gender roles and biases, The Big Flip's discussion themes are geared towards heterosexual families with working moms. If you have attracted a diverse group that goes beyond our core audience e.g. single moms, single dads, same sex couples, stay-at-home moms, singles/young childless couples—we encourage you to adapt and find ways to expand the conversation to be inclusive and relevant to them. Unsure where to begin? The best way to start is to ask! Ask what inspired them to come, what they would like to get out of the discussion, and take it from there.
- + **Know what resources are available locally.** Whether it's a professional moms' group, a daddy group, or free classes on financial planning for families, know what's available—you don't need to reinvent the wheel and start new groups or create resources from scratch!



# General Tips (cont'd)

## TIPS FOR A PANEL DISCUSSION

- + **Diverse viewpoints and range of expertise matter.** Recruit panelists from diverse perspectives, each of whom can confidently address the subject at hand.
- Recruit a good moderator. That means someone who is comfortable with setting the pace, keeping panelists on track, keeping discussions moving, and summarizing key points for the audience.
- + **Prep your panelists.** Decide ahead of time, with the panelists, how you will manage questions.
- + Tips for making audience engagement more engaging!
  - Encourage audience members to direct their questions to a specific panelist.
  - If you don't have extra microphones for audience members, have the moderator repeat questions into the microphone to ensure everyone in the audience can hear.
- + **Manage your stage.** Ensure there are comfortable seats that allow panelists to face each other. Avoid having a table set-up as it will only create a barrier to the audience.
- + **Keep the pace dynamic.** Make short and interesting introductions to briefly establish why each panelist is qualified to be there but avoid long opening statements from panelists.
- + **Manage audience expectations.** Let your audience know at the outset what topics will be covered, general guidelines about timing, and how questions will be taken.
- + **Start broad.** Begin the discussion with a broad opening question.
- + **Switch things up.** To build energy and foster learning, try encouraging panelists to ask each other questions.
- + Help your audience follow the conversation. Summarize major points or conclusions as they are made. After a major topic has been covered, sum up what was said before you move to the next major topic.
- + Wrap gracefully. Thank each panelist by name and ask the audience to join you in expressing appreciation with their applause





# DISCUSSION THEME 1 Initial Reactions

- + What resonated with you most in the film?
- + What parts of the film were surprising or made you sit back and say, "Wow, I never thought about that"?
- + Is there a specific story or character that resonated with you? If so, why?
- + What did you learn from the film?
- + What questions did the film raise for you personally?

Allow for initial silence (approx. 10-15 seconds) and then if no one responds, you can offer something from your own experience to get the discussion started; your reaction when you first saw the film, reactions other people have shared with you, etc.



# Gender Roles & Bias

### AWARENESS

## In the film

We heard a few of our big flip dads and moms struggle with their deep-seated notions of what a good father or mother should be.

- + Chip from Portland struggles with becoming a stay-at-home dad because of "this feeling that you should be the one supporting the family, doing the male job."
- + In a later scene, Chip goes on to explain that he worries that Bonnie isn't spending as much time with the kids "as she should being the mother."
- + Robyn in Seattle, during a luncheon with other breadwinner wives, confesses how "a lot of the issues dig deep into things that are just so programmed into your head. I watch Dennis the Menace with my kids and the mom is making dinner in her dress and her heels. There's something in me that wants to be that!"
- + What is your definition of a good father?
  - What images, emotions and feelings come to mind?
  - Your definition and ideas of a good father—where did they come from? What shaped your ideas and expectations?
  - Has the film affected your perspective? How?
- + What is your definition of a good mother?
  - What images, emotions and feelings come to mind?
  - Your definition and ideas of a good mother—where did they come from? What shaped your ideas and expectations?
  - Has the film affected your perspective? How?
- + When you compare typical social definitions and expectations of a good father and a good mother, are they different? In what ways?
  - What is the source of that difference?
  - Do you believe there should be a difference? Why? (Remind audiences this is not a debate, but an exercise in active listening, where we express and understand our deep-seated notions about gender roles without judgment.)



# Gender Roles & Bias (cont'd)

#### IMPACT

## In the film

- A Pew Research report on breadwinner moms found that
- + 51% of Americans still believe kids are better off with mom at home instead of at work
- + Only 8% of Americans believe kids are better off with dad at home instead of at work
- What are your reactions towards these stats?
- Have you seen these attitudes manifest in your life, whether at work, in the community or with friends? How?
- + When you look around the communities and organizations in your life—the office, school groups, play groups, gyms, neighborhood circles—have you experienced or noticed any negative manifestations of outdated gender role expectations?
  - How did it affect you? How did it affect others?
  - What do you think is the source of that misperception or bias?

### CHANGE

- + Is there anything specific you learned from some of the men and women in the film that you wish to apply in your own life?
- + What are some specific actions we can take as a school/ community/ organization/group to create new, less limiting definitions what it means to be a good father, a good mother?
- + What about on a personal level—as colleagues, friends, parents, etc.? What actions can you take today, this week, this year—to model healthy attitudes and behavior towards gender roles?



# Gender Roles & Bias (cont'd)

# **Beyond the film**

More food for thought, for those interested in the what's myth/what's the truth when it comes to parental gender roles.

"Cultures around the world have long assumed that women are hardwired to be mothers. But a new study suggests that caring for children awakens a parenting network in the brain–even turning on some of the same circuits in men as it does in women. The research implies that the neural underpinnings of the so-called maternal instinct aren't unique to women, or activated solely by hormones, but can be developed by anyone who chooses to be a parent."

~ <u>Parenting Rewires the Male Brain</u>, in Science Magazine (published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science)

*"Taking care of a child reshapes a dad's brain, causing it to show the same patterns of cognitive and emotional engagement that are seen in moms."* 

~ <u>5 Ways Fatherhood Changes a Man's Brain</u>, in Live Science (spinoff of Space.com)



# Gender Roles in Dating

Topics for audiences with a good mix of single young women and men. Remind folks there are no right or wrong answers, and to put aside judgment—the key is to have an honest dialogue about our conscious and unconscious biases.

## AWARENESS

# **Beyond the film** In Kate Bolick's highly-discussed 2011 Atlantic article, "<u>All the Single Ladies</u>," this is what she had to say about dating and marriage: "My future was to be one of limitless possibilities, where getting married was something I'd do when I was ready, to a man who was in every way my equal."

- + This desire Kate has to find a man that's "in every way her equal," how many of you can relate to that?
  - What does that mean to you, to be "your equal"? How does income and earning power figure into the equation?
  - Have you dated someone who made substantially less than you? What was that like?
- + Gentlemen, have you dated someone who made substantially more than you?
  - How did you feel about it? What was good? What was hard?
  - How did people around you react to it? How did that affect you?

### IMPACT

- + Friends and family members often feel strong opinions about a close one's date because they care deeply. Thinking back to conversations with close family and friends about your dates or their dates—what are some themes that come up when you chat about whether someone's a good match?
  - Do you notice any gender differences, in terms of what makes a man a good catch vs a woman?
  - Has the concern of whether someone is a "deadbeat" or "taking advantage" or "being a mooch" come up? In what situations?
  - How about concerns of whether someone is being too "bossy" or "controlling" or "overshadowing"? In what circumstances?
- + Have you ever felt pressure to take a step back from your career or play down your successes—whether it's to be more "date-able," win approval from family, or to preserve a relationship?
- + Vice versa, have you felt pressure to step up in your career or play up your work accomplishments—whether it's to be more "date-able," to win approval from family, or to preserve a relationship?



# Gender Roles in Dating (cont'd)

## CHANGE

## In the film

Here's what Amy in D.C. had to say about her attitudes towards income and dating: "I never really thought about people's income when I started to date them. Is the person I'm with happy with who they are—that's more important to me."

- + How has the film affected you, in terms of your thoughts on dating, marriage, work and parenthood?
- + Is there anything specific you learned from some of the men and women in the film that you wish to apply in your own life?



- + What are some ways we can evolve our attitudes and expand our expectation of what makes someone an equal or a good catch, in a world where it's no longer the norm for a man to be the primary provider?
- + What are some specific actions we can take on a personal level—as friends, siblings, parents, etc.? What are some things we could do or approach differently, when dating or evaluating a good friend or family's potential mate?



# The Trouble with Housework

## AWARENESS

- + How did you react to the division of housework in the big flip families in the film?
  - Do you recall any emotional reactions on this topic? For example, "Wow, I wish my spouse did this!" or "Wait a minute, this isn't fair!"
  - (Probe reactions if it doesn't come up: Chuck being the one who "keeps the household neat and tidy" versus Amy who goes "I don't know what order I'm supposed to these in!" in the kitchen.)
  - (Probe reactions if it doesn't come up: Robyn in Seattle constantly cleaning and picking up.)
- + For those of you living with a partner, when it comes to the division of household responsibilities, how is it working out?
  - Do you feel like one of you does more? Who? Why?
  - Do you two see eye-to-eye, in terms of how things are going on this front?



+ What's your reaction to these facts? Do your personal experiences—in your relationships or the relationships you see around you—match or contradict them?



# The Trouble with Housework (cont'd)

## CAUSES

## In the film

Expert Jenny Garrett (author of "Rocking Your Role") talked about the problem of social expectations for mom to be the one responsible for family and kids. For example, schools would call the mom first instead of dad when the child is sick.

- + When you look around at the people, organizations and media in your life, can you identify ways in which our social norms are reinforcing the expectation for women to be in charge of parenting and household responsibilities?
- + Probe the following areas if they don't come up:
  - Do schools expect more from moms than dads?
  - Does work culture make it more difficult for working fathers to step back for family duties than working mothers?
  - How about the media? Does anyone remember the Huggies' "Dad Test" campaign in 2012—where the key selling point is Huggies is so tough that they're dad-proof i.e. idiot-proof.

## In the film

Towards the end, Big Flip mom Bonnie says, "When I stopped expecting him [Chip] to do the things that I did, the way that I did them, he morphed into this amazing husband, amazing husband, and brings his own creativity into those roles."

+ Some say housework is a problem of men not stepping up while others believe it's an issue of women not letting go of control. What are your thoughts?



# The Trouble with Housework (cont'd)

## CHANGE

- + What are some ways we can make things better on this issue—and change the narrative from one of bickering chore wars to savvy teamwork?
  - Was there a time where you experienced or witnessed an aha moment that allowed partners to shift from contention to understanding?
  - Do you have any personal tips, advice or helpful resources you want to share?
- + What are some specific actions we can take as a school/ community/ organization/group to create a culture that's more inspiring for men to take the lead at home, and for working moms to find the balance that's right for them without unfair expectations, guilt or blame?
- + Personally, what actions can you take today, this week, this year—to support a more equal distribution of parenting and family responsibilities for men and women? What are some strategies you can employ for encouraging this in your personal life?



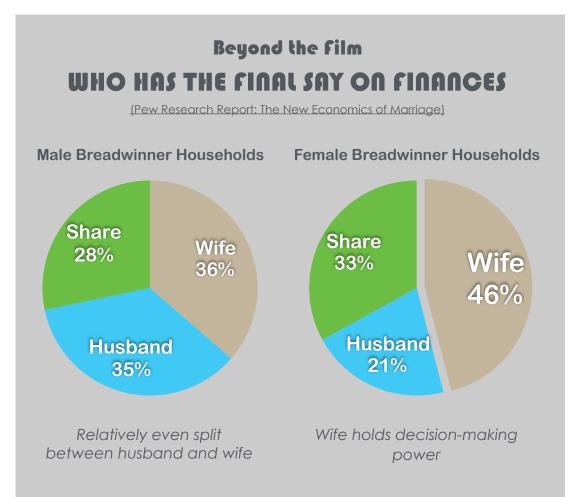


### AWARENESS

# In the film

Here are some mentions of money that came up in the film.

- At the breadwinner wives' luncheon, Robyn mentioned some concern over finances: "We need a little more money. Should we cut back or should you [Fred] go to work?"
- + Here's what Robyn's husband, Fred, thinks: "Money sucks. The more you make, the more you spend it. You don't need to make millions of dollars to be happy. You just gotta live within your means."
- + This is how Amy in D.C. feels a few months after husband Chuck was laid off: "Everyone once in a while you get a little bit of anxiety about money. I've never existed in a family setting where both people didn't work. Even my great grand-mother worked."
- + What thoughts, ideas or reactions do these trigger in you?



Probe: agree, disagree, why, other opinions/thoughts/ideas

- + What's your reaction to these facts? Do your personal experiences—in your relationships or the relationships you see around you—match or contradict them?
- + What do you think is driving the behavior behind these numbers?



# Money & Power (cont'd)

### IMPACT

# In the film

A study by Western Washington University shows that when the wife contributes over 60% of the household's income, the marriage is 40% more likely to end in divorce than in marriages where the wife is not the main earner.

- + While the Western Washington University study doesn't specify reasons for divorce, most data on divorce in America (and the UK) points to money (differences on finance) as one of the top causes.
- + What's your reaction to these stats? Do your personal experiences—in your relationships or the relationships you see around you—match or contradict them?

## CHANGE

- + How can we change this? How do we encourage healthier financial behavior, dialogue and decision-making in couples and families?
  - Was there a time where you experienced or witnessed an aha moment that allowed partners to shift from unspoken resentments over money matters, to being more mindful and aware of each other's needs towards financial security, risk and independence?
  - Do you have any personal tips, advice or helpful resources you want to share?
- + What are some specific actions we can take as a school/ community/ organization/group to provide resources that teach families how to have constructive conversations over money, and adopt healthier financial habits?
- + Personally, what actions can you take today, this week, this year—to have a healthy dialogue about financial security, risk and independence with your partner? What are some financial friction points in your relationship that you want to improve?



# Identity, Purpose & Fulfillment

#### AWARENESS

# In the film

Early in the film, one of the at-home dads and one of the breadwinner moms vent about the loss of identity, purpose and lack of fulfillment they feel in their roles.

- In the beginning, Chip in Portland tells us he "never use the term stay-at-home dad." He explains that, for him, "there's a smallness" to the term. He struggles with letting go of his career because "You step out of your work, you start to feel like the rest of the world's gonna go by."
- On the other hand, Robyn in Seattle feels trapped in her role as breadwinner. While she likes her job and is good at it, she wishes she were the one at-home with the kids. But she feels like she "didn't have a choice" given her husband Fred's earning potential as a former snowboarding champion.
- + What do you think is the nature of their dissatisfaction?
  - Do you think it affected other aspects of their lives and relationships? Why?
- + How do you introduce yourself to strangers? What are the first things about your identity that you want people to know, that give you pride and purpose?
- + Take a minute to take stock of how fulfilled you feel about your life. Then tell us...
  - What are the things that increase your sense of purpose and fulfillment?
  - What are the things that take away from your sense of fulfillment?

#### IMPACT

## In the film

We learned from the University of Virginia and National Bureau of Economic Research that...

- + Husbands whose wives make more money are 61% less happy.
- + Wives who are primary breadwinners are also significantly less happy about their family lives than other women.
- + In what ways do you think this relates to big flip couples' sense of identity, purpose and fulfillment?



# Identity, Purpose & Fulfillment (cont'd)

## IMPACT (CONT'D)

- + In our society, there's a strong value placed on sacrifice—of putting family first or company first, yourself last. Concern over personal fulfillment can almost feel trivial or selfish in this light. There are counter-arguments that when an individual feels personal fulfillment, they are better parents, and more productive contributors at work and in society.
  - What are your thoughts and reactions on this matter?

### CHANGE



- + What do you think are the reasons for these shifts in attitudes?
  - How do these shifts affect other aspects of their lives and relationships?
- + Is there anything specific you learned from some of the men and women in the film—or from this discussion—that you wish to apply in your own life?
- + What are some specific actions we can take as a school/ community/ organization/group to provide resources that teach and encourage people to discover or stay in touch with their identity, purpose and fulfillment in life whether they hold a paying job or run the family and household?
- + What about on a personal level—as colleagues, friends, parents, husbands, wives, etc.? What actions can you take today, this week, this year—to honor, nurture and support each other's sense of identity, purpose and fulfillment?



# Reminders & Resources

**Take Plenty of Photos:** Have someone take photos and post them to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter during or right after the event.

**Social Media:** Consider incorporating social media into your event with a live tweet chat. Use the hashtags (#TheBigFlip, #LoveEndures) and the Twitter handle (@TheBigFlip) to have the audience tweet their reactions throughout the Q&A or send in questions for the panel.

**Discussion Backdrop:** Project the slide with the film's social media handles on the screen throughout the discussion. This slide can be found in your screening toolkit.

**Email Sign-Up Sheet:** You can have attendees register and sign-up at the door or pass around the sign-up sheet. That way, we can continue the conversation and connect the community beyond the screening.

#### **THANK & WRAP**

As you wrap things up, don't forget to pass out the **call-to-action flyer** with details and resources on how audiences can stay engaged.

# Wishing you all the best for a fabulous screening!



