

ALLY INDEX:

Four Ways to Level Up Your Allyship



At 2050 TrailBlazers, we receive many questions about how people can work to be better allies to individuals in minority communities. Whether you're working to support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), women, LGBTQ+ community members, or others in the financial planning profession and beyond - it can be tough to know where to begin.

For many, the anxieties over not “getting it right” often stop them from trying. This guide provides four easy ways to establish your allyship practice, organized with tips at three different levels to build upon what you have already done.

If you're just starting to pursue allyship, start with “Level One,” then begin to stretch yourself to “level up” even more to Level Two or Three.

Remember: all of these actionable steps are a movement in the right direction. Our goal is to help you start down the path, no matter where you are in your allyship journey.

#1: ELEVATE PEOPLE FROM MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The foundation of allyship lies in the elevation of people from minority communities. This can take place in many ways such as listening, researching, and then using your privilege for good.

Level One: Listen more.

The more you can listen without feeling the need to offer your opinion or your own story, the more space you make for minority community members to share their experiences. You're making room for them at the table just by taking the time to truly hear them.

Level Two: Do your homework - and offer support.

Have questions about someone's experience? Want to know more about their culture? Do your homework before going into conversations with friends and colleagues who come from different backgrounds than you do. When you come to the conversation educated and prepared, you're taking the burden off their shoulders to educate you.



From there, you can use your deeper understanding to ask meaningful questions and offer genuine support.

Level Three: Use your privilege for good.

Ready to go beyond researching, listening, and supporting? Start leveraging your privilege to elevate others. Some of our favorite examples are:

- Turning down speaking roles where minority groups aren't represented in the lineup.
- Talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion with colleagues who come from the same background as you.
- Speaking out against racist, sexist, or homophobic comments and actions.
- Sharing the work (written or otherwise) of your colleagues and friends who come from minority communities.



#2: PRACTICE INCLUSIVITY AT HOME AND WORK

Practicing inclusivity can happen in so many different ways. Here's how you can start incorporating inclusivity in your day-to-day.

Level One: Evaluate your own life and business.

How are you being inclusive in your day-to-day? Think about your workplace, friend group, family, and community. Are there ways you can be more inclusive? This can be as small as asking someone from a professional network where you belong to grab a coffee, or asking a family who comes from a different background in your local community over for dinner.

Level Two: Expand your network.

Look around you - do all of the other professionals you know and speak with regularly look like you, or come from your same background? Work on expanding your network. The more professional connections you can have, and the wider range of backgrounds those connections come from,



the more you can incorporate inclusivity into your business practices. You'll expose yourself to other perspectives and open yourself up to new opportunities.

Level Three: Put systems in place to encourage inclusivity in the future.

Are you a business owner? Put systems in place to open yourself up to inclusivity in the future. Hiring is one of the biggest areas you can start. Develop an inclusive hiring practice by evaluating job descriptions, creating a blind-review process for applicants, and setting up systems to encourage diversity and inclusion on your team after an applicant is hired.

It can be tough and feel awkward to stand up to individuals in your own community. However, without kind correction, none of us would ever grow. Here are three steps to involve your own community and to take a stand against discrimination.

Level One: Say something.

Has a colleague ever made a comment in your company that wasn't inclusive? Have you ever heard someone make a sweeping, offensive generalization? Next time this happens, say something. You don't have to be unkind or overly vocal, but saying something small to shut down those comments can make a world of difference and push your colleagues to do some introspection.

Level Two: Elevate the voices of colleagues from minority groups.

Do what you can to share the stories, content, podcasts, or articles from colleagues who are part of minority communities. Elevate their voices, and support them outwardly among your network and online.



Level Three: Involve your own community.

There is strength in numbers. As you continue down the path of allyship, find ways to involve other members of your community. This could look like:

- Sharing episodes of 2050 TrailBlazers and other podcasts with your colleagues.
- Starting conversations about inclusivity in your mastermind group or at conferences.
- Ask a friend or colleague to volunteer on an allyship-focused committee (or ask your membership network if something like this is available!).

Growth can only happen when you're constantly asking yourself: What can I do better? How can I improve? Self-reflection is key to becoming the best ally you can be.

Level One: Think about your current lifestyle or past interactions.

Everyone has made mistakes. However, burying your mistakes and failing to reflect on them is only setting you up for future mistakes. Think back on your lifestyle or past interactions where you wish you could have been more inclusive, a better listener, or behaved differently.

Dig a little bit deeper - what spurred that action, or comment that you made? What fears did you experience? Was it just a lack of understanding and knowledge? Understanding why you've acted a certain way in the past can help you prevent it in the future.

Level Two: Ask for feedback.

Going to trusted friends or colleagues and having them help you evaluate your actions, or your business can be incredibly helpful.

Be open to feedback from your colleagues and/or employees, and be ready to embrace the feedback you receive and take action to make improvements.

Level Three: Put systems in place to do better.

Being forward-thinking is the key to continuously improving your allyship. Knowing what past mistakes you've made and taking the feedback you receive from others, what systems can you put in place to grow in the future? This might look like:

- Building an inclusive hiring process. Putting business systems in place to interact with diverse clients in a more meaningful and understanding way.
- Researching your friends or colleagues' culture and background so that you're better prepared to support them in conversations.

Remember: you will likely continue to make mistakes on your allyship journey. Don't let these mistakes stop you from pushing yourself to improve!