

# CanFilmDay Facilitator Package

How to lead a post film discussion



The goal of this document is to give you some advice and guidance for facilitating a CanFilmDay event. Whether it's a Q&A with a guest or a discussion/talk back with your audiences and community.

REEL CANADA's mission is to introduce everyone to the power and diversity of Canadian film and engage them in a conversation about what it means to be Canadian.

## THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

A facilitator does much more than just stand in front of an audience, introduce films and moderation. The facilitator presents an opportunity to think and talk about Canada and what it means to live here, be here, be Canadian. Facilitators make that experience real. Their primary role is to get the audience talking.

Your role is to find a way to succinctly and effectively hook the audience, get to the essence of issues and ideas brought up in the film or post-film discussion, connect the audience to the film and respond attentively, understand the vulnerabilities of speaking in front of a group, and choose to participate anyway.

## PRE-EVENT PREPARATION

Feel free to do your own research about the film, the issues brought up in it, or any related subjects. The better prepared you are – and the more interesting facts or questions you come with – the more confident you will feel during the Q&A/discussion time. It is always best to have a few questions or discussion topics in your back pocket to get things started.

## MICROPHONES

If there is a microphone available, please use it. It gives you more authority, and it is your tool to use. Even if you feel that the room is too small to warrant a mic, we insist on this one simple rule. Microphones also empower audiences and give them a "voice". If for any reason it is impossible to get a mic to an audience member, then repeat their questions or comments into your mic before moving forward. It's up to you to ensure that everyone is heard, loud and clear!

## DISCUSSION OR Q&A

Pick up on anything the audience brings up and try to expand on it. Feel free to come up with your own analogies that get to the heart of why it might be important to also be aware of what's being produced in your own backyard.

Find key moments in the film to connect to the audiences' experience. Always remember that even if you have a short amount of time, you have to approach it with patience. Rushing will undermine the process of facilitation. The idea of "holding steady" is integral to dealing with large audiences. Support and encourage them, whether their comments are positive or negative. If they say a film is "great" or "bad", follow up to ask why they feel that way.

## IF YOU HAVE A GUEST

You are responsible for making your guest feel special. You should make them feel like a star with your introduction. Make them feel important, and pump the audience up with what a big deal it is that this person has taken the time to come and speak to them. The audience will be more respectful and attentive, and the guest will feel more appreciated. During the Q&As, you have to balance the needs of the guest with the needs of the audience. We want the guests to feel valued and feel like their time at our event was well spent.

If the guest says something interesting or meaningful, repeat it for the audience to increase the impact. Depending on the question and the answer, you can ask the filmmaker to elaborate or ask the audience to respond.

Here are some ideas of what we think are the key to being a successful facilitator:

- Hold steady and wait them out, not everyone will have something to contribute right away, give them time to think before responding
- Be an active listener and use what you hear to further the discussion
- Use the microphone as a tool and encourage the audience to use the microphone
- Bridge and clarify statements between guest and audience
- Prep your guests on the purpose of the Q&A and be unified in your efforts to draw the audience out
- Be generous, be the connector
- Support and encourage critical thinking
- Establish interactivity in the opening
- And of course, have fun!

## SOME EXAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What were your initial thoughts on the film?
- What did you like about the film?
- If the filmmaker were here, what would you want to say to them or ask them?
- Why does it matter that we watch Canadian movies?
- If the film is set/takes place outside of Canada, what about this film makes it Canadian to you? Where do we see the Canadian point of view?
- If the film takes place in Canada, how does this film speak to your experiences of Canada & Canadian culture?
- Is there a scene/moment in this film that stood out to you and why?
- What ideas/themes stood out to you in this film?