



MIDWEST

Collaboration and Conflict Management Workshop

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Situation

- You are a Legislative Assistant to a State Senator.
- Russia just launched its invasion of Ukraine.
- You email Joe, Director of Communications, urging him to release a statement on the invasion.
- He wrote back a one-line email: “We’re going to hold off on doing that, thanks for your input though.”
- How do you respond?

A. Email him back, making your case more clearly

B. Email him back asking for a meeting

C. Knock on his door down the hall

D. Let it go



There is a disagreement...

THOUGHT ONE: ADDRESS IT

If I address it, I'll be able to tackle the issue head on



But it'll probably go badly, and won't help



It's not worth it.



I probably shouldn't address it.

THOUGHT TWO: DON'T ADDRESS IT

If I don't address it, I'll avoid any issues with them



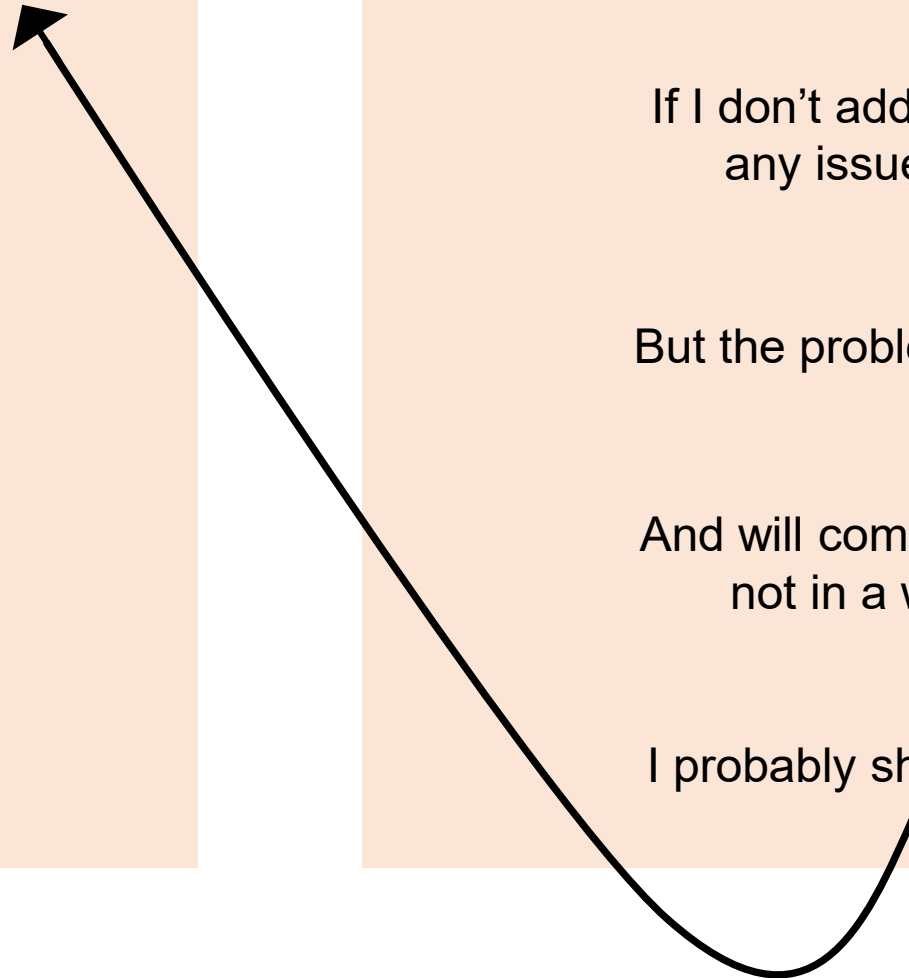
But the problem will remain



And will come out later, and not in a way I'd like



I probably should address it.



Script

What was said in the conversation

I said:

They said:

I said:

They said:

I said:

They said:

What was said in the conversation

I said: This project plan is not going to work.

They said: Yes. It will.

I said: We will slip the deadline if we go forward in this manner.

They said: I don't think so. It should be fine.

I said: No. It won't be, and it will be our fault.

They said: You're worrying about nothing.

Common Approach

ASSUMPTIONS

I'm right on this,

And I'll show you how

PURPOSE

Convince them to
do/think something

ACTIONS

**Build and Deploy
Argument**

Communicate talking points/key
messages, lecture, defend, etc.

Embedded Assumptions

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

I'm right on this

- This is about right and wrong. I'm right.
- Your mind is an empty vessel. I will pour `truth' into it, and persuade you
- To get the truth from my mind to yours, I advocate, lecture, explain, argue
- I will be able to persuade you right now.
- If you are *not* persuaded, how can I explain that? Are you stubborn, fearful, ill-informed, not smart, irrational, selfish?
- What is persuasive to me is persuasive to you.

Self-Awareness

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

Think about:

- Your favorite class in high school.
- The last time you cried at a movie.
- Who you voted for in the last election.
- The last time you changed your mind.

Self-Awareness

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

Ways in which we're influenced:

Charm

Group Think

Fear

Interests

Force

Sympathy

Flattery

Blackmail

Data

Peer Pressure

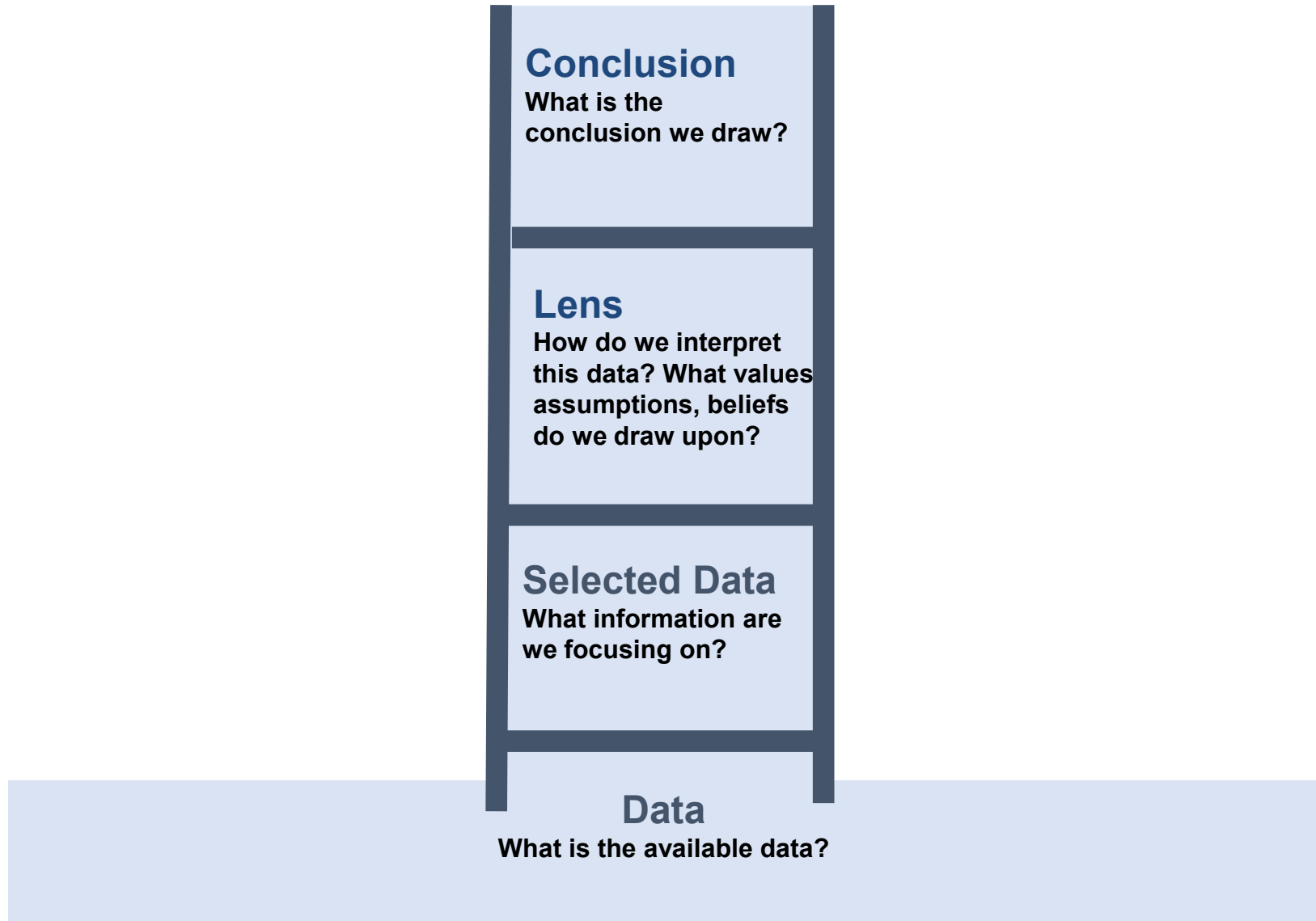
Statistics

Ladder of Inference

ASSUMPTION:

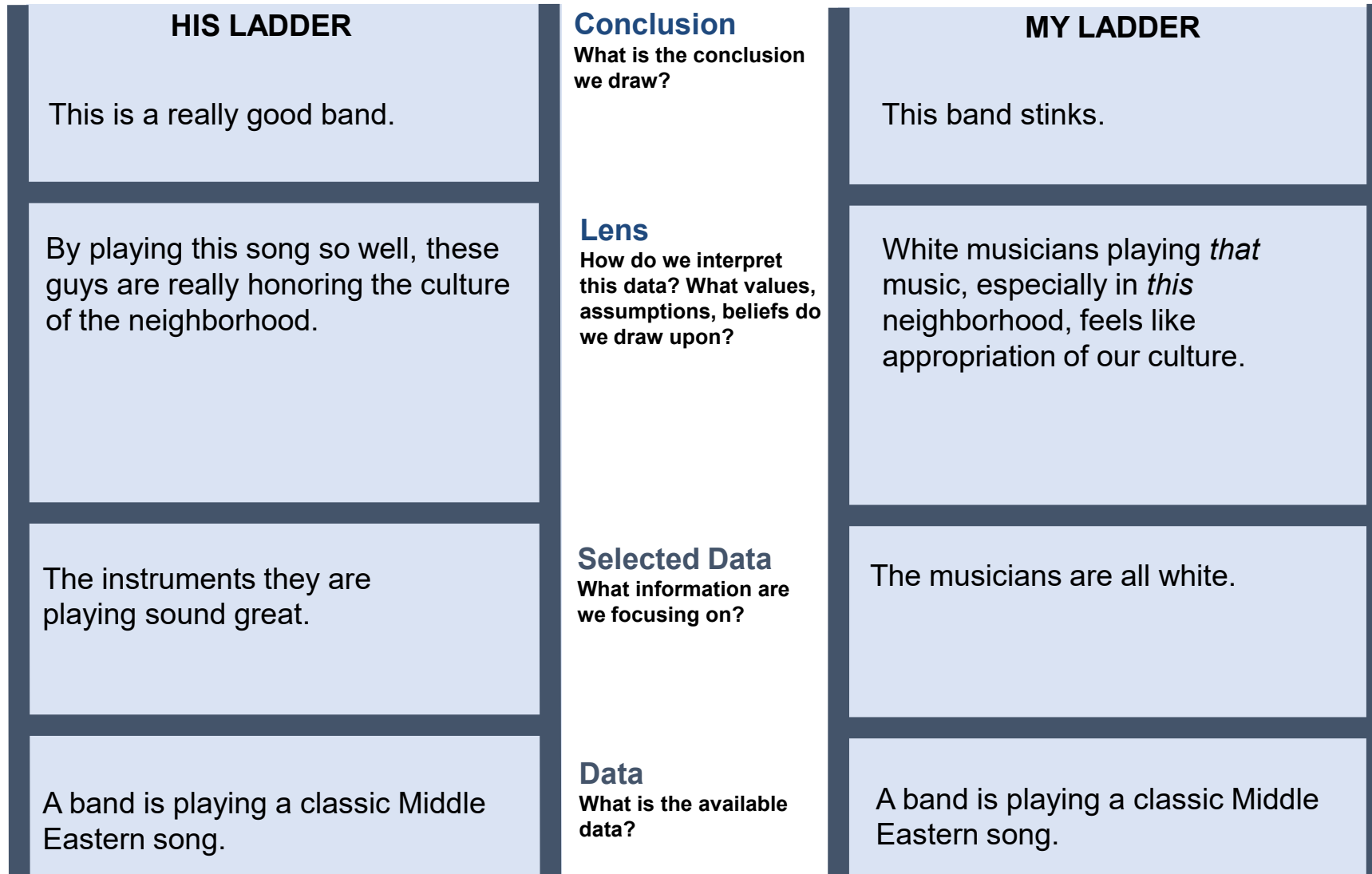
I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU





Ladder of Inference



Biases

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

Bias: the tendency to make decisions or take action in an unknowingly irrational way

We see what we believe

- **Confirmation bias** – caring about information that backs up what we already believe.
- Explains why facts and data are insufficient: vaccines, climate change, etc.

“Numbers in statistics are necessary and wonderful to discover the truth. But they are not enough to change beliefs, and are virtually useless for motivating action.”

- Tali Sharot, neuroscientist at University College London

Biases

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

We dismiss what we don't believe

- **“Asymmetrical updating”**: When we receive information that contradicts what we believe, we dismiss it.
- “As we get more and more information, we will change our beliefs more and more but mostly in response to information that already fits our views.”



Biases

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

We get attached to what we see first

- **Anchoring bias**: we over-rely on one key piece of information—usually the first one we received



ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU



ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

- Tweet from Tide: “What should Tide PODS be used for? **DOING LAUNDRY**. Nothing else. Eating a Tide POD is a **BAD IDEA...**”



- Four days later: Google searches for Tide Pods doubled. A week later, by 7x.
- Cases of teens ingesting Tide Pods more than doubled that of prior two years combined.

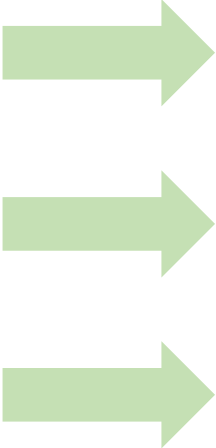
Autonomy

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

Denying Autonomy

- Instructing jurors to disregard inadmissible testimony
 - Telling people to stop drinking alcohol
 - Persuading people that smoking is bad for health
- 
- Jurors weigh it more heavily
 - College students drink more
 - They get more interested in smoking

Autonomy

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

How to reduce teen smoking?

- Cigarettes were largest cause of preventable deaths and disease
- In the US, smoking responsible for 1 in 5 deaths
- Cost of \$150 billion per year

Tobacco companies targeted teens

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of high school students had smoked
- One in four seniors smoked daily
- Teen smoking at 19 year high



Autonomy

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

The 'Truth Campaign'

- “The ad didn’t demand anything from teens. There was no message at the end telling them not to smoke, what to do, or what would or wouldn’t make them cool. The spot just let them know that, whether they realized it or not, cigarette companies were trying to influence them – and that the media was in on it.”



Autonomy

ASSUMPTION:

I'M RIGHT

I'LL SHOW YOU

Results

- In Florida:
 - More than 30,000 teens quit.
 - Within two years, teen smoking rates reduced by half.
- National campaign
 - Led to rates dropping by 75%
 - Prevented more than 450,000 youths from smoking in the first four years.



So what do we do?

ASSUMPTIONS

I'm right on this

And I'll show you how

I have an opinion and I'm open to change

We'll share our perspectives and both evolve

PURPOSE

Convince them to do/think something

Understand each other's views

Understand why/how you might disagree

Co-create a new option together

ACTIONS

Build and Deploy Argument
Communicate talking points/key messages, lecture, defend, etc.

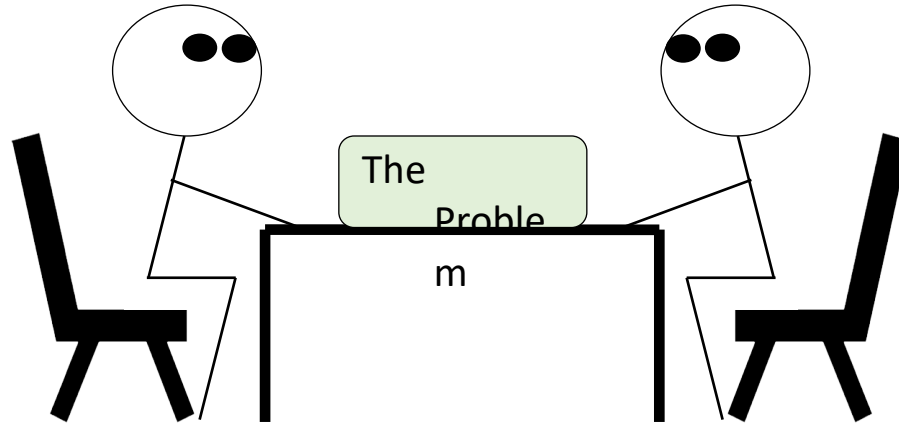
1. Adopt Mindset
of curiosity and openness

2. Understand
their values, concerns, perspective

3. Skillfully Advocate
based on their perspective

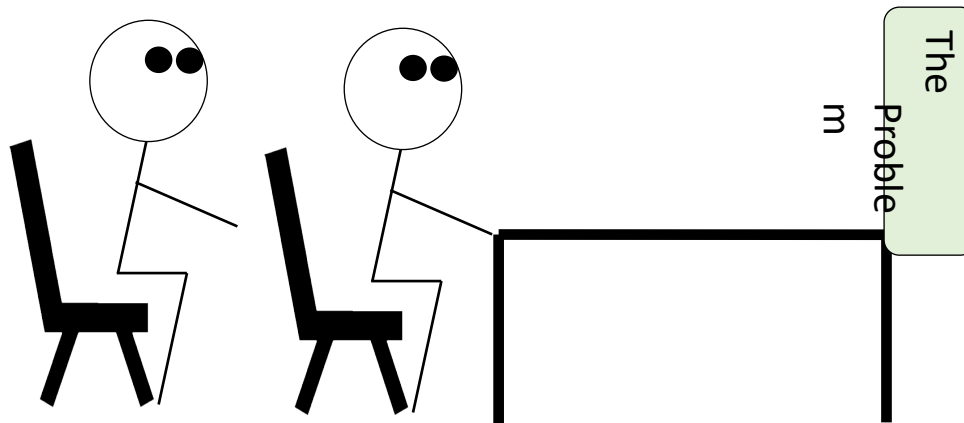
Action One

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE



COMPETITIVE

- Someone wins, someone loses
- Relationship implications
- Untapped value



COLLABORATIVE

- We can both win
- Relationship implications
- Maximizing potential

Action One

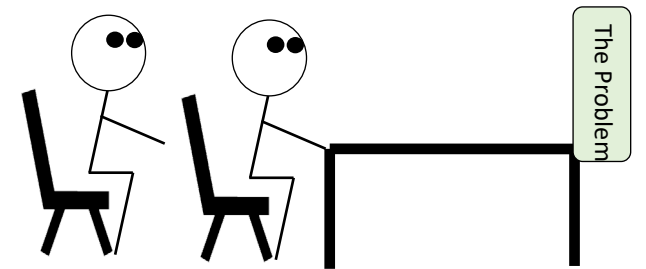
ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

Changing minds is complex:

- It implicates personal & group **identity**, life experiences, and well-being
- Persuasion often occurs over **time**, in stages.
 - **Minds don't change overnight, they change over time.**
- It requires **autonomy**:
 - **People need to make their own decisions**

Advice: Be present and open

- Pay full attention to the other
- Be in the moment
- Make the decision to be curious and to not judge.



Exercise: Sell!

Instructions for everyone

- Partner up
- Choose A and B
- A's task
- B has confidential instructions

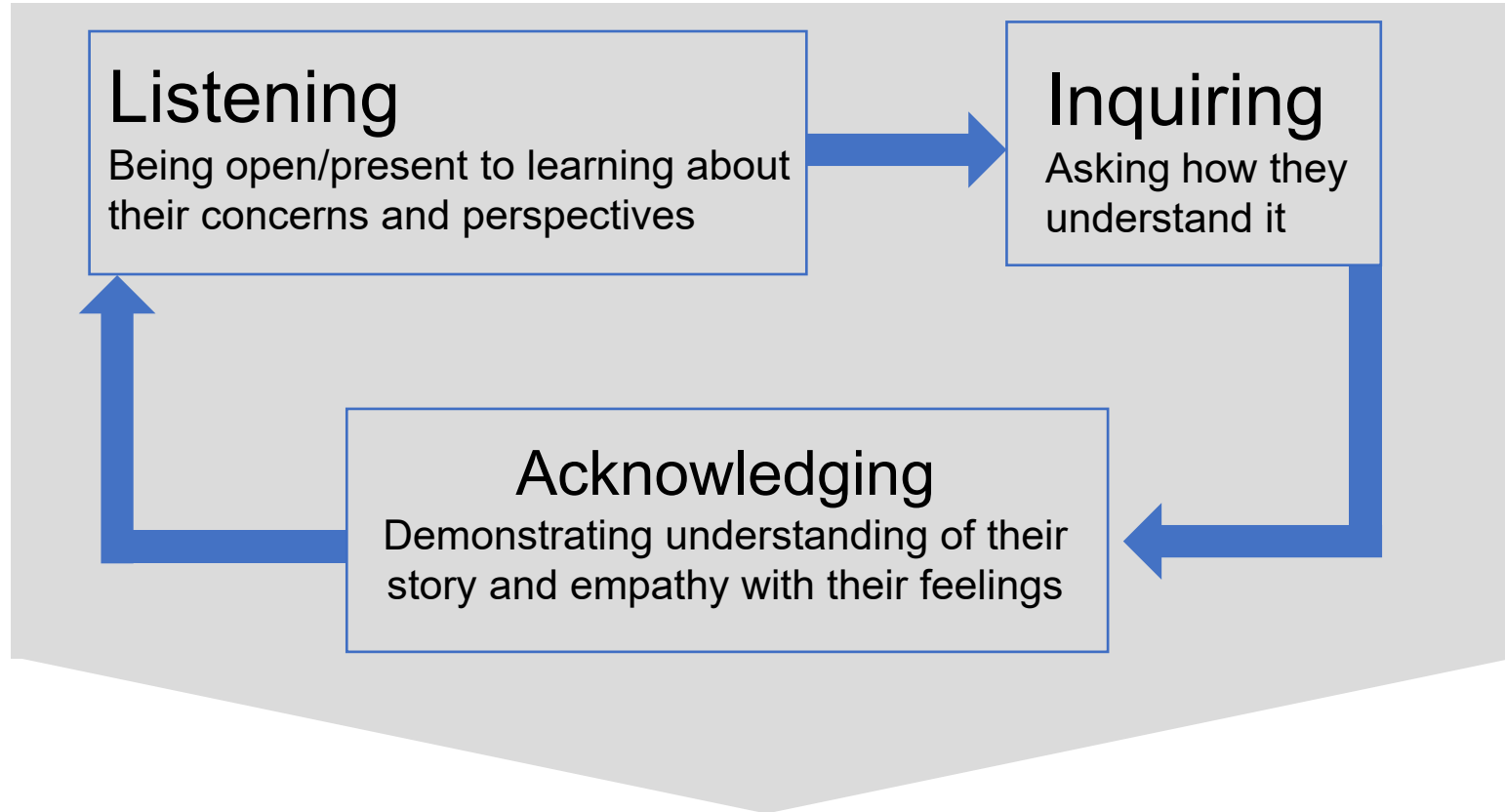
Confidential instructions for B:

COUNT (IN YOUR HEAD) THE NUMBER OF STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS THAT A MAKES. BE READY TO REPORT ON EACH.

Action Two

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

UNDERSTANDING SKILLS



ADVOCACY SKILLS

Advocate Skillfully

Ladder of Inference

HIS LADDER

This is a really good band.

By playing this song so well, these guys are really honoring the culture of the neighborhood.

The instruments they are playing sound great.

A band is playing a classic Middle Eastern song.

Conclusion

What is the conclusion we draw?

Lens

How do we interpret this data? What values, assumptions, beliefs do we draw upon?

Selected Data

What information are we selecting?

Data

What is the available data?

MY LADDER

This band stinks.

White musicians playing *that* music, especially in *this* neighborhood, feels like appropriation of our culture.

The musicians are all white.

A band is playing a classic Middle Eastern song.

Understanding Skills

Listening
Inquiring
Acknowledging

Skillful advocacy

Action Two: Examples of Inquiry

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

Exploratory

- “So what’s your view on this?”
- ”Can you say a little more on...”
- “What concerns you the most?”
- “What questions do you have?”
- “Is there any other information that would help you decide here?”
- “What *other* concerns might you have?”
- “What would be helpful for you to know as you make this decision?”

Impact

- “What benefit do you see to my proposal here? For you? For others?”
- “Do you know anyone who is affected by this issue, and what their experience was?”

Clarifying

- “Can you say a little bit more about that?”

Action Two: Examples of Acknowledgment

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

Don't just TELL:

- “I understand where you're coming from”
- “I understand what you're going through”

Rather, SHOW that you are hearing them. Summarize, then ask what you've missed or misunderstood

- “So, you feel that...”
- “It seems like you're saying that...”
- “I can imagine that...”

And then...

- “Is that right?”
- “Is that a fair way to say it?”

Action Two: Examples of Acknowledgment

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

Key tip: Use words they just used:



It forces you to take their perspective.



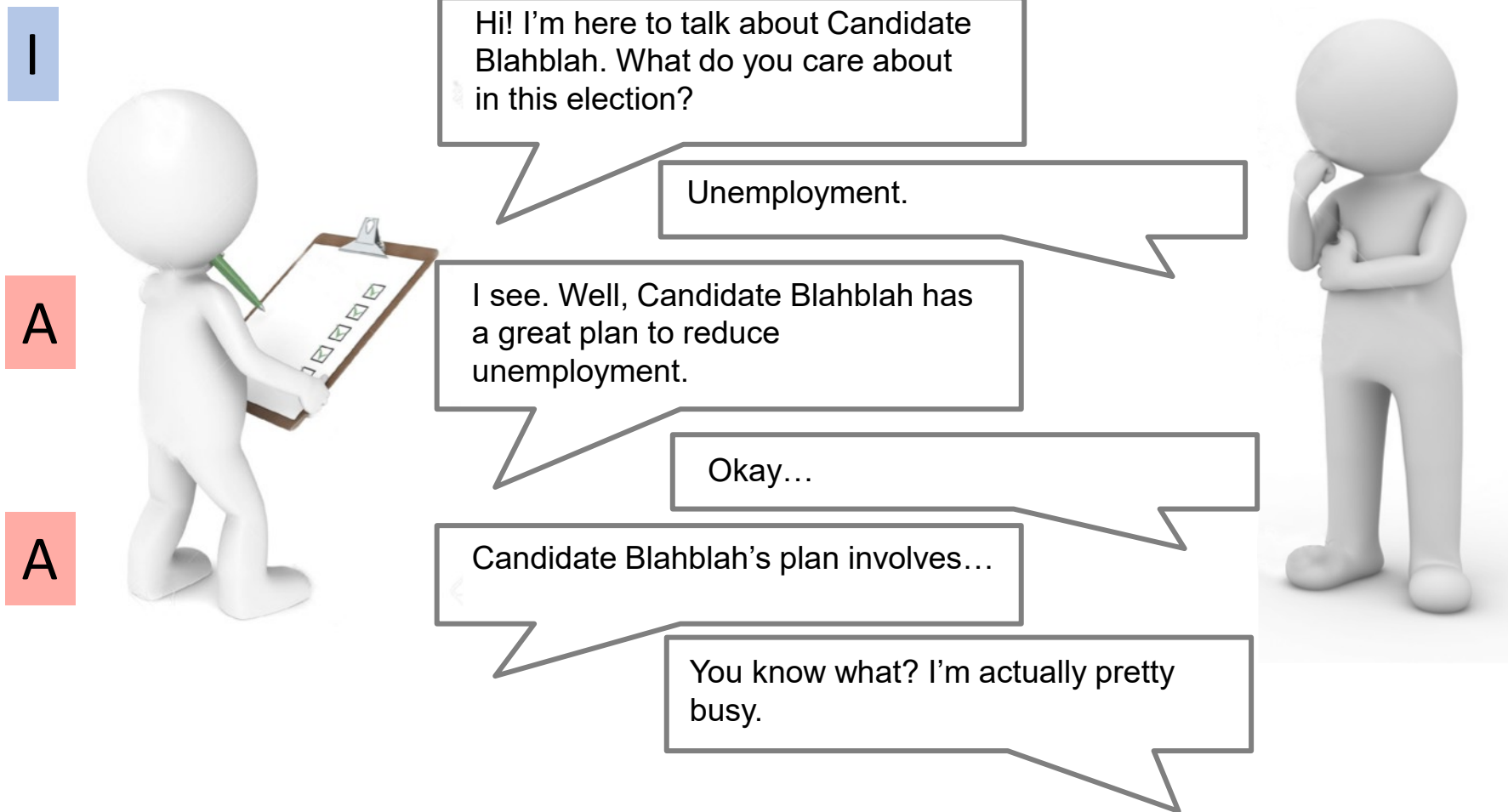
It shows you've heard them.



It gives them an opportunity to elaborate.

Action Two: Canvassing Example

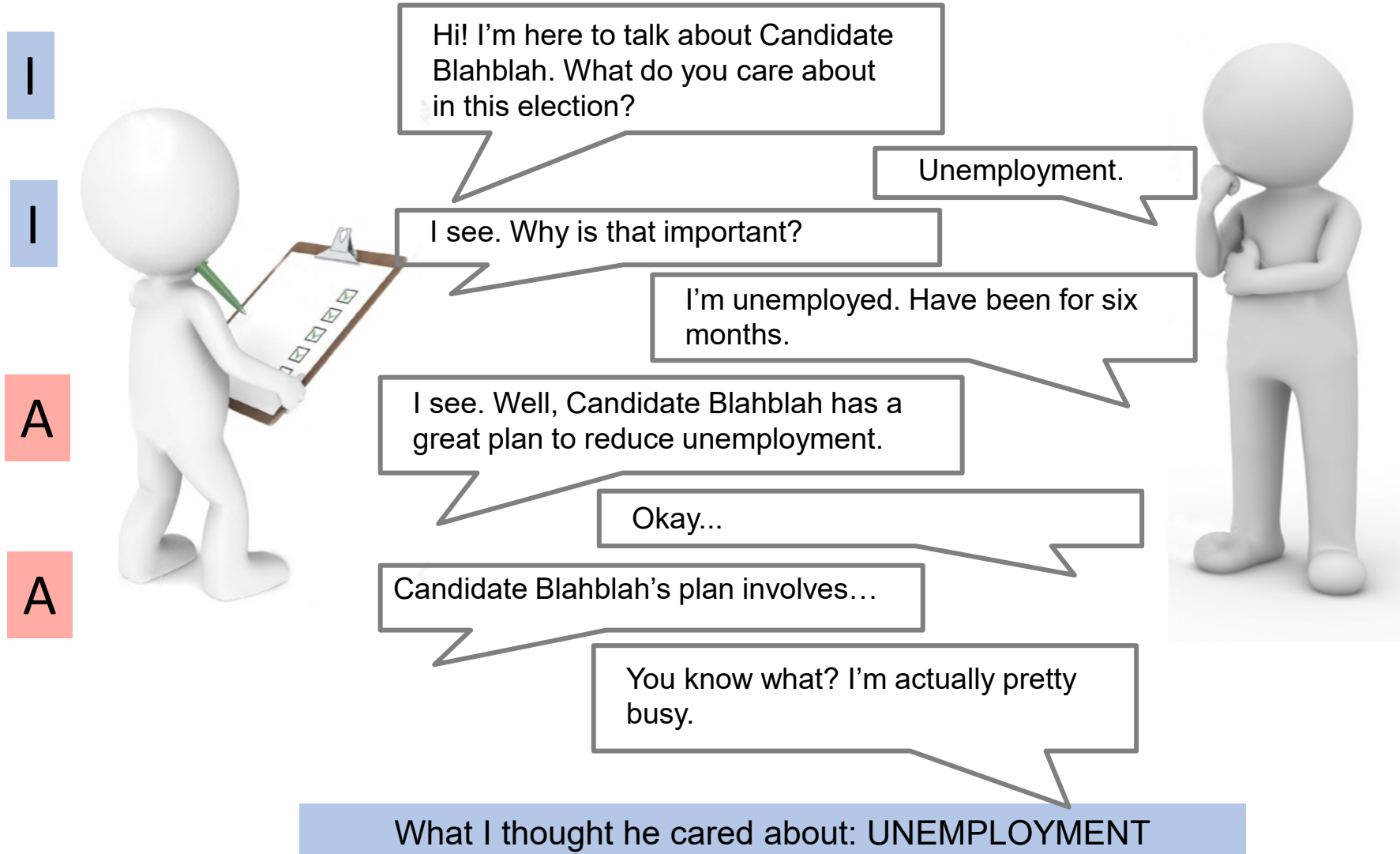
ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE



What I thought he cared about: UNEMPLOYMENT

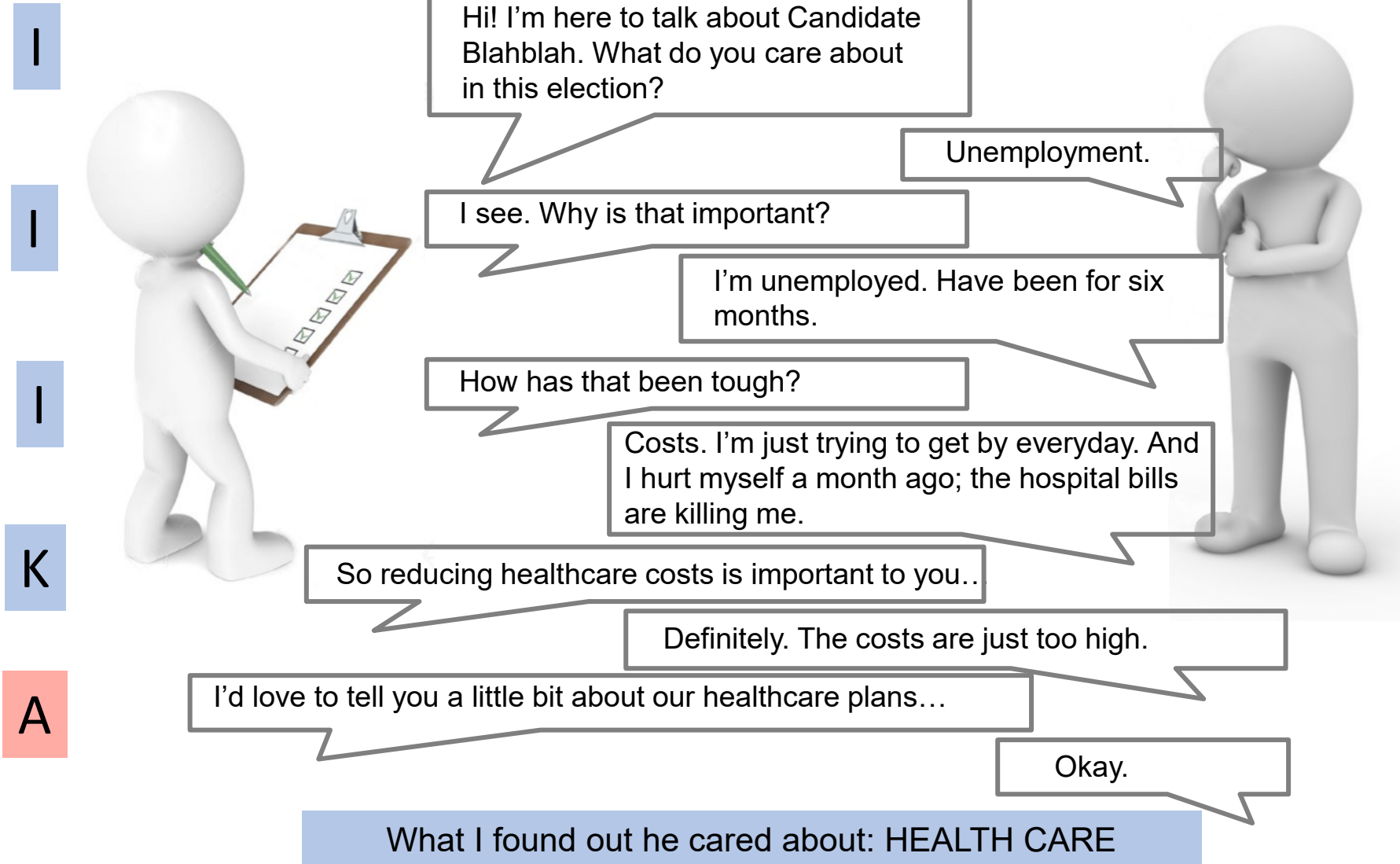
Action Two: Canvassing Example

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE



Action Two: Canvassing Example

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE



"I'm not taking it"

vertical

Horizontal: "is that the one concern? Are there other concerns?"

"what's your concern?"

**"I mean, it was called
Operation Warp Speed."**

"say more about that..."

**"We were told the fastest
time to develop a vaccine
was four years. This got
done in 9 months."**

"what's your concern?"

"Safety."

SAFETY

**"Folks in government keep
changing what they say we
should do."**

"say more about that..."

**"We shouldn't wear masks, we
should wear masks..."**

"So what worries you now?"

**"They have proven their
incompetence. How can I trust
them to oversee a vaccine?"**

**TRUST IN THE SYSTEM
AS A WHOLE**

**"Even if I decide to take it,
I don't know how I'd tell
my family."**

*"Are you saying no one
else in your family has
taken it?"*

**"Yes, that's right. My
father is really against it."**

"What's your concern?"

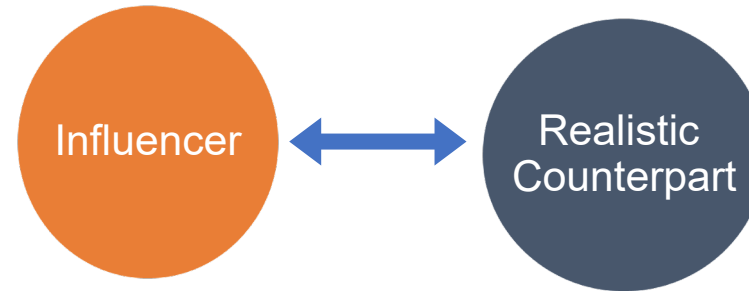
**"Explaining it to him,
and he'll be
disappointed in me."**

**STAYING LOYAL
TO FAMILY**

Exercise: Practice Understanding

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

- Right now: write down, in one sentence, a position you take on a topic that is important to you. “I believe strongly that _____”
- In breakout groups:



- Influencer tells Realistic Counterpart their opinion.
- Realistic Counterpart role-plays, arguing the exact opposite of Influencer.
- Influencer only practices the skills of understanding – listening, inquiry and acknowledgment.

Action Two

ACTION:

ADOPT MINDSET

UNDERSTAND

SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

“False” Inquiry

- “Don’t you think that...”
- “Isn’t it true that...”
- “You don’t *really* think that...”

“False” Acknowledgment

- “I hear you but...”
- “I totally understand what you’re saying, but...”
- “So you’re saying [inaccurate]”

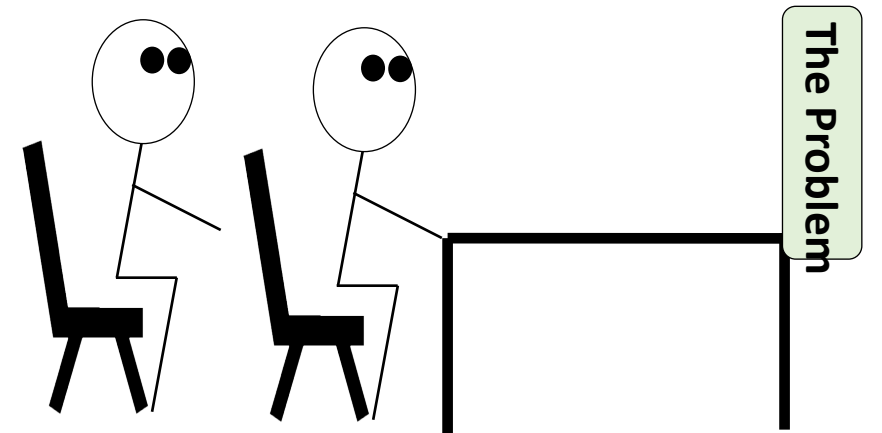
Action Three

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

1. Ask yourself: are they ready to hear my advocacy?

Before you share your story, ask yourself:

- Do they feel heard?
- Have they shown interest in solving this problem in general?
- Have they shown interest in helping you solve this problem?



Action Three

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

2. Connect to their concerns, use “testable advocacy”

- Share your reasoning:
 - “Here’s how I reached my conclusion...”
- Test Understanding
 - “What questions do you have about my view, and how I arrived at it?”
 - “Do you track my thinking?”
- Invite challenge
 - “Do you see different data? What have I missed?”
 - “Do you disagree with my conclusion?”

Action Three

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

“Nations with allies thrive, and those without allies decline — it’s that simple.”

“We must be willing to do more than to listen to our allies. **We must be willing to be persuaded by them.**”

- Sec. James Mattis



Action Three

ACTION: ADOPT MINDSET UNDERSTAND SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE

3. To be persuasive, show you can be persuaded

- **Key questions:**
 - If you don't expect to change your thinking at least a little, why do you expect your counterpart to change theirs?
 - Does the solution reflect their thinking as well? If it doesn't, will it last?
- **Research:** inverse relationship between "source certainty" and persuasiveness, or...
 - The more of an expert I am in a topic, and...
 - ...the less I express certainty on that topic, then...
 - ...the more effective I become at persuading people on that topic

Action Three: “To be persuasive...”

ACTION:	ADOPT MINDSET	UNDERSTAND	SKILLFULLY ADVOCATE
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The Blemishing Effect

- Small doses of mildly negative information may actually strengthen a consumer’s positive impression of a product or service
- Why? When consumers receive mildly negative information after already receiving positive information, the “blemish” highlights the positive information and makes it seem even more positive

“As long as the negative information about a product is minor, your pitch might be more persuasive when it calls attention to that negative, especially if consumers have already learned some positive things”



Influencing Checklist

Adopt Mindset

- Self awareness: Am I aware of what persuades me?
- Do I have the appropriate mindset? Am I present? Am I open to learning?

Understand

- Am I balancing the three skills of understanding before moving to skillful advocacy?
- Am I really understanding the problem before I'm trying to solve it?

Skillfully Advocate

- Are they ready to hear my advocacy?
- Am I connecting to their concerns?
- Am I demonstrating openness to being persuaded?

Suggested Reading

Some related books, in no particular order:

- *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, Robert B. Cialdini (New York: Collins Business Essentials, 1993)
- *The Catalyst: How to Change Anyone's Mind*, Jonah Berger (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020)
- *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*, Adam Grant (New York: Viking, 2021)
- *Influence is Your Superpower: The Science of Winning Hearts, Sparking Change, and Making Good Things Happen*, Zoe Chance (New York: Random House, 2022).
- *Leadership is Dead: How Influence is Reviving It*, Jeremie Kubicek (New York: Howard Books, 2011)
- *Masterful Coaching: Extraordinary Results by Impacting People in the Way They Think and Work Together*, Robert Hargrove (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995)
- *Descartes Error*, Antonio Damasio, (New York: Putnam, 1994)
- *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman, (New York: FSG, 2011)
- *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman (New York: Bantam Books, 1995)
- *How the Mind Works*, Steven Pinker, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997)

Thank You

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