



# Why We Disagree and How To Understand Effectively

# EXPLO Elevate Webinar Series

## June 12, 2020

# Why We're Here

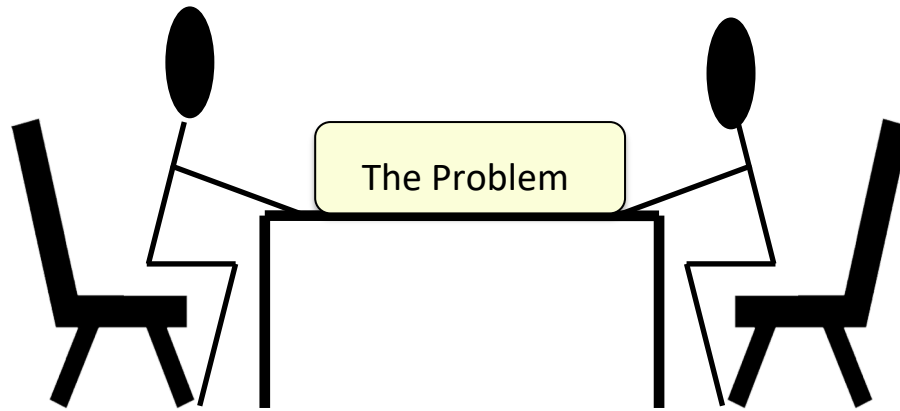
Provide a **framework** and guidance for how to engage difficult conversations by:

- **Understanding** how disagreements take shape;
- **Diagnosing** the sources of disagreement; and,
- **Creating** a learning conversation using three key modes of communication.



# What is our stance?

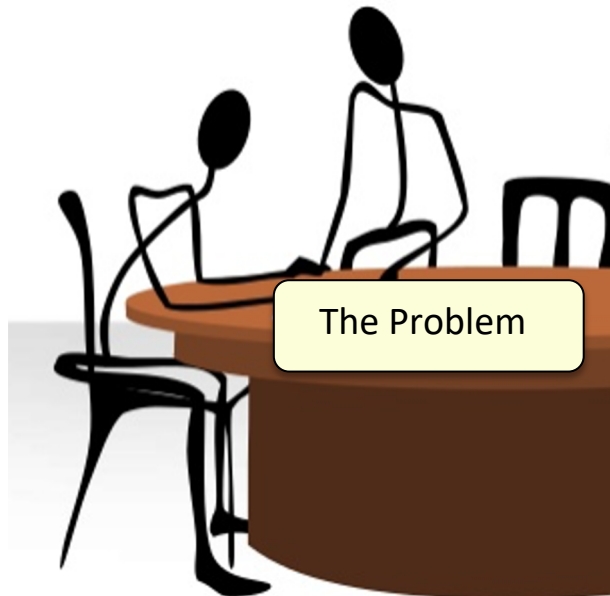
## COMPETITIVE



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

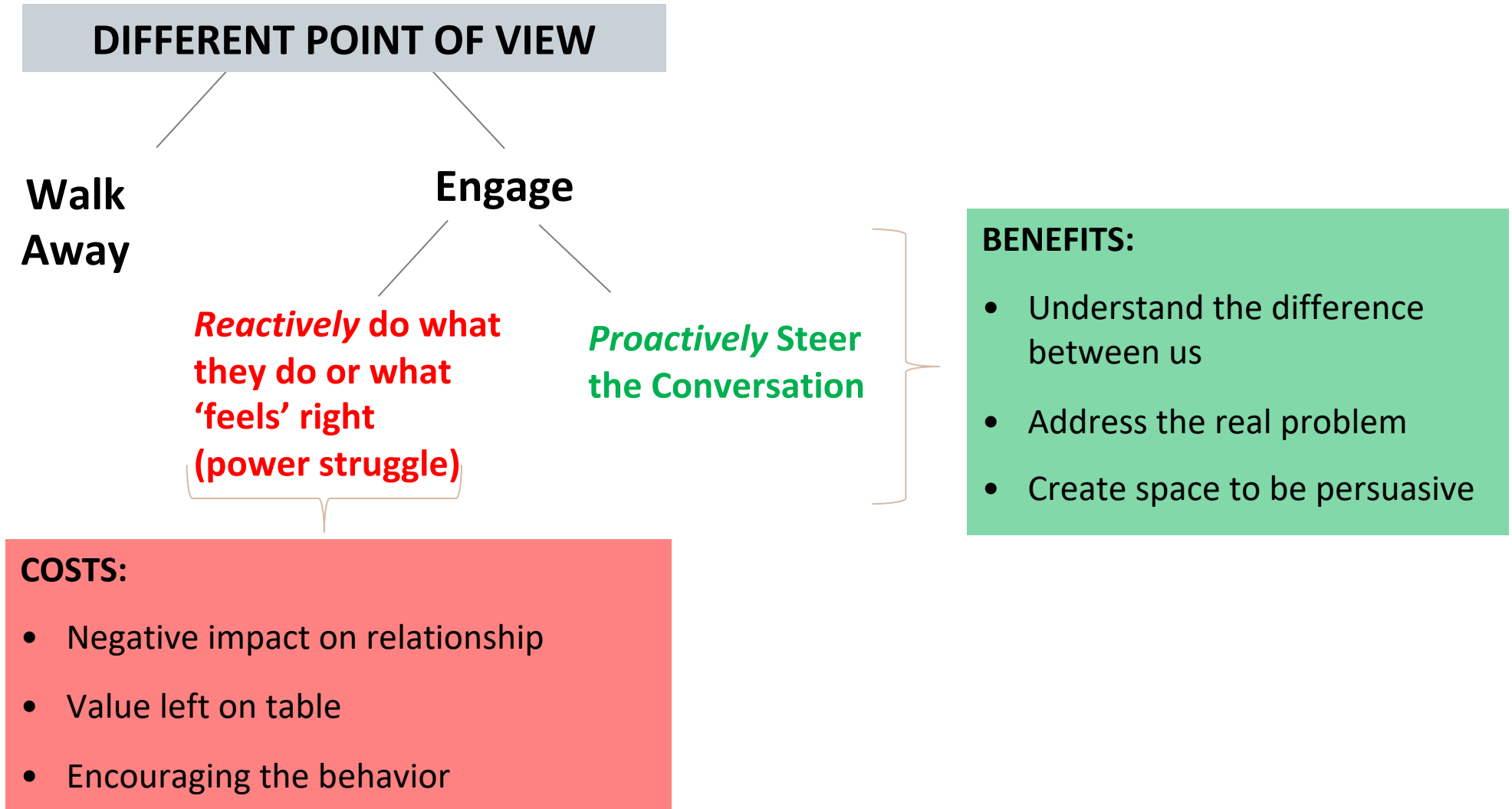
---

## COLLABORATIVE



- We can both win
- Relationship implications
- Maximizing potential

# We Have a Choice





## Exercise:

# Script a Recent Challenging Conversation

Think of a recent conversation that didn't go well because:

- The other person (or you!) became difficult to deal with;
- You felt you were misunderstood; or,
- You weren't able to get your point across

Write the script of the conversation as you remember it.

## Exercise: Script a Recent Challenging Conversation

What we said

They said:

I said:

They said:

I said:

They said:

I said:

They said:

I said:

## Exercise:

# Script a Recent Challenging Conversation

What we said

**They said:** I can't believe that we are expected to work during the summer after such a stressful spring.

**I said:** This is an unprecedented situation. We need all hands on deck to get ready for the school year.

**They said:** I need this summer break to recuperate so I can be ready to teach again in the fall.

**I said:** We're all working under constraints we didn't anticipate. We need to be team players.

**They said:** Do you think this is realistic? Teachers are going to burn out!

**I said:** We are looking at requiring *some* effort over the summer. Whether we go virtual or hold classes in person, we'll need to adjust during the summer to be ready for the school year.

**They said:** I just don't know if I'll be able to do that unless there's additional compensation.

**I said:** Shutting down the school was expensive. We may not have additional funds to offer.

# Three Key Modes of Verbal Communication

## Inquiry

Asking how they understand it

**Acknowledgment**  
Demonstrating understanding of their  
story and empathy with their feelings

## Advocacy

Explaining how you understand it

# Purposes

## ADVOCACY

**Promote a perspective**

**Convince**

**Provide evidence / “facts”**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Demonstrate Understanding**

**Check Understanding**

**Validate other’s perspective**

## INQUIRY

**Understand their  
experiences, priorities,  
concerns**

**Learn**

**Dig deeper into one point of  
view**

**Connect to related concerns**

## Score Your Case

- Write an 'A' next to every statement
- Write an 'I' next to every question
- Write a 'K' next to every acknowledgement
- Re-evaluate your "I"s — are they genuine inquiries or disguised advocacy (i.e., 'Red Zone Inquiry')?

# Script a Recent Challenging Conversation

What we said

**A** They said: I can't believe that we are expected to work during the summer after such a stressful spring.

**A** I said: This is an unprecedented situation. We need all hands on deck to get ready for the school year.

**A** They said: I need this summer break to recuperate so I can be ready to teach again in the fall.

**A** I said: We're all working under constraints we didn't anticipate. We need to be team players.

**RZI** They said: Do you think this is realistic? Teachers are going to burn out!

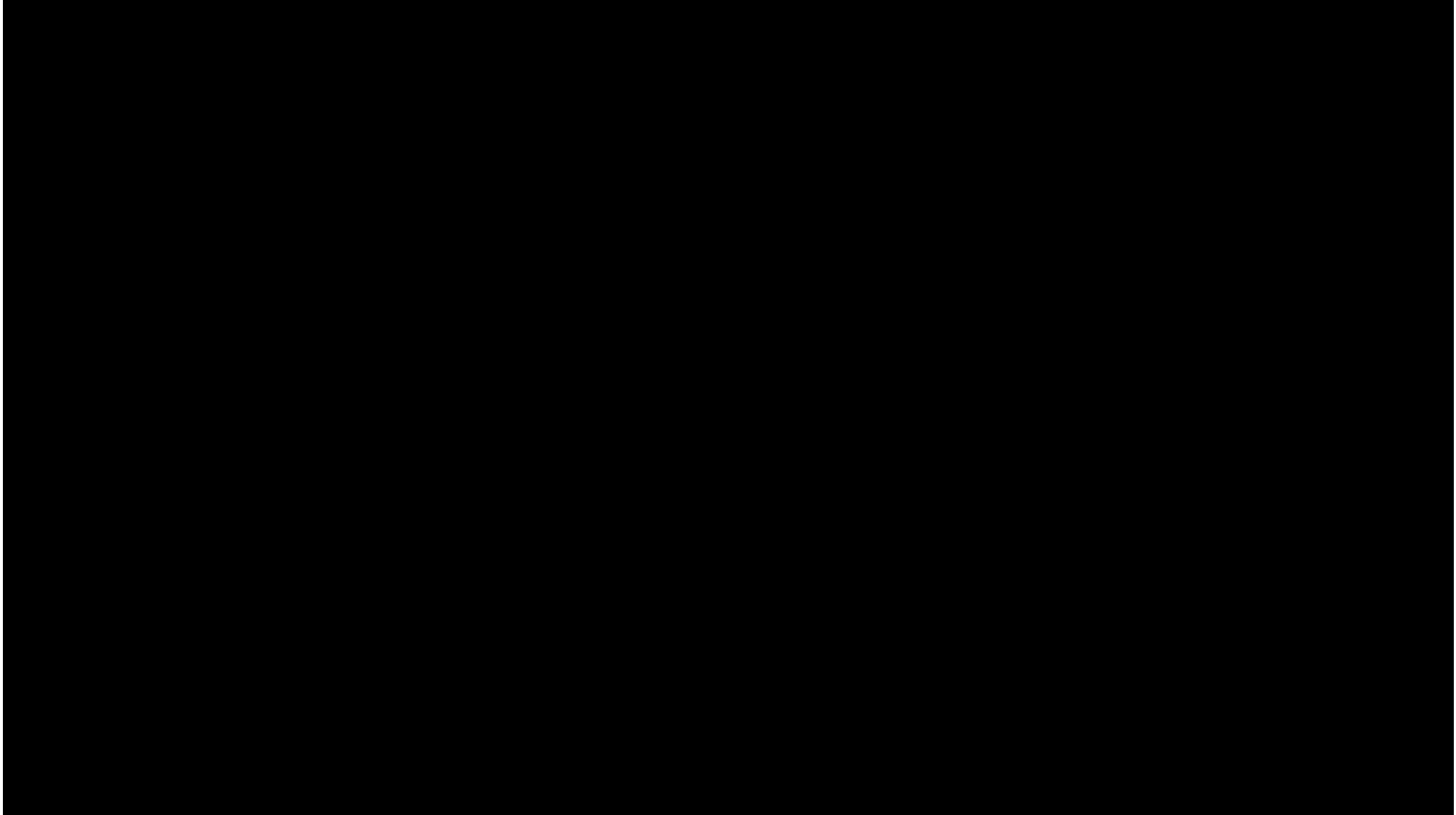
**A** I said: We are looking at requiring some effort over the summer. Whether we go virtual or hold classes in person, we'll need to adjust during the summer to be ready for the school year.

**A** They said: I just don't know if I'll be able to do that unless there's additional compensation.

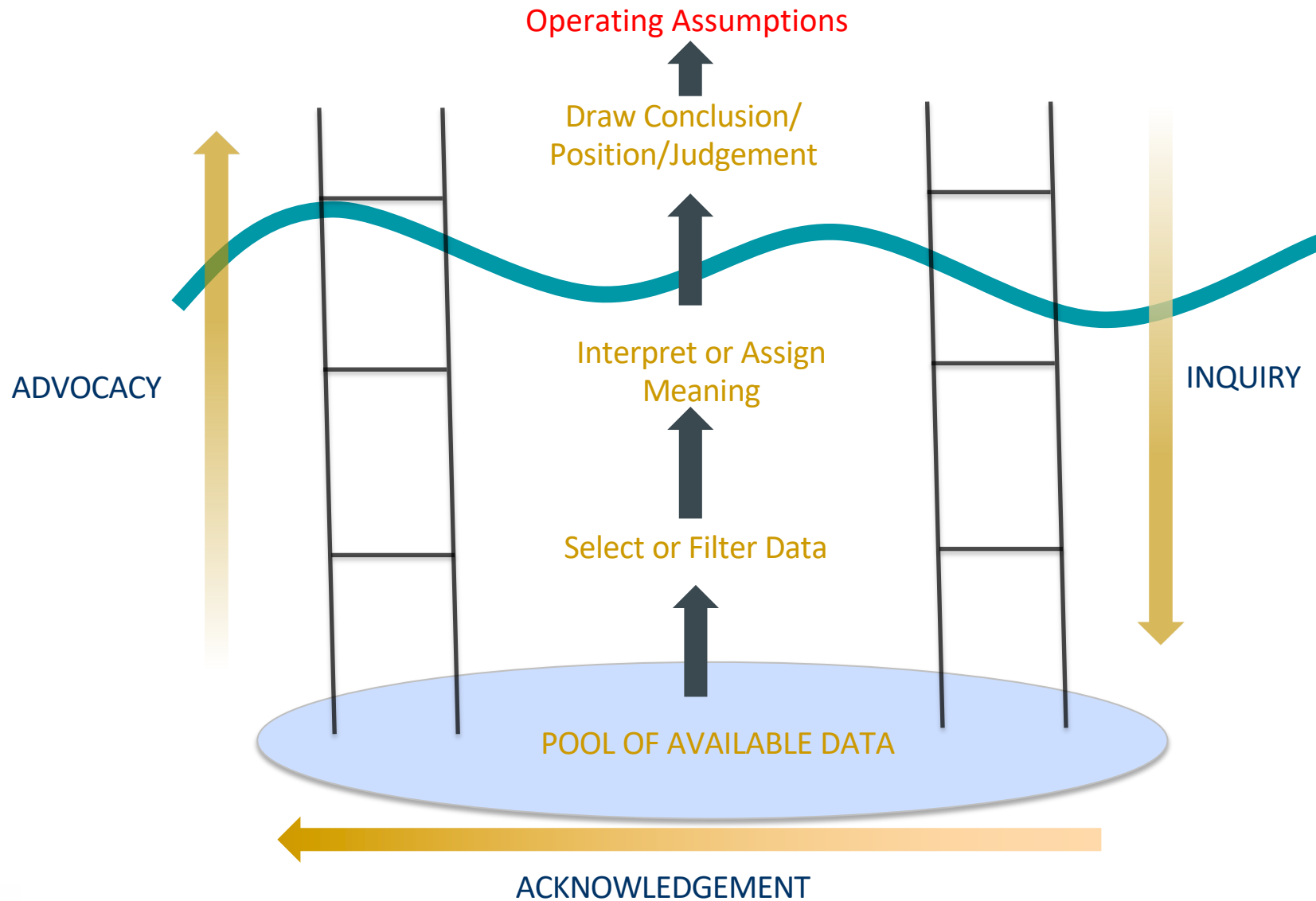
**A** I said: Shutting down the school was expensive. We may not have additional funds to offer.



# Ladder of Inference: Works at the Speed of Thought



# Key Tool: The Ladder of Inference



# Ladder: Different Filters, Different Lenses, Different Conclusions

## School Leader's LADDER

The Board is being unhelpful by micromanaging.

By interfering in the operations decisions, the Board is making our lives more complicated.

The Board doesn't trust us to make operational decisions.

School leaders are best positioned to confront crisis because of their intimate knowledge of operations.

The pandemic has disrupted regular school operations.

## Conclusion

**What is the conclusion we draw?**

## Lens

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

## Filters

**What information do we select?**

## Data

**What data is available?**

## Board Member's LADDER

We are exercising leadership by taking over key decisions in challenging times.

This is a stressful time, with new pressures for our teachers and school leaders.

We're not sure they are seeing the full picture. We are trying to be helpful.

Challenging times require hands-on leadership by the Board.

The pandemic has disrupted regular school operations.

# Good Practices - Modes of Verbal Communication

## ADVOCACY

Invite discussion of your thinking

Don't assume what is persuasive to you will be persuasive to them

Be open to being persuaded in order to be more persuasive

Don't make the conversation a competition – try to build rapport as you try to persuade

Probe complexity

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Beware of reactivity

Don't draw conclusions too quickly

Focus on understanding

## INQUIRY

Cultivate your curiosity about them

Practice strategic listening

Earn the right to inquire

Beware of “false” inquiry

# Good Practices - General Verbal Communication

## COLLABORATIVE STANCE

Separate the people from the problem

Get on the same side of the problem

## ENGAGE PROACTIVELY

Paraphrase to check understanding

Ask for correction to your understanding

Validate the difficulty or uncertainty

## NON-LINEAR, ITERATIVE

Mix Inquiry, Acknowledgement, and Advocacy as you explore data, interpretations, and conclusions

Engage across several conversations over time

Anticipate that together you may create a 3rd ladder of mutual understanding

# Do-Over: A More Skillful Conversation

**K** They said: I can't believe that we are expected to work during the summer after such a stressful spring.

**K/I** I said: You and your colleagues were under a lot of pressure, and you all performed extremely well. What about working this summer causes you concern?

**A** They said: I need this summer break to recuperate so I can be ready to teach again in the fall.

**I** I said: I understand. What sorts of things do you like to do to recuperate after a challenging semester?

**A** They said: Teachers here are into outdoor activities during the summer such as hiking and camping.

**I** I said: Do you think there might be a way to combine the two activities, such as a faculty retreat in the mountains where we could mix work with some hiking and camping?

**A** They said: Maybe, but we also like to spend time with our families in the summer. There's also the issue of childcare costs I hadn't planned for...

**A/I** I said: Perhaps, with proper COVID testing, there is a way to invite family members to join us on the retreat. Would you be willing to help design the retreat agenda?

# Show that we can be persuaded

*The New York Times*

Sept. 20, 2017

***Mattis Shows How to Split With Trump Without Provoking Him***

“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.**”





# Thank You!

Please contact us at:

Jayne Nucete      [jnucete@bridgewaygroup.org](mailto:jnucete@bridgewaygroup.org)

Rob Rosen      [rrosen@bridgewaygroup.org](mailto:rrosen@bridgewaygroup.org)