

Investing in Inclusion



**Difficult
Dialogues
Consulting**

**So, my dear brothers and sisters, get this straight.
Every person should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.**

James 1:19, New Testament for Everyone

Diversity and organizational effectiveness



- The state of the science in research on team diversity and performance supports the conclusion that team diversity can be a positive influence on knowledge work performance provided two conditions are met: disruptive interpersonal tensions are prevented and members are motivated and able to engage in team information elaboration (van Knippenberg and van Ginkel, 2021, p. 4)
- In summary, two distinct processes – intergroup bias and information elaboration – resulting from differences between team members can explain the differential effects of diversity on team performance (Homan, et al, 2020, p. 3)

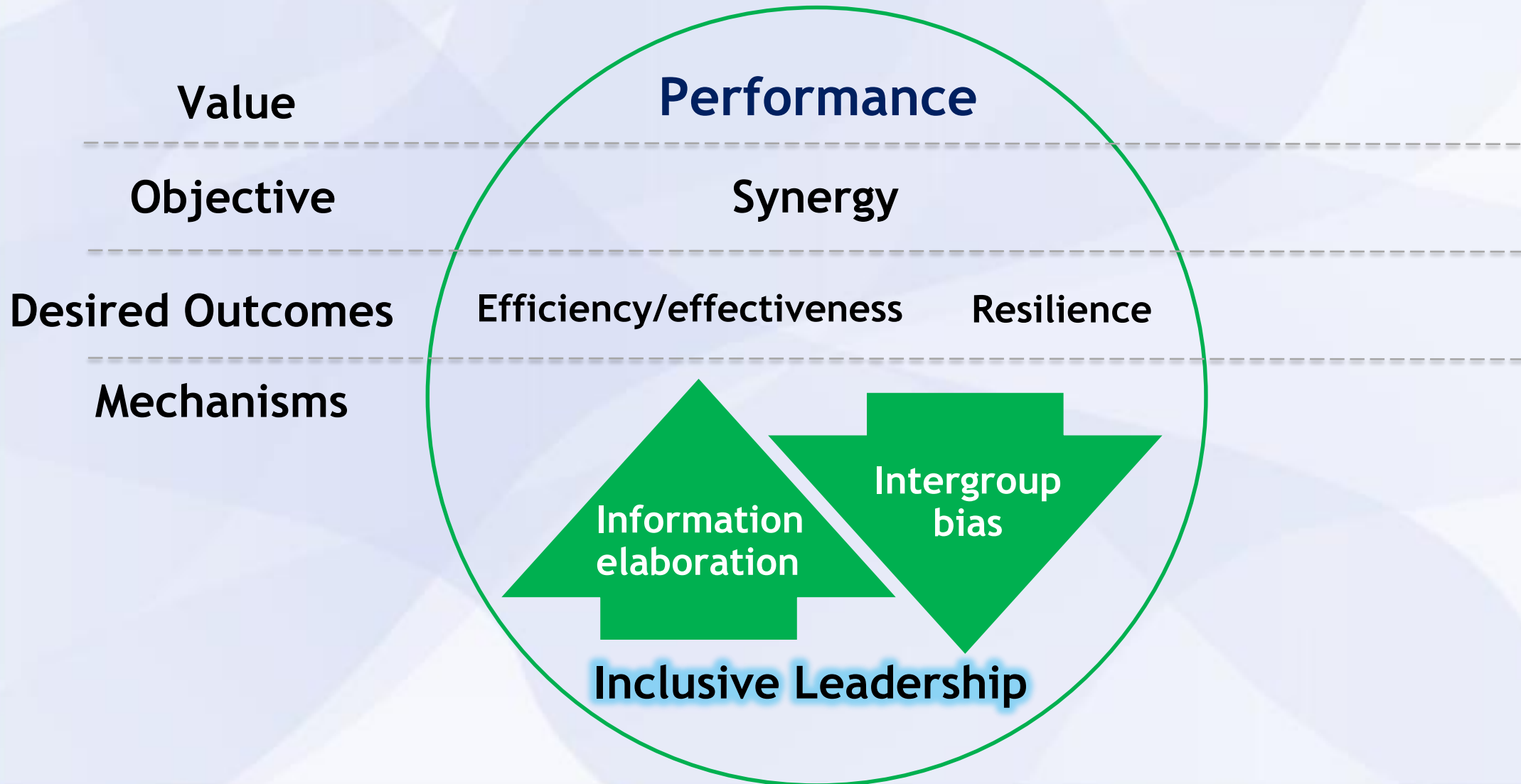
Organizational diversity paradigms



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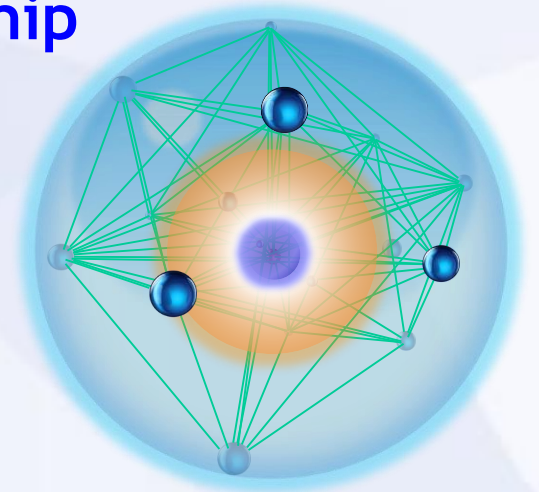
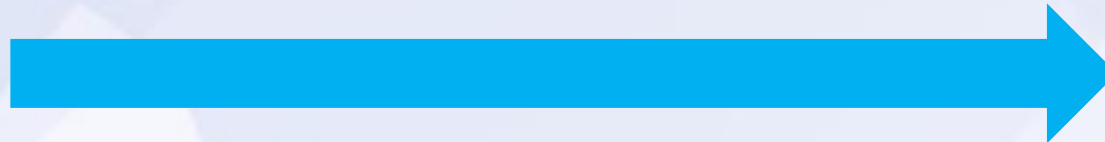
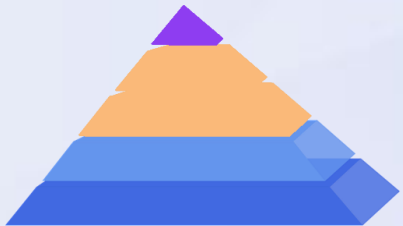




Leadership in the Information Age isn't about giving commands
from the pinnacle of a pyramid ...

... it's about building a *culture of collaboration* that supports
maximum flexibility/adaptability

In other words, it's about Inclusive Leadership





An inconvenient truth

**Diversity initiatives get the right people into the organization,
but authentic *inclusion* is what keeps them there**

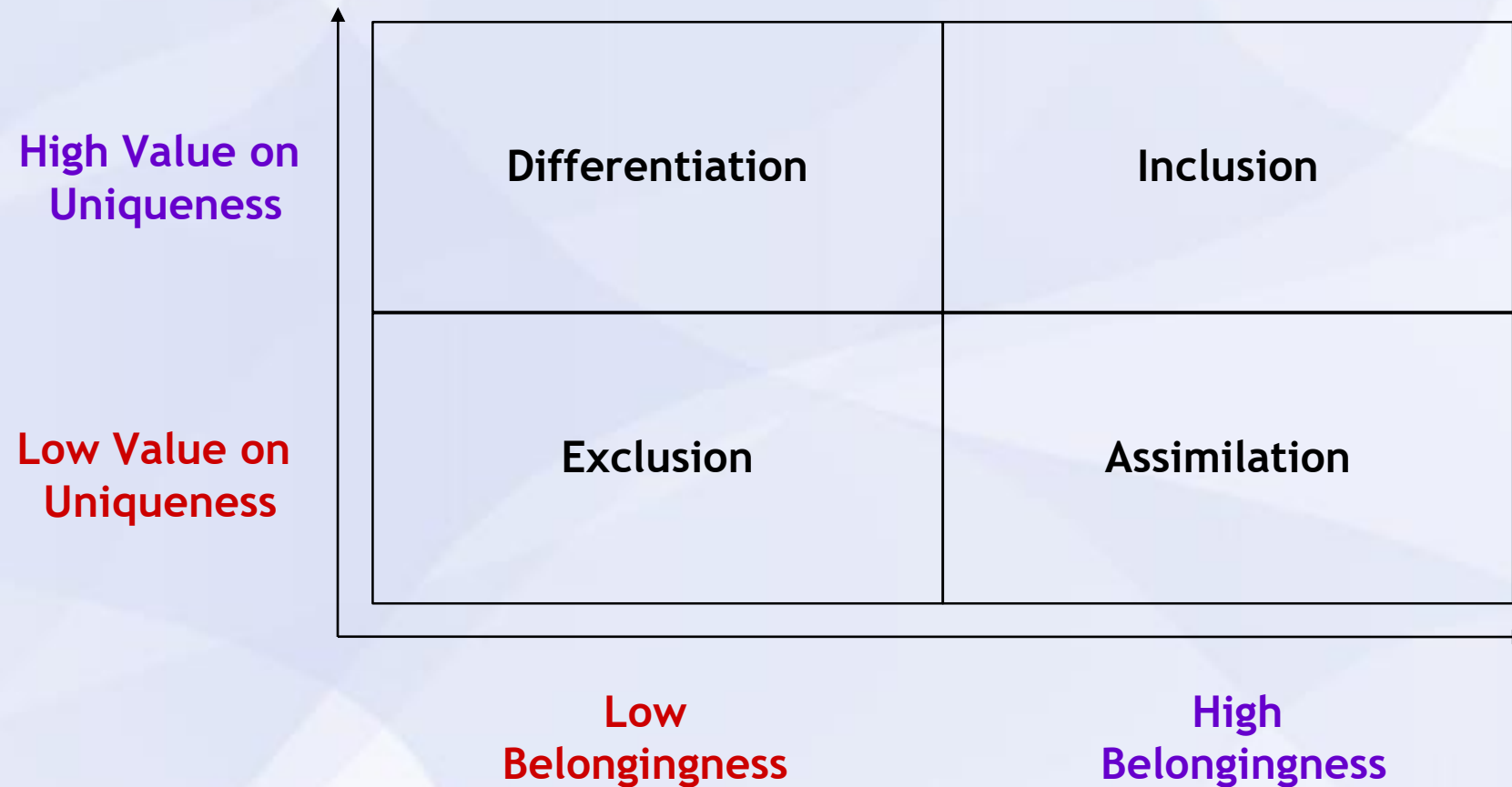
Diversity is intercultural interaction;



Inclusion is intercultural *effectiveness*.



Interaction environments



Adapted from Shore, L., et al, (2011). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1262-1289.

And yet another inconvenient truth:



Having a diverse workforce is no guarantee that the work environment is inclusive and engaged. **Companies hire for diversity and manage for similarity.** We hire people for their difference and then teach them directly and indirectly what they have to do to fit in to the corporate culture.

Dr. Helen Turnbull, *The Illusion of Inclusion:
Global Inclusion, Unconscious Bias and the Bottom Line*, 2016



How do you know if you're *really* included in a group?





People who are authentically included in a group are
able to *influence each other* ...

... this *mutual influence* is what drives the
mutual transformation that yields *inclusion*.

Control and influence are NOT the same thing



Control

- Power is unequally distributed
- Produces uniformity
- *Avoids conflict*
- *Limited innovation*
- ***NO INCLUSION***

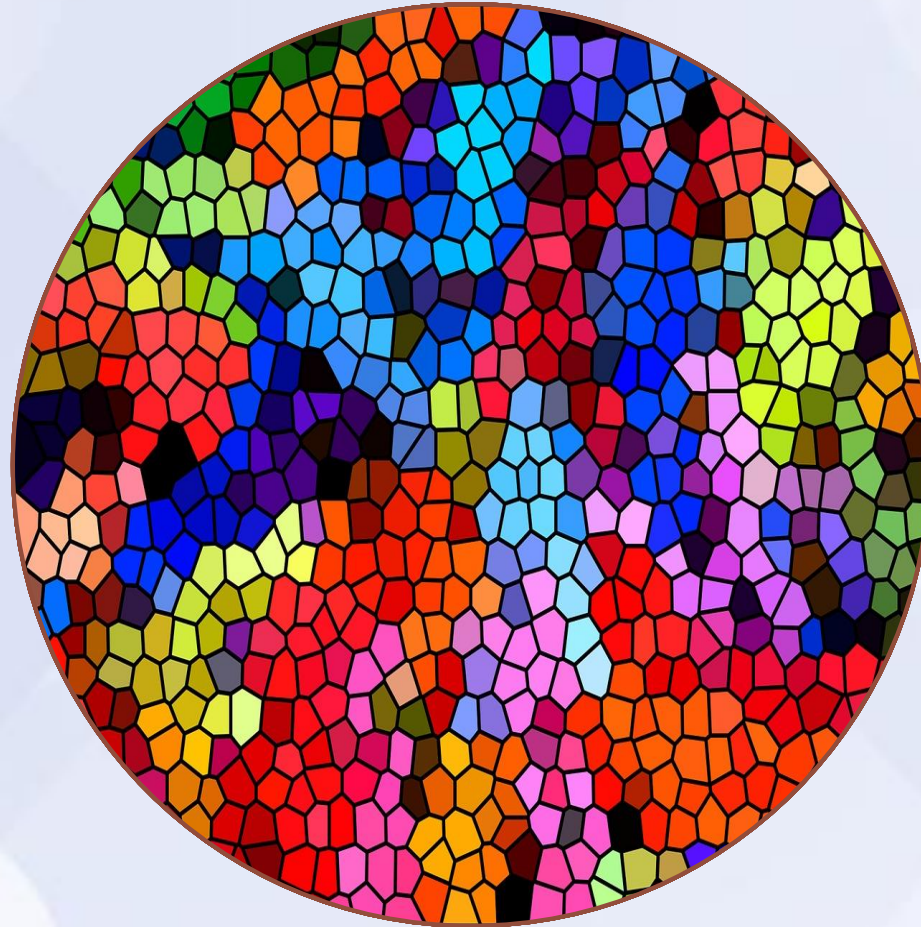
Influence

- Power is equally distributed
- Produces unity
- *Powers constructive conflict*
- *Unlimited innovation*
- ***AUTHENTIC INCLUSION***



Authentic inclusion

Each of us honored
for our uniqueness

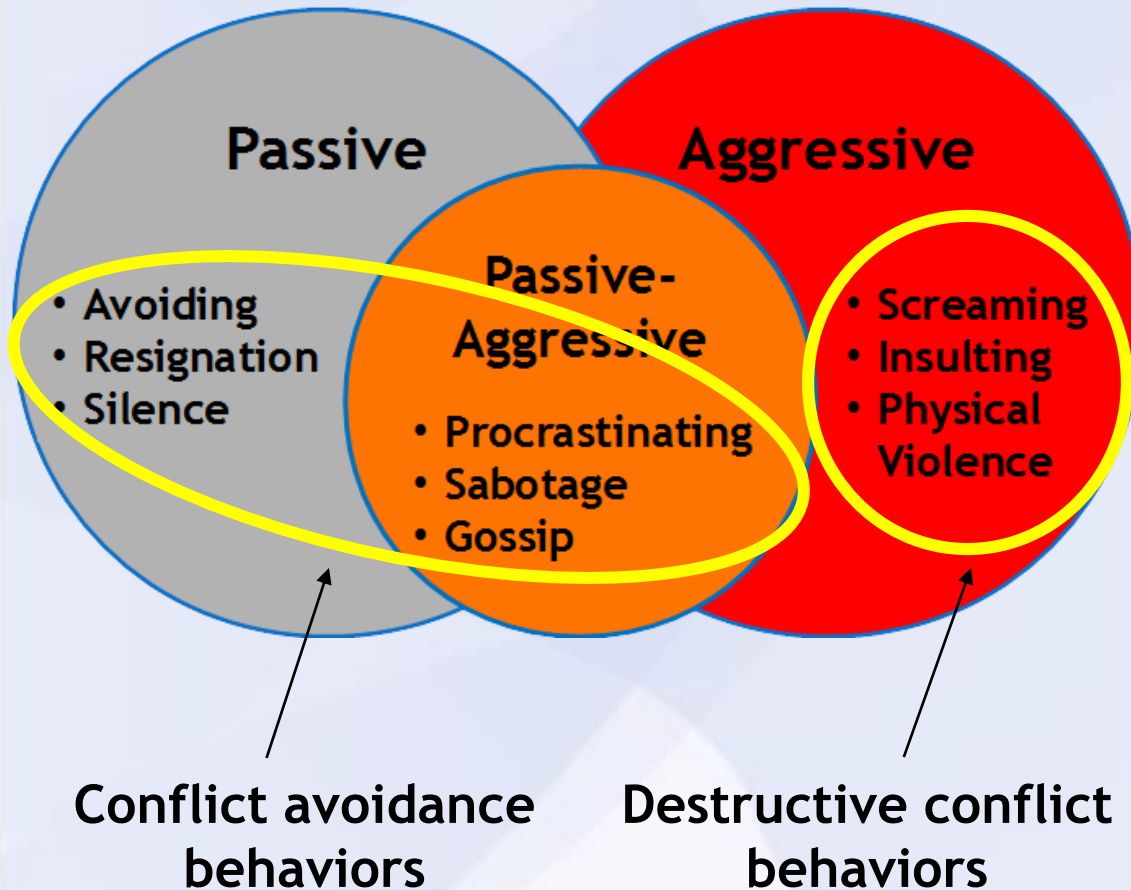


Each of us fully
belonging

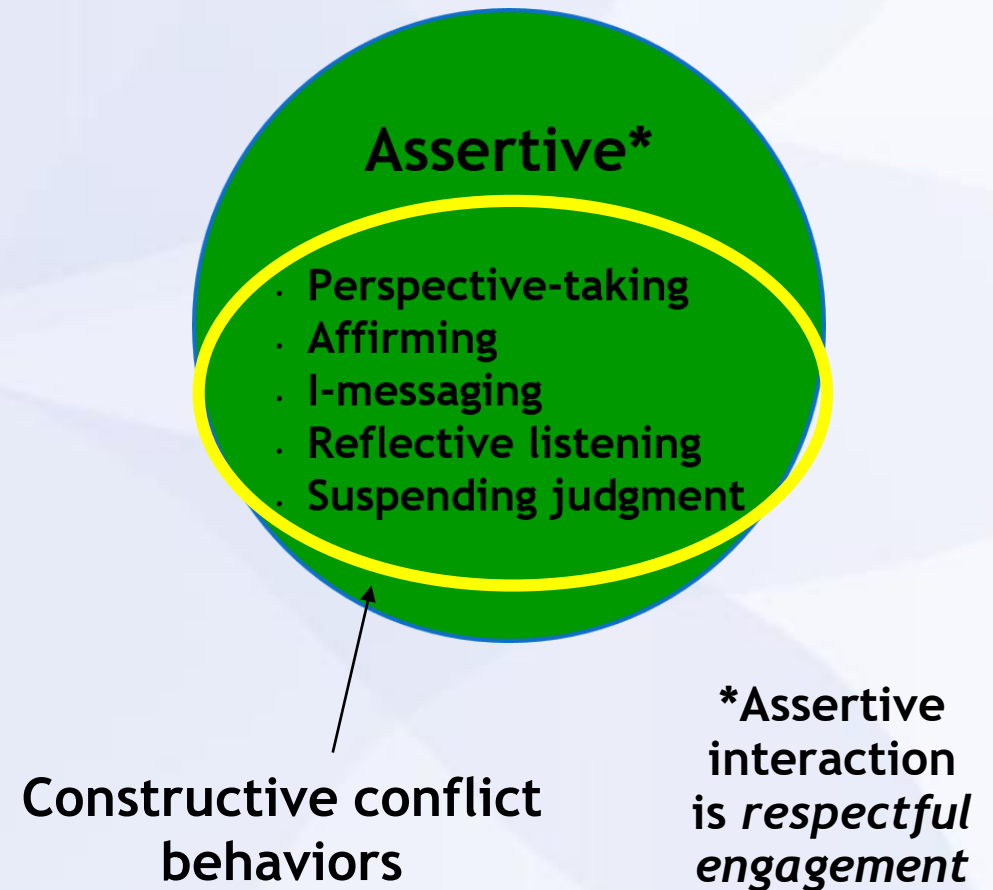
Each of us growing (transforming) as a result of our interactions



Conflict **In**competence



Conflict **Co**mpetence





Conflict Competence

- **Knowledge:** A basic understanding of cross-cultural awareness (without stereotyping), ethnocentrism, and cultural self-awareness
- **Skills:** Perspective-taking, affirming, I-messaging, reflective listening, suspending judgment (PAIRS)
- **Attitudes:** Compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience



During your difficult dialogue, do you remember hearing or speaking anything like the following phrases?

- “Okay, I think I see how that might appear to you”
- “You make a really good point”
- “When that happens, I feel ...”
- “So what I thought I heard you say was ...”
- “Even though I don’t understand that, I accept it”

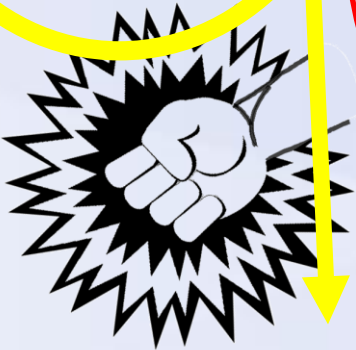


Constructive conflict
behaviors



How We “Handle” Our Differences

If we cannot suspend judgment, we are condemned to live in this realm of interpersonal interaction



Debate

Dialogue

Negotiation



DOMINATION

COMPROMISE

INTEGRATION

Conversion

Competition

Coordination

Cooperation

Collaboration

Co-Creation



Removing our cultural lenses

It is not wrong to say that culture “distorts” a member’s perception of reality ... after all, the Cartesian principle is that *the path to the truth leads through voluntary cultural exile*.

(Source: Tipurić, D, Organisational Culture, Leadership Language and Integration of the Collective, p. 188, In *The Enactment of Strategic Leadership*, 2022, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham., https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-03799-3_7)



Perspective-taking is all about staying focused on a situation and NOT on the individuals involved in it



Perspective-taking

- It's NOT about what you would do/think if you were “in their shoes”!
- It's about what the situation looks like *through their eyes!*
- In order to stay focused on the situation itself, it's *critically important* to move beyond our own personal perspective on it
- Disciplined perspective-taking can help avoid the “instant dismissal” problem that strangles our efforts to innovate
- This is why the “Circle of Perspectives” is such a useful tool; it helps us “pull our heads out of our own perspectives” and see things from others' points of view *without judgment*



How to become an expert perspective-taker

- “Suspend, don’t defend”
- When you encounter things that don’t fit into your mental model of reality, resist the urge to defend your point of view
- Instead, set your own perspective aside (suspend judgment; i.e., “take off your cultural lenses”) until you’ve listened deeply and can paraphrase in a way that shows that you actually understand what you’ve encountered; use a Circle of Perspectives whenever the situation allows it
- You don’t need to agree with a different perspective - but you do need to understand it before you either agree or disagree!



Affirmations are *positive you-messages*; they draw attention to another person's strengths

If you train yourself to use *you-messages exclusively* for affirmations, you won't get caught in the *unintentional personal attack trap*



Example dialogue affirmations

- You have a lot of insight into ...
- You did a great job of describing ...
- Your point about _____ was fascinating ...
- Your perspective is really interesting and well thought-out ...
- You are an excellent listener ...



The purpose of I-messaging

Eliminate *you-bombs*



Focus on the action, not the actor

It's never about *who they are ...*

It's always about *what happened (or is happening)*



Recommended I-Message format

- Whenever _____ (describe the action; DON'T use the word “you”!) ...
- I feel _____ (name the feeling) ...
- because _____ (share the “why”)

The “because statement” is the most important part of the message ... it gives the speaker an opportunity to de-escalate the situation AND build strong relational connections that promote *psychological safety*



The bottom line:

- Use you-messages exclusively for affirmations
- Focus I-messages on the action, not the actor
- Always include a “because” statement in an I-message
- It’s not an exact science, but you CAN master it

Always remember:

I-messages are never about *who they are ...*

They’re always about *what happened (or is happening)*



Listen with the intent to paraphrase

- Don't evaluate
- Don't defend your point of view
- Don't stop listening to start silently crafting a witty reply
- Instead, train yourself to say “Okay, what I thought I heard you say was ...”



Attitudes

- Compassion: I care
- Kindness: I act
- Humility: I learn
- Gentleness: I am careful (I do no harm)
- Patience: I wait

Assertive

- Perspective-taking
- Affirming
- I-messaging
- Reflective listening
- Suspending judgment



Difficult Dialogues Consulting

Our Goal:

To equip people to *welcome difference and put it to work* in productive difficult dialogues that *generate value* in relationships and endeavors

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