

Campaign Academy: Coaching Skills to Develop Campaign Leaders Day 1

March 2026





Campaign Academy

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Honoring This Space

We begin by acknowledging that through a history of colonization and brutality, we are currently on the traditional lands stewarded by generations of indigenous people.

Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations are today the five main tribes in Oklahoma who maintain significant cultural and political presence today, with distinct governments and rich heritage. We acknowledge that the 39 sovereign Native Nations inhabiting what is now Oklahoma were forcibly relocated from all four corners of the North American continent. We acknowledge this territory once served as a hunting ground, trade exchange point, and migration route for the Apache, Comanche, Kiowa and Osage nations.

We honor these indigenous people, all elders, past, present, and emerging. We are called to learn and share these learnings about this tribal history, culture, and contributions that have been suppressed in the telling of the story of what we now call the United States of America.

Training Outcomes. *Participants will:*

- ☐ Explore how coaching is a leadership development practice that expands the capacity of leaders to build organizing power and impactful campaigns.
- ☐ Develop core coaching skills including asking powerful questions, learning to self-manage and centering the agenda of those being coached.
- ☐ Learn how to coach common challenges in leadership, centering equity and shifting from a service to organizing model of unionism.
- ☐ Learn how to assess affiliate readiness and capacity to run effective campaigns, and how to coach a leader to define goals and priorities for growing the strength of their local union.
- ☐ Learn about awareness-based systems thinking as a coaching model for deeper growth.

OVERALL SCHEDULE



Meeting Starts: 8:30am Daily

Meeting Closes:

Friday/ Saturday

Start 8:30am

Mid-Morning Break

15 minutes

Lunch 12pm-1pm

Mid-Afternoon Break:

15 minutes

Meeting End 4:30pm

Network: 4:30-5pm

Dinner: On your own

Sunday

Start 8:30am

Break: 10:15 am-
10:30am

End 1pm

Lunch: Box lunches to
go

Documents you will need today

- › Make sure you can access the Course
- › Make sure you have downloaded all files.
- › Pre Academy Assignments and the Participant Handout Module
- › Community Agreements
- › Be able to access your personal local-assessment.



Campaign
Academy:
Coaching and
Leading Winning
Campaigns

Participant
Handouts

The Campaign Lab is a system of Affiliate Staff, Members, and Leaders networked to build power to win on issues that matter most by building a culture for organizing. A culture for organizing and continually campaigning includes a shared analysis of how to win, issue identification, goal setting, strategic actions, distributed leadership, and data that informs progress. This NEA Center for Organizing training is designed to build skills around coaching all aspects of a campaign cycle.

Community Agreements

Using Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge

Listening for Understanding

Being Gracious

Staying Engaged

Being Open and Suspend Judgment

Saying “I”- tell your truth

Lean into Discomfort

Reaching Empathy

Expecting Non-Resolution and Non-Closure

Adapted from “Embracing equity and inclusion”, Annie E. Casey Foundation

Time	Content
8:30-9am	Opening, Agenda, Community Agreements
9-10:30am	Systems Thinking & Puzzle Activity
10:30-10:45am	Break
10:45-11:15am	Coaching Overview
11:15am-12pm	Coaching Towards Alignment
12-1pm	Lunch
1-1:40pm	Coaching Towards Alignment Activity
1:40-2:10pm	Self-Management
2:10-2:25pm	Break
2:25-2:55pm	Curiosity and Unpacking Judgement
3:25-4:20pm	Coaching Equity
4:20-4:30pm	Closing
4:30-5pm	Adult Choice Networking

Campaign



What is Campaign Lab?

1. Leadership Development through Peer Coaching
2. Campaign and Organizing Fundamentals: Tools and Training
3. Assessment, Evaluation, and Centering Equity
4. Strategizing and Collaboration

**Do you want to build the
power of your local?
Apply to the Campaign Lab.**



**Experienced in leading
campaigns?
Apply to be a Coach!**



Ice breaker: Introduce Yourself!

- › Name, title, location, pronouns
- › Years of organizing or union campaign experience
- › Kinds of organizing or union campaigns you have been a part of
- › Secret Superpower - One word share your gift, skill, or talent you bring to table (doesn't have to be campaign-related)

One person should take notes and add up the years of experience, type of experience and list of superpowers!



Awareness-based systems thinking:
combines understanding complex systems with
shifting the our inner-awareness and the mindset of the
people within that system. It focuses on root causes.

**A "Change Maker" believes the
systems, patterns, structures, values, and beliefs
around us need to shift to create the change we need.**

Awareness-based
systems change

**What
appears...**

**What does
not appear....**

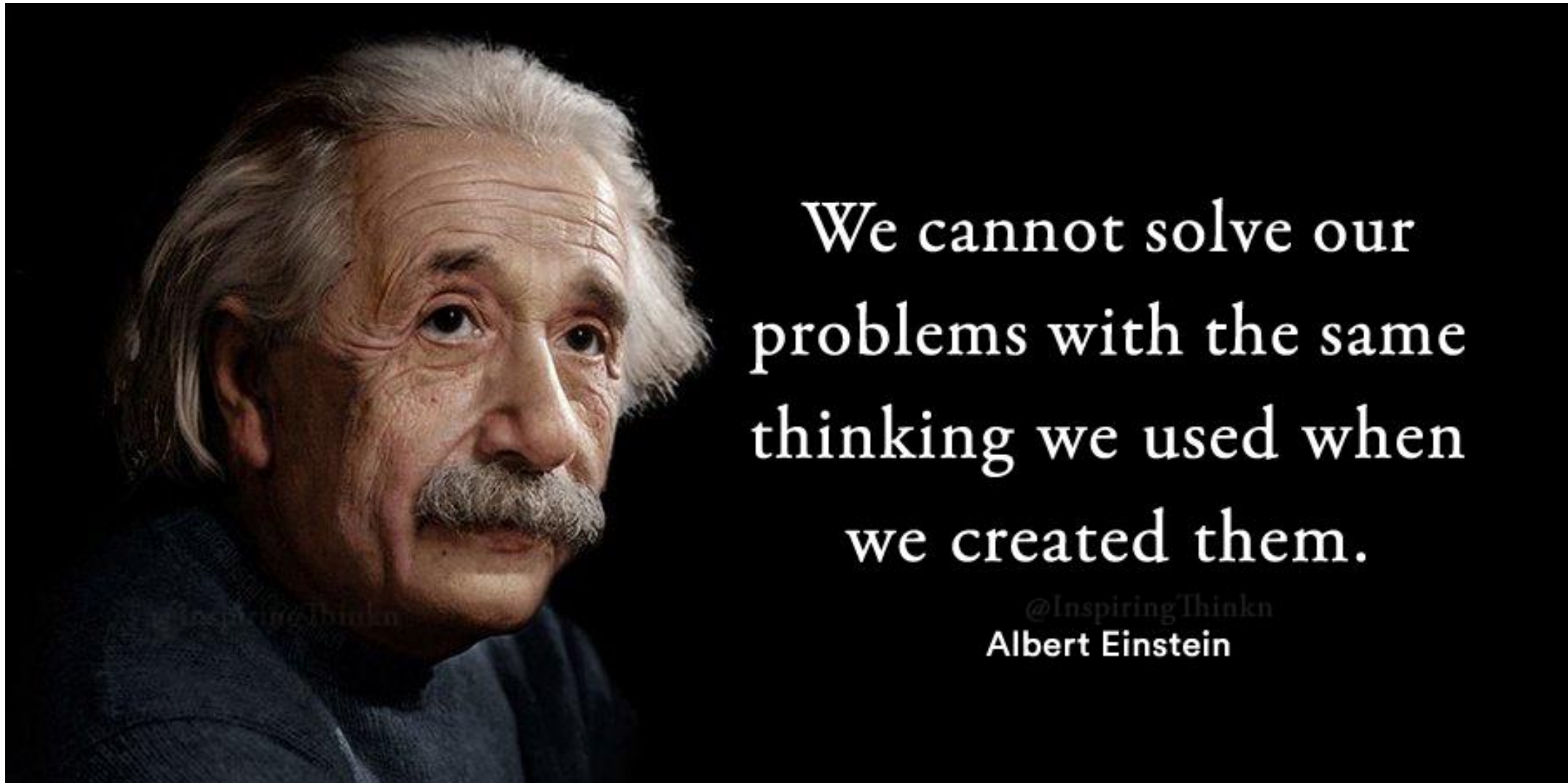
Patterns

Structures

Beliefs + Values

Root Causes

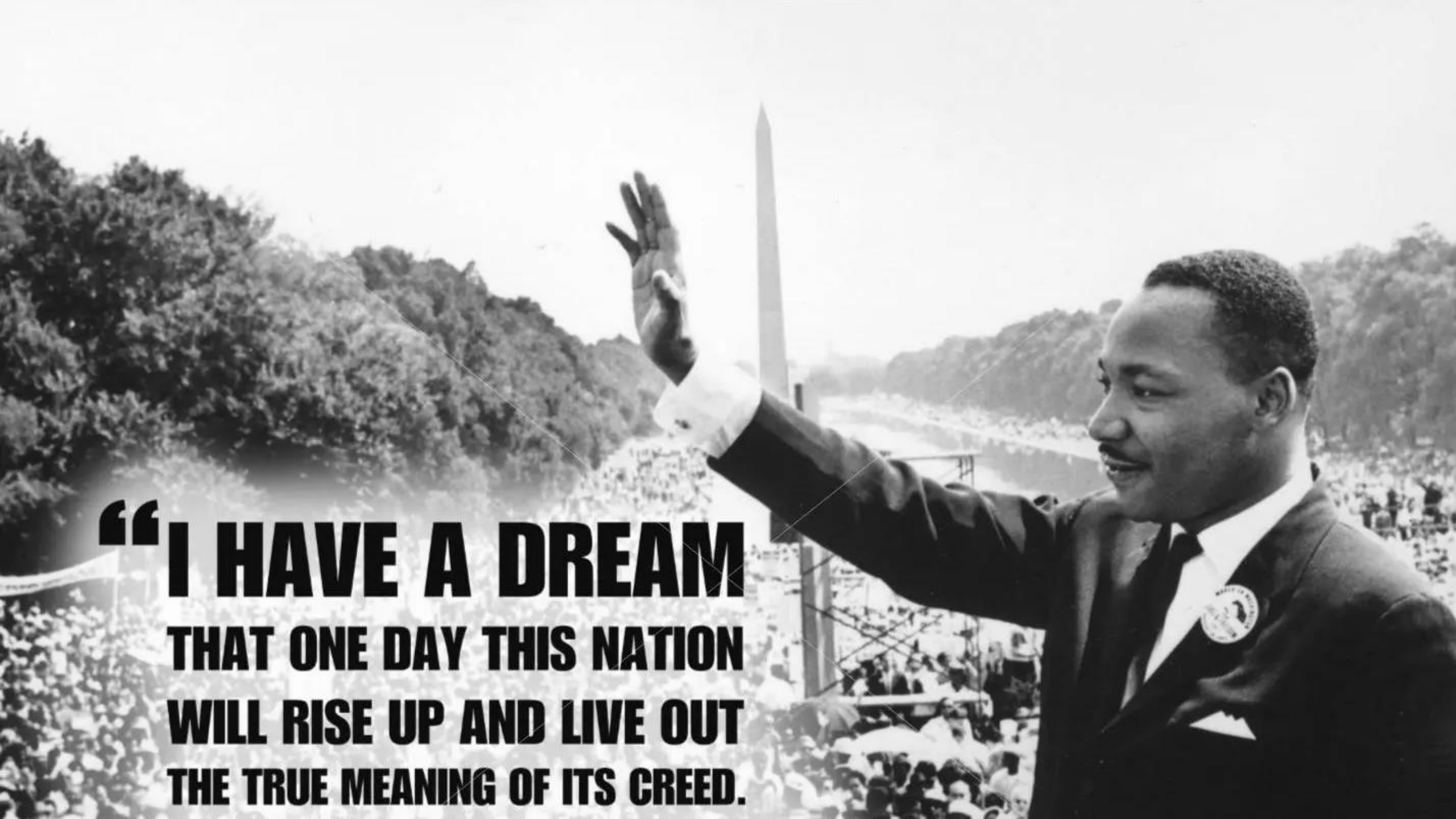




We cannot solve our
problems with the same
thinking we used when
we created them.

@InspiringThinkn

Albert Einstein

A black and white photograph of Martin Luther King Jr. speaking at the Lincoln Memorial. He is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, with a circular pin on his lapel. His right arm is raised, palm facing forward. The Washington Monument is visible in the background behind him. A large crowd of people is gathered in the foreground and middle ground, and a line of trees is on the left side of the image.

**“I HAVE A DREAM
THAT ONE DAY THIS NATION
WILL RISE UP AND LIVE OUT
THE TRUE MEANING OF ITS CREED.**

Awareness-based
systems change

**What
appears...**

**What does
not appear....**

Patterns

Structures

Beliefs + Values

Root Causes



Shift

Beyond an individual perspective into sensing the broader system.

Notice

Recurring patterns and our own role in creating them.

Move away

From "reacting to the past" towards "sensing the future" and what is emerging.

Help

Leaders test new ways of acting, learning quickly from failures rather than fearing them.

Build

New structures that support and sustain the change.

Activity

Find a new friend and answer the two questions below:

- › What patterns, thoughts, habits or tendencies do you notice in your union that are preventing your union from cultivating more participation and organizing more leaders to take action?
- › What patterns, thoughts, habits and tendencies do you notice in yourself that are holding you back from trying to change that?

Share Out

- › If you can successfully disrupt the old patterns, what does that inspire inside of you?
- › With an open mind, heart and will, what change in the world becomes possible?

Puzzle Piece Activity

Silent Reflection:

“What does it feel like to belong to a community that is supported and shows up for everyone?”



Puzzle Piece

Silent Reflection:

*‘What belief, value, or mindset
— within us or within the system —
would need to shift for that kind of
community to become possible?’*



Outer Part of the Puzzle

On the outer edges or border of your puzzle piece, express your reflections from the first question:

‘What does it feel like to have a community that is supported and shows up for all?’”

Inner Part of the Puzzle

Now, use the inner area of your puzzle piece to express your reflections from the second question:

‘What belief, value, or mindset must change – within us or within the system – for that kind of community to be possible?’”

Initial Debrief: Level 1

- What patterns or colors do you see?
- Do you notice anything about the textures used?
- Do you notice any shared themes across the pieces?

Level 2: Deeper Analytical Question

1. What does our outer-puzzle art reveal about what we value most in a supportive community?
2. Looking at the inner messages, what common beliefs or values are emerging?
3. What common needs or experiences are reflected across our pieces?
4. What connections or interdependencies do we notice between our visions of community?
5. What does this reveal about the challenges our system is living through?

Level 3 Evaluating & Creating Questions

1. What do these puzzle pieces say about the future we're ready to step into together?
2. What strengths, hopes, or sources of power become visible when all of our pieces come together?
3. Based on our shared artwork, what elements of a supportive community must we prioritize first as a union?
4. Which parts of our shared vision feel most achievable if we work together — and which require deeper system change?
5. What leverage points or opportunities do we see that could move us toward the community we envisioned?
6. How might we turn these visual themes into commitments or next steps that we take together?

Whole Group Debrief

Now take a few minutes to walk over to the other group's puzzle.

Observe what stands out to you.

Notice similarities, differences, surprises, or insights.

Debrief:

Who would like to share what you noticed between the two collective pieces? What themes stood out?
What surprised you?

Key Takeaways



- › We can see that there is a shared vision and experience across our experiences.
- › We can find patterns across all of our individual experiences.
- › Achieving change requires opening up to new mindsets and disrupting old patterns.
- › Awareness-Based Systems Thinking allows us to develop a deeper sense and understanding of the system and identify where we might intervene for change.

Break Time!



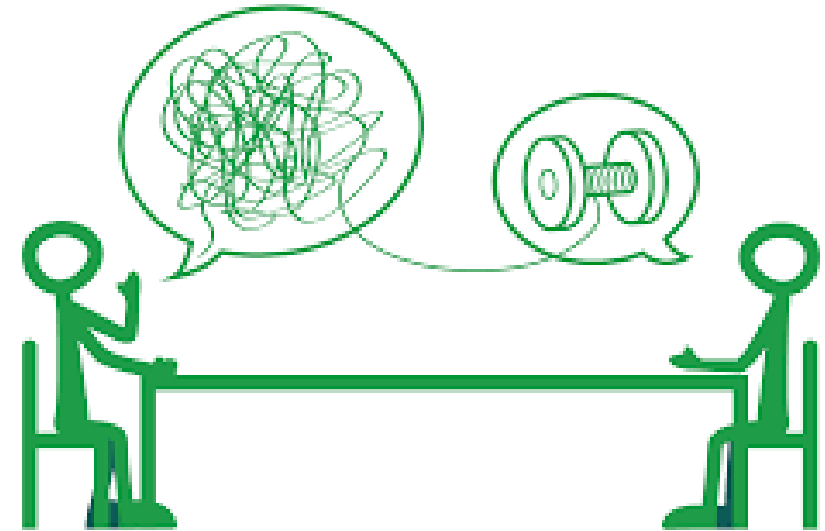
COACHING



Coaching is a leadership practice.

Coaching....

- Enables leaders to grow, understand their own agency and gain clarity about what is needed.
- Guides leaders to explore how to overcome challenges to make their themselves, their campaigns and organizing more effective.



"People Are the Only Hope"
By Park No-Hae
Translated by Helen S. Kim



- › People who speak of hope
- › Are themselves hope
- › People looking for a new way
- › Are themselves a new way
- › In truly good people
- › Is already a good world
- › It is within people
- › It begins with people
- › Again people are the only hope



Pair Share Activity

- Where have you witnessed ordinary people becoming "*hope*" in your life?
- What do you *hope* to contribute in being a coach?

Engaged Listening

- Open Body language
- Maintain eye contact, nodding, facial expressions that show empathy or curiosity
- Bring curiosity
- Mirror
- Paraphrase
- Reflect the feelings you hear
- Consider what is not being said



The Anatomy of a Growth Mindset



PRIORITIZES
GROWTH
OVER SPEED

SEES CRITICISM
AS A CHANCE
TO LEARN

ENCOURAGES
PURPOSE

EMBRACES
IMPERFECTION

VIEWS CHALLENGES AS
OPPORTUNITIES

Grounded in the principles of Healing Justice. We partner with change-makers to reimagine what is possible through deep listening and transformative presence.



Blooming Willow =
HEALING CENTERED LIFE COACHING™ & TRAINING FOR CHANGEMAKERS

The Coaching Conversation

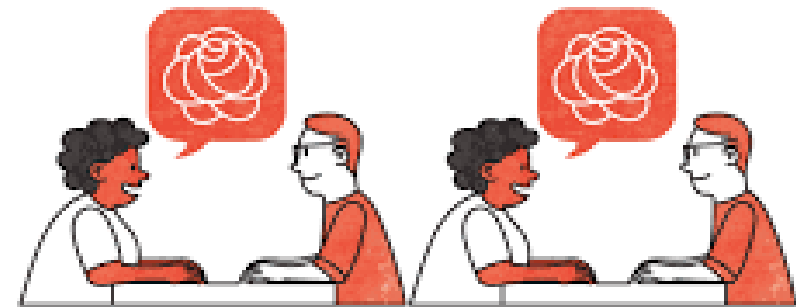


- Center curiosity and how to improve effectiveness.
- Build their own capacity to act.
- Focus on how to grow and have a growth mindset.
- Overcome challenges and tap new possibilities.

Organizing Conversation Structures

- › LAVA: Listen, Agitate, Vision, Ask
- › AHUY: Anger, Hope, Urgency, You
- › Feel, Felt Found
- › AAR: Affirm, Answer, Redirect

***The one-on-one
organizing
conversation***



DSA-LA Political Education Committee

What's the difference?

- › Count off by 8
- › Get into your group
- › Create a T chart
 - What is a coaching conversation
 - What is an organizing conversation



Core Competencies in Coaching

- › Understanding the ways coaching can support growth
- › Centering the Leader's Agenda
- › Asking Powerful Questions
- › Active Listening
- › Diagnosis
- › Curiosity, Interrupting and Acknowledgment
- › Self-Management





The Structure of a Coaching Conversation

Pause: Take a moment to come into presence and intention.

Ground: Tap into what's most important. What would you like coaching on today?

Align: What's getting in the way? What are the possibilities to move the forward?

Act: Clarity needs to act. What's standing out for you? What might some next steps be for you?

Acknowledge: I want to acknowledge the work you did today.

Centering the Leader's Agenda

"What do you want coaching on today?"

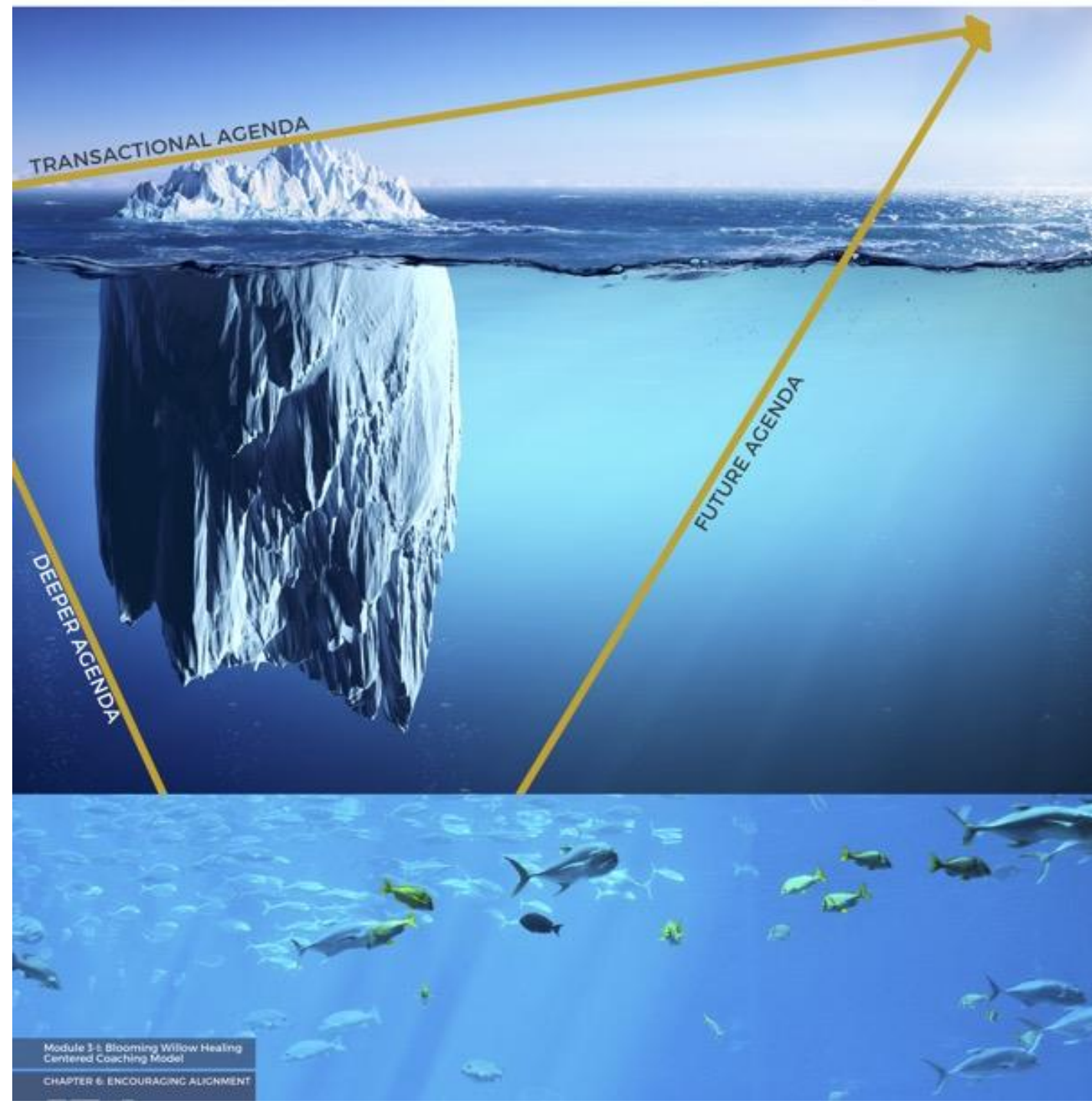
- › It's what the leader is noticing that they want to pay attention to in their lives.
- › This the area where they would like to see move, find clarity or strategies to support them to act.
- › On the surface, it might seem like the only agenda.

3 Agendas of the Leader

Transactional

Deeper

Future



Key Takeaways



Coaching....

- › Builds Leadership Capacity
- › Strengthens Decision Making and Agency
- › Helps leaders Navigates Challenges
- › Improves Campaign and Organizing Impact
- › Has 3 agendas: Transactional, Deeper and Future
- › Is Intentional.

Coaching Skill: Coaching towards Alignment



Let's start with a moment of reflection:

- What is a deeper lesson you have learned in organizing, campaign or leadership?
- How might you connect someone with that wisdom by asking a question?

Put sticky note with question on the wall.



Asking Questions

Why are questions important?

What do questions do that statements can't?



Asking Questions as a Coach

- **WHAT and HOW** questions that are open – ended to allow the leader to be in the driver seat - problem solve and draw from their own experience.
- **WHO, WHEN, WHERE** questions temporarily allow the coach to be in the driver seat to uncover blind spots or move through difficult conversations.

Asking Building Questions

- › What is important about the issue? How do you wish it would be?
- › Identifying Barriers: What is getting in the way?
- › Explore Possibilities: What is needed to change that? Overcome that obstacle? What is needed from your leadership?

Asking powerful questions..

- What is getting in the way?
- What needs more clarity for you?
- How might other people help with finding a solution?
- What values or beliefs might guide you right now?
- What's the lesson for you in this situation?
- What do you want to be spending more time on?
- How are you adapting?
- What might be another way to think of this challenge?
- How is this challenge impacting how you feel about the work?



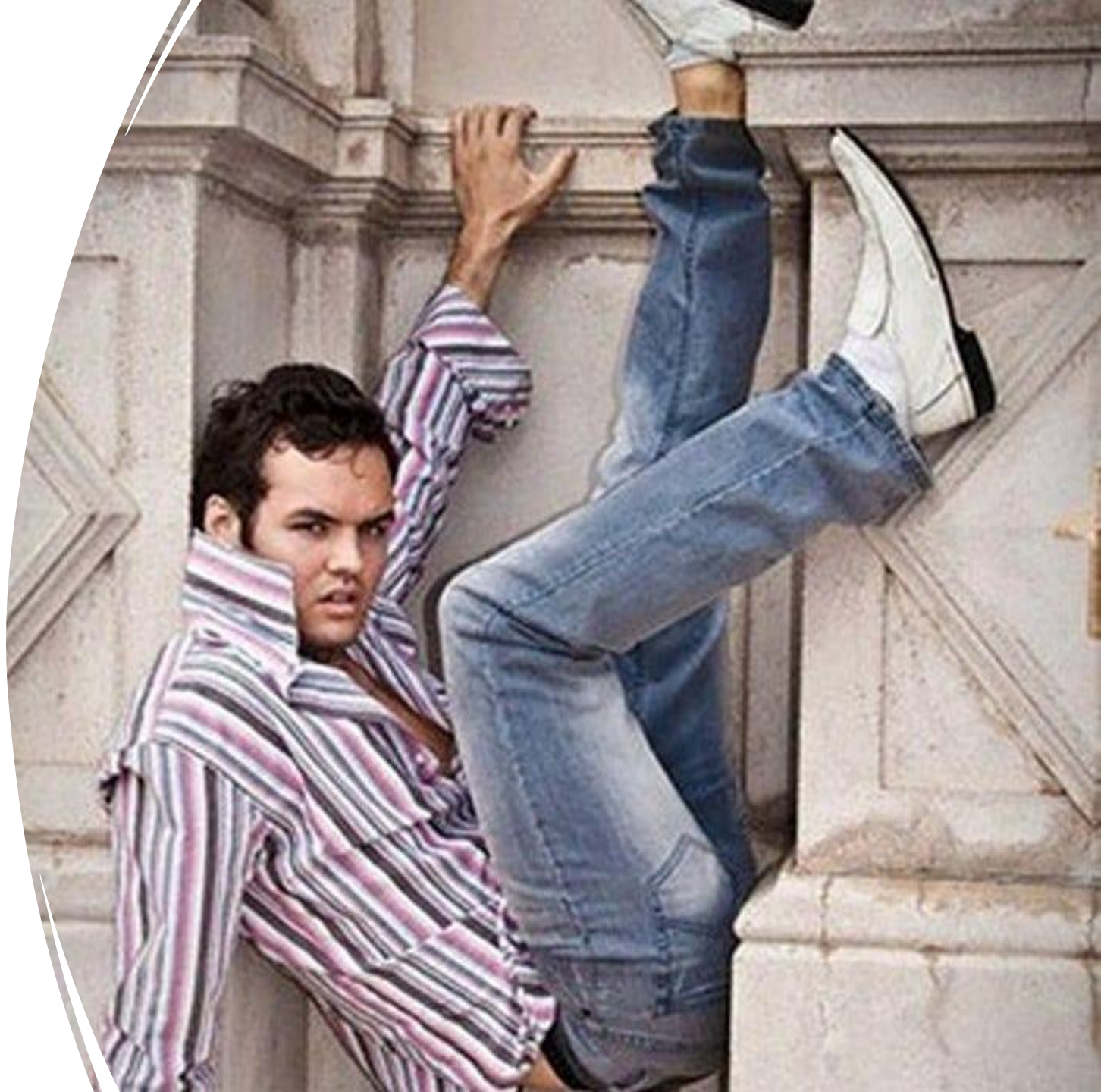
Moving towards Alignment

- Ask concisely. Preambles aren't needed.
- Build upon where they are going.
- Silence and pause can give space to a deeper insight. Wait.
- Interrupt to support greater clarity.
- Invite them to consider different possibilities.

Activity: Write it Out!

What are ten questions you want to incorporate into your coaching?

Model



Model Debrief



LUNCH

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.



Coaching Triads – 35 minutes

Each group will have 3 people. Find someone new!

10 minutes for each coaching conversation. Each group should have one volunteer in these different roles:

- 1) Coachee: Share a challenge you are facing in your union work and receive coaching.
- 2) Coach: Ask powerful questions to help the person explore their challenge.
- 3) Observer: Observe the coaching conversation to note what was impactful.

Debrief 2 minutes

Debrief!



For 2 minutes share:

Observer: What did you observe in the coaching conversation?
What went well? What might be something to adjust for the future?

Coachee: What was your experience being coached? What felt impactful or helpful to you?

Coach: How did it feel to be a coach? What worked well? What might you try differently next time?

Learn to Self-Manage

- Bekah

The coach's role is not to fix the problem or find the "solution."



Coaches don't have to be experts.

The leader is responsible for their own growth.

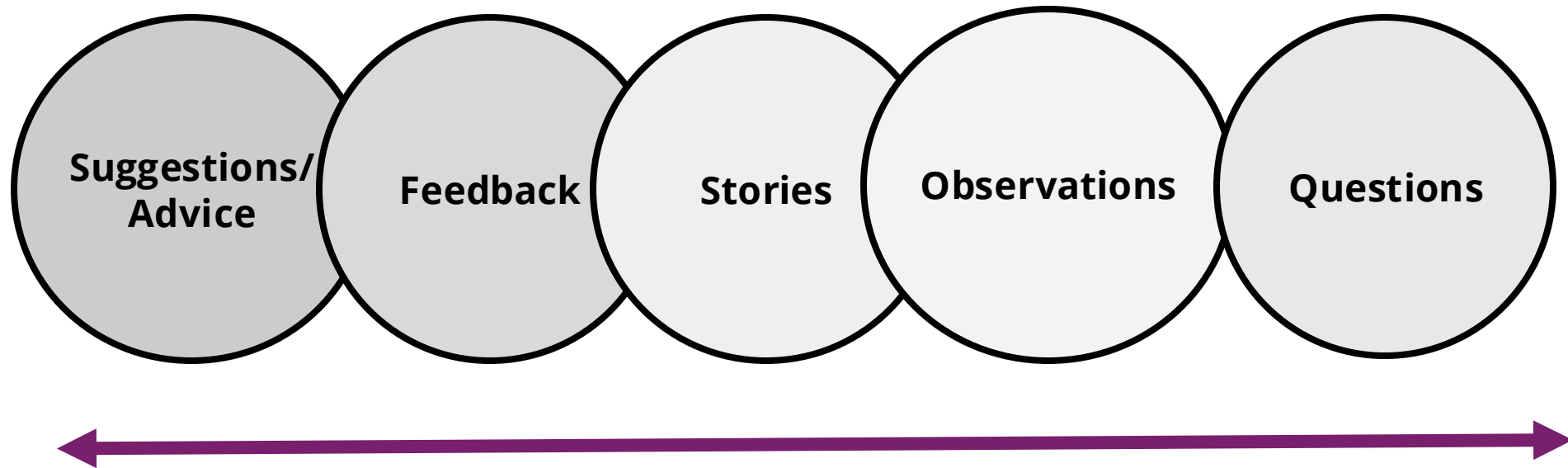
The coach supports them in this process.



Possible Interventions

***Centering
the Coach***

***Centering
the Leader***

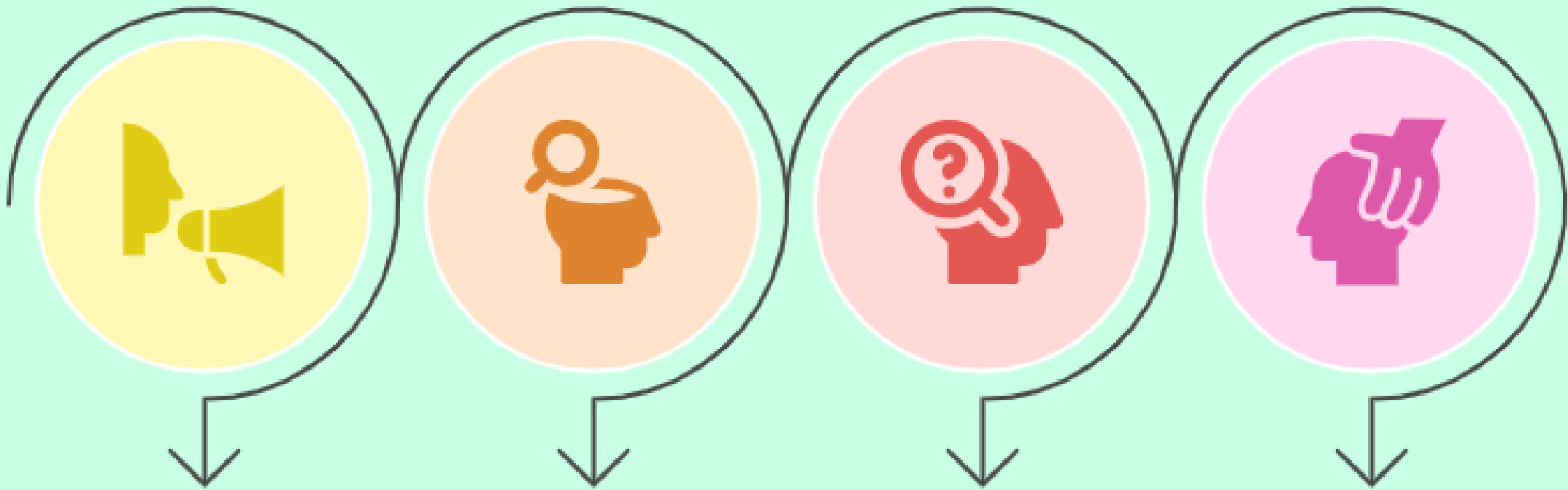


Why might these practices be considered self-management pitfalls?

- Giving advice
- Focusing on solutions
- Sharing personal experiences
- Storytelling

What are some signs that we are not centering the leader and their agenda?

- On chart paper
- Draw or Write the moment when you were not being centered in conversation you were having or you did not center someone else.



**Speaking
More than
the Leader**

**Interrupting
Insight
Moments**

**Using Jargon
or Over-
Explaining**

**Rescuing the
Leader from
Feelings**

When coaching, manage your....

Fears

Beliefs

Judgements

Opinions

Reactions.



How might we self- manage as a coach?

Pause.

Notice the urge to share, give advice, and fix it.

Reflect on why you have that urge.

Take a deep breath.

Ask the leader a good question to support their deeper insight or greater clarity.

Key Takeaways

- Self- Manage
- You cannot force your members/other leaders to want something more than you.
- Organizing conversations are 10% talking, 90% listening
- Guide on the side, not sage on the stage



15 minute break



Curiosity and Unpacking Judgement

Melissa Dan



Curiosity....

- Core competency of coaching.
- A posture of openness and genuine interest in the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of another individual.
- Builds the connection between the coach and the leader.
- It supports exploring what's hidden beneath the surface.
- Curiosity is a part of "not knowing" and being willing to explore new perspectives and a way forward.

Judgement

It's important to bring awareness of judgment into a coaching conversation because it will limit the exploration of deeper understanding and new possibilities.

IS

- Counterpart to curiosity
- Invites the leader to evaluate themselves rather than be curious about themselves.
- Invites a feeling of assessment, problem solving, forming opinions, and decision making.

IS NOT

- Invited into a coaching session because it creates barriers for the leader to move outside of set parameters.

Unpacking Judgement: Table Groups 10 minutes

- List common judgements in our union work and identify how they might take a posture of curiosity.
- Develop coaching questions that feel authentic without judgement.

Example:

The members don't want to do anything.

Vs.

What might motivate the members to get involved?



Share Out



Key Takeaways

- › Curiosity is about questioning. It allows you to probe deeper into understanding.
- › Curiosity allows people to see themselves and the challenge from different perspectives.
- › Prior to judgement, a question is better.
- › Judgement reinforces existing systems.

Practicing Interrupting

Melissa Dan and Kristin Lytie



How do we feel about
Kristin interrupting
Melissa?

What do we mean by interrupting?

Process of stopping someone from continuing what they are saying by suddenly gently speaking to them or making a noise.

Intrusive Interruptions

Disagreement: Jumps in to voice a different opinion

Floor-Taking: Takes over the conversation, but stays on same subject

Topic-change: cuts in to change the topic

Summarization: Paraphrases the speaker's point, often minimizing it

Collaborative Interruptions

Agreement: shows support or elaborates on the speaker's idea.

Assistance: provides a word or phrase the speaker was searching for.

Clarification: asks for an explanation about something the speaker just shared.



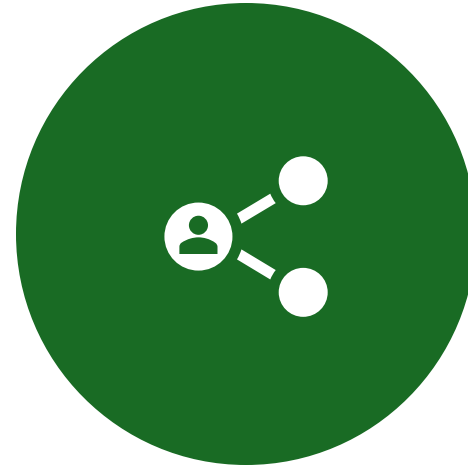
Focusing the Conversation on Intention

- Interrupting a coachee by inviting them to Pause as needed to support them to move with greater intention
 - Interrupting may be experienced as rude, but as framed here we can see it is a skill that coaches need to develop. Our role as a coach is to maintain focus in the coaching conversation and steer the leader to focus on the coaching agenda they laid out.
-

What do we mean by a pause?



TAKING A MOMENT,
TAKING A BREATH.



PAUSING ALLOWS THE LEADER TO
ACHIEVE DEEPER INTENTION IN
THE COACHING CONVERSATION.

WHY might we need to interrupt when coaching someone?

Our role as a coach is to be the guide, and when someone gets them off track, bring them back into clarity so they can find their way.



When should we interrupt?

Background info: We just need to know the impact on the coachee, not what led to it.

Long stories: Only need to know what's important about it, not all of it in detail.

Details about Others: Should focus on the coachee, not the people around them.

Loops: Repeating same thoughts, stories, words, phrases.

Confusion: Coachee is lost and needs a moment to reset.

Boredom: Coachee doesn't seem interested in the direction of the conversation.

Coaching Tips:

- A coach supports greater clarity – and helps someone tap into their own wisdom.
- Help an individual discover new thoughts, beliefs, emotions that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what's important to them.
- “Bottom-line” or understand the essence of the person's communication and support them to get there rather than engaging in long stories.

Let's try it!

- Count off by 5 and go to a chart paper with your group.
- Write down a list potential prompts you could use to cooperatively interrupt someone.
 - Examples:
 - Let's take a moment to breathe
 - I don't want what you just shared to get lost
- Share out - What would you feel comfortable saying to interrupt?

Debrief

What did you hear
that stuck out?

What will you
use?

Key Takeaways

- › Interrupting can be used constructively to keep conversations focused.

Centering Equity and Justice

Bekah Saxon



The new racism: Racism without 'racists.' Today, racial segregation and division often result from habits, policies, and institutions that are not explicitly designed to discriminate. Contrary to popular belief, discrimination or segregation do not require animus. They thrive even in the absence of prejudice or ill will. It's common to have racism without racists.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva



Centering Race, Class, and Gender Justice

- › Race, class, and gender justice is the systematic fair treatment of people resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.
- › It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of **deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain race, class, and gender equity through proactive and preventative measures.**

Centering Equity in your Campaigns Tool (pg 3 in PEPS)

What they do:

- › Proactively seek to both eliminate systemic barriers and advance equity
- › Identify clear goals, objectives and measurable outcomes
- › Develop mechanisms for successful implementation

What they are:

- › *A set of questions used to anticipate, assess, and prevent potential adverse consequences of proposed actions on different race, class, or gender groups.*



Would the campaign(s) your coaching have answers to these questions or be able to say most components of these tools are a part of their campaign?

What is something you noticed that could support your coaching?



Factors that Support the Centering Equity in your Campaigns Tool

- › Buy in from the organization and its leader
- › Routine and ongoing use of the RET
- › Data- driven assessment
- › A commitment to making changes
- › Tenacity – A commitment to overcoming obstacles to making changes



WE HAVE TO DECIDE TO DO THINGS
DIFFERENTLY AND STICK WITH IT

Coaching Equity—Tabletop Discussion

- › How can we coach leaders to center equity?
- › How can the tool assist?
- › What are some coaching questions you could ask?
- › What might come up for the leader as they explore issues of race, gender, culture, etc?
- › How can this be used to discuss not just a campaign but also the functioning of the union?

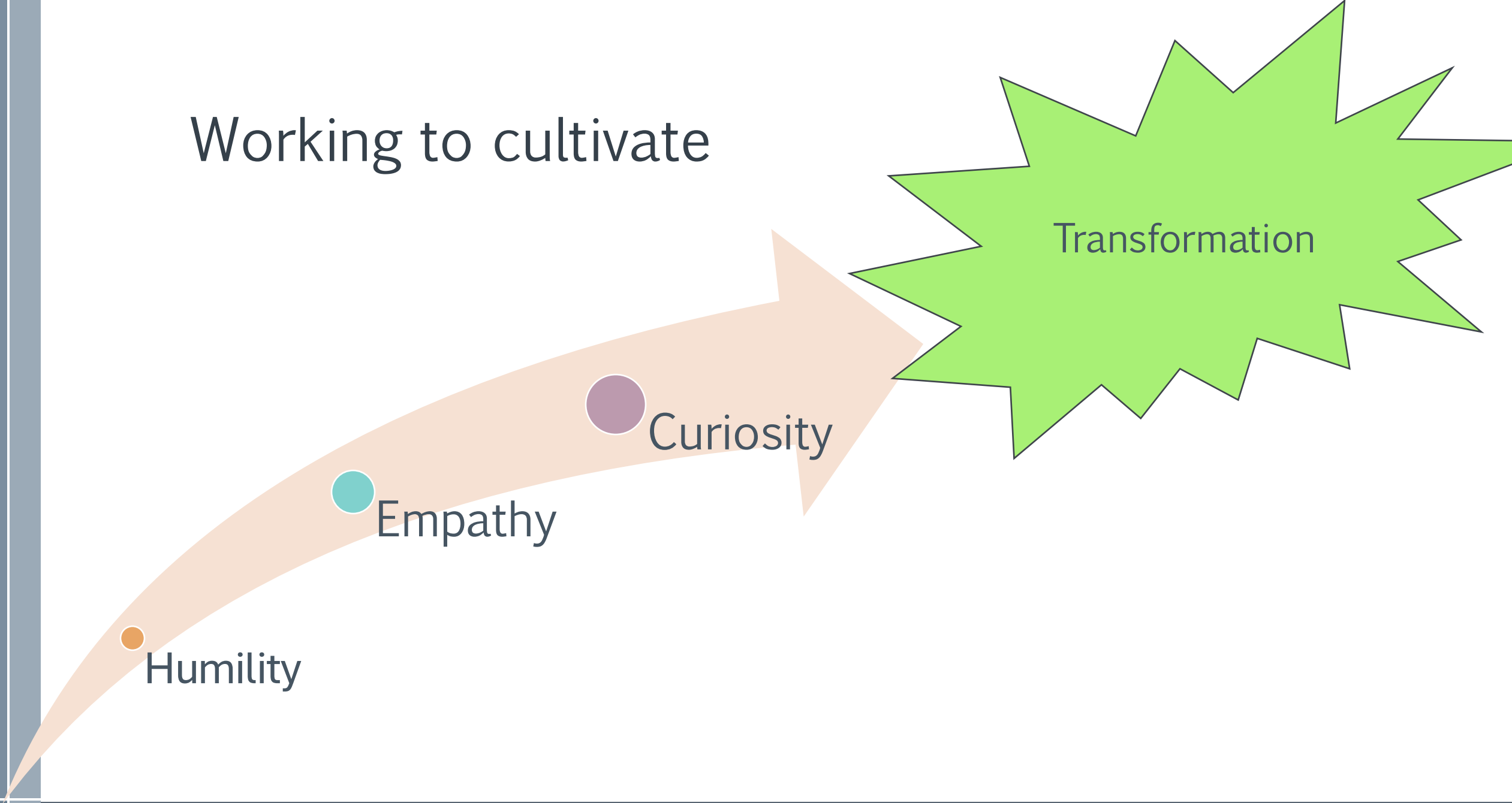
Coaching for Equity

Transformational coaching requires:

- Compassion
- Curiosity
- Connection
- Courage
- Purpose

This is especially true for coaching for equity

Working to cultivate





“Diversity asks,
‘who’s in the room?’

Equity responds, *‘who is trying
to get in the room but can’t?
Whose presence in the room is
under constant threat of erasure?’*

Inclusion asks, *‘have
everyone’s ideas been heard?’*

Justice responds, *‘whose ideas
won’t be taken as seriously because
they aren’t in the majority?’*

Diversity asks, *‘how many more of
[pick any minoritized identity] group do
we have this year than last?’*

Equity responds, *‘what conditions
have we created that maintain certain
groups as the perpetual majority here?’*

Inclusion asks, *‘is this environment safe
for everyone to feel like they belong?’*

Justice challenges, *‘whose safety is
being sacrificed and minimized to allow
others to be comfortable maintaining
dehumanizing views?’”*

DR. D-L STEWART

Coaching Practice (groups of 3)

- › Coach, leader, observer/timekeeper
- › 12 minutes coaching, 3 minute debrief.
- › Switch roles.

Pick one of these scenarios to practice:

- › Union participation is all white, despite 15% of members being people of color.
- › Students are missing school due to fears of ICE.
- › Teachers of color report that parents complain about them frequently.

Key Points



- › Centering race, class, and gender justice in our campaigns increases the people engaged, the number of leaders involved, and the amount of resources we have to win the change we want.
- › Power is only built through people with a shared vision, making public commitments to act, to risk their collective resources, for the meaningful change they want.
- › Centering equity requires changes in the work we do and in how we do the work we do.

Give us
Your
Feedback
Please



Closing 4:20

What is becoming
clearer?

What is murky?

Breakfast Tomorrow

Coaching Assessment