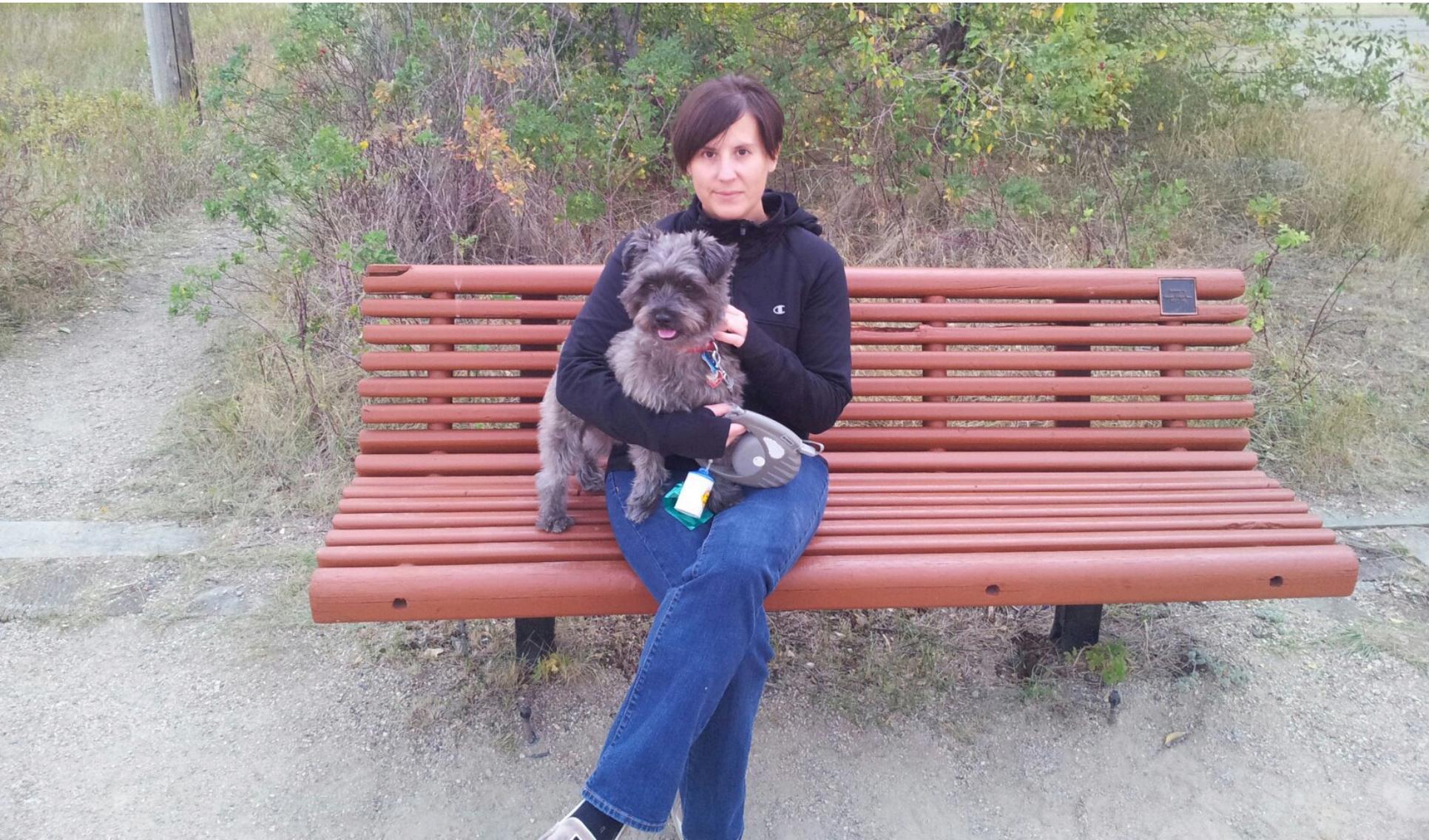


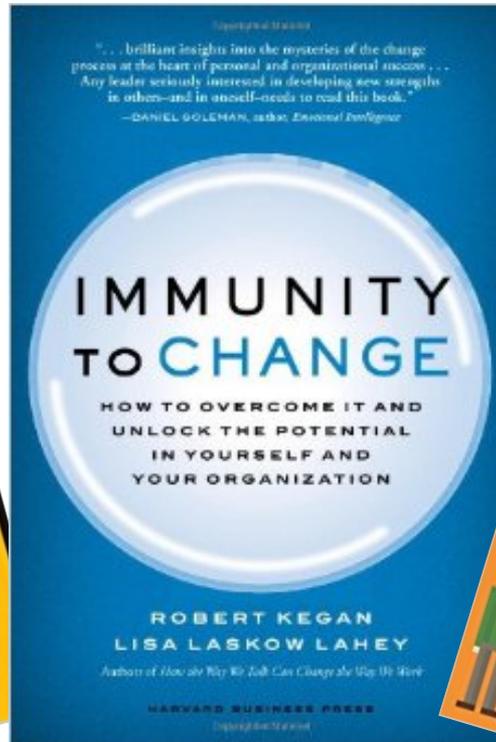
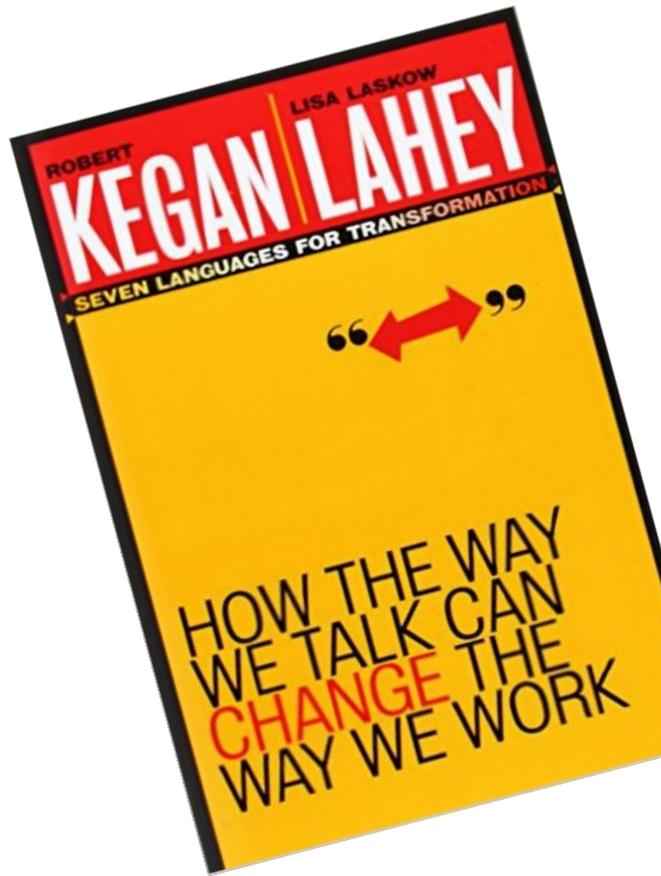
seven
languages for
transformation

HOW THE WAY WE TALK CAN
CHANGE THE WAY WE WORK

About me



The work of Kegan & Lahey





WORDS: So innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them.

NATHANIAL HAWTHORNE





Quick
Overview!

The first FOUR languages

Language One:

From complaint to commitment

Shift from critical people to committed people.
What commitments/convictions are implied in
your list of complaints?

"I am committed to the value or the importance
of..."

Language Two:

From blame to personal responsibility

What are you doing that is keeping your
commitment or value from being more fully
realized?

What are you not doing?

Language Three:

From resolutions to competing commitments

It's not enough to resolve to eliminate undesired
behaviour.

When you think about doing something to
support your values, is there anything that causes
you to feel vaguely worried, anxious, concerned?

Language Four:

Exploring our big assumptions

Shift from critical people to committed people.
What commitments/convictions are implied in
your list of complaints?

"I am committed to the value or the importance
of..."

THE SOCIAL LANGUAGES



From the language of prizes and praise to the language of ongoing regard



From the language of rules and policies to the language of public agreement



From the language of constructive criticism to the language of deconstructive criticism

**From the language of
prizes and praise
to the language of
ongoing regard**



think

Think about a recent experience you've had with a colleague where you valued something they said or did. It can be anything - it doesn't have to be monumental!

imagine

Now imagine you're in a staff meeting. The chair has set aside 5 minutes at the beginning for thank you's.

Take 2 minutes and write down what you might say.

"Everyone join me in a round of applause for all of Kim's hard work on the report!"



Jim sure did a great job on that brochure.





angie b
@angibangle



 Follow

5yo just took a picture of me then said, "Ok, but next time try to be beautiful."
In case I had a shred of confidence left.

RETWEETS
14

LIKES
49



1:43 PM - 25 Sep 2016



 14

 49





APPRECIATION WITH POWER

#1

Be direct.

#2

Be specific.

#3

Be nonattributive.

Be direct



Instead of **“I just want to mention that Janet did a great job on that report”**

Try **“Janet, I want to acknowledge your work on that report”**.

YOUR TURN!

Go back to your statement of appreciation.

Is it direct? Or could it be more direct?

Take one minute and edit.



I was hoping everyone would enjoy that icebreaker I tried. It was worth the time we spent on it!

Good stuff chairing that meeting today Hal.

Aside from that weird icebreaker, we got a lot done. Maybe next time we can skip the warm fuzzies and get to it.

Be specific

“Tim, you’re a great leader.”

Okay, so you think Tim is a great leader.

- Why? What makes a leader great?
- What is it Tim is or isn’t doing that leads you to believe *he’s* a great leader?
- What do *you* value about leadership, based on the specifics you have identified?

Shares *your* experience of the speaker.

Also helps you learn what is valuable to *you*.



YOUR TURN!

Go back to your statement of appreciation.

Is it specific? Can you make it more specific? Any insights from making it more specific?

Take one minute and edit.

Generous? I'm still holding a grudge that you haven't paid me back the \$1.27 you owe me, buddy!

Thanks Tina! You're so generous!

Oh, no I'm not! But thanks Jim.



Thanks Alan! You're so generous!

Alan, I appreciate the way you took time to fill me in on what I missed at that meeting. It made a real difference to me.



YOUR TURN!

Go back to your statement of appreciation.

Is it nonattributive? Could it be more nonattributive?

Take one minute and edit.

**From the language of
constructive criticism
to the language of
deconstructive criticism**



think

Think back to a recent time when you had to give someone critical or negative feedback.

What was the situation?

What were some of the first things you said?

How did the person respond?

What were you feeling?

Take 2 minutes and write down what happened.

An engineer presented a plan for developing new software to the vice president of his high-tech company. With his team, the engineer waited expectantly, hoping for praise and encouragement; the plan was the result of months of work.

But the reaction from the vice president was harsh: “These specifications are ridiculous,” he said. “They haven’t a chance of getting past my desk.”

Then, his voice thick with sarcasm, he added, “How long have you been out of graduate school?”

Destructive

Vague: Offers no specifics, but makes a blanket condemnation, such as, “That was a lousy job.”

Blames the person: Attributes the problem to personality or some other unchangeable trait.

Threatening: Makes the person feel attacked, such as, “Next time, you’re through.”

Pessimistic: Offers no hope for change or suggestion for doing better.



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Constructive

Specific: The manager says exactly what the person is doing wrong, such as, “This is what I like and why.”

Supportive: Gives the sense that the criticism is meant to help the person do better.

Problem solving: Suggests a solution or offers to help to find a way to improve things.

Timely: Gives the message soon after the problem occurs.

Source: Weisinger, H. *The Critical Edge: How to Criticize Up and Down Your Organization and Make It Pay Off.* (1990).



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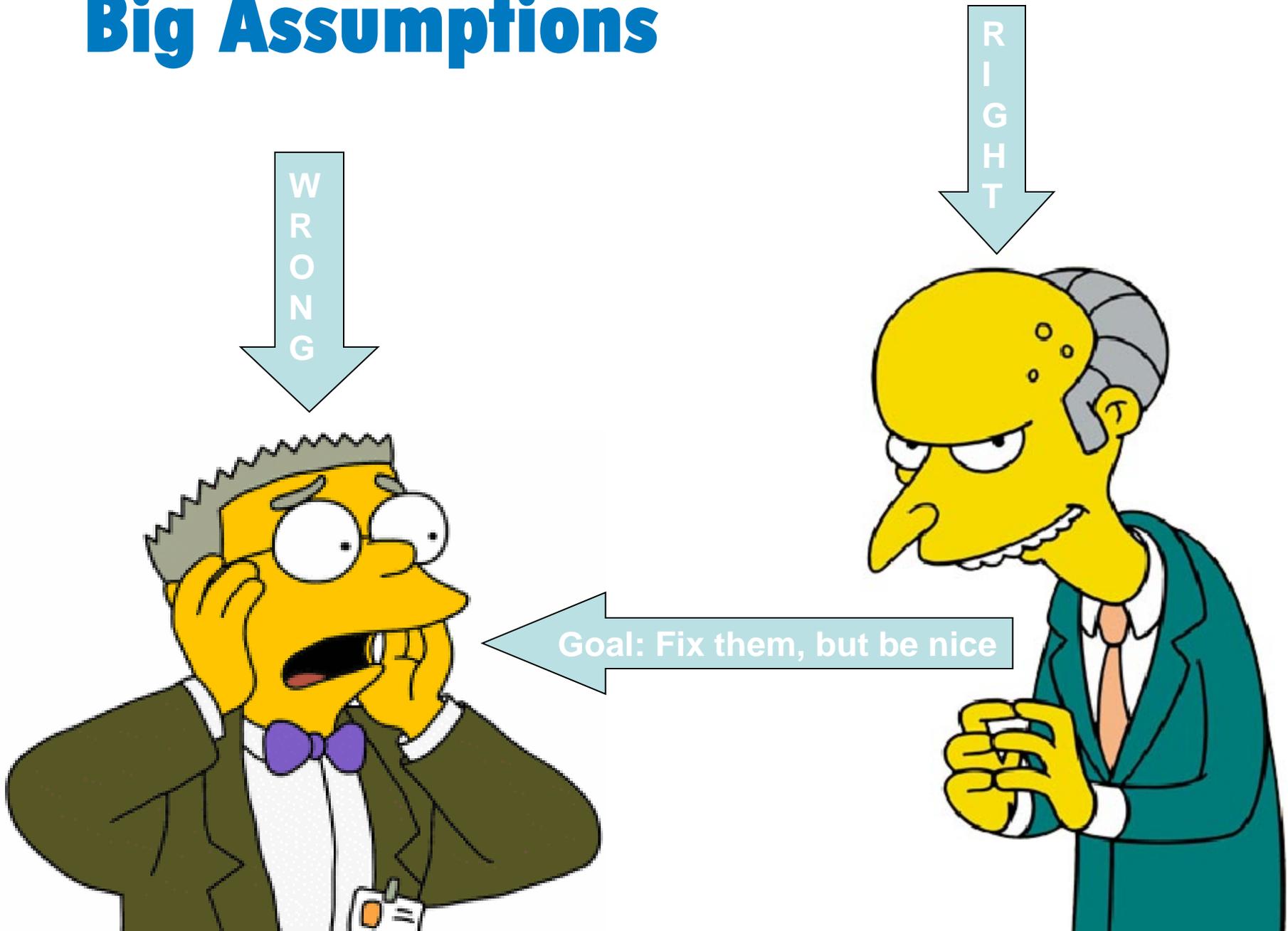
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Deconstructive



Big Assumptions



what if?

How often is there only one "right" answer?

Once we consider both possibilities – we could be right, but then again there might be another legitimate view – we need to acknowledge that **we can't be sure.**

This allows us to learn – we have little reason to check ourselves if we assume we are right.

Because as long as we hold our view to be true, we have a vested interest in maintaining the truth of our view.

No one willingly gives up the truth.

the challenge with being "right"

Once we establish our meaning as the standard and norm against which we evaluate other people, we essentially **hold them to our personal preferences.**



Who are you?

Where's your ID?

**How do I know
you're really from
the food bank?**

And this was me, hiding in the bedroom



My instinctive approach

**“Uh honey...I heard you talking to the
volunteers.**

**I don't think you should really have
interrogated them like that.**

**I mean, the beans were No Name for
crying out loud.**

Let's not do that again next year, okay?”



But I was curious...





"Hey honey.

It sounded like
you were having
quite a
conversation.

What was going
on there?"

My perspective:

The act of giving involves making the donation. Once I've put the canned goods in the bag, I've essentially donated. I don't really care what happens to it after that.

Dennis' perspective:

The act of giving involves making sure the donation is received. It has to go to the people who need it for me to feel that I've donated.

Comparing & contrasting

	Destructive	Constructive	Deconstructive
My goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get you to do the right thing, avoid the wrong thing (as defined by me)• Sometimes shame you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get you to do the right thing, avoid the wrong thing (as defined by me)• Maintain good relationship with you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See how you're thinking• Establish a context for learning and change• Strengthen our ability to talk about difficult topics
I think	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I know the answers• I have to get you to see it my way• Blame/shame is helpful in the long run	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have the answer but I want you to discover it so you feel good• I don't want to hurt your feelings or avoid the feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult learners will change when they choose!• Everyone is intelligent, capable, cares about doing their best and wants to improve.
How I do this	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blaming or sarcastic tone• State the judgement and solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withhold my judgement• Try to lead you to a solution but won't tell you what I think• Use a kind tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start with curiosity• Share my perspective• Figure out next steps based on what we learn together

A Few Good Deconstructive Starter Questions

'sup?

How was it
for you?

Tell me how
you see it.

Walk me
through your
thinking.

What's your
take on that?

What was going
on for you then?

Can you talk
about that?

Can you
explain that
more?

Your
thoughts?

What were you trying to
accomplish?

How did you
approach this?

Tell me more
about that.

What were you
thinking?

YOUR TURN!

Go back to your feedback situation.

How might you start the conversation now? How would that change the way you feel about the conversation?

Take two minutes and edit.

"Does this mean I always have to assume **I'm wrong?**"

No. It is about holding **two simultaneous realities** together.

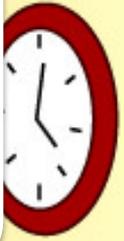
"If we're both right how will we ever **move forward**?"

Practicing deconstructive language does not leave one in paralysis of analysis, unable to act. In fact, it gives you a better idea of **how to move forward**.

**From the language of
policies and rules
to the language of
public agreement**



Can you believe Ann Marie today? From one meeting to the next, I never know who she's going to set up and throw under the bus. Did you see the way she just ran over Hal? She just says these incredibly destructive things. I couldn't believe the way she cut you off this morning. That must burn you, hey?



Your options

1. **The double down.** “I know! She’s the worst. Did you hear what she did in that meeting with Suze? Unbelievable!”
2. **The dodge.** “Oh, yeah. Uh...hey did you watch the game last night? Did you see that ludicrous display?”
3. **The admonish.** “You know, I’m not comfortable with that kind of talk. If you have a problem with Ann Marie, I think you should talk to her about it directly.”



rules and policies

In a group that has no public agreements, the only place people have to look for these resources is to the preexisting nature of their own private principles.

public agreements

Moves from individual integrity to organizational integrity - a shared integrity.

Without agreements, there can be no violations, only private objection.

Without violations, there can be no learning.

Compare and contrast

Rules and Policies

Public Agreement

Little or no discussion of the meaning of the rules and policies, **no experience of owning them** or assenting to them. Different interpretations across the organization.

Shared understanding of their meaning and **experience of co-owning** them and assenting to them.

Frequently **discussed only after there is a violation**.
Corrective in nature.

Discussed and created before violation to establish a shared understanding.
Educational in nature.

Violations are **ignored** or **treated privately**.

Violations are **treated publicly** as a **resource for** personal and organizational **learning**.

It sounds like Ann Marie has really upset you. You know, we've all agreed that we'd like to have these conversations with each other. Can you help me understand why you're not discussing this with Ann Marie?



Public Agreements

Start by asking the question: What agreements are shared among all of you?

Look for **skunkworks** – start there. Skunkworks are ongoing, recurring problems in the life of the group or organization.





No leadership team can be expected to banish all conflict from our midst, though many have tried. The familiar result is that conflict is driven underground.

But every leadership team, as a language shaper, has the opportunity to create a frame for understanding and using conflict that not only prevents it from undermining the good order but actually transforms it into a resource for individual and organizational learning.



YOUR TURN!

Thoughts? Comments? Feedback?

Where could you start with using these tools?

What questions do you still have?