

BUILDING BRIDGES Group at The Pinehills

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Session 2 June 6, 2022

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Where are we?

Define Problem and Agree on Method

[5/16] Introductions
and Foundations

Apply Methods to INCOME INEQUALITY

**[6/6]
Triad Engagement**

[6/20]
Caucuses (L, M, C)

[7/7]
Fishbowls (L, M, C)

Conclude Learnings

[7/18]
Final Triads
[8/1]
Feedback (optional)

Recap of Session 1 - May 16

- *provided* a short introduction and set expectations
- *explored* and *built* a deeper understanding of the causes and accelerators of the US “divide” problem
- *reviewed* and *agreed* on a methodology for conducting difficult conversations on issues
- *selected* a single tough and divisive “threat to US democracy” issue – **Income Inequality**

Tonight's Agenda

- *Share* some additional suggestions on how to have impactful conversations
- *Personally engage* in our Triads with a narrow focus on **Income Inequality**
 - Share **experiences** and **influencers** that shaped our personal **values** framing Income Inequality
 - Share our personal **vision** of the desired **outcomes** for Income Inequality
 - Suggest possible alternative **paths** to attain your desired outcomes
- *Reflect* on what we learned as a full group

SETTING:

We spliced together the “worst” stories of Thanksgiving dinner conversations “gone wrong”

SCRIPT:

Arlene – So what do you think of the new voting laws in Texas?

Rick – Absolutely what we need. Get rid of the cheats and have some honest elections. Not like 2020.

Arlene – 2020? Are you serious? You think Trump won?

Rick – We need to tighten up the voting laws!

Arlene – You’re just a racist.

Rick – And you’ve clearly been listening to fake news. It’s okay for Clinton to cheat and lie. And Pelosi. Don’t get me started.

Arlene – I suppose you are a climate denier too!

Rick – Oh, aren’t we all woke! I have my opinions on global warming if you would like to hear.

Arlene – I think I know exactly what you think. All sanctity of life, keep out the immigrants, American exceptionalism, family values.

Rick – What’s wrong with any of those things? You don’t value family? Don’t think this is a great country? Not politically correct enough for you? Sound like a socialist to me.

Arlene – Rick, You ignorant slut! I can’t believe your stupidity!

Rick – My ignorance? Let’s just agree to disagree. <pause> Pass the potatoes, Mom.

Illustrative Role Play

Arlene and Rick

SUGGESTED TOOL ... #1

Replace *Contempt* with *Curiosity*

In response to another person's comment

When you feel *contempt* ...

... identify it

..... replace it with *curiosity*

..... and ask a non-inflammatory "why?" question

Repeat as necessary

SUGGESTED TOOL ... #2

Avoid **DIVISIVE** language and terminology

Why?

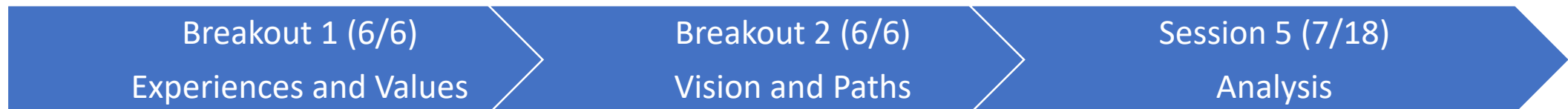
- Reinforces stereotypes
- Fosters group think
- Makes accurate disagreement difficult to achieve
- Contributes to mutual incomprehension
- Uses language for virtue signaling and in-group bonding
- Replaces authentic expression with formulaic expression
- Communicates instantly a colorized persona

Review: Our Agreed Top Civil Discourse Principles

- **Take winning off the table**
- **Seek to understand**
- **Honor the fact of multiple truths**
- **Embrace your discomfort and vulnerability**
- **Prioritize relationships over ideas**

Introducing: Full Spectrum Conversations

- **Experiences** – share events and influencers that shaped your personal values and beliefs on the issue
- **Values** – identify your defining values and beliefs, that frame the issue
- **Vision** – share your description of the desired outcomes to resolve the issue
- **Paths** – suggest possible alternative paths to attain your desired outcomes
- **Analysis** – assess the strengths and weaknesses of your proposed paths



Framing of the Income Inequality Issue

What are your underlying values and beliefs?

IMPACT

- Democracy
- Health
- Happiness & Joy
- Economy
- Inequality
- Racism
- Competitiveness

CONSIDERATIONS

- Economic System
- Personal Freedoms
- Meritocracy
- Rights vs Privileges
- Roles of Government

INSTRUMENTS

- Taxes
- Minimum Wage
- Healthcare System
- Economic System
- Income redistribution
- Many more

Triads Breakout # 1 – Experiences and Values

Each participant shares their response to these questions
(please give everyone equal time)

- What/who are the primary **experiences** and **individuals** that have shaped or influenced your **values** and **beliefs** that frame your thinking about **Income Equality**?
- Describe your **values** and **beliefs** about **Income Inequality**.

Dialogue

Curiosity

Language

Principles

Worksheet for Breakout #1

	#1-	#2-	#3-
Experiences and Influencers			
Values and Beliefs			

Triads Breakout # 2

Vision and Paths

Each participant shares their response to these questions
(please give everyone equal time)

- What is your personal **vision** of the desired **outcomes** for resolving Income Inequality?
- What are your suggested possible alternative **paths** to attain your desired outcomes for resolving Income Inequality?

Dialogue

Curiosity

Language

Principles

Worksheet for Breakout #2

	#1-	#2-	#3-
Vision and Outcomes			
Suggested Paths			

Wrap-up

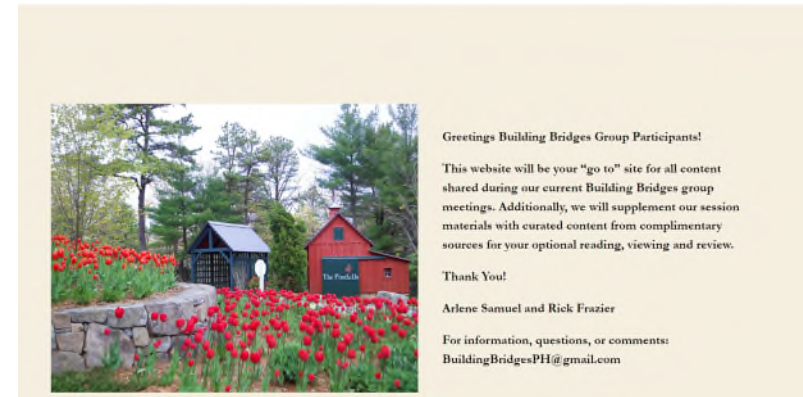
Summary of the night

Expectations for next Session #3 on 6/20

Go To:

www.BuildingBridgesPH.com

The Building Bridges Group at the Pinehills



- Session Details
- Slides, Handouts
- Complementary Content

Quotation Guideposts

Stephen Covey – 5th Habit

“Seek first to understand before being understood”

David Brooks, Political and cultural commentator and author

“My theory of social change is that society changes when a small group of people find a better way to live, and the rest of us copy them.”

Seth Godin – Author

“There are countless ways to make a point. You can clearly demonstrate that you are angry, smart, concerned, stronger, faster or more prepared than the person you’re engaging with.

But making a point isn’t the same thing as making a difference.

To make a difference, we need the practical empathy to realize that the other person doesn’t know what you know, doesn’t believe what you believe and might not want what you want. We have to move from where we are and momentarily understand where they are.

When we make a point, we reject all of this. When we make a point, we establish our power in one way or another, but we probably don’t change very much.

Change comes about when the story the other person tells themselves begins to change. If all you do is make a point, you’ve handed them a story about yourself. When you make a change, you’ve helped them embrace a new story about themselves.”

And even though it’s more fun (and feels safe, in some way) to make a point, if we really care, we’ll do the hard work to make a difference instead.”


Worksheets and Crib sheets to support the discussion Triads

print next 8 slides - 4 per page, 2 sided


Top Civil Discourse Principles

- **Take winning off the table**
- **Seek to understand**
- **Honor the fact of multiple truths**
- **Embrace your discomfort and vulnerability**
- **Prioritize relationships over ideas**


Take winning off the table

METHODS	TECHNIQUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUMILITY INSTEAD OF ALL KNOWING • APPRECIATE CIVIC VIRTUE AND ROBUST CITIZENSHIP • LOOK FOR COMMON GROUND • BE AWARE AND APPRECIATIVE OF FUNDAMENTAL AMERICAN TENSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberty vs equality • Strong central Govt vs decentralized Govt • Federalist vs anti-federalist • Color blindness vs color consciousness • Individual rights vs collective responsibility • Pluribus vs unum 	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <p>STOP SIGN: THIS IS NOT ABOUT WINNING</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HONOR THE PRIVILEGE OF DISCOURSE WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS DIFFERING VIEWS • RESPECT THAT THEY ARE TRUSTING YOU TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION WITH THEM • LOOK FOR SHARED STORIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you trace the earliest roots of your passion for this conversation? • Why are you here? What longing or curiosity made you say yes to this invitation? • What hope and fear do you bring to this conversation?


Seek to understand

METHODS	TECHNIQUES
<p>EMPATHY NOT STEREOTYPING</p> <p>LISTEN FOR UNDERSTANDING</p>	<p> STOP SIGN: SUSPEND THE BELIEF THAT YOU ALREADY HAVE THE ANSWER</p> <p>REMINDE YOURSELF THIS IS NOT ABOUT TALKING, IT'S ABOUT LISTENING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your only job is to listen for information and understanding. • You are not listening if you are thinking about your response <p>ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS WITH NO SET UP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you explain? • Tell me how you arrived at your thinking • Help me understand <p>ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS TO ENSURE YOU UNDERSTAND, AND TO DEEPEN THE CONVERSATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me what you mean when you use that word? • Would you put some bones on that idea for me? • Can you tell a story to illustrate that?

Honor the fact of multiple “truths”

METHODS	TECHNIQUES
<p>DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTHS AND FACTS</p> <p>YOUR TRUTH IS DEPENDENT UPON BELIEFS</p> <p>UTILIZE INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY</p>	<p> STOP SIGN: QUESTION IF YOUR REACTION IS TO FACT OR TO BELIEF</p> <p>SEPARATE FACTS FROM BELIEFS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask yourself what you absolutely know to be a fact, assume all else is subject to belief • Know your beliefs • Accept that there are limits to what anyone of us can know at any one time

Embrace your discomfort and vulnerability

METHODS	TECHNIQUES
<p>REDUCE DEFENSIVENESS</p> <p>DEVELOP SELF AWARENESS</p> <p>VALUE ABILITY TO BE OPEN</p>	<p> STOP SIGN: CHECK YOUR MOST IMMEDIATE REACTION AND TAKE TWO BREATHS BEFORE SPEAKING</p> <p>BODY CHECK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically: note if muscles are tensed, heart speeds, voice raises • Mentally: note if you have a fight or flight response • Emotional: note if you have demeaning or contemptuous thoughts

Prioritize relationships over ideas

METHODS	TECHNIQUES
<p>APPRECIATE AND VALUE DIFFERENCE</p> <p>SUSPEND JUDGEMENT</p>	<p> STOP SIGN: AM I REACTING WITH RESPECT FOR THE PERSON OR THE IDEA?</p> <p>SPEAK CIVILLY WITH HONESTY AND RESPECT</p> <p>DISAGREE ACCURATELY</p> <p>AVOID STONEWALLING, EXAGGERATION AND STEREOTYPING</p>

NORMAL RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

<p>FEEL THREATENED FEEL VULNERABLE FEEL FEARFUL</p>	<p>RESULT = FLEE or FIGHT</p>
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BODY RESPONSE	MENTAL RESPONSE	EMOTIONAL RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUSCLES TIGHTEN, STOMACH CLENCHES, FISTS MAY CLENCH • BLOOD VESSELS DILATE – HEAD BUZZES, FACE FLUSHES • BREATHING SPEEDS UP • HEART SPEEDS UP • VOICE RAISES • VISION NARROWS • AGGRESSIVE PHYSICAL STANCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATTACK TO WIN • CRITICIZE • JUDGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEMEAN • FEEL CONTEMPT • DESPISE

Full Spectrum Conversations

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