

Conversational Competence

OSI All Staff May 2010
Learning Session



Stable and Dynamic Situations



Predictable: higher degree of management through defined roles and separation; communication culture is following instructions

Source of Credibility: knowledge and expertise; experience and credentials

Accountability: the ability to create, measure and manage process

Chaotic: higher degree of leadership through adaptive roles and integration; communication culture is open conversation

Source of Credibility: visible learning and adjusting

Accountability: the ability to gain and maintain alignment through valuable conversations



The Quality of Interactions Determines the Rate of Value Creation

Dialogue is the basic unit of work in an organization.

The quality of the **dialogue** determines how people gather and process information, how they make decisions, and how they feel about one another and the outcome of these decisions.

—Ram Charan

Conquering a Culture of Indecision

The Intersection Model

Focus on the
intersection.

High velocity
value is at the
intersection.





Conversational Continuum

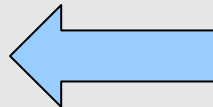
*POLITE
DISCUSSION*

*RAW
DEBATE*

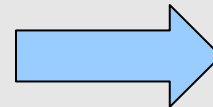
*SKILLFUL
DISCUSSION*

*AUTHENTIC
DIALOGUE*

low



VALUE



high

AVOID

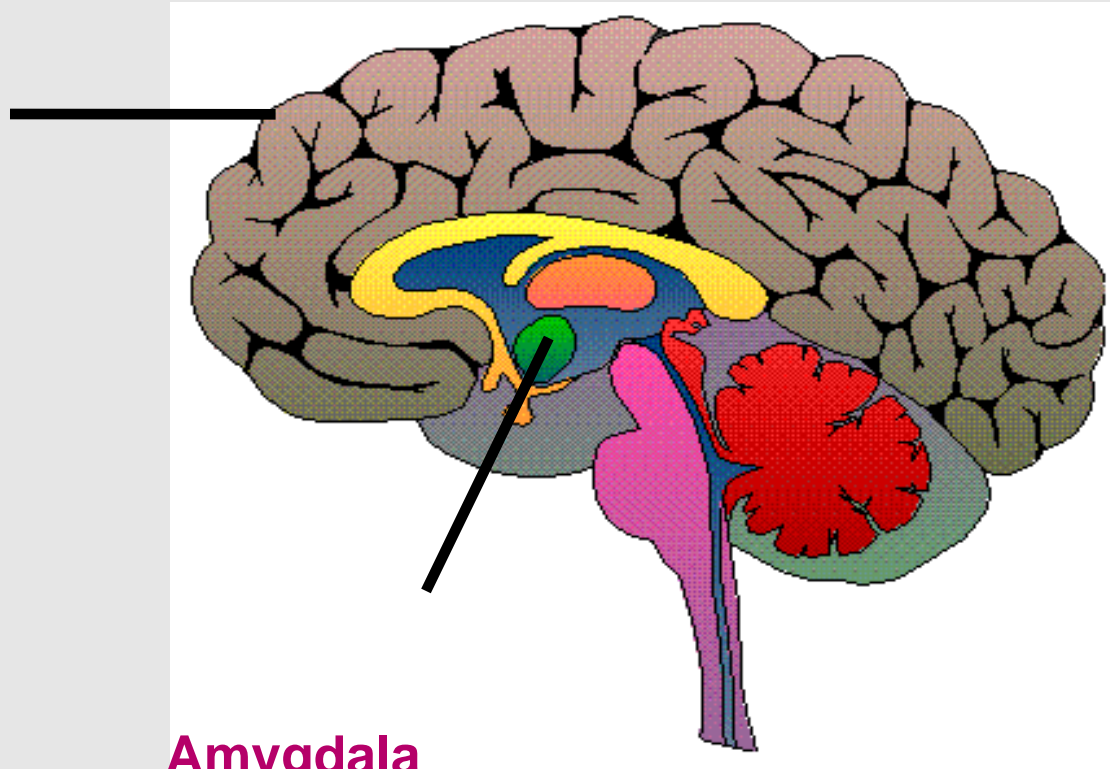
ARGUE

ACCURATE

APPRECIATE

THE HUMAN BRAIN

Neocortex

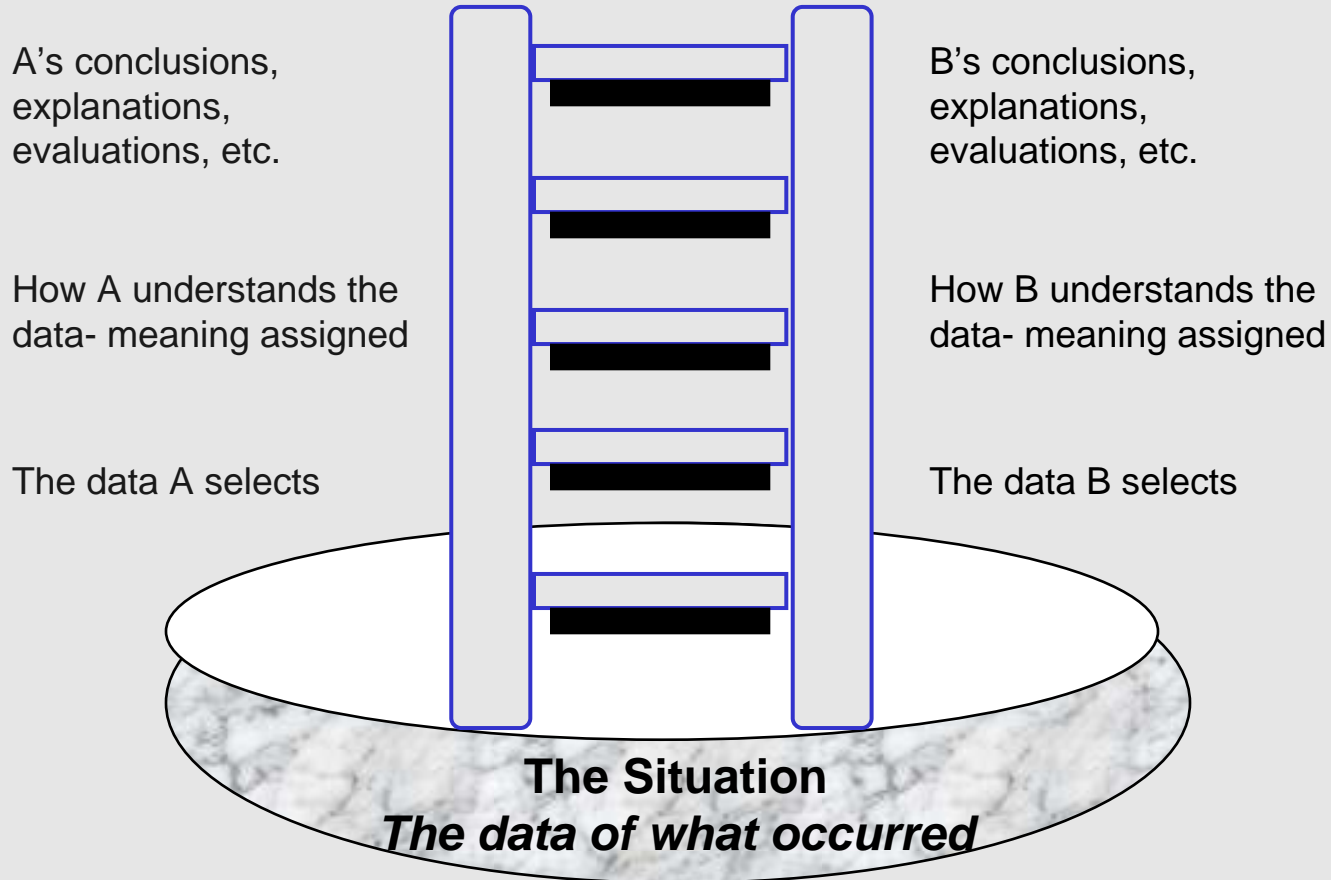


Amygdala

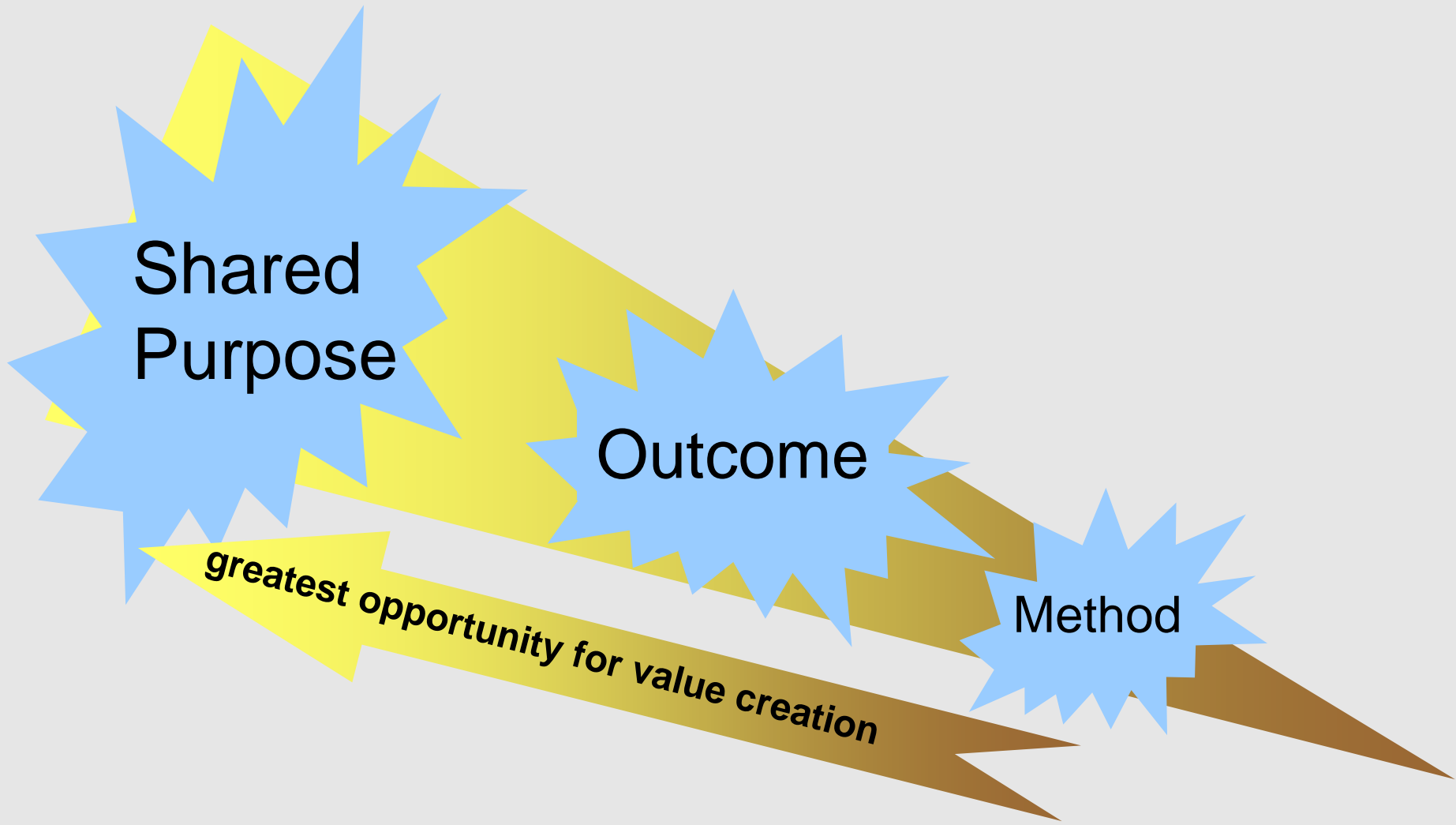
Fear triggers bio-reaction. The amygdala reacts to social or physical threat with four responses: FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE or APPEASE

The Ladder of Inference

Adapted from Action Design Associates. Based on Argyris & Schon, 1974.



Three Kinds of Intersections



Laws of Conversation

All humans have purposes and concerns.

When people perceive you threaten or are unaware of their purposes and concerns, they resist. **This is waste.**

When people perceive you are aware of and sensitive to their purposes and concerns, they communicate and collaborate. **This is value.**

Listening Focus

Bioreactive Listening

Protect and justify

- Fight, Flee, Freeze, Appease

Fear is the filter

- Listening *against*

Resistance → convince

- How can I prove them wrong?

Irrational judgment

- My reaction = the truth about you
- Listen at the speed of opinion

Valuable Listening

Learn

- Remember shared purpose

Purpose is the filter

- Listening *for*

Resistance → research

- What is important to them?

Intelligent judgment

- Hold lightly, research and compare
- Listen at the speed of comprehension

Elements of Effective Dialogue

- (a) Make friends with your amygdala. Realize that our bodies are wired for survival and not collaboration
- (b) Distinguish facts from explanations or interpretations in order to have more accurate conversations
- (c) Notice that we always listen through filters and select the one that will be most productive
- (d) Focus on listening first: realize that listening grants speaking