

Positive Leadership in a Polarized World

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Positive Leadership In A Polarized World

Our goal:

Identify successful strategies of leadership in polarized situations.

Our strategy:

Use practices from *Appreciative Inquiry*

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What *Appreciative Inquiry* is, and isn't.

- It does not “sugar-coat” or avoid reality
 - The “Apollo 13” example
- It can build resilience
- It can surface useful learning out of reflection
- It recognizes the best in people and experiences
- It works with diverse groups of people

Positive Leadership In A Polarized World



Positivity was not “normal” or “desirable” growing up in West Texas.

What I know to be true:

- All the wisdom we need is in the room.
- Personal examples are as useful as professional examples.
- Simple/low stakes examples can offer as much learning as complex/high stakes examples.

Think of a time anywhere in your life when you were involved in or closely witnessed an emotional situation or heated exchange of polarized opinions AND someone demonstrated successful leadership that wasn't just about taking physical control of a situation.

The required features are that

- there was a conflict,
- people held vastly different opinions, and
- someone somehow demonstrated leadership strategies that **diffused the negative spiral while maintaining integrity and generating a positive outcome**, no matter how small.

Let's get started!

- Pair up with someone to share stories
- Use the interview guide
- Relax into the conversation
- You will report the highlights of what your partner says

- Reconvene at your tables at 9:30 to debrief.

Debrief the Interviews

- Each person shares the highlights of the interview
- Each table will collect three favorite leadership strategies that are either
 - ✓ Foundational
 - ✓ Innovative
 - ✓ Just plain impressive

Report out at 9:50

Share your best strategies

At your original tables,

1. Share the highlights of the story you heard.
1. Collect the useful leadership strategies.
- 2. How do these stories and strategies inform your thinking about your colleagues or your work during these politically polarized times?**

The game-changers

****Learn to distinguish between interests and positions.**

Key Practice #1: Reframe to focus on strengths.

- Figure out the points of excellence imbedded in the situation

Key Practice #2: Ask positive questions.

- You will find what you look for.

Key Practice #3: Jointly develop a positive future.

- Use “yes...and” statements

Slow down for “Big Rock” decisions

- It affects a large number of people.
- It involves a significant investment of financial resources
- It is a “fork-in-the-road” decision.
- It affects a small number of people, but in a big way.
- It involves functions that support the community.
- It is something we can influence.
- It is highly visible or symbolic.

A Reminder

- You can only control your own behavior.
- Ask yourself:
How do I want to be in this situation?

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