



Smart Politics Topics

Coping with the GOP Culture War

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Presented by



Karin Tamerius, MD
Founder, Smart Politics
Political Psychiatrist

JoinSmart.org

Exercise #1

- 1) Introduce yourself
- 2) Why are you here?
- 3) What's one experience you've had relevant to today's workshop?



ACTION PLAN

Overview

- The strategic use of race, gender, and sexuality in GOP campaigns
- Quick Review
- Step-by-step practice
- Full Demo
- Q & A
- After Party

Racial Resentment, Dog Whistle Politics, and Strategic Racism

Racial Resentment

- Overt prejudice, hate, and antipathy toward people of color is NOT a primary driver of American politics
- More important is the perception among whites that they are falling behind and not getting what they deserve because people of color are receiving unfair advantages
- This perception is largely fueled by inaccurate racial stereotypes that are largely independent of racial animosity

Dog Whistle Politics

- The use of coded or suggestive language in political messaging to garner support without provoking opposition (e.g. being explicitly racist)
- The GOP uses dog whistles around race to stoke fear and elicit negative stereotypes around race without their voters knowing that's what they're doing
- Most voters don't consciously "hear" the racial content of the ads (while those of us on the left do)
- Classic example: Willie Horton ad

Strategic Racism

- Broad term for the use of a wide range of strategies to leverage racial resentment, anxieties, fears, and stereotypes for political gain
- The artificial controversy around Critical Race Theory is a recent example

Boomerang Effect

- Most voters embrace dog whistle messages because they don't "hear" the negative racial content
- Meanwhile progressive voters and pundits clearly hear the racial content and call out Republicans and their voters
- This makes voters confused and defensive. They see themselves as non-racist and believe progressives are just "playing the race card"
- This fuels further resentment and strengthens the power of the message

Exercise #2

What experiences have you had with one or more of the following?

- 1) Racial resentment
- 2) Dog whistle politics
- 3) Strategic racism
- 4) Boomerang effect



**The GOP is
now using the
same playbook
with other
prejudices**

- **Homophobia**
- **Transphobia**
- **Xenophobia**
- **Sexism**
- **Gender**
- **Sexuality**

Questions?

Review



Smart Politics Defined

- Advocacy method
- Person-to-person
- Conversation-based
- Psychologically-informed
- Grounded in democratic values

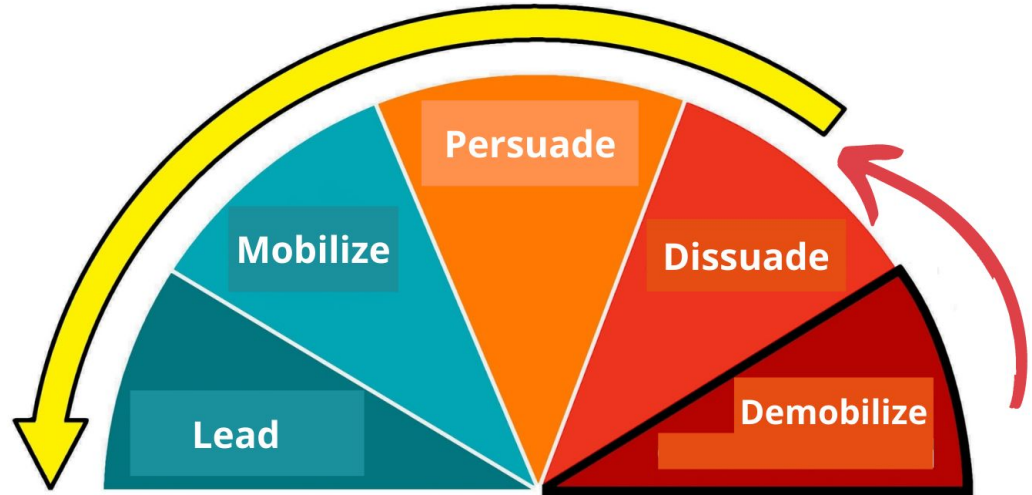
Why do Smart Politics conversations work?

- Respect autonomy
- Avoid triggering ego defenses
- Bypass the Belief Defense System
- Provide support
- Increase rationality, curiosity, empathy, self-reflection, and open-mindedness

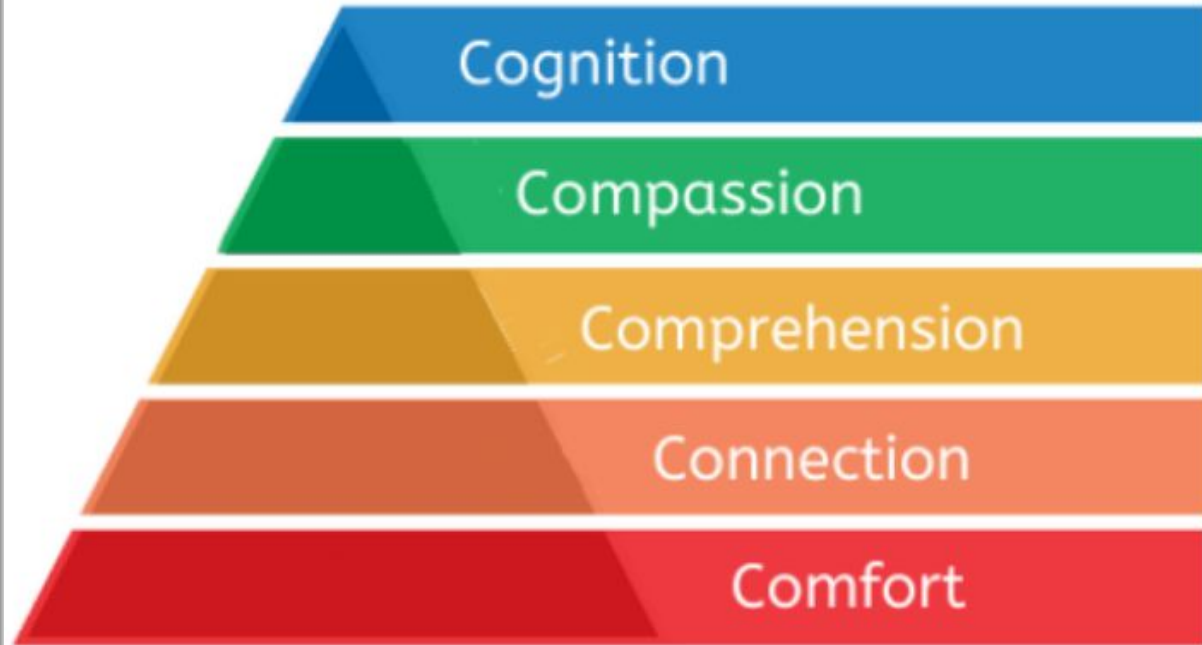
Spectrum of Allies

Spectrum of Allies

Strategic Objectives



BUILD THE PYRAMID



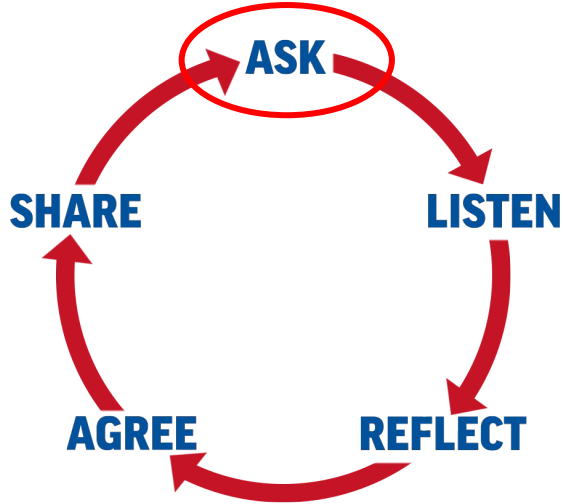
Change Conversation Cycle



Practice

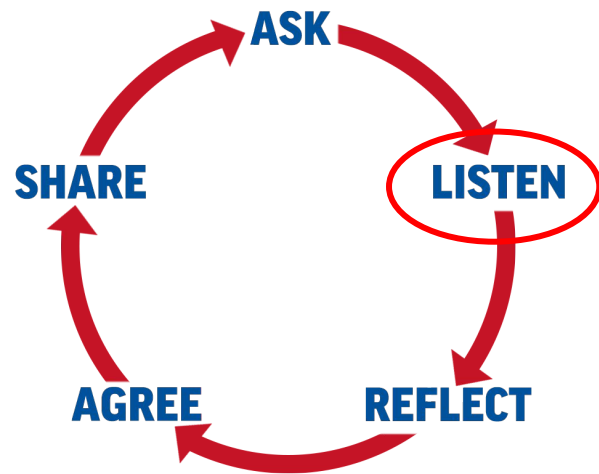
ASK

Exercise #3:

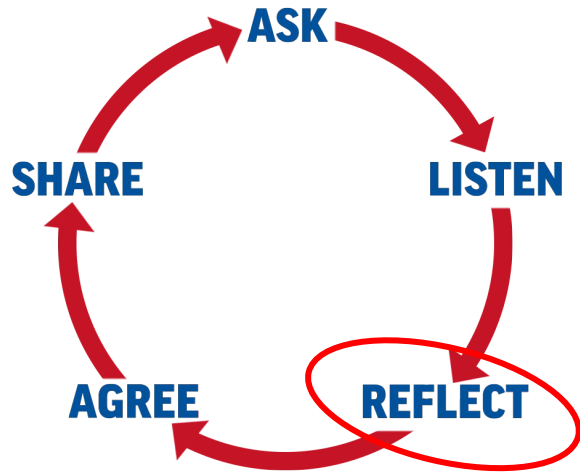


Your sister lives in Florida and voted for DeSantis and Trump. She is Republican-leaning, but considers herself an Independent. You suspect she's frightened by what's she's hearing from the GOP. How might you initiate a discussion with her to counter the influence of the culture war?

LISTEN



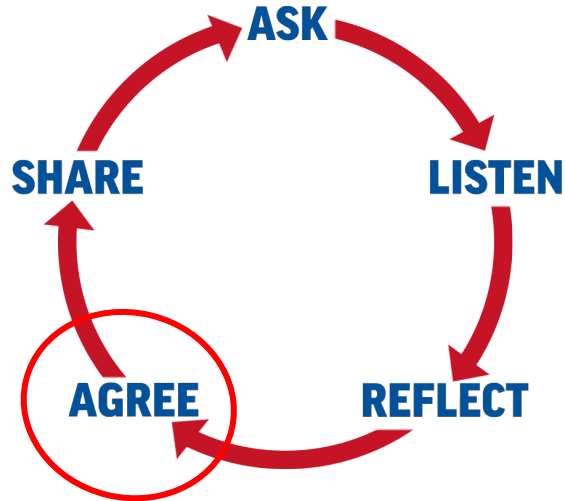
REFLECT



Exercise #4:

- Write a reflection
- Try to include text, subtext, and emotion

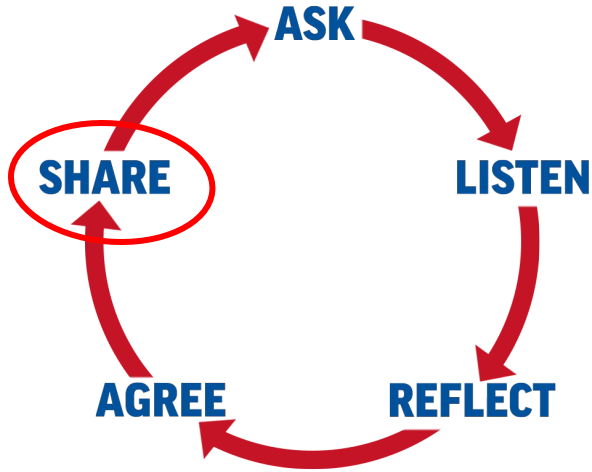
AGREE



Exercise #5:

- Make a list of three things you could agree with in the video
- Try to include
 - One emotion
 - One value
 - One goal

SHARE



Exercise #6:

Think of a personal story you that might help you achieve a short-term outcome goal in this conversation?

Demo

Q & A

The logo consists of two overlapping speech bubbles. The top bubble is blue and contains the word "SMART" in white. The bottom bubble is red and contains the word "POLITICS" in white.

SMART

POLITICS

UPCOMING:

- Summer Relational Organizing Practicum
 - “The Smart Politics Show” Podcast
 - Book Clubs
 - Sunday night Practice Group
 - Intro to Smart Politics webinar
-

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Thank you!

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After Party