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# The Secret to Persuading Republicans

Smart Politics Tools for  
Influencing Hearts and Minds

April 10, 2024

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# Presented by

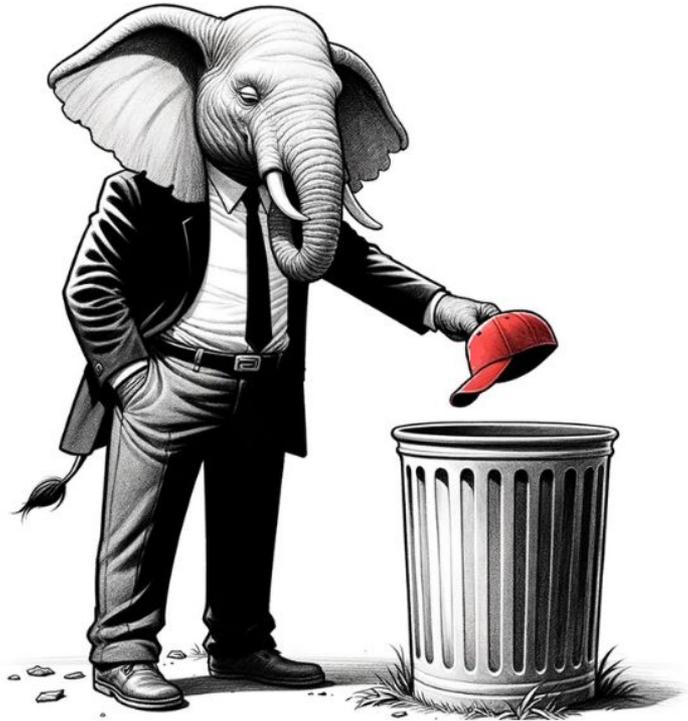


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# AGENDA

- Why is political persuasion so hard?
- How does persuasion work?
- What's the secret to persuading Republicans?
- How can you get started?
- Q & A
- **BONUS: AI Angry Uncle Bot**

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**Why is it so hard to  
persuade Republicans?**

# Paradox of Persuasion

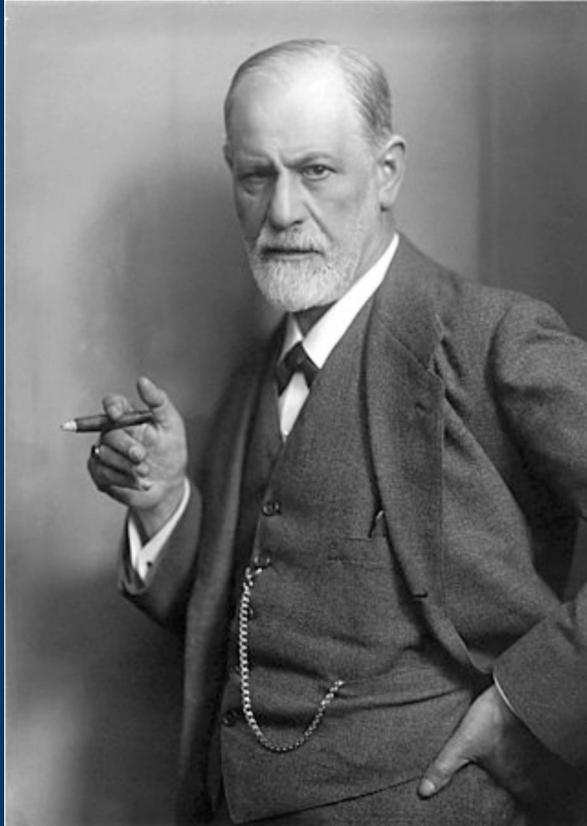
The more we try to  
persuade people,  
the less influence  
we have.

# Reactance



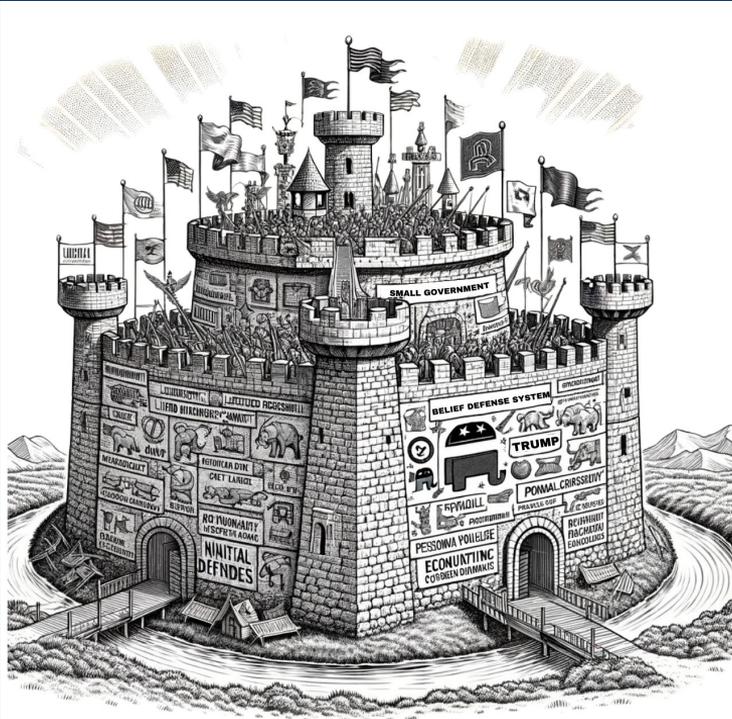
- Psychological aversion to being controlled by others
- Causes people to take action to show their autonomy
- It's why two year-olds say "no"

# Ego Defenses



- Safeguards to protect us from having bad thoughts/feelings
- Protects self-esteem and maintains emotional stability
- Includes denial, projection, rationalization, intellectualization

# Belief System Defenses



- Safeguards to maintain a stable worldview
- Confirmation bias
- Rationalization
- Dismissive of alternative evidence and arguments

# Three Things That Don't Work

- Telling people what to do
- Making people feel bad about themselves
- Attacking their view of the world with facts and reasoned arguments

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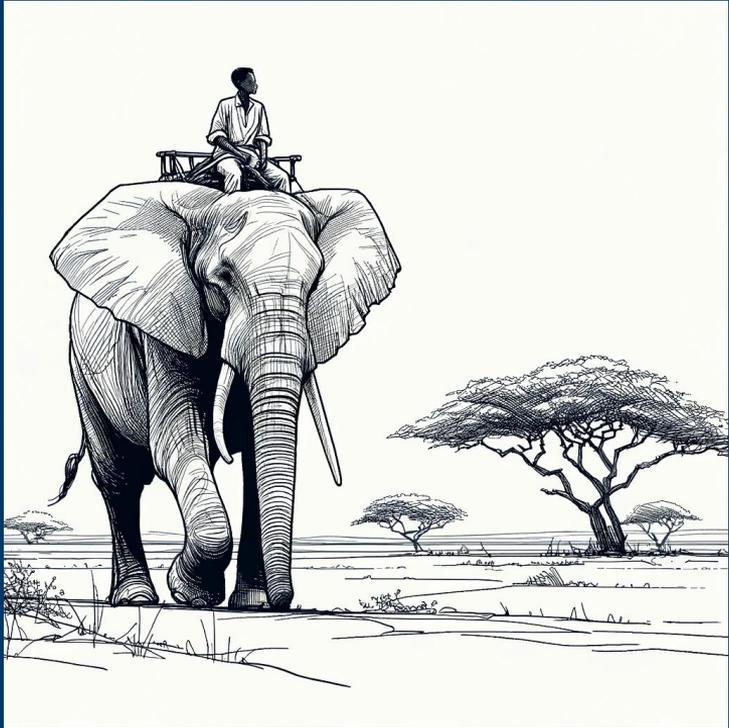
**How does  
persuasion work?**

# Dual Process Model



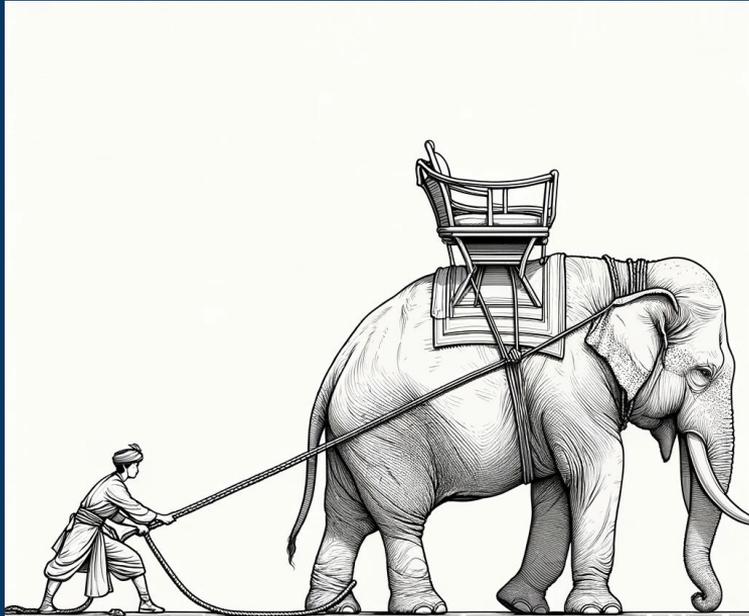
- The brain processes persuasive messages in two ways:
  - Fast, intuitive, gut-level assessments
  - Slow, reasoned, effortful analysis
- Intuition is more important than reason

# Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant



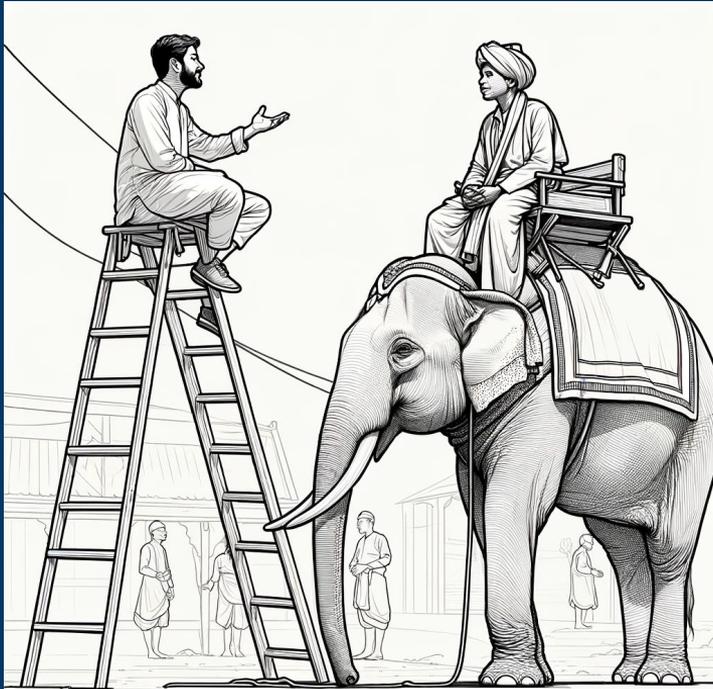
- The elephant is persuaded by gut feelings
- The rider is persuaded by facts and reason

# Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant



- If the elephant doesn't want to go somewhere, the rider can't force it
- So, while the reasonable rider seems in charge, the emotional elephant has all the power

# Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant



## So what's the problem?

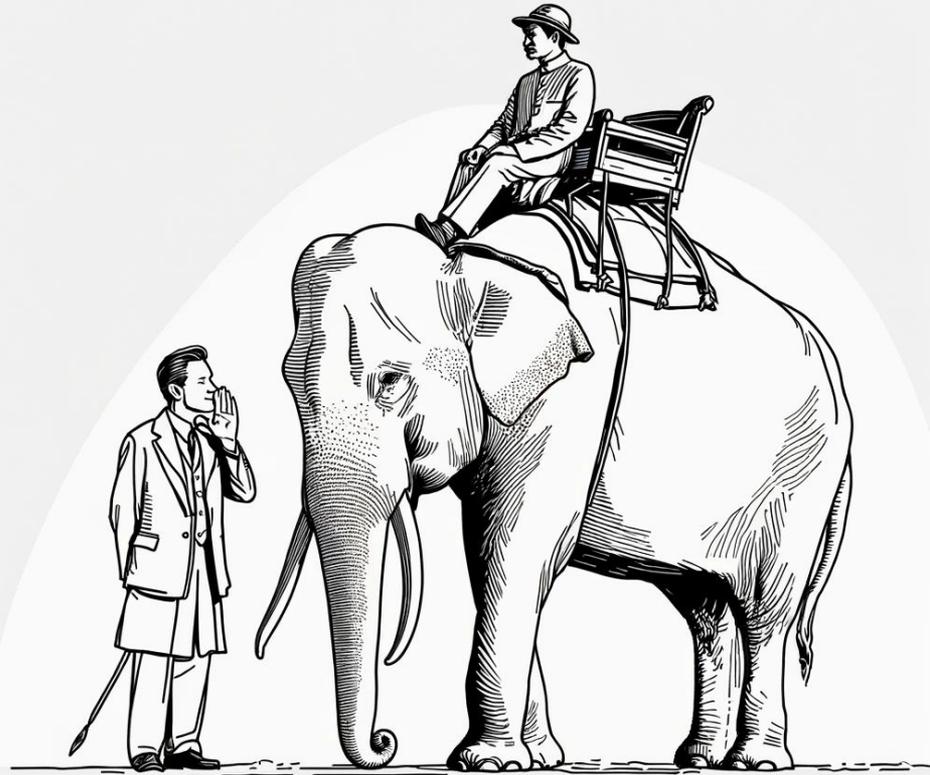
- Successful influence is mostly about persuading elephants
- But we squander our time and energy trying to persuade riders

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**What's the secret to  
persuading Republicans?**

**Stop talking  
with riders.**

**Communicate  
with elephants!**



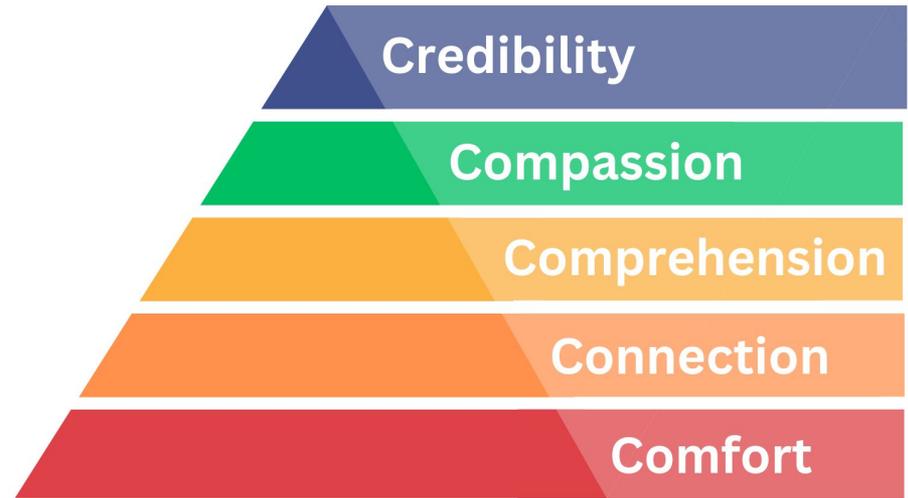
# Key characteristics of elephants

- Skittish
- Emotional
- Social
- Uninterested in facts and reason
- Respond more to behavior and tone than words
- Set in their ways
- Wary of novelty

What's the secret  
to persuading  
elephants?

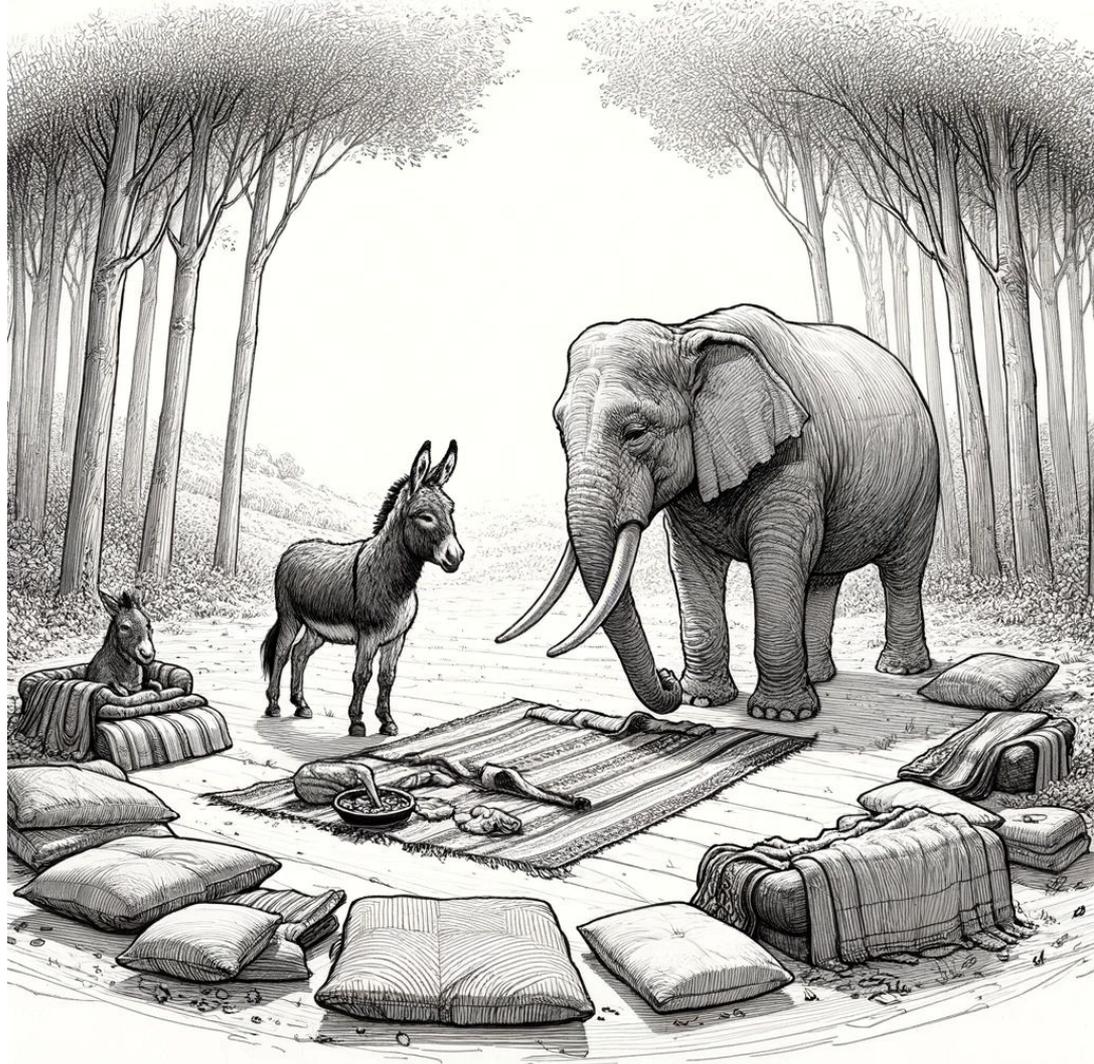
Earn their trust.

## Trust Pyramid



# Comfort

Make them feel  
safe-enough to  
talk with you



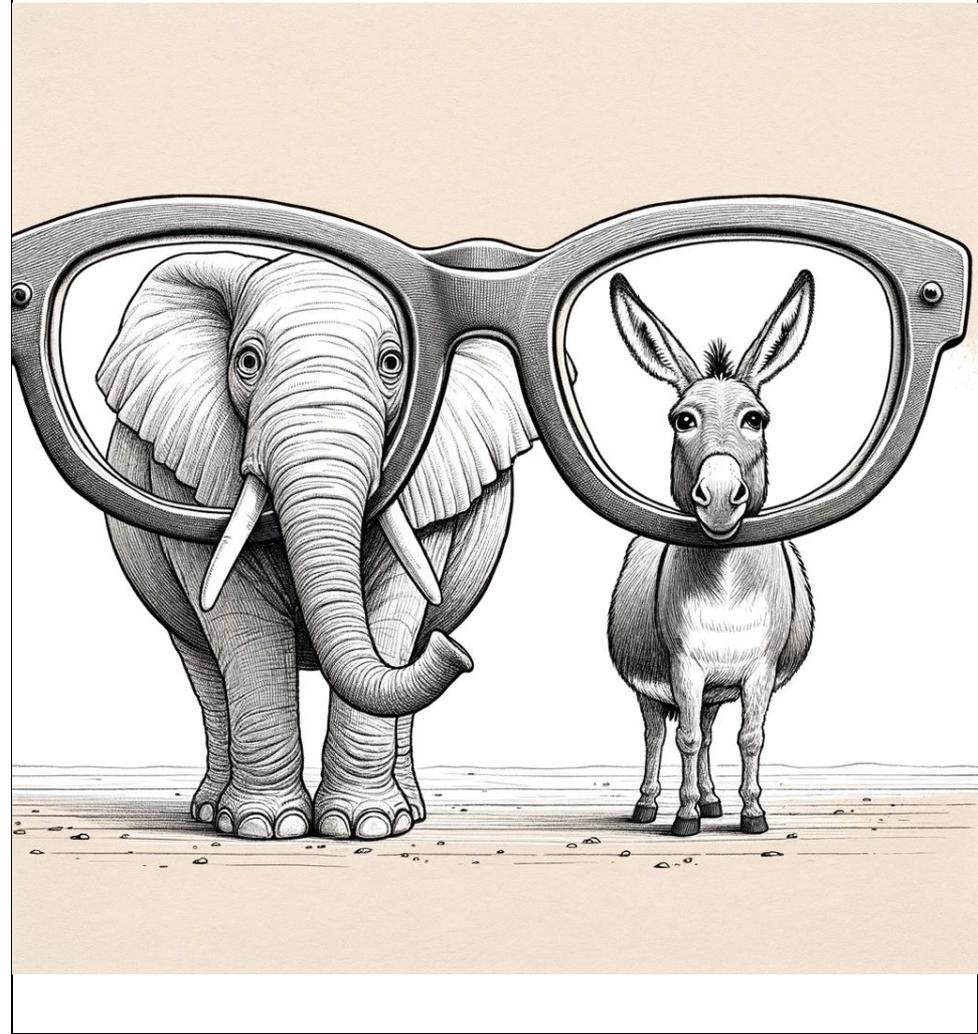
# Connection

Find ways you are alike and come to like one another as people.



# Comprehension

Learn their point of view and be able to see the world from their perspective.



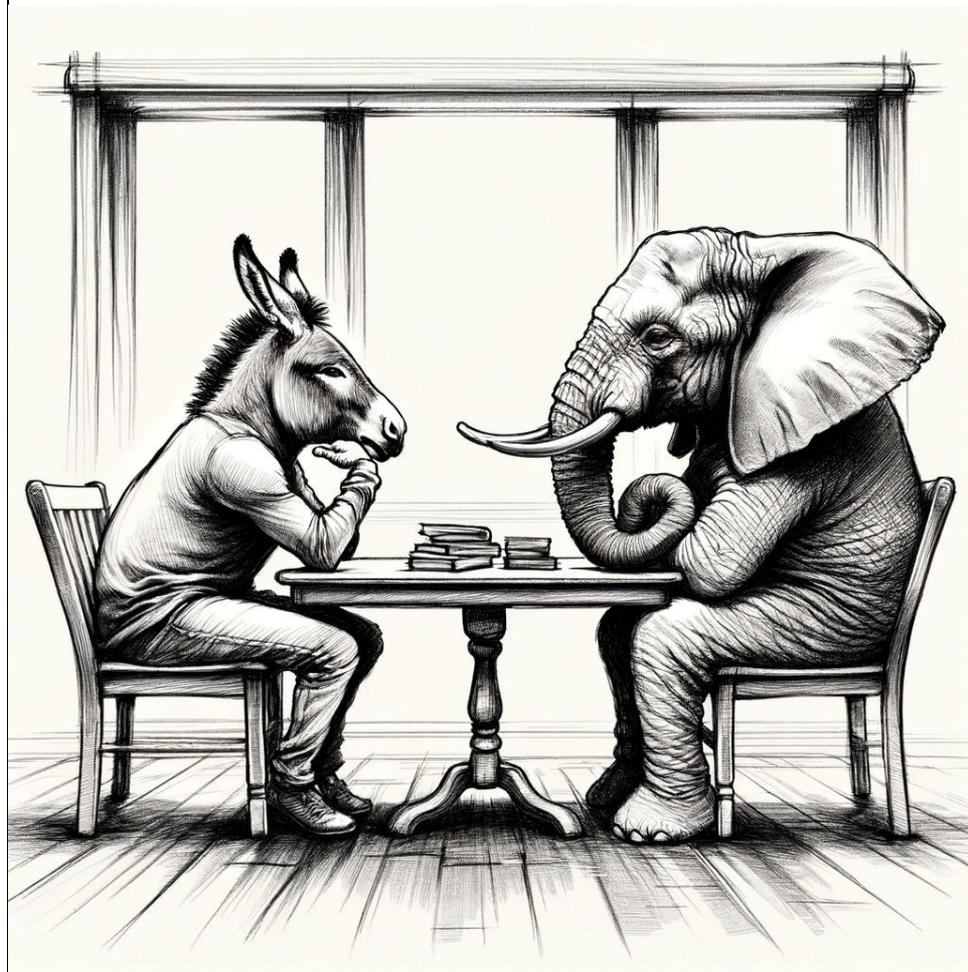
# Compassion

Show you care  
about them and  
don't want them  
to suffer.

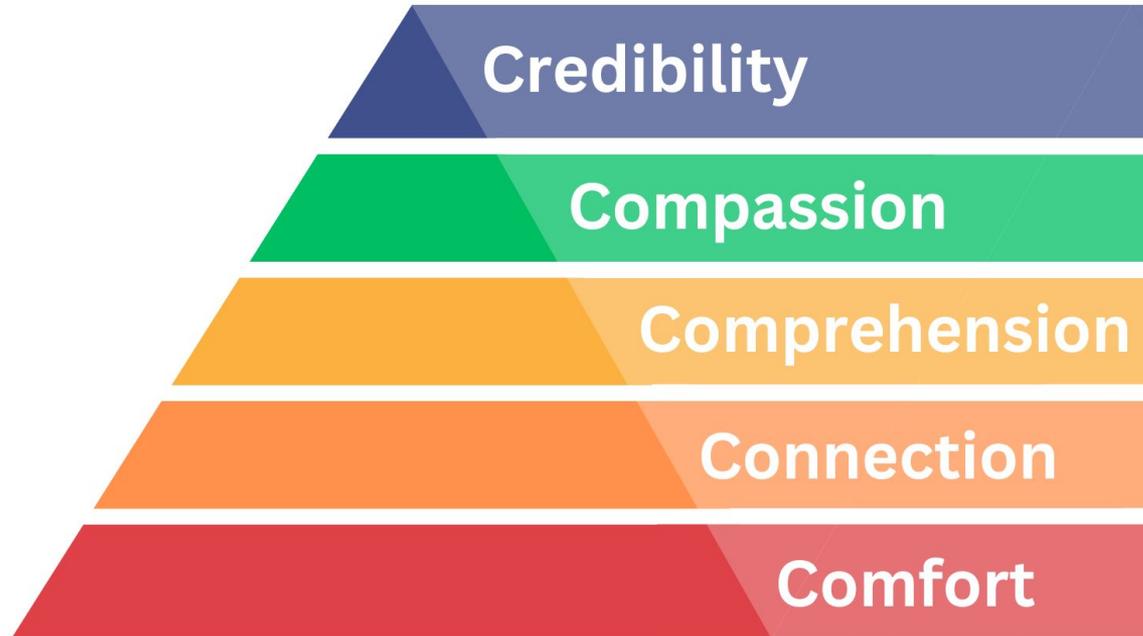


# Credibility

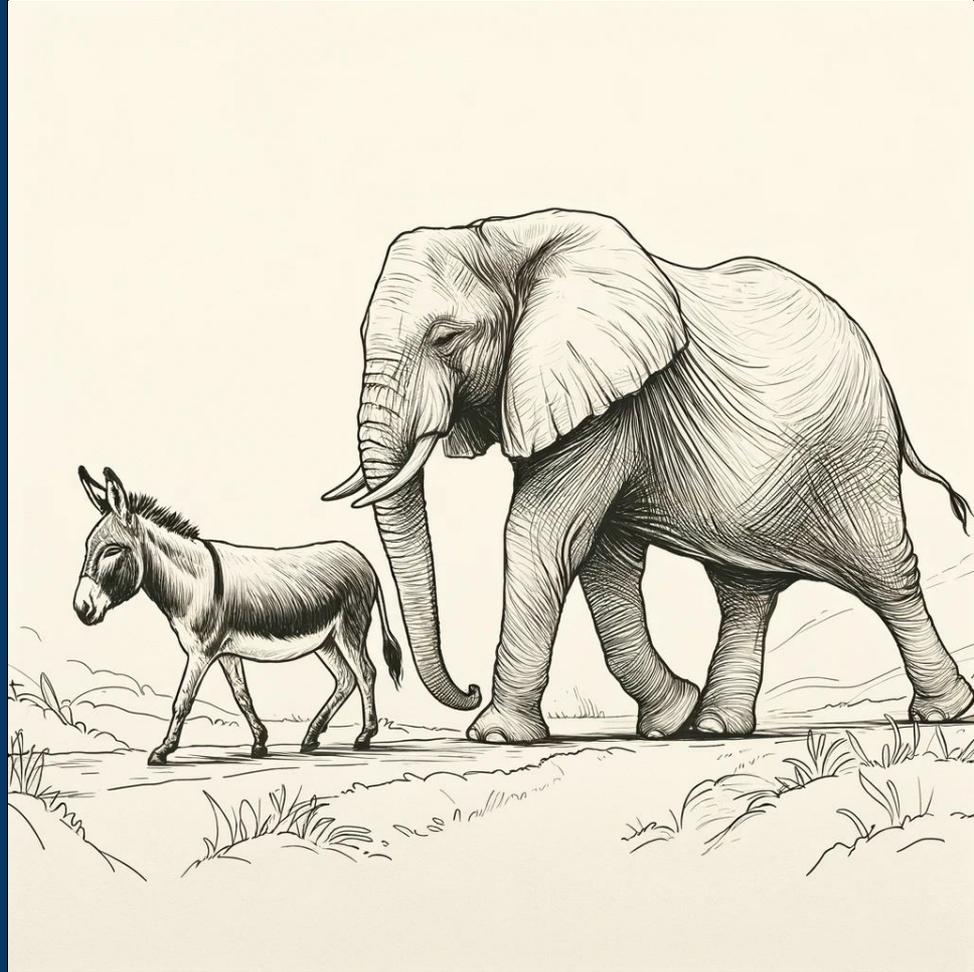
Show you are doing your best to be rational, unbiased, and open-minded.



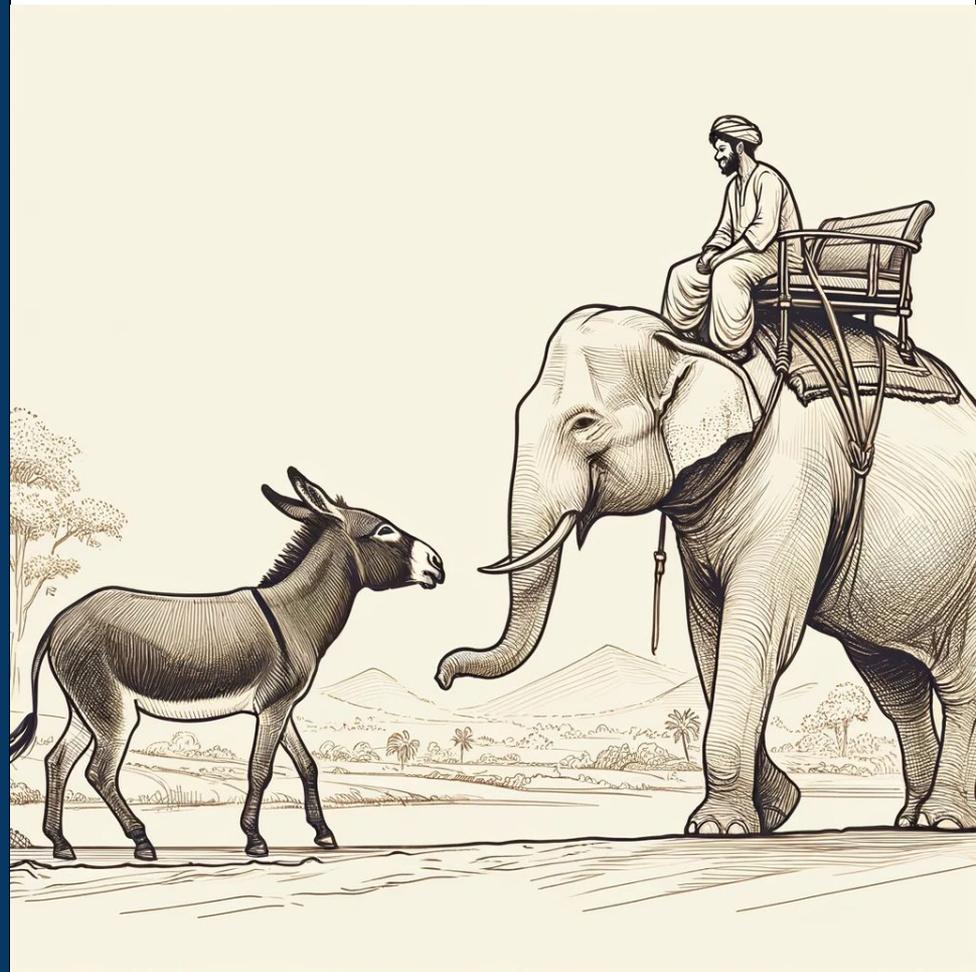
# What happens when you earn the elephant's trust?



The elephant  
*WANTS* to  
follow you!



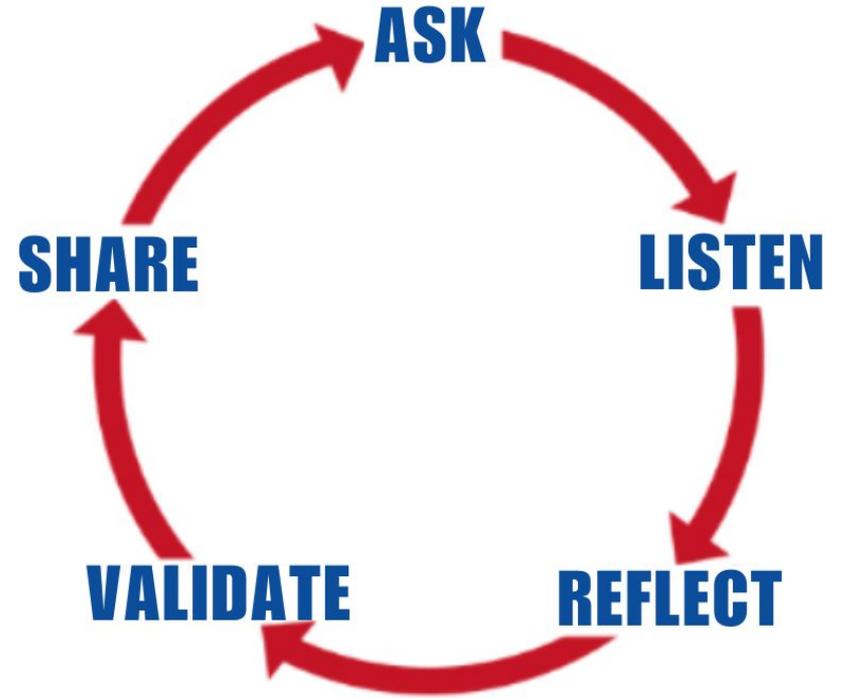
***NOW*** you can talk  
with the rider



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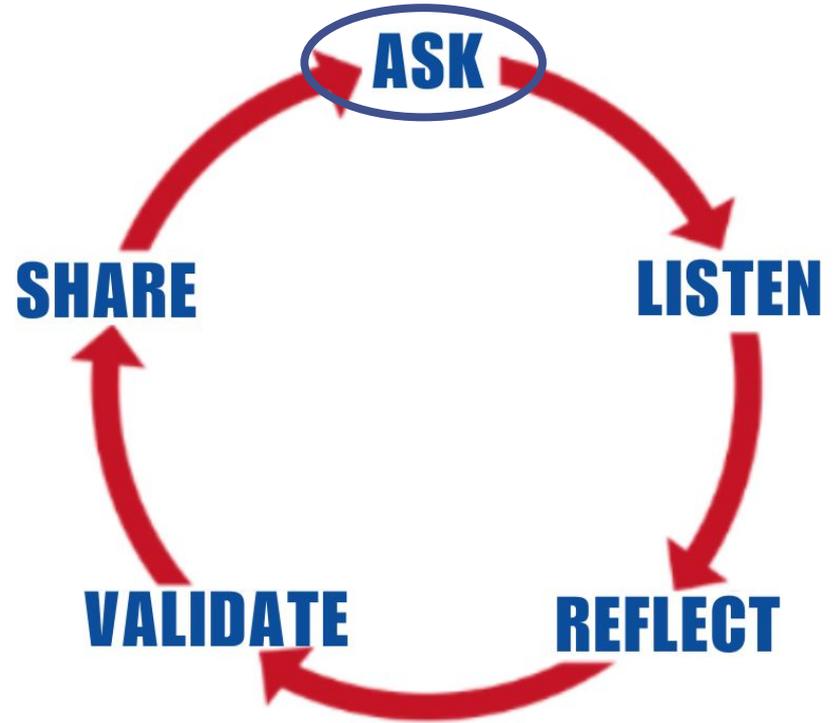
**How can you  
get started?**

# Persuasion Conversation Cycle



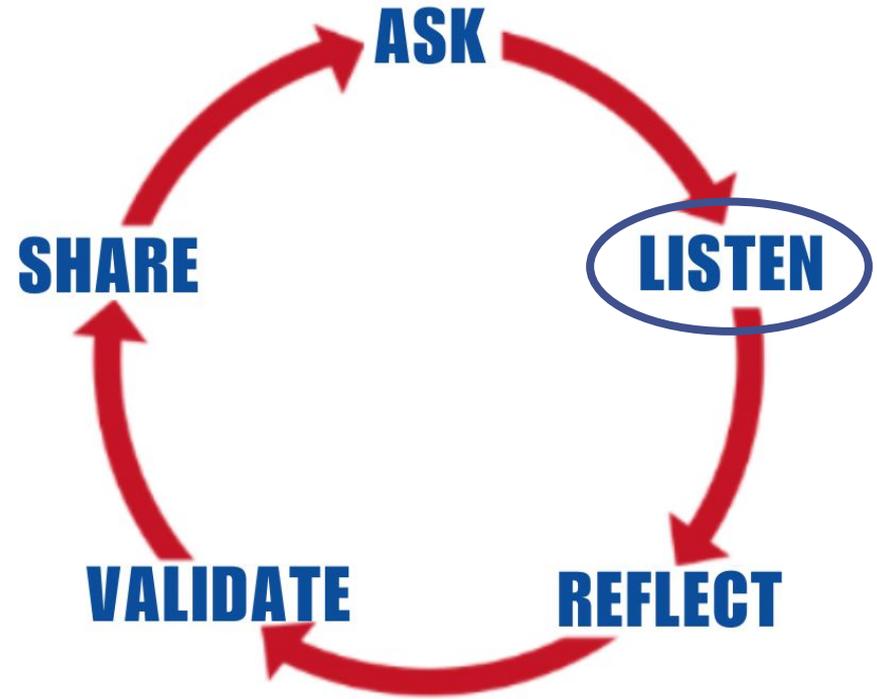
# Ask

- Open-ended
- Nonjudgmental
- Curious



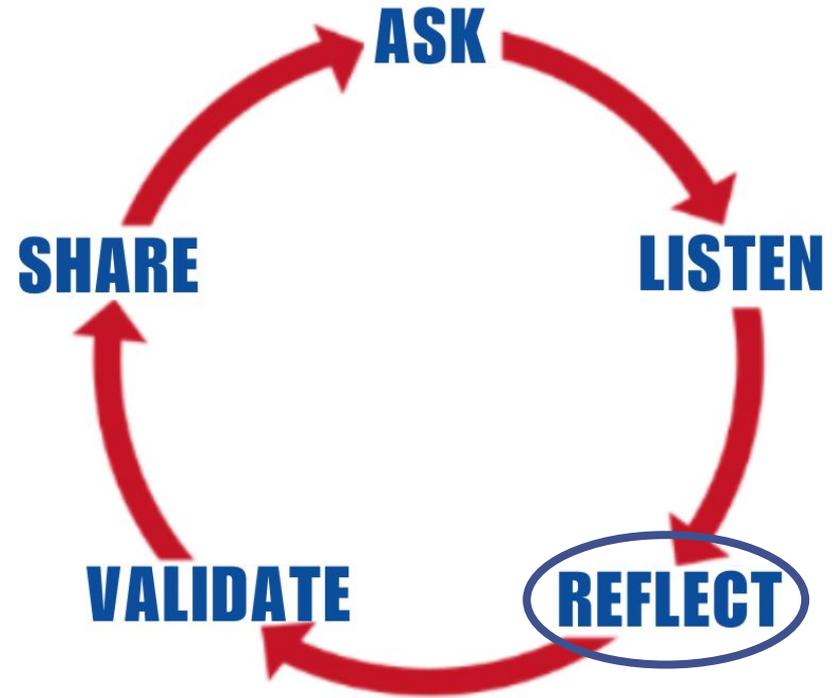
# Listen

- Pay attention
- Seek to understand
- Don't interrupt
- Let them talk as long as they want



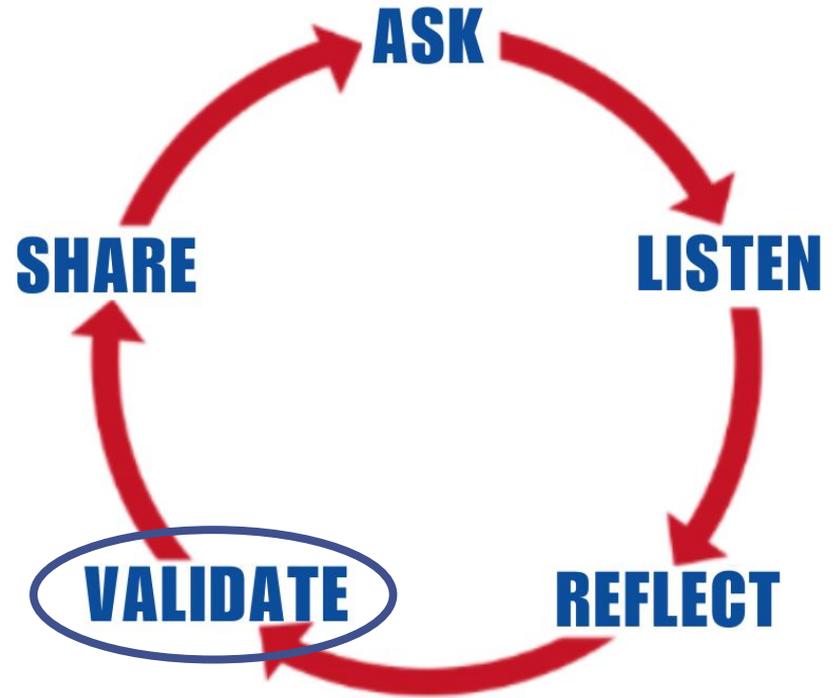
# Reflect

- Summarize
- Name feelings
- Acknowledge implicit content



# Validate

- Acknowledge the legitimacy of their beliefs and feelings
- Accept their experience
- Agree where possible
- Describe a time when you felt the same



# Share



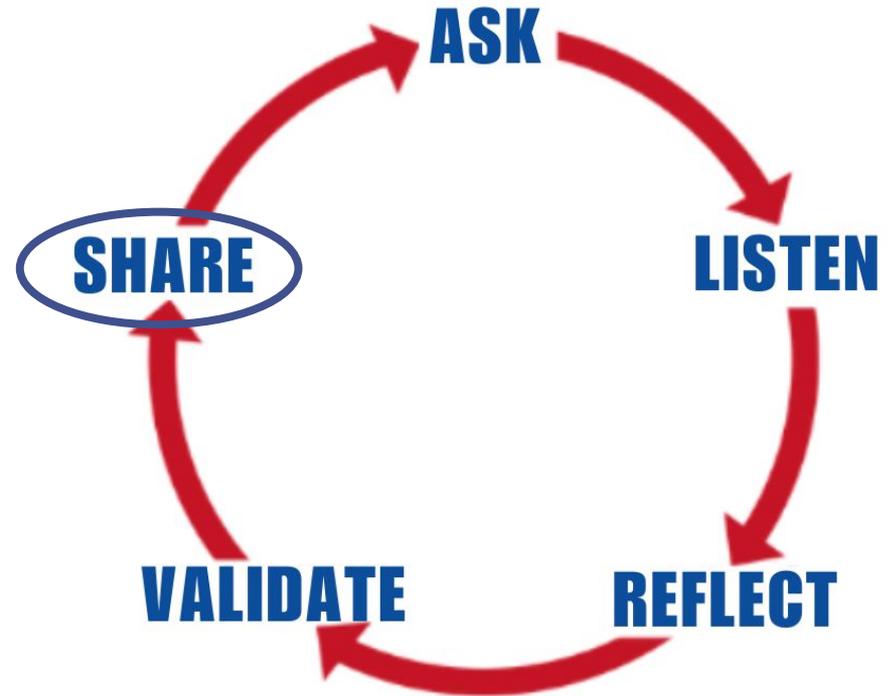
Don't argue with facts or reason



Shift the narrative with a personal story or anecdote



Share information only after getting consent



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**Before AUB...**

Put your  
new skills  
to work!



[Linktr.ee/itsnottoolateproject](https://linktr.ee/itsnottoolateproject)