



The Secret to Persuading Republicans

Smart Politics Tools for
Influencing Hearts and Minds

May 8, 2024



Presented by



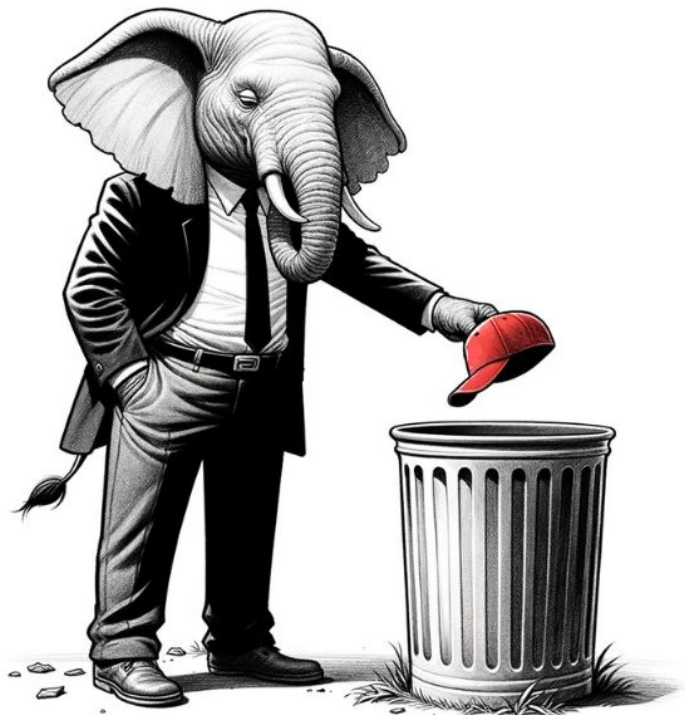
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AGENDA

- **The 3 Secrets to Persuading Republicans**
 - **First, Do No Harm**
 - **Second, Talk to the Elephant, Not the Rider**
 - **Third, Facilitate Change, Don't Force It**
- **Q & A**
- **BONUS: AI Angry Uncle Bot**

The Three Secrets to Persuading Republicans

Secret #1

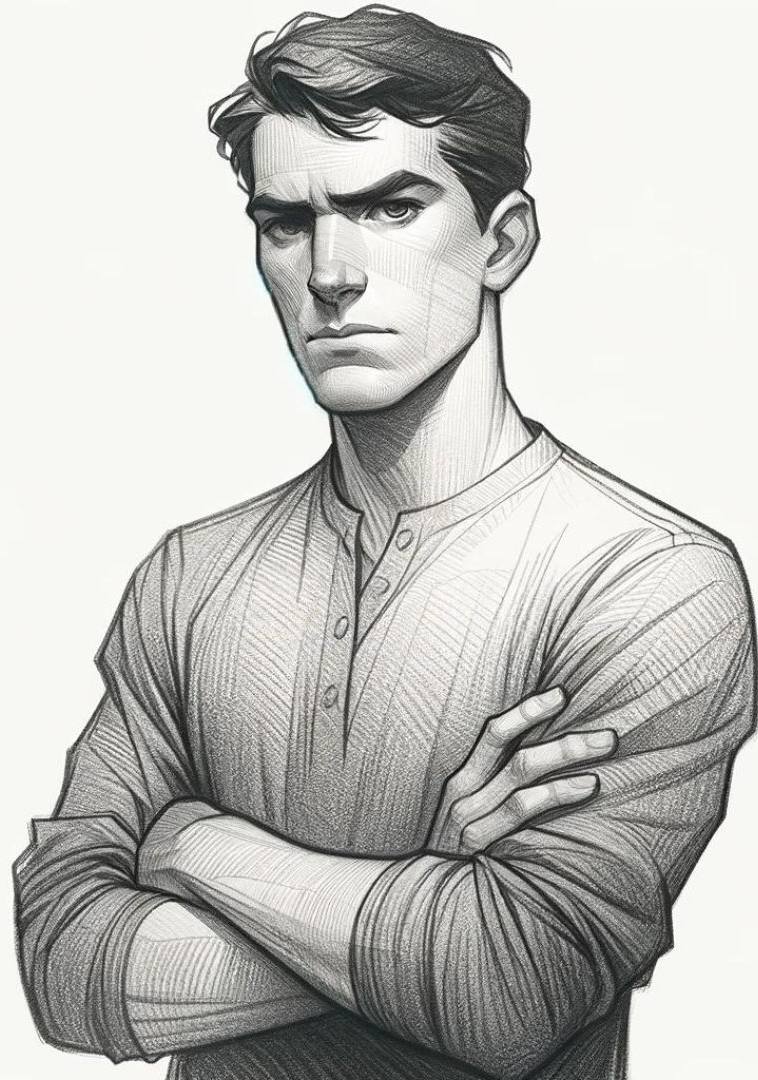
First, Do No Harm

Paradox of Persuasion

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

Why?

Because people
easily become
defensive.



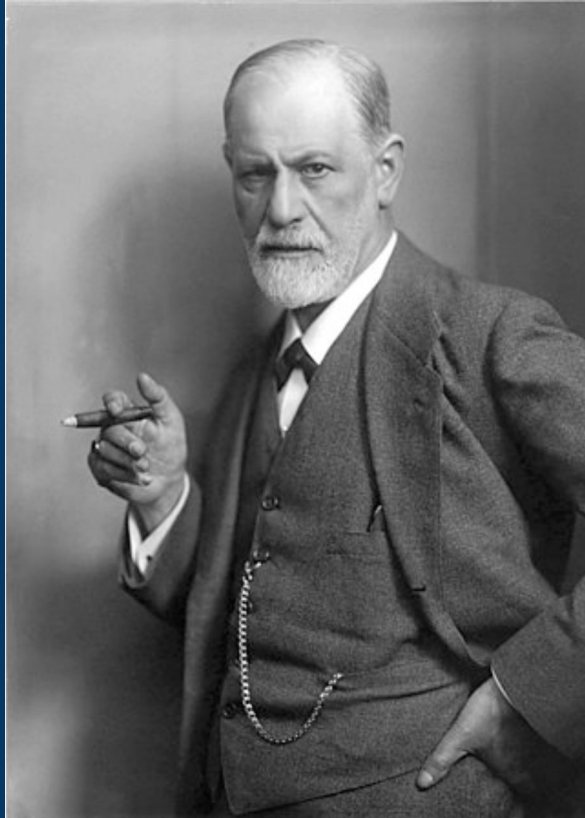
The Four Kinds of Psychological Defenses

Reactance



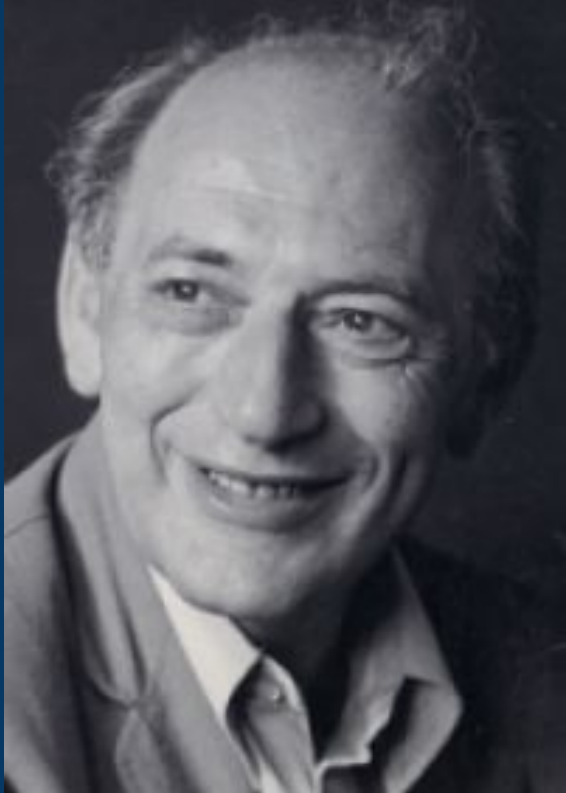
- Psychological aversion to being controlled by others
- Causes people to take action to show their autonomy
- It's why two year-olds say "no"

Ego Defenses



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

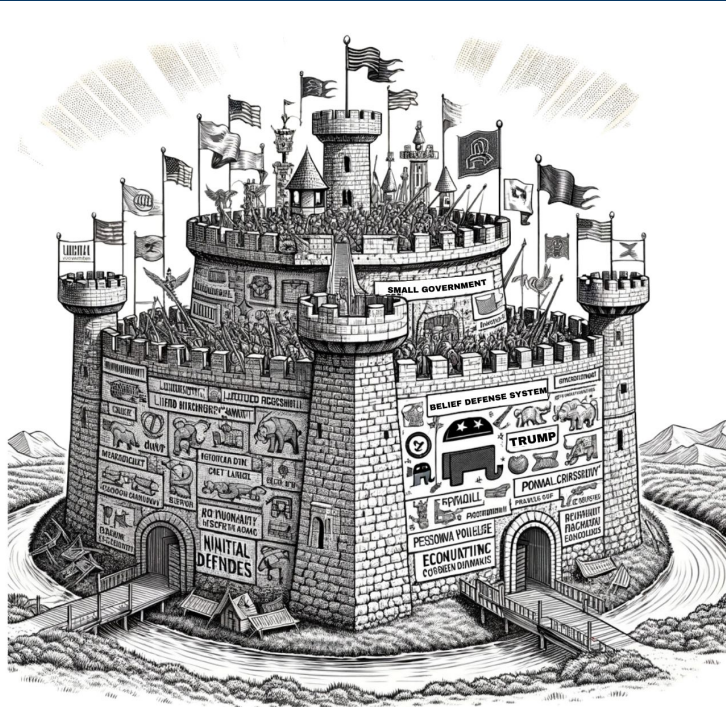
Group Defenses



Henri Tajfel

- Safeguards to protect us from losing our social identity and connection to our group
- Protects belonging and social status
- Includes idealization of ingroup and denigration of outgroup

Belief System Defenses



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

Four Things That Don't Work

(and May Actually Hurt)

- Telling people what to do
- Making them feel bad (especially about themselves)
- Threatening their social identity or sense of belonging
- Attacking their worldview (even with facts and reason)

Secret #2

**Talk to the Elephant,
Not the Rider**

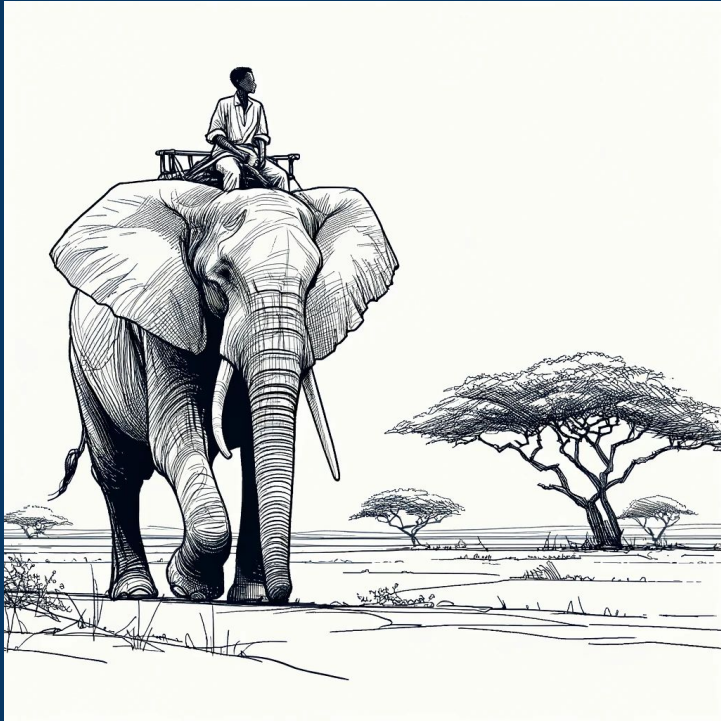
How persuasion works



Dual Process Model

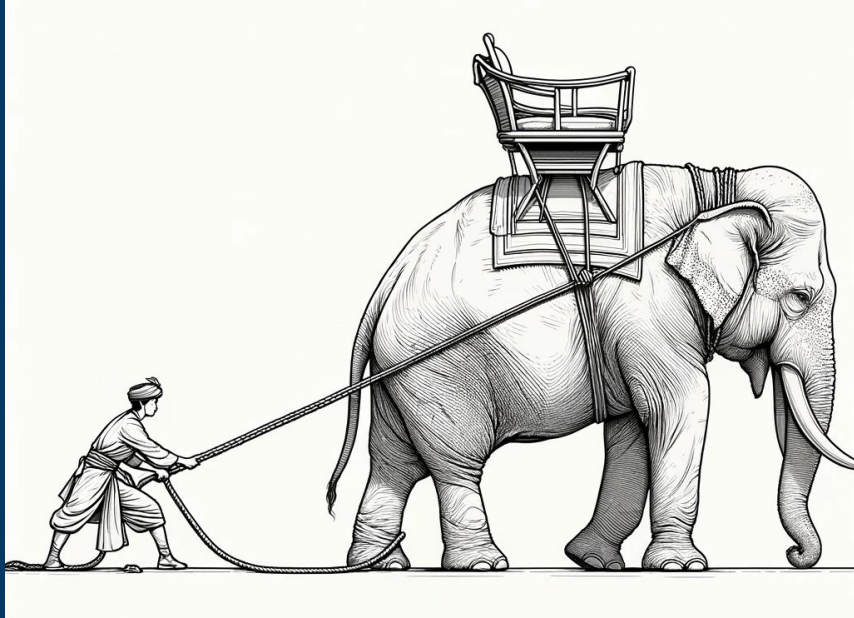
- The brain processes persuasive messages in two ways:
 - Fast, intuitive, gut-level assessments
 - Slow, reasoned, effortful analysis
- Intuition is more important than reason

Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant



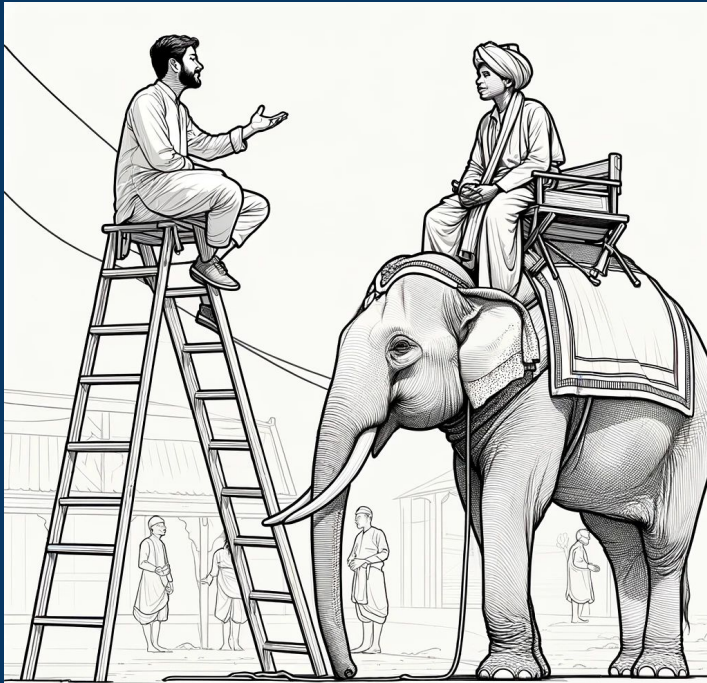
- Think of the mind as divided into two parts, like a rider on an elephant
- The elephant is persuaded by gut feelings
- The rider is persuaded by facts and reason

Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant



- If the elephant doesn't want to go somewhere, the rider can't force it
- The reasonable rider seems in charge
- But the emotional elephant has all the power in the relationship
- Worse still, the rider tries to hide their impotence by rationalizing the elephant's desires

Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant

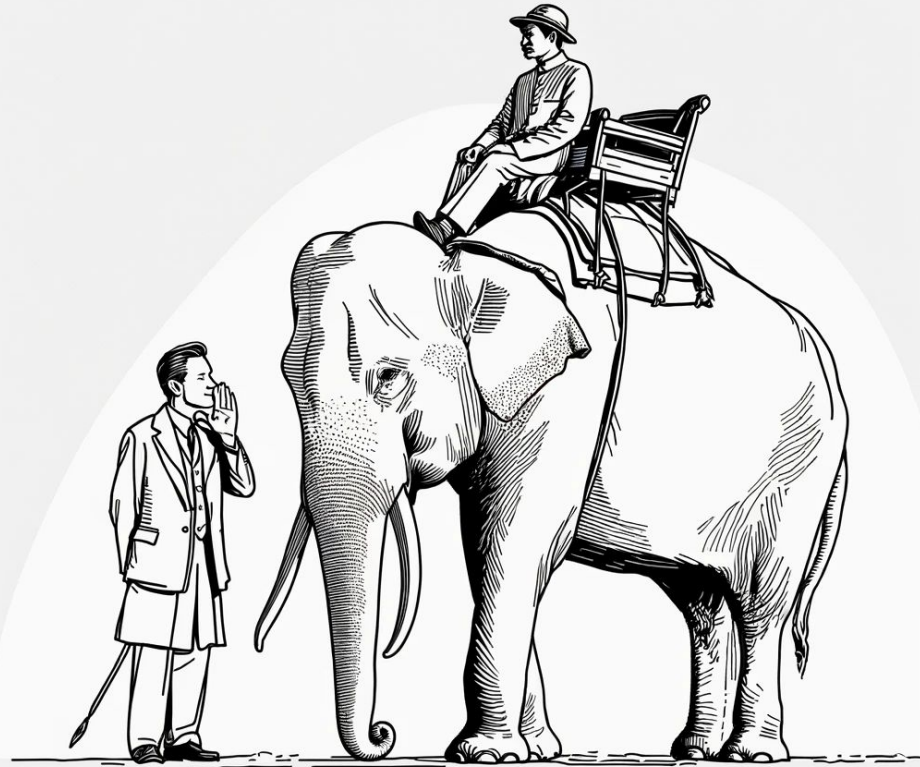


So what's the problem?

- Successful influence is mostly about persuading elephants
- But we waste our time and energy trying to persuade riders
- Often scaring elephants in the process

**Stop talking
with riders.**

**Communicate
with elephants!**



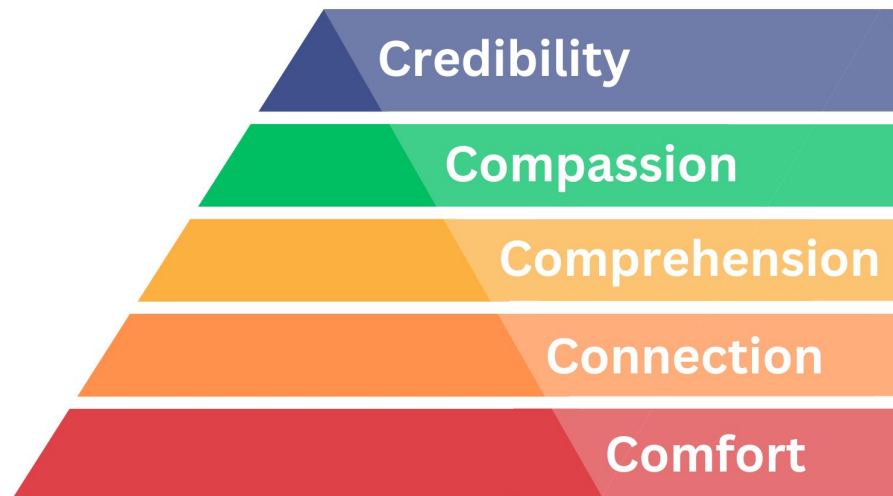
Key characteristics of elephants

- Skittish
- Emotional
- Social
- Uninterested in facts and reason
- Set in their ways

What's the secret
to persuading
elephants?

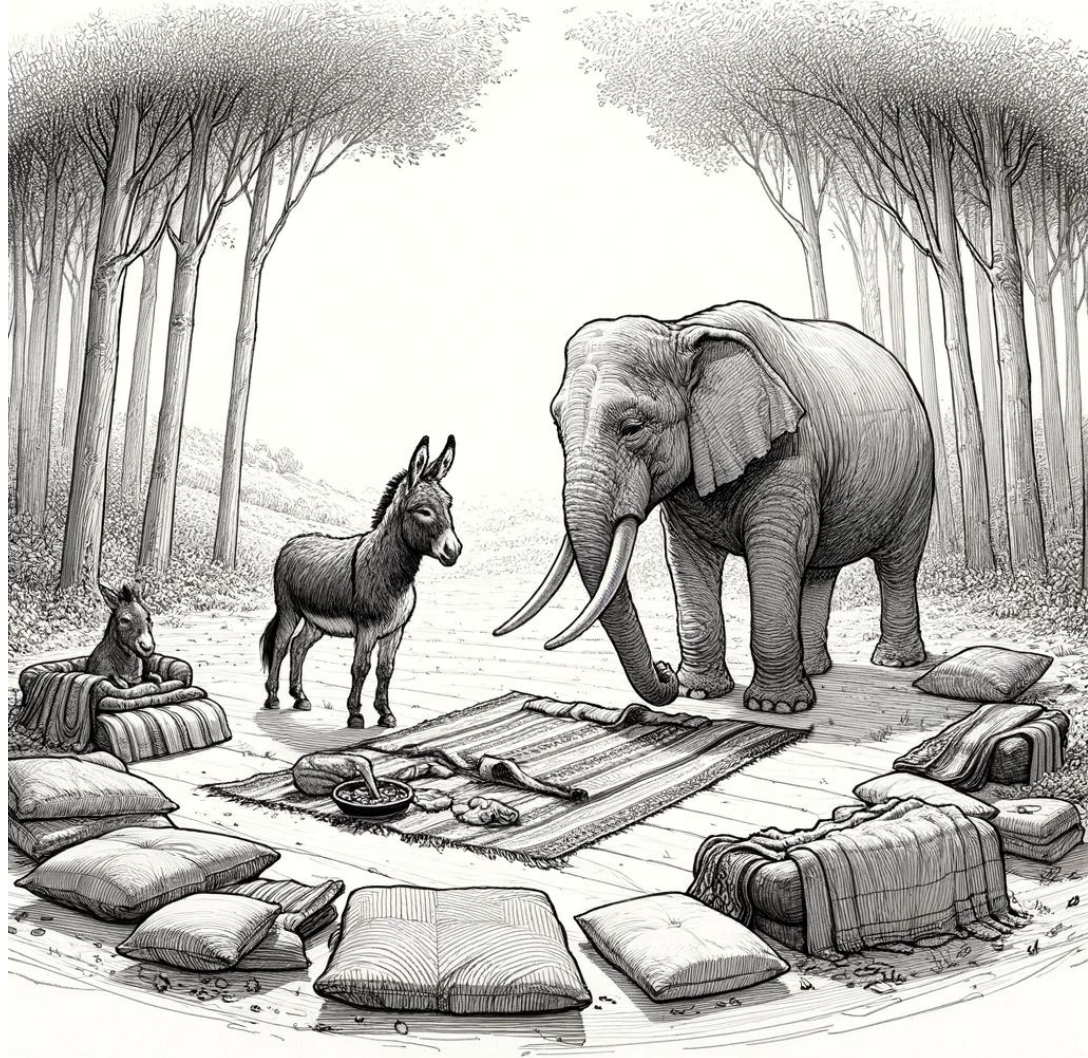
Earn their trust.

Trust Pyramid



Comfort

Make them feel
safe-enough to
talk with you



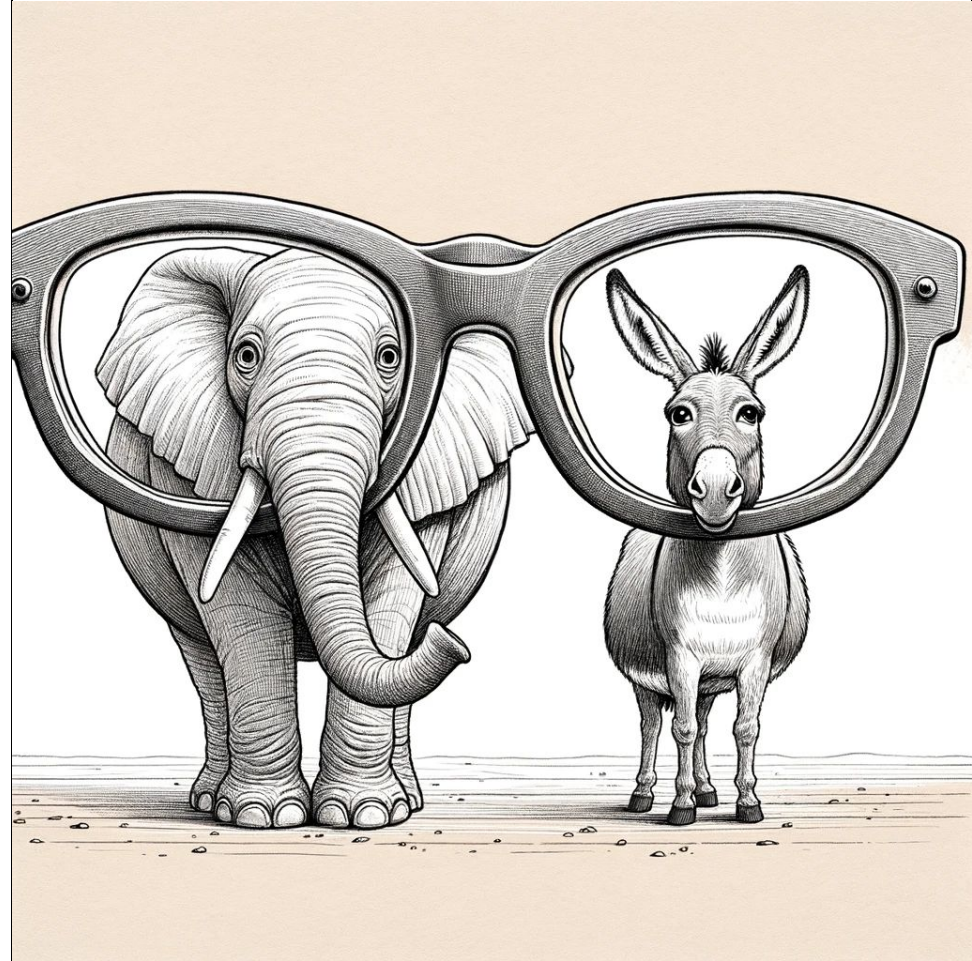
Connection

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.



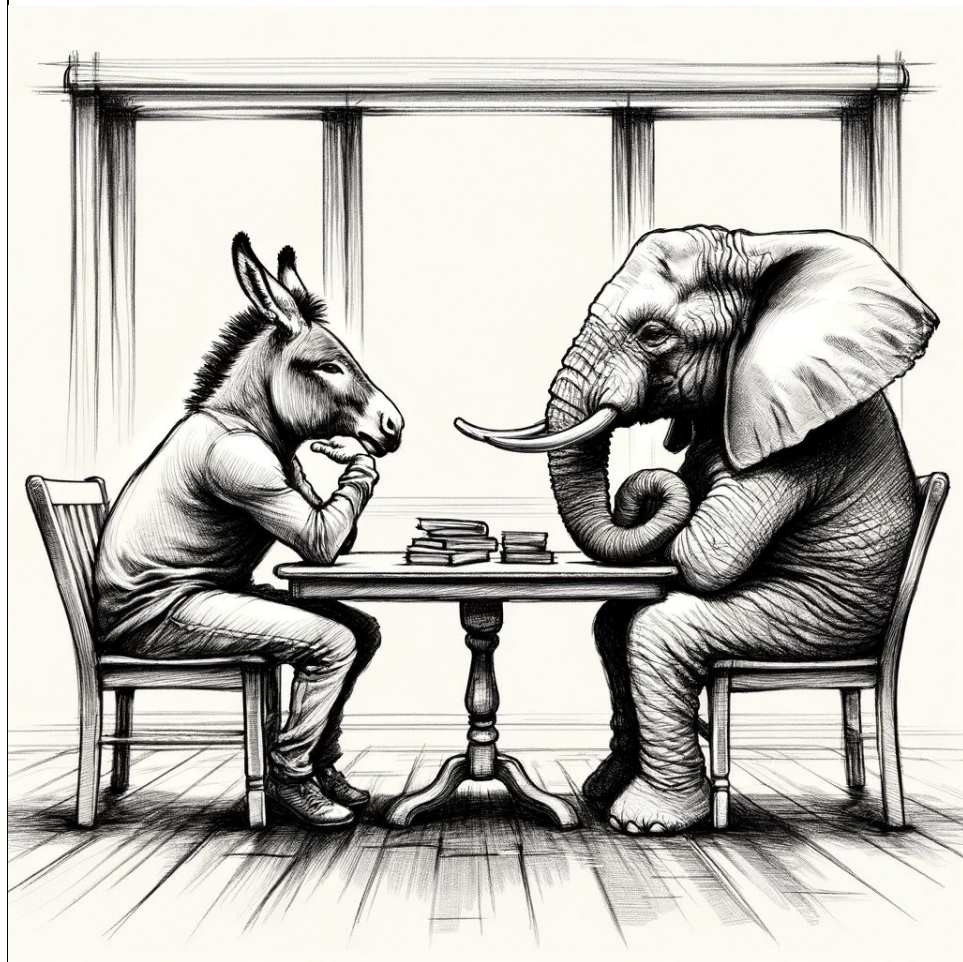
Compassion

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

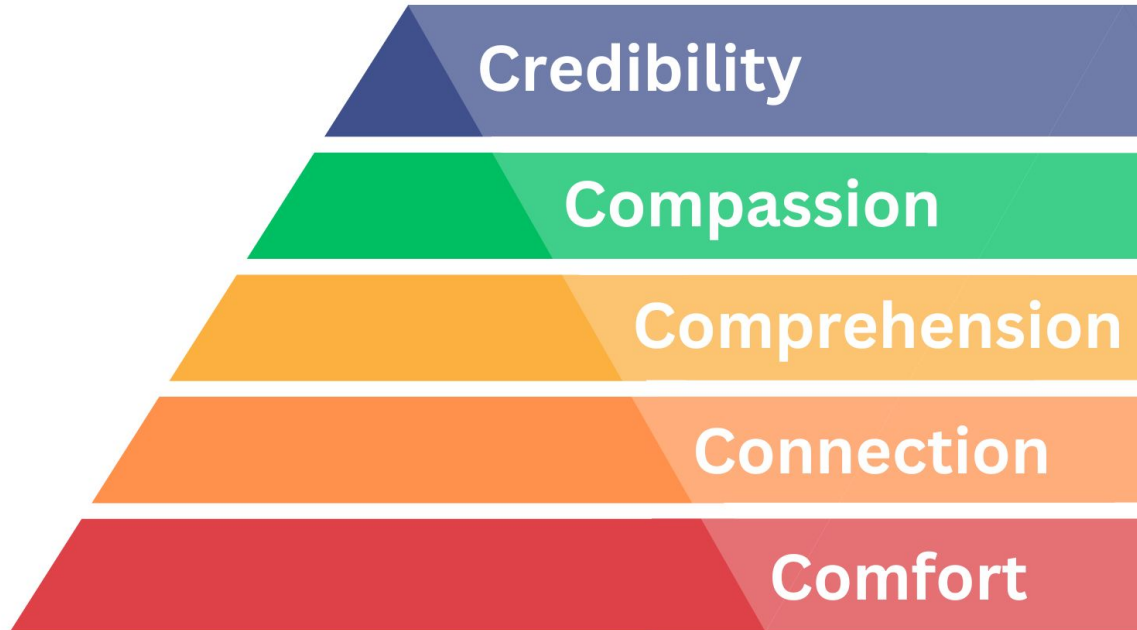


Credibility

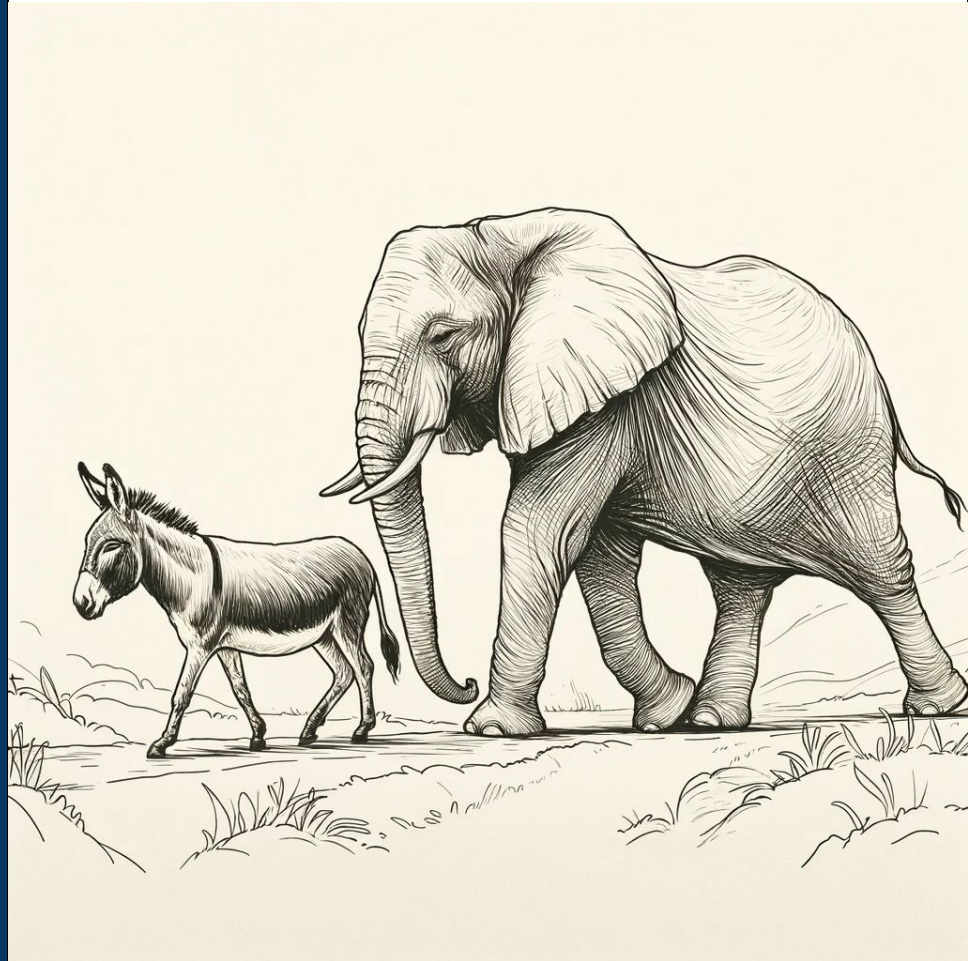
Show you are doing
your best to be
rational, unbiased,
and open-minded.



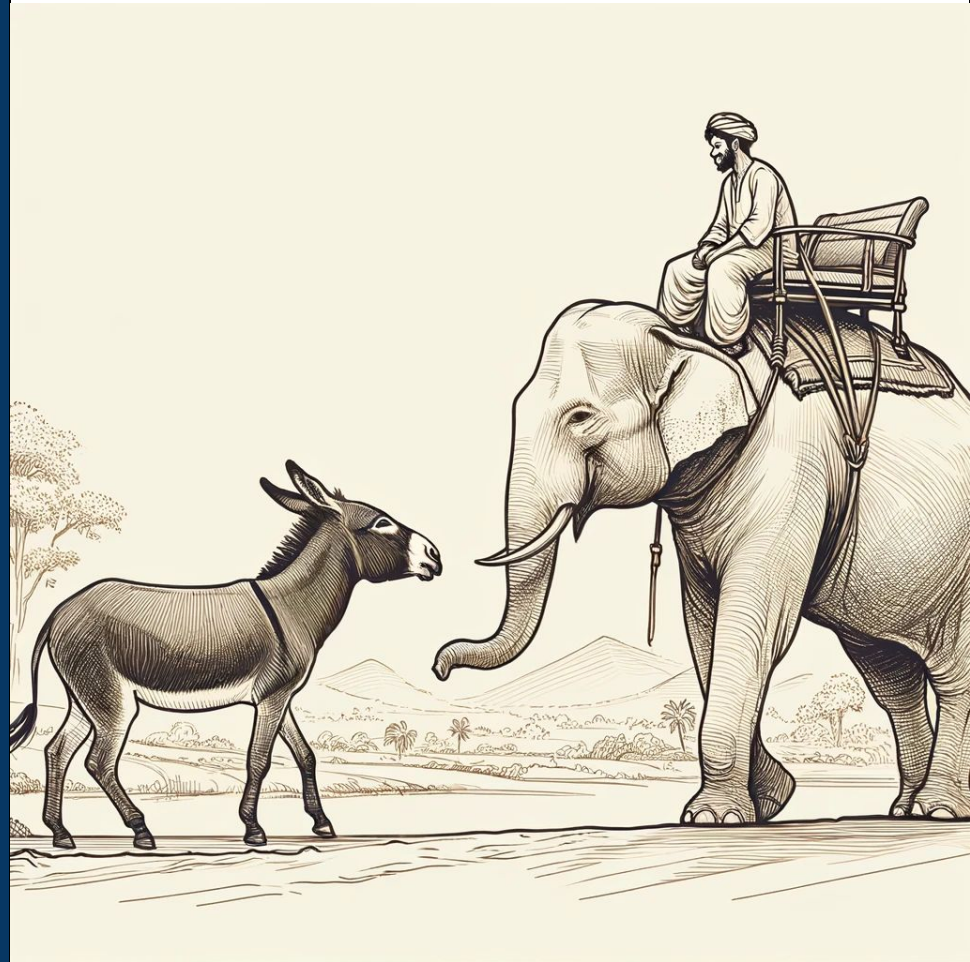
What happens when you earn the elephant's trust?



The elephant
WANTS to
follow you!



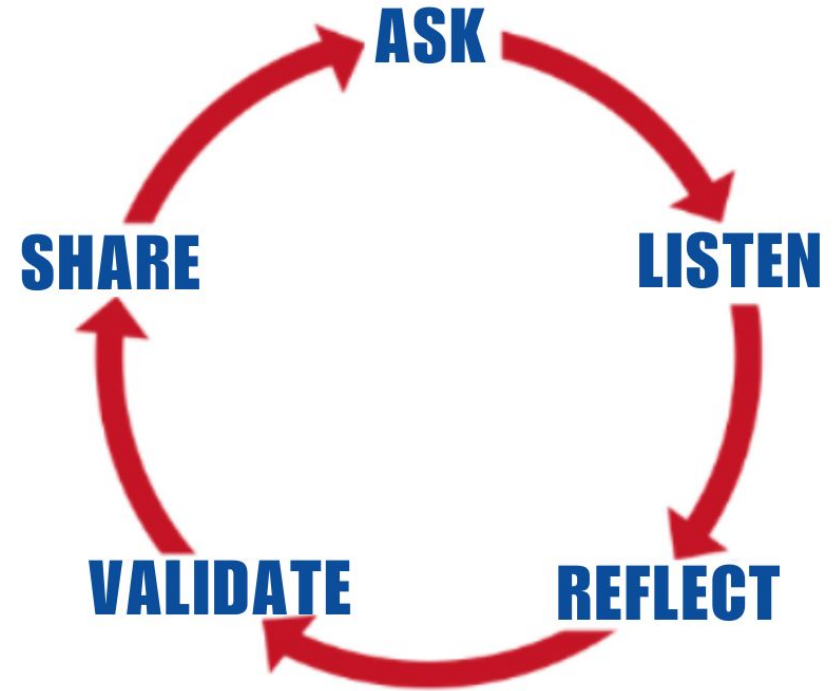
NOW you can talk
with the rider



Secret #3
Foster Change,
Don't Force It

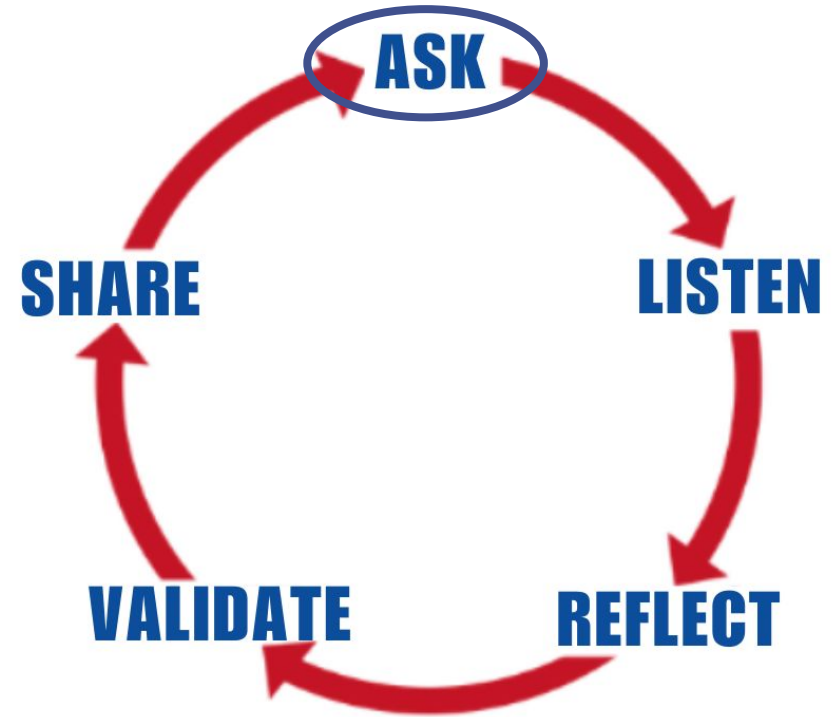
Persuasion Conversation Cycle

A tool for earning the elephant's trust *AND* persuading the rider



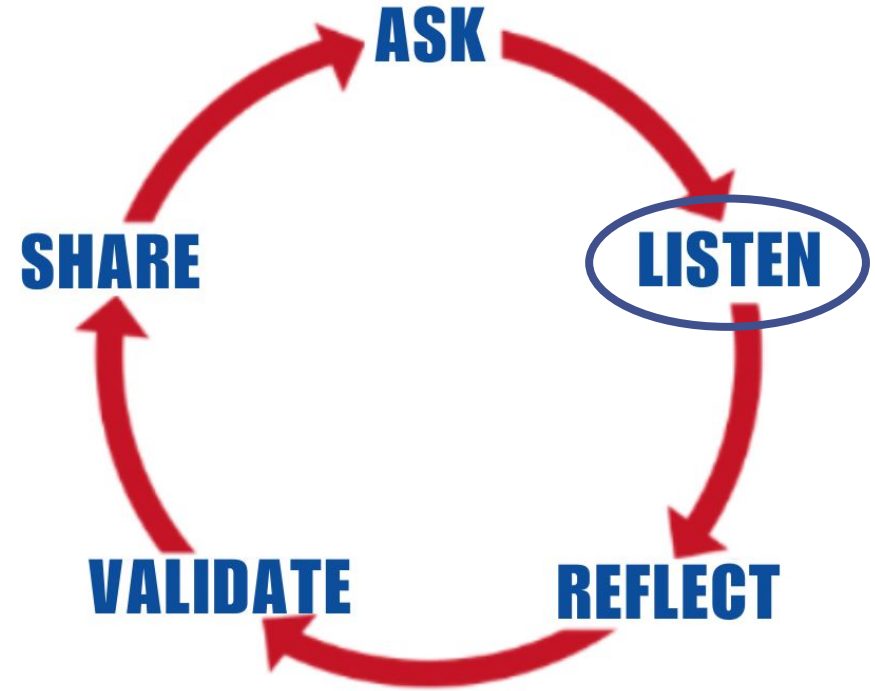
Ask

- Open-ended
- Nonjudgmental
- Curious



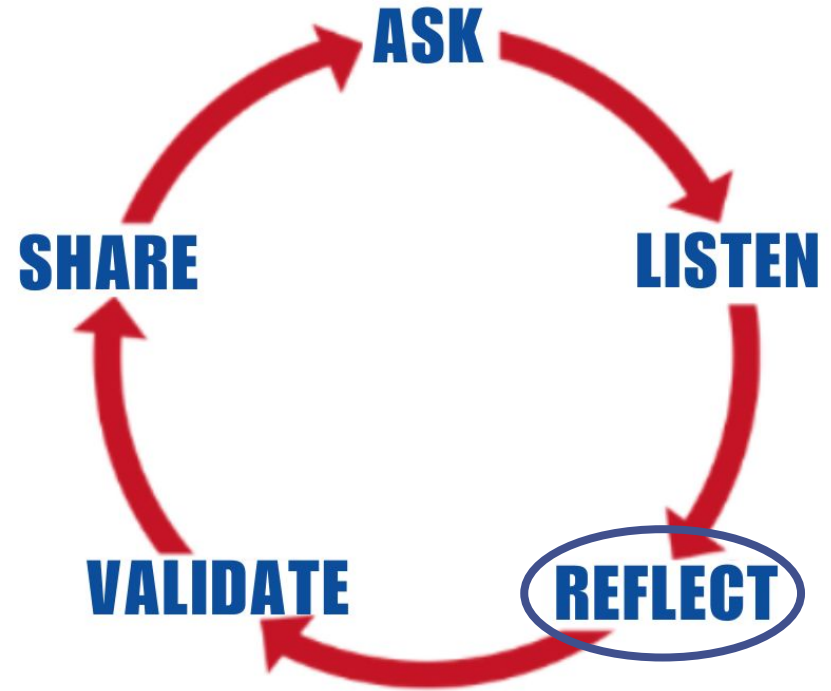
Listen

- Pay attention
- Seek to understand
- Let them talk as long as they want



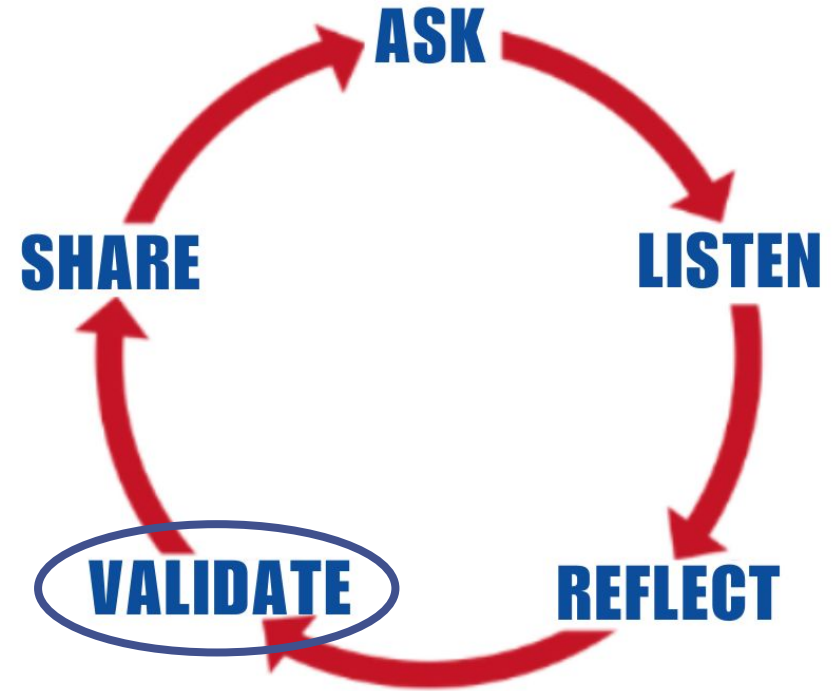
Reflect

- Summarize the gist
- Name their feelings
- Acknowledge implicit content when possible



Validate

- Acknowledge the legitimacy of their beliefs and feelings
- Accept their experience
- Agree where possible



Share



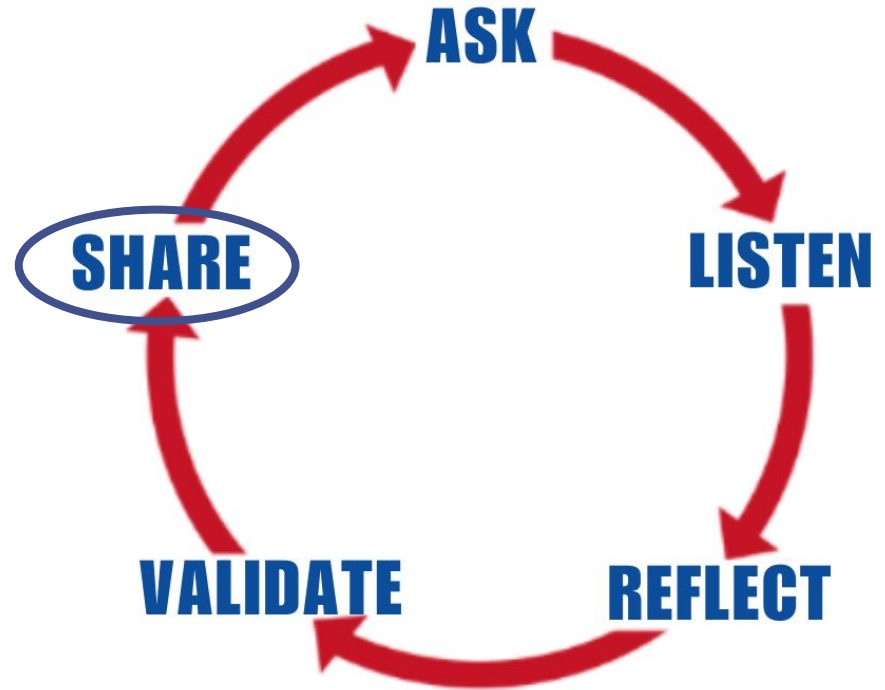
Don't argue with facts or reason



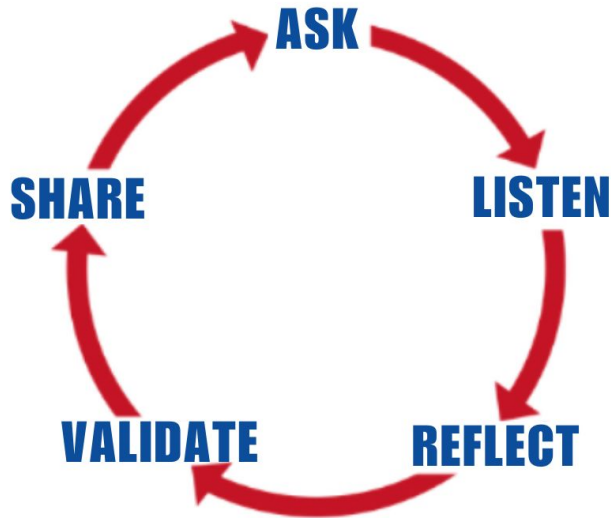
Shift the narrative with a personal story or anecdote



Share information only after getting consent



Three ways to use the PCC to persuade the rider



1. Motivate change

- a. Elicit inconsistencies
- b. Highlight ambivalence

2. Catalyze change

- a. Facilitate learning
- b. Offer emotional support

3. Stabilize change

- a. Guide integration of new beliefs

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Before AUB...

Put your
new skills
to work!



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