



*How To Generate Support
and Allies for Organizational
DEI in Turbulent Times*

April 24, 2024

Facilitator: Xavier Ramey

Chief Executive Officer, Justice Informed

JUSTICE INFORMED is a management consulting firm committed to delivering social solutions for an equitable future.

All Information contained in this presentation are the property of Justice Informed LLC. Reproduction without written consent is strictly prohibited. © 2024 Justice Informed LLC

Our Goals Today

1. To provide a framework for understanding how willingness shows up in your individual and organizational teams
2. To provide guidance on how to identify conversational tactics for next steps for people based upon their level of willingness to advance DEI and social impact by focusing on creating invitations

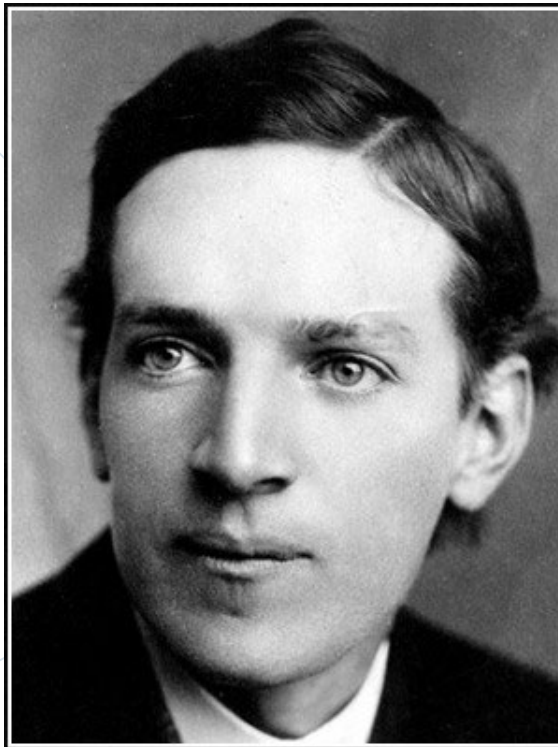
What is difficult about this moment in time, as our nation and organizations demand equality for all?

Identity is a challenging issue, given its fractal nature.

Power and identity converge to create the challenges we face in building communities together.



(some)
FACETS
OF
IDENTITY



It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.

— Upton Sinclair —

AZ QUOTES

The reason why DEI and various equity work isn't progressing isn't as simple as just not having the right **STRATEGY**.

People who agree that equality is important have differing levels of **WILLINGNESS** toward equity.

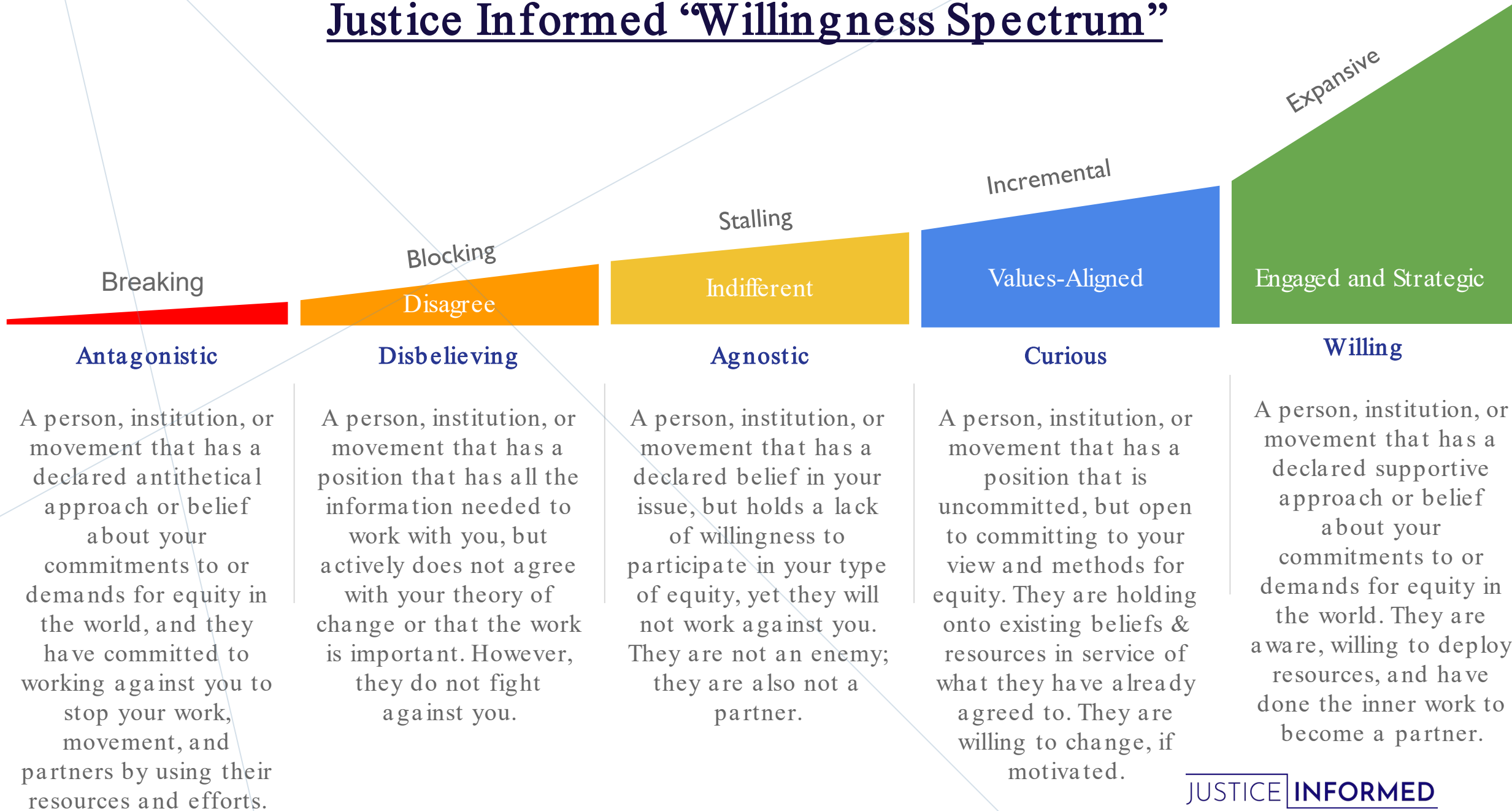
Let's dig into how to **assess and engage** various levels of willpower.

Leadership is about vision and momentum.

Leaders are responsible for democratically establishing a collective **VISION** for DEI.

Managing **MOMENTUM** is where the problems most often occur. Momentum is everyone's responsibility. So let's learn how to manage momentum.

Justice Informed “Willingness Spectrum”



Example Results from a real Justice Informed Client’s Senior Leadership team of a ~250-person department who had ERGs, a DEI Council, a DEI Strategy, and DEI values promoted on their website. *“Which of the following would you feel comfortable with ABC organization and/or leadership pursuing as a formal part of its DEI commitment?” (Please select all that apply).*

Actively and continuously sharing the ABC organization's DEI statement to all clients, vendors, partners, etc.	41%
Setting measurable goals for increasing the diversity of staff and transparently sharing demographics by leadership level	39%
Establishing clear structures and avenues (e.g. advisory council, task force, Board roles, etc.) for staff to directly influence and determine ABC organization's priorities and strategies for DEI	39%
Collaborating and sharing resources with other organizations and partners to develop innovative solutions that center (i.e. prioritize) DEI and the needs of marginalized and minoritized identities to access capital and credit	37%
Increasing funding to elevate and support DEI initiatives and trainings	24%
Leveraging ABC organization's position and power by developing a public policy advocacy strategy aimed at addressing policies that limit Black and Brown business's access to investment capital	18%

Which of the following would you feel comfortable with ABC organization and/or leadership pursuing as a formal part of its DEI commitment? (Please select all that apply). (Key Leadership)

Cutting ties with funders and partners who do not align with ABC organization's DEI practices/goals and are not willing to address how their practices contribute to inequalities in financial services.	12%
Publicly denouncing practices that other organizations in your sector pursue which are not aligned with ABC organization's DEI values and what those holding marginalized and minoritized identities have denounced as antithetical to equity in the company's operational footprint	2%
No longer participating in partnerships/convenings/or resource pooling that focuses outside of majority Black and Brown communities	0%
I would not be comfortable with any of these actions.	18%

This team asked Justice Informed to “develop a DEI training to ensure their leaders are seen as champions of DEI.” What is possible with THIS leadership team, given their assessed willingness toward these goals, many of which are already happening at their company?

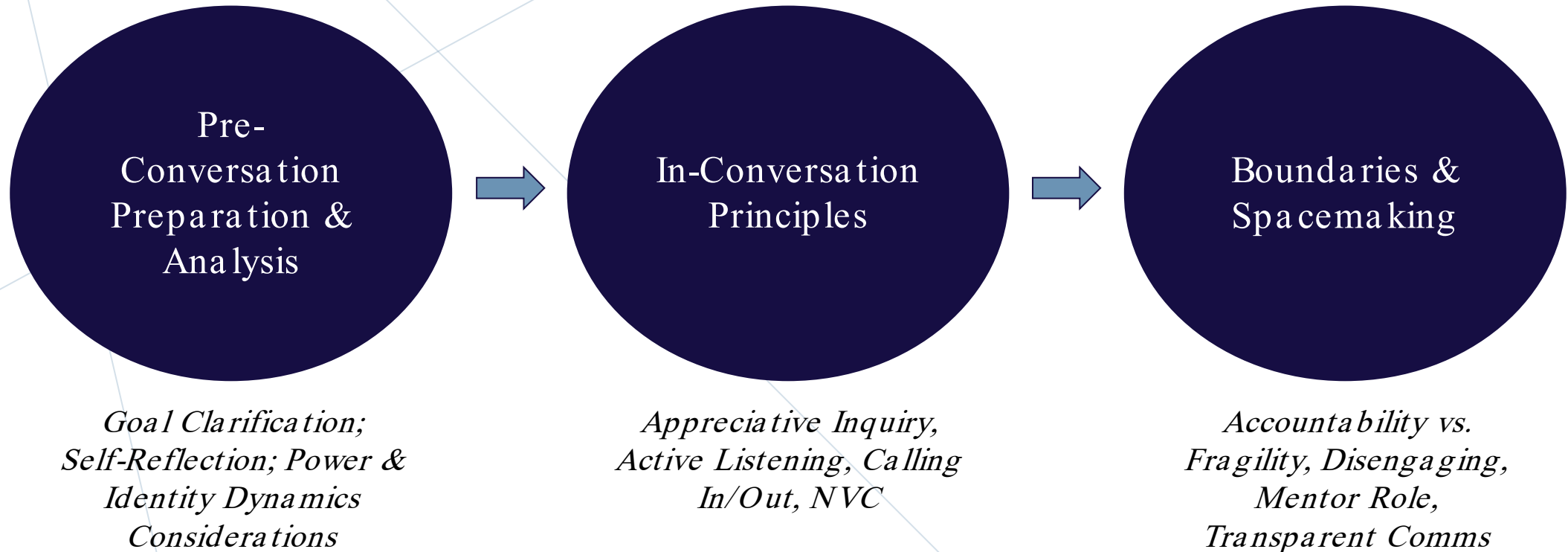
If we know that everyone doesn't agree, how do we move forward with negotiations and discussion given we may not be fully compromising?

Do you have a framework for how you deal with challenging conversations?

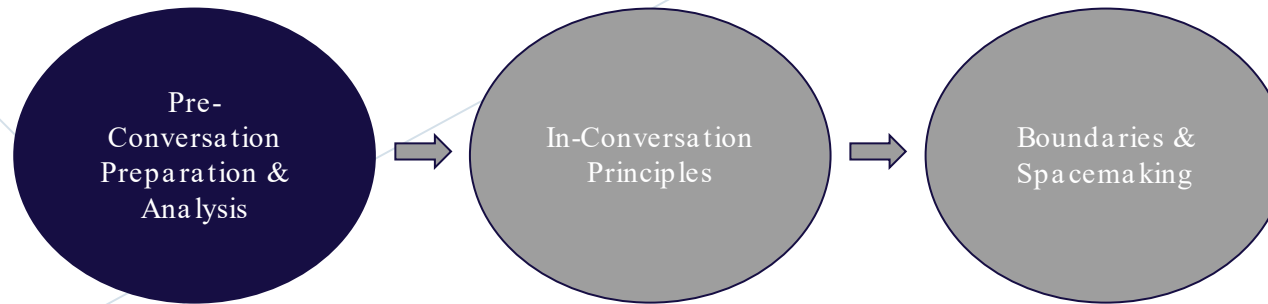
CONVERSATIONAL MODEL: WHAT ARE OUR TACTICAL VALUES?

- The Value of “Manufacturing Epiphanies” (enlightened understanding)
- The Value of Inserting Space for “Constructive Doubt” (de-centering of self)
- The Value and Danger of Solidarity separate from Community: work together!
- The Necessity of Choosing (or as James Baldwin notes, “the danger of committedness”)
- Consistency as a Shield, Resiliency as an ongoing need
- People over Everything: Who are you centering when you do the work of DEI? Do the people you’re speaking with also center them?

THE CONVERSATIONAL FRAMEWORK



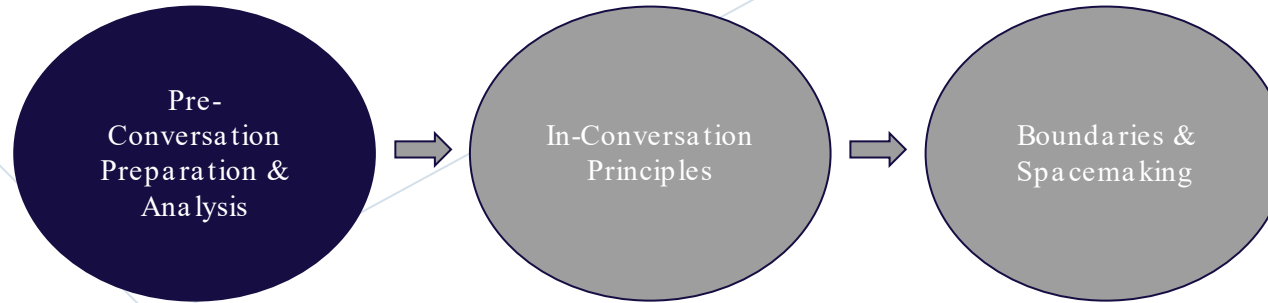
CONVERSATIONAL MODEL: PRE-CONVERSATION



Goal Clarification: What is the purpose of this conversation? Do you have what you need to be conversationally successful (not just “right”)?

- Inform -- High degree of need for logical information (including data, historical fact, and counter arguments). High value on comprehensiveness and comprehension.
- Persuade -- High degree of need for logical information+patience, proof of listening, and perspective-taking. High value on clarity and relationship.
- Agitate -- High degree of need for confidence, proof of understanding, & clear demands for action. High value on actions, not intentions.
- Be heard -- High degree of need for transparency and self-reflection to communicate harm and opportunity. High value on acknowledgment.

CONVERSATIONAL MODEL: PRE-CONVERSATION



Power & Identity Dynamics Considerations

ERASURE / NON-ENGAGEMENT

- “I don’t see color”
- Minimizes nuances in how people experience life and make meaning
- Ignores the real joys and traumas associated with an experience or identity

TONE POLICING

- Directness seen as aggressiveness
- Emphasis on *how* something is said and not *what* is said, especially when the *what* pertains to harms experienced by M&M individuals
- Centers comfort over accountability

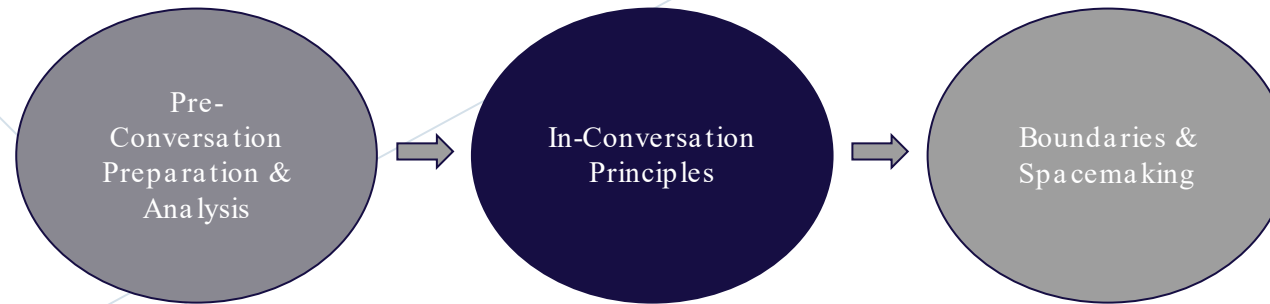
MICROAGGRESSIONS

- “Death by a million paper cuts”
- Microinsults, microassaults, microinvalidations
- Often relies on unchecked assumptions
- Insidious as often seen as “minor” or “a joke”

PROFESSIONALISM VS ASSIMILATION

- Standardization of culture and identity
- Remove who you are at the front door
- A form of erasure that is often tied to bottom line performance, customer expectations

CONVERSATIONAL MODEL: IN-CONVERSATION



Engage in appreciative inquiry and active listening:

- **Appreciative Inquiry:** Asking questions to guide a conversation, leading with empathy and curiosity rather than fact-finding and case-building
 - Allow for discovery of the topic without problem-solving or diagnosing a weakness / ignorance
 - This is not an interrogation, use questions to discover information and navigate conflict or disagreement
- **Active Listening:** Listening to someone fully with the intention to understand; listening to the words, tone, body language, etc. because people can tell the difference.
 - “Listen to understand, not to respond”
 - *Consider rephrasing or summarizing others to demonstrate engagement and desire to understand*

CONVERSATIONAL MODEL: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY EXAMPLES

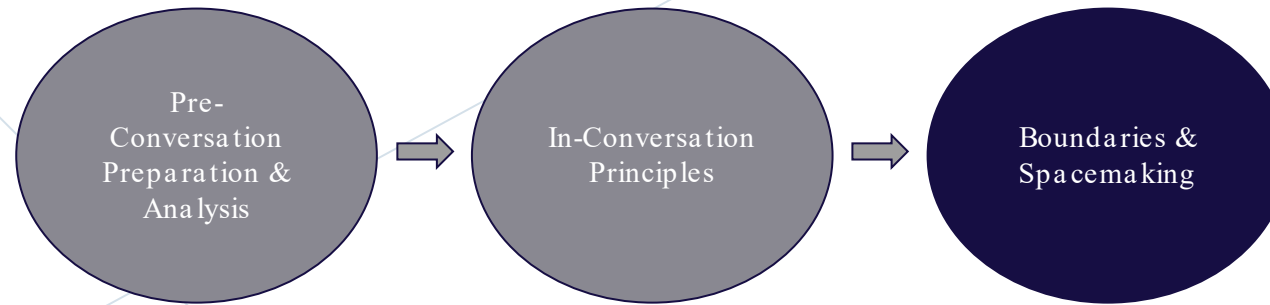
TRIGGERING EVENT

- It seems like there was a strong emotional reaction to what was shared. Would we be willing to discuss it?
- Can we pause the conversation and talk about what was said?
- Are we reacting to what was *said* or *done*?
- I'm hearing that when _____ was said, it revealed _____. Is this how others understand it?

ENGAGING DISCOMFORT

- I can see this is difficult for us to hear. I encourage us to stay with the discomfort and talk about it. What are we feeling right now?
- It seems like this activity is really impacting you. Would you like to talk about it?
- It's easy to move to an intellectual space but you seem to be feeling a lot of emotions. Stay with your feelings and see if you can process them out loud with us

CONVERSATIONAL MODEL: BOUNDARIES & SPACE-MAKING



Understand your Boundaries, and use invitations where disagreement is present:

- Be ready to walk away or re-evaluate when you see the other person does not have a goal, a stake in changing, or no true care for the outcome of their ideas
- Remember what is and what is not within your CONTROL and INFLUENCE as a peer, direct report, or independent contributor
- Consider how to de-escalate and return to a conversation when you see someone not emotionally available or able to have a conversation
- Transparency even when declining a request or asking for more time important (i.e. when will you circle back? Why can't certain info be shared?)

Invitations are critical in a world where people feel afraid to be wrong, accountability feels like revenge, and the increasingly diverse workplaces of the world are often the sole place where people practice their personal commitments to inclusion and equity.

Making All of This Come Alive

- 1) Everyone doesn't agree, your best work is to invite them to consider your view using the conversational framework
- 2) Where power is at play, consider how you work with others to tactically engage levers of control versus influence
- 3) You may not feel safe to speak up or out; safety occurs in community. Who are you speaking WITH, not just TO?
 - a) You cannot do this alone, it takes a village
- 4) You are participating in "good and insufficient work." The diversity of the challenge requires a diversity of the workers and approaches. Be humble.
- 5) Everyone must find their role and voice in a unified message about the VALUE, ACTIONS, DECISIONS, and OPPORTUNITIES for DEI

Open Q & A

JUSTICE INFORMED

Contact us to learn more, view keynotes on YouTube, or to request DEI and social impact consulting services.

IG: [xavier.ramey](#)

LI: [Xavier Ramey](#) or [Justice Informed](#)

xavier@justiceinformed.com

www.justiceinformed.com