

SMART

POLITICS

SMART POLITICS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

From Conflict to Change

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AGENDA

- The 5 kinds of political troublemakers
- How to deal with them
- Q & A
- Discussion
- Review Quiz
- After Party!!!

The Debater





The Debater

- Argues with evidence and logic
- Challenges everything you say
- Listens mainly to refute
- Never gives an inch
- Dismissive of alternative evidence and arguments
- Doesn't consider alternative points of view because they know they're right

The Debater



THE SECRET

DON'T DEBATE!!!

Get the debater out of their head
and into their heart.

Instead of presenting arguments
and evidence, share **emotions**,
feelings, and **experiences**

The Parrot





The Parrot

- Avid consumer of Right-Wing media
- Repeats the most recent MAGA talking points ad nauseum
- Often agitated about current news
- Expects to make you defensive with their latest “revelations”
- Unexpectedly recycles old talking points (like Hillary’s emails)

The Parrot



THE SECRET

IGNORE THE MISINFORMATION!!!

Nod politely as the Parrot regurgitates their talking points.

When they finish, say...

“What are you most worried about?”

Then say...

“Why is this issue so important to you?”

The Conspiracist

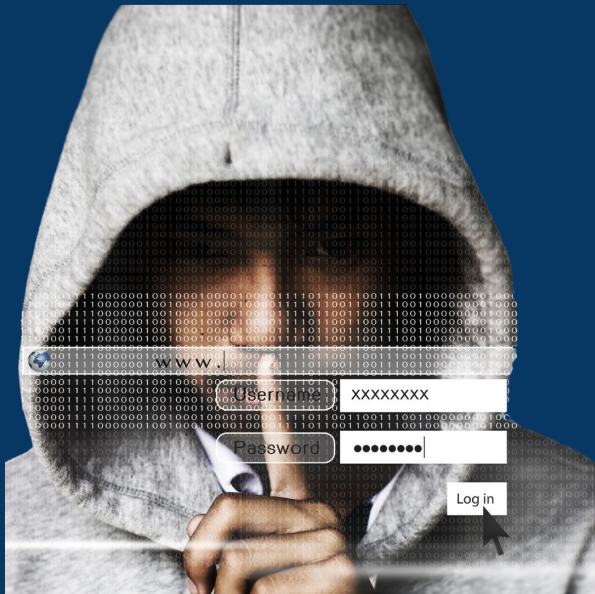




The Conspiracy Theorist

- Strongly believes in and spreads unverified or debunked theories
- Skeptical of mainstream media and information
- Distrusts official narratives
- Deeply invested in proving and disseminating their theories
- Find emotional gratification in knowing things others don't

The Conspiracy Theorist



THE SECRET

**DON'T TALK ABOUT THE
CONSPIRACY THEORY!!!**

Instead, say...

"That sounds scary."

Then, ask...

***"How do you cope with your anxiety about
all of this?"***

The Insensitive





The Socially Insensitive

- Prone to making problematic remarks about social groups
- Limited experience in diverse social settings
- Unfiltered (speaks w/o considering consequences)
- May be hostile toward social justice causes
- More likely to cause harm unintentionally than intentionally

The Socially Insensitive



THE SECRET

DON'T CALL THEM OUT!!!

Instead, name the pain...

"Ouch! That hurts."

When they ask what, explain...

Ex: "A lot of people find that language derogatory. Is that what you meant?"

The Rager





The Rager

- Quick to anger
- Self-righteous and contemptuous
- May feel unfairly persecuted
- Lacks skills to calm self
- May become abusive

The Rager



THE SECRET

DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY!!!

Help them cool off.

1. **Name emotion:**

Ex: "You sound upset."

2. **Offer compassion:**

Ex: "I'm sorry."

3. **Ask to hear more:**

Ex: "Tell me more about what's so upsetting about this."

4. **Repeat**

Q & A



Discussion



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which type of troublemaker do you encounter most often?
2. What will you do differently next time you see them?

Review Quiz!



Role Play



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

SMART

POLITICS

Thank you!

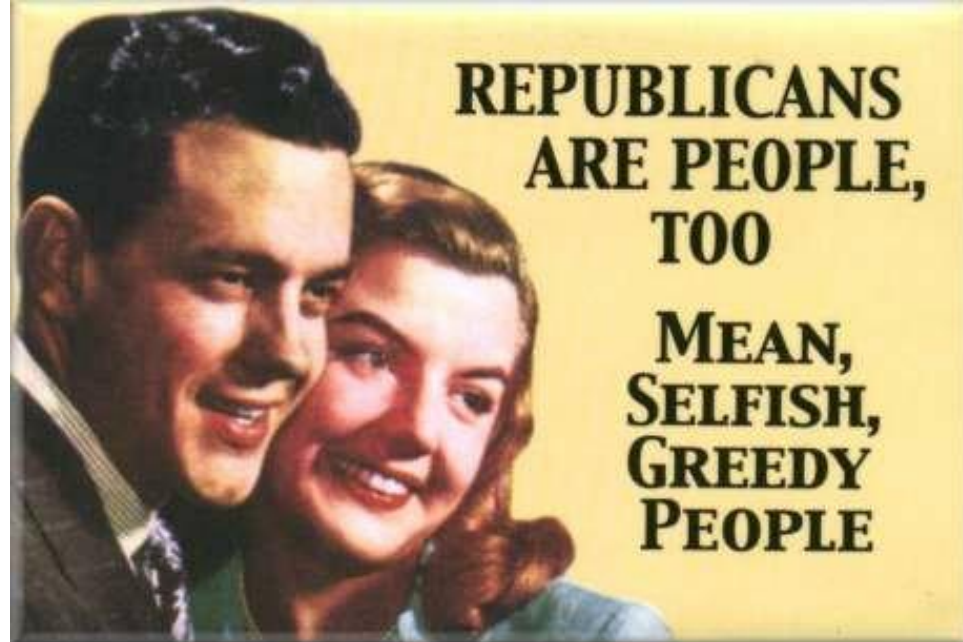
JoinSmart.org
Link.tree/SmartPolitics

After Party



#1

**You Think People
Who Disagree With
You Are Bad**





We are divided by nurture, not nature

- Parents' political party
- Religion
- Where we're from
- Race & ethnicity
- Sex, gender, sexuality
- Socioeconomic status



#2

**You're Telling
Others What to
Think**



Image by [Robin Higgins](#) from [Pixabay](#)



#3

**You're Making
Others Feel Bad
About Themselves**



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs





Photo by [Henry Hustava](#) on [Unsplash](#)

People who feel bad about themselves get defensive

- Fight, flight, or freeze
- Cognitive shutdown
- Can't think
- Can't learn
- Can't empathize

#4

You're Arguing with Reason & Evidence





Our minds have a Belief Defense System

- Built-in bias against foreign ideas
- Like an immune system for the mind
- Motivated cognition
- Social cognition

#5

**Your Emotions Are
Getting in the Way**



Photo by [Julien L](#) on [Unsplash](#)



When you're triggered, you're less persuasive

- Cognitive shutdown
- Can't be strategic
- Can't communicate clearly
- You trigger others

—

**What are your
biggest mistakes?**





Summary: 5 Big Mistakes

- #1** Thinking people who disagree with you are bad
- #2** Telling others what to think
- #3** Making others feel bad about themselves
- #4** Arguing with reason and evidence
- #5** Talking while triggered

A Smarter Way



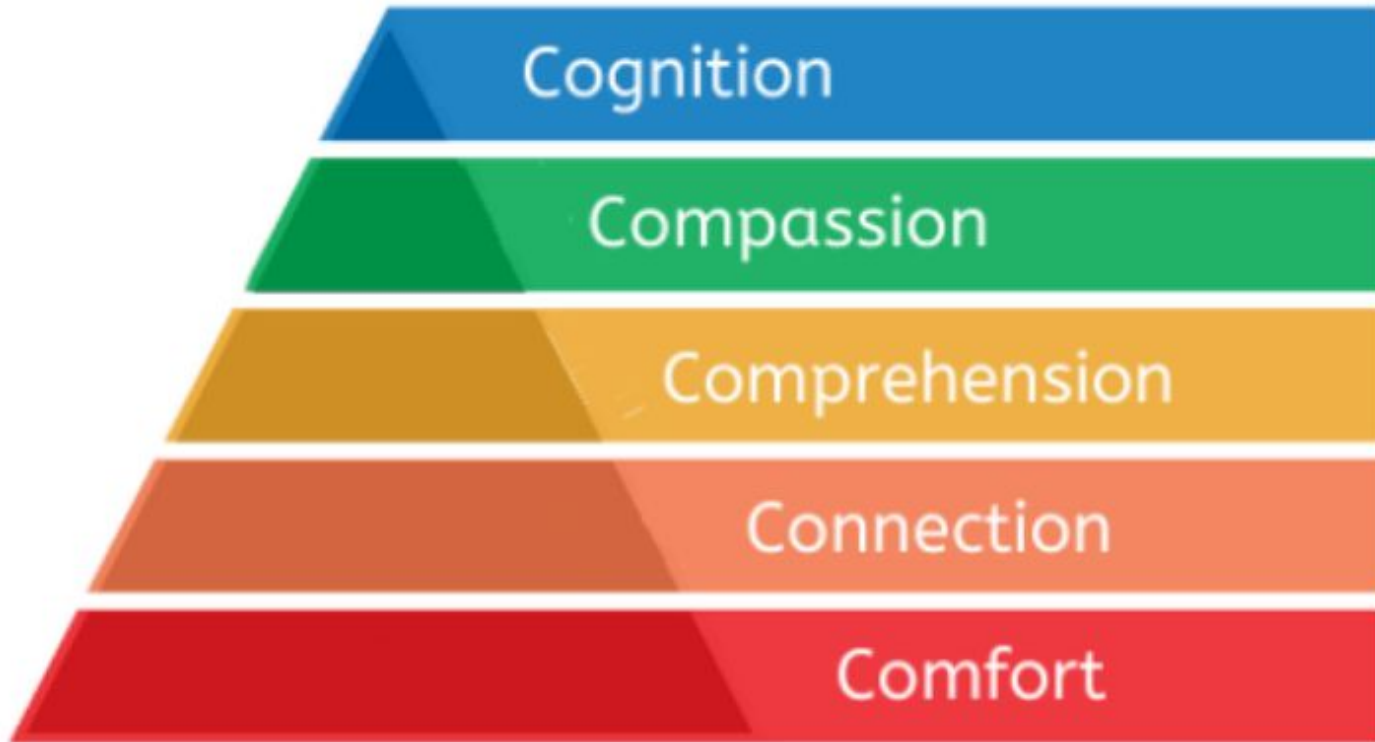
Smart Politics Defined

- Advocacy method
- Person-to-person
- Conversation-based
- Psychologically informed

What makes Smart Politics conversations different?

- Avoid triggering defensiveness
- Bypass the Belief Defense System
- Meet the other person's emotional needs
- Facilitate change by fostering greater rationality, curiosity, empathy, self-reflection, and open-mindedness.

Change Conversation Pyramid



Comfort

**Make people feel
safe-enough to
learn and grow**

How to build comfort

- **Be respectful**
- **No personal attacks**
- **Assume good motives**
- **Say you'll still love them
no matter what**
- **Set boundaries**

Connection

**Earn their trust
and form an
alliance**



How to connect

- **Make yourself vulnerable**
- **Tolerate differences**
- **Highlight ways you are alike and agree**
- **Reframe “you vs. me” as “us vs. the problem”**

Comprehension

Learn their point of view



How to establish comprehension

- Be curious
- Ask questions about their experiences
- Listen to understand
- Reflect

Compassion

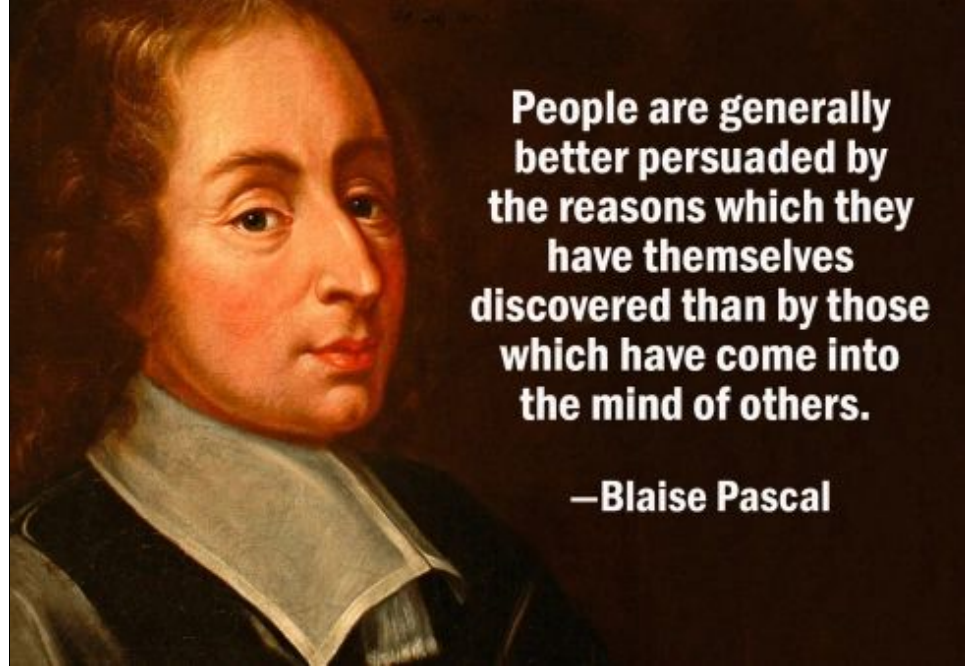
Show you care

- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Words
- Sounds



Cognition

**Gently encourage
them to rethink their
point of view**

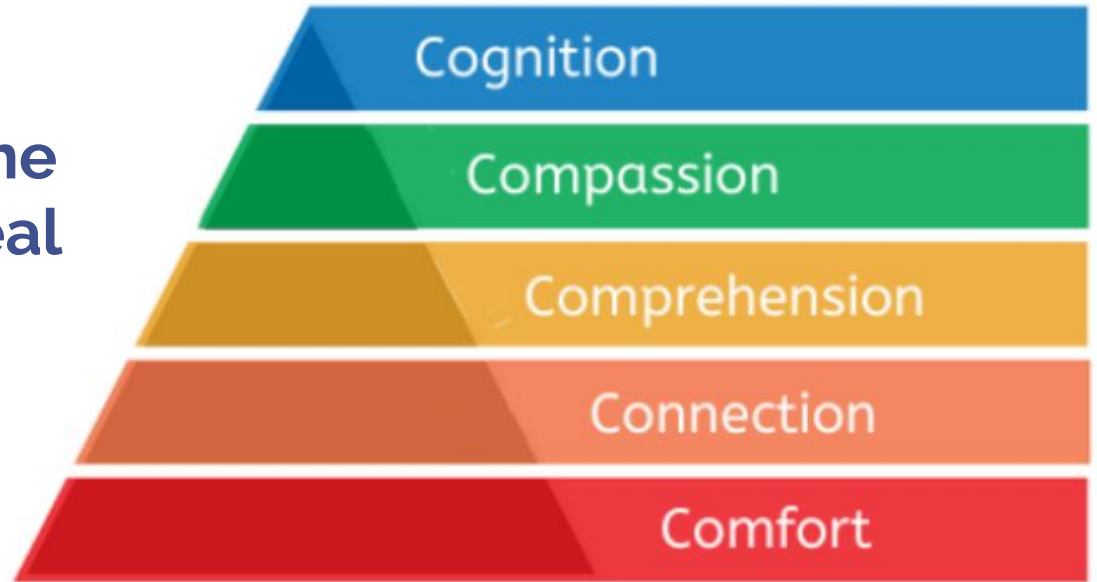


**People are generally
better persuaded by
the reasons which they
have themselves
discovered than by those
which have come into
the mind of others.**

—Blaise Pascal

Change Conversation Pyramid

How can someone do all that in a real conversation?



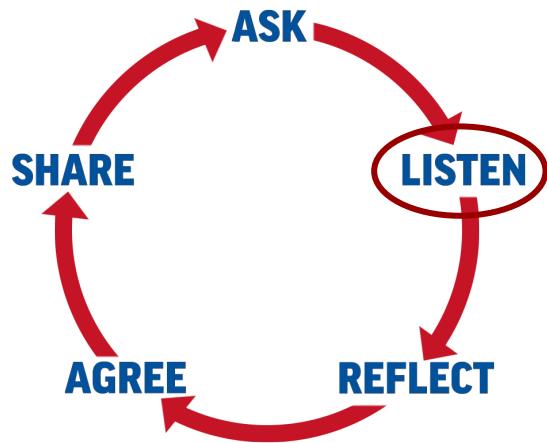
Change Conversation Cycle



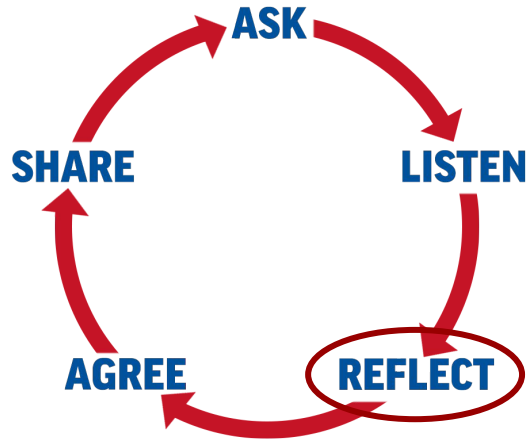
ASK



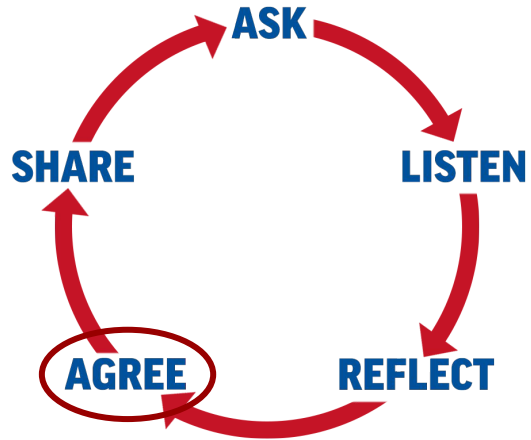
LISTEN



REFLECT

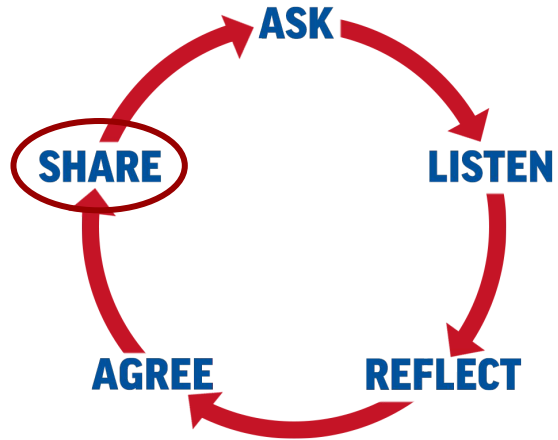


AGREE



YEAH!!

SHARE



Demo



Important Caveat

Communicating across the divide can be traumatic

Responsibility for this work rests with those with the greatest privilege

