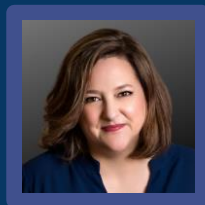# SMART POLITICS 101

Essential Tools for Persuasive Conversations
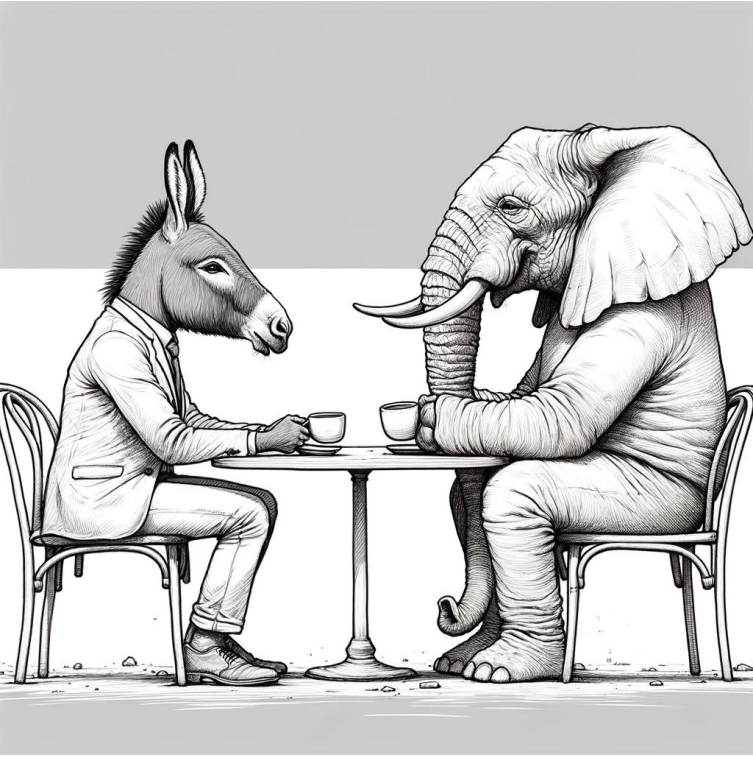
February 7, 2024

Presented by

Karin Tamerius, MD
Founder, Smart Politics
Political Psychiatrist

Locke Peterseim
Content Manager

AGENDA

- **Why is political persuasion so hard?**
- **How does persuasion work?**
- **What's the secret to persuading Republicans?**
- **How can you get started?**
- **Demo**
- **Q & A**
- **After Party**

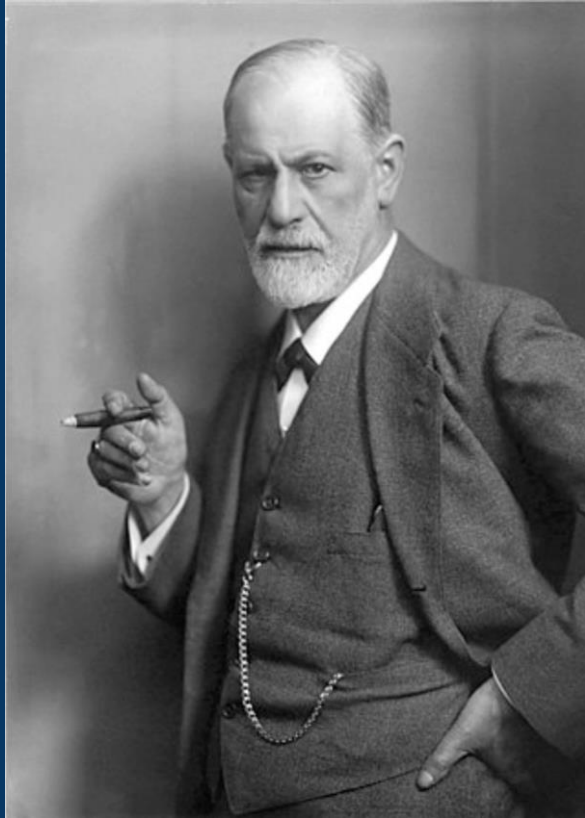# Why is it so hard to persuade Republicans?

Paradox of Persuasion

People are defensive. When we try to change them, they instinctively fight back.

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
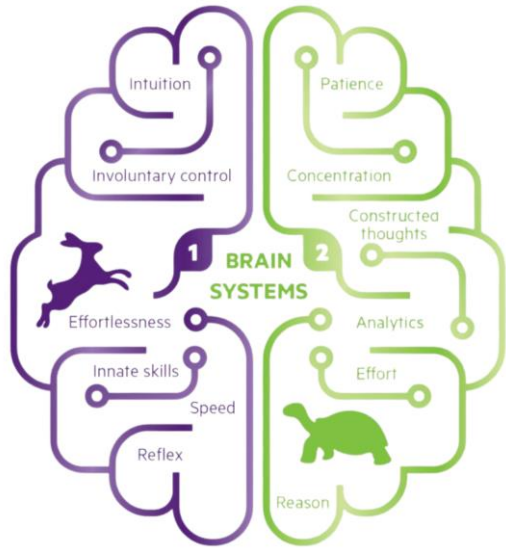
- Dismissive of alternative evidence and arguments
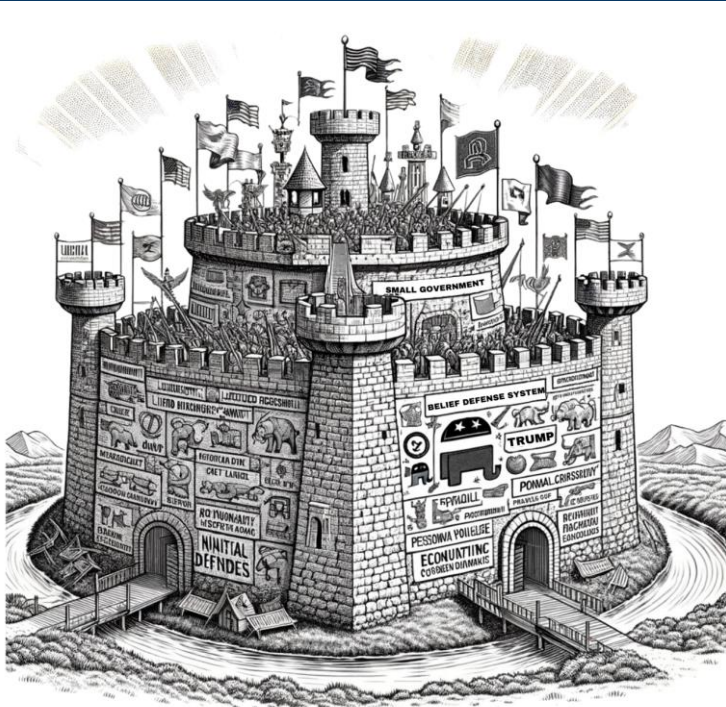
Three Things That Don't Work

- Telling people what to do

- Making people feel bad about themselves

- Attacking their view of the world with facts and reasoned arguments
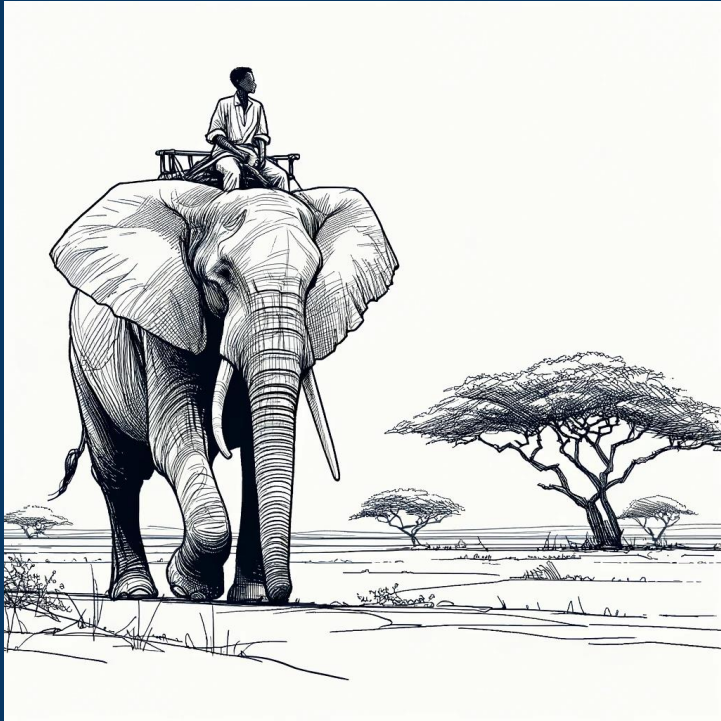
How does persuasion work?

Dual Process Model

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

# Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant

- The elephant is like the intuitive brain, persuaded by emotion and gut feelings

- The rider is like the rational brain, persuaded by facts and reason

Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant
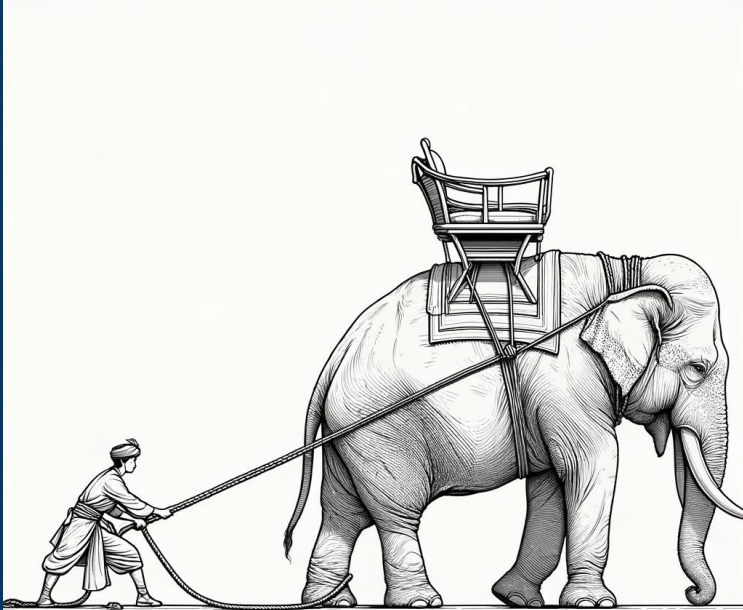
- If the elephant doesn't want to go somewhere, the rider can't force it

- So, while the reasonable rider seems in charge, the emotional elephant has all the power

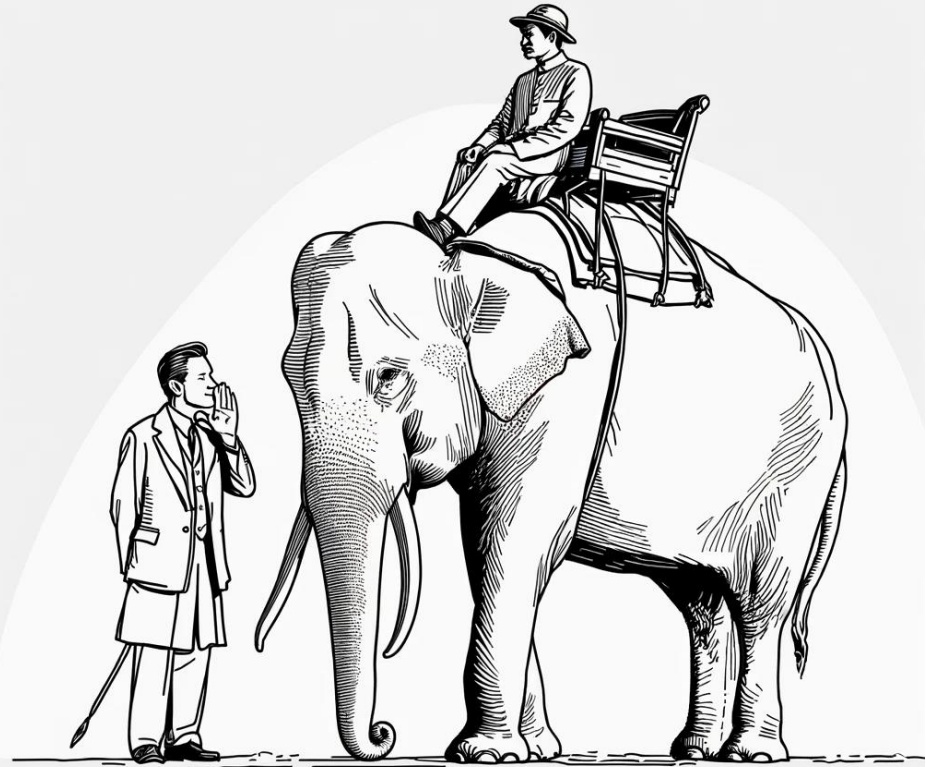# Haidt's Metaphor of Rider on an Elephant
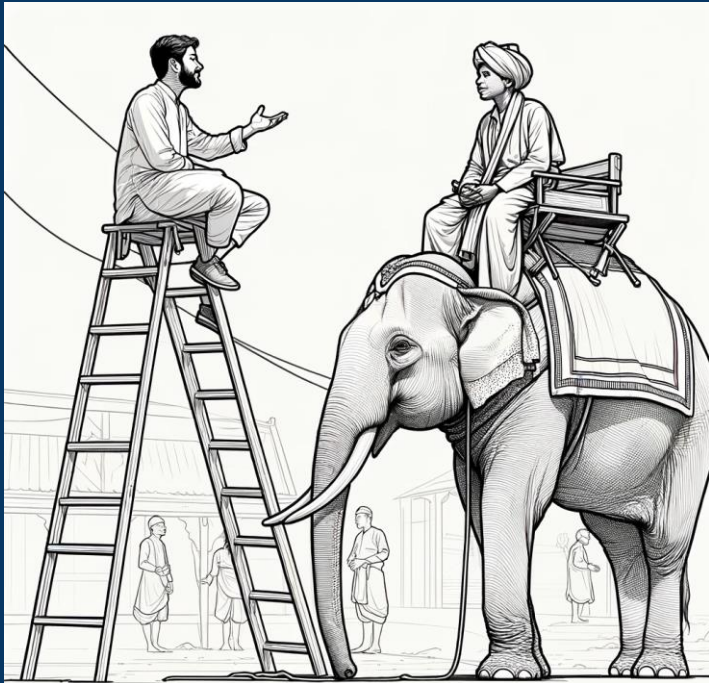
So what's the problem?

- Successful influence is mostly about persuading elephants

- But we squador almost all of our time and energy trying to persuade impotent riders

What's the secret to persuading Republicans?

Stop talking with riders.
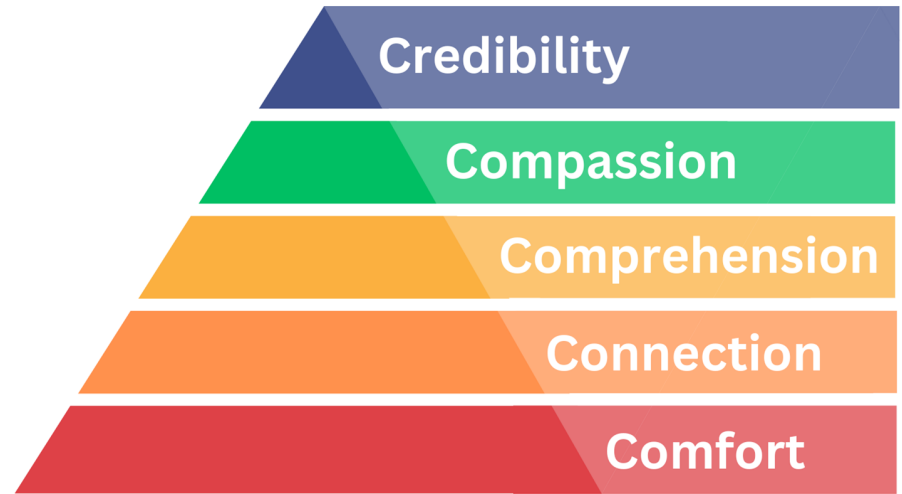
Communicate with elephants!

Key characteristics of elephants

- Skittish
- Emotional
- Uninterested in facts and reason
- Respond more to behavior and tone than words
- Set in their ways
- Wary of novelty
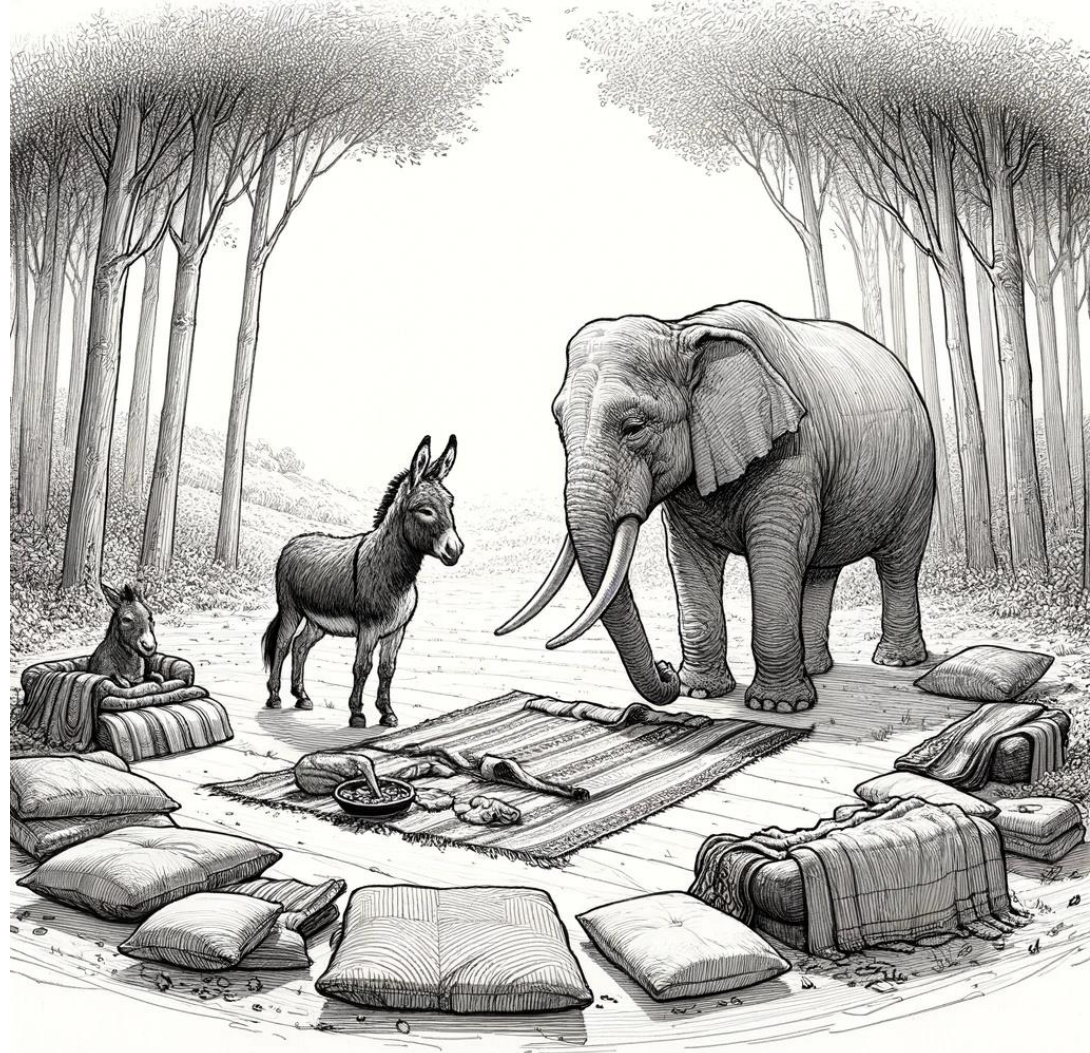
What's the secret to persuading elephants?

Earn their trust.

Trust Pyramid

Comfort

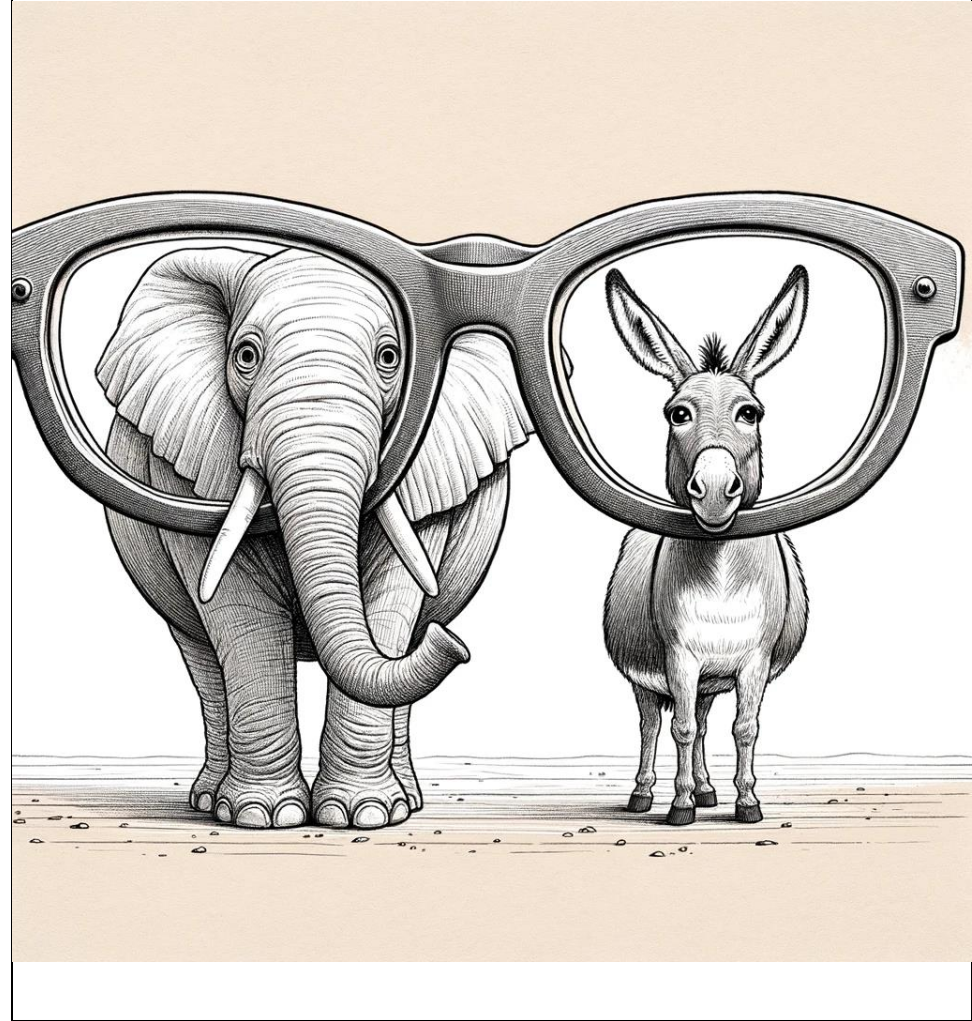## Make them feel safe-enough to talk with you

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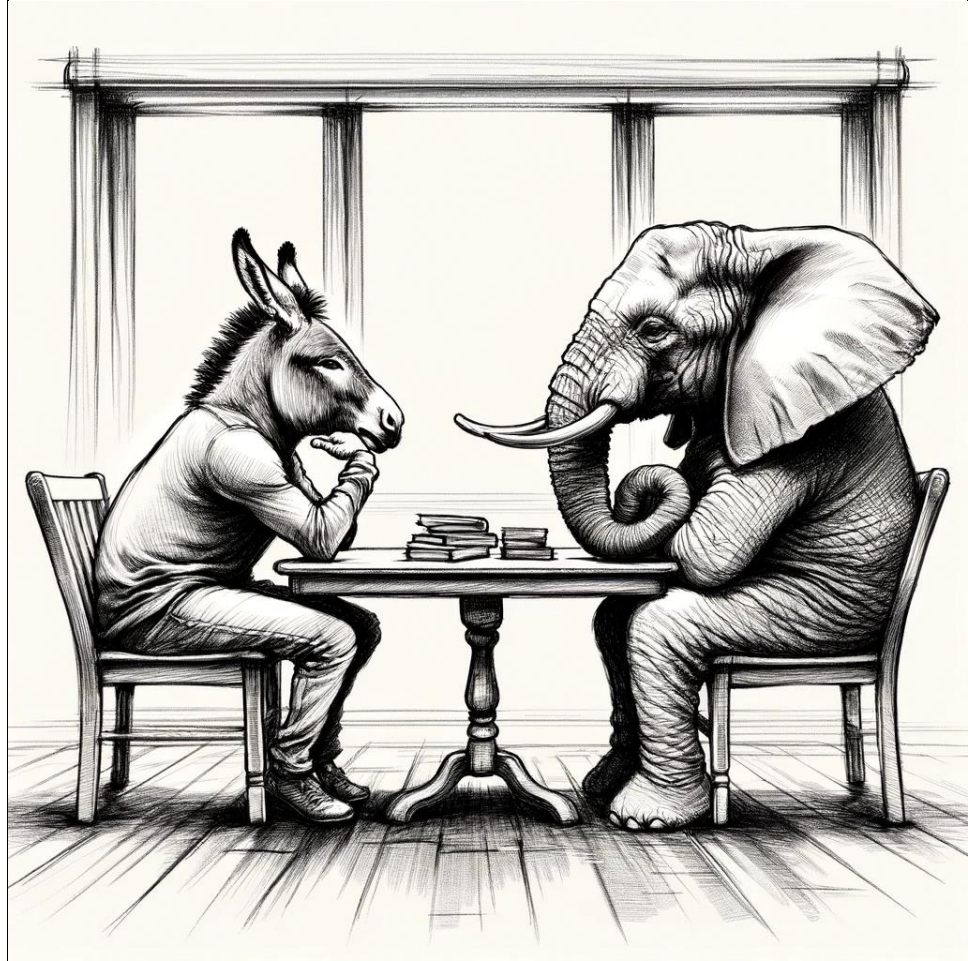
Compassion
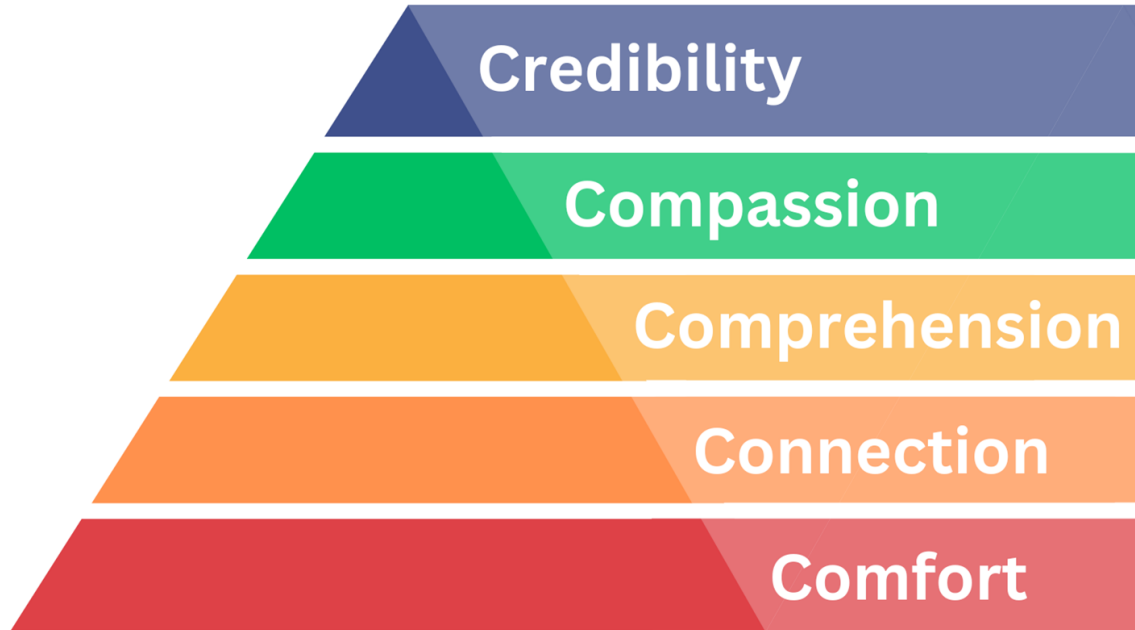
Show you care about them and don't want them to suffer.
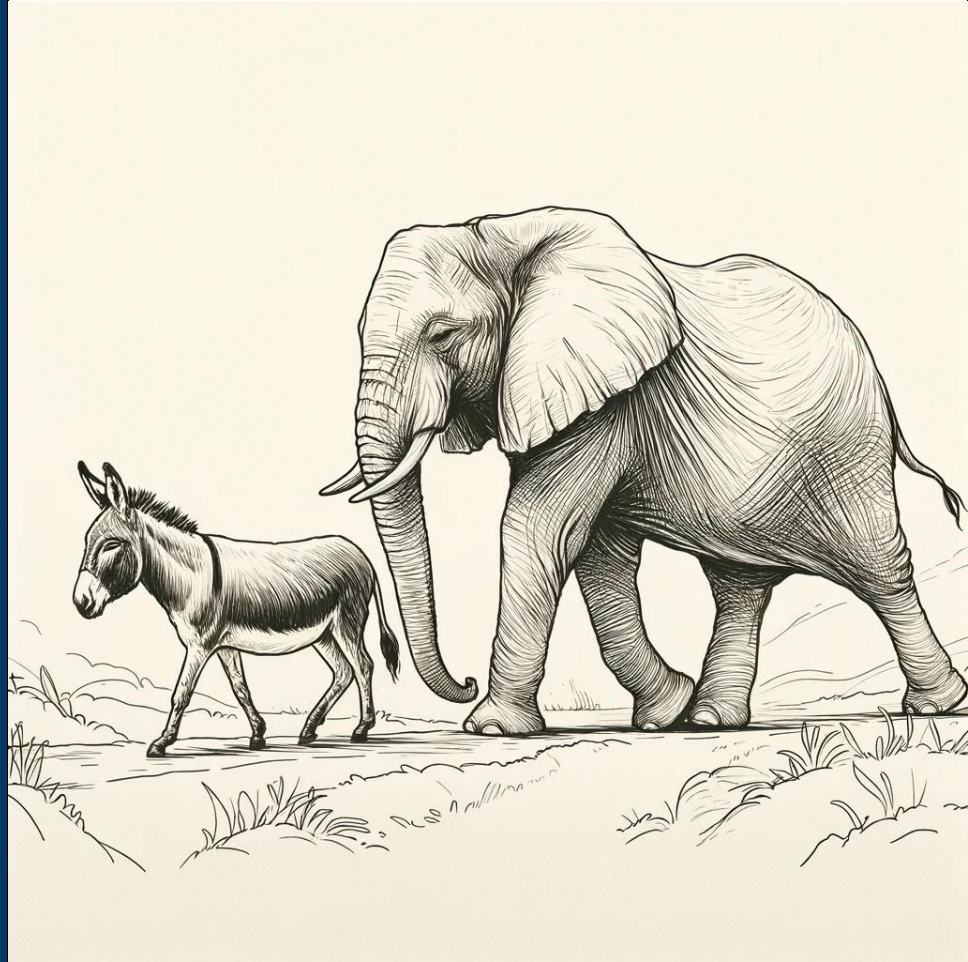
Credibility

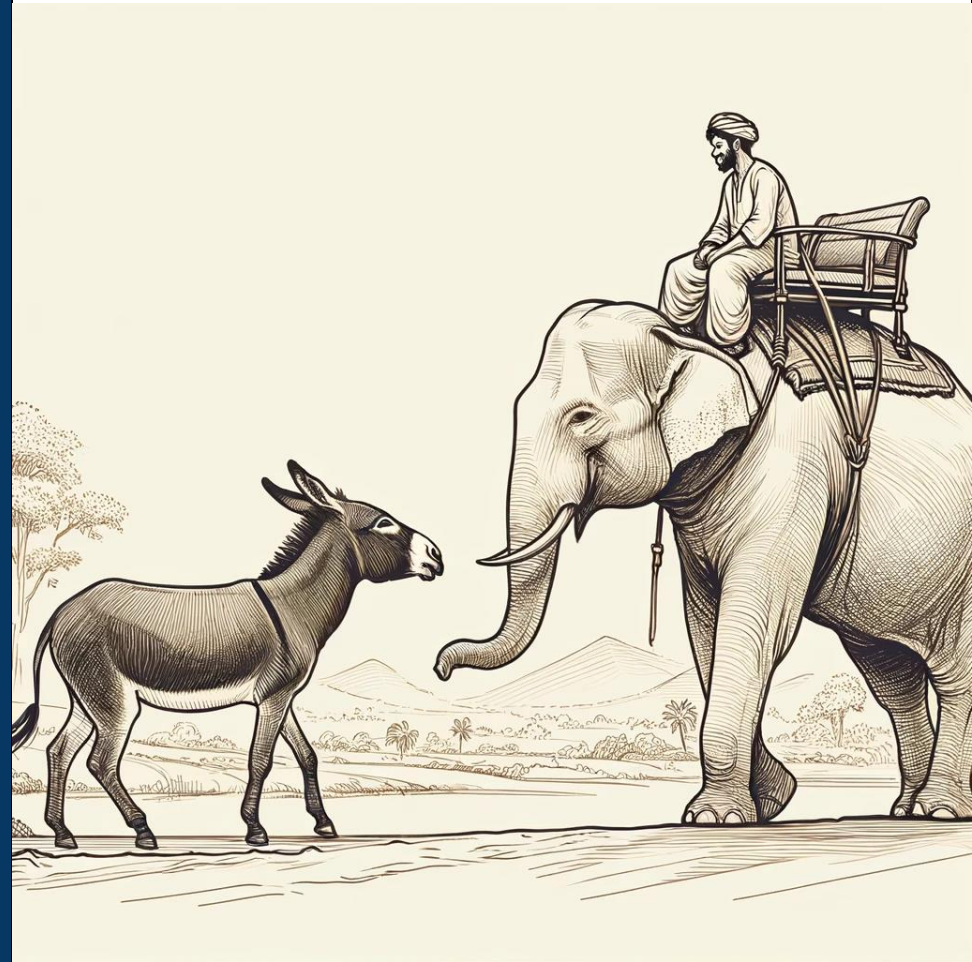Show you are doing your best to be rational, unbiased, and open-minded.

What happens when you earn the elephant's trust?

Credibility
Compassion
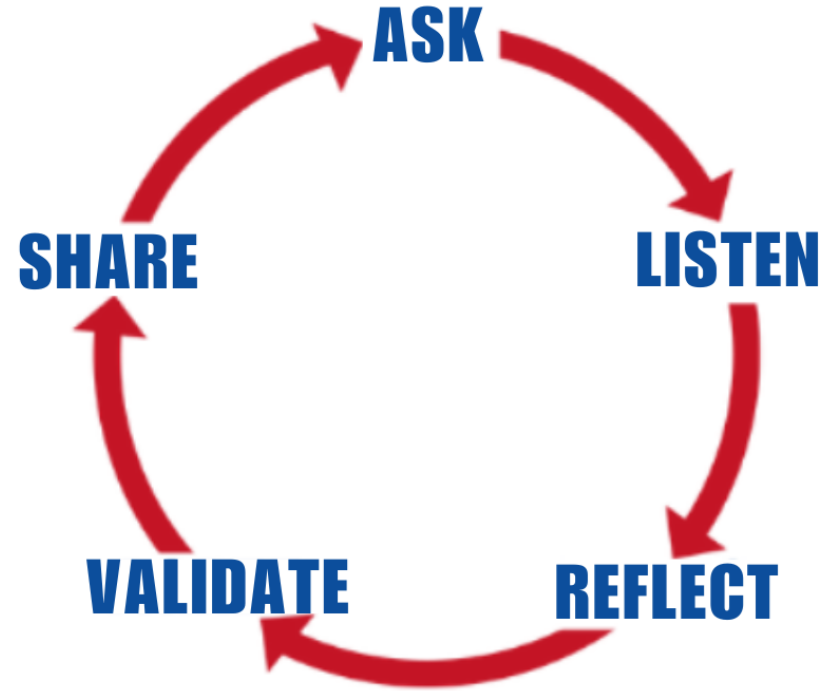Comprehension
Connection
Comfort

The elephant *WANTS* to follow you!

NOW you can talk with the rider

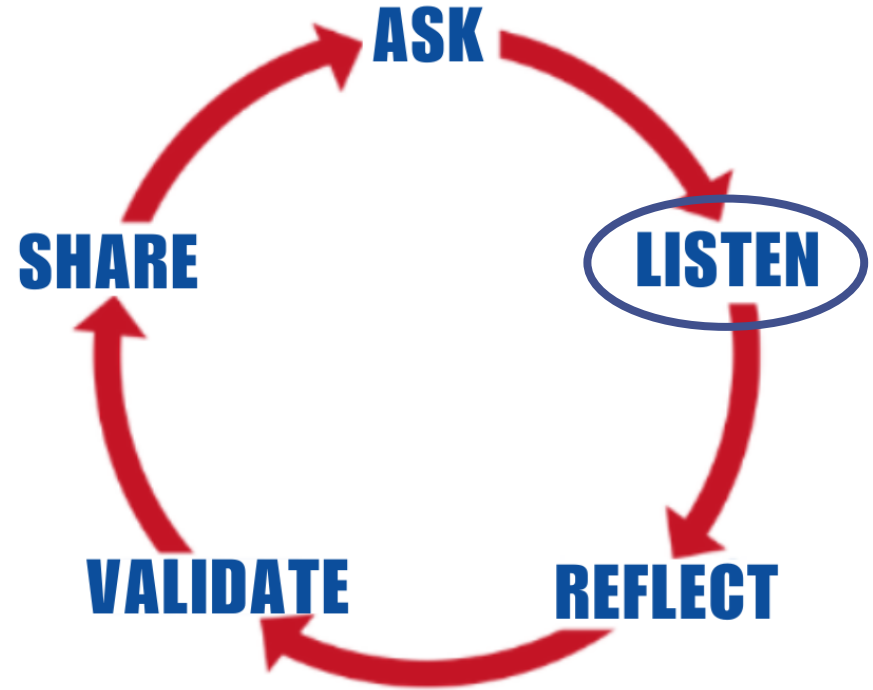# How can you get started?

Persuasion Conversation Cycle

ASK

LISTEN

REFLECT

VALIDATE

SHARE

Ask

- **Open-ended**
- **Nonjudgmental**
- **Curious**
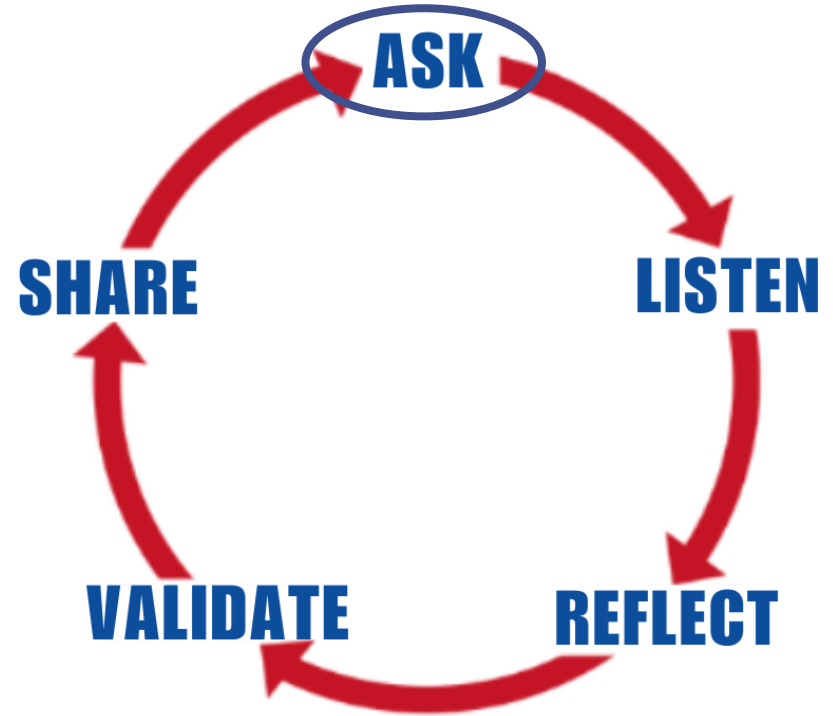
Listen

- **Pay attention**

- **Seek to understand**

- **Don't interrupt**

- **Let them talk as long as they want**

Reflect

- **Summarize**

- **Name feelings**

- **Acknowledge implicit content**

ASK

LISTEN

REFLECT
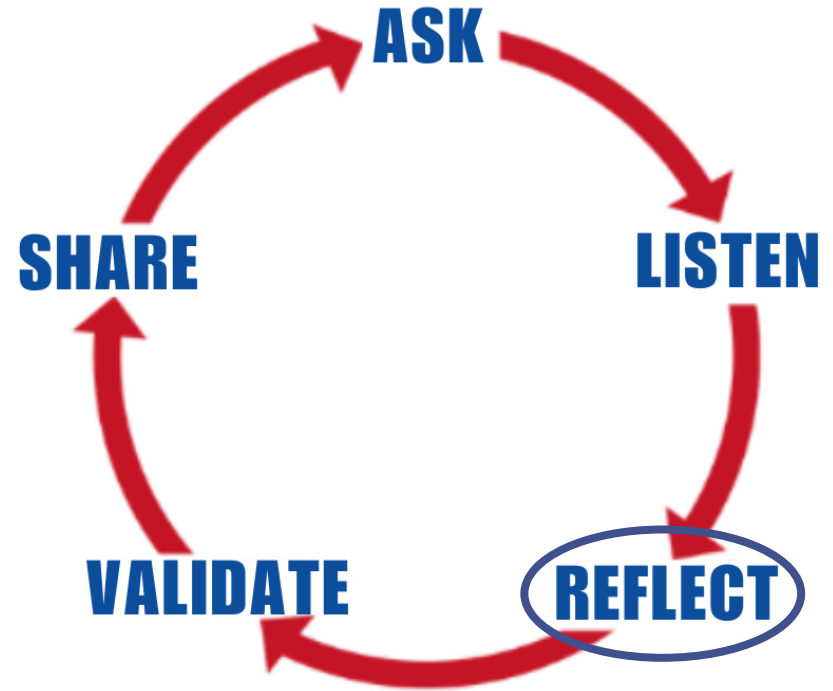
VALIDATE

SHARE

Validate

- **Acknowledge the legitimacy of their beliefs and feelings**

- **Accept their experience**

- **Agree where possible**
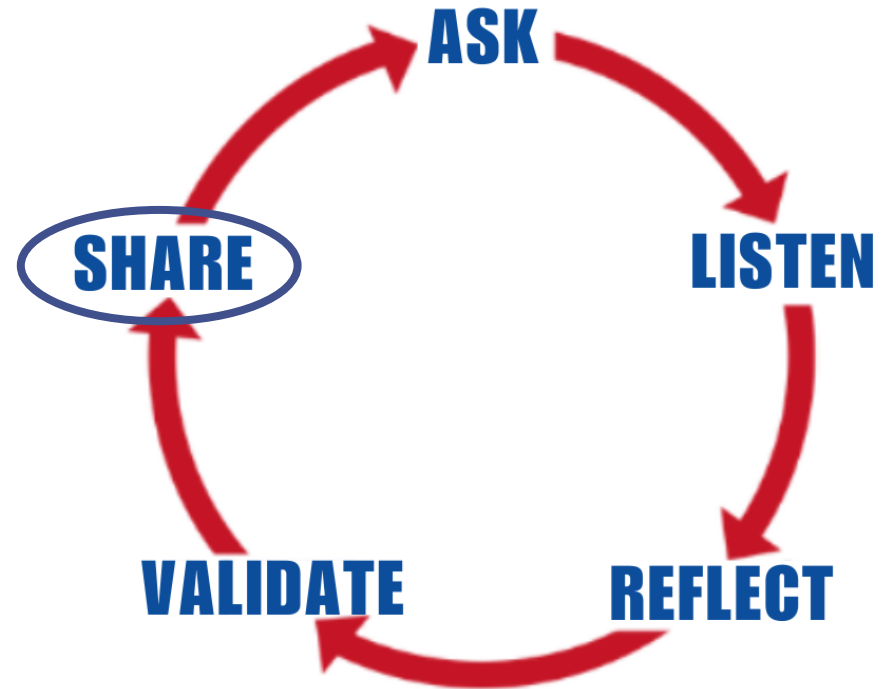
- **Describe a time when you felt the same**

ASK

LISTEN

REFLECT

VALIDATE
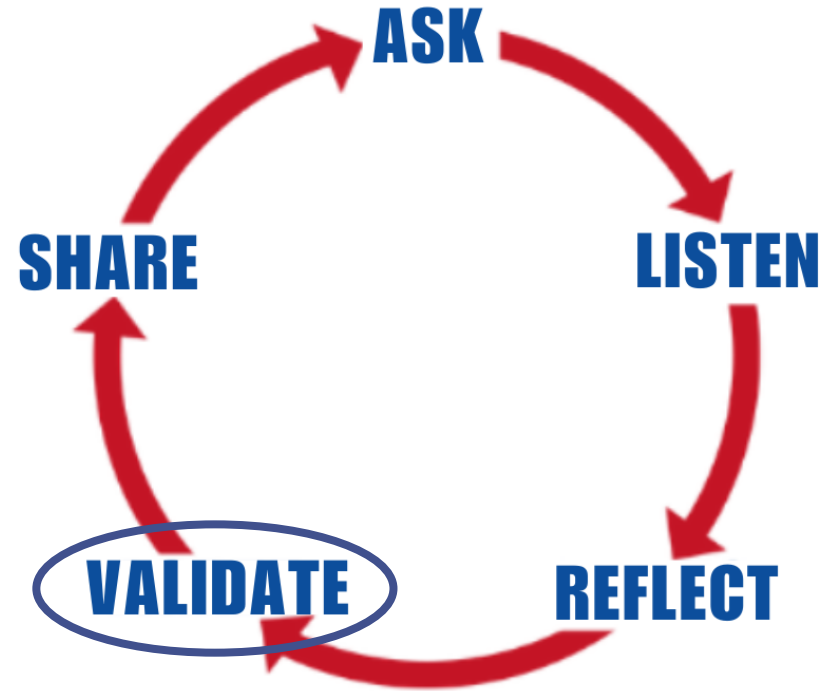
SHARE

Share

🚫 **Don't argue with facts or reason**

✓ **Shift the narrative with a personal story or anecdote**

✓ **Share information only after getting consent**

Demo

Before you go...

Put your
new skills
to work!

Linktr.ee/itsnottoolateproject

Tell your friends!

If you liked
this webinar,
they will too!

Thank you!

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After Party!!!