


Mastering Challenging Conversations

Ann Smith, Guide & Grow



To get the most value from this discussion, please consider one example of a challenging conversation you are currently facing or have faced in the workplace. This might be a conversation you are avoiding or one that has not gone well.

GOALS

Navigate challenging & difficult conversations

Manage and resolve conflicts

Strengthen relationships & promote positive outcomes



Agenda

Challenges & Benefits

6-Step Process

Self-Reflection

Positive Purpose

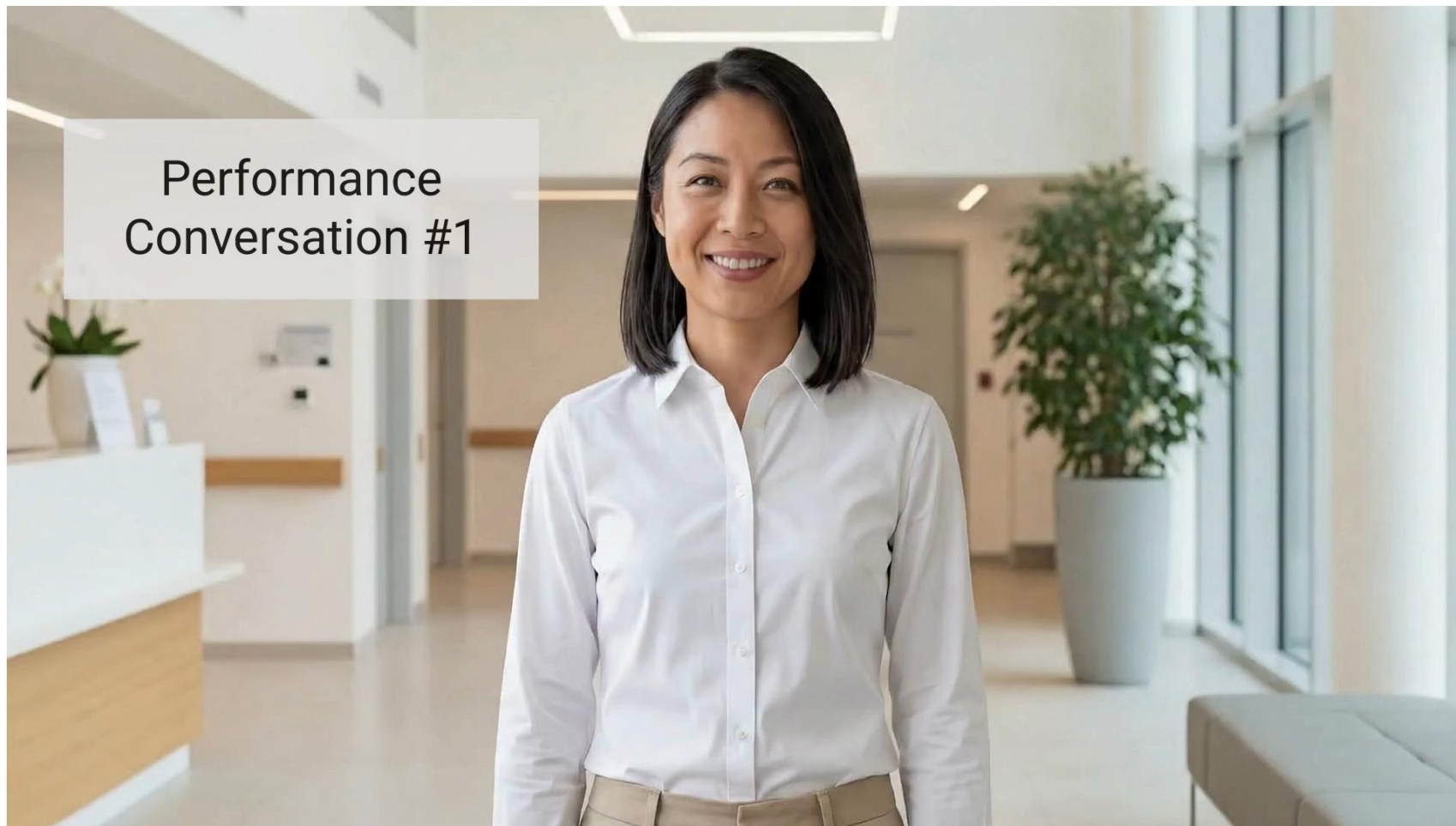
Clear Description

Additional Steps

Promote Positive Outcomes



Challenging Conversation #1



Performance
Conversation #1

Challenges & Benefits

1-5 challenges | 1-5 benefits



Challenges



Fear of Conflict
Fear of Conflict

Defensiveness

Uncertainty

Benefits



Improved Relationships

Growth & Understanding

Clarity & Resolution

Self-reflect

Convey
purpose

Describe the
situation

Co-create
solutions

Listen

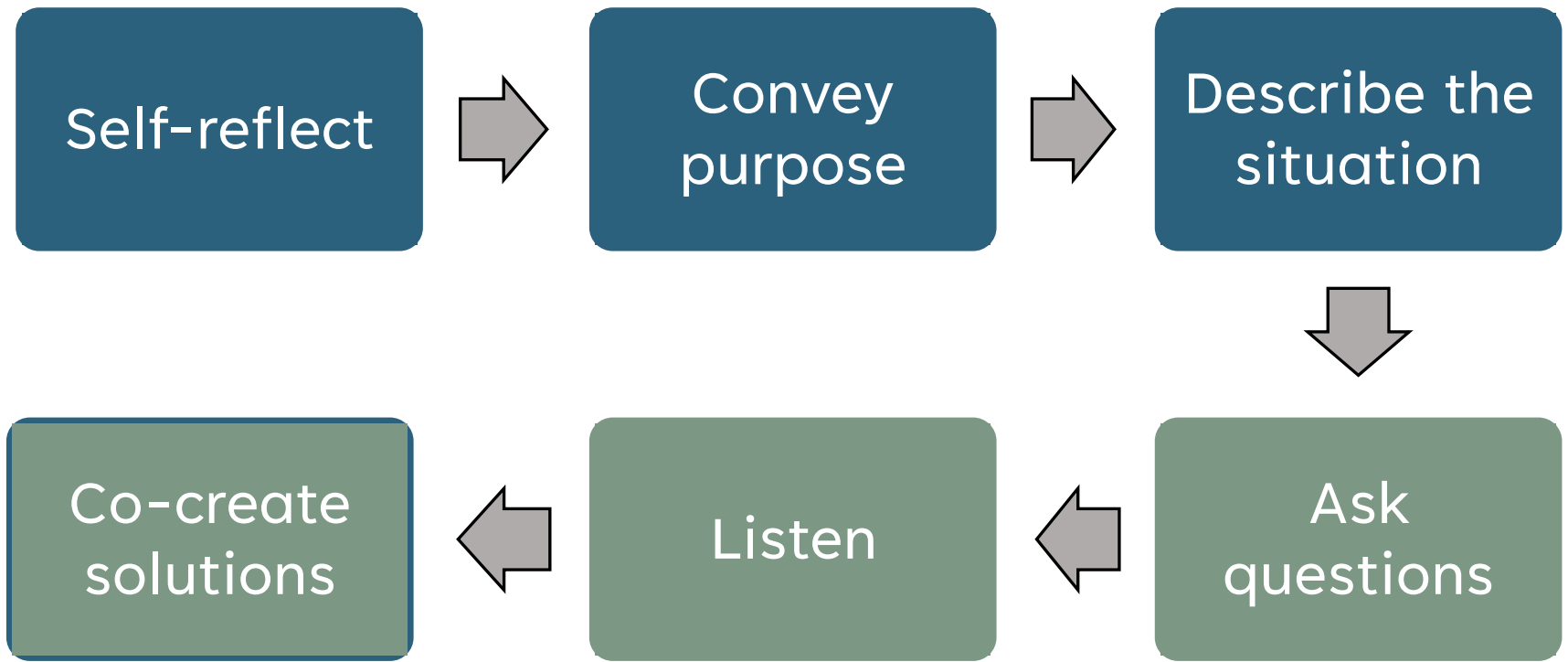
Ask
questions

6-step process for challenging conversations

Individual reflection

Identify one challenging conversation.



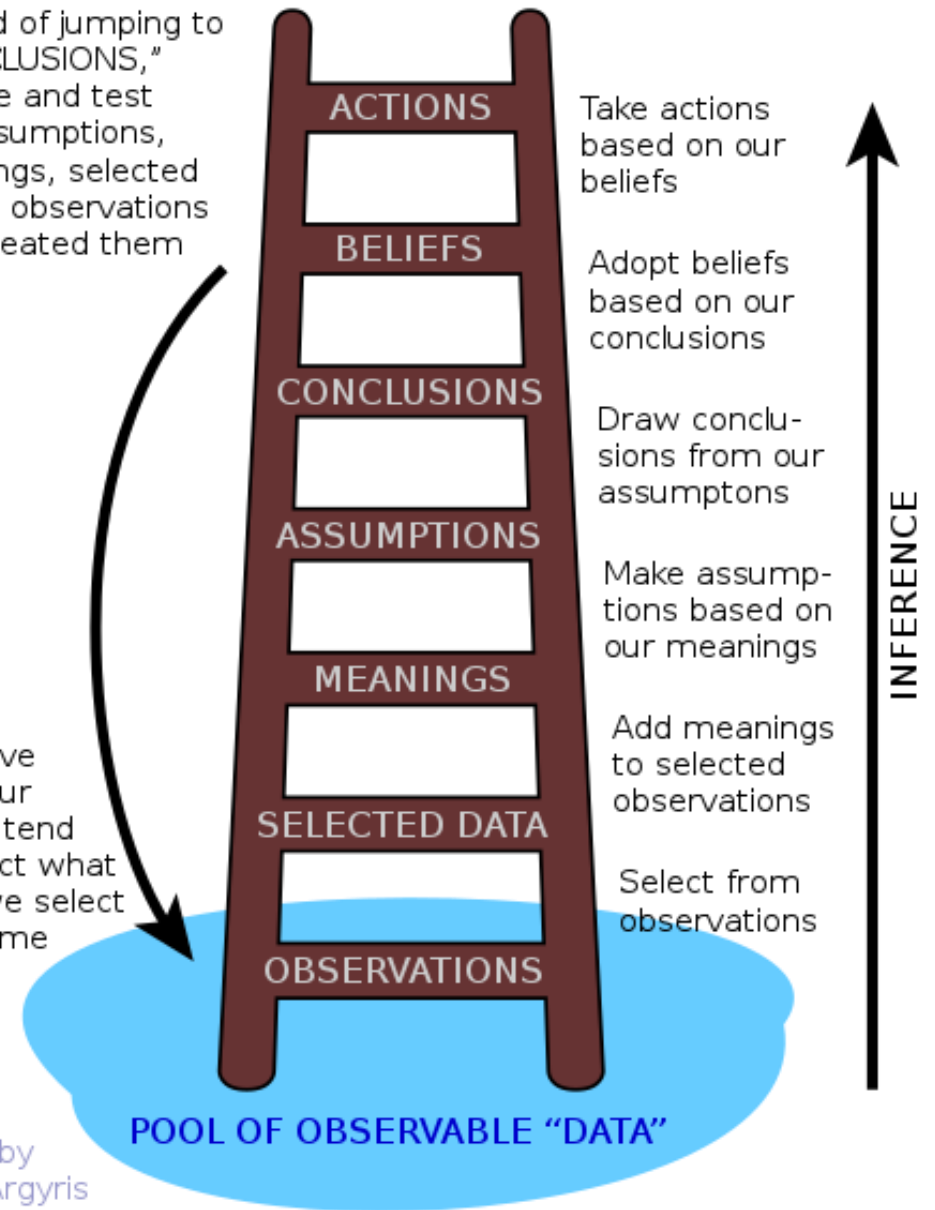


Ladder of Inference

Alternate view

Instead of jumping to "CONCLUSIONS," analyze and test the assumptions, meanings, selected data & observations that created them

Reflexive loop: our beliefs tend to affect what data we select next time



ACTIONS

Take actions based on our beliefs

BELIEFS

Adopt beliefs based on our conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

Draw conclusions from our assumptions

ASSUMPTIONS

Make assumptions based on our meanings

MEANINGS

Add meanings to selected observations


SELECTED DATA

Select from observations

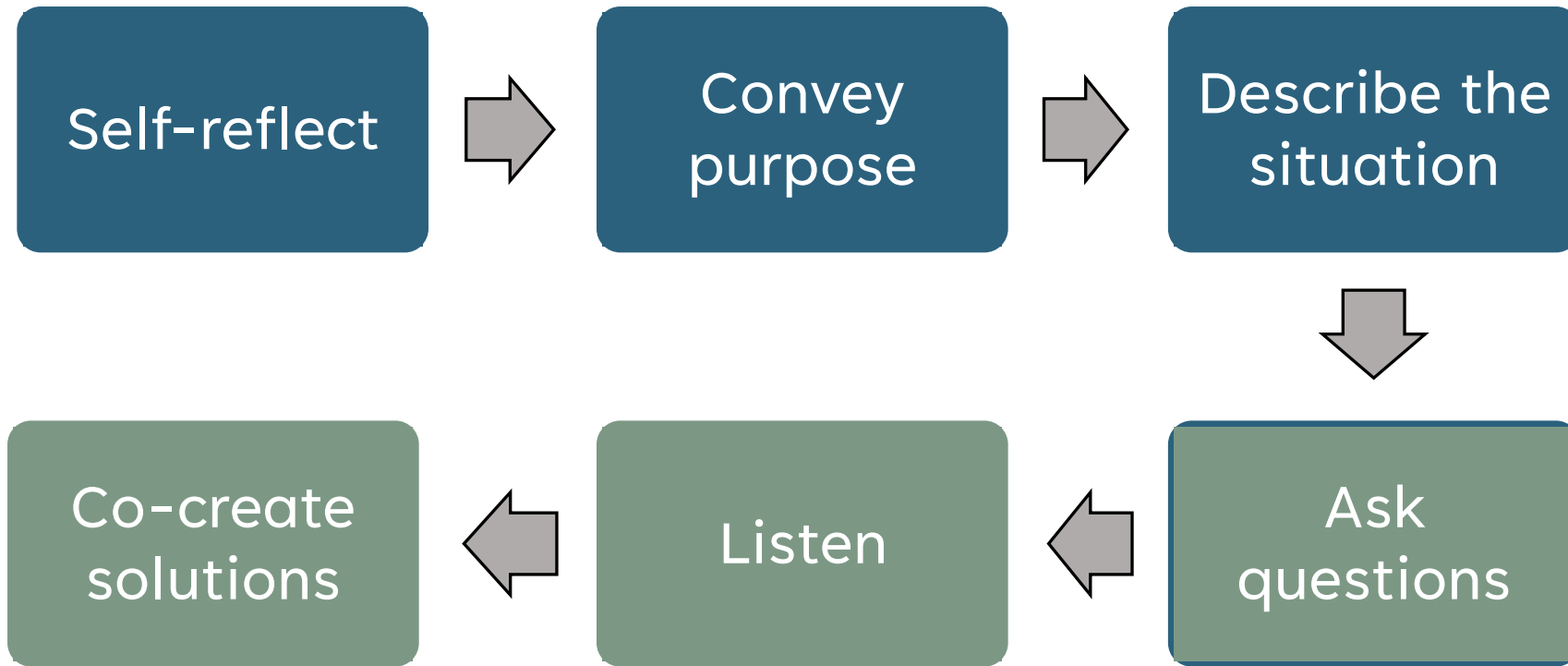
OBSERVATIONS

POOL OF OBSERVABLE "DATA"

INFERENCE

A person wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue button-down shirt is seated at a desk. Their right hand is holding a black and white marker, poised to write on a document. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall scene suggests a professional or business setting.

You assume your manager does not trust your ability to get the work done right, even though you have done similar projects in the past. You decide to completely ignore your manager's suggestions and then complain about your manager to your coworker at lunch.



What's your positive purpose?

–

- Dominate the conversation
- Blame others
- Defend oneself at all costs
- Be right/Win
- Ignore the issue
- Avoid conflict

+

- Understand perspectives
- Discover truth
- Open two-way communication
- Seek mutual benefit
- Resolve a problem, improve
- Strengthen relationships

Positive Purpose

Identify a positive purpose for your challenging conversation.

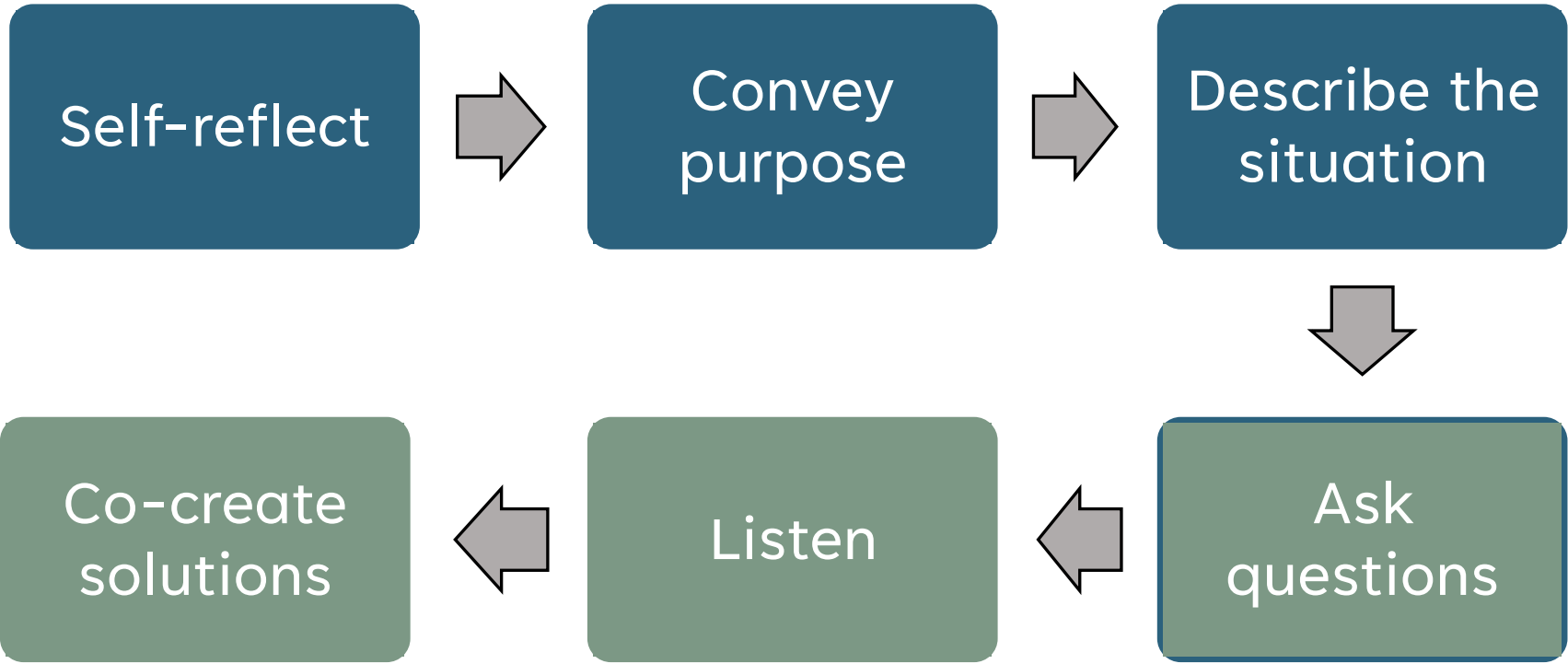
Consider what you will say to open the door and invite the conversation.

What positive outcome would you like for the person, yourself, and your team?



“I’d like to discuss X so that Y (positive outcome)”







Describe the Situation



Be Accurate

Not a team player ❌

Always late to meetings ❌

Interrupted Jay four times during the meeting ✓

Micro manager ❌

Checked up on my work three times in an hour ✓

Difficult to work with ❌

Did not respond to my last three emails ✓

Rude ❌

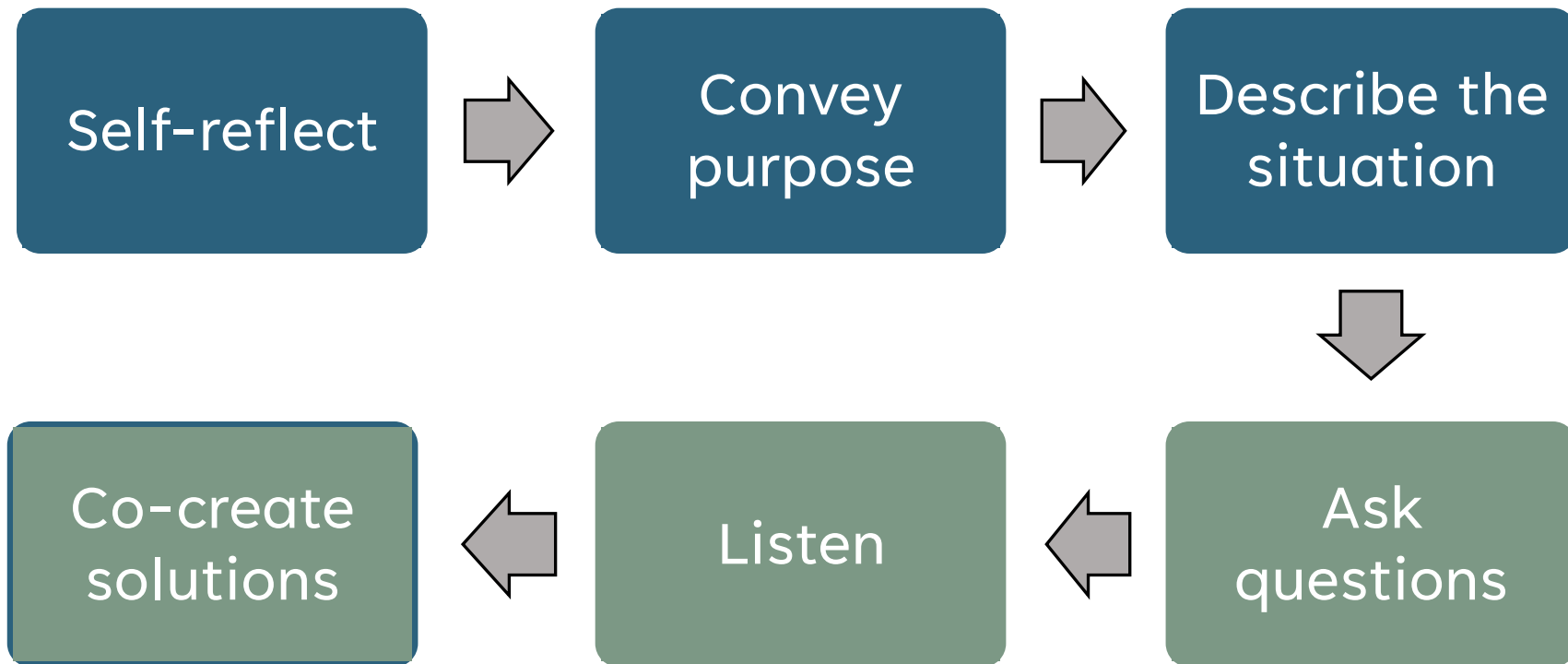
Told co-worker to “shut up jerk” during the meeting ✓



Reflect

Take a moment to write how
to describe your situation





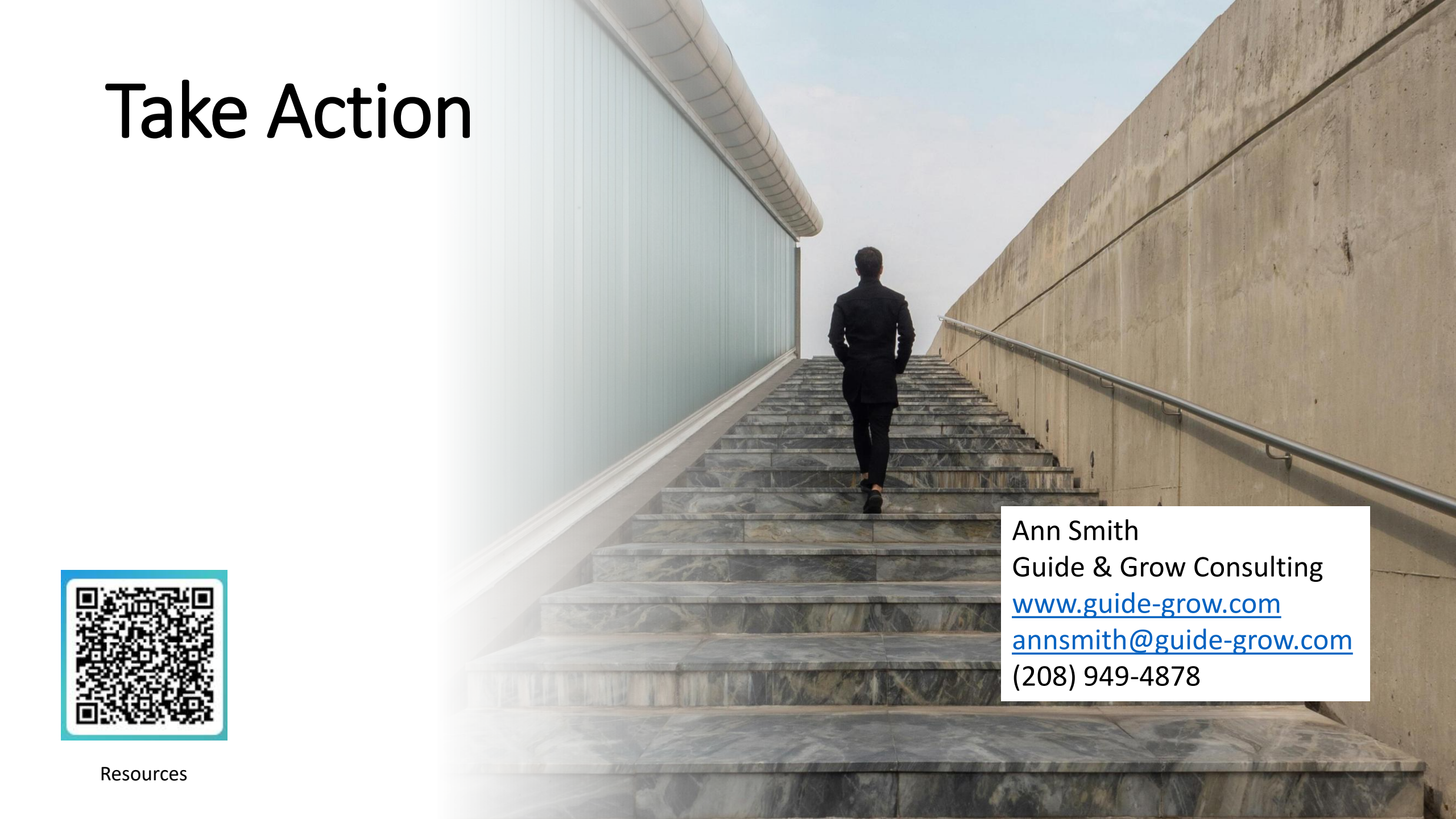
Challenging Conversation #2



Take Action



Resources

A person in a dark suit is seen from behind, walking up a long, wide set of stone stairs. The stairs are flanked by a light blue wall on the left and a concrete wall with a metal handrail on the right. The sky is overcast and grey.

Ann Smith
Guide & Grow Consulting
www.guide-grow.com
annsmith@guide-grow.com
(208) 949-4878