



Hosting Difficult Conversations





COMPLEX

Consisting of many different and interacting parts. The relationships between the parts in a complex system are dynamic and always emerging.



What are the characteristics of complex environments?

- Agents or objects interacting
- Feedback loops
- Emergent phenomenon
- Pockets of order
- Patterns within patterns



Complex environments can be surprising and even volatile.



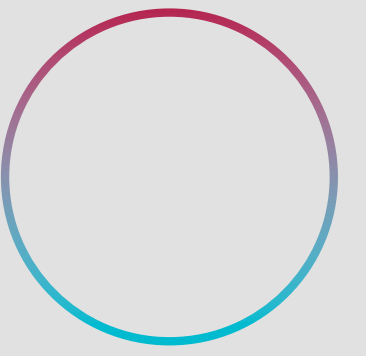
The Brawl

The story of one of the most memorable fights on TV.



OVERVIEW

This **Deep Dive** is part of the College of Behavioral Health Leadership's 2017 Convening



Key Considerations:

- Why do we even need facilitators?
- What's required to be an effective facilitator?
- How important is design to the experience and the outcomes you seek?
- How can you remain engaged without becoming a distraction in the room?
- What happens when we convene diverse groups around difficult conversations?



Facilitating difficult conversations is both art and science.



Asia-Montana Energy Summit

A facilitated conversation about energy with leaders from the US and Asia





Truly **BAD** Conversations

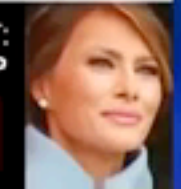
Denver
5:38 PM MT



San Diego
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TONIGHT 9P ET
SPECIAL REPORT:
MELANIA TRUMP
1 21 44
HRS MIN SEC



NEW TONIGHT
STANDING UP TO TRUMP: UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS TELL ALL
Tom Tancredo | (R) Former US Congressman

LIVE
CNN
4:38 PM PT

ING BOSTON MAYOR AND MA GOVERNOR -- THREATENED TO PULL OUT **CNN** ERIN BURNETT

FACILITATION AS A DESIGN CHALLENGE


Accept the task of facilitating difficult conversations as an immense design challenge



Essential Design Elements

- People
- Places
- Problems



 When conversations go poorly, was it by design?

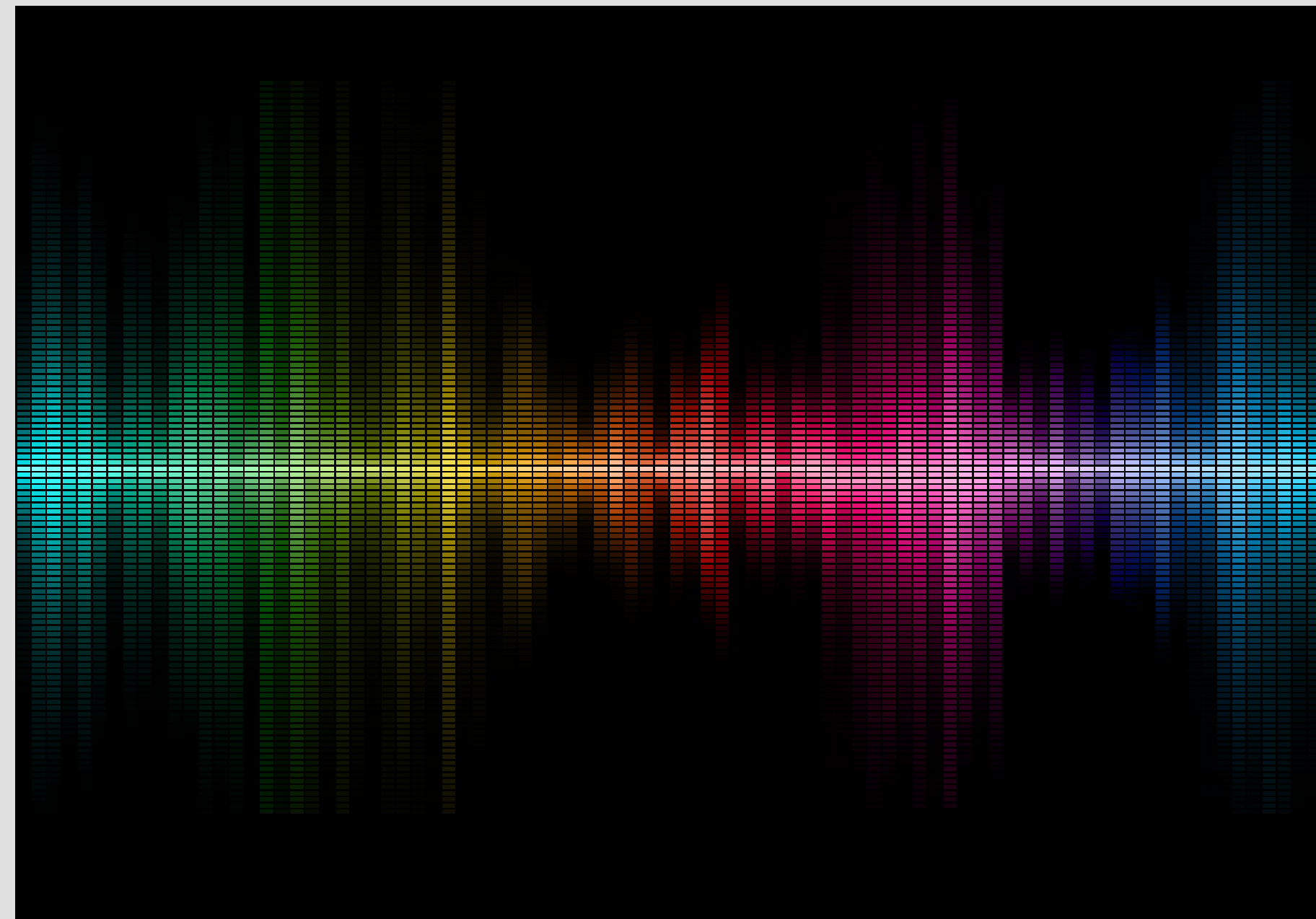
Truly **BAD** Conversations

By Design



COMMON CONVERSATIONAL MOMENTS

Complex conversations often fluctuate in and out of various stages or what we call “moments”



The 7 Conversational Moments

1. Confusion
2. Contention
3. Conversation
4. Connection
5. Cooperation
6. Collaboration
7. Creation



Learn to recognize and then to manage these moments.

COMMON CONVERSATIONAL LANDMINES

Designing conversations so they avoid these common landmines



The 7 Conversational Landmines

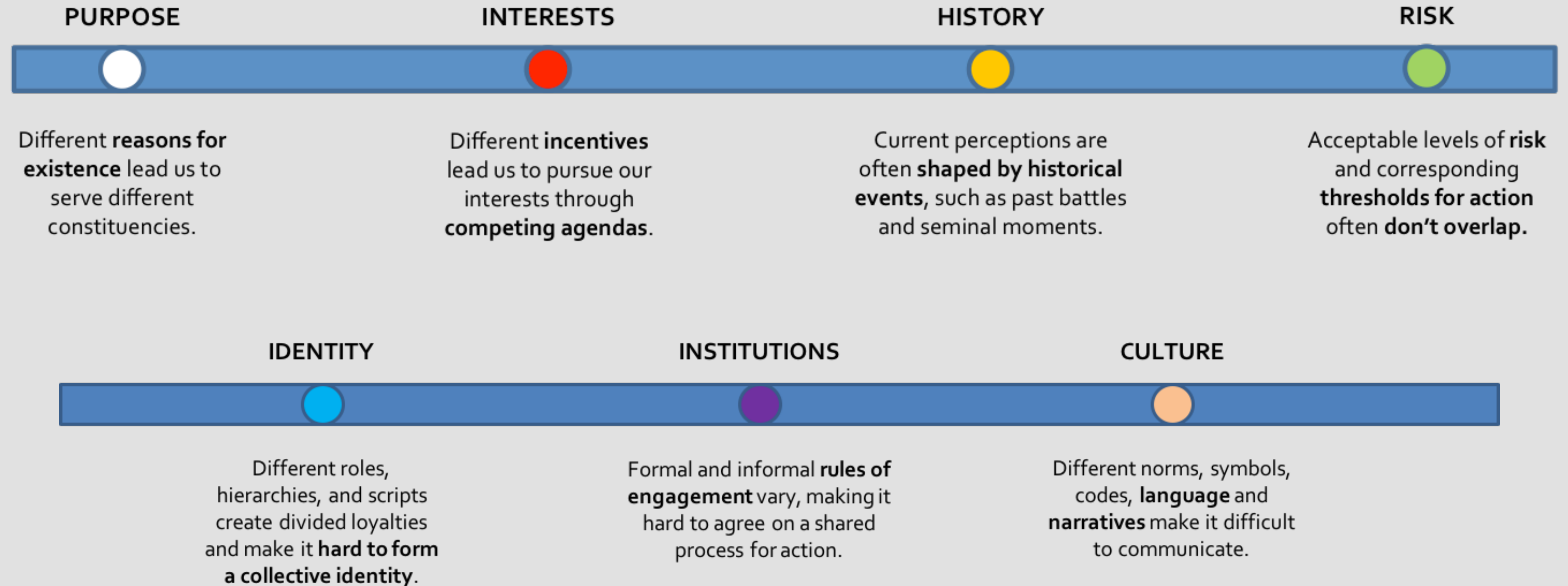
1. Purpose
2. Interests
3. History
4. Risk
5. Identity
6. Institutions
7. Culture



When the conversation stalls, it's likely because you hit one of these.

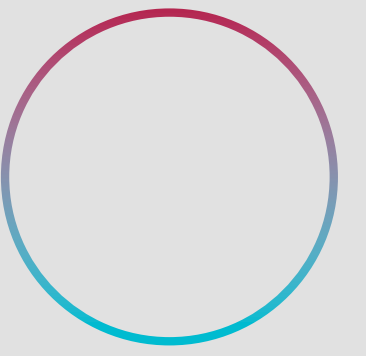
Common Conversational Landmines

Beware of these 7 hot spots



EFFECTIVE FACILITATORS

Throughout the conversation, the facilitator has 6 essential responsibilities



The 6 Essential Duties and Responsibilities

1. Accuracy
2. Unity
3. Tempo
4. Phrasing/Framing
5. Experience
6. Balance



Facilitation is about gracefully negotiating agendas and creating conditions where people can achieve the seemingly impossible.



How You Can Learn To Manage Complex Environments

Before the conversation



Forecasting

Generate assumptions about future events or situations that may surface during the conversation.



Ecosystem Mapping

Organize all of the information you have into a visual portrait that depicts the key forces and their influence on you and your environment.



Scenario Planning

Be prepared for a number of likely scenarios. Develop action plans based on the emergence of specific events or situations.



Road Mapping

Generate in your mind or in writing a sequence of actions or steps designed to achieve the goal or to reach the desired destination.

How You Can Learn To Manage Complex Environments

During the conversation



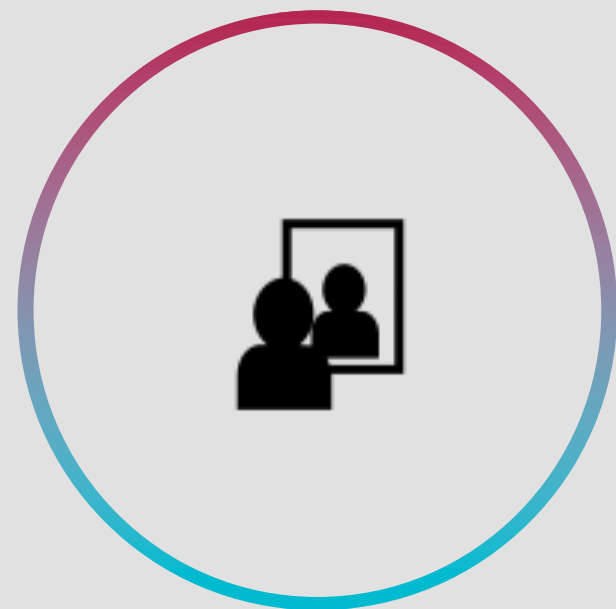
The Indicators of Stress

Use a “cheat sheet” to identify the various signs of stress, including the physiological, emotional, psychological, and social indicators of stress.



Trend Spotting

Using a wide variety of sources, identify the trends and patterns that are emerging in the conversation. Which ones are healthy and which ones are unhealthy?



Moments of Reflection

Take time to stop, look, and listen. What have you just experienced and how was that experience different from previous ones?



Time Lapse Portraits

Use time lapse portraits to better understand before and after states; take mental snapshots of verbal and non-verbal states over time.

How You Can Learn To Manage Complex Environments

During the conversation



Open Windows

Look for windows of opportunity you can exploit in ways that promote and encourage deeper conversation.



Mobilization Triggers

Identify the emotional, psychological, and other triggers that are catalysts for action.



Reduce the Contrast

Through your language, reduce the contrast between the existing reality and the ideal and future possibility.



Grab the Bull Horn

Use your role to keep the conversation focused on what you believe to be the “right” issues.

How You Can Learn To Manage Complex Environments

During and after the conversation



Stay Optimistic

Learn how to suppress negative and pessimistic thoughts and to replace them with positive and optimistic ones.



Cultivate Social Connections

Identify pre-existing social connections and work to establish new social connections when possible.



Walk, Don't Run

Engineer a sequence of small victories that cumulatively give participants more confidence to take bigger risks.



Find a Buddy

Don't go it alone. Find a buddy who is willing to join you on the journey.