

JASON J. JAY & GABRIEL GRANT

BREAKING THROUGH GRIDLOCK



THE
POWER OF CONVERSATION
IN A POLARIZED WORLD

FOREWORD BY PETER SENGE

Praise for *Breaking Through Gridlock*

“A field manual for change agents on how to build bridges across differences and move from talk to action.”

—**Adam Grant, Professor of Management, The Wharton School, and
New York Times bestselling author of *Originals* and *Give and Take***

“This book is not for the fainthearted, but if you truly want to change the world, it’s essential. It challenges us—as advocates, as citizens, as humans—to identify our own motivations and assumptions to create common ground with those we oppose or avoid. It asks us to abandon certainty and righteousness to allow for new and different paths toward our goals. And it gives us the tools and the inspiration to do so.”

—**Gwen Ruta, Senior Vice President, Climate and Energy, Environmental
Defense Fund**

“Our country’s future depends on our ability to reach beyond our echo chambers. Jay and Grant guide us through starting the conversations so crucial to our democracy.”

—**Van Jones, cofounder and President, The Dream Corps; CNN
contributor; and author**

“We need the creativity that can be harnessed from competing perspectives to craft a thriving organization and a thriving society. This book gives people the tools to take that on.”

—**John Mackey, CEO, Whole Foods Market**

“Jason Jay and Gabriel Grant single out authenticity as the key to breaking through the conversational gridlock that afflicts so many of our public and private interactions. They highlight the traps we fall into, as well as promising pathways for working our way out of them. It won’t be easy, but you can use the exercises they offer to practice sidestepping the polarizing moves we make without even being aware of what we are doing.”

—**Lawrence Susskind, founder of the Consensus Building Institute; Ford
Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning, MIT; and Vice Chair,
Program on Negotiation, Harvard Law School**

“Whether you’re hoping to shift your company, your community, or even yourself, Jay and Grant have produced an accessible and practical guide that will make you chuckle with recognition—then motivate you to get to work.”

—**Christine Bader, author of *The Evolution of a Corporate Idealist***

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THE
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IN A POLARIZED WORLD

Jason Jay
Gabriel Grant



BK

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
a BK Life book

To our children,
Vikram, Uma, Ariana, and Madeleine

Struggling with others is the definition of war
Struggling with oneself is the definition of peace

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Contents

Exercises	x
Figures	xi
Tables	xii
Foreword	xiii
Preface: How this book came to be	xvii
Our journey	xix
A note on our language	xxii
Introduction: How to use this book	1
Serious play	2
A note on the exercises	4
Introduction summary	7
1 How We Get Stuck: Breakdowns in conversation	9
The power of conversation	10
Start where you are	15
Focus on real, live conversations	17
Power plays can't help you strengthen relationships	21
Framing breaks down in unfamiliar and polarized situations	22
Start with authenticity	26
What's possible	27
Chapter 1 summary	28

2 (In)Authenticity: The key to getting unstuck	29
Consistency with the past can lead to getting stuck	30
Dynamic authenticity is aligned with the future	31
Dynamic authenticity is a team sport	36
Chapter 2 summary	39
3 Know What You Bring: The hidden baggage of conversations	41
Our way of being is tied with our background conversation	43
Our ways of being are shared	46
Uncover your background conversations	51
Ways of being can be tricky to see	55
Is being in the eye of the beholder?	58
Being and inauthenticity	59
Chapter 3 summary	60
4 Locate the Bait: What we gain when conversations lose	61
You got yourself stuck	65
Pitfalls: Background conversations that get us stuck	67
Identifying the bait helps you get unstuck	74
Bait usually involves right, righteous, certain, and safe	76
Map out your pitfall	78
Chapter 4 summary	81
5 Dare to Share: Moving past the talking points	83
Connect with internal motivations	86
Express what you really want	96
Embody your new way of being	104
Chapter 5 summary	108

6 Start Talking: Bringing conversations back to life . . .	109
The power of apology	113
You will encounter a variety of responses	122
Results require action, and action requires commitment	123
Chapter 6 summary	127
7 Embrace the Tension: How our differences can make a difference	129
Clarify values	131
Own the polarization	135
Expand the landscape	142
Dance in the new terrain	149
Chapter 7 summary	151
8 Widen the Circle: Building inclusive movements . . .	153
Shared inquiry is required to change the collective conversation	156
Each social movement has core tensions and pitfalls	157
Realist-visionary tensions are present in all social movements	160
Movements can have collective bait and pitfalls	164
Find the possibility at the heart of our movements	170
We have only just begun to discover the pathways forward	178
Chapter 8 summary	184
Notes	187
Bibliography	195
Acknowledgments	201
Index	205
About the Authors	215

Exercises

1	Where do you want to break through gridlock?	3
2	Identify stuck conversations	18
3	What does authenticity mean to you?	29
4	What does authenticity mean to you (continued)?	34
5	Choose a buddy	37
6	Our unspoken background conversation	52
7	Identify your ways of being	54
8	The spoken conversation	57
9	The cost of being stuck	67
10	Recognize pitfalls	73
11	Identify the bait in the trap	78
12	Map the pitfall	79
13	Why is your endeavor important to you?	87
14	Notice what motivations you're sharing or not sharing	93
15	Envision what you really want	97
16	Create a new way of being	99
17	Guided meditation	100
18	Reframe the problem	106
19	Build a new conversation	112
20	Write a letter	121
21	Conversation commitment	124
22	Your values, their values	134
23	Your values, their values (continued)	142
24	Go beyond a one-dimensional conversation	147
25	Brainstorm ideas that break trade-offs between values and objectives	149
26	Core tensions in your movement	163

27	Locate the collective bait	169
28	Envision the future together	172
29	Transform the central conversation of your movement	175
30	Create pathways for yourself and your movement	180
31	Commit to action	182

Figures

1	Our way of being gives rise to what we do and the results we have	44
2	Ways of being when people are stuck	48
3	New ways of being created by our workshop participants	102
4	Spheres of care	133
5	Trade-offs between parts and wholes	136
6	When we perceive a fundamental trade-off between values, the best we can imagine is compromising one for the other	137
7	A one-dimensional conversation in the corporate and investing world	143
8	A common mental model of trade-offs between performance and impact	145
9	Breaking trade-offs through innovation	146
10	Competing objectives	147
11	Compromise or innovation?	148
12	Ways of being expressed inside a positive future	173

Tables

1	Static authenticity versus dynamic authenticity	33
2	Thirty most frequently mentioned traits of a “typical” environmentalist	50
3	A few common pitfalls	68
4	Elements of wholehearted and effective apologies	114
5	Examples of people’s acknowledgments of the pitfalls they have created	117
6	Pathways forward	179



Exercise 1

Where do you want to break through gridlock?

Find a piece of paper or perhaps a notebook you want to use over the course of the book. Take a moment to make three lists.

Make the lists in sequence, but leave some space between them because you may find that you identify issues for list 1 after you make lists 2 and 3.

List 1: What issues are you passionate about?

The issues you are passionate about could involve big geopolitical challenges, simpler issues like turning off the lights, and anything in between. You can list issues where you are highly engaged through your work, social media, and social circles or those where you are more quietly but seriously concerned.

To help you brainstorm, you might consider the following questions: What feels threatened that you would like to protect? What values do you find yourself standing for? What vision do you hold for your household, organization, community, nation, or world?

List 2: Which of your conversations end up polarized or stuck?

With whom have you found yourself advocating, arguing, or debating the issues above?

Who is on “your side” and who is on “the other side” of the polarization?

When and where does this debate happen (e.g., the dinner table, Facebook, the office, or the school lunchroom)?

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List 3: What conversations are you avoiding because you know they will get stuck?

Whom do you believe “just won’t understand” your perspective about the issues above?

With whom do you believe it is just too risky to talk about these issues and your ideas? You might perceive that risk as ranging from mild discomfort to serious retaliation.

introduction summary

- This is a field guide and workbook that includes a sequence of proven exercises to help you along the way.
- If you stick with it, your work with the book will help you communicate powerfully with anyone about issues that are important to you.
- We invite you to join in a spirit of *serious play*: having the courage to face moments when we have contributed to our own failure and to poke fun at ourselves and have fun in the process.
- *Do the work*: Ask yourself, Where do you want to break through?
 - What issues are you passionate about?
 - Which of your conversations end up polarized or stuck?
 - What conversations are you avoiding because you know they will get stuck?



Exercise 2

Identify stuck conversations

Part A: Conversations that have gone off the rails

Choose a real conversation about improving the world that didn't go the way you wanted it to go. Perhaps you simply did not achieve your goals. Perhaps you found yourself feeling unsettled afterward about where you left the conversation or relationship. Start by looking at list 2 from exercise 1, but choose a real conversation.

Real conversations

- Are with a specific person who has a name.
- Have a history of dialogue in a specific place and time.
- Are current. You think about them. The person is living and still in your life. You see (or actively avoid) the person. You have the power to contact the person (or know someone who can connect you).
- Are important to you. They matter. Producing new results is worth the work of reflection.

In your notebook, answer the following questions about a real conversation:

- Who is the person this conversation is with?
- What is the person's relationship to you?
- Why does the conversation matter to you?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- When and where has the conversation taken place?
- What has been said in the conversation so far? Write out the conversation. Note that our recollection is often biased and incomplete. It can help to close your eyes, visualize,

and listen again, as specifically as possible, for what you said and heard verbatim.

This exercise is essential because it is the basis of all the reflection work we will ask you to do.

If you have several examples in mind, you can repeat this exercise, identifying a few specific conversations that have gone off the rails. If you consider skipping writing down one conversation because you have many in mind, then refer back to our earlier warning on being masters of avoidance.

Part B: Conversations that never happen

In part A, we invited you to consider conversations that didn't go the way you wanted them to go. These are memorable, but they are not the whole story. We also asked you to recall *avoided conversations* in exercise 1, list 3.

Consider that you avoid *far more* conversations that you're concerned won't go well. And your ability to avoid saying anything risky is so profoundly developed, you don't even remember the vast majority of the conversations you've avoided. You're swimming in these conversations, like a fish swims in water, and you typically never see them.

Right now, and over the next week, take note of the conversations you avoid. You might carry a small notebook with you, use the voice-recorder on your phone, or jot yourself an e-mail so that you can note it immediately.

For example, let's say you care about the health of the oceans and farms that produce your food. Sometimes you ask questions like, "Where was this fish caught?" or "Is this organic?" Now notice where you don't ask these questions. Chances are, you ask

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them where people or establishments are likely to have a well-developed answer and avoid asking them in places where the conversation might be less comfortable (but where it could actually make a difference!).

Notice when you see people take actions that you believe create negative impacts (e.g., making a sexist comment, littering) or they miss an opportunity where you think they could have generated a positive impact. When have you made it a topic of conversation with them, and when have you avoided it?

When you're in the presence of particular groups of people, when do and don't you raise the issues that matter to you?

Notice if there are friends or family members with whom you often discuss politics and others with whom you avoid discussing politics.

Replace "politics" in the previous sentence with any topic that is meaningful to you. That could be "spirituality," "parenting," or "your work," for example. With whom do you talk about what's most meaningful to you? With whom don't you talk about what's most meaningful?

Once you have a collection of these avoided conversations, choose one that seems important, and answer the questions from part A as they relate to the selected conversation you are avoiding.

chapter 1 summary

- We have a profound lack of consensus about the nature of the world's problems or what to do about solving them.
- Every formula for action and problem solving has one thing in common: having conversations with people.
- Conversations about big issues often get stuck. Being stuck means taking or avoiding action repeatedly without achieving our stated goals. When we care about something and we're stuck, there are consequences.
- Other approaches to stuck issues and conversations include power plays and framing or translation. Our book explores the power and possibility of *authentic conversations* to create a better world.
- *Do the work*: Choose one real, live conversation for further reflection and exploration in the chapters ahead.

(In)Authenticity

The key to getting
unstuck



Exercise 3

What does authenticity mean to you?

Which people in your life would you identify as being authentic and why?

What specifically have they said or done that you relate to as being authentic? Inauthentic?

What would you say makes a conversation authentic?

What specifically have you said or done that you relate to as being authentic? Inauthentic?



Exercise 4

What does authenticity mean to you? (continued)

Flip back to exercise 3 and reflect on your own notions of authenticity.

Which of the characteristics that you wrote down are pointing to the past?

Did you mention being true, real, or consistent? If so, true to what? Real according to what? Consistent with what? Did you say authenticity is in accordance with the original? True to who you knew yourself to be?

These are typical dictionary meanings of “authenticity” and they’re all pointing to the past.

Now consider the idea of *dynamic authenticity*. Is it enticing? Uncomfortable? Both?

Reflect on a time when you spoke your mind and opinions but didn’t get the result you wanted. What might it have been like to share your story, your contingent perspective, knowing you didn’t have all the information, knowing your opinions will change as you learn and grow?

What would it be like to tell your story, the story of who you are, knowing even your account of your own past will change as you learn and grow?

Who in your life would you identify as being dynamically authentic and why?

Is there a specific recent conversation you recall that you now experience as having expressed dynamic authenticity? What exactly was said and who said it? What was your experience of the conversation during and afterward?



Exercise 5

Choose a buddy

First, make a short list of people whom you think would be fun to include on your journey through this book. Consider the following:

- Who is willing to listen to you about the issues and problems you care about in the world, even if they don't always agree with the way you go about trying to solve them?
- Whom are you willing to listen to?
- Whom would you trust to hear the details of situations where you have gotten stuck or fallen on your face?
- Who will tell you what others may be afraid to tell you? Who is not afraid to confront you with what they think about your attitude and actions? Who is willing to challenge your interpretation of events? Who recommended this book?

Continued on next page

- Who is separate enough from the context of your challenges that they can help you think through them dispassionately? (For example, if you are trying to make changes at home, think twice before picking your spouse; if you are trying to make changes at work, think twice before picking your boss.)
- Who else may benefit from learning how to harness the power of conversation in a polarized world?

Next, choose one or more partners, share this book with them, and ask them to play along. For example, you could tell them you want to get better at talking about tough issues you care about and you would like their help and peer coaching.

Then, create your own set of agreements for how you'll best support one another along this journey. Here are some ideas:

- Be candid and challenge one another. If you hear your buddy say something that sounds off or unfair or makes unquestioned assumptions, then pause the person and point it out.
- Hold each other accountable. If you hear your buddy theorize or complain but avoid taking action, encourage the person to make a real move. Create a deadline together.
- Be compassionate *and* persistent. If you sense you or your buddy is feeling frustrated or resigned, take a break. But instead of just dropping the conversation, return to it while trying something new.

We recommend your list of agreements be explicit yet not fixed. You can always come back and add to it or amend it as you learn.

chapter 2 summary

- Most of the time, the word “authentic” is used to describe when people are acting consistently with their past beliefs, statements, behaviors, and cultural identity. This common idea of authenticity is static and can solidify gridlock and polarization.
- Rather than being consistent with the past, we invite you to be consistent with a future you really want and to embark on a process of learning and growth. We call this “dynamic authenticity.”
- The key to dynamic authenticity is being honest and vulnerable about our inconsistencies and contradictions. It is often easiest to do this in trusting relationships and then to expand from there.
- *Do the work:* Invite a friend, colleague, or a group of people to join you as you work through this book. Find someone who can quickly see the traps you fall into and isn't afraid to say so. Invite the person to be your coach, and offer to reciprocate.



Exercise 6

Our unspoken background conversation

Choose one of the conversations you identified and wrote out in exercise 2. This could be a conversation that didn't go the way you wanted or one that you have been avoiding. Make certain you're choosing a conversation that is *live* and that *matters*.

A conversation is *live* if it still feels unresolved or incomplete, even if some time has passed. It is with someone who is in your life, someone you'll continue to be in conversation with (not the person you saw on the bus whom you have never met and don't know how to find). It *matters* if you really want to achieve something. That goal could be a concrete outcome like a change of behavior, or it could be a higher quality relationship with the person.

If this is an avoided conversation, then imagine it happening—play the recording in your mind of how you think it would go.

Now reflect on that conversation as follows:

Write down the unspoken or background conversation—what you were (and are now) thinking and feeling but not saying out loud. Feelings are basic: mad, sad, glad, afraid, ashamed. To notice feelings, sense your body's signals, like a pounding heart or heat in the face. Thoughts are interpretations or judgments of the other person or the situation. Write down whatever you can remember going through your mind.

If your conversation is one that didn't go well, write down what you were thinking and feeling before, during, and after the interaction. If your conversation is one you have been avoiding, write out the background conversation you're having with yourself about that conversation that isn't taking place.



Exercise 7

Identify your ways of being

Step back and look at the whole interaction that you wrote out in exercises 2 and 6. Consider your background conversation with yourself. How would you describe your way of being in this conversation? What adjectives would you use? How do you think you came across? If it's an avoided conversation, how do you think you would come across?

Another way to get at this is to imagine that someone who knows you really well—your spouse, best friend, sibling, parent, or child—could watch a video of the interaction. Imagine this person can anticipate what's going through your head. *How would the person describe your way of being?*

Hint: You need not reinvent the wheel. Look back at the word cloud (fig. 2) for ways of being that may express your way of being in this conversation.

Share your reflections with your buddy, and see if your buddy agrees with the way you have described your way of being.



Exercise 8

The spoken conversation

Go back to the spoken conversation you described earlier. Now that you have reflected on your background conversation and way of being, ask yourself, How well did I describe *everything* that was said and *how* it was said? Are you able to distinguish better what actually happened and remember things more clearly?

On a piece of paper or in your notebook, write down, as precisely as you can remember, a transcript of *what was said* and *visible actions taken*. If someone had a recording device, what would that person have seen and transcribed? That transcript could look like this:

Me: “_____”

Other person: “_____”

Me: “_____”

...

chapter 3 summary

- When we show up for a conversation with others, we carry the hidden baggage of background conversations with ourselves.
- We might try to mask our prejudices and assumptions about how the conversation will go, but they sneak through in the way we carry ourselves and the way we come across: our way of being. The conversation can get stuck before it even gets started.
- Our ways of being are shared, both in cultures of advocacy and in the basic human experience of difficult conversations. Our ways of being contribute to negative stereotypes and expectations of us as advocates.
- To get unstuck, we invite you to recognize whether your way of being is (dynamically) authentic. Is it consistent with achieving our immediate objectives? Is it in line with the world you want to create?
- *Do the work:* The next step in transforming conversations is to open up and confront this hidden baggage by getting in touch with your ways of being.
 - When your conversation got stuck, what were you thinking and feeling but not saying out loud?
 - What is your background conversation?
 - What was your way of being in that conversation when it got stuck?



Exercise 9

The cost of being stuck

To identify the cost of being stuck, answer the following questions:

- How do you know you are stuck?
- What outcomes are you hoping to produce that you are not currently producing?
- What problem do you wish you could solve but can't?
- What goals and aspirations are you not realizing?
- What collateral damage might you be creating? How does your current way of being affect the people around you?
- How are you impacted emotionally and practically?

Table 3 A few common pitfalls

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
Someone should	<p>“Business should . . .”</p> <p>“The government should . . .”</p> <p>“China should . . .”</p> <p>“They should . . .”</p> <p>“I can’t . . . I need a lot more money, power, connections before I can . . . ; therefore, they should.”</p>	Giving up of our own power and responsibility to make a difference	Getting off easy: holding a vision for how the world “should” be without taking ownership or responsibility for creating or realizing that vision

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
Holier than thou	<p>“I am more virtuous than you (because I recycle, bike, etc.).”</p> <p>“I see more than you (because I know the science, I see things from a systems perspective, etc.).”</p> <p>“I know what you want better than you do (because I read philosophical books about how to be happy).”</p> <p>“I’m not even going to have this conversation (because you don’t get it, you don’t care, or you do get it but you’re distorting the truth for your own purposes).”</p>	<p>Loss of ability to engage and empower people beyond the choir</p> <p>Creation of “us versus them” perspective</p>	<p>Feeling right(eous), smart, superior, and certain that “I know the answer” in an uncertain world</p> <p>Dominating others, making them wrong</p>

Continued on next page

Table 3 (continued)

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
I know what progress is	<p>“That’s merely incremental change, and what we truly need is transformative change.”</p> <p>“We are working on the biggest, noblest, and most important problem.”</p> <p>“How dare you marine ecologists get in the way of my wind farm!”</p>	<p>Silos among groups of advocates: divided we fall</p> <p>Limited personal growth, less potential for learning from or engaging with others</p>	<p>Being right, making others wrong</p> <p>Being certain in an uncertain world</p> <p>Feeling justified personal importance or significance</p>

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
Lone wolf	<p>“I am being the change.”</p> <p>“They don’t get it.”</p> <p>“The system is wrong and I’m not a part of it.”</p> <p>“This isn’t my community.”</p>	<p>Isolation, burnout</p> <p>Inability to inspire others or effect change</p>	<p>Feeling superior and righteous</p>

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
It's the right thing to do	<p>"We should (buy greener products, recycle, turn off the lights) because it's the right thing to do."</p> <p>"Everyone is too focused on the costs and benefits when this is a moral issue."</p>	<p>Missed opportunities to design solutions that incorporate the diversity of values present within the community or organization</p> <p>Missed opportunities for sharing experiences of higher quality motivations</p>	<p>Feeling righteous</p> <p>Claiming the moral high ground</p> <p>Avoiding the hard work of seriously considering competing tensions</p>

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
Selfless OR selfish	<p>"They're just in it to make a buck."</p> <p>"Those greedy people are the problem."</p> <p>OR</p> <p>"They don't understand business, we have to earn a living, and I don't want my kids to go without."</p> <p>"Those tree huggers live in a utopian la-la land."</p>	<p>Gridlock and paralysis</p> <p>Missed opportunities for collaboration</p> <p>Surrender of personal agency and responsibility to outside influences (e.g., the market)</p>	<p>Being right, making others wrong</p> <p>Being dependent on others to create economic value and earn money</p> <p>Avoiding envy for financial success</p> <p>Avoiding the challenging tensions of mission-driven business</p>

Continued on next page

Table 3 (continued)

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
Right now!	<p>“The problems we face are too large and far too urgent to invest in education or waste time “building consensus.”</p> <p>“What’s most required is that we influence business and political leadership. They are the ones with the power to effect change.”</p>	<p>Loss of staying power across generations</p> <p>Loss of authenticity: using short-term “crisis-based” strategies while advocating long-term thinking, advocating for equality that is inherently based on and perpetuates inequality, losing touch with those you’re purporting to help</p>	<p>Creating urgency</p> <p>Exclusivity: chasing after and running with elites</p>
<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
Humans OR nature	<p>“Humans are the problem. There are too many of them.”</p> <p>OR</p> <p>“Nature can take a backseat. Those spotted owl people need to pay attention to human suffering.”</p>	<p>Loss of our ability to express our love for humans <i>and</i> other life</p> <p>Loss of our ability to share what we love with others</p> <p>Anthropocentrism or misanthropism</p>	<p>Feeling certain: simplifying the problem and having someone to blame</p>

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Example conversation</i>	<i>Cost of being stuck</i>	<i>Bait</i>
Problem orientation	<p>“This is wrong. Why is it this way?”</p> <p>“This /that community / country / organization has so many problems.”</p>	<p>Focus on the past rather than the future</p> <p>Reactive rather than proactive, creative, transformative, or integrative conversations and behaviors</p> <p>Inability to see people’s strengths and resources</p>	<p>Being right about the way things are</p> <p>Having a simple focus for our attention amid a complex world</p> <p>Defining a clear enemy for directed anger</p>



Exercise 10

Recognize pitfalls

Reflecting on common pitfalls is helpful if we want to uncover pathways toward being more effective in what matters to us.

From the table above, which pitfalls do you recognize in your own communities of friends, family, and colleagues?

Which pitfalls do you find yourself engaging in?



Exercise 11

Identify the bait in the trap

Consider the conversation you started reflecting on in chapter 3. How has your way of being, your background conversation, and your framing of the problem allowed you to be right, perhaps while making the other person wrong? How have you set yourself up to feel righteous? Are you taking the stance that you are certain about your ideas, actions, and strategies? Does your approach allow you to stay safe from confrontation, embarrassment, hard work, looking bad, getting in trouble, or other consequences?

Turn back to table 3, and look through the column of bait examples. Which baits resonate as hidden commitments that you were chasing, perhaps at the expense of being effective?



Exercise 12

Map the pitfall

Consider the conversation that did not go the way you wanted it to go or that you have been avoiding.

Identify your background conversation. How are you perceiving the basic problem with the world? What do you find yourself saying about yourself and others?

Identify your way of being. What is your stance and tone when you address the problem? How do others feel and what do they think of you? What's it like for them being around you?

Identify the cost of being stuck. What are you giving up by being stuck? What is the cost of your not being effective? What goals and aspirations are you not achieving? What collateral damage are you creating?

Identify the bait in the trap. Have your framing of the problem and your way of being allowed you to be right? Righteous? Certain? Safe? What are you gaining, even when your conversation isn't working?

chapter 4 summary

- We often persist with our ways of being and strategies even when we're not getting the results we want.
- We stay stuck because we still benefit from the status quo in subtle ways. Those benefits are the "bait" in a pitfall trap of our own making.
- The common pitfalls for advocates each have their own background conversation, cost of being stuck, and bait. These include "holier than thou," "someone should," "lone wolf," and "I know what progress is." We can't dig out of the pitfall until we let go of the bait.
- Bait usually involves getting to feel *right*, *righteous*, and *certain* about complicated issues. When we retreat to our group of fellow advocates, we get to stay *safe* from confrontation.
- *Do the work*: In looking at a specific conversation that has gotten stuck, identify your own pitfall, including your particular cost of being stuck and the bait. We all fall into pitfalls—we can laugh and poke fun at ourselves when we know we are all in this together. The key to getting out of pitfalls is taking responsibility for recognizing when you're stuck and for getting unstuck.



Exercise 13

Why is your endeavor important to you?

Choose a topic, issue, or cause that is important to you. Consider the list of issues from exercise 1 and the topic of the stuck conversation you identified in exercise 2.

In your notebook, at the top of a new page, write “[Insert your cause here] is important because . . .”

Then, underneath that prompt, complete the sentence several (as many as ten) times with whichever responses first come to you.

Be sure to write down all the reasons and rationales that you have given to other people when explaining why they should care and act on that issue.



Exercise 14

Notice what motivations you're sharing or not sharing

Review each response you created in exercise 13, and label it with the appropriate type of motivation, *self-determined* or *external*.

- Self-determined or internal motivations are self-referential—for example, “I sing to sing.” Or they point back to you—for example, “I sing because I love to sing,” “I work to create peace in the world to create peace in the world,” “I do it for the fun of it,” “I do it for the challenge,” “It fulfills me,” “It’s what I love,” “It’s who I am.”
- External motivations point to something outside you—for example, “It’s the right thing to do (according to a moral

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authority or my facts that I can share with you),” “The status quo is wrong, dangerous, costly, unjust, inefficient, illegal, or bad for our health,” “It’s good/bad for business, the environment, or society.”

Assess only the language you wrote, considering how someone else would experience the communication. Do not take into consideration your expanded thoughts behind what is written.

Notice the mix of motivations you shared. Notice which you shared first and which you shared only after several others.

Notice any tendency to want to score your responses as being more self-determined than they actually are. Notice if you want to add more responses or tweak your existing responses, perhaps to “cheat” on your own assessment.

Consider if other motivations came to mind when you first did the exercise that you left out entirely—you decided, for whatever reason, not to write them down, not to share them. Maybe now you’re tempted to add them to your original list. Maybe you’re even more tempted to keep them out. Write them down separately.

Share your reflections with a buddy, and invite their perspective on what feels the most authentic to them and what inspires them.



Exercise 15

Envision what you really want

Consider that the topic, issue, or cause you chose in exercise 13 doesn't begin to express what you really want.

Consider that, perhaps, what you previously identified is something you're indifferent about or maybe at most one small possible expression of what you'd really love to see expressed in the world.

Begin to consider what possibility, vision, or dream makes your heart light up. What do you really love?

What would you really like to share with the world?

What might be worth working toward even if it were a thousand-year ambition, for which you would never see the result?

What would be worth working toward as your own self-expression, regardless of the result?

Play with completing these sentence prompts and see what lights you up:

- I have a dream where . . .
- What I'm committed to creating is . . .
- What I'm standing for is . . .

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Finally, don't be limited by the prompts. Craft your own aspirations in ways that speak to you.

Work with your buddy to share your answers to these prompts with each other. Practice listening to and coaching your buddy so you understand each other's answers. This paired work will be invaluable preparation as you engage in other, more challenging conversations.



Exercise 16

Create a new way of being

Consider the stuck conversation you have been reflecting on for the past few chapters. Imagine saying the following:

Going forward in this conversation and relationship, you can count on me to be _____, which is consistent with the future I really want.

How would you fill in the blank? Try to be as succinct as possible—a single adjective or a short phrase that you can say to yourself and awaken that sensibility.

This is a critical moment in the book. Much of the work we have done so far is to make room for you to create a new way of being, one that could possibly generate new approaches, new actions, and new results.

We can't tell you what to write here. This is a moment of transformation, and the power to create is up to you. We can simply pose some questions for you to consider:

- What is the future that you really want for your relationship and for the world?
- What way of being would be consistent with that future?
- If you were in that future right now, how would you feel—what would be your way of being?

These can be very hard questions to address intellectually. We have found that people get more clarity through an experiential

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exercise. We offer the guided meditation below as a way to help you get in touch with the future you want.⁴ If you just rolled your eyes, you are not alone. In our workshops, it takes a moment to get people settled into this practice. Then we often hear—even from hard-minded, skeptical business executives—that it was the most valuable piece of our work together.



Exercise 17

Guided meditation

Sit upright and comfortably, take a deep breath, and slowly read the following, letting yourself experience it piece by piece:

It's thirty years from now, and there are still problems in the world. But things have come a long way. In fact, you are surprised and impressed by how far things have come. Some people still struggle, but overall, people are more healthy and prosperous than you could have imagined. Structures are in place to support those who would like support. There has been a positive shift in the health of planet Earth. The skies and waters are cleaner. Species and habitats are recovering. Nations are more peaceful than you imagined could be possible. More people than you ever imagined are inspired and alive, contributing to making the world better together.

Close your eyes and visualize this.

Now, continue:

As you inhabit this place and time, know that you had something to do with it. It wasn't you by yourself, and

perhaps nothing you did singly was as ambitious as you thought you might do when you were young. But nevertheless, what you did accomplish—working inside this symphony of what everyone accomplished—was enough. And now you are standing in this place. While there are still problems to be solved, it is clear that we are going to get there from here. Nothing is insurmountable. The world is in the midst of becoming something very special that you are excited to pass on to generations to come.

Let yourself experience the following aspects of that future:

What's in the news?

What do we get to eat?

How do people spend their time?

Consider that people you never thought would be allies have contributed together to create this profound shift.

What does this look like?

How do they get to be with one another?

How do you get to be?

Now take a moment to close your eyes and visualize this future more concretely, and experience that way of being—how it feels to you, how it occurs to other people.

When you are ready, turn to a blank page in a journal or notebook, and take ten minutes to do some free writing—whatever comes to your mind. Include any reflections on what you saw, how it felt, and particularly your way of being.



Exercise 18

Reframe the problem

Take a moment to deeply consider the new way of being that you have created and articulated in the previous exercises. Visualize yourself being that way in the conversation that has gotten stuck.

From this new perspective, this new vantage point, write down what you really want to have happen in the conversation—an outcome or future quality of the relationship that would make you feel like you had manifested the future you envision.

Now write down what you observe about the current state of the situation. What is the gap between the current state and what you want? This may include your own behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. It may include the other person's behaviors, thoughts, and feelings as you understand them.

What new actions could you take?

What new conversations could you have?

chapter 5 summary

- It takes courage to let go of the bait. The key is getting clear on what we really want and daring to share that with others.
- Often at the root of our advocacy is something that inspires us—our love for people, our love of life, and an idea of how the world could be. Because it feels too vulnerable to share that, we talk about what is wrong with the world in a more objective way.
- Mapping out our motivations can be helpful in understanding why an issue or line of advocacy is important to us. Some of these motivations are more self-determined and internal; others are more externally driven reasons or forms of psychological pressure.
- To get a conversation unstuck, we first have to reconnect with ourselves and what matters most. Bringing that forward can create a completely new basis for conversation.
- One way to get in touch with our internal motivations is to visualize and let ourselves dwell in the future we want to create. That experience can help us see what matters to us. It can also help us experience a new way of being.
- Creating and taking on a new way of being can shift the way we see the problems in front of us and the conversations where we have gotten stuck.
- *Do the work:* Identify the deeper, heartfelt motivations for why your issue or line of advocacy is important to you. Use the reflection and visualization exercises in this chapter to get in touch with the future you want to create and a new way of being that is aligned with that future.



Exercise 19

Build a new conversation

Imagine a new conversation with the other person where you have previously been stuck. Fill in the blanks with your pitfall diagnosis, and imagine making this statement out loud to the other person. You may want to change the phrasing so that it feels more natural to you, but make sure you include each of the elements.

I want to talk with you about _____ (prior conversation or avoided conversation). I have come to see that up to this point I have been _____ (old ways of being), which is not consistent with my values and who I aspire to be.

While I've been saying I want _____ (stated goals for a better future), really I was also going for _____ (bait).

I see some unfortunate consequences of this approach, which include _____ (consequences of being stuck).

I am sorry to have taken this approach. I want to create a new way to engage.

Going forward you can count on me to be _____ (new way of being), which is consistent with the future I really want. And I want you to call me on it if you catch me slipping back into old habits.

Table 4 Elements of wholehearted and effective apologies

<i>Wholehearted apology (effective)</i>	<i>Halfhearted apology (ineffective)</i>	<i>Nonapology (harmful)</i>
Specify the offense, acknowledge the harm, and concede the facts.	Hint at the offense, downplay the impact, or debate the facts.	Justify or defend one's behavior; dispute the impact or the facts.
Make a full admission of wrongdoing, accepting responsibility without blaming circumstances.	Provide excuses; share responsibility or blame with the other party (or a third party).	Sidestep responsibility.
Explicitly express remorse (e.g. use the words "I am sorry").	Posture remorse (e.g., say, "I'm sorry you interpreted . . .").	Withhold remorse.
Inquire into and offer what is required to repair the damage.	Make a contingent offer, or offer words without action.	Question the motives of the apology seeker.
Make a new commitment for the future, including a pledge to not repeat the offending conduct.	Offer a commitment contingent on the other party or external circumstances. Suggest the possibility of repeating the offending conduct.	Commit to repeat the offending conduct.

Table 5 Examples of people's acknowledgments of the pitfalls they have created

<i>Addressing avoided conversations</i>	<i>Addressing conversations that didn't go well</i>
<p>To my uncle Vicente: In relation to your business in the oil production world, my way of being has been to stay safe by not bringing it up. While I've been saying I want you to stop partaking in this unsustainable industry, really I've also been hoping to be right and call you out on it. The consequences of my approach have been creating distance, diminishing you and our relationship.</p>	<p>In a conversation with my employee Natalie about Styrofoam cups, my way of being has been pious and know-it-all. While I've been saying I want a win-win solution, really I was also trying to be right and recognized as the expert. The consequence has been a lack of trust all around. I am sorry for my past approach.</p>
<p>To a board member of my organization: In relation to our canceling our recycling service, my way of being has been timid. While I've been saying I want to find more impactful ways of saving money, really I've also been trying to avoid conflict. The result is that I am missing an opportunity to contribute to the organization by creating alignment with our core company values and my own vision for the future.</p>	<p>To food service executives about preventing human rights abuses in your supply chains: In our conversations, my way of being has been condescending and one sided. While I've been saying I want to prevent human trafficking and forced labor, really I have also been trying to feel like I made a difference by changing you. The consequences are that I have prevented us from connecting and created mutual frustration. I would like to take a new approach.</p>



Exercise 20

Write a letter

Write a letter to the person with whom you have a stuck conversation. In the letter, acknowledge the different aspects of the pitfall. Use the previous “imaginary conversation” (exercise 19) and Laura’s letter as inspiration, but use your own words—make it yours.

Note that as you draft the letter, you may find yourself at a loss for words after laying out the elements of the pitfall. You may think, “If my new way of being is about understanding and openness, then it’s not about what I am going to say. It is about how I am going to listen and the questions I am going to ask.” This is fine, and in the next chapter we will address how to ask good questions. For now, you can start imagining what you’d like to ask the person—for example, “What has this conversation been like for you?”



Exercise 21

Conversation commitment

Exactly when and where are you going to have the new conversation that embodies your new way of being where you had previously been stuck?

Now is a great time. If not now, when? Write down the time in your calendar or diary, or create an alarm or reminder in your phone—whatever system you reliably use.

If you need to schedule time with the person, text, call, or e-mail the person *right now* to set it up.

Ask someone to make you accountable. Share your letter or an outline of your conversation with your buddy, spouse, partner, colleague, or friend. Let the person know the exact time you'll be having your conversation and schedule a time with them to follow up and share what happens.

chapter 6 summary

- Bringing conversations back to life starts with acknowledging our baggage and bait and apologizing for how we got the conversation stuck.
- We sometimes resist apologizing because we believe that apologies give up our power. In fact, they create power by making ourselves responsible and by strengthening our relationships.
- People may not immediately change their behavior and perspective in response to our apology, but an opening is created. The apology moves the conversation from being stuck by the past to creating a future together.
- Because acknowledging a pitfall will make you feel especially vulnerable, it takes a special level of commitment and accountability with your buddy to get into action. The results will be worth it.
- *Do the work:* Role-play a conversation where you share the details of the pitfall you have been in, and apologize. Then commit to and take action—go engage with the person and bring the conversation back to life.



Exercise 22

Your values, their values

Write down some of your own values.

- What really matters to you in the context of the conversation, the relationship, and your life more generally? Build on your work from the exercises in chapter 5.
- Where would you locate your values in the spheres of care? Whom do you stand for? What parts or wholes are you most passionate about protecting and nurturing? Name the specific community, place, or group.
- What qualities do you most want the broader system (organization, community, society) to embody?
- What is most sacred to you?

Now apply this analysis to the person you hope to engage.

- Write down what you think the other person most values. Articulate these values in a positive frame—what the person is *for* (rather than *against*).

What is this person's sphere of care? How and where does the person express personal values?



Exercise 23

Your values, their values (continued)

Consider your own values and those of the person or group you hope to engage. Use the spheres-of-care and moral foundations models if useful. Make two lists: *my values* and *their values*.

Now, consider when or how what they value has been important in your own life. Consider where you may have stood for what they value, perhaps in another context. Where do you have common ground? What values, if any, seem irreconcilable?

Make some notes in response to these questions about how your values relate to theirs.

Consider having a dialogue with the person or group members about your values and theirs:

- Ask them whether you have accurately understood their values and how they would describe them.
- Share situations where their values resonate with you.
- Ask them which of your values resonate with them as well.
- Explore what might seem fundamentally at odds.



Exercise 24

Go beyond a one-dimensional conversation

Where do you experience the most tension around the idea of making the world a better place?

First draw the tension as a single line, a trade-off between two things you value or one thing that you value and something that “other people” value, as shown in figure 10. The poles could be abstract ideals like individual rights versus the collective good, liberty versus justice, or economic growth versus environmental protection. They could be social groups like urban people of color versus rural whites. They could be different spheres of care like my department versus the whole organization.



Figure 10 Competing objectives

Do you find yourself oscillating from one side to the other? Have you made one side “right” and the other “wrong”? Have you made the people who embody one side or the other “right” or “wrong” as a result?

Now redraw the picture as a two-dimensional space, with one value on the horizontal axis and one on the vertical axis, as shown in figure 11.

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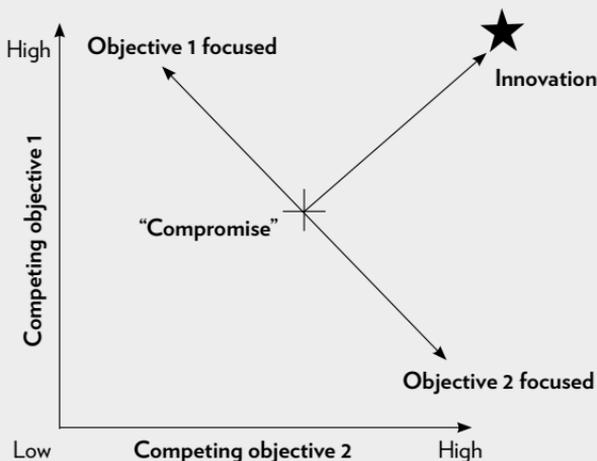


Figure 11 Compromise or innovation?

What “solutions” have actually been compromises, asking people to give up on one objective to achieve another? These might be habits, products, strategies, or policies.

Allow yourself to imagine pushing out the frontier, exploring the space of innovation marked by the star in figure 11. Can you let yourself believe that something out there might be possible? If you imagine that breaking the trade-off might be possible, does that make it easier to acknowledge the importance of both values?

If your drawing represents a tension between your objectives and those of another person, how might you take that other person on this same journey of acknowledging the polarization, acknowledging compromises, and expanding the landscape?



Exercise 25

Brainstorm ideas that break trade-offs between values and objectives

Where do you or others in your organization or movement experience trade-offs between multiple values or objectives? In this domain, when have you heard people cynically argue that “both-and” opportunities are impossible or naively argue that they are everywhere?

First, make a list of examples in your context that validate the trade-off: solutions that were high on one value but low on the other.

Now, share your examples with someone who has argued on one side or the other, and acknowledge that the trade-off exists. If you have been right, righteous, certain, or safe in your own views, acknowledge this too!

Finally, acknowledge that a possible space of “both-and” could be carefully considered and evaluated. What search or brainstorming process would help uncover new ideas in that space?

Explore together how you could evaluate those ideas against multiple competing values. Use the frameworks in the “Clarify values” section above as a guide.

chapter 7 summary

- You can turn polarization into energy for innovation and action. Doing so requires embracing the tension between values.
- Embracing the tension involves four steps. These steps can help you move forward from a stuck conversation—after you have done the hard work of acknowledging your own pitfalls. They can also help you approach new conversations in a polarized context.
- The first step is to move beyond factual debates and *clarify values*, as well as associated hopes and fears. Consider spheres of care and moral foundations in understanding other perspectives.
- The second step is to *own the polarization*. Acknowledge your own ambivalence—the concern you have for the other person’s values. And acknowledge when you have contributed to polarization in the past.
- The third step is to *expand the landscape*. Declare an intention to move beyond compromises that satisfy neither party’s goals and to find solutions that break apparent trade-offs between values.
- The last step is to *dance in the new terrain*. Brainstorm, search, connect, prototype, and create beyond the familiar ideas.
- *Do the work*: Use the exercises in this chapter to engage someone whose values or strategies appear to be in tension with your own. This could be in a conversation that is newly unstuck as a result of your work in chapters 3 through 6, or it could be with a new person or group you want to engage.



Exercise 26

Core tensions in your movement

Gather a small group of people in your organization or movement (this could be you and your buddy), and consider the following questions:

- What are the central tensions in your movement? What are the tensions or contradictory desires you often hear expressed within your movement?
- What are the tensions or values that separate the people in your movement from those outside it?

Write each tension you identify, putting each value in positive terms, that is, what people are standing for (rather than what they're against).

It may take some time to articulate what those outside your movement are standing for. It's common for us to settle for "they're against what we want" rather than doing the work to understand what they are for. If you get stuck, ask someone who disagrees with you for the answer.

If you are in the sustainability movement, consider our reflections. What might you add? Edit our words to fit your experience.



Exercise 27

Locate the collective bait

Reflect back on the core tensions of your movement (exercise 26). What are the sacred terms, such as “justice,” “liberty,” or “sustainability”? These are the words that you are *certain* stand for what is *right* and *righteous*. As long as someone agrees with you about the meaning and value of those ideas, you feel *safe* engaging with that person.

Now carefully consider the limitations of this idea and community. We suggest you do this as an individual and in partnership with others in your movement.

- Reconsider “right”: What do your particular personal perspectives reveal about the complex system you hope to change, and what do they hide? What other perspectives on that system have you avoided listening to or seeing as potentially right from another person’s vantage point? If you engaged with that person, how might it change your own sense of being right?
- Reconsider “righteous”: What individual and group interests would benefit if your movement were to succeed? Who would decline or lose power, influence, and resources? Does your approach have any foreseeable negative side effects or consequences? How would confronting those undermine your claims to righteousness?

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- Reconsider “certain”: How good are your data and analysis about cause-effect relationships in the system you hope to change? Which of your claims are founded in evidence, and which are assumptions? How many times have you run experiments using your solution, or how precisely have you modeled the impact of your strategy and activities into the future? How effective have you been at modeling and predicting outcomes in the past? How does confronting these questions affect your sense of certainty?
- Reconsider “safe”: If you find your group is staying psychologically and socially safe by engaging only with allies, do you risk undermining your effectiveness? If so, what dangers in the world are you allowing to continue? What risks are you taking through inaction as well as action? If you confront those, how would that change your notion of what it means to be safe?



Exercise 28

Envision the future together

Practice crafting conversations about possibilities by inviting someone important to you into a conversation where you envision a better world. Choose someone with whom you have an existing relationship but who doesn't usually see eye to eye with you. This could be an informal get-together—for example, a shared meal or a scheduled office meeting.

What challenges does the person see that we need to overcome?

If we were to overcome those challenges, what would the world look like that the person would be excited to pass on to our grandchildren?

If the person asks, share the future you're inspired to create.

Be aware that you're crafting a creative tension, and people can have a variety of responses inside that space. They may be playfully delusional or realistic and disillusioned. Notice any tendency you have to fix or correct the person's response, and let go of it.

Practice steering the conversation toward a healthy creative tension by articulating and reflecting back both the future the person wants and the challenges that must be overcome: “Your dream is . . .” “And you fear the most insurmountable challenge is . . .”

If you’ve shared your own desired future, practice exploring a both-and possibility space. How would the person’s vision complement yours? How might the person’s goals be necessary to the future you want? How might those objectives sometimes conflict?

Notice your own ways of being inside this conversation.



Exercise 29

Transform the central conversation of your movement

With others in your group, organization, or movement, work to fill in the blanks in the following:

As we have engaged in conversations about _____ (context for engagement and activism), we want to acknowledge that our ways of being have included _____ (old ways of being).

While we have been saying we want _____ (goals for a better future), really we were also going for _____ (baits).

We recognize some unfortunate consequences of this approach, which include _____ (consequences of being stuck).

We are sorry to have taken this approach. We want to create a new way to engage.

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Going forward in this conversation and relationship, you can count on us to be _____ (new ways of being), which is consistent with the future we really want, which is _____ (the possibility of the movement). And we want you to call us on it if you catch us slipping back into old habits.

Table 6 Pathways forward

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Possible alternative pathways</i>
Someone should	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make our own authentic commitments, and follow through.
Holier than thou	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite others to express what future they want for themselves and their grandchildren, and actually listen.• Authentically share our own process and struggles of learning and development.• Identify shared values or commitments, the places where we honor one another's values.
I know what progress is	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge people's commitments and honor their contribution.• Invite a vibrant ecology of creative and transformative activity, defined by mutual respect, mutual inspiration, and cocreation.
Lone wolf	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge others' commitments.• Share our personal commitments.• Invite others to participate.• Acknowledge our interdependence with others.
It's the right thing to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to what others value and find ways to accomplish multiple goals.• Explore the business/self-interest case and the pro-social case together. Acknowledge that people usually care about both but believe there must be a trade-off.
Selfless OR selfish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge when trade-offs have occurred between the good of the few and the good of the whole.• Honor both as valid and pursue ways to "do well by doing good."• Pursue alignment of personal, societal, and planetary flourishing.
Right now!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find synergistic opportunities for K-12 education in any endeavor.• Take time to engage people who have not been part of the movement but who may bring valuable perspectives.• Create opportunities for conversation about our common future, not just the immediate challenge.

Continued on next page

Table 6 (continued)

<i>Pitfall</i>	<i>Possible alternative pathways</i>
Humans OR nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge when trade-offs have occurred between human and other species' well-being. • Honor and express our love for humans and all life. • Get creative about solutions that contribute toward both.
Problem orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get clear on what you really want to have happen—vision and aspiration. • Take a clear, data-rich view of current reality and redescribe problems as a gap between that current reality and the vision, without jumping to diagnosis or solution. • Organize conversations that are future based, building from a vision of where we want to be and working backward to the present to plot a course toward how we can get there.



Exercise 30

Create pathways for yourself and your movement

Consider the pathways for action in table 6. Which of these pathways might be most valuable for you and your group, organization, or movement? For example:

- Which pitfall best captures the moments where you have collectively gotten stuck? You may wish to review the details of these sample pitfalls in chapter 4.
- Which pathways could best carry you out of that pitfall and help you avoid it in the future?
- Which pathway seems most counterintuitive to you, most contradictory to your current way of doing things? Consider that as a signal that it might be worth exploring if you are stuck.

What other pitfalls have you identified within your movement? Remember, a pitfall is a conversation or group of conversations that correlate with the experience of being stuck.

What other possible pathways might you envision?

Consider the particular individuals, groups, or organizations that you would most like to engage with to advance your goals. Which of the pathways may shift the conversation with them?

What is your next step?



Exercise 31

Commit to action

Consider that powerfully engaging with five particular people in the world would make an extraordinary difference in the realization of your goals for yourself and the world. Who are these people?

You might not know their names. You may just know their organizations and roles.

Do your best to write down that list.

You may have no idea how to access those people. In that case, add people to the top of the list who would be your access to the people you ultimately want to engage.

You may have no idea how to start the conversation. In that case, add people to the top of the list who would be your confidants or peer coaches to help you take steps forward.

Consider that your group or organization may have a reputation because of its pitfalls, such that you have to work through issues internally before you can take pathways forward as a group. In that case, add people to the top of the list whom you would have to engage in your own organization.

Using the tools of this book, do the necessary reflection and planning for the conversations on your list. If baggage needs to be released, use the tools of chapter 6 to bring the conversation back to life. If you are ready to move forward but anticipate a tension you have to navigate, use the chapter 7 tools to embrace the tension.

Out of this landscape of conversations, choose at least one that you can commit to having. Write down in your calendar or journal your commitment to action and the specific deadline by which you will do it.

chapter 8 summary

- As you practice the skills you have learned in this book, you will gain the courage and ability to break through gridlock and polarization on a wider and wider stage. We can never know where our conversations will lead.
- With some shared reflection in our organizations and movements, we can also enhance our collective efficacy. Rather than being a site of frustration and burnout, our movements can become a source of flourishing for the people involved—on the way toward the flourishing of society and the environment.
- Movements get internally polarized around core tensions specific to their goals, as well as a pervasive tension between realist/incrementalist and visionary approaches. Identifying these core tensions can be an essential step in being more unified and effective.
- Movements fall into collective pitfalls that are analogous to those at the individual level. Moving forward means collectively letting go of right, righteous, certain, and safe. In doing so, we can inquire into new ways of seeing the world, new strategies, and the deeper vision and possibility of our work.

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- *Pathways* are new ways of being and new strategies for engagement that open up avenues through gridlock and polarization. We offer some examples, but we look to our readers to help chart the course.
 - *Do the work*: With others in your organization and movement, inquire into the core tensions of your movement and the places where you have fallen into collective pitfalls. Clarify your vision and the deeper possibilities of your work together. Identify and try out new pathways for action where you have previously gotten stuck. Make personal commitments to have bold conversations and follow through.
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Notes

Chapter 1

1. We originally heard this story from Marshall Ganz at the Harvard Kennedy School, who was part of Cesar Chavez's extended team and later applied the lessons when training organizers for Barack Obama's first presidential campaign. This version of the story comes from Jeffrey David Stauch, *Effective Frontline Fundraising: A Guide for Nonprofits, Political Candidates, and Advocacy Groups* (Berkeley, CA: Apress, 2011).
2. Paul Hawken. *The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability* (New York: Harper Business, 1993).
3. You can read more about Ray Anderson in his books *Mid-Course Correction: Toward a Sustainable Enterprise: The Interface Model* (Atlanta: Peregrinzilla Press, 1998); and *Confessions of a Radical Industrialist: Profits, People, Purpose—Doing Business by Respecting the Earth*, with Robin White (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009).
4. The algorithms that search engines and social networks use to filter content for "relevance" can contribute to this phenomenon by showing us only news and views that confirm our beliefs. See Eli Pariser's book *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).
5. The classics include Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. But many authors have applied their lessons in contemporary contexts, bolstered by contemporary research on the psychology of power and influence. See Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Power: Why Some People Have It and Others Don't* (New York: Collins Business, 2010); and

Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (New York: Collins, 2007).

6. See the idea of “Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement,” or BATNA, in Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).
7. Daniel C. Esty and Andrew S. Winston. *Green to Gold: How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).
8. George Lakoff, *The All New Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2014).

Chapter 2

1. *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. “authentic,” accessed April 10, 2016, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/authentic>.
2. We love our dogs. Just for fun, as a student at Yale’s Center for Industrial Ecology, Gabriel calculated a rough footprint of the food eaten by his dog Delft using SimaPro, a life-cycle analysis software tool. The environmental cost of Delft’s dog food was equivalent to swapping out his hybrid Civic for a Hummer. Now, several years later, both Jason and Gabriel have two children each and their dogs. Two kids plus a large dog often has us driving an SUV or a van instead of a sedan, which effectively doubles our dogs’ footprints. As young environmentalists, we thought dogs were good, SUVs were bad. Turns out the world is more complicated than that.
3. Our model of static and dynamic authenticity is inspired by existential philosophy. For a pragmatic exploration of this idea, see Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*, in which he shares the idea that “everything can be

taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.” Victor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).

For a summary of existential philosophy on authenticity and being, see Steven Crowell, “Existentialism,” *Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, August 23, 2004, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/#Aut>.

4. *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. “authentic.”
5. See Werner H. Ehrhard, Michael C. Jensen, and Kari L. Granger, “Creating Leaders: An Ontological/Phenomenological Model,” chap. 16 in *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being*, eds. Scott A. Snook, Nitin Nohria, and Rakesh Khurana (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012). Abstract available at SSRN, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1881682>.

Chapter 3

1. A *being* or *ontological* inquiry in pursuit of a better world is far from a new idea. Psychoanalyst Erich Fromm identified our Western focus on *having* rather than *being* as a core challenge to the flourishing of individuals and the sustainability of humanity. Scholars John Ehrenfeld and Isabel Rimanoczy have more recently emphasized a prioritization of being before doing as a core shift in mindset that allows leaders to craft a better world.
2. See Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey’s work, particularly *Immunity to Change*, which offers further tools and a process for reflection and personal development. Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, “Uncovering the Immunity to Change,” chap. 2 in *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2009).

3. The word cloud was created from the responses of workshop participants. The size of the word represents the frequency of its occurrence in participant responses.
4. Adapted from Nadia Y. Bashir et al., "The Ironic Impact of Activists: Negative Stereotypes Reduce Social Change Influence," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 43, no. 7 (2013): 614–626, doi:10.1002/ejsp.1983.

Chapter 4

1. Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).
2. The pitfall model is inspired by several self-reflective communication models that help people identify their bait, payoff, or secondary gain. The first is developmental psychologists Kegan and Lahey's model of "visible commitments" and "competing commitments." This model is available in their books *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work* and *Immunity to Change*.

The second is the idea that people get under-the-table payoffs for maintaining the status quo, from Steve Zaffron and David Logan, *The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 58.

Crucial Conversations also mentions payoffs and is a resource we recommend. We chose to create a new terminology and metaphor to focus attention on the collective aspect of pitfalls—they are common among advocates for a better world, often shared by members of a community or movement. Kerry Patterson et al., *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes Are High* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012).

3. Idries Shah, "How to Catch Monkeys," in *Tales of the Dervishes: Teaching-Stories of the Sufi Masters over the Past 1000 Years* (London: Octagon Press, 1982), 29.

4. Showing a video of a monkey getting trapped by a hunter is not always a great fit for any audience! Fortunately, the hunter's purpose in this video is to feed the monkey salty foods, release him, and then chase him as he leads the way to a secret source of spring water. "The Monkey Trap Is Not a Lemmings Myth," YouTube, posted by Russell Wright, October 13, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAyU6wZ_ZUg.
5. See Kegan and Lahey, "Uncovering the Immunity to Change."
6. Chris Argyris, in his study of why people resist feedback and learning in organizations, identified a similar list of motivations: people seek to be in control, to maximize winning, to suppress negative feelings, and to be rational. Chris Argyris, *Teaching Smart People How to Learn* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2008).

Chapter 5

1. Instead, consider that everyone is internally motivated and inquire into what internally motivates you and what internally motivates others. For support in this journey, see Susan Fowler's *Why Motivating People Doesn't Work . . . and What Does* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2014).
2. For a deeper inquiry into the linkages between positive psychology and creating a better world, see Gabriel B. Grant, "Transforming Sustainability," *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 2012, no. 46, 123–137, doi:10.9774/gleaf.4700.2012.su.00008.
3. Scharmer, C. Otto, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2009).
4. Special thanks to Barrett Brown for the meditation in exercise 17. He crafted the first variation for a workshop at the 2014 Flourish and Prosper Conference.

5. The word cloud was created from the responses of workshop participants. The size of the word represents the frequency of its occurrence in participant responses.
6. Scharmer, *Theory U*.

Chapter 6

1. For peer-reviewed research on the elements of good apologies, see Karina Schumann, "An Affirmed Self and a Better Apology: The Effect of Self-Affirmation on Transgressors' Responses to Victims," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 54 (2014): 89–96, doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2014.04.013.
For a fantastic guidebook on effective apology, see John Kador, *Effective Apology: Mending Fences, Building Bridges, and Restoring Trust* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2009).
2. Halfhearted apologies may backfire on you. Take full responsibility if you are committed to moving forward. See Jennifer K. Robbennolt, "Apologies and Legal Settlement: An Empirical Examination," *Michigan Law Review* 102, no. 3 (2003): 460–516, doi:10.2307/3595367.
3. Research documents the psychological payoffs. By not apologizing, you can feel in control and better about yourself in the moment. Tyler G. Okimoto, Michael Wenzel, and Kyli Hedrick, "Refusing to Apologize Can Have Psychological Benefits (and We Issue No Mea Culpa for This Research Finding)," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 43, no. 1 (2012): 22–31, doi:10.1002/ejsp.1901.
4. Gabriel cofounded the Byron Fellowship Educational Foundation to activate emerging leaders, engaging their unique abilities to cultivate generative efforts within their own communities (www.byronfellowship.org).

Chapter 7

1. Dan Kahan at Yale's Cultural Cognition Project has shown how values and ideology can shape people's perception of technological and environmental risks. Conservatives systematically underestimate the risk of climate change, while liberals systematically overestimate the risk of nuclear power and concealed handguns. Dan M. Kahan, Hank Jenkins-Smith, and Donald Braman, "Cultural Cognition of Scientific Consensus," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, doi:10.2139/ssrn.1549444.
2. Haidt's book *The Righteous Mind* is a fantastic resource, inviting readers to explore the emotional, cultural, and evolutionary foundations of our morality and politics, building on decades of research into cultural and political psychology. Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012).
3. "Carl the Cuck Slayer vs Van Jones," Van Jones interview by Owen Shroyer, YouTube, posted by TheInfowarrior, July 21, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stjENUXgZIY>.
4. We've changed the specifics of the graphs to simplify them and make them more general than the investment management context.

Chapter 8

1. Tom Kludt, "Mike Pence Appears at Odds with Trump on Climate Change," CNN, September 27, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/27/politics/mike-pence-donald-trump-climate-change-trade/>.
2. For more exploration of the idea of creative tension, see Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline* and the fieldbooks that follow it. Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The*

Art and Practice of the Learning Organization (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1990). Also see Robert Fritz's work that was Senge and his team's original inspiration. Robert Fritz, *The Path of Least Resistance: Learning to Become the Creative Force in Your Own Life* (New York: Ballantine, 1989).

3. John Tillman Lyle, *Regenerative Design for Sustainable Development* (New York: John Wiley, 1994); John R. Ehrenfeld and Andrew J. Hoffman, *Flourishing: A Frank Conversation about Sustainability* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books, 2013); and Yossi Sheffi, *The Power of Resilience: How the Best Companies Manage the Unexpected* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).
4. The word cloud was created from the responses of workshop participants. The size of the word represents the frequency of its occurrence in participant responses.
5. Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks (San Francisco: Harper, 1995).
6. John R. Ehrenfeld, *Flourishing by Design*, <http://www.johnehrenfeld.com/>.
7. Quoted in Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, and John Kania, "The Dawn of System Leadership," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2015, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_dawn_of_system_leadership.

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- Ehrenfeld, John R. *Flourishing by Design*. Accessed November 13, 2016. <http://www.johnehrenfeld.com/>.
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Acknowledgments

While most acknowledgment sections end with the authors' families, we think it's most appropriate to start there. Our wives, Alaka and Sarah, and our children, Vikram, Uma, Ari, and Madeleine, have had to put up with more of our nonsense than anyone. And no one has held up as crystal clear a mirror to help us reflect, learn, and grow. In these pages we include some choice excerpts of our crusades on the home front. Sarah provided valuable input on several drafts of the book. Alaka contributed the elegant turns of phrase that reshaped not only the chapter and book titles but our voice throughout. There are no words to express our gratitude for their love, humor, and support through this whole journey.

We have also benefited from a variety of mentors and teachers along the way. For Jason, the key "voices in my head" through writing this book have been (in chronological order) my parents, Rick Jay and Sue Sawyer (who also provided valuable comments on the book), Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Netanel Miles-Yepez, Robert Kegan, Catalina Laserna, Bruce Allyn, Bill Isaacs, Skip Griffin, Glennifer Gillespie, Peter Senge, John Sterman, Wanda Orlikowski, Rick Locke, and Susan Silbey. For Gabriel, my parents, Gregory Grant and Marilyn Bauchat, who taught me to always pursue my purpose, Jim Brainard, Mark Boyce, Gunter Pauli, Amelia Terrapin, Tom Seager, Marian Chertow, Charles

Vogl, Amy Wrzesniewski, Chad Oliver, Harry Pickens, Anamaria Aristizabal, Wayne Davis, and Barrett Brown.

We both owe a debt of gratitude to a few shared mentors and influencers whose work has inspired ours. John Ehrenfeld redefined sustainability as the possibility that human and other life will flourish on Earth forever. Donella Meadows invited us all to hold and express our vision. Together they helped us identify the critical link between authenticity, personal transformation, and wider social transformation. Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey's books, including *Immunity to Change*, and Otto Scharmer's *Theory U* have been powerful influences on our work and showed us that sharing a process of personal and social transformation through a book is possible. We also both feel profound gratitude for the chance to encounter Werner Erhard and our teachers and coaches in the lineage he inspired, including some whom we've already mentioned and Roger Smith. They shared with us the possibility of transforming a discourse. In addition, the notion of paradox underlies many of our ideas, particularly in the "Embrace the tension" chapter, and we are thankful to a lineage of work on paradox from Kenwyn Smith and David Berg, Robert Quinn and Kim Cameron, Wendy Smith and Marianne Lewis, and Paula Jarzabkowski. We benefit from their consistent effort to make an esoteric concept useful in understanding organizational and social change. Finally, our work benefits from a set of contemporary authors taking on the challenge of political polarization from new vantage points. Dan Kahan's cultural psychology of climate change and other societal risks, Jonathan Haidt's

careful depiction of the “Righteous Mind,” and Mark Gerzon’s well-documented efforts toward a “Reunited States of America” have all been inspirations for this book.

Our workshop participants, students, and interviewees brought their experience to the table through profoundly vulnerable and powerful stories. They have done the real work of changing the conversation, and we owe all of them our gratitude. A few chose to share their stories in the book and leave what we hope will be an important legacy: Kevin Hagen, Melissa Gildersleeve, Joyce LaValle, John Frey, Sean Kenney, Rob Wilson, Molly Baldwin, and Brent Segal.

None of this would be possible without the cofacilitators we have engaged along the way, including Katie Wallace, Barrett Brown, and Sara Soderstrom. Barrett helped us develop key exercises. Sara’s environmental leadership class at the University of Michigan has generated some of the most profound transformations we have witnessed. Our workshops have also enjoyed some financial sponsorship, and we owe particular thanks to Jeff Senne at PwC, Mark Boyce at Byron Fellowship, and Jeremy Grantham and Ramsay Ravenel at the Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment.

We have received tremendous help and inspiration from Laura Yates, our project manager. A glimpse into her spring-break climate change conversation kicks off the book, and stories of her courageous conversations are included in chapters 6 and 8. She kept us organized and on task throughout the whole journey.

Our editors, Rose-Anne Moore and Anna Leinberger, helped wrangle our cacophony of ideas and exercises

into a coherent whole. And we would never have proceeded with the book if it weren't for the "tough love" and encouragement of Jeevan Sivasubramaniam and Steve Piersanti at Berrett-Koehler. We are inspired to be part of a publisher and author community that is dedicated to creating a world that works for all and that puts its authors through their paces to get there.

We received extremely helpful feedback on our early draft from two groups. The first includes published authors we respect, like Wanda Orlikowski, Peter Senge, John Ehrenfeld, Andrew Hoffman, Barrett Brown, Charles Vogl, Bill Isaacs, Kate Isaacs, and Steve Schein. Others were "test users" who muddled through our first-draft exercises, including Rachel Payne, Becky Margiotta, Carolyn DuPont, Heather Johnson, Tamara Staton, Bethany Patten, John Harrison, Jasmine Hamilton, and Savannah Christiansen. Sarah Townsend-Grant and Chloe Cockburn helped us bring in perspectives from health and social justice contexts. Our illustrator, John Cox, helped us bring the spirit of serious play alive. And finally, we have greatly benefited from other university faculty who field-tested the work in their classrooms, including Elizabeth Walsh, Jessica Vogt, James Beresford, Jim Stoner, and Glen Dowell.

We have done our best to honor all our friends' extensive insights; any further omission or lack of clarity falls squarely on our shoulders.

About the Authors



Jason Jay

Jason grew up in Boulder, Colorado, where he lived in awe of snowy mountains and watched his parents build a business that improved people's lives. He moved to Boston and fell in love with his wife, Alaka, and life in a coastal city. Alaka's family in India made him their own and helped him see the world as fundamentally interconnected. He grew to understand how all these places he loves are fragile and committed himself to seeing them flourish for his children, Vikram and Uma, to enjoy with their children.

Today, Jason is a senior lecturer and the director of the Sustainability Initiative at the MIT Sloan School of Management. He teaches courses on strategy and innovation for sustainable business to hundreds of leaders every year. Through his writing, teaching, and community building, he empowers business leaders to help their organizations thrive while tackling the tough social and environmental challenges of our time. Before he began teaching, he ran an Internet start-up, traveled around the world, taught kindergarten, received a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in education from Harvard University, worked as a consultant with Dialogos International, and earned a doctorate in organization studies from MIT.



Gabriel Grant

When Gabriel was a child, his parents went to work each day to contribute toward making the world a better place. He couldn't wait to grow up and do the same. Over the past fifteen years, he has trained more than one thousand purpose-driven leaders and world-class change agents, including sustainability directors and vice presidents from more than 150 major brands. He came to see that when people experience their work as a calling, they come alive and contribute to the flourishing of all life around them. He envisions a world where people share their whole selves, just as they are, just as they're not, and as who they want to become.

Today Gabriel's work supports organizations in creating cultures of purpose, trust, and engagement. He is the CEO of Human Partners and cofounder of the Byron Fellowship Educational Foundation. He holds a bachelor's degree in physics and a master's in ecological systems engineering from Purdue University and a master's in leadership and sustainability from Yale University. His research at Yale explored the relationships between micro-level flourishing of individuals, flourishing organizations and communities, and a flourishing planet. He lives in Seattle with his wife, Sarah, and daughters, Ariana and Madeleine with whom he shares a mission of creating unconditional love and powerfully contributing to others.



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