

MARK **S** KENNY

# Organizational Savvy

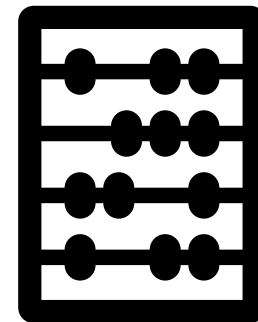
## Making an Impact

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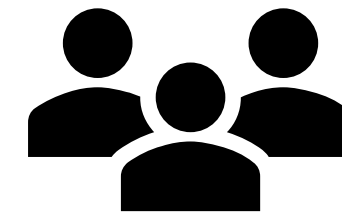
# Our Agenda



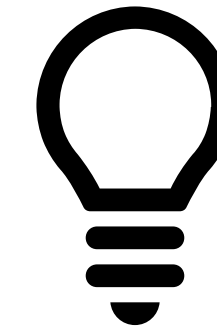
Understanding  
Organizational  
Savvy



Navigate the  
Political  
Landscape



Navigate the  
Interpersonal  
Landscape

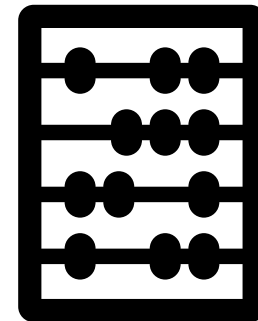


Tips and  
Takeaways

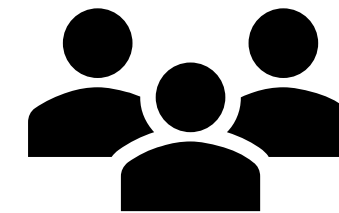
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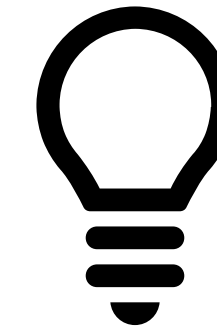
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Tips and  
Takeaways

# Organizational Savvy: Definition

Maneuvering comfortably  
through complex policy, process,  
and people-related  
organizational dynamics.



# Mark's Definition

Knowing how to work an  
issue.

# Organizational Savvy: Skilled Behaviors

- ✓ Is sensitive to how people and organizations function.
- ✓ Anticipates land mines and plans approach accordingly.
- ✓ Deals comfortably with organizational politics.\*
- ✓ Knows who has power, respect, and influence.\*
- ✓ Steers through the organizational maze to get things done.\*

# Organizational Savvy: Less Skilled Behaviors

- ✓ Overlooks or disregards the political complexities of the organization.
- ✓ Pursues own area's goals without considering the impact on other groups.
- ✓ Says and does things that strain organizational relationships.
- ✓ Tends to be impatient with organizational processes and makes political errors.

# Organizational Savvy: Possible Causes of Lesser Skill

- ✓ Ignores or denies the reality of the system.
- ✓ Inexperienced.
- ✓ Resists the reality of complexity.
- ✓ Weak negotiator.
- ✓ Rejects the need to “play politics.”
- ✓ Doesn’t read others or their interests well.
- ✓ Excessively direct and straightforward.
- ✓ Lacks influence.
- ✓ Low ambiguity tolerance.
- ✓ Cynical.



# Organizational Savvy: Key Ingredients

- ✓ Open-minded
- ✓ Flexible
- ✓ Patient

# Politics

A set of activities  
associated with the  
governance of an entity  
(country, state, agency,  
department, company,  
non-profit).

# Politics

How work gets done and  
decisions are made.

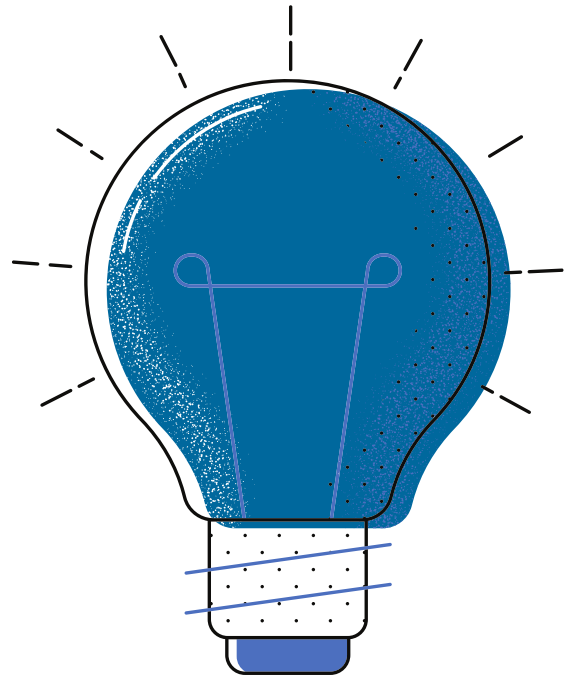


So much emphasis has been placed upon the false notion that...politics has come to convey the meaning of crafty and cunning selfishness, instead of candid and sincere service.

Calvin Coolidge

Navigation, not Manipulation

## On Your Own

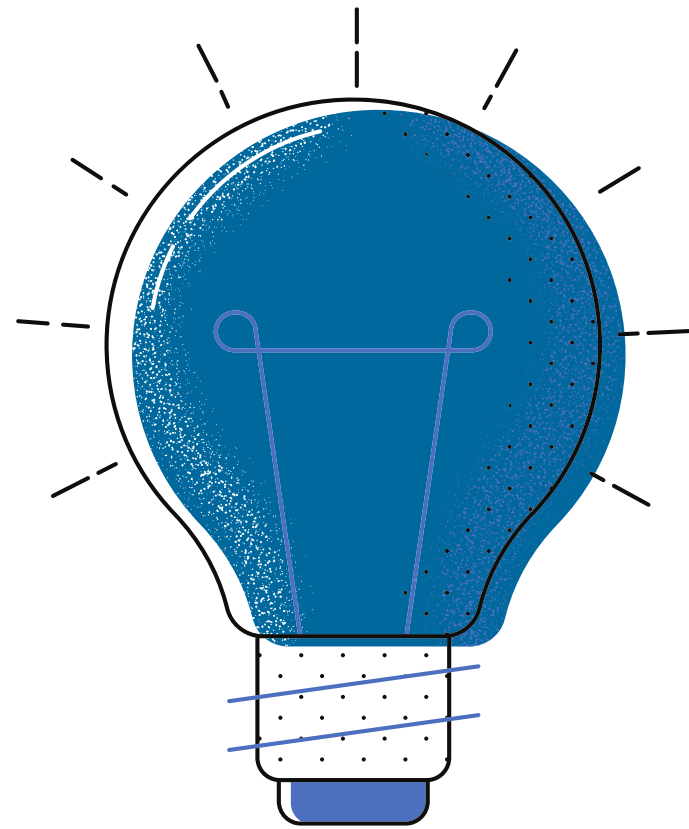


(1) Think about a time when you or a leader you observed:

1. **Excelled in being organizationally savvy:** Successfully and smoothly navigated the organizational dynamics.
2. **Struggled with organizational savvy:** Got overwhelmed, overlooked complexity, or strained relationships.



# Table Discussion



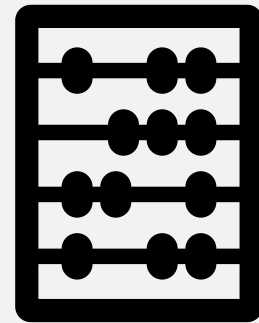
(2) Share a brief example with your table:

1. What happened?
2. What made it a success or failure?
3. What was the impact on the organization? The person?
4. What lessons can be applied to future situations?

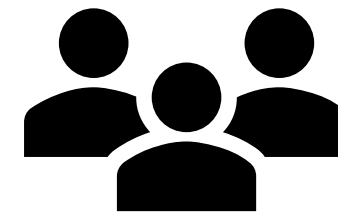
# Our Agenda



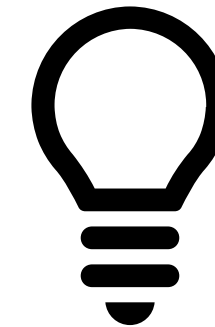
Understanding  
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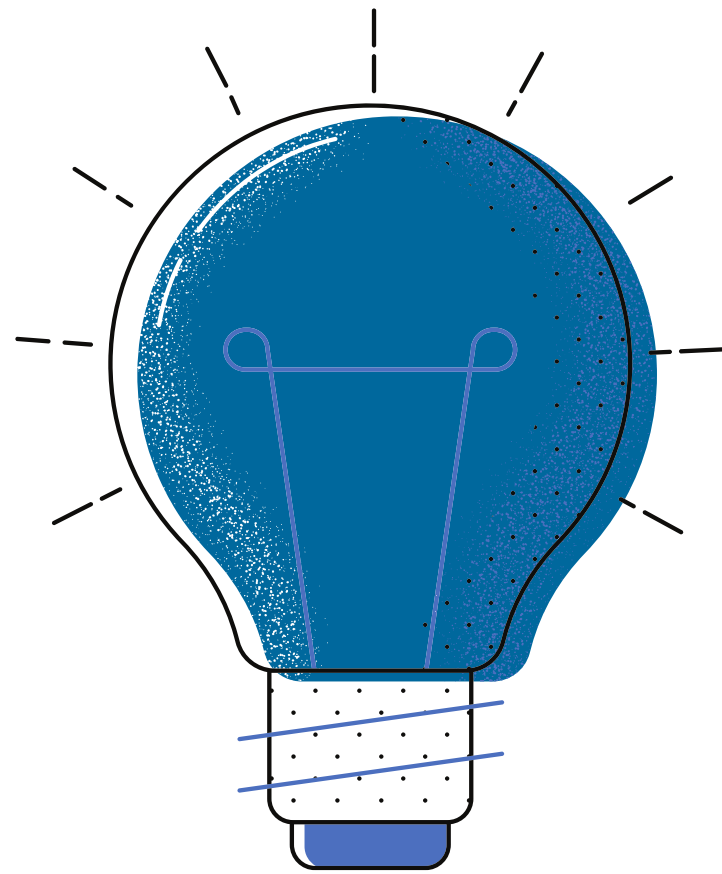
Navigate the  
Interpersonal  
Landscape



Tips and  
Takeaways

# 1. Evaluate the Landscape

# Discuss at Your Table



The commissioner has tasked you with taking over the rollout of a new process improvement initiative that will greatly improve efficiency across the department. However, different divisions and teams have competing interests—some fear job redundancies, others feel their input hasn't been considered, and senior leaders expect quick implementation.

**Discuss how a savvy leader would navigate concerns, communicate effectively, and secure buy-in.**

## 2. Know and Be Known

# Assignment

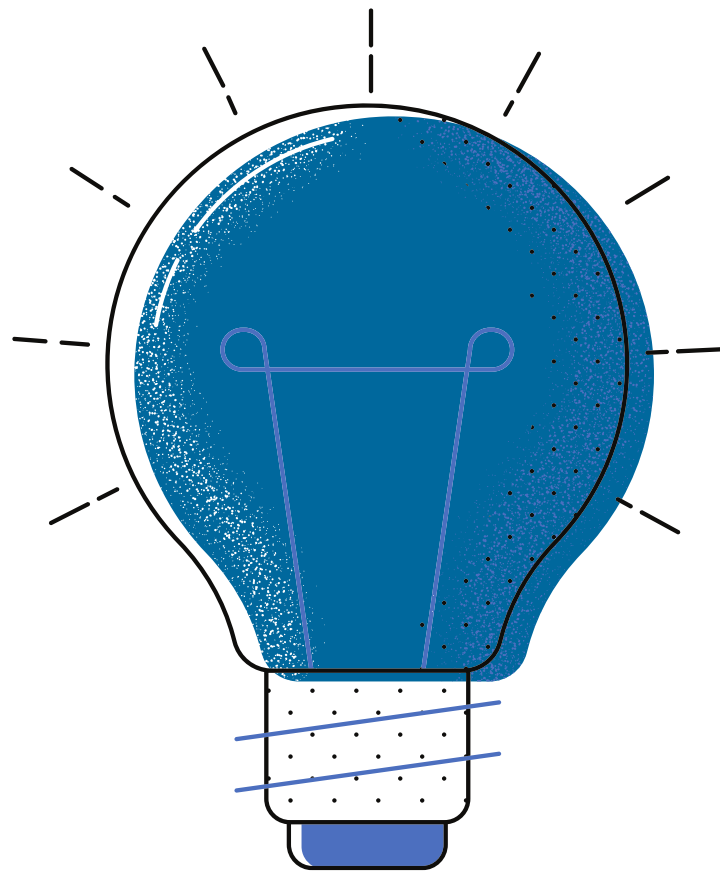
1. Write down the names of three more senior leaders whose perspective would be valuable.
2. Circle one with whom you want to develop a relationship.
3. Reach out for a meeting.



# Skip Level Meeting Questions

1. How did you get to where you are now?
2. How do you think the department is going to change in the next year? 3 years?
3. What's worrying senior leadership right now?
4. How does our team support the department's overall mission?
5. What is most important for our team to prioritize?
6. Do you have any feedback on the {last project} our team finished?
7. How best do you think I can win over executive support when proposing a project?
8. How do you want to stay informed?
9. How do you like to be approached?
10. Who in the department do you think I can learn the most from?

# Skip Division Meeting



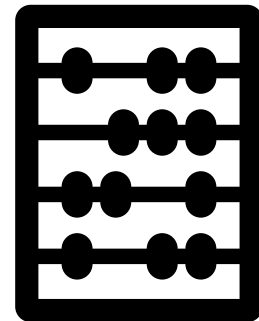
Find someone who is in a different division than yourself and ask each other the following questions:

1. How did you get to where you are now?
2. How do you think the department is going to change in the next year? 3 years?
3. What's worrying your division right now?
4. Do you have any feedback on the {last project} our team finished?
5. How best do you think I can win over executive support when proposing a project?
6. Who in the department do you think I can learn the most from?

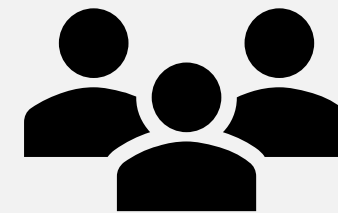
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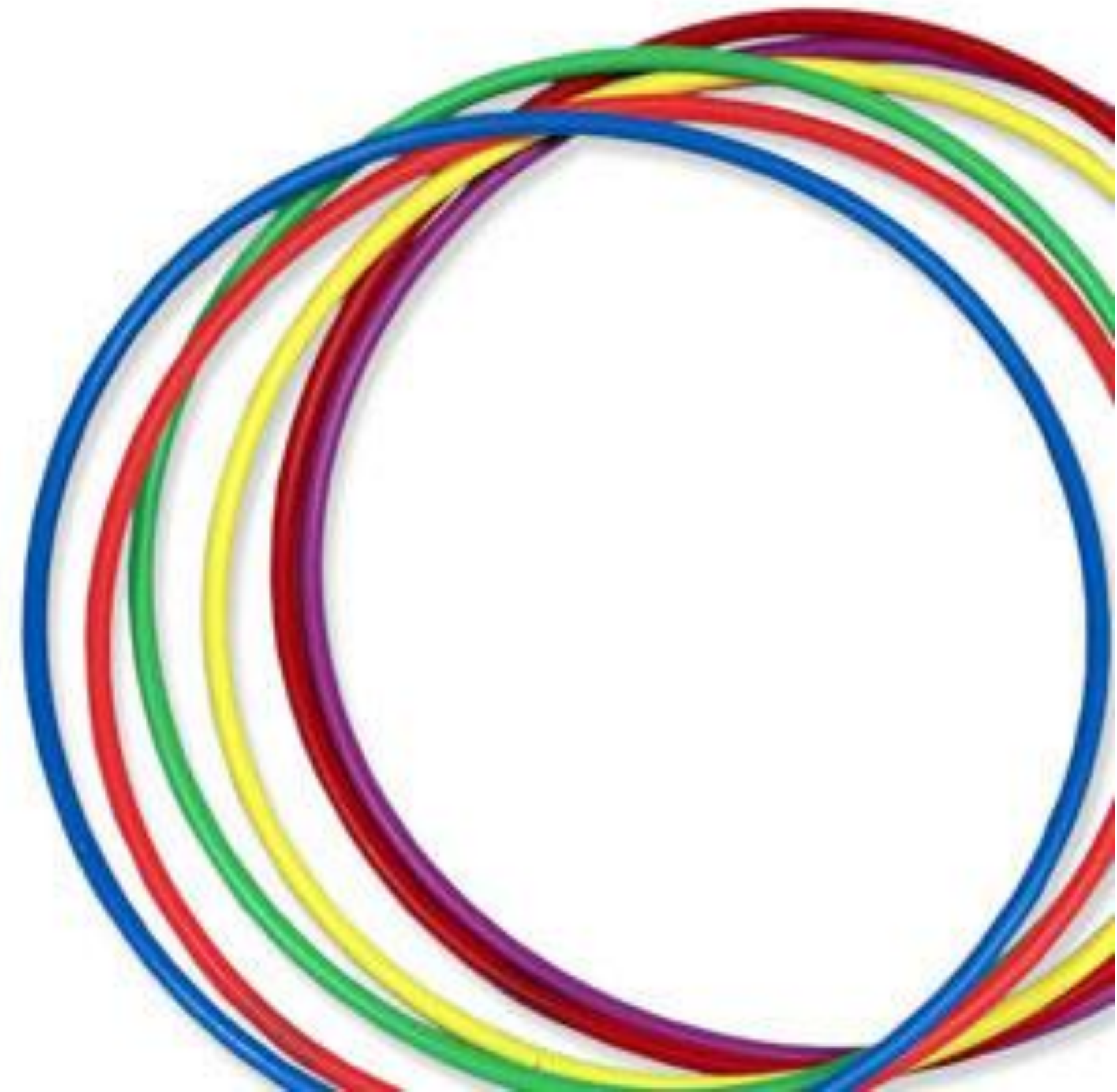
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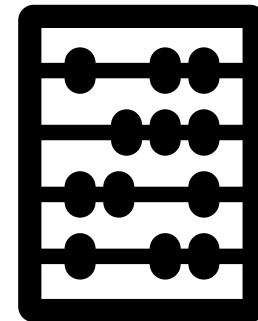
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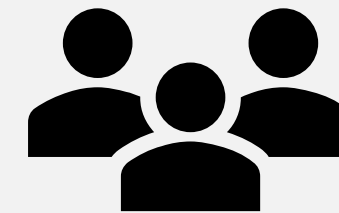
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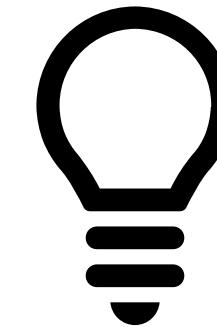
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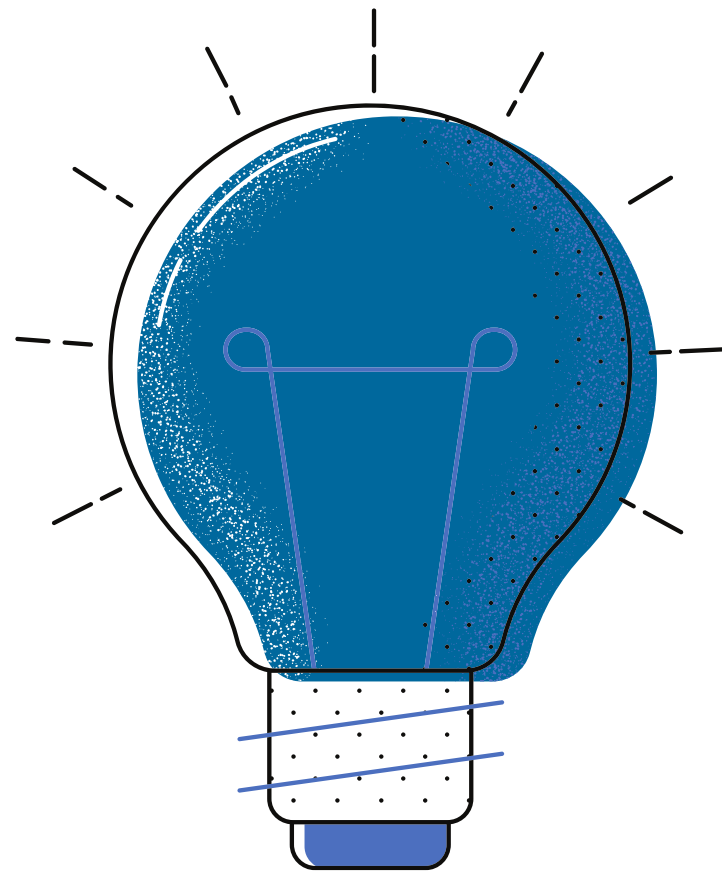
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Tips and  
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# 1. Change My Strategy

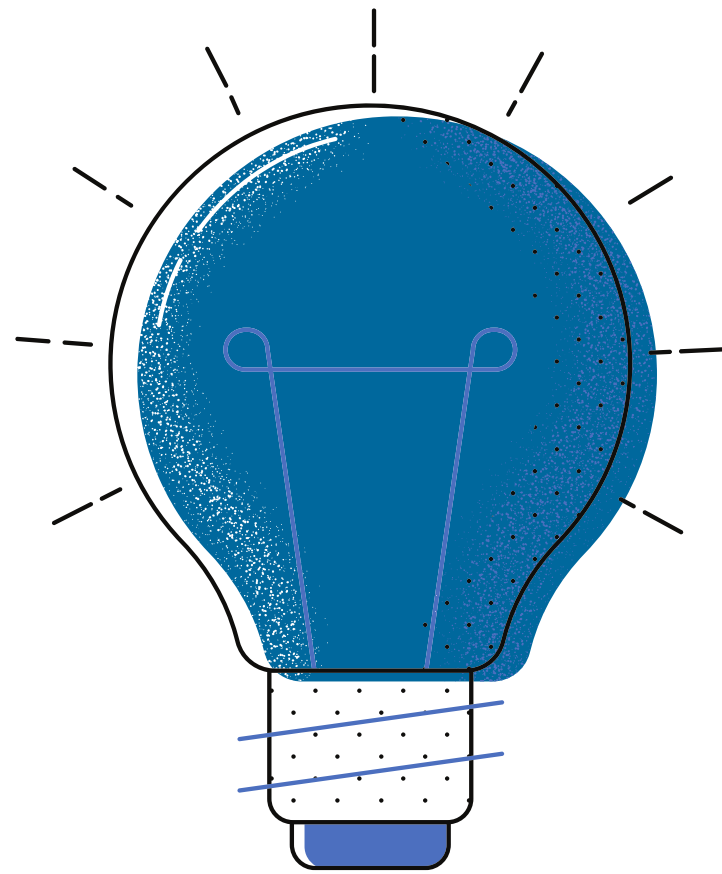




Something –  
Something -  
Anything

# Interviews

Interview each other with the questions in your handout:



1. What is your greatest strength when relating to people?
2. If you could change one thing about your ability to relate to other people, what would it be?
3. What is something about you that people around you might not know but would help them understand you better?

## 2. Merge Agendas

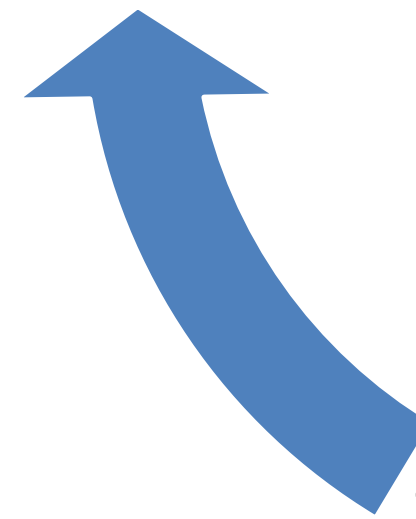
- What would it look like if ...?
- How might we work together to ...?

Step 3: Blend  
the agendas  
together

Step 1:  
Articulate my  
agenda

Step 2: Discover  
their agenda

- How does this impact you?
- What would make this easier for you?
- What questions does this raise for you?

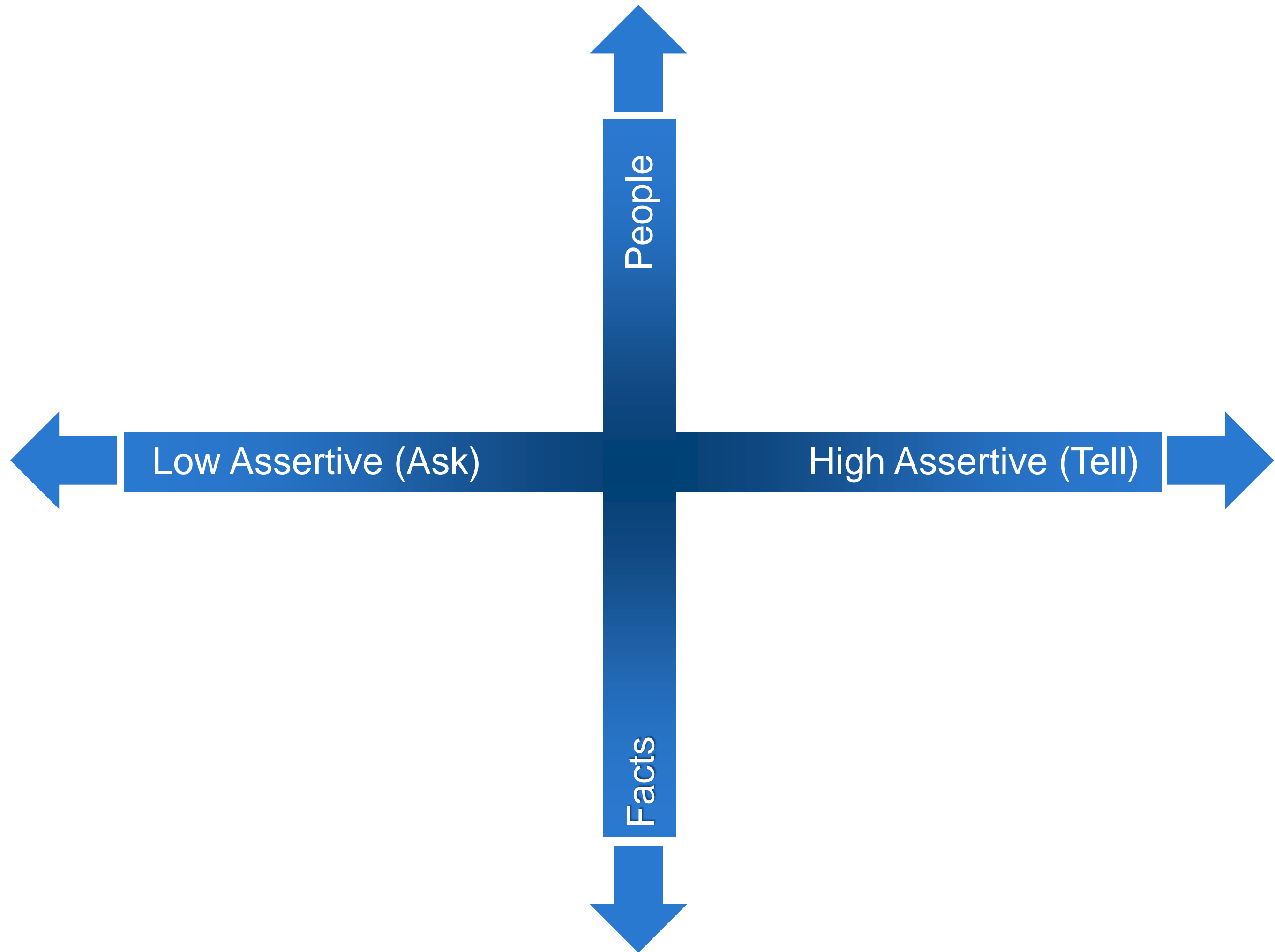


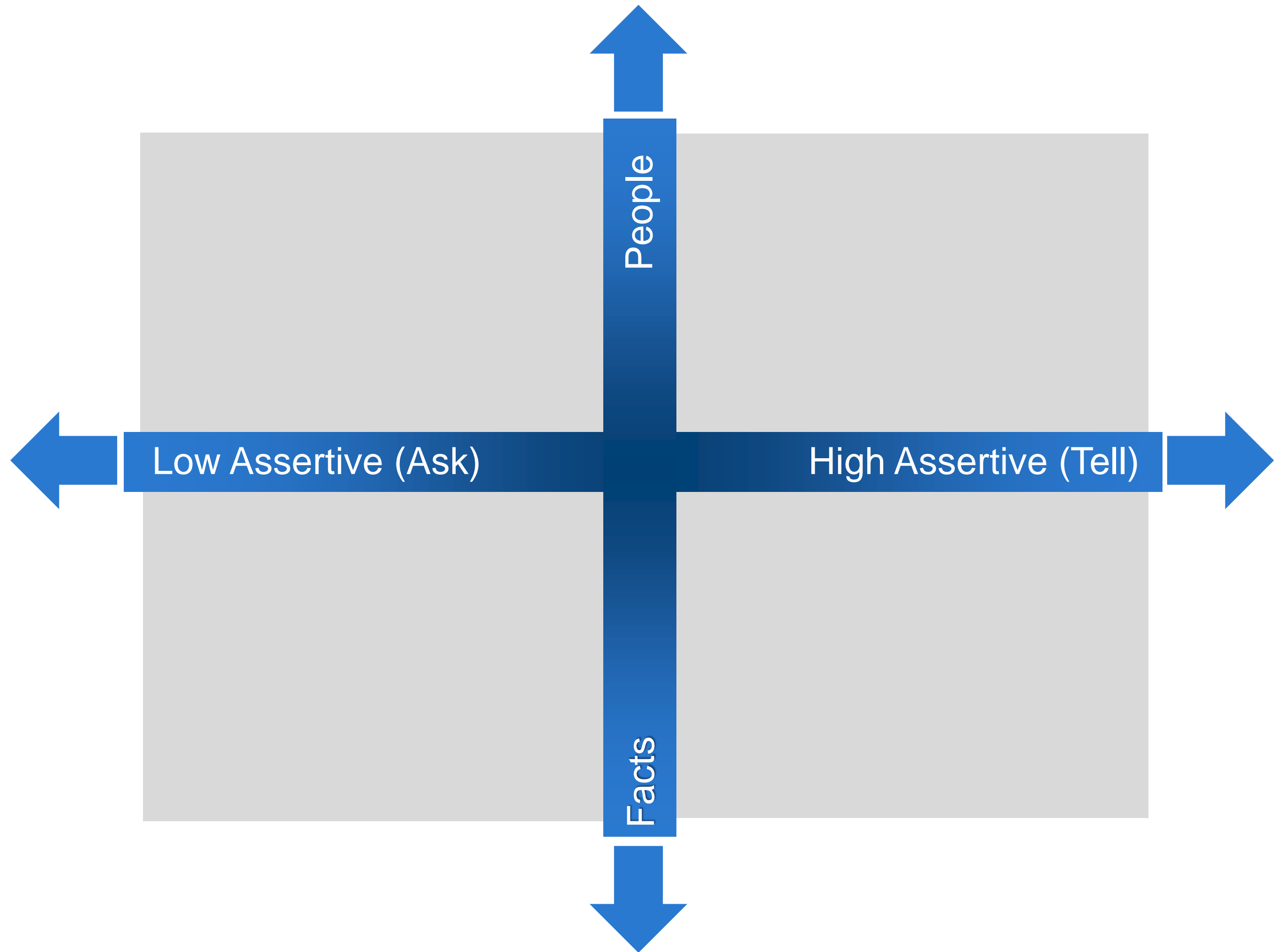
# 3. Flex My Style

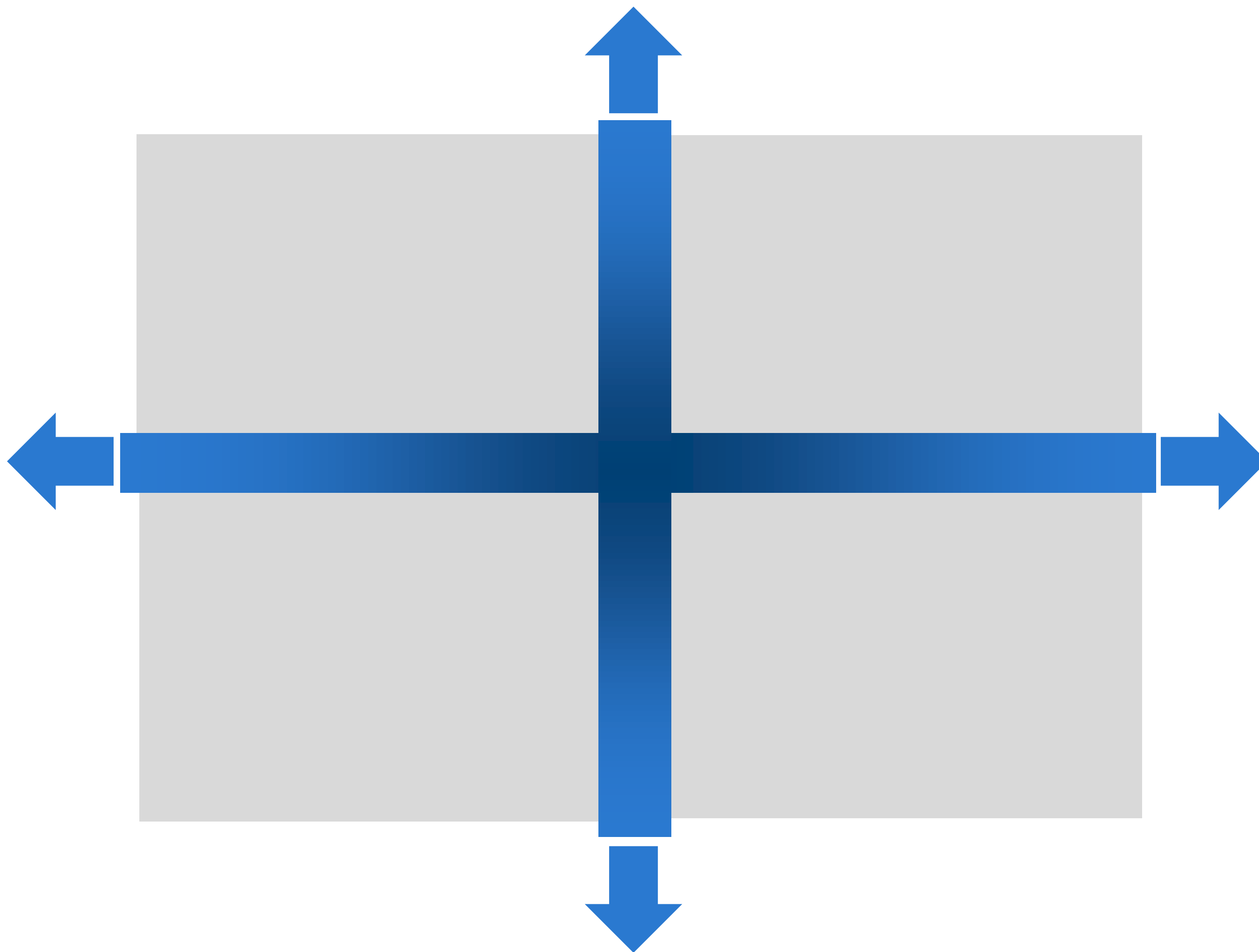


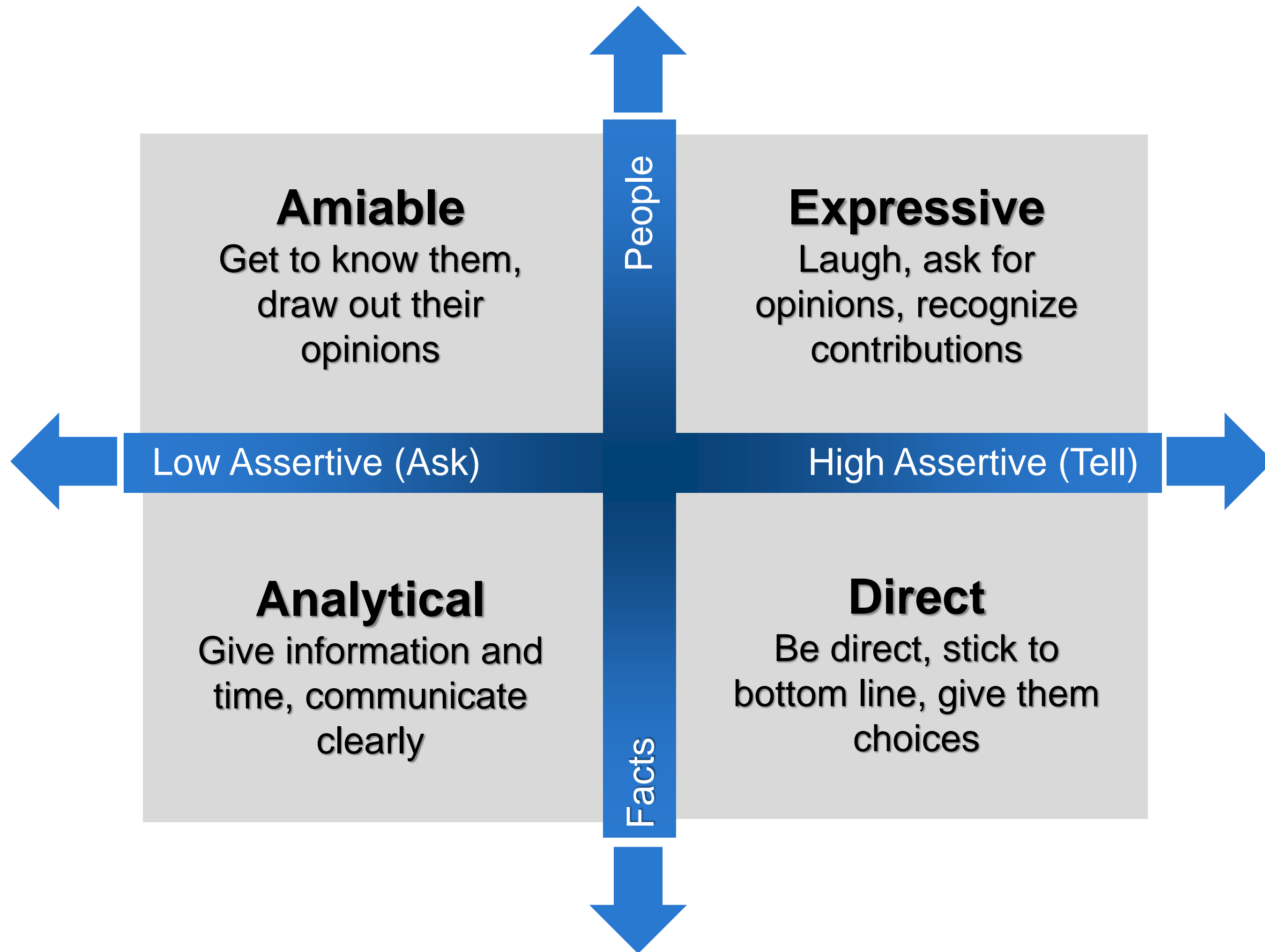


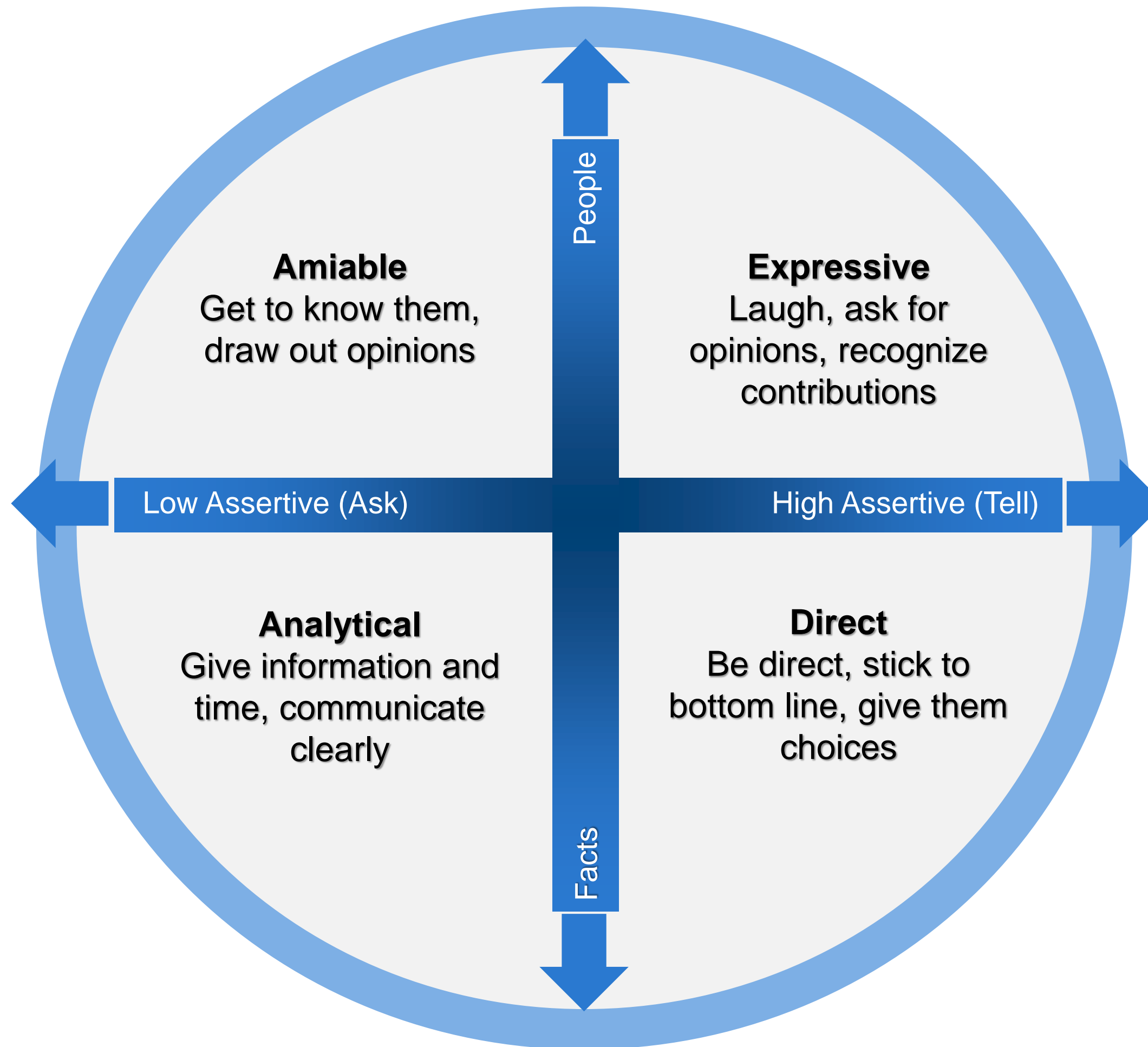




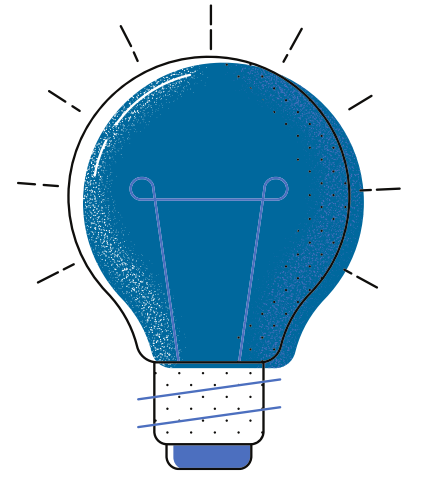






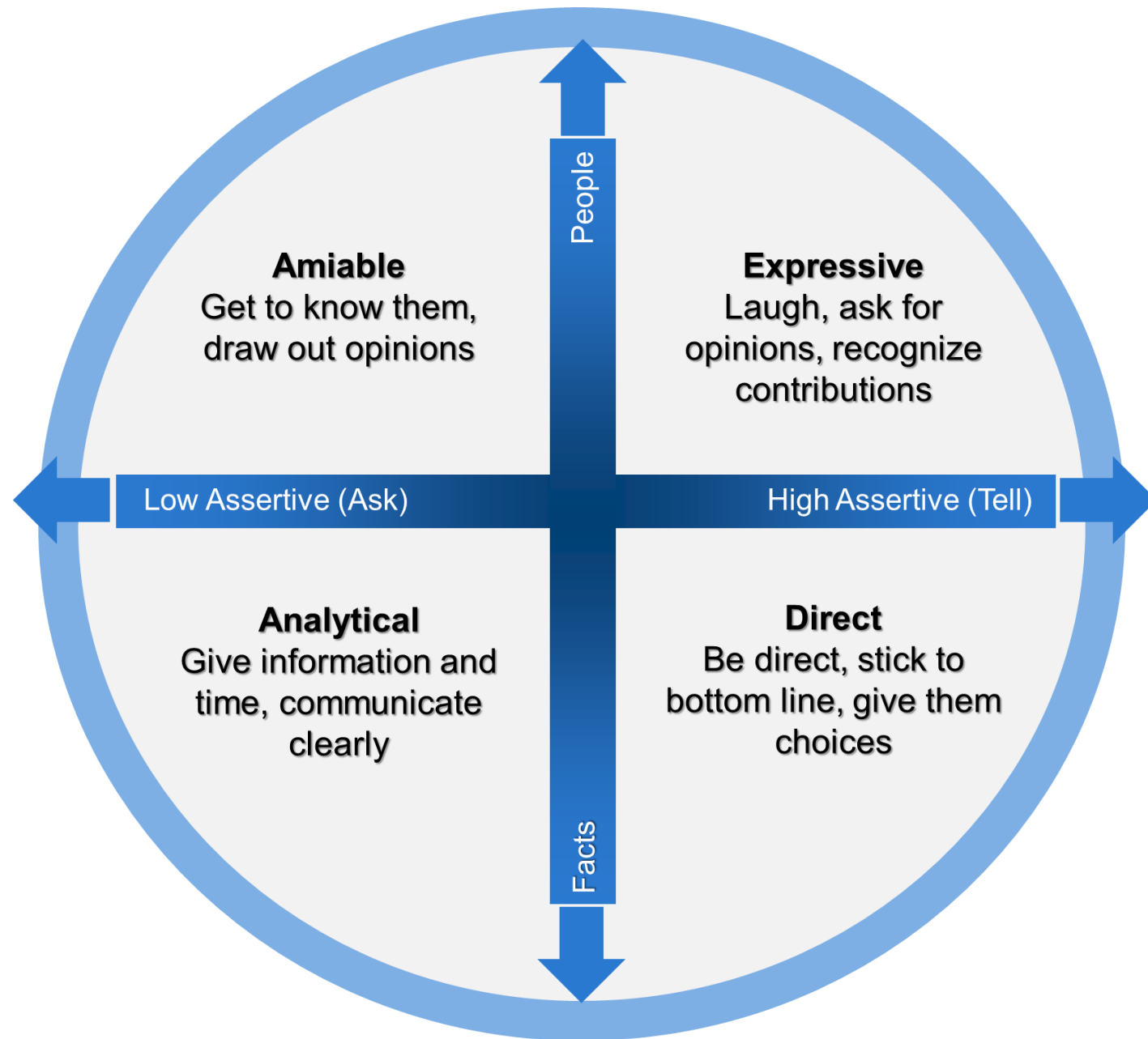


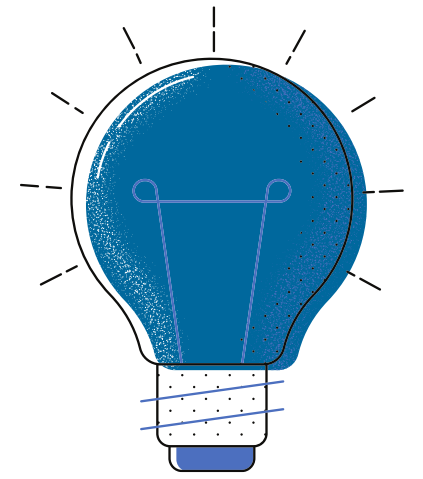




# Exercise

Break up into groups, based on your dominant style.



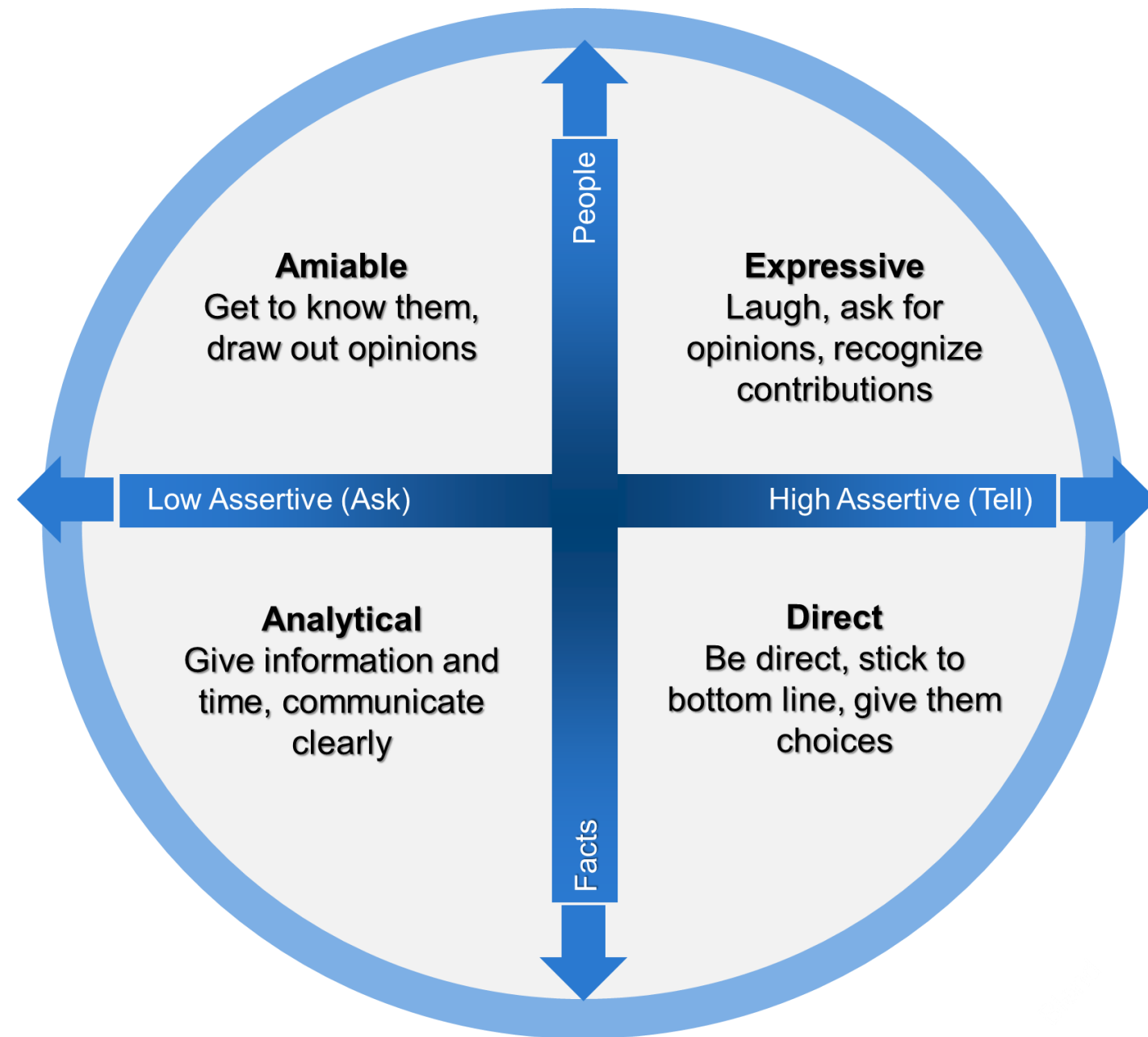


# Exercise

## The Scenario:

We need to approach you about rolling out a new process improvement initiative that is going to affect your team. Your team is fearful of job redundancies, and you are concerned that your team's concerns are not being considered.

How do you want us to approach you?  
(make a list of specific behaviors)



# Strategies

---

## #1: Wait

Is this the right or wrong timing? Do we need to exercise patience and things play out?

---

## #2: Build coalitions / alliances

Should we consider building an alliance with another group or leader? What would make a good partner?

---

## #3: Adopt the right change initiatives

Is this the right initiative to pursue? Is there support for it?

---

## #4: Ask for help

Do we need to ask for help? From whom? For what might we ask for help?

---

## #5: Work around resistors

Do we need to work around resistors? How should we work around resistors?

Scenario: someone is not coming through for you.

# Strategies

---

## #1: Wait

Is this the right or wrong timing? Do we need to exercise patience and things play out?

---

## #2: Build coalitions / alliances

Should we consider building an alliance with another group or leader? What would make a good partner?

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Is this the right initiative to pursue? Is there support for it?

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## #4: Ask for help

Do we need to ask for help? From whom? For what might we ask for help?

---

## #5: Work around resisters

Do we need to work around resisters? How should we work around resisters?

Scenario: someone is resisting your agenda.

# Strategies

---

## #1: Wait

Is this the right or wrong timing? Do we need to exercise patience and things play out?

---

## #2: Build coalitions / alliances

Should we consider building an alliance with another group or leader? What would make a good partner?

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## #3: Adopt the right change initiatives

Is this the right initiative to pursue? Is there support for it?

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## #4: Ask for help

Do we need to ask for help? From whom? For what might we ask for help?

---

## #5: Work around resisters

Do we need to work around resisters? How should we work around resisters?

Scenario: you don't have much influence with a key decision maker.

# Strategies

---

## #1: Wait

Is this the right or wrong timing? Do we need to exercise patience and things play out?

---

## #2: Build coalitions / alliances

Should we consider building an alliance with another group or leader? What would make a good partner?

---

## #3: Adopt the right change initiatives

Is this the right initiative to pursue? Is there support for it?

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## #4: Ask for help

Do we need to ask for help? From whom? For what might we ask for help?

---

## #5: Work around resistors

Do we need to work around resistors? How should we work around resistors?

Scenario: you are confused and not sure what to do next.

# Strategies

---

## #1: Wait

Is this the right or wrong timing? Do we need to exercise patience and things play out?

---

## #2: Build coalitions / alliances

Should we consider building an alliance with another group or leader? What would make a good partner?

---

## #3: Adopt the right change initiatives

Is this the right initiative to pursue? Is there support for it?

---

## #4: Ask for help

Do we need to ask for help? From whom? For what might we ask for help?

---

## #5: Work around resistors

Do we need to work around resistors? How should we work around resistors?



Scenario: You get a poor response from someone.

# Strategies

---

## #1: Wait

Is this the right or wrong timing? Do we need to exercise patience and things play out?

---

## #2: Build coalitions / alliances

Should we consider building an alliance with another group or leader? What would make a good partner?

---

## #3: Adopt the right change initiatives

Is this the right initiative to pursue? Is there support for it?

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## #4: Ask for help

Do we need to ask for help? From whom? For what might we ask for help?

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## #5: Work around resistors

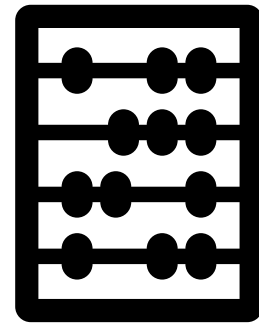
Do we need to work around resistors? How should we work around resistors?



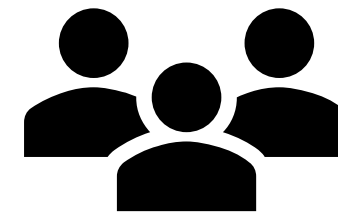
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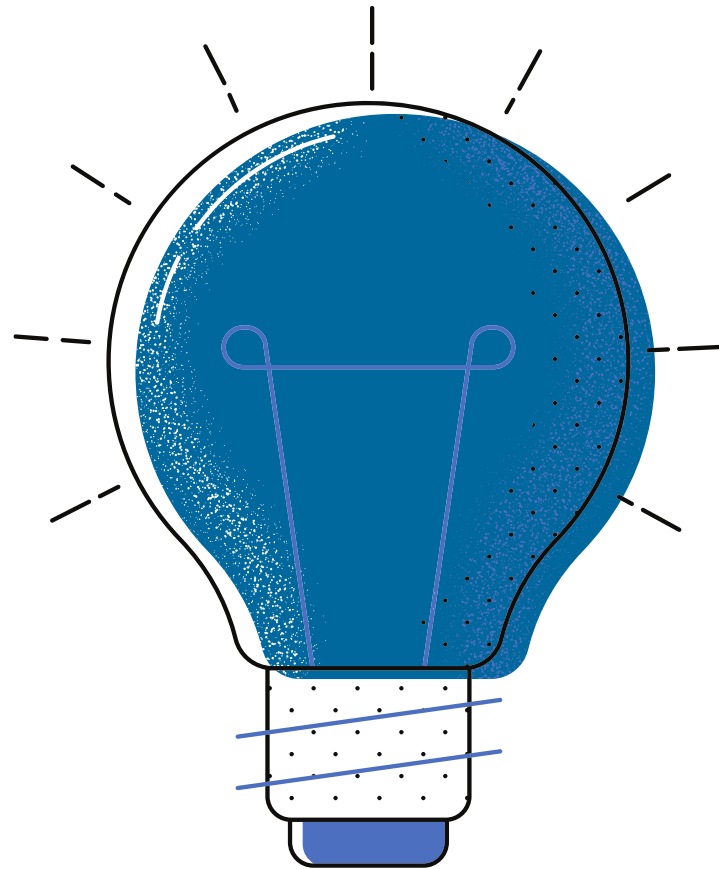
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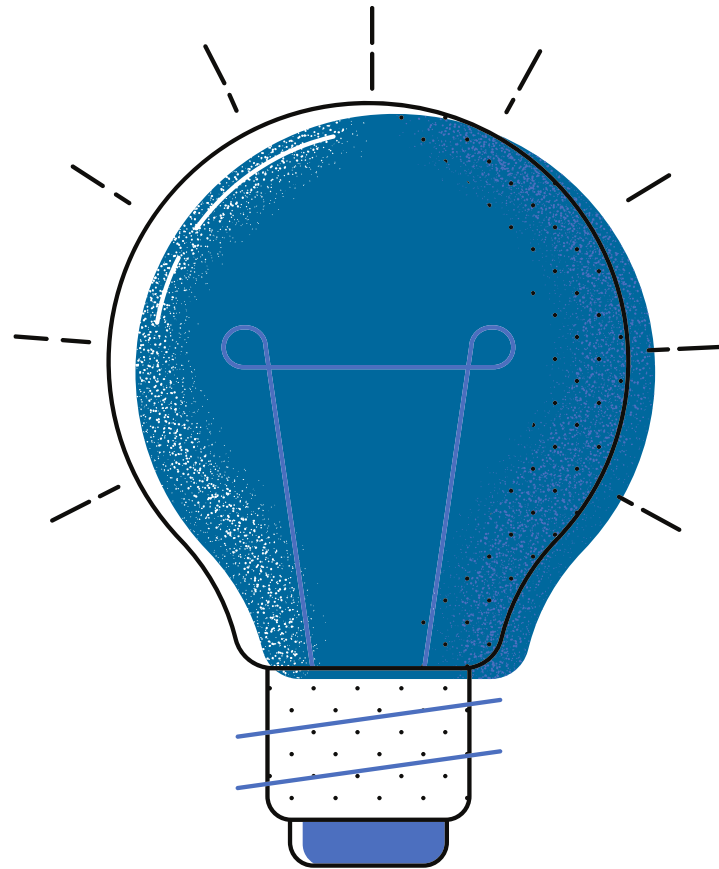
Tips and  
Takeaways



# On Your Own

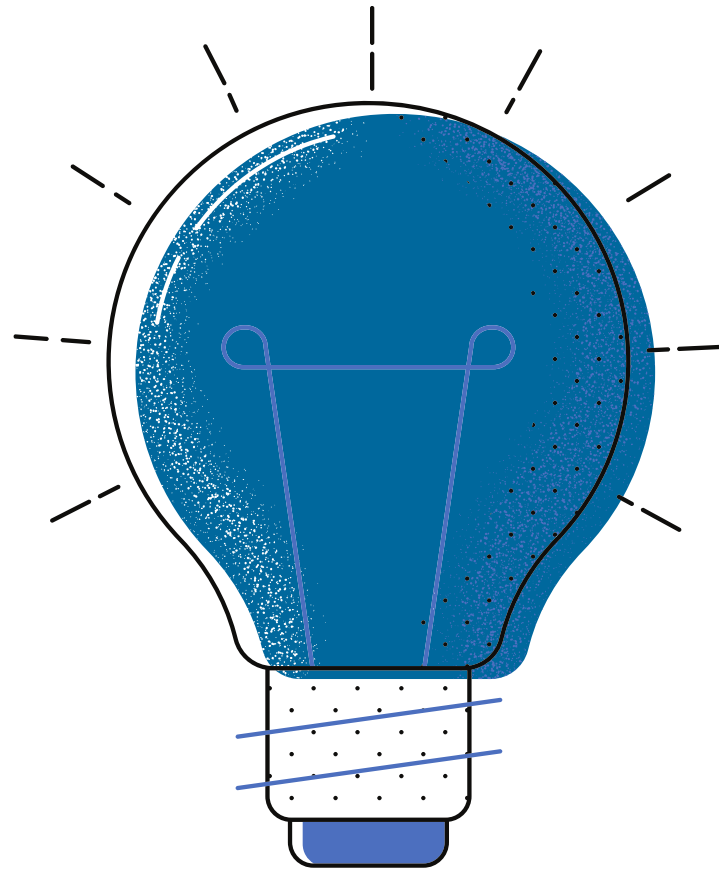
Write down behavior you would like to change to improve your organizational savvy.

- Blame others (instead of taking responsibility)
- Make up excuses
- Too direct / say things that cause problems
- Don't speak up / stay quiet
- Overstate negative views
- Shade the truth
- Sarcastic
- Viewed as a loner
- Pushing narrow / personal interests
- Don't listen
- Hedge on tough questions
- Try to make everyone happy
- Indicate little or no concern for others
- Nervous or freeze with upper management
- Dis-engage: reject politics



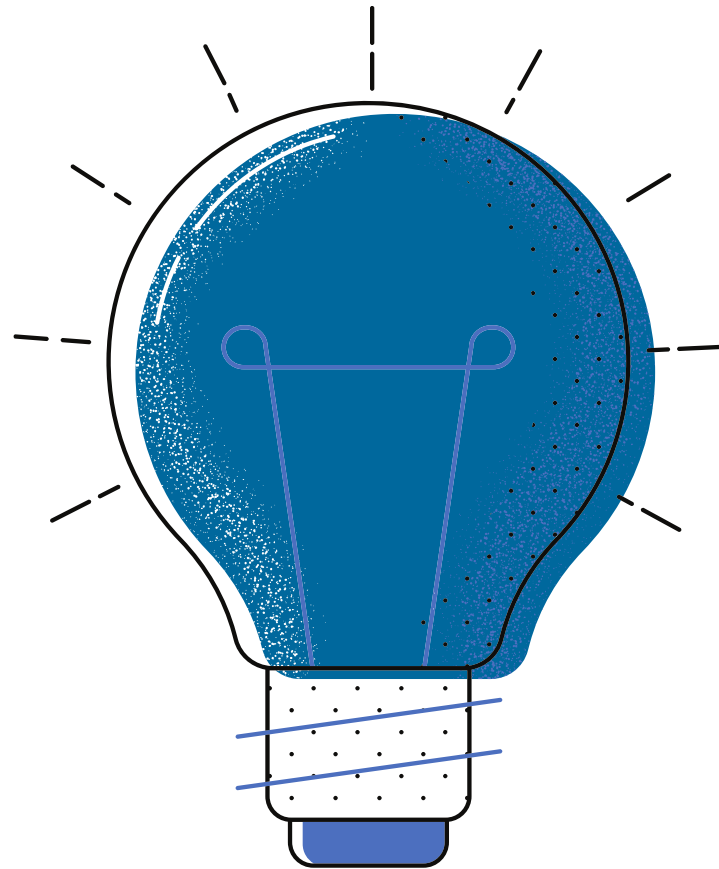
## How to Get Good Feedback:

1. Solicit advice rather than criticism.
2. Be directed towards the future rather than obsessed with the past.
3. Couch it in a way that suggests you will act on it – you are indeed trying to get better.



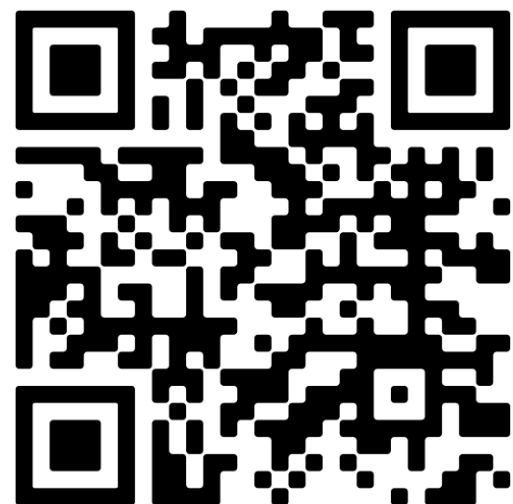
# How to Get Good Feedback:

“How can I do better?”



# Feedforward

1. Find one other person.
2. Describe the one mindset or behavior you would like to change.
3. Ask them for two suggestions for the future that might help you achieve a positive change in your selected mindset or behavior.
4. Do this with two different people.
5. Be prepared to share one suggestion you heard.



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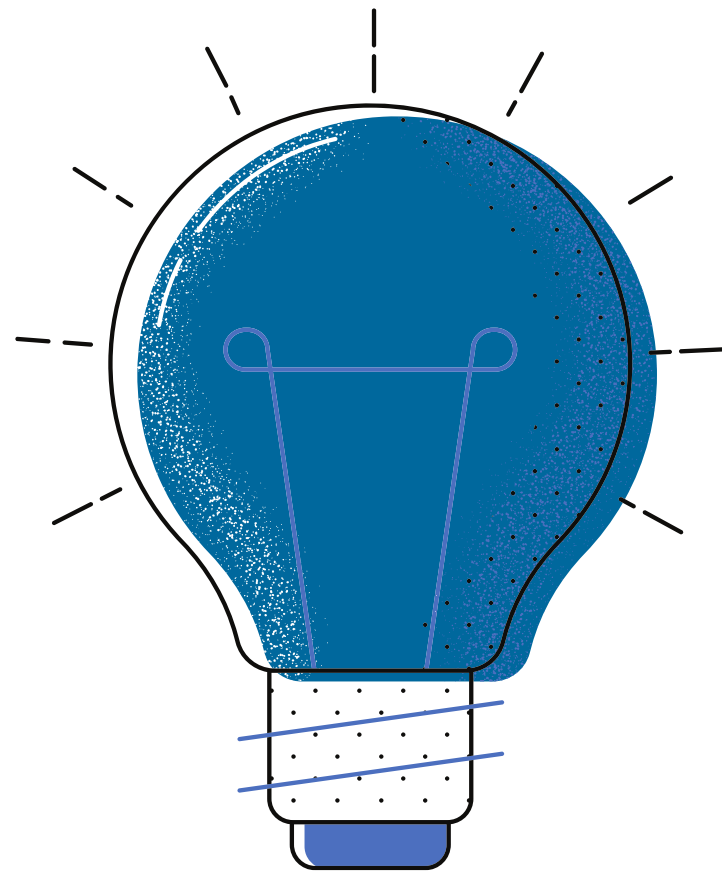
# Get in touch with Mark

Text: (760) 271-8256  
Email: [mark@markskenny.com](mailto:mark@markskenny.com)

Retreat Speaker | Keynote Speaker | Team Advisor

[markskenny.com](http://markskenny.com)

# “Speed Takeaways”



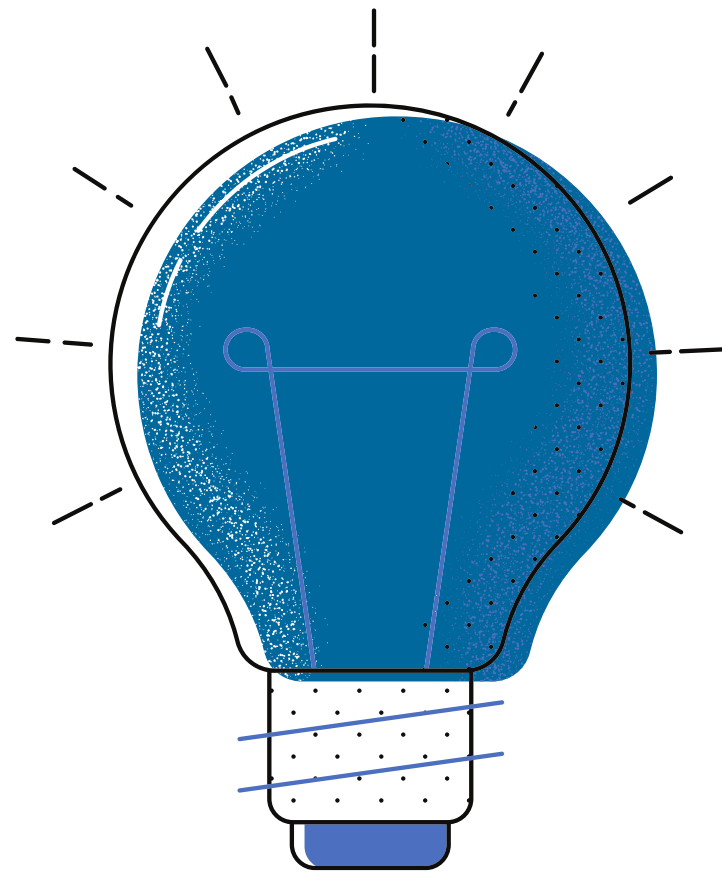
On your own, write down the following:

1. What surprised you the most today?
2. What is one action you will take immediately?
3. What is one tip you will share with your team?



# “Speed Takeaways”

Share what you wrote down with 2 other people:



1. What surprised you the most today?
2. What is one action you will take immediately?
3. What is one tip you will share with your team?

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## Making an Impact

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