

# Teams: Session 4

**ABBY BERENSON**

*Senior Associate Director, MIT Leadership Center*



# AGENDA

## From earlier...

- Leadership is...
- Teams are Humans Connecting: Personization and Psych Safety
- Team Basics: Hackman & Team Framework
- Perspective Taking & Perspective Getting

## Diversity, Conflict, and Emotions

- Diversity & Conflict Go Hand-in-Hand
- Managing Conflict through Managing Our Emotions
- Productive Reasoning

An aerial photograph of a large, intricate maze made of green hedges. A narrow, winding water channel flows through the maze, reflecting the sky. The hedges are well-maintained and feature small red flowers. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

# Leadership at MIT

Leadership is the **process** of solving problems that won't be otherwise handled in the existing system.



# Lone Inventors as Sources of Breakthroughs: Myth or Reality?

Jasjit Singh

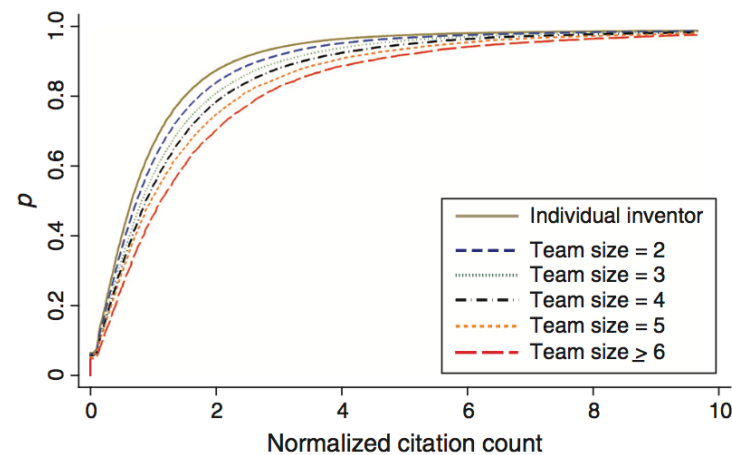
INSEAD, Singapore 138676, Singapore, jasjit.singh@insead.edu

Lee Fleming

Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts 02163, lfleming@hbs.edu

...there is no evidence of lone inventors performing better in any part of the distribution...In fact, the difference across the four categories is significantly larger for the higher quantiles, indicating that lone inventors are particularly disadvantaged when attempting to achieve breakthroughs. (p.50)

Figure 2(a) Cumulative Distribution of Observed Impact of Patents from Individuals vs. Teams



# At the Center of Conflict

"It is possible to conceive conflict as not a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities, but a normal process by which socially valuable difference register themselves for the enrichment of all concerned.

There are three ways of dealing with difference: domination, compromise, and integration. By domination only one side gets what it wants; by compromise neither side gets what it wants; by integration we find a way by which both sides may get what they wish.

All polishing is done by friction."



*Mary Parker Follett*  
1868-1933



# Core Ideas

1. Diversity is the key to innovation and growth
2. Diversity can create conflict and reduce team effectiveness
3. Managing conflict is challenging because:
  - We avoid it
  - When conflict surfaces, we are often sabotaged by our emotional responses

# The Plot

- We are all "...feeling machines who think," and our decisions and reactions are heavily influenced by that emotional state
- Understanding our emotions and those of others (perspective taking/getting), along with managing them is critical to resolving conflict
- Resolving conflict requires productive reasoning

**Be increasingly objective about your subjective experience, and that of others**



# Emotions: What Do We Know?

- 1. Physiological responses to our environment producing distinct sensations (i.e. joy, stress, calm, anxiety, etc.)**
- 2. Our cognitive processes associate various concepts with these sensations**
  - Nervous, scared, excited, happy
- 3. The source of these emotions is hotly debated**
  - Hard wired by evolution or learned from birth?



# Emotions: What Do We Know?

- **Irrespective of their origin, emotional responses are based on our unique histories**
  - Brain tries to predict what's needed in a moment
  - Utilize statistical learning – unconscious, repeated patterns
- **Your emotional state can significantly influence your evaluations and decisions**
- **The emotions you experience may not suggest the most functional response to the situation at hand. (Lisa Feldman Barrett)**



# Can We Change Emotional Responses?

**It appears that the answer is yes in at least some contexts**

- Deliberate, controlled breathing has been shown to calm anxiety
- Progressive muscle relaxation can reduce stress
- Expressive writing about disturbing events can reduce emotional distress
- Growing evidence that mindfulness and meditation can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression

**Better knowledge of self (and emotions) shows greater efficiency in emotional regulation**

**But, it also appears that these take time to cultivate**

# Types of Conflict

## Relational Conflict

The perception of interpersonal incompatibility and typically includes tension, annoyance, and animosity among group members.

**Tends to lead to worse decisions and counter productive outcomes**

## Task Conflict

The perception of disagreements among group members about the content of their decisions and involves differences in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions

**Tends to lead to better decisions and productive outcomes**

**HOW DO WE MAINTAIN  
TASK CONFLICT WITHOUT  
DESCENDING INTO  
RELATIONAL TROUBLE?**



# Keep on the **Task Side** of Conflict: Setting the Stage



Set shared targets



Don't minimize difference,  
embrace multi-culturalism and  
emphasize benefits for both  
majority and minority groups

See Galinsky et al. (2015)



Engage in perspective taking and  
getting



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# Keep on the **Task Side** of Conflict: In the Moment



Voice the Emotion

- We are all human with different histories and thus different emotions
- Those emotions happen automatically, unconsciously
- How you react to those emotions is what matters

Understand that Emotions  
Can Effect Processing

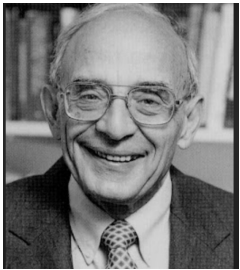
- Don't grocery shop when hungry

Re-Affirm Shared Targets

- "We are all here to complete the project."

Use Productive Reasoning  
to Resolve Conflict

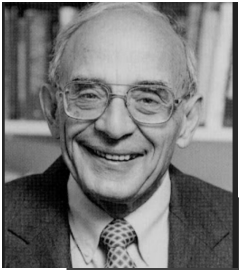
# Productive Reasoning



Chris Argyris

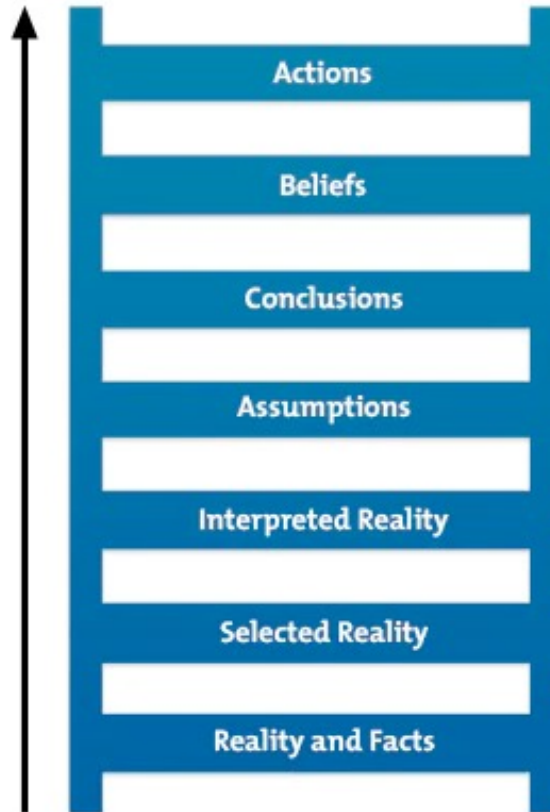
Using your cool, conscious processing capabilities to offset and update your automatic, emotional responses





Chris Argyris

# LADDER OF INFERENCE



The step-by-step reasoning process helps you to remain objective and, when working or challenging others, reach a shared conclusion without conflict.



When you reason from facts to a conclusion, you're "climbing a ladder of inference," whether you're doing this consciously or not.

You can use each rung to question the stages of your decision making.



(Source: Argyrus, C. (1990). 'Overcoming Organizational Defenses: Facilitating Organizational Learning.' Prentice Hall.)

# How to Use the Ladder of Inference

1

Wherever you are in your decision-making process,

# STOP!

It's time to consider your reasoning.



2

Identify which rung of the ladder you've reached.



3

Question the choices you made to get here.

### WHAT were you thinking and WHY?

Work your way down the ladder, analyzing your thought process at each rung.



4

When you've reached the bottom of the ladder, you know which facts you can rely on.



5

Now work your way back up the ladder, using the right facts, to reach the right conclusion!





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# Let's Try Using the Ladder of Inference

## Example?

Make the Subjective Objective  
Use Productive Reasoning

# Happy Teaming