



DON'T FEED THE ELEPHANTS!

Overcoming Avoidance for
Powerful Partnerships

Sarah Noll Wilson



“

You do not **avoid conflict**;
you just **displace** and
reposition it.



T. Maxine Woods-McMillan, Esq.
*Employment Law Attorney and
Workplace Mediator*



LOGISTICS

- 1 **Share** how you are comfortable

- 2 Ask **questions**

- 3 Do what you need to do to **be present**

ROADMAP TOGETHER



- 1** Explore our relationship with conflict

- 2** Examine the “Elephant in the Room”

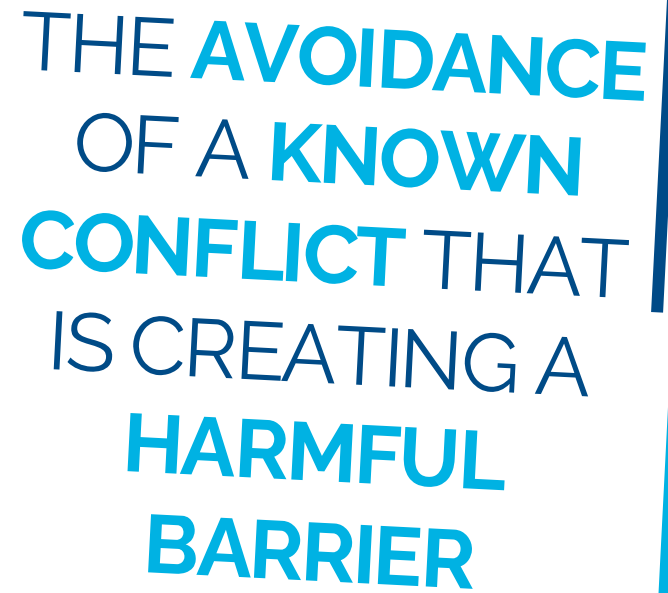
- 3** Introduce the Curiosity First Approach

- 4** Reflection

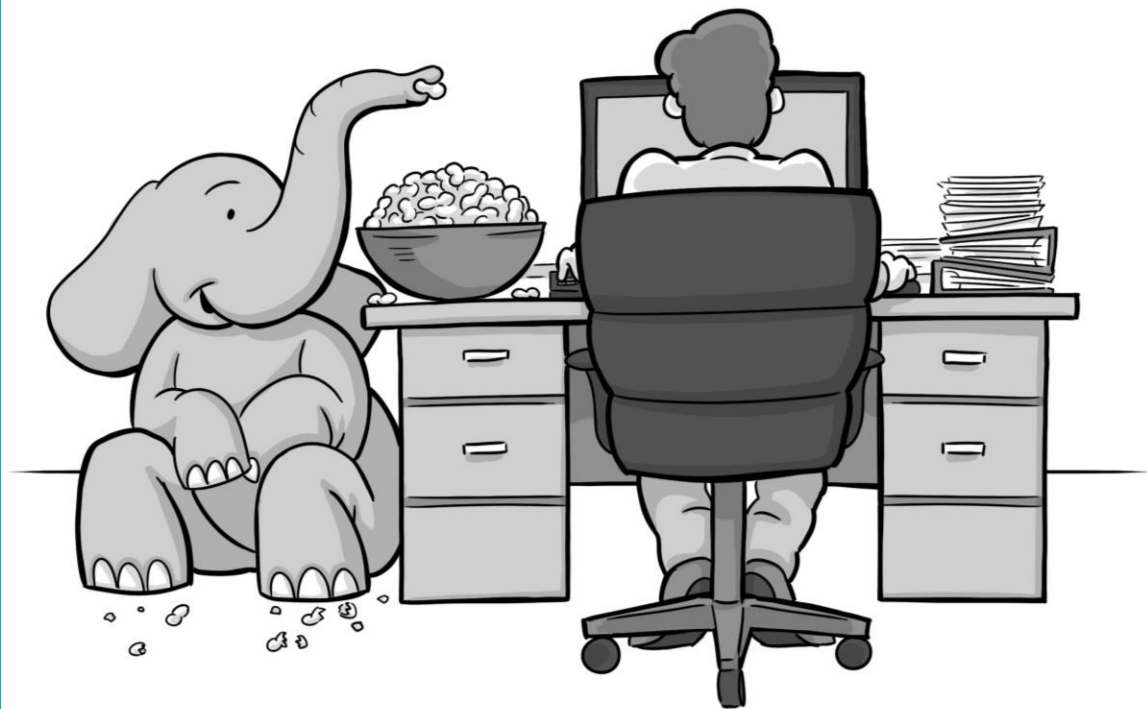


REFLECT **AND** SHARE

What lessons did
you learn about
conflict growing up?
From your culture?
Your career?



THE **AVOIDANCE**
OF A **KNOWN**
CONFLICT THAT
IS CREATING A
HARMFUL
BARRIER





REFLECT AND SHARE

HOW HAVE **YOU**
FED AN
ELEPHANT?

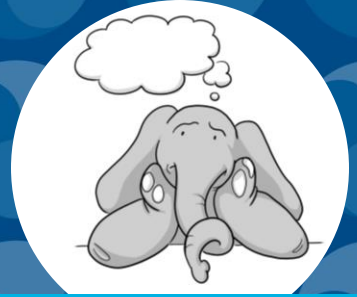
KNOW YOUR ELEPHANTS



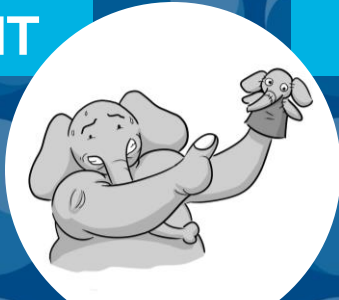
AVOIDEPHANT



BLAMEPHANT



IMAGIPHANT



DEFLECTEPHANT



NUDGEPHANT

BONUS ELEPHANTS

- 1 Pretendephant/Gaslightephant
- 2 Perfectephant
- 3 Optimephant
- 4 Sarcastephant
- 5 Grenadephant

An iceberg floating in the ocean, with a small tip above the water and a much larger, jagged mass submerged below. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue with some white clouds. The iceberg's submerged part is dark and textured, suggesting a complex internal structure.

THE “RIGHT” WORDS

YOUR EMOTIONS

THEIR EMOTIONS

EXPECTATIONS

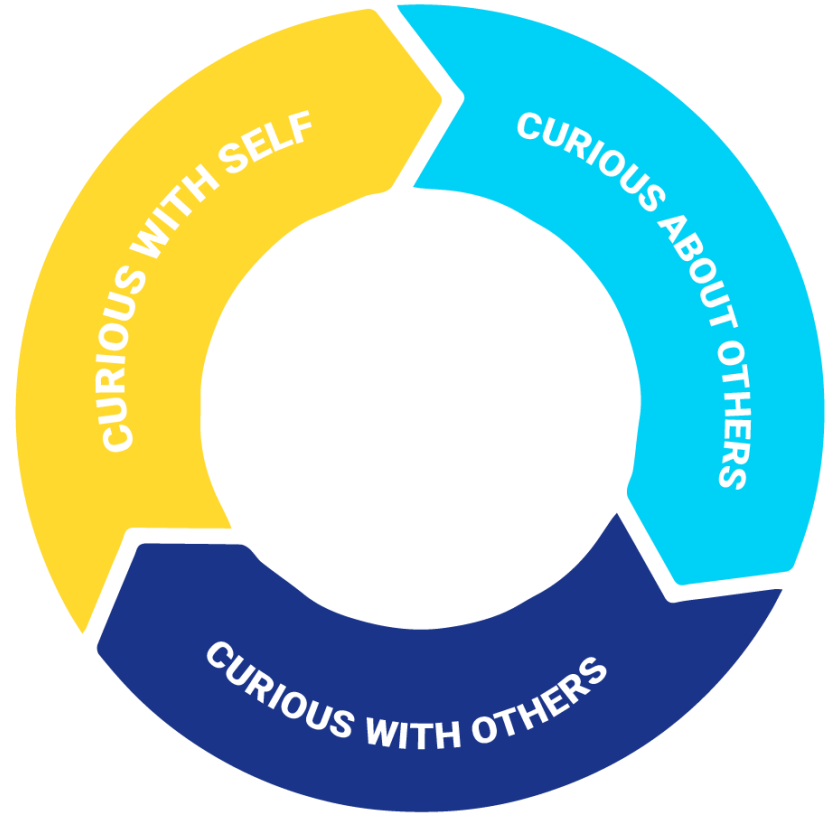
FEAR OF RETALIATION

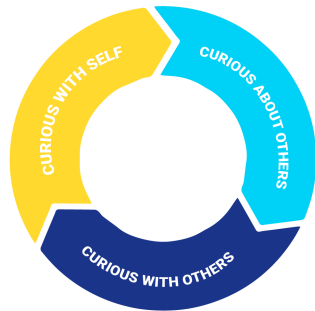
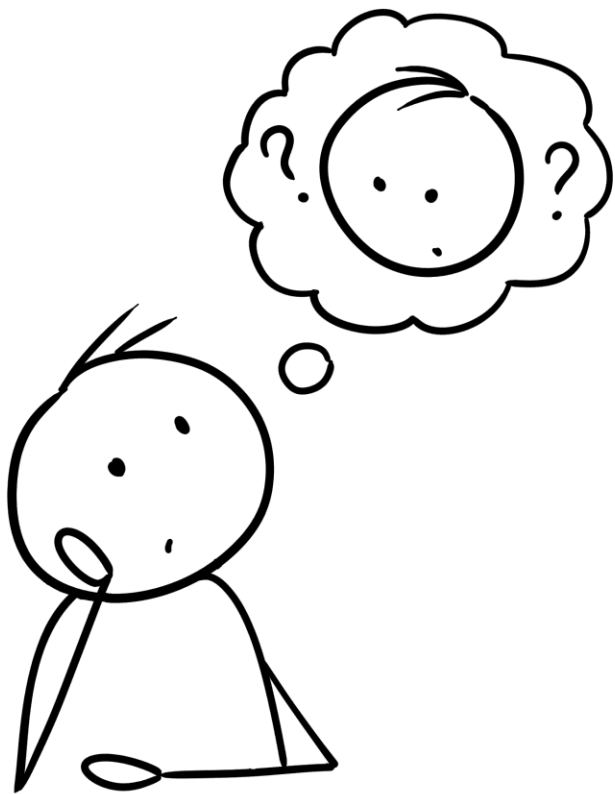
POWER DYNAMICS

POSSIBILITY OF NON-CLOSURE

BUMPING INTO THEM AT TARGET

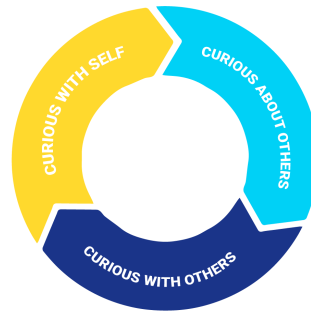
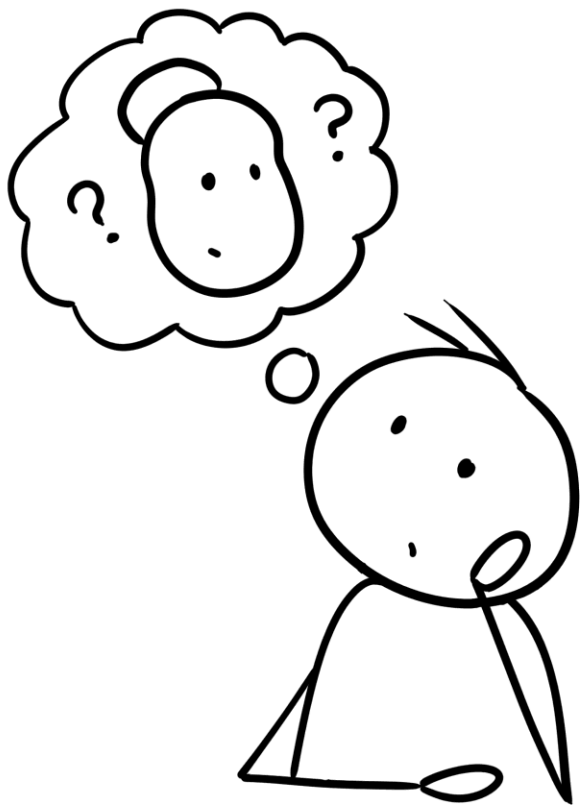
The **Curiosity First Approach**





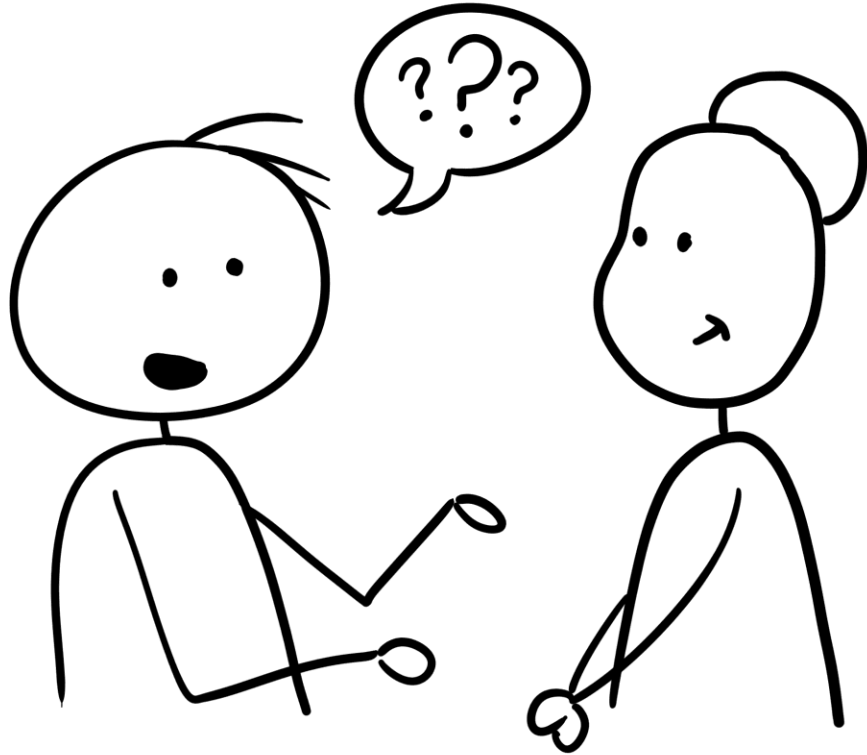
CURIOUS WITH SELF

- What am I feeling?
- What is my perspective?
- Is this a preference or performance issue?
- What role did (do) I play?
- What do I need?



CURIOUS ABOUT OTHERS

- How might they be feeling?
- What makes sense to them?
- What else is going on in their world?
- What might they need?
- What might they value?



CURIOUS WITH OTHERS

- Prep the conversation
- Invite the conversation
- Explore perspectives
- Goal: Clarity, Creation, Closure

PREP FOR THE CONVERSATION

- 1 What is the **purpose** of your conversation?
- 2 What is your **Most Valuable Point**?
- 3 What **conditions** will more likely lead to a successful conversation?
- 4 What **traps** do you need to be aware of and avoid?
- 5 What is your **opening statement**?

PETERSON'S OPENING STATEMENT MODEL



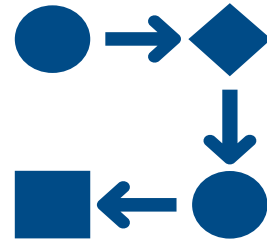
ACKNOWLEDGE

Explain reason for
conversation



ANCHOR

Connect to something
bigger



ACTION

Share how you
would like to move
forward

"We can both agree things have been tense..."



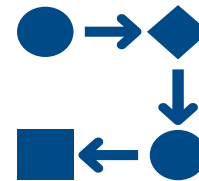
ACKNOWLEDGE

I realize that we are on the same page with about 90% of the work..."



ANCHOR

"Would you be open to exploring how we close the gap on the last bit?"



ACTION

"I've been thinking more about..."



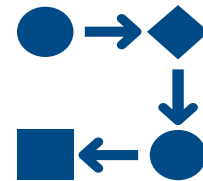
ACKNOWLEDGE

I know it's important to both of us that...



ANCHOR

I'm wondering when we could check in about it and look for a win-win."



ACTION

"I want to check in about..."



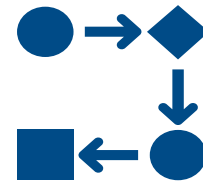
ACKNOWLEDGE

I don't think your intention was..., but the impact your comment had was...



ANCHOR

Can you talk about this now? Or would tomorrow be better?"



ACTION

"That was hard to hear your feedback..."



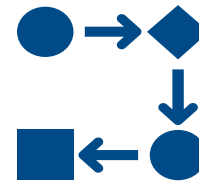
ACKNOWLEDGE

I am grateful we can have these kinds of conversations even when they are uncomfortable...



ANCHOR

I commit to showing up differently."



ACTION



REFLECT **AND** SHARE

Where has your
thinking changed
because of our
time together?



“

Great relationships don't avoid conflict. They know how to have conflict and thrive because of it.



Give feedback to Sarah

Scan this QR code



Or go to

<https://talk.ac/sarahnollwilson>

and enter this code when prompted

CURIOUS