

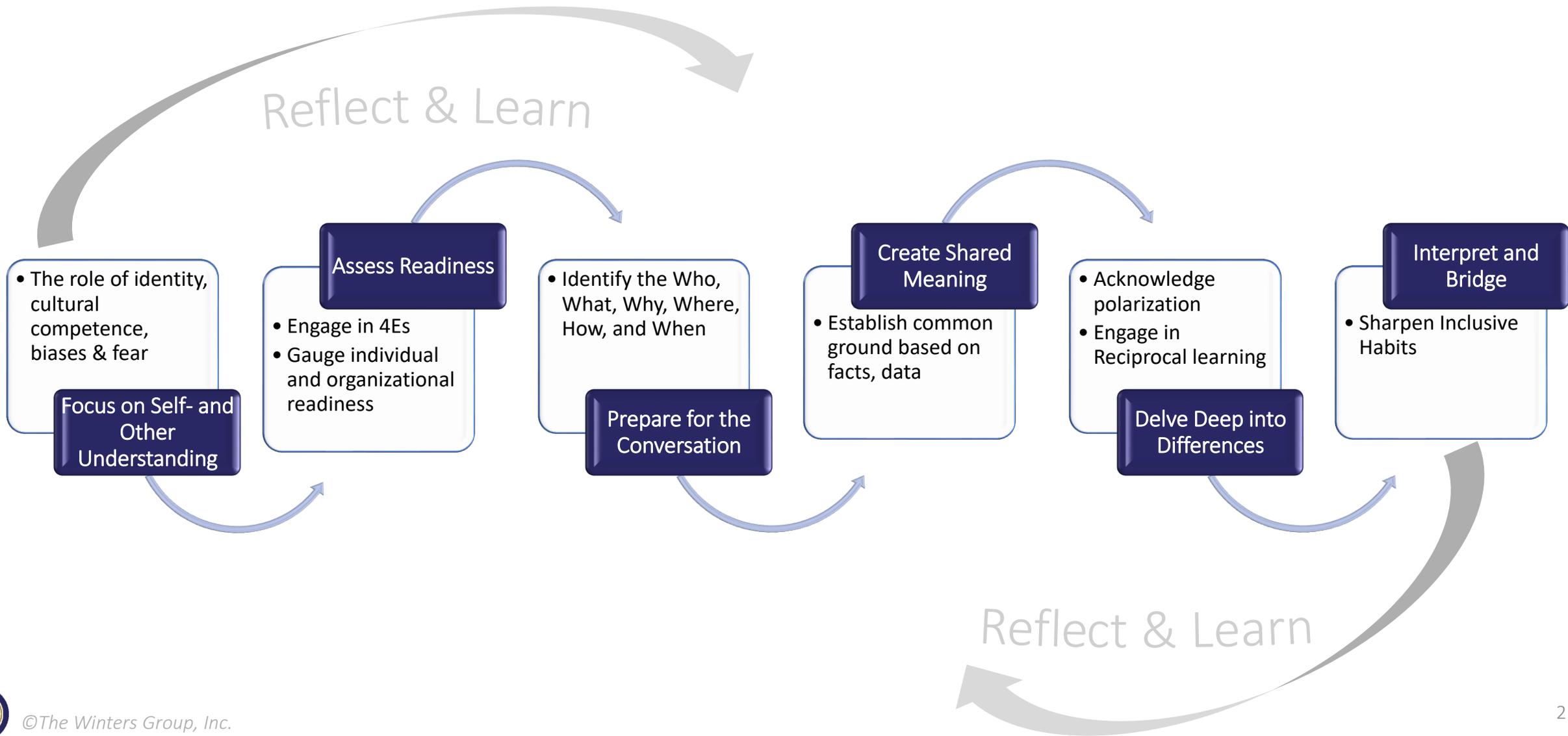
# Bold, Inclusive Conversations®: Putting the Model into Action

Facilitated by: Mary-Frances Winters,  
President and CEO of The Winters Group, Inc.  
and Progressive Insurance

**PROGRESSIVE**



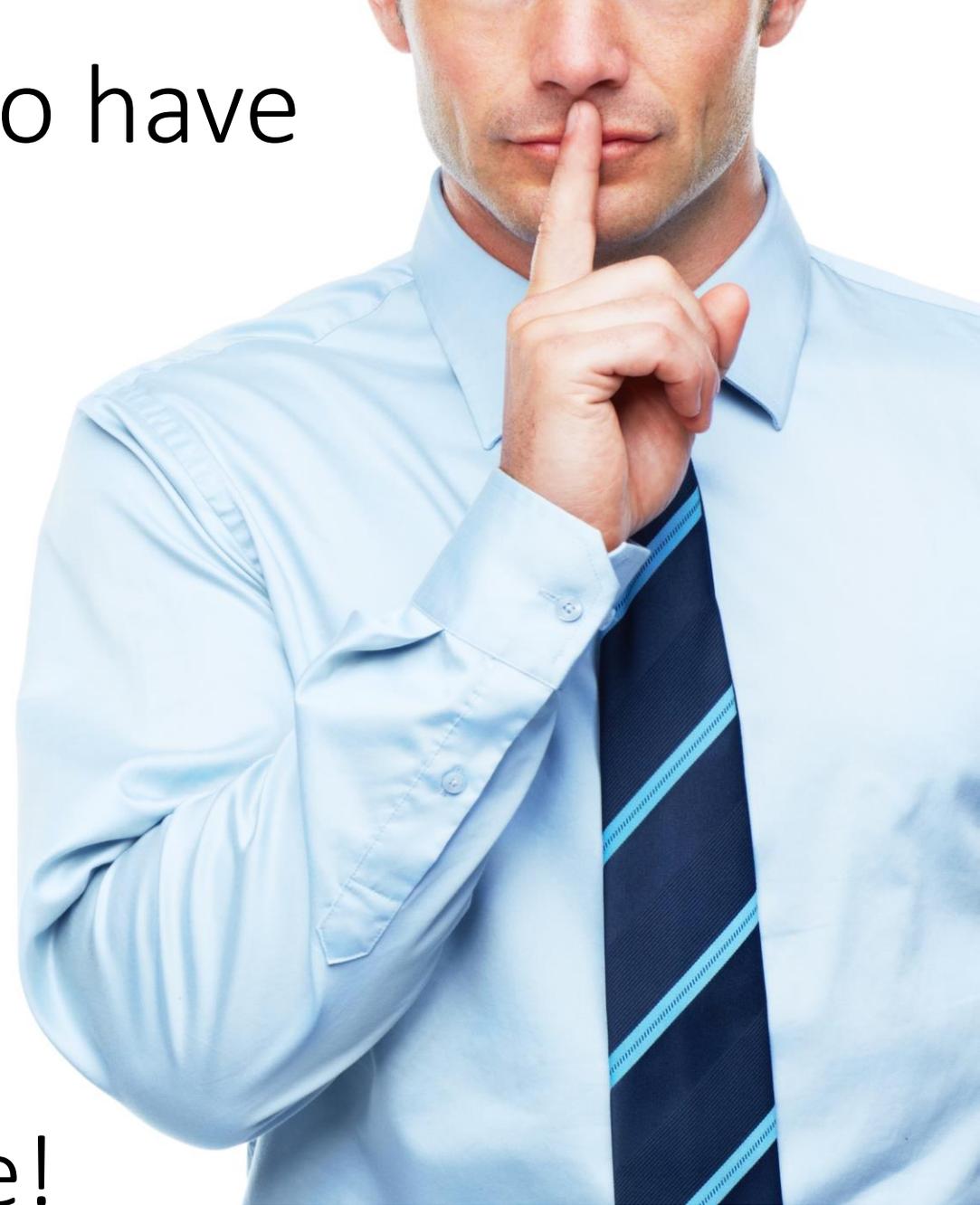
# A Model for Bold, Inclusive Conversations®



We have been taught not to have these conversations

- History
- Embarrassment
- Shame
- Guilt
- Fear of conflict
- Uncertainty of what to say
- Not socially acceptable
- Unprofessional

...Just plain impolite!



Why should we be having these conversations at work?

Productivity

Engagement

Retention

Enhanced Cross-  
Cultural  
Understanding

Psychological  
Safety



# The Resume

Terry, an African American male sent his resume for a new IT job in which he had an interest. To his pleasure, he was invited to the office for an interview.

He arrived for the interview and was seated in the lobby with two other people. As the three individuals sat in the lobby, Terry could hear the hiring manager making comments about an outstanding resume with great skills, qualities, and experience. This made Terry a little nervous because he was not certain to whom the resume belonged.

Moments later, the hiring manager came into the lobby. He approached the white male asking if he was Terry, to which the gentleman replied no. He then approached the white female and asked if she was Terry, to which she replied no. The manager then went back into the office. Completely confused, Terry approached the receptionist to advise that he was Terry and that the hiring manager never approached him.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why did the hiring manager approach both a white male and female, but not Terry?
2. What are the implications of the manager's comments? Are there any stereotypes?
3. How or should Terry address this situation?
4. How does the manager's actions impact hiring practices at the company?



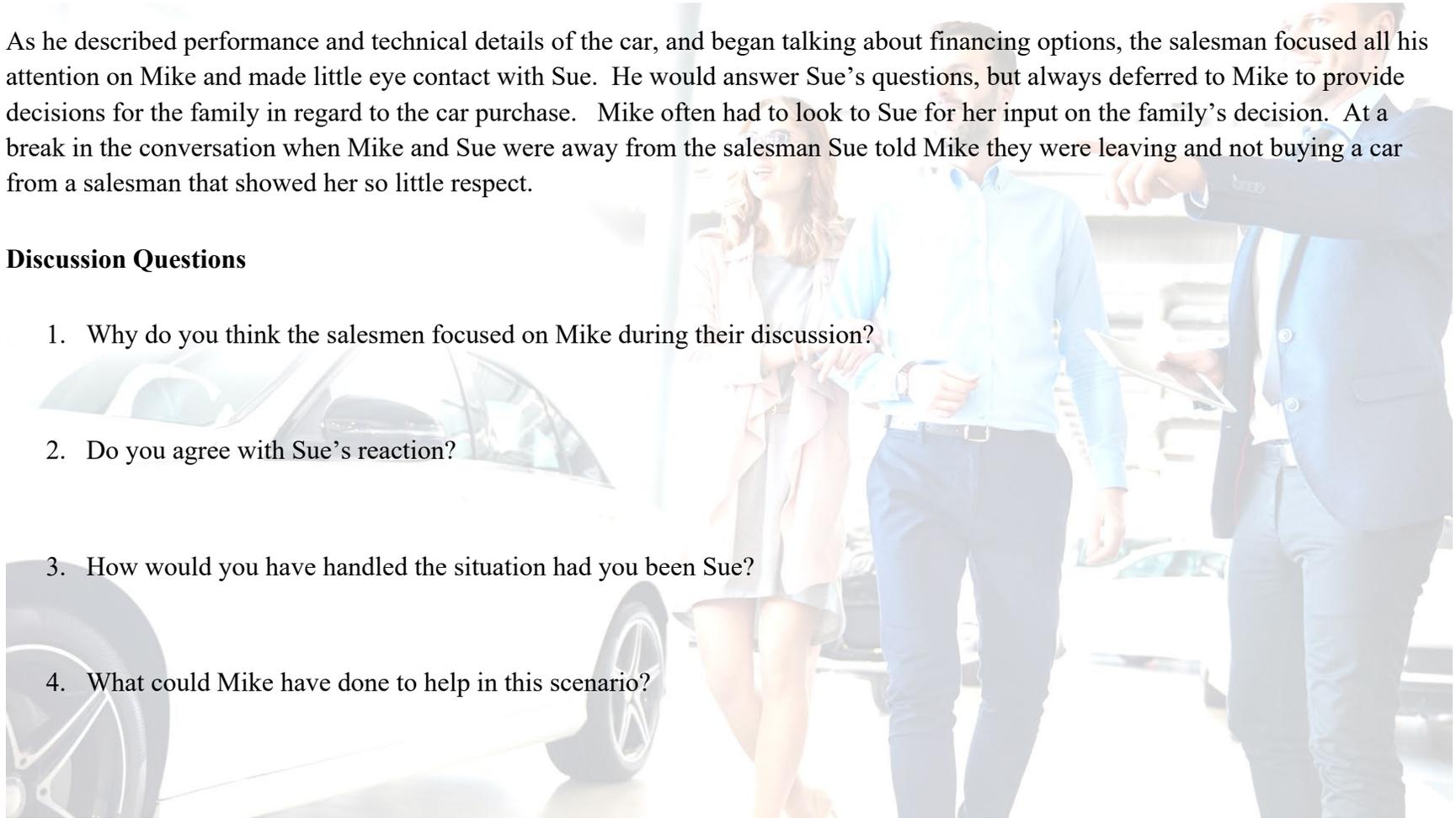
# New Car

Mike and Sue took their kids to the car dealer to shop for a new car. A salesman approached and introduced himself to each member of the family. The salesman graciously showed the family to a playroom, so Mike and Sue could get the kids situated there to free them up to talk to the salesman. The salesman had Mike and Sue join him in his office.

As he described performance and technical details of the car, and began talking about financing options, the salesman focused all his attention on Mike and made little eye contact with Sue. He would answer Sue's questions, but always deferred to Mike to provide decisions for the family in regard to the car purchase. Mike often had to look to Sue for her input on the family's decision. At a break in the conversation when Mike and Sue were away from the salesman Sue told Mike they were leaving and not buying a car from a salesman that showed her so little respect.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the salesmen focused on Mike during their discussion?
2. Do you agree with Sue's reaction?
3. How would you have handled the situation had you been Sue?
4. What could Mike have done to help in this scenario?



# Guidance for Engaging in Bold, Inclusive Conversations®

- Acknowledge the “elephant” in the room. Discuss those differences. Write them down.  
Polarization exists and acknowledging that is part of the dialogue.
- Establish ground rules (e.g. non judgment, confidentiality, dialogue not debate, assume positive intent, pausing)
- Distinguish interpretations and clarify definitions. Even “universal” terms and values can be interpreted differently across cultures.
  - What do terms like fairness, safety, and trust mean to those involved in the dialogue?
- Understand Facts vs. Truth.
  - Honor one’s truth, even if it is not fact.
- Leverage data.
- Uncover your different perspectives and listen with an open mind. Tell your story.
- “Ouch and educate.”
- Know when to “press pause.” Set aside time to reflect. Be okay with non-closure.
- Strive for reciprocal empathy.



# A Commitment to

## Live Inclusively<sup>®</sup>

I commit to be intentional in living inclusively.

I commit to spending more time getting to know myself and understanding my culture. It is in understanding myself, that I am better positioned to understand others.

I will acknowledge that I don't know what I don't know, but I will not use what is unconscious as an excuse.

I will be intentional in exposing myself to difference. If I don't know, I will ask. If I am asked, I will assume positive intent.

Most importantly, I will accept my responsibility in increasing my own knowledge and understanding.

I commit to speaking up and speaking out, even when I am not directly impacted, for there is no such thing as neutrality in the quest for equity, justice, and inclusion.

I will strive to accept, and not just tolerate; respect, even if I don't agree; and be curious, not judgmental. I commit to pausing and listening. I will be empathetic to the experiences and perspectives of my "others." I will use my privilege positively, and get comfortable with my own discomfort.

I commit to knowing, getting, and doing better than I did yesterday—keeping in mind my commitment to live inclusively is a journey, not a destination.

Written by: Brittany J. Harris, VP, Innovation & Learning

