



# Global Leadership Exchange

## **Adaptive Leadership by Dr Ellen Kagen**

Who Am I in the Work of Leadership? Mental Models and the Reverse View?

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# Who Am I in the Work of Leadership? Mental Models and the Reverse View?

## **Adaptive Leadership for Systems Change Learning Circle Series**

Sponsored by IIMHL

August 1, 2022 North America and UK  
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Developed and Facilitated by

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# Welcome and Quick Review

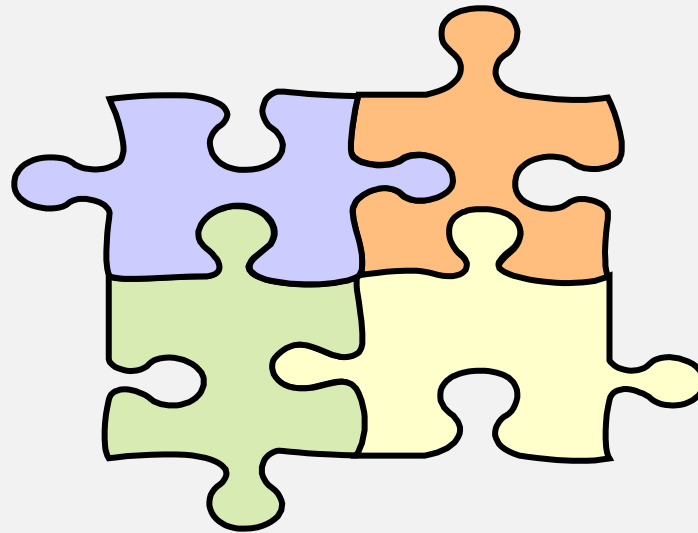
- Session One: What is Leadership?
  - 7 Views
  - Process
  - Behavior
  - Awareness
  - Leaderly vs. Humanly
  - Leadership is not Authority
  - Leadership is different from Management
  - Leadership requires Reset

# Who are you In the Work of Leadership?

## *Personal Competence*

Self-Awareness

Self-Management



## *Social Competence*

Social-Awareness

Relationship Management

# Learning Objectives: Who am I in the Work of Leadership

- Understand the role of mental models in the work of leadership
- Understand the importance of the ladder of inference, the “reverse view” in managing our mental models
- List leadership strategies for managing our mental models



# Understanding Mental Models

# Mental Models

- Beliefs, assumptions, and models we have about every aspect of ourselves, others, our organizations, and how the world works
- Habits of thought
- Ancestral voices

# Mental Models & Assumptions

We all have  
them

Rely on them  
every day

Conscious or  
unconscious

Easy to see in  
others

Affect  
perceptions &  
actions

Impede or  
enhance  
understanding

Not all are  
warranted

Need to be  
tested

# Mental Models/Assumptions

If we believe something to be true that is not tested or not true, we often act as if it is true

Daniel Kies, 2005

# Determinants of Mental Models



# Mental Models

- Teenager
- Education
- Police
- Silence
- The Government
- President
- Hospital
- Religious













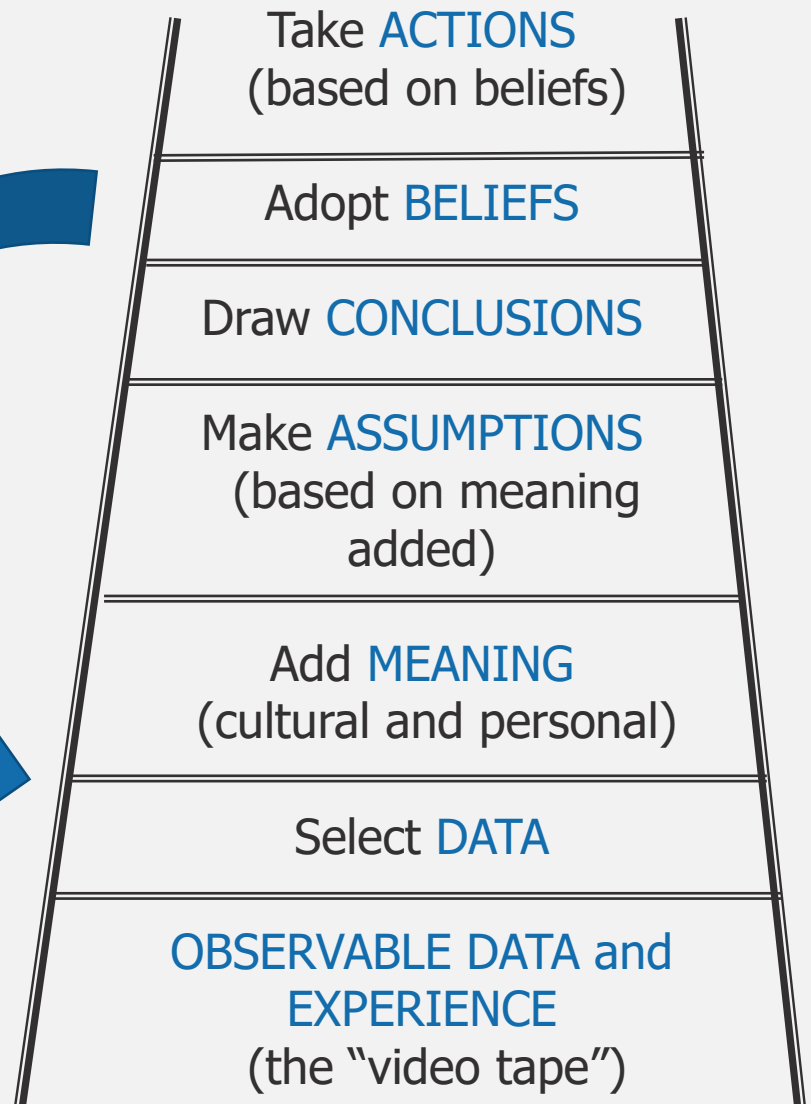


# Disussion

What is happening here?

# Ladder of Inference

The beliefs I adopt affect the data I select the next time. Seek contradictory data.



Source: Chris Argyris

# Data and Inference

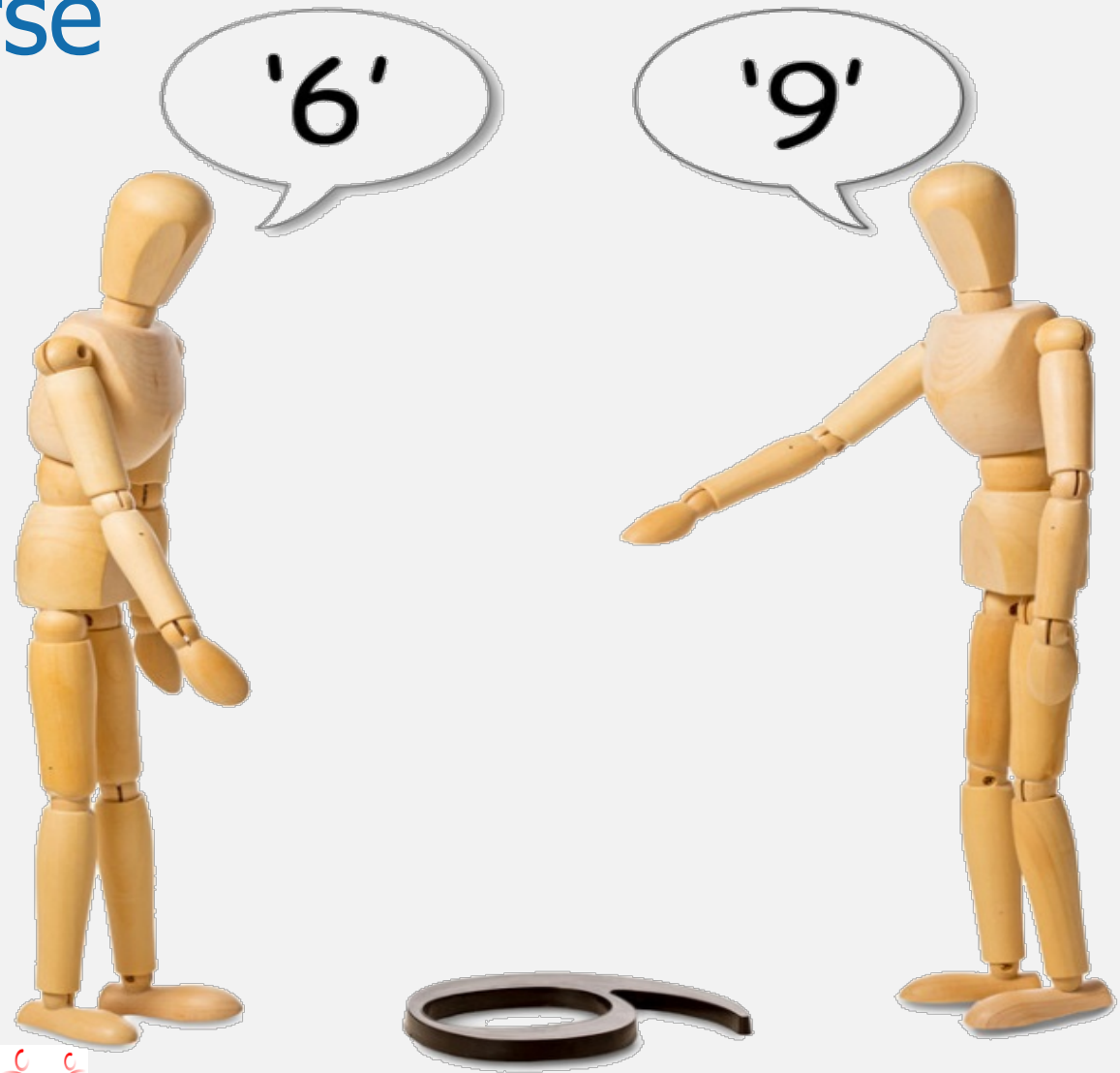
- We are assumption-making machines
- We need to make assessments and rely on our inference
- Knowing the difference
- Always testing our assumptions
- Making sure we don't jump the ladder

# Breakout

Brainstorm possibilities that might explain what is happening in the escalator video

- What might be just beyond your view?
- What might be invisible to your eyes?
- What does the world look like from the others point of view?

# The Reverse View



Date source: Adapted by Ellen Kagen, GUCCHD



# The Reverse View

- All human beings have a point of view and describe the world from that view.
- When we bring in the value of humility into focus, we recognize that our view of the world is incomplete. We only see the world through our own lenses (our mental models) which are limited.
- We need others to give us a fuller picture of the world, to provide additional data for a more complete and comprehensive perspective.
- To learn to see the view of others we can practice – “The Reverse View.”

# The Reverse View

## This Is the View,

- From the perspectives of others,
- That helps us see what is not evident or in plain sight; that makes the invisible visible,
- That emerges when we imagine what else could be happening in any given situation.

*We can access The Reverse View through inquiry by asking:*

- *What does the world look like from the others point of view?*
- *What could be happening that is just outside my capacity to see?*

# The Reverse View

- Once we access The Reverse View more data is brought into the picture. With this additional data our original tightly held judgements, assumptions, and inferences are challenged.
- When we hold our judgements lightly instead of tightly, we create more possibilities for positive outcomes and a more collaborative, diverse set of options emerge.
- When we can see the perspectives of others, we increase our capacity to address our adaptive challenges.



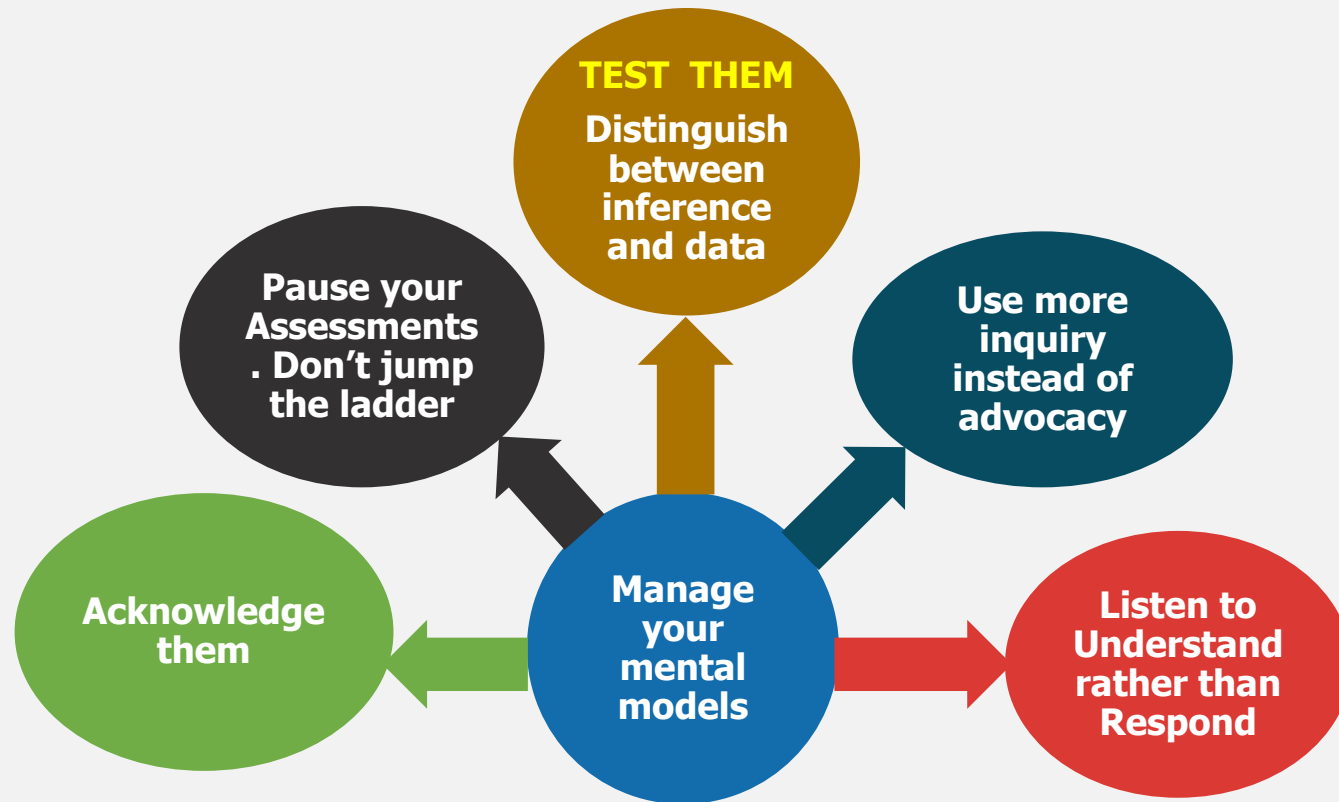
# Breakout and Discussion

- Identify the **mental models/assumptions** in your challenges? (about individuals, about your teams, about your partners, about your structure, about your financing models, about the ecosystem)
- What mental models might you want to call into question and may need “**a reset**” to support the challenges you are facing?
- How can the Reverse View support you? Whose perspective might we need to understand more deeply?

# What can we do to Manage our Mental Models?

# Managing Mental Models

- Acknowledge them!
- Intentionally pause our assumptions— when it blocks or interferes with our ability to think clearly about any particular issue
- Don't jump the ladder!
- Mental Models must be tested and evaluated – distinguish inference from data
- Use the Reverse View
- Make sure you are present, listening and asking powerful questions
- Increase use of Dialogue and Facilitation
- Less Talking More Listening. WAIT – Why am I talking?
- What do I need to learn?



YOUR PLAN



