Leaning into Not Knowing

Preventing Panic & Practicing Presence

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Disclosure Statement

- Tahirih McAleer and Debbie Bunka
  - We have received in-kind support from RxFiles to prepare for today's workshop.
  - We have no other relevant financial/nonfinancial relationships to disclose.


How did we decide on this workshop theme?
I don't know...
easy

During this workshop, participants will…

- Cultivate self-awareness when faced with a question/ situation for which they do not know the answer/best way to respond
- Reflect on which cognitive biases affect their reflex response or "default mode"
- Practice techniques and language to grow further as a poised and present academic detailer
- Explore potential benefits of minimizing "*I don't know, I'll get back to you*" types of responses during detailing encounters

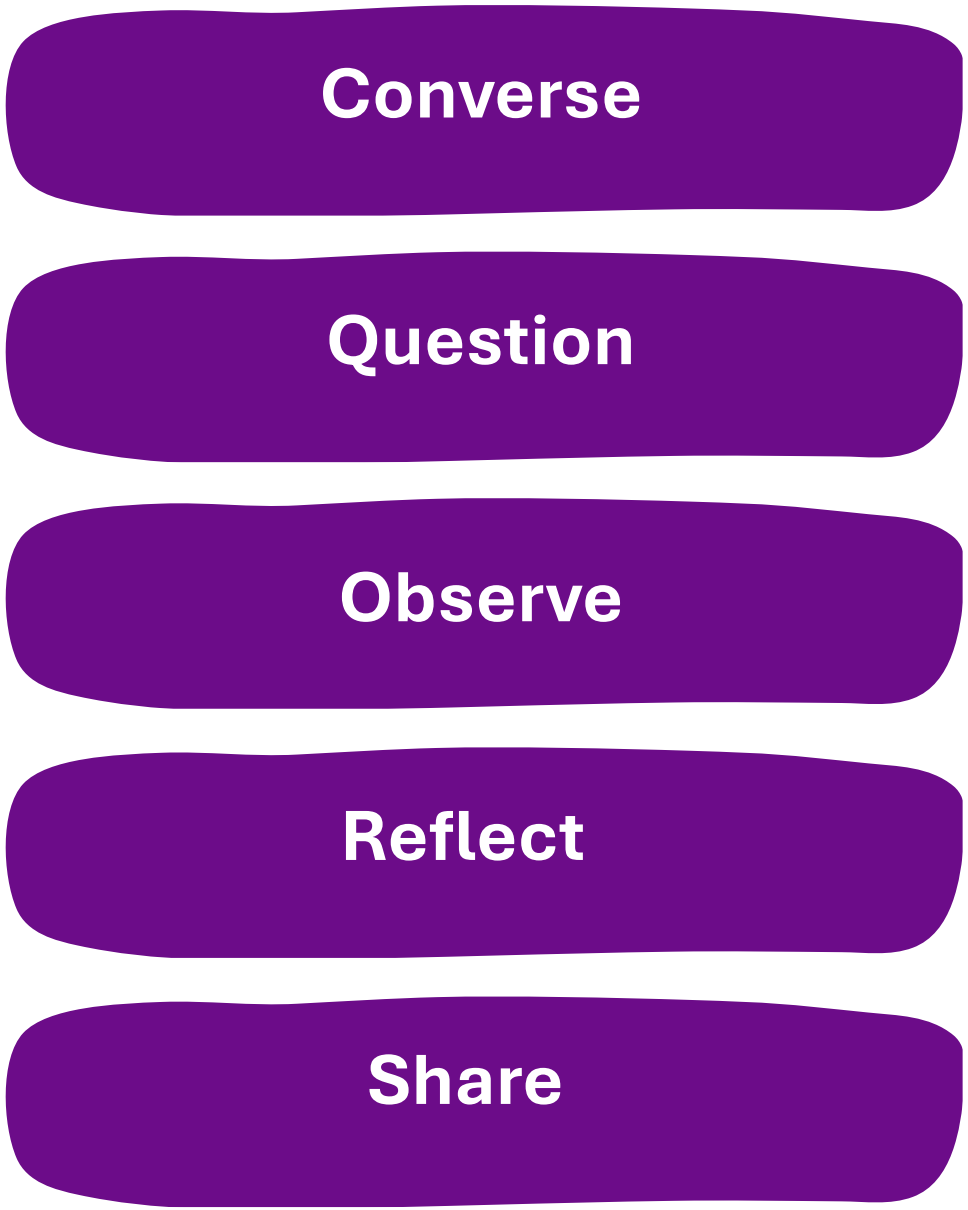
When we need the group's attention, we are going to **raise our hands**.

When you see someone else in the room with their hand up, please raise your hand as well … and stop talking.

Group Accountability Signal

Partner Activity #1: Introduction

- Mock scenario
- You are not expected to know the 'correct' answer
- Gather baseline information
- Encourage personal reflection



Description of **Partner Activity**

- Raise your **pink** envelope.
- Raise your **green** envelope.
- Find a partner! Every **pink** envelope find yourself a **green** envelope partner and vice versa.
- Grab your worksheet/pen or pencil & space yourselves out around the room.

Description of **Partner Activity**

- Familiarize yourselves with what is on the worksheet.
- When we say to begin, open your envelope and begin reading to yourself what information was provided to you.
- There will be ~ 90 seconds of silence as you read through your sheet and have some time to prepare yourself for your partner work.
- We will announce the official GO! and this is when the room will come alive with chatter.
- You and your partner will have ~ 3 minutes to converse.
- We will provide a 1 min, and a 30 second warning to wrap up your conversation.
- Once the time is up --> hands up (**group accountability signal**)

Description of **Partner Activity**

- When all is quiet, you will have 5 minutes to self-reflect and/or debrief with your partner.
- Use the worksheet to jot down your ideas and observations.
- Open up to group discussion.

Once the time is up --> hands up (**group accountability signal**)


Converse
Question
Observe

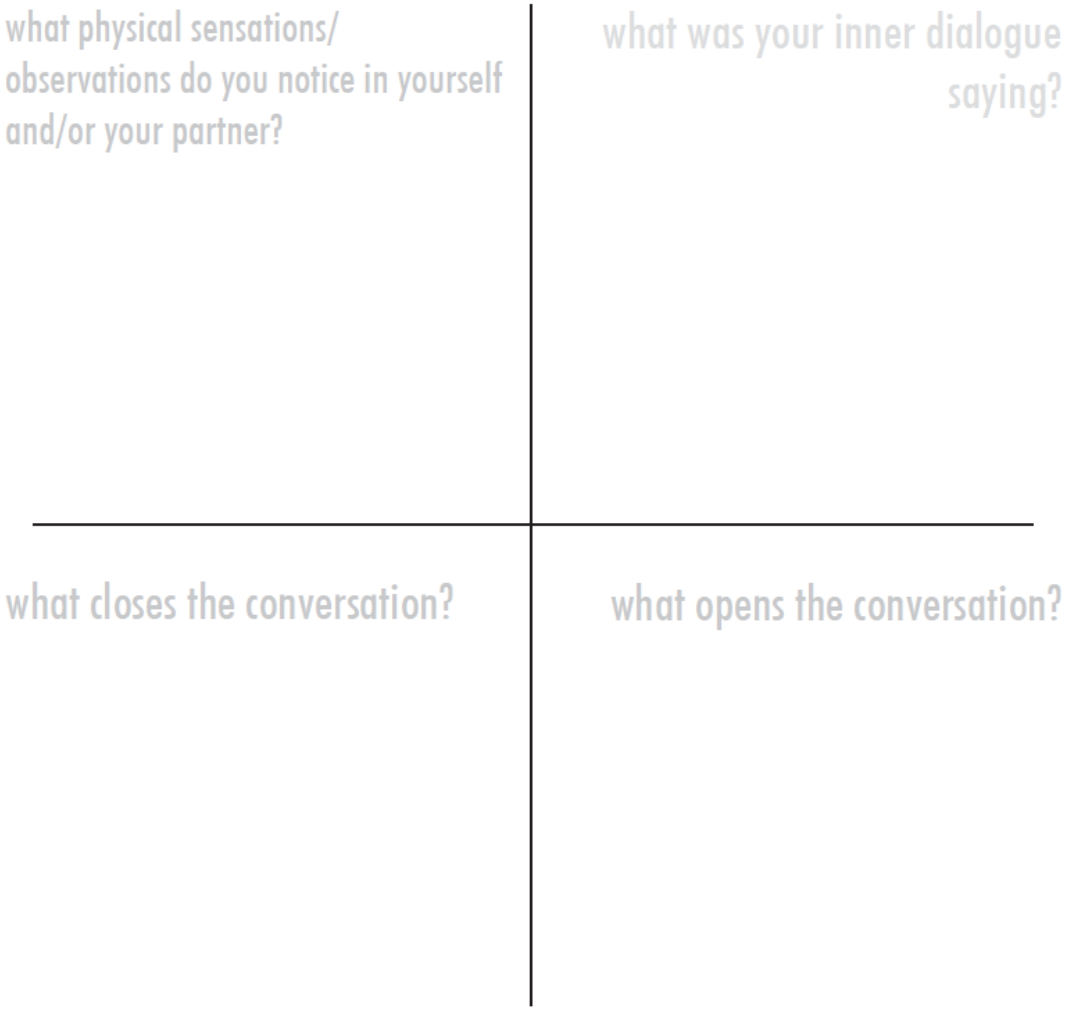
5 Minute Reflection

- Take 5 minutes to discuss and/or self-reflect.

- Write down some thoughts on your worksheet.
  - Bring awareness to your own sensations/thoughts/reactions.
  - What can you recall from the conversation that made it feel more open? Anything close it off?

Leaning into Not Knowing:
Preventing Panic & Practicing Presence

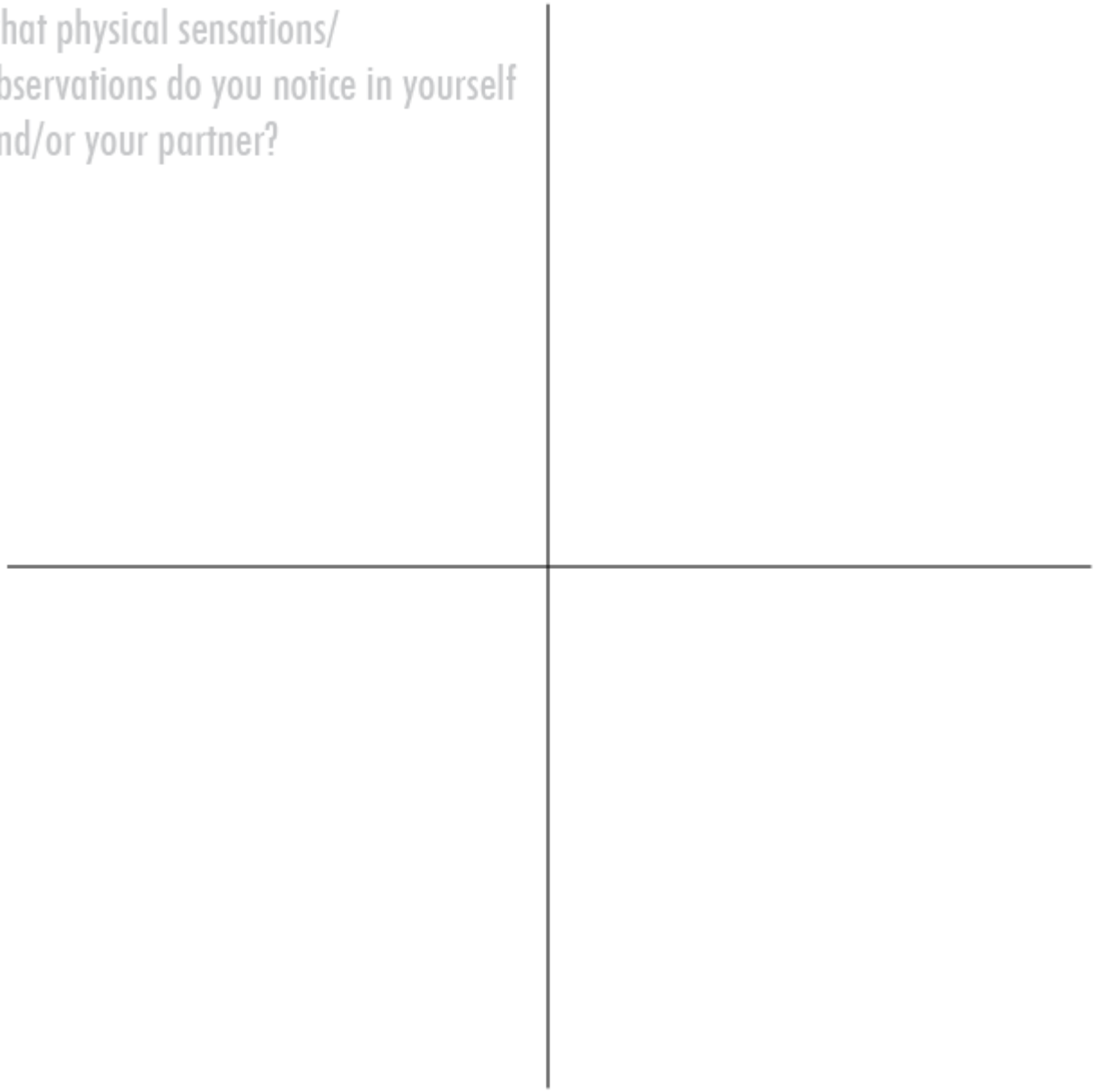
PARTNER ACTIVITY #1



Share

- **Green** envelopes

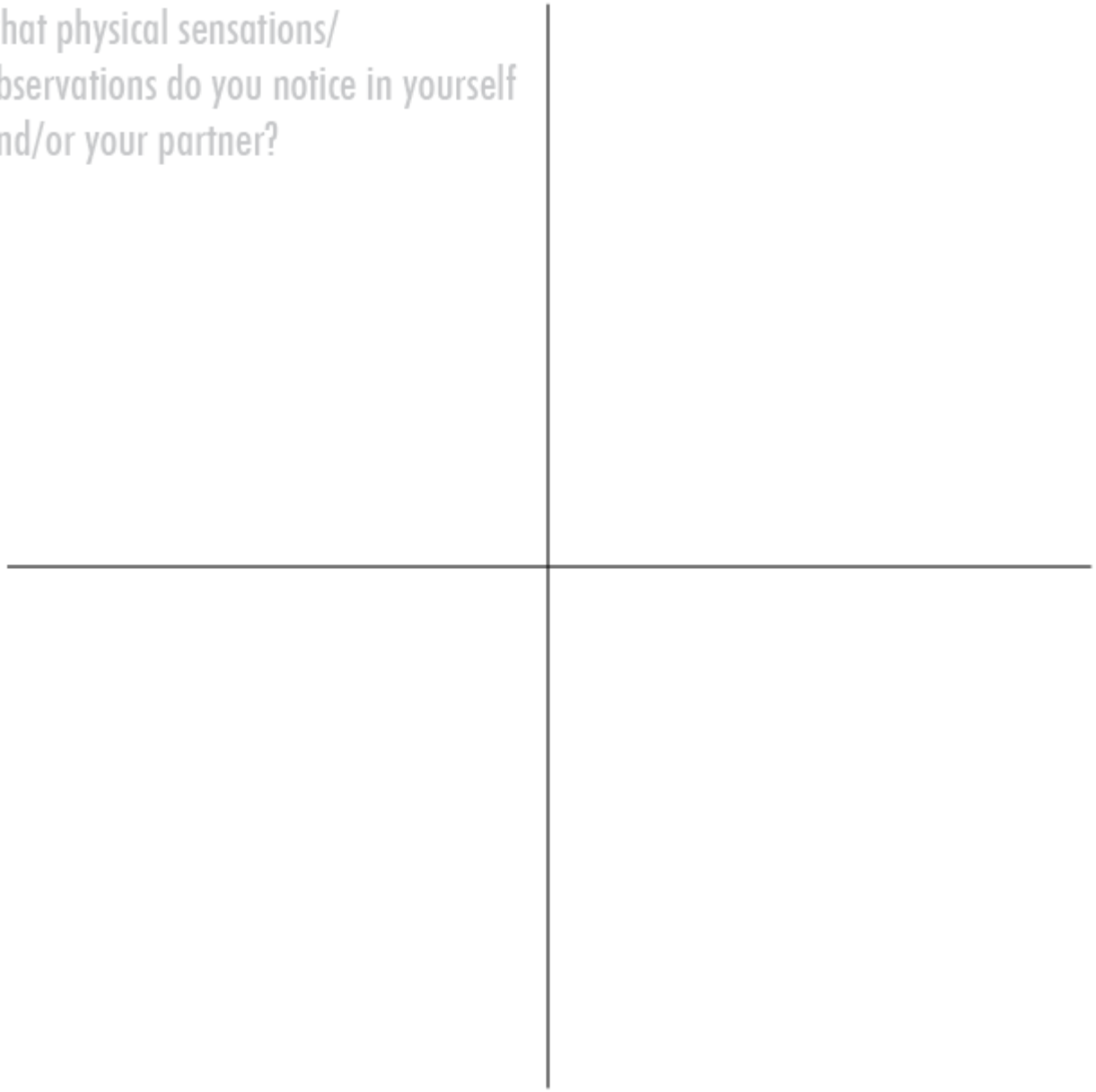
what physical sensations/
observations do you notice in yourself
and/or your partner?



Share

- **Pink** envelopes

what physical sensations/
observations do you notice in yourself
and/or your partner?



What's the Big Deal?

- IT'S STILL OKAY TO SAY I DON'T KNOW!

- Closes conversations
  - We want to take "I don't know" and turn it into a conversation opener
  - We want to build relationship

- May create unnecessary work
  - Discourages clarification
  - More research required
  - Author pressure

- Practitioner questions may be their conversation openers

THEMES & IDEAS

- *Presence*
- *The Imposter Syndrome (Experience)*

What does it mean to be "*present*" in academic detailing work?

- Presence is about how we show up.
  - how we approach the people we hope to connect with and influence.
- Presence is the medium through which trust develops and ideas travel.
- Listening is crucial to presence.
- Presence begets presence.
- It is a practice; the more you practice being present, the more likely it is to become forefront of mind.

Ideas from Amy Cuddy's book entitled *Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges*. 2015.

How does the "*imposter syndrome*" show up for us in academic detailing work?

- It is more than stage fright or performance anxiety; it's the deep (and sometimes paralyzing) belief that at some point we will be exposed!
- Causes us to overthink and second-guess.
- We worry that we are underprepared.
- It steals our presence.
- An internal experience of intellectual phoniness.

Ideas from Amy Cuddy's book entitled *Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges*. 2015.


I have imposter syndrome right meow!

Imposter Syndrome: Potential Benefits

MOTIVATION

PERSPECTIVE

BETTER LEARNER

Ideas from Adam Grant's book entitled *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*. 2022.

“Great thinkers don’t harbor doubts because they’re impostors. They maintain doubts because they know we’re all partially blind and they’re committed to improving their sight. They don’t boast about how much they know; **they marvel at how little they understand**. They’re aware that each answer raises new questions, and the quest for knowledge is never finished. A mark of lifelong learners is recognizing that they **can learn something from everyone they meet**.”

- Adam Grant, *Think Again*

Feeling like
a failure...

detailing on heart failure.

Advice from a mentor… excerpts from an email

- Be authentic, up-front about your experience & preparation
- Don't downplay what you have to offer
  - Deep dive into the evidence
  - Worked closely with those who have experience
  - Combed through available guidelines
  - Wrestled in areas where information/evidence is uncertain or evolving

-L. Regier (personal communication, 2020)

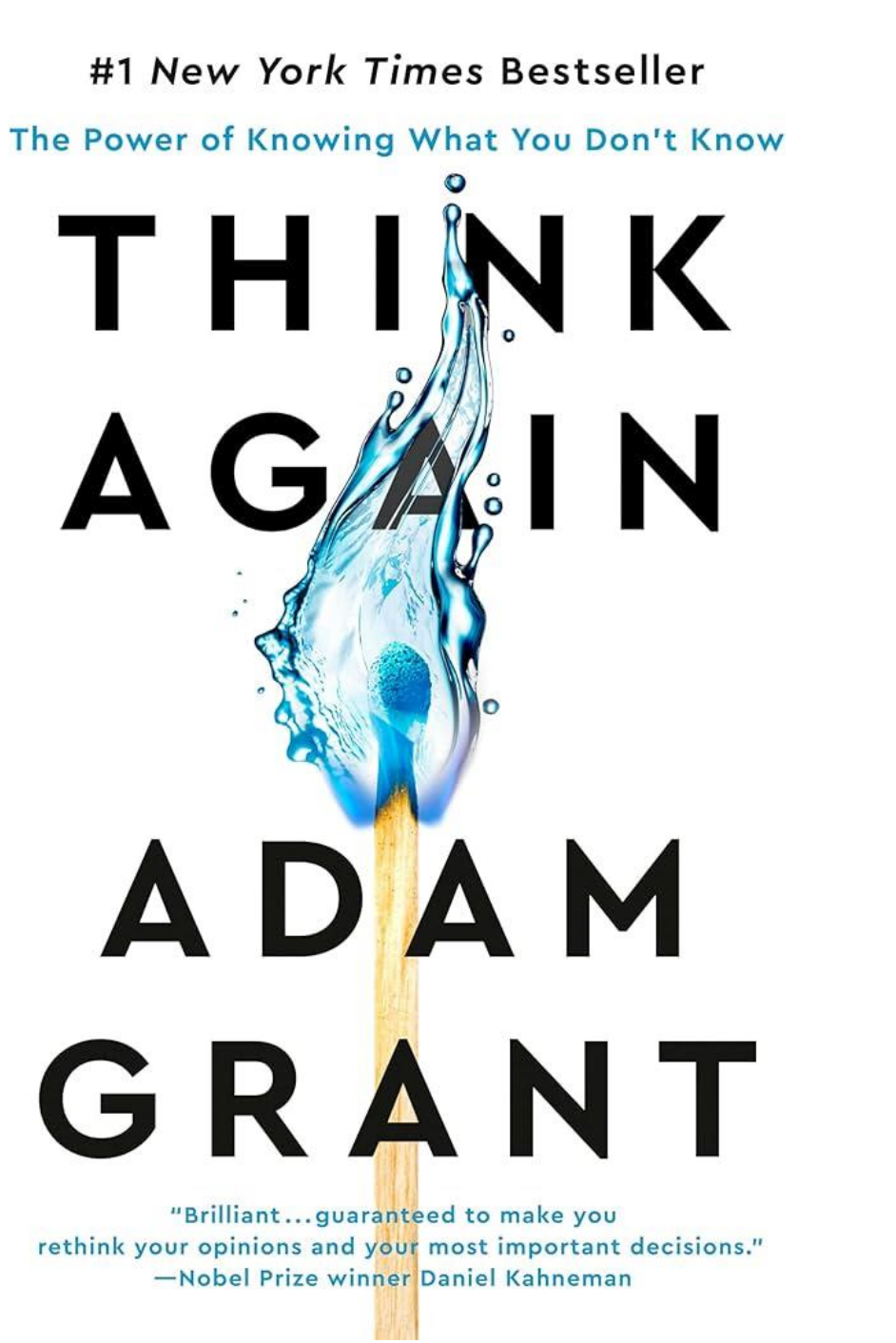
Advice from a mentor… excerpts from an email

- Don't overplay what you have to offer
  - Respect for where the clinician can see this applied to their clinical context or not
  - Be aware of our limitations
  - It is OK to be a learner and help problem solve as issues come up

"Some of the day-to-day management side, I have no experience with; however, there are those on the development team and review team who have extensive experience, and they have shared many practical tips that I am prepared to pass on to you."

-L. Regier (personal communication, 2020)

Inspired by...


#1 New York Times Bestseller
The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know
THINK AGAIN
ADAM GRANT
"Brilliant...guaranteed to make you rethink your opinions and your most important decisions."
—Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman

PROSECUTOR

- Criticize flaws
- Argumentative
- Build cases
- Question motives
- Find weak points

You're wrong!

POLITICIAN

- Seek favor and approval
- Gain support
- Use rhetoric to influence

We're right, they're wrong!

PREACHER

- Defend beliefs
- Seek conversion
- Appeal to authority
- Preach own ideas only

I'm right!

SCIENTIST

- Seek truth
- Update beliefs with new evidence
- Aware of limits
- Run experiments

I might be wrong!

BONUS: FREEZER

- Succumb to panic
- Blurts, "*I don't know!*"

Ideas from Adam Grant's book entitled *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*. 2022.

Cognitive Biases

- **Anchoring Bias:** Comparing new information to the first information received
- **Framing Effect:** Decisions depend on how information is presented
- **Bandwagon Effect:** Supporting opinions as they become more popular
- **Dunning-Kruger:** Overestimation of our own abilities or knowledge
- **Belief Perseverance:** Maintaining beliefs even with contradicting information
- **Confirmation Bias:** Favoring our own beliefs
- **Functional Fixedness:** Trouble thinking outside the box
- **Messenger Effect:** Finding some sources more credible than others
- **Authority Bias:** Trusting those of higher authority, without question

Hey, Jon!
How can I respond to stressful scenarios?

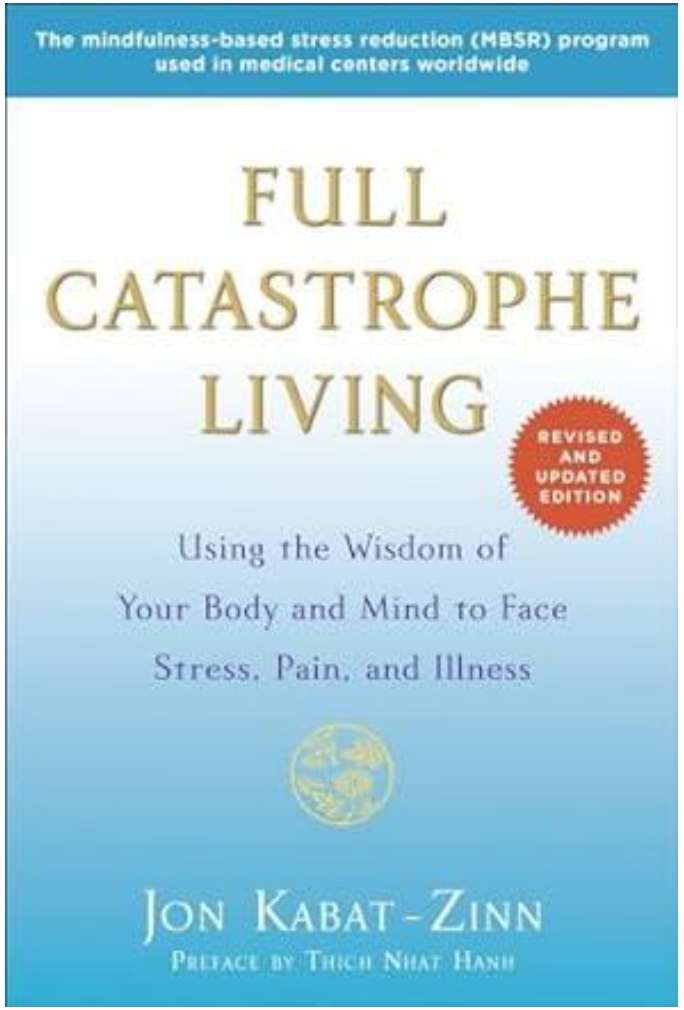
https://jonkabat-zinn.com/about/

Practicing Responding to Questions (Stress)

- Responding VS reacting

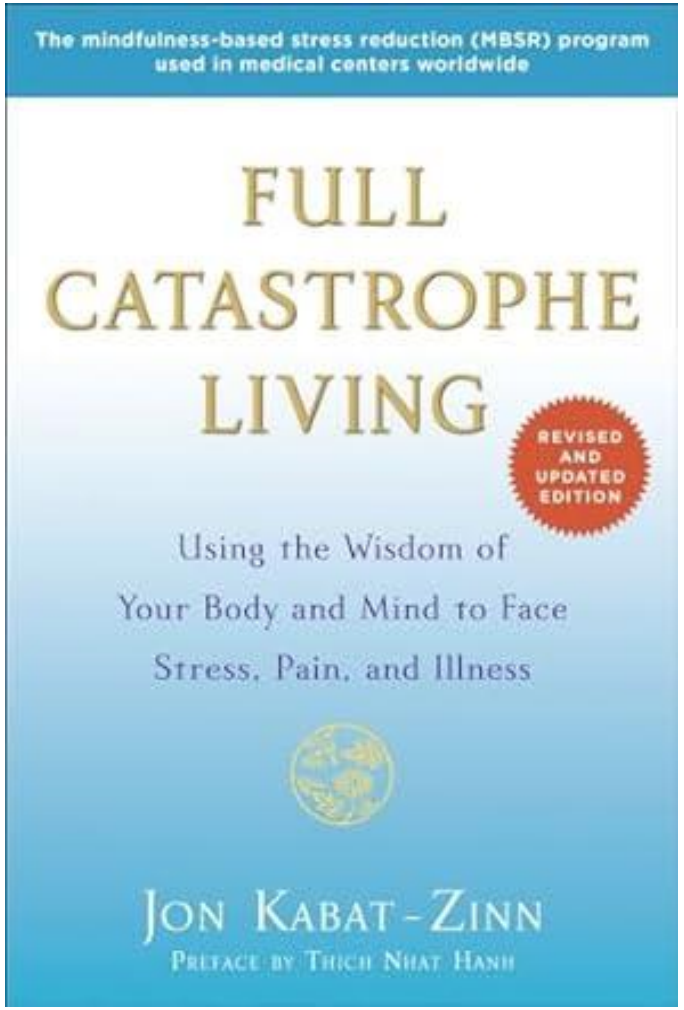
- Mindfulness creates space so you can engage and influence the flow of events when you are most likely to react automatically

- Awareness reduces our automatic responses and/or helps recover from them more quickly



Practice Pause and Presence

- Create space to choose your response.
- Pauses create buffers to reactions. Buffers give opportunities for more nuanced responses.
- This takes practice.
- Presence may be simple, but it's not easy.

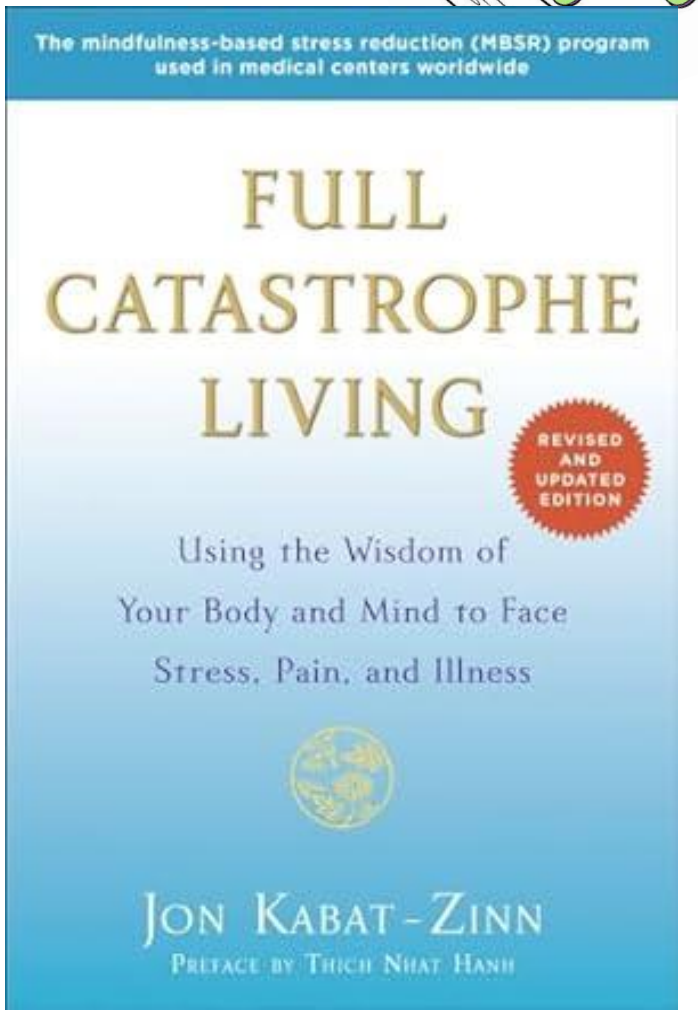


Mindfulness in Detailing… and Beyond

- Bring nonjudgemental awareness to…
  - Your breath
  - Your body
  - Sounds
  - Sights

- Replace stories with facts
  - ~~"I don't know the answer. This person is trying to undermine me."~~
    "That's an interesting question.“

- Use realistic expectations – this is a practice!



Bringing it all Together – Tangible Examples

- How can we bring presence to our detailing interactions?
- What are some key phrases that open conversations?

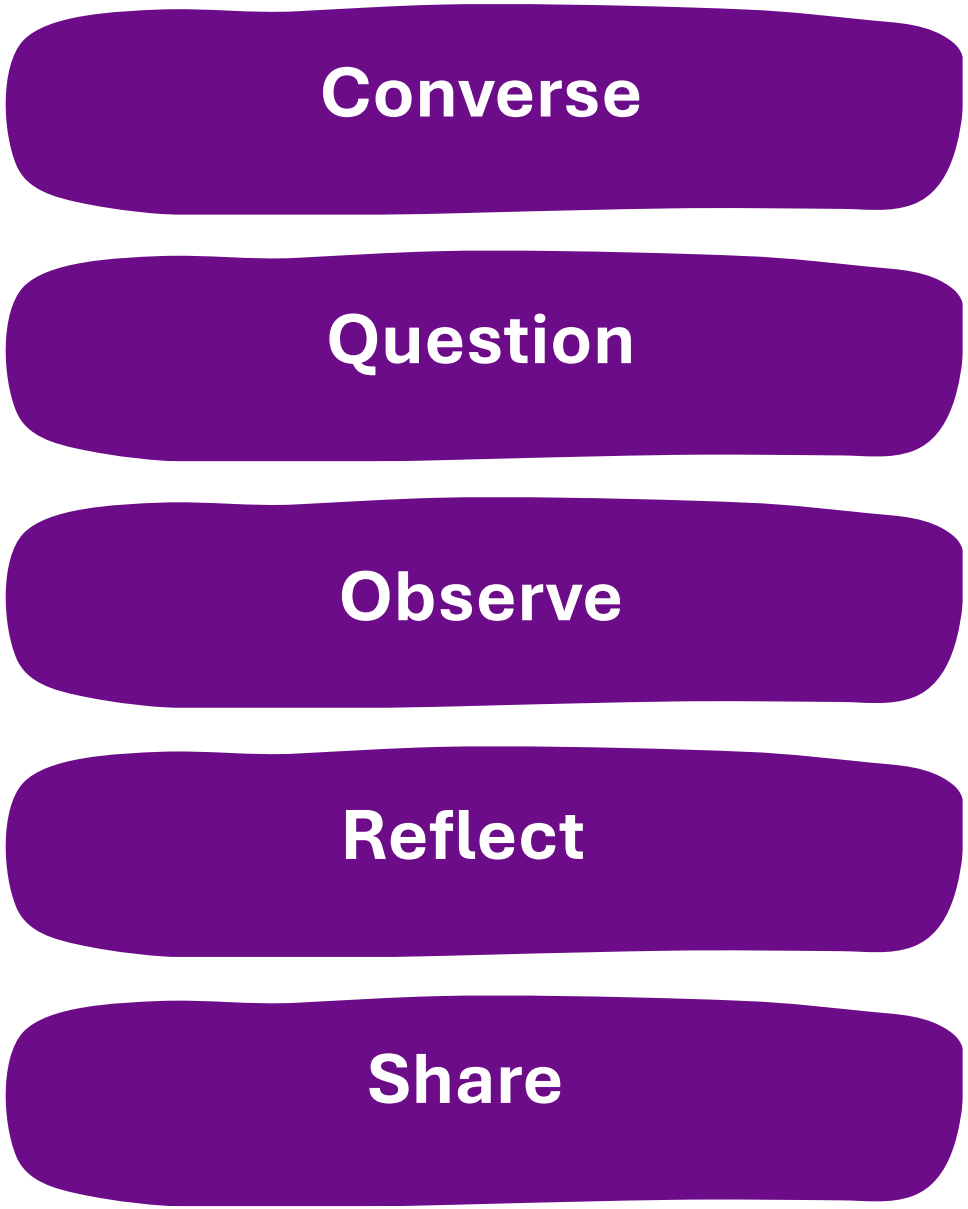
Small group discussion for 10 minutes

How can we bring presence to our detailing interactions?

What are some key phrases that open conversations?

Partner Activity #2: Introduction

- Another mock scenario
  - This time **green** will be asking the question and **pink** will be responding



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Question
Observe

Share

what physical sensations/ observations do you notice in yourself and/or your partner?

what was your inner dialogue saying?

what closes the conversation?

what opens the conversation?

The Ongoing Work…

- What's your "easy button" reaction?
- Use imposter syndrome to your advantage.
- Invite the scientist to the table and ask them to stay awhile.
- Academic detailing work is an important responsibility – remember, at any given moment during a visit, you can choose *to respond (vs react)*.
- Breathe, and create space.


Questions / Comments