

Your Truth May Not Be True.

Vantage Point

Our truths are often _____, but _____.

Self-Deception

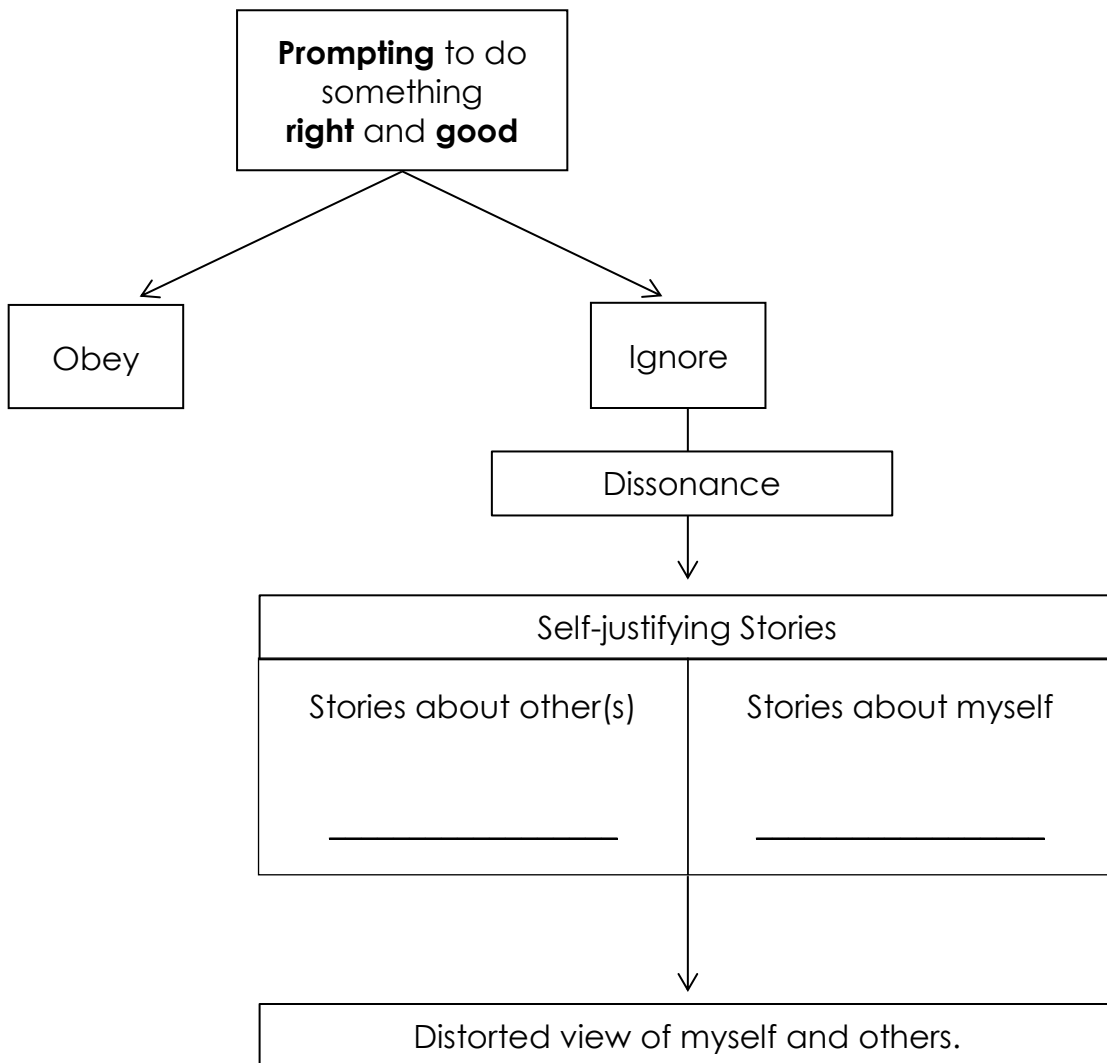


Table Discussion #1

Discuss

- Share a recent scenario in which you ignored a prompting or acted out of character.
- What role did self-deception play?

Self-Reflection points

Vantage Point

- Am I open to a different and more complete picture?

Self-deception

- How have I distorted the truth to justify my choice/position?
- How am I minimizing my contribution to the problem?
- What factors am I conveniently forgetting?
- Could there be a reasonable and rational reason the other is behaving in such a manner?

Automatic Responses (“the reptile brain”)

1. Characteristics of the neocortex and limbic systems

	Precision/Accuracy	Speed
Neocortex <i>(relational brain)</i>		
Limbic System <i>(Primitive brain-“the reptile”)</i>		

2. Signs of a “limbic hijack”

- Overly vigilant and paranoid
- Lack empathy or compassion
- Irrational
- Lacking awareness
- Incoming data is imperfect
- Overconfident

3. De-escalate: Get your neocortex back in the game.

Facts

Summarize the pressing issue *in a statement that all parties agree upon.*

"You arrived to our meeting after the scheduled start time."

"I interpreted your remark as sarcastic."

4. Reengage: Get REAL

- Proceed only after satisfactory de-escalation!
- Use your relational neocortex to reengage the situation.

Reassure

What do you desire relationally?

"I am committed to..."

"...close the gap that is currently between us."

"...get our working relationship back on track."

Emotion

What are you feeling?

"I feel..."

"...sad, afraid, etc..."

Assumption

What are your stories/fears?

"I tell myself..."

"...a story that my contribution is not important to you."

Longing

What do you hope for?

"I desire..."

"...that you be here at the agreed-upon start time for our meetings."

Table Discussion #2: Automatic Responses

Discuss

- On a scale of 1 (none) to 10 (tons), how much trouble do your automatic responses cause for you?
- What types of situations are most likely to trigger your “reptile brain”?

Reflection points

- Am I (becoming) **triggered**?
- What is a **fact** that could explain this situation?
- Relationally speaking, what do I really want?
- Are my emotions related to the current situation or are they partly an overflow of past emotional memory?

Invite God into the tension

- We have a responsibility to be peace makers and to guard unity.
If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. —Romans 12:18
- *It takes more than willpower. We need God's intervention.*
"It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does." —Romans 7:23–25 (MSG)

Be proactive when you notice your emotions escalating.

- Recognize the internal alert: Your relational thinking is being hijacked!
- Ask God's help to self-regulate and avoid relational damage.
*"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, he who **rules his [own] spirit** than he who takes a city." —Proverbs 16:32 (NKJV)*
- Until you are de-escalated, this is NOT the time for dialogue.
"Set a guard, O Lord, before my mouth; keep watch at the door of my lips." —Psalm 141:3 (NKJV)

Take time to reflect

Invite God to help you....

- Tell yourself the **R.E.A.L. truth** (what really happened).
- Explore why the situation triggered you.
Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. —Psalm 51: 6 (NKJV)
- Seek God's perspective and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. —John 16:13
- Make the first move towards reassurance and relational repair.

A Prayer Liturgy

A plea for God's intervention in times of conflict

I humble my heart before You; don't let my pride deceive me.
Grant me courage to look beyond the limits of my understanding and my distorted views.
Soften my heart to receive Your truth. Save me from the snare of shame and condemnation;
I wait expectantly for Your conviction. Bring safety and care to my troubled soul.
Give me Your trustworthy eyes to see, and Your trustworthy ears to hear.

Guide me in Your redemptive ways and shape Your character in me.
Anchor me in Your truth and give me a repentant and forgiving heart.
Preserve relationships from ruin and safeguard unity from fracture.
In Your tenderness, bind wounds and bridge divides.

When light breaks through and peace is made, I will praise You!
Be it sunrise or sunset, I invite Your truth to prevail.

For further consideration

Not sure how to proceed?

Before you enter a difficult conversation:

- Be open to the fact that your truth may not be true.
- Ask God to help you see as He sees.

Check in with yourself:

- Could there be more to this story (curiosity vs. anger/hurt)?
- Have I ignored a prompting to do what is right and good?
- Are my "truths" accurate but incomplete?
- Am I omitting an important vantage point?
- Am I "accusing" (failing to see how the other's actions could be reasonable)?
- Am I "excusing" (failing to see my culpability and contribution)?
- Am I triggered (responding automatically, with overconfidence or antisocial words/actions)?
- Have I focused on the *facts* so that my relational neocortex is back in the game?
- Do I understand why this situation is causing such distress in me?

Be Proactive

Discuss, agree upon, and adopt some shared language between you and your friends, spouse, family, and teammates.

"I'm feeling **triggered**."

"Can I share with you another possible **vantage point**?"

"It seems we are **escalating** a bit. Can we remind ourselves of the **facts**?"

"I wonder if our **reptile brains** are starting to drive?"

"Let's take a **time out** and reflect."

Resources

- *Leadership and Self-Deception*: Arbinger Institute
- *Anatomy of Peace*: Arbinger Institute
- *Mistakes Were Made (but not by me)*: Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson
- *The Emotional Brain*: Joseph LeDoux