



**Where Two or Three are Gathered,
there is Jesus. And conflict!**

Betty Pries

Credence and Co.

www.credenceandco.com

Faith in Canada

2001: 77.1% Christian; 16.5% No Religion; 6.4% Other

2011: 67.3% Christian; 23.9% No Religion; 8.8% Other

2021: 53.3% Christian;* 34.6% No Religion; 12.1% Other

- *37% of those between 25 & 34 identify as Christian
- *12% attend church 1/month or more

Globe and Mail, Thursday October 27, 2022, pA11
Source: Statistics Canada

Being Christian in 2024

- Often, a source of shame, something to hide
- Loss of confidence in what we think we know about what we think we believe
- Loss of trust in text & institution





Going to Church in 2024

Deep Longing: Meaning, Purpose,
Belonging, Inner Peace & Center

Struggles over Differences: social
norms, politics, what we believe about the
Bible, how we experience meaning, how
we express our longings for God

21st C & 16th C Europe: A Comparison

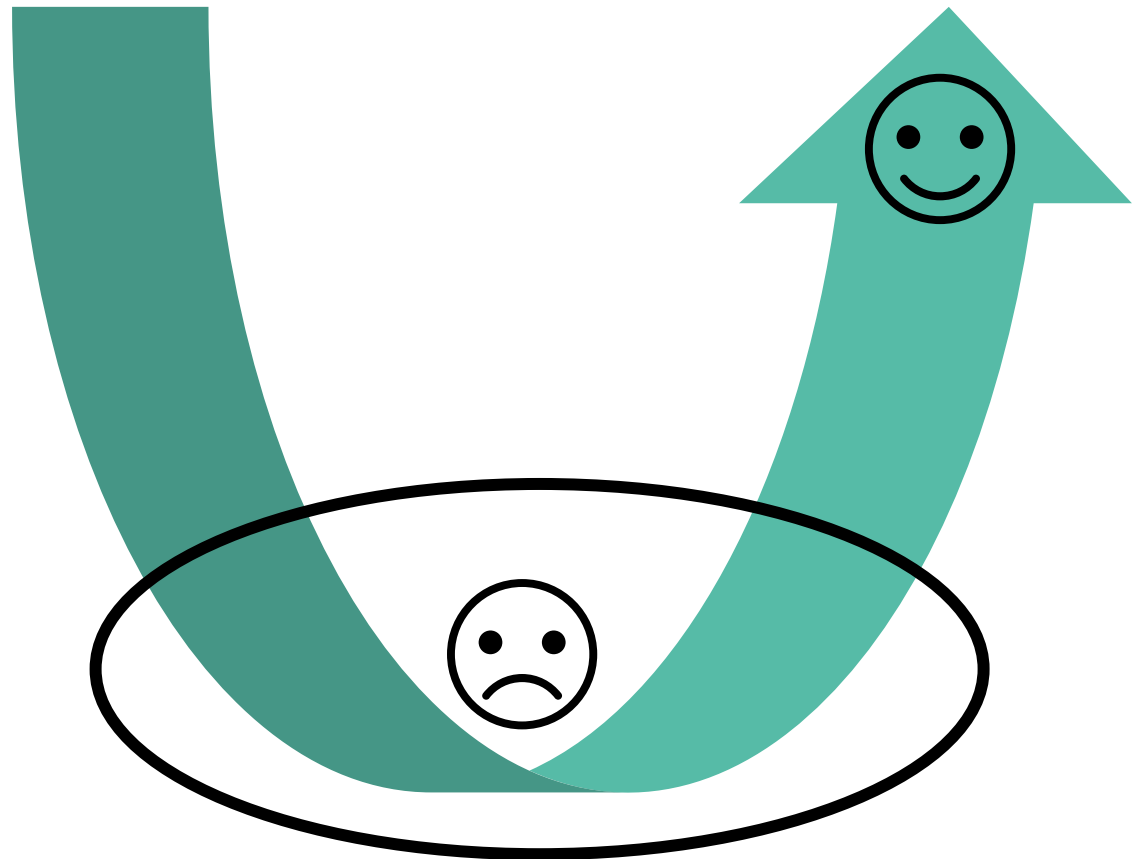
TODAY	REFORMATION
New Media (Social Media)	New Media (Printing Press)
Globalization	Encounter: Europe & Americas
Changing Social Norms	Changing Social Norms
People leaving the church	People leaving the church
Polarized public discourse	Polarized public discourse

We are in the same position today as the RC Church 500 years ago. What can we learn from their experience?

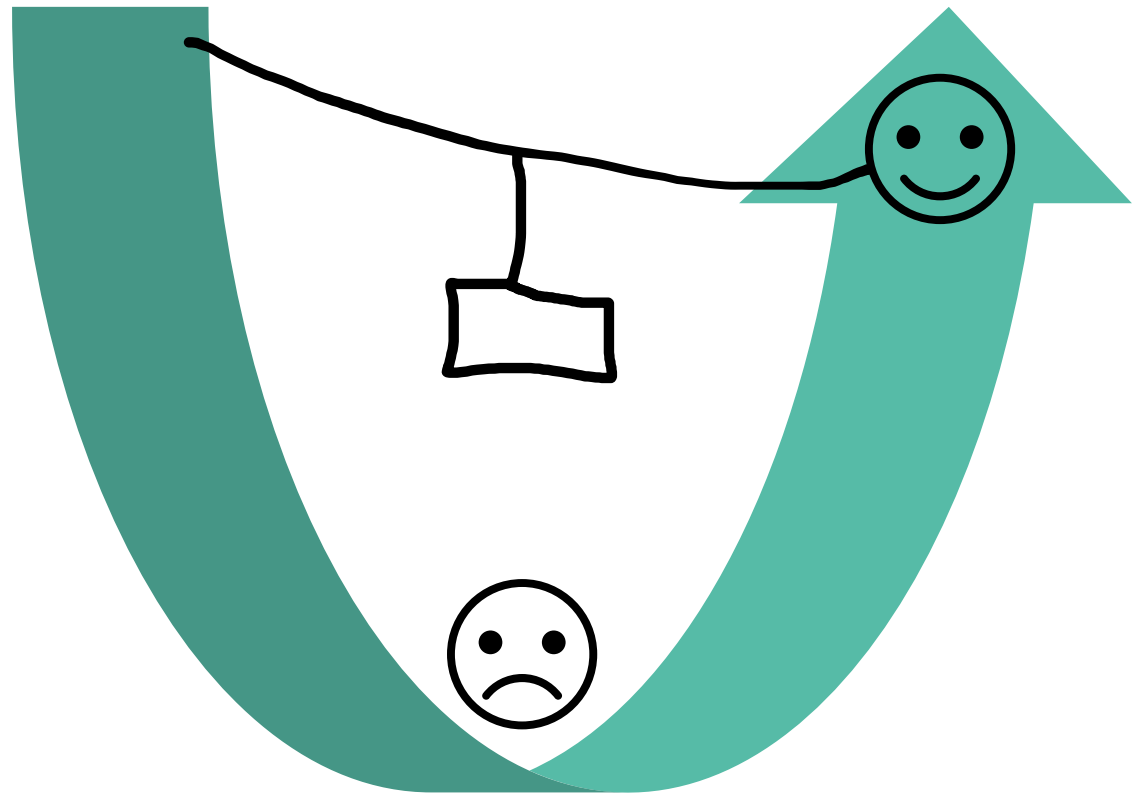
The Change Curve



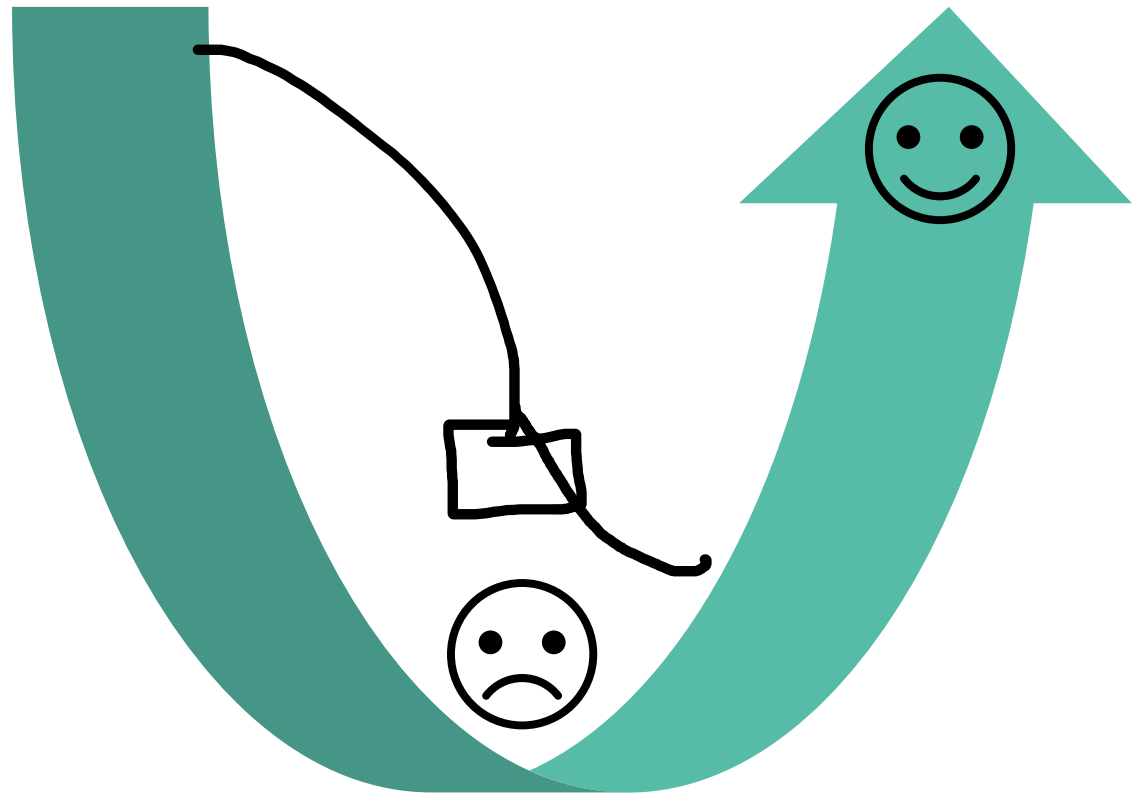
The Change Curve



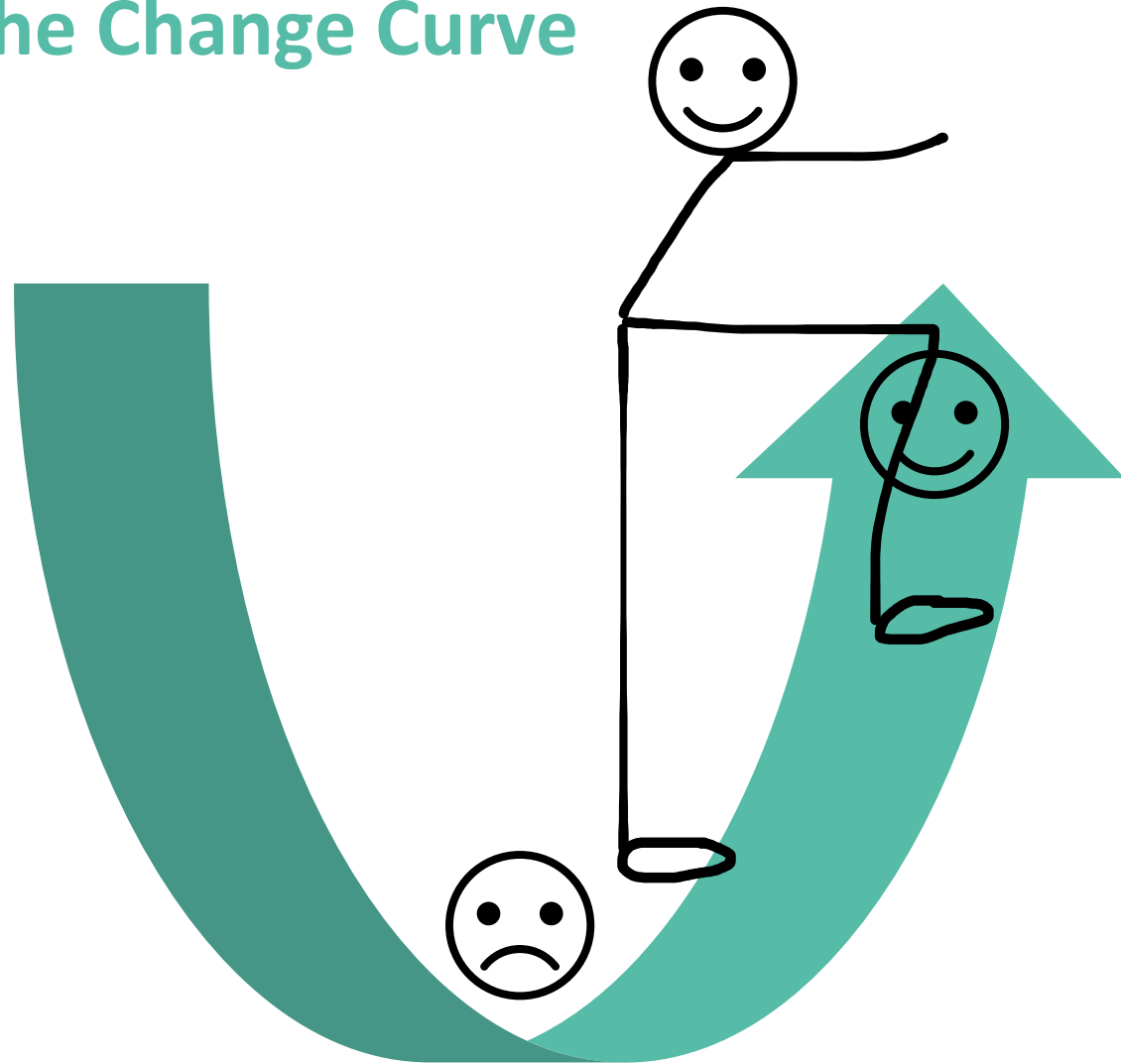
The Change Curve



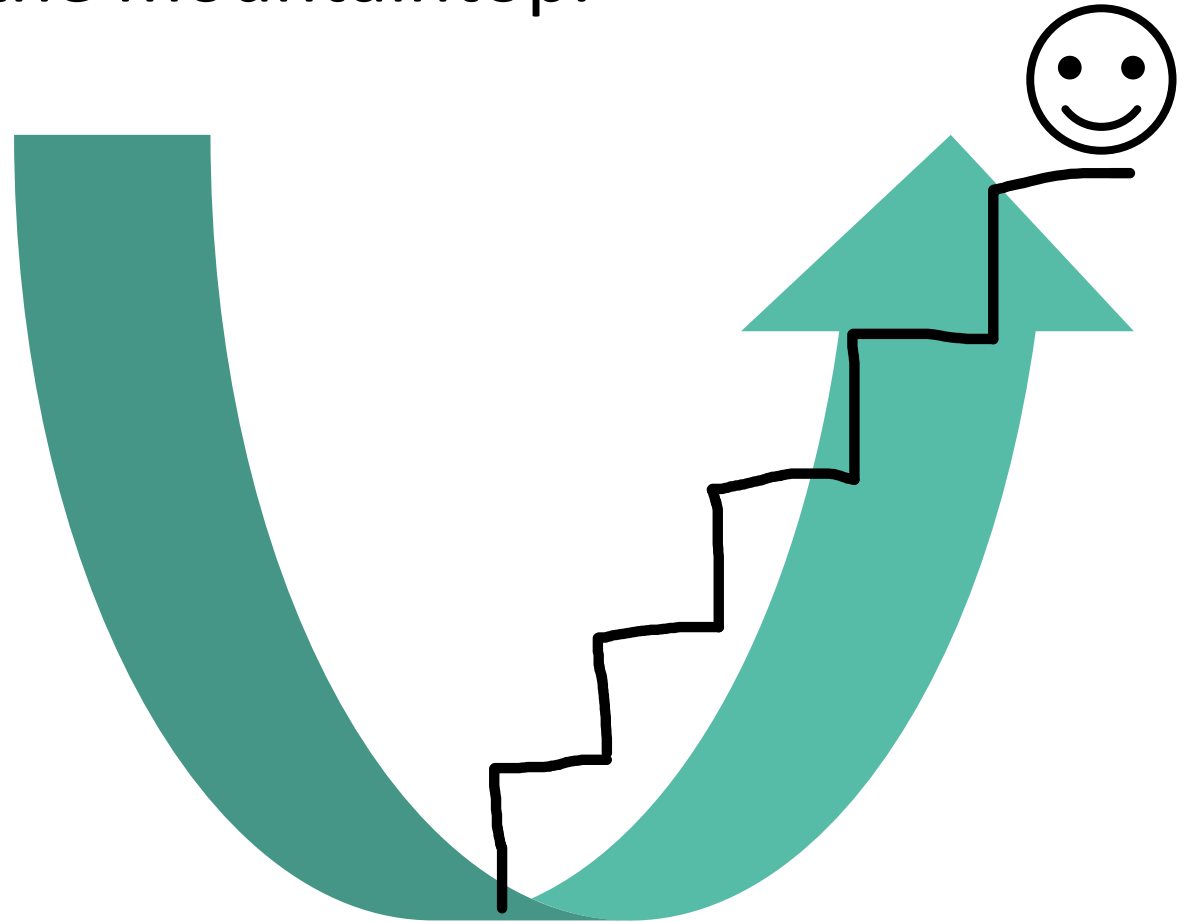
The Change Curve



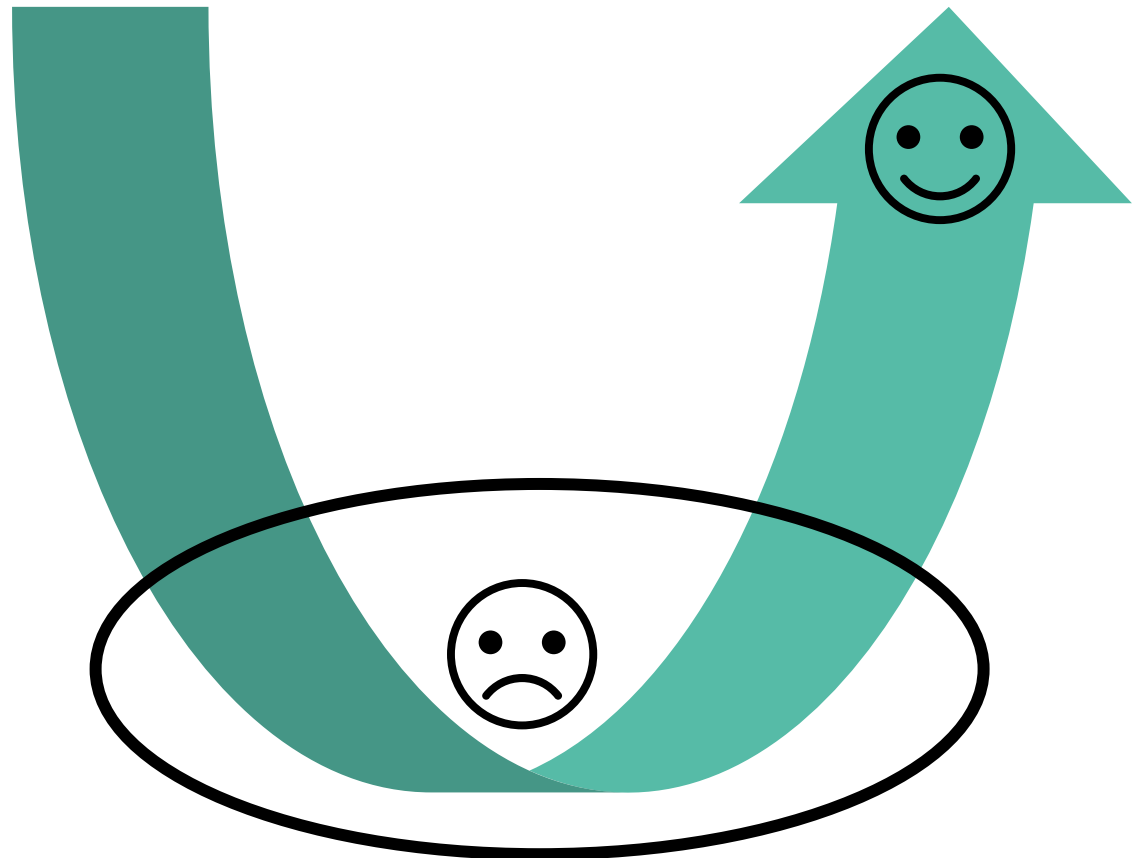
The Change Curve



We are longing for a pathway to the mountaintop.



Hard News: We can't rush the bottom of the curve.



Good News: The bottom of the curve
is transformational.

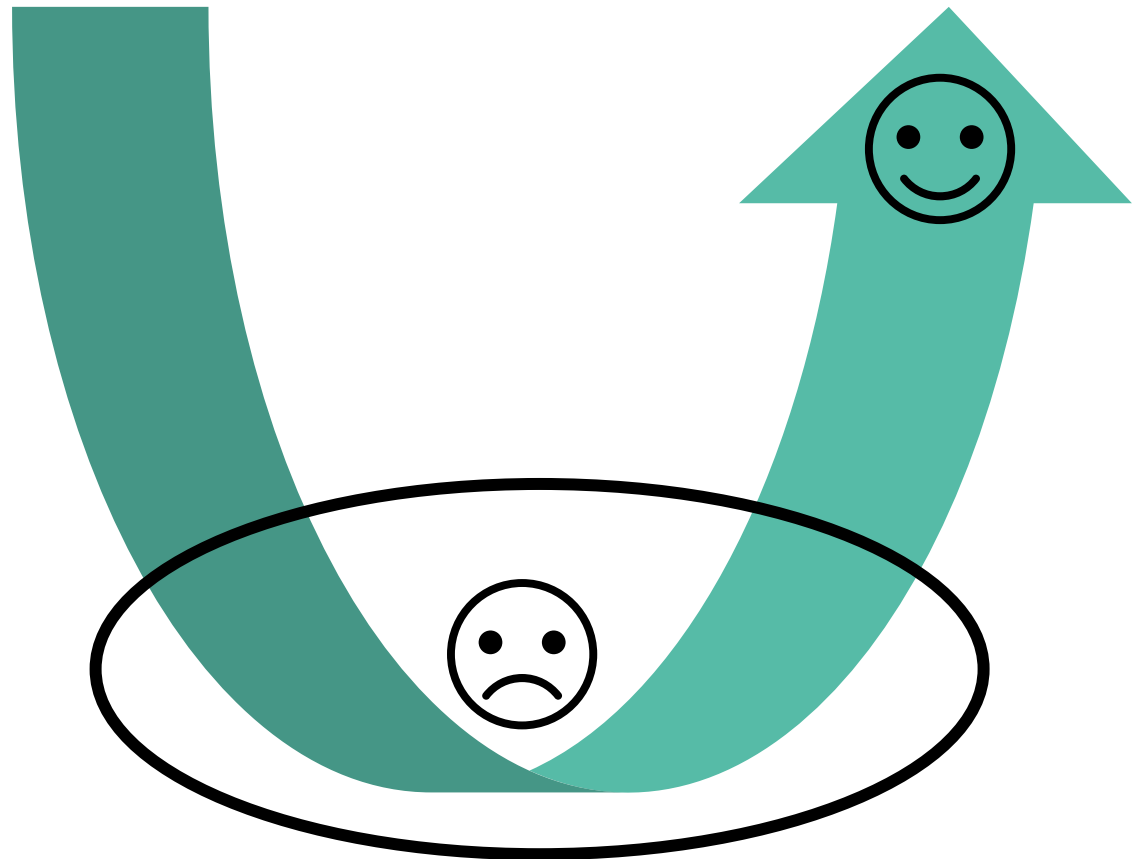


“In life we look for mountaintop experiences, but the fertilizer is in the valleys.”

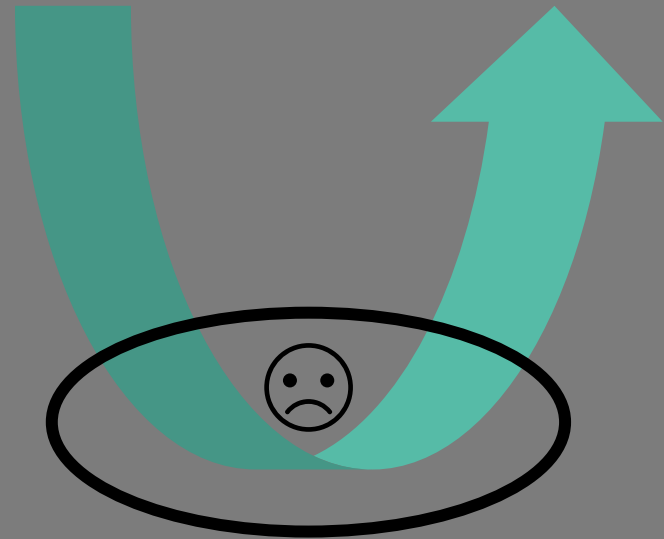
Anganeta Pries



We are living in valley time; a wilderness season.



Bad News: In the valley we tend toward conflict & polarization.



Conflict in the Context of Change



Conflict Continuum

Artificial
Harmony

Mean-Spirited
Personal
Attacks



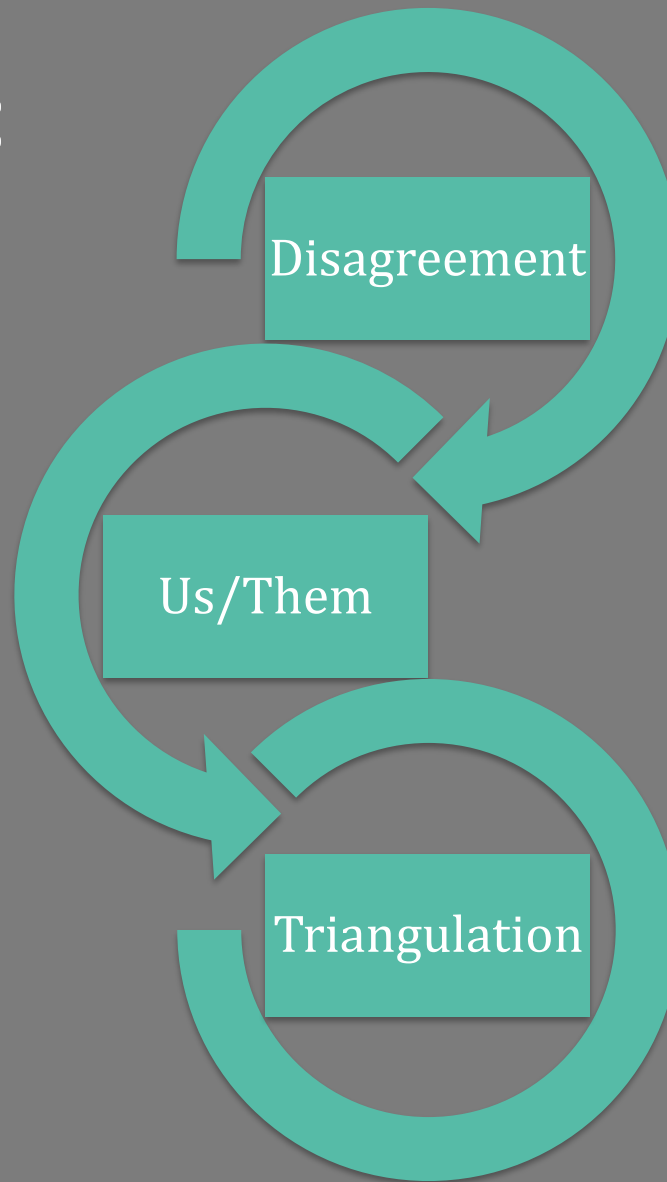


Artificial
Harmony

**Healthy
Disagreement**



Mean-Spirited
Personal
Attacks

From Disagreement into Conflict





The Plague of Otherizing



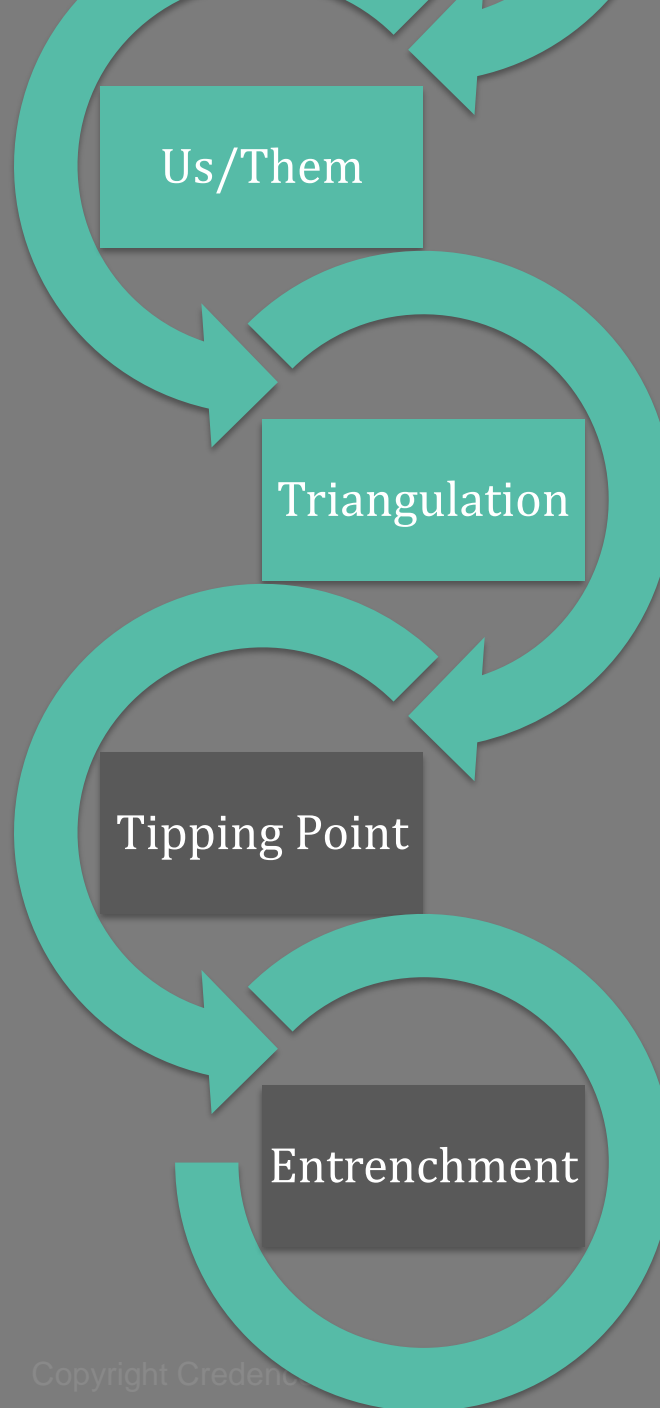
		
Us	Reflects our character	Forced into it
Them	Forced into it	Reflects their character

The Plague of Otherizing

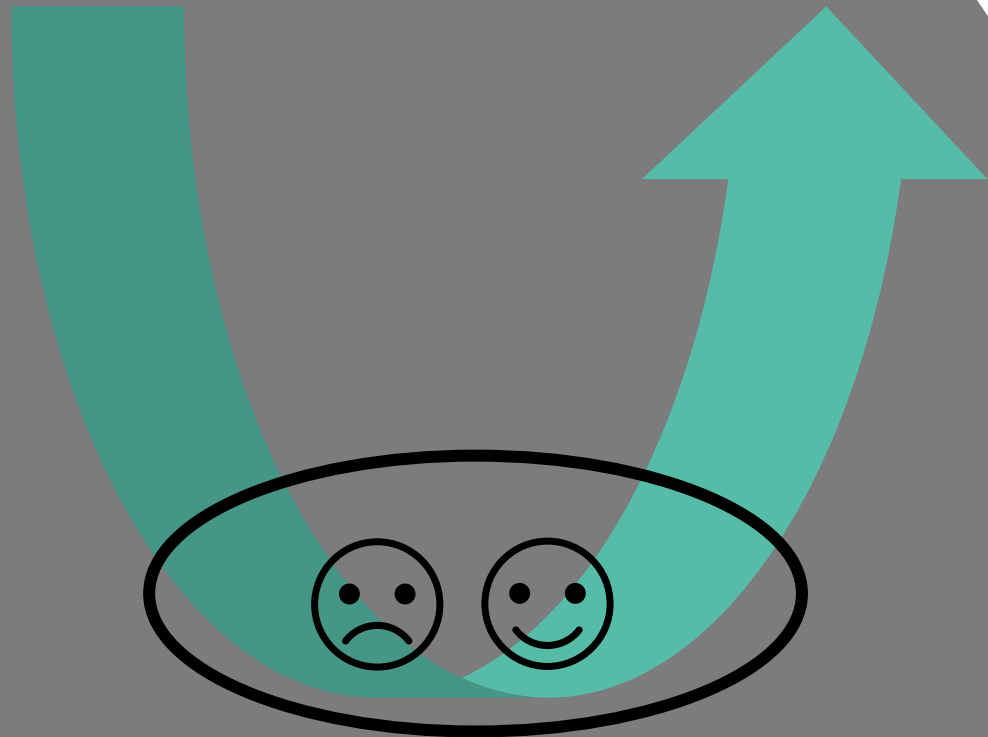


		
Us	Our ideas & our people	The bad ones are one-offs.
Them	The good ones are one-offs.	Their ideas & their people

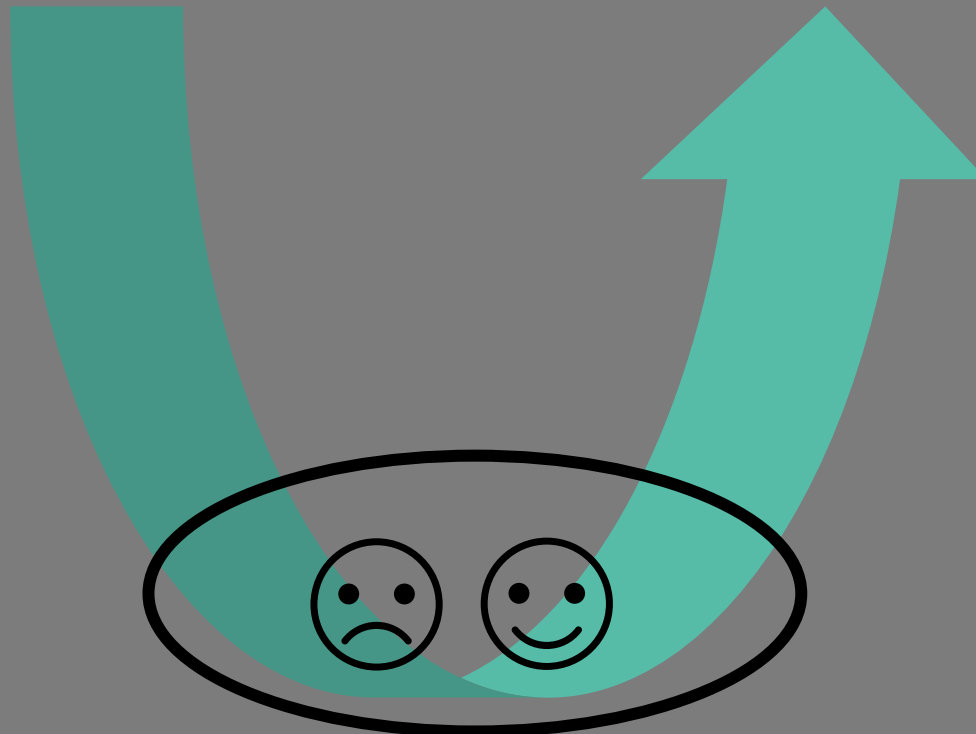
From Conflict into Entrenchment



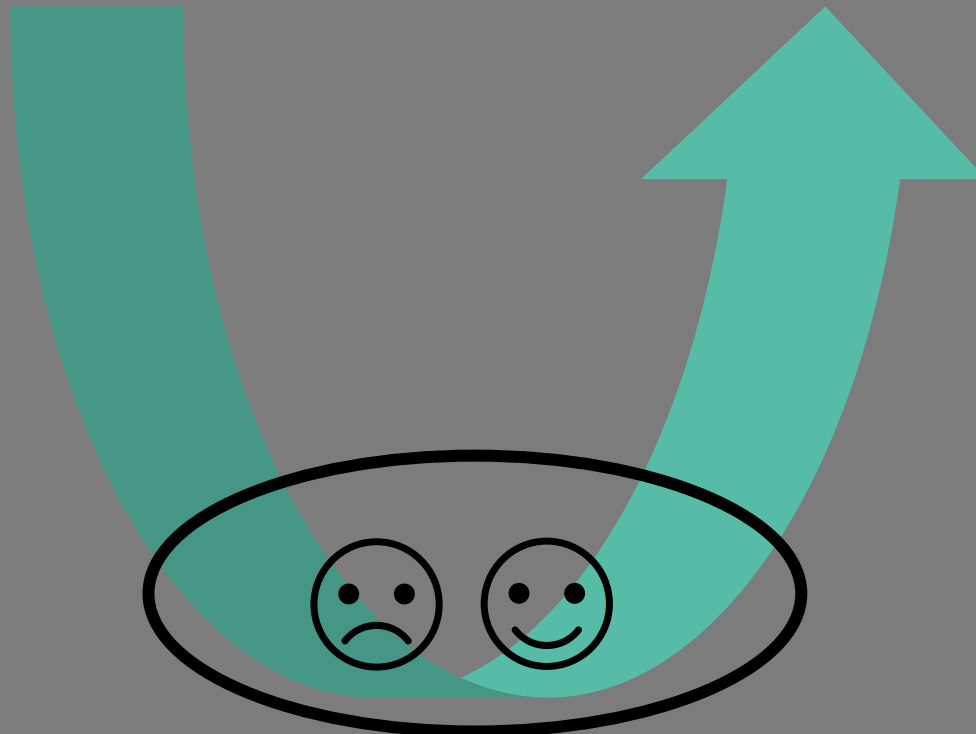
At the bottom of the change curve – we will face disagreement, conflict & polarization (the full range of conflict definitions).



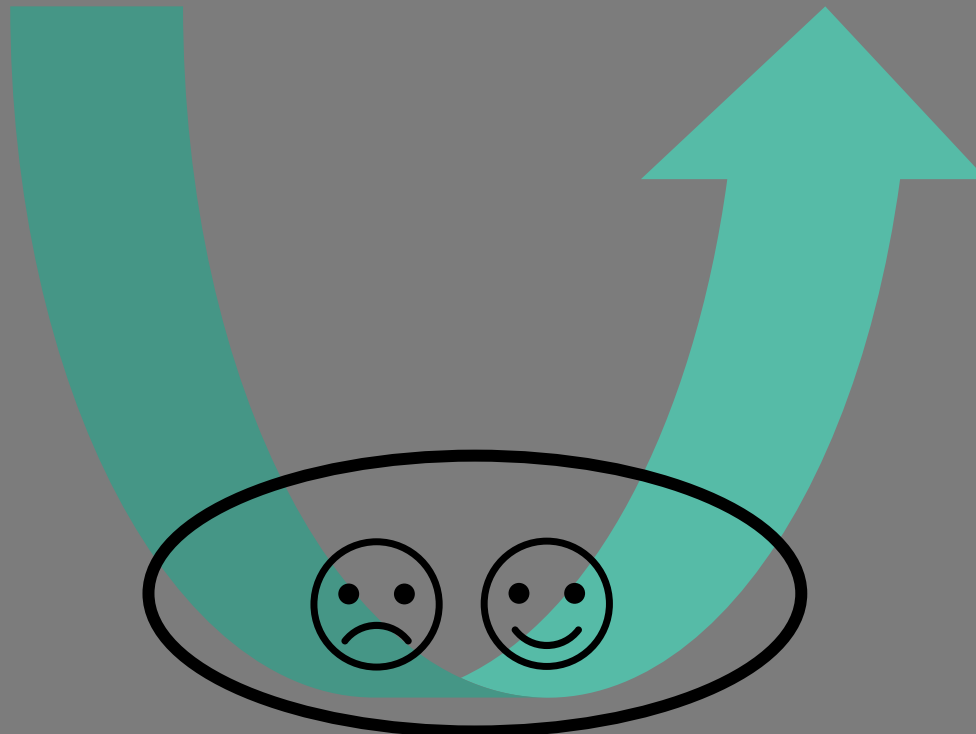
How do we disagree well with one another when we are in the valley & the risk of conflict is so high?



1. Attend to your interior condition.
Ground yourself in your center where
your selfhood is not at risk.

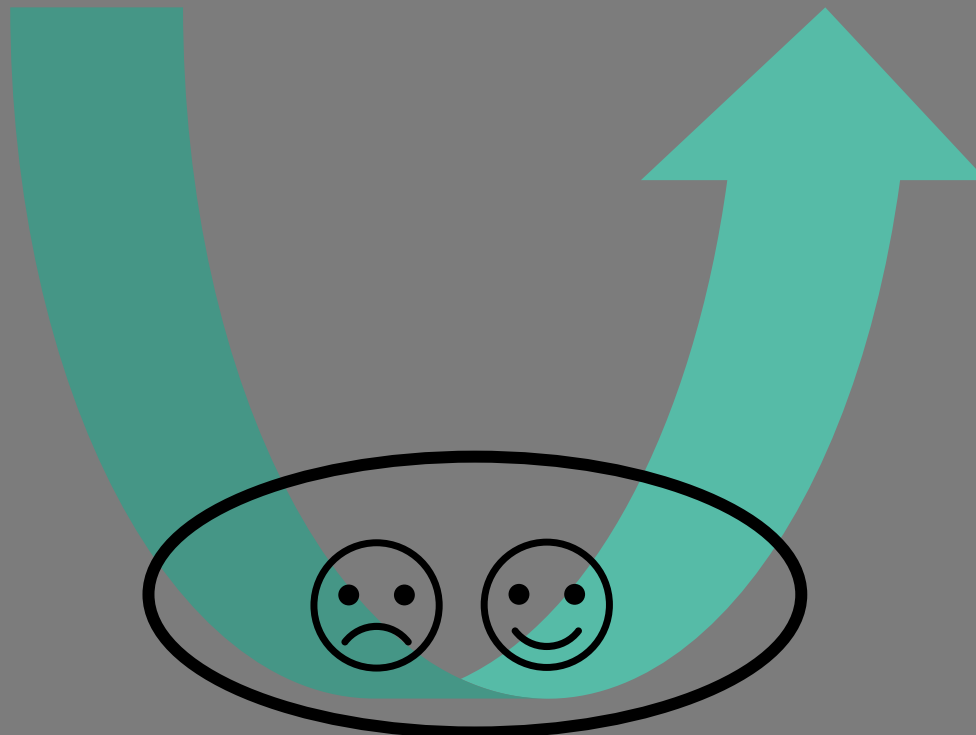


2. Commit to the spiritual discipline of humility. We see in the mirror dimly. Check out your assumptions!

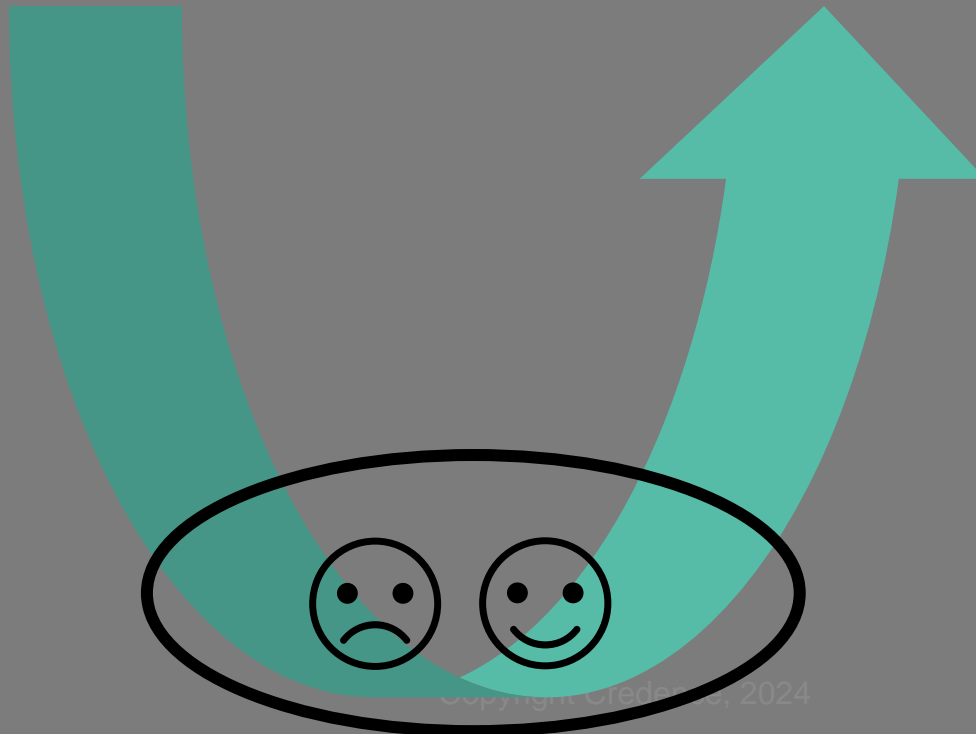


3. Pray for God to embrace you & them with arms of loving kindness.

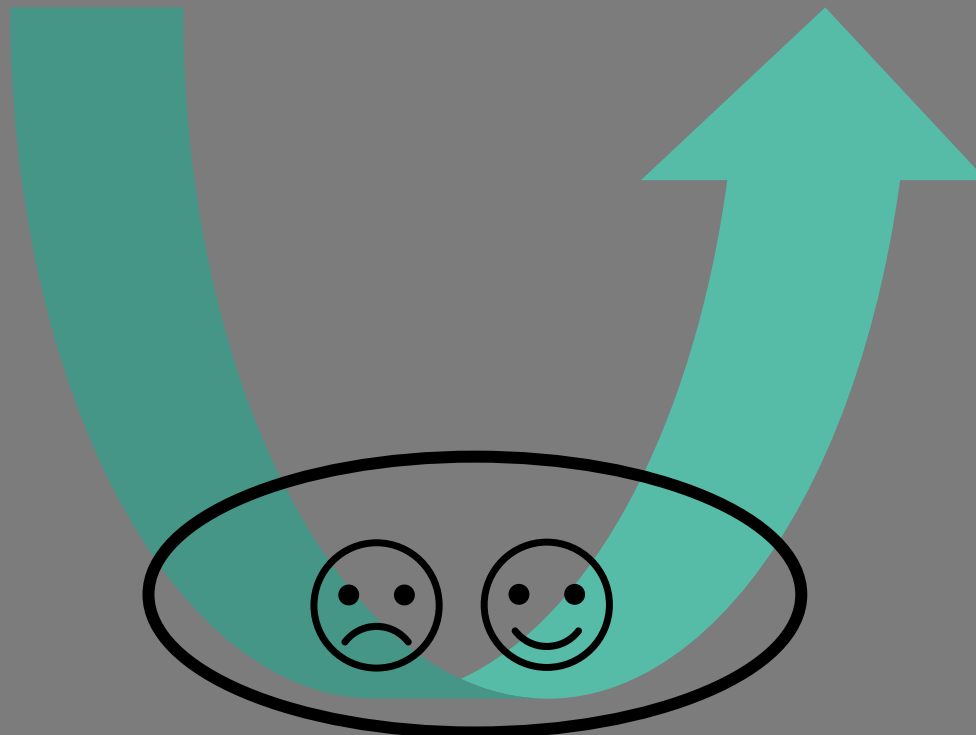
Remember – in the valley need for care goes up not down.



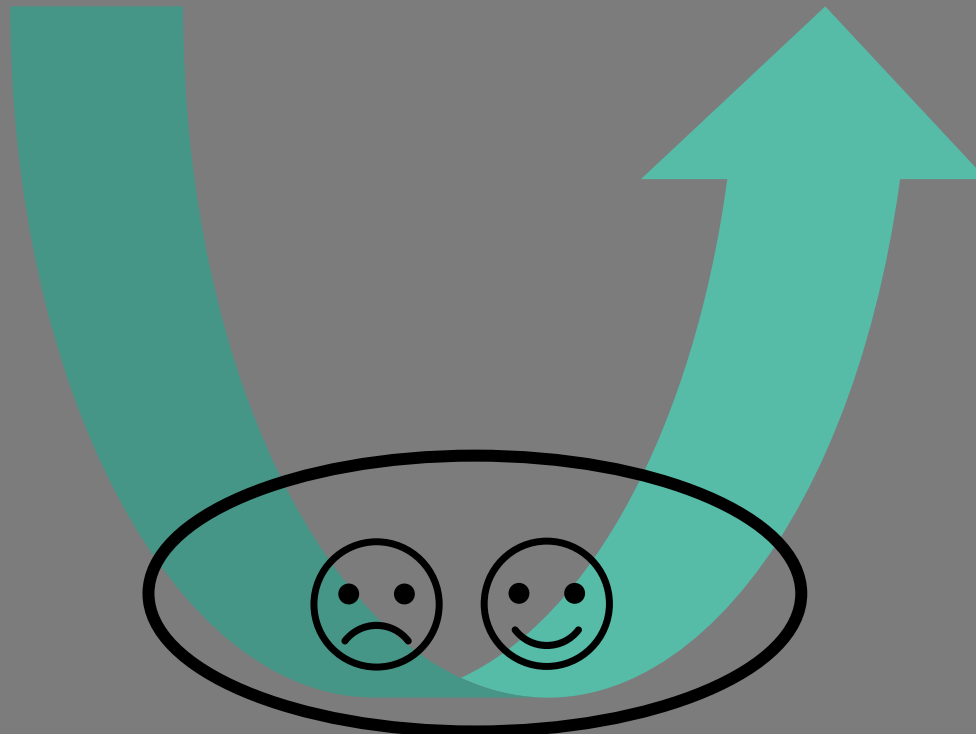
4. Go slow to go fast. Follow the 3x rule. Take time to hear each other & to understand accurately where your differences lie. Understand what you are actually disagreeing over.



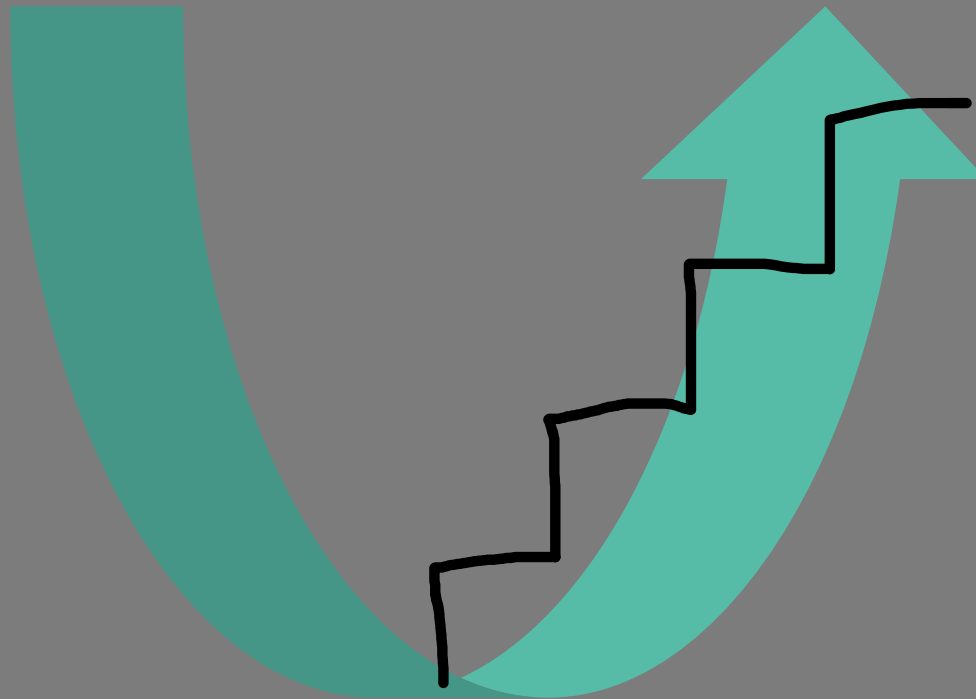
5. Get into your hearts & out of your heads. Practice listening to how you have impacted each other.



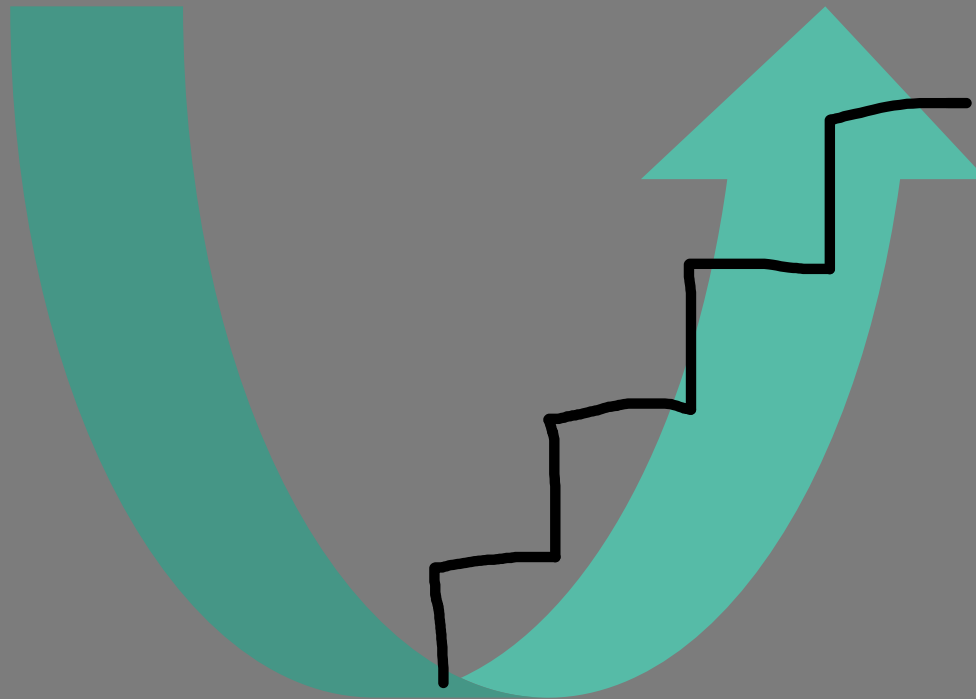
6. Practice the spiritual discipline of intentional listening for God to speak.



7. Create a staircase – steps to support transformation – out of the curve.
When you act, do so tenderly & with an open heart.



8. Get ready for the long haul – and the risk of conflict reactivation.



9. Practice both boundaries & grace.

