



**JORGENSEN**  
Learning Center  
Change the *conversation*.  
Change the *results*.

# The LEARNING CONVERSATION GUIDELINES

*The quality of your leadership is revealed one conversation at a time.*

<p><b>Listen for Understanding</b></p>	<p><b>Speak from the Heart</b></p>	<p><b>Suspend Certainty</b></p>	<p><b>Hold Space for Difference</b></p>	<p><b>Slow Down the Conversation</b></p>
<p>Do your best to listen to the words being spoken in the room and look to surface deeper meaning. All participants listen deeply for understanding from a place of learning, not from a place of knowing or judging what the other person is saying or planning a response to what is being said.</p>	<p>One who speaks from the heart speaks with courage to help develop a common understanding rather than just to end the silence or be heard. Courage requires vulnerability in recognizing that your thinking can be very different from another's but that everyone's thinking needs to be heard.</p>	<p>This does not mean that we give up our opinions or beliefs; it means merely that we put them on hold for the sake of the conversation. When we hold our thoughts that we have the answer or know the result, we are able to listen deeply.</p>	<p>Thinking takes time. And thinking and listening sometimes require silence. This requires a willingness to inquire deeper into the speaker's thoughts and ideas.</p>	<p>This means that we accept the diversity of the individuals in the group and their ideas. In other words, we are open to outcomes we might never have considered as well as encourage all parties to speak if they wish.</p>

# The LADDER OF INFERENCE

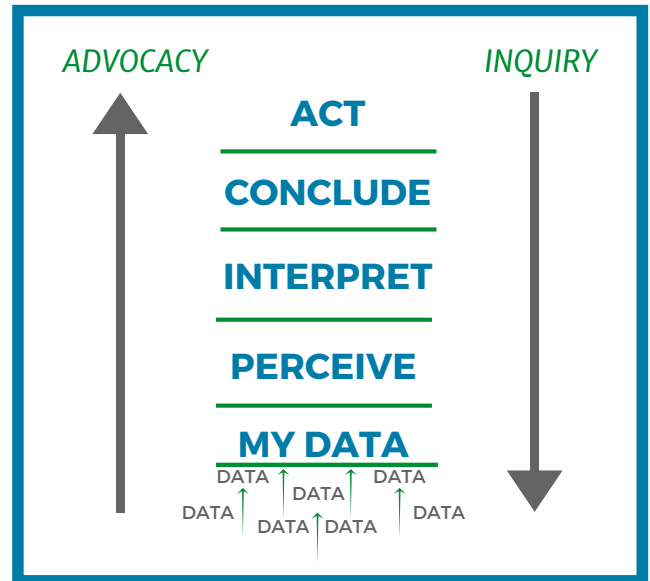
*Don't believe everything you think.*

Ever jump to a conclusion, only to discover you were wrong? Or completely misread a situation at work or home, and then wonder why? The Ladder of Inference is a model that explains the steps we take mentally to move ourselves from data-gathering to action. Its power lies in showing us exactly how we reach conclusions, whether during protracted deliberations or during split second impulses.

**Tip #1: SLOW DOWN AND QUESTION YOUR OWN THINKING** At each stage, ask yourself **WHAT** you are thinking and **WHY**. As you analyze each step, you may need to adjust your reasoning. For example you may need to change some assumption or extend the field of data you have selected.

**Tip #2: NOTICE IF YOU ARE SKIPPING RUNGS** When you are working through your reasoning, look out for rungs that you tend to skip. Am I making assumptions too easily? Do I tend to select only part of the data?

**Tip #3: TALK IT OUT** Explain your thinking to a colleague or friend. This will help you check that your argument is sound.



Adapted from Chris Argyris