



Mind the Bridge

A learning and socializing event on a topic more relevant than ever: how do we manage the differences and gaps that form between us? How do we avoid building barricades in the face of different or incompatible values?

The Perspective of the Session

Our brain is not “factory programmed” to easily accommodate opposing perspectives or to see what unites us in diversity. This ability develops through education, structure, and practice.



Key Concepts

MIND THE GAP

Focus on differences and emphasizing them through negative emotional loading.

MIND THE BRIDGE

Focus on the relationship and identifying bridges that allow addressing differences.

Reading Recommendations:

“Thinking, Fast and Slow”
by Daniel Kahneman

"The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion"
by Jonathan Haidt

“Humble Inquiry” by
Edgar H. Schein

Takeaway 1: how our brain handles differences of opinion

Confirmation Bias: The brain's tendency to seek out and interpret information that confirms preexisting beliefs. This neurological mechanism explains why we often find it difficult to accept opinions different from our own.

The role of the amygdala: This cerebral structure is responsible for processing emotions and can trigger "fight or flight" responses when we are confronted with divergent opinions perceived as threats.

Takeaway 2: cognitive empathy vs. emotional empathy

Cognitive empathy is the ability to understand another person's perspective without directly feeling their emotions. It is more of an intellectual skill to put oneself in someone else's shoes.

Emotional empathy, on the other hand, involves the ability to feel and share another person's emotions. It is an affective experience where we emotionally resonate with others' moods and states.

Takeaway 3: practical techniques for building bridges

+ Start with the relationship: What stage is it currently in? How do you want it to be after the interaction? How does the person perceive you? What thoughts and emotions do you have toward them?

+ Humble Inquiry: “Make it about them” – ask exploratory questions, listen actively, show genuine interest and understanding. Accurately identify what the person is saying, believing, and wanting, as well as the foundation of their perspective.