



FINDING OUR BALANCE in the POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

FIVE WHYs PROCESS GUIDE



FINDING OUR BALANCE IN THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

FIVE WHYS PROCESS

The election of Donald Trump as President and the initial directives of his Administration have done very little to bring us together as a nation. In fact, they have made the divisions among us even more pronounced. As a people we seem to be traveling on separate landscapes which are beginning to move and could be on a collision course.

Many of us have been surprised to find ourselves on opposite landscapes from colleagues, friends, and family who made different choices. We are finding it difficult to engage in conversations about the election and its aftermath and our attempts often end in emotional outbursts and disagreements. More often we avoid making the attempt.

This is a dangerous situation at the very time in our nation's history when we need to be engaging each other in healthy discussions and dialogue. We need to come to a greater understanding of each other, of what divides us and why, so we can begin to heal our wounds, acknowledge points of agreement, and move our nation forward to a better place.

With that purpose in mind, the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue (ICCD) offers this suggestion for building bridges among the multiple landscapes by engaging in a process that accesses each person's emotions in a peaceful way that leads to greater understanding.

The *Five Whys* originated as a rational problem-solving process by the Toyota company in Japan. It was further developed by Peter Senge, a leader in systems thinking and adult learning. In *Engaging Impasse: Circles of Contemplation and Dialogue*, ICCD chose to use the process in a different way by focusing the why questions on our emotions. We found that it allowed us to probe more deeply into why we feel what we feel in our experiences and decisions.

The process invites us to stay with the same emotion long enough to be surprised by what emerges within us. We hope it will help us come to a better understanding of each other and that this could be a first step in moving forward.

The process can be used with one person or in small groups. While the process will lead each person to a greater self-understanding another significant goal is for us to listen to and begin to appreciate the other's positions and concerns. In the process, there are no debates, arguments, or judgments.

The steps to facilitate the process are on the next page.



PROCESS

1. Create a safe space. Share how to listen and speak from a contemplative heart found on the next page. Invite everyone into 5 minutes of quiet to become present to this process.
2. Explain the *Five Why* process. It is designed to help us go deeper into how we feel about an issue. In this process each person will identify how s/he feels about our political situation and then will be asked 5 times the question, Why? Indicate that they will have two minutes to write their responses. Tell them not to censor their responses; rather, trust what is emerging in them. Remind the participants that each response refers to the original emotion as we are trying to go deeper into one emotion for greater understanding. If people have more than one emotion ask them to respond separately for each emotion.
3. Pass out the *Five Why* paper to each person. Everyone needs a pen. Ask if there are any questions. Invite people to take a minute of quiet to get in touch with their feeling. Then have them write that feeling on the line provided on the sheet. You can either time each response inviting them to move to the next Why every two minutes or let them work at their own speed and call time at the end.
4. When everyone is finished take an additional minute or two of quiet in preparation for sharing. Then invite the first person to share their response. Ask them to read the question as well as what they wrote for each of the 5 Whys.
5. After each person finishes take 1 minute of quiet consciously receiving what you heard.
6. Then take 1-2 minutes to prepare for contemplative inquiry. This is a time to ask questions of clarification; to comment on what you felt s/he was saying and to express resonance or ask curiosity questions. This is not a time for debate, arguments or trying to change someone's mind. Depending on the number of persons and your time, allow 4 or 5 minutes for contemplative inquiry. Pause and then begin with the next person.
7. When everyone is finished, take five minutes to reflect on: What is your response to what you are hearing? What is stirring within you? What insights are occurring to you? Each person offers their reflection taking no more than 2 or 3 min. each. (Depending on time)
8. Begin a conversation. If you do converse or decide to meet again for conversation, please use the sheet which offers some guidelines for conversation and dialogue Close the process with a prayer of gratitude.



CONTEMPLATION AND CONVERSATION

For a good conversation one needs to be a good listener. Entering a conversation that leads to real dialogue calls upon listening and speaking skills that invite engagement. The work on dialogue that ICCD has done over the years testifies to the need for the participants to be extremely self-aware of their values, assumptions, world view, etc. and a willingness to offer their best ideas and then let go of them so that something new can emerge from the group. It depends on a willingness to move from the “I” to the “We.” Although this level of discourse is rare the basic skills needed can be developed and practiced. Engaging in a contemplative practice, over time, enables you to respond to different opinions and converse with others since you no longer need to defend and protect your positions.

Here are some key characteristics to keep in mind as you begin to consciously engage with those whose positions may differ from yours.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING FROM A CONTEMPLATIVE HEART

1. Be soft and spacious.
2. Be aware of one’s biases, assumptions, and world view.
3. Be non-judgmental and non-defensive.
4. Slow down the pace—listen all the way through before formulating your response.
5. Be present to this moment.
6. Be curious about differences.
7. Listen to each other as a revelation of God.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A DIALOGUE PROCESS

1. Become aware of your own position, your own emotional investment in the issue/question.
2. Reflect on the underlying reasons as to **why** you feel this way.
3. Observe your reactions throughout the dialogue—respond rather than react.
4. Seek to understand the different positions- ask curiosity questions.
5. Enter the space from which you begin to think and speak from the whole—the “I” becoming a “We”.
6. Address the concerns that are now the group’s even if they were not yours.
7. Be open to the “new” that is emerging.



Finding Our Balance Post Election

The 5 Why Process

When I reflect on the election of Donald Trump as President and the initial directives of his Administration I feel _____ (write the emotion on this line)

1. Why do I feel this way (the emotion)?

2. And why does that (answer of #1) make me feel this way (the emotion)?

3. And why does that (answer of #2) make me feel this way (the emotion)?

4. And why does that (answer to #3) make me feel this way (the emotion)?

5. And why does that (answer to #4) make me feel this way (the emotion)?