



## Do a Limbic Audit

Think of situations when your limbic system got engaged or you experienced amygdala hijack. Make a list of the observable effects – physical, mental, emotional.

## Practice Priming

- Set the intention to understand and connect; expect to hear things that may be new and unfamiliar
- Choose to make giving them the opportunity to feel heard more important than defending your own views.
- Choose conversation partners you believe will be open to you trying this new way of talking politics.
- Find a location for the conversation so neither of you needs to shout to be heard.
- If you think it wise, then what you are doing and why. “I don’t think I every took the time to really understand your views on this subject. If you’re okay with it, I’d like to slow the conversation down, reflect back, and ask questions so I can do better this time.”

## Create New Memories

The easiest, and most important thing you can do to get your limbic system aligned with your desire to cross party lines is to create new memories it can use when assessing whether a situation is a threat. Here are just a few ways you can do this:

- Watch videos about the limbic system or amygdala hijack.
- Attend more CPL workshops
- Attend more CPL meetings so you get used to hearing other ideas, so they won’t surprise you.
- Find podcasts from political commentators on the other side that don’t upset you, and listen to them.
- Practice wondering – about everything and especially what’s behind comments or views that don’t match your own.
- After a less-than satisfying political interaction, replay it looking for opportunities where you could have used techniques in this handout, then imagine using them.
- Attend Crossing Party Lines movie nights



## Form New Habits

- Priming
  - Taking time to set the intention, expectation, environment before the conversation begins
- Noticing
  - Notice the observable effects of your limbic system taking over – physical, mental, emotional.
  - Notice the observable effects of *their* limbic system taking over
- Wondering or other mantra – see below
- Self-soothing
  - Breathe deeply
  - Focus on your body
  - Focus on your surroundings
- Reflecting back
- Using I statements

## Practice Applying Mantra

Mantras are words, phrases, or formulas used to focus one’s thoughts, set one’s intentions, or shift one’s energy. When you are experiencing amygdala hijack, repeating a mantra can reroute brain resources from the limbic system back to the neo-cortex. Using “I wonder...” as a prompt is a form of mantra that fosters curiosity. Start applying it throughout your daily life: “I wonder why I always choose this cereal over that one.” “I wonder why they put a traffic circle here instead of a stop light.” Here are examples of applying it in a political conversation.

- I wonder what problem they are trying to solve.
- I wonder who they care about the most, who they are trying to save or protect
- I wonder who they see as the winners and losers here.
- I wonder why they seem to care so much about this particular issue right now.
- I wonder how their faith or religion plays into this.
- I wonder what a perfect solution looks like to them
- I wonder how they would describe this issue
- I wonder what success looks like to them
- I wonder if they know anyone who...

## CPL Trainings

- CPL 101 – Listening Politics
- CPL 102 – Talking Politics
- CPL In Real Life
- Using Moral Foundations in Political Conversations