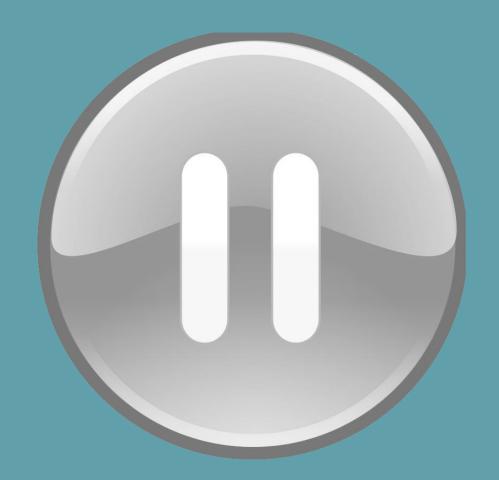
The Power of a Pause



For Christian Couples



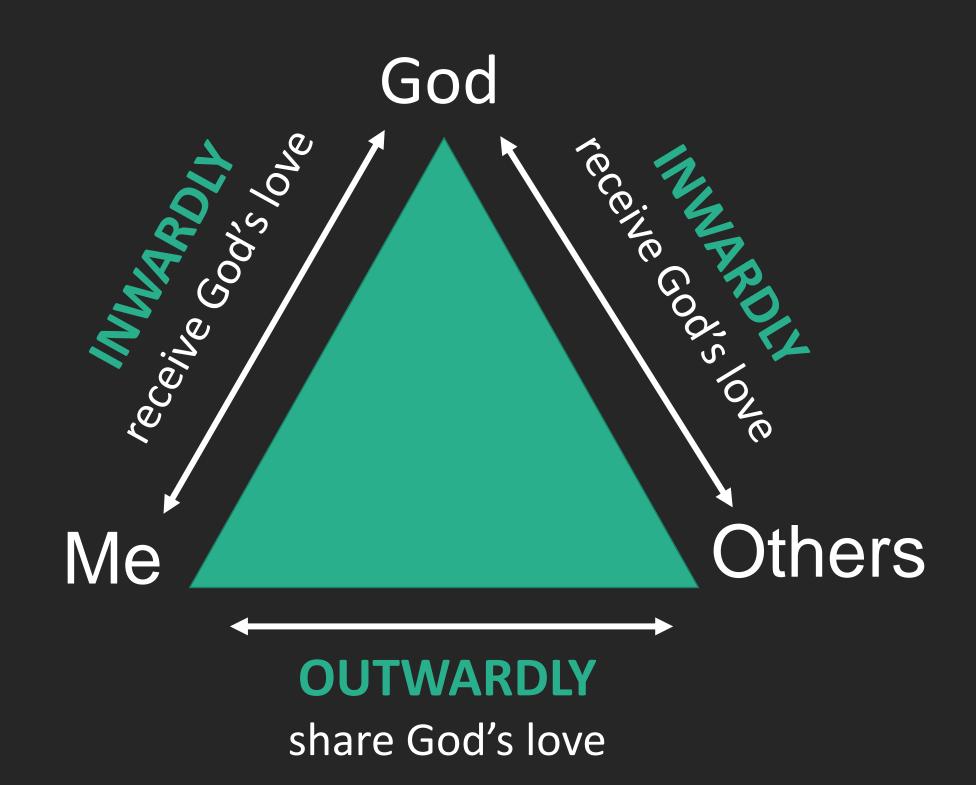




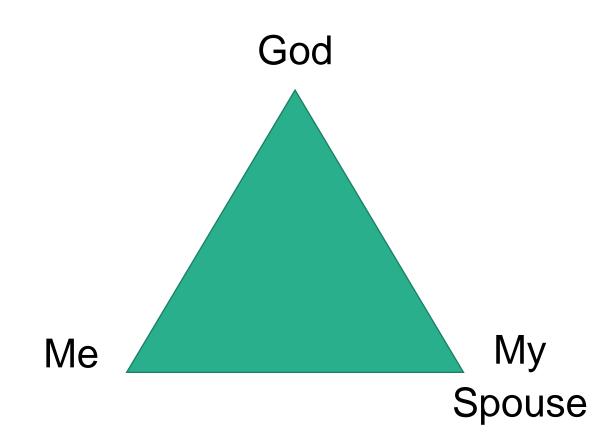


"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34

At our BEST, we both ...

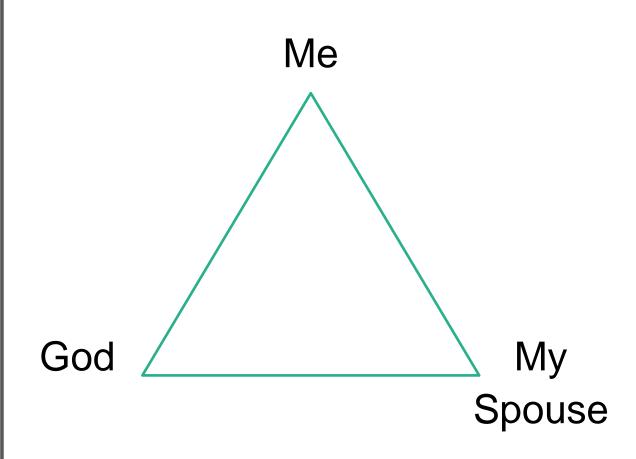


Trusting



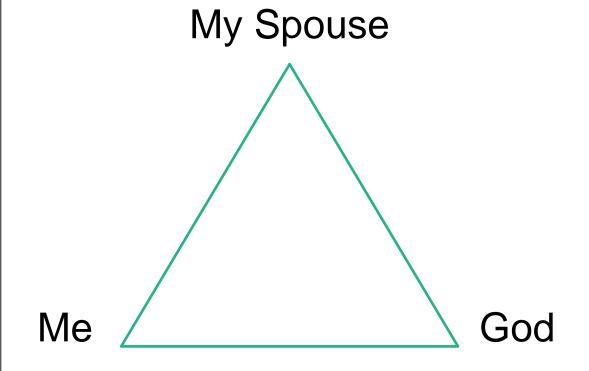
Trusting God's love, we are empowered to share God's love.

Self-Centered



Elevating ourselves, we want our way.

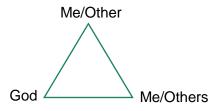
Co-Dependent



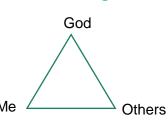
Elevating our spouse, we conform.

Our Focus Matters

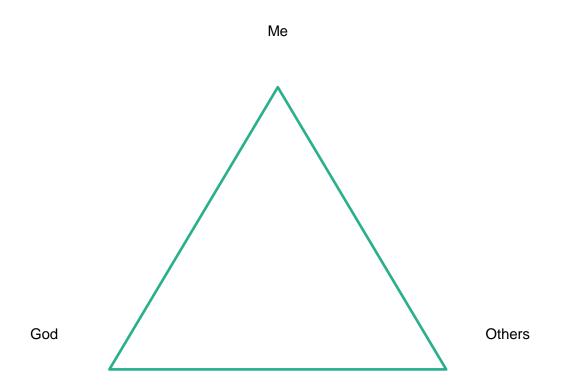
Self-Centered/Co-Dependent



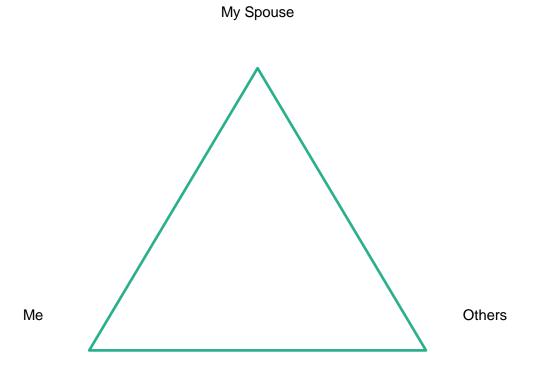
Trusting



Trusting God's love, we are empowered to share God's love.



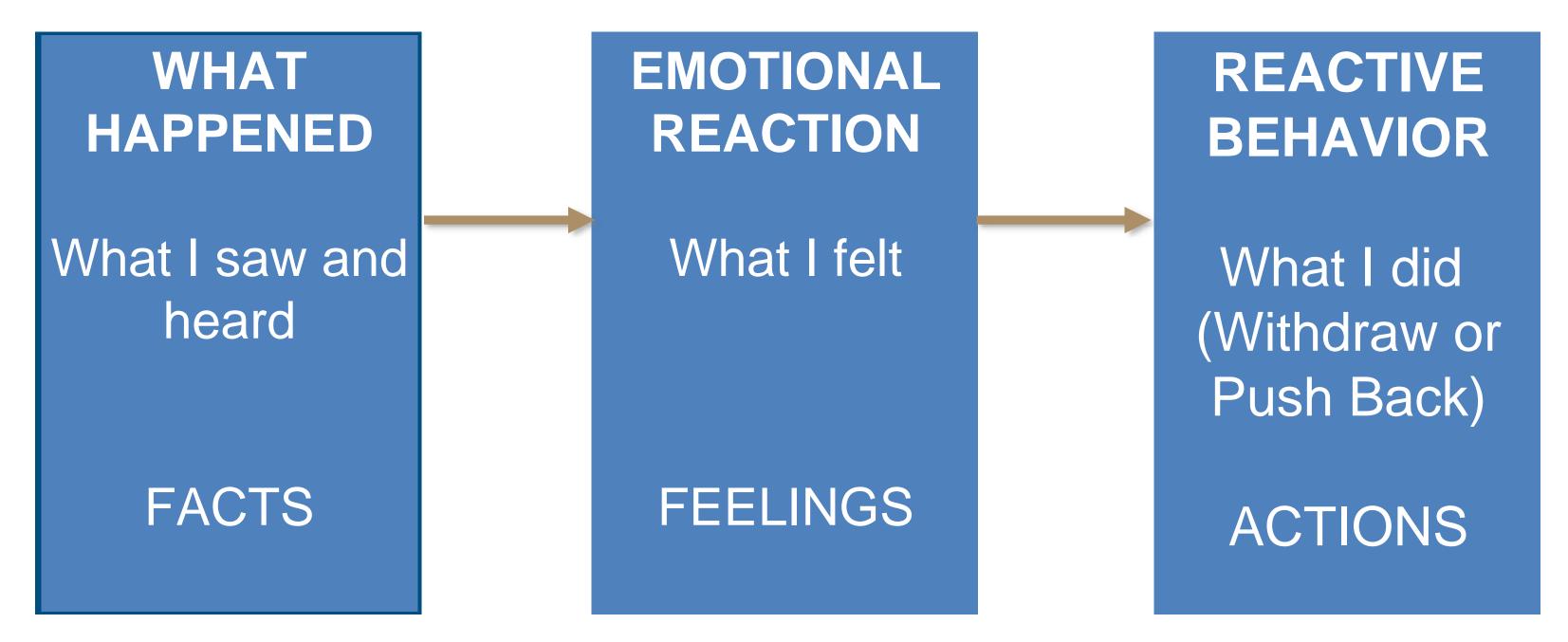
Elevating ourselves, we want our way.



Elevating our spouse, we conform.

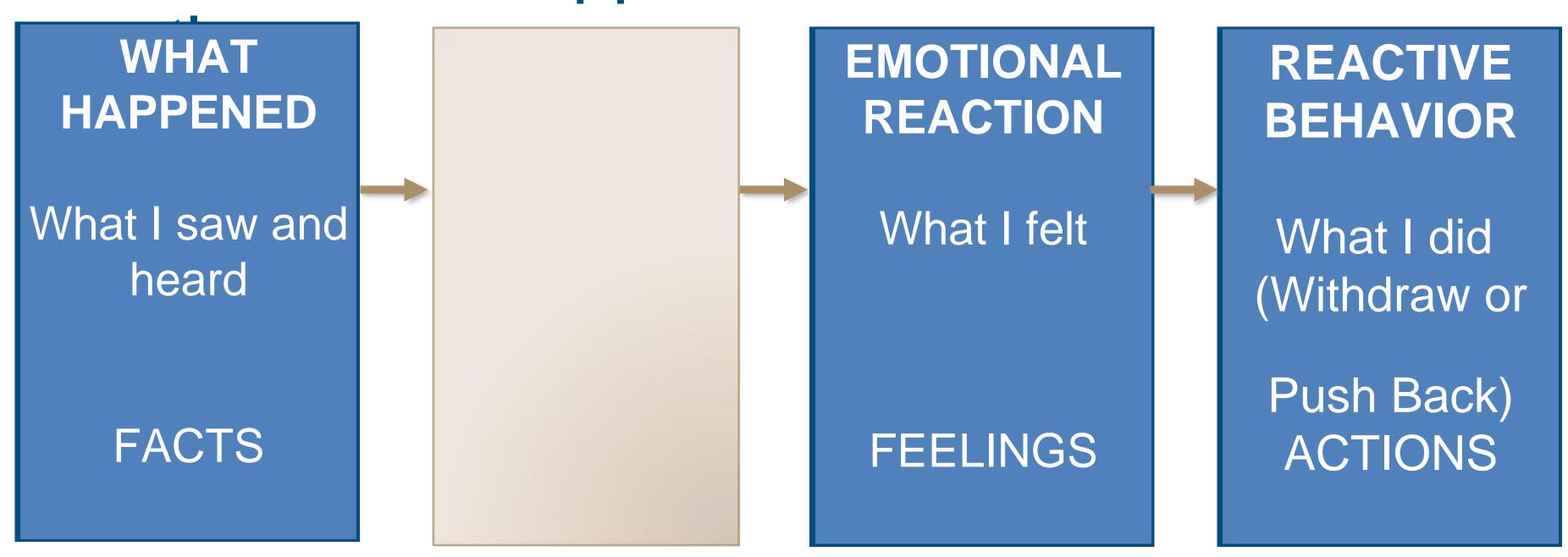
Our Focus Matters

We see or HEAR or SEE something, FEEL an emotional reaction, and then ACT on those feelings.



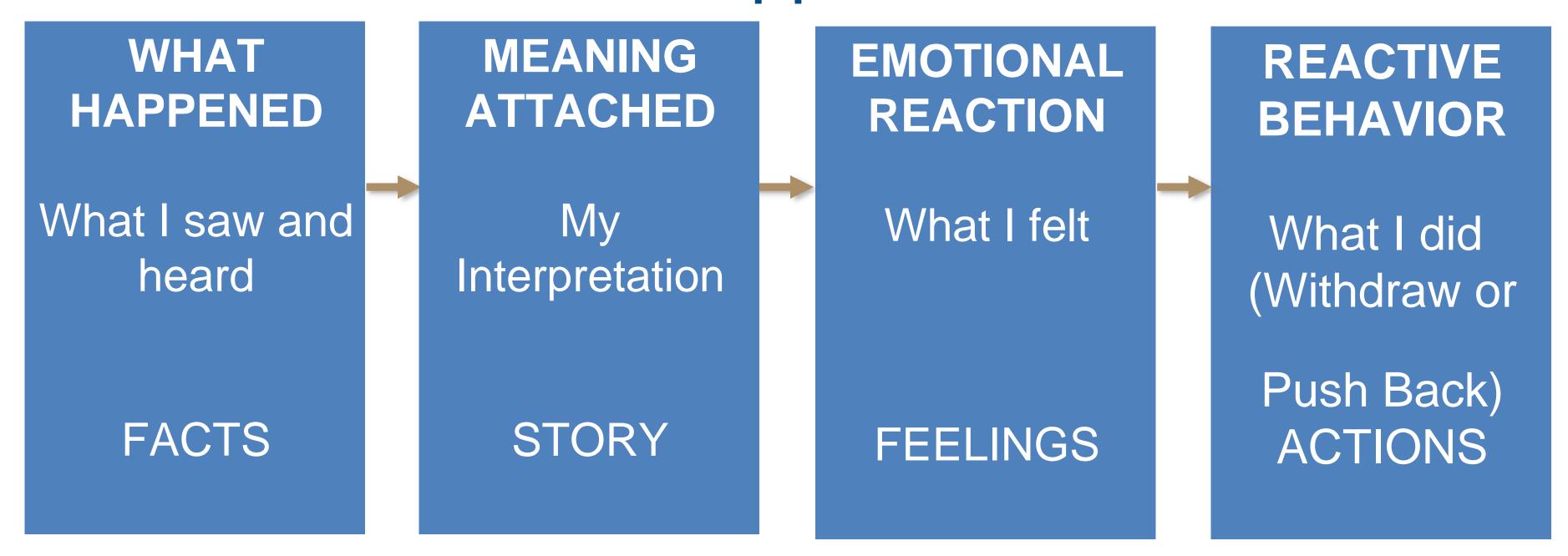
"When you rolled your eyes at me when I was struggling with my phone I felt angry and blew up at you in front of our friends."

We don't realize something going on between what happened and our emotional



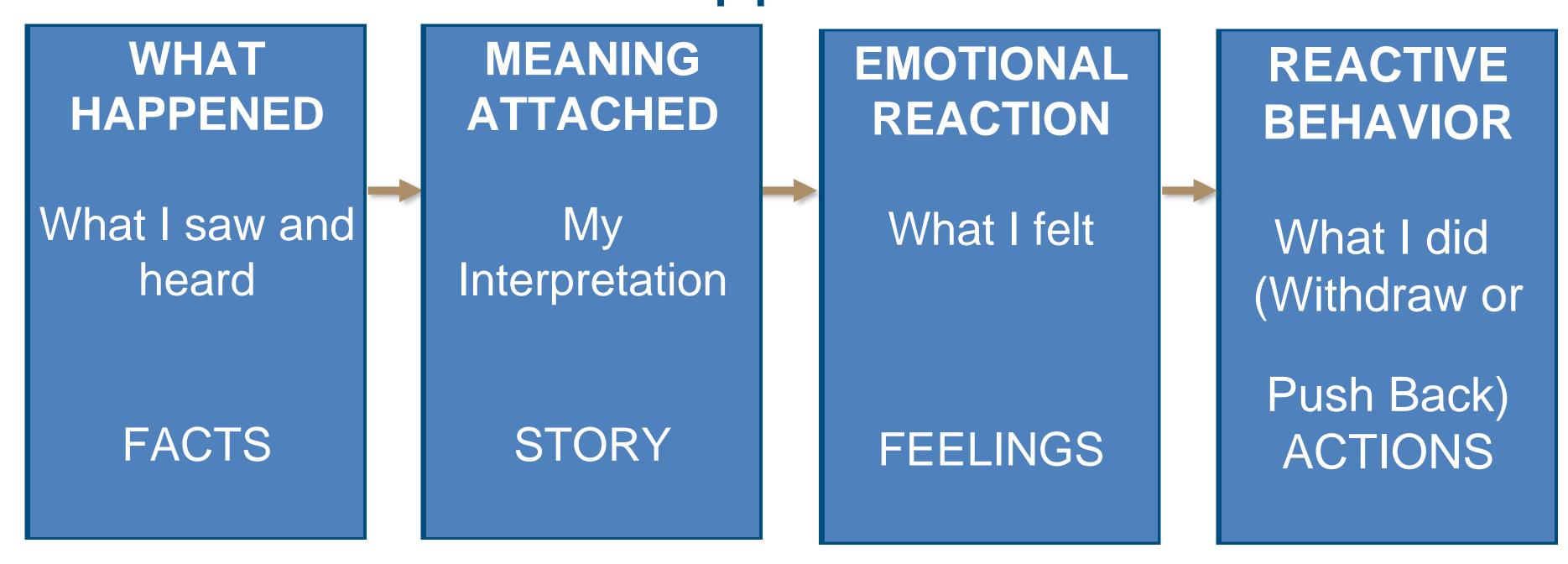
"When you rolled your eyes at me when I was struggling with my phone...I felt angry and blew up at you in front of our friends."

Before our emotional response we tell a STORY about what happened.



Our emotional reaction is not because of what happened, but by the meaning we attach to what happened – the story we tell about it.

Ten people in the room can tell ten different stories about what happened.



If we can change our story we can change our emotions. If we can hold our story tentatively we can control our emotions.

First, you see or hear.

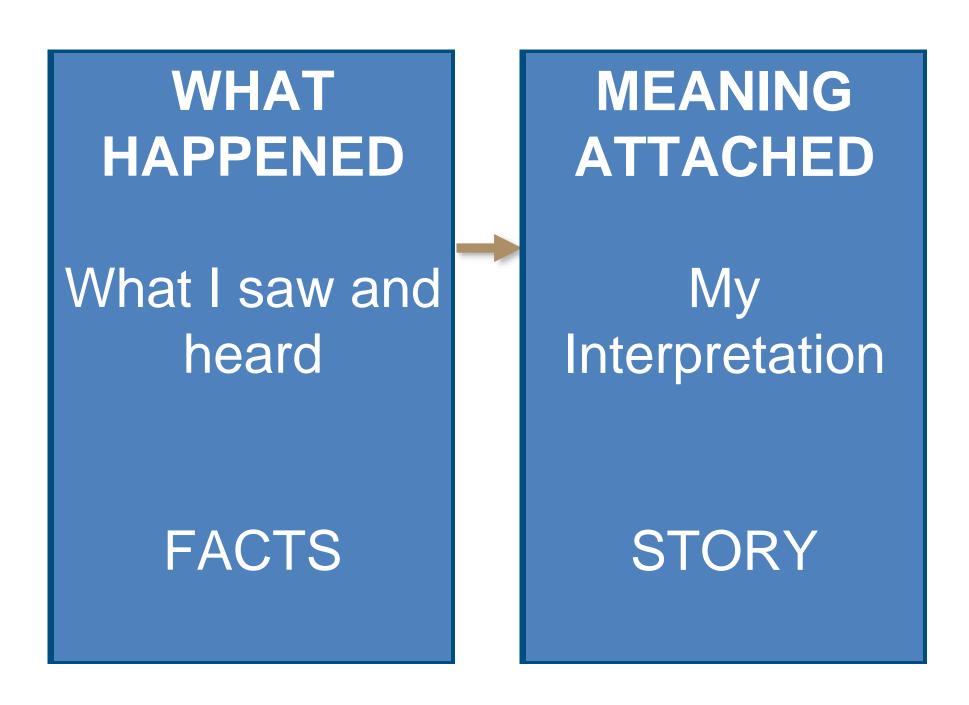


What I saw and heard

FACTS

"When you rolled your eyes at me when I was struggling with my phone..." What story might you tell yourself?

Second, you tell a story.



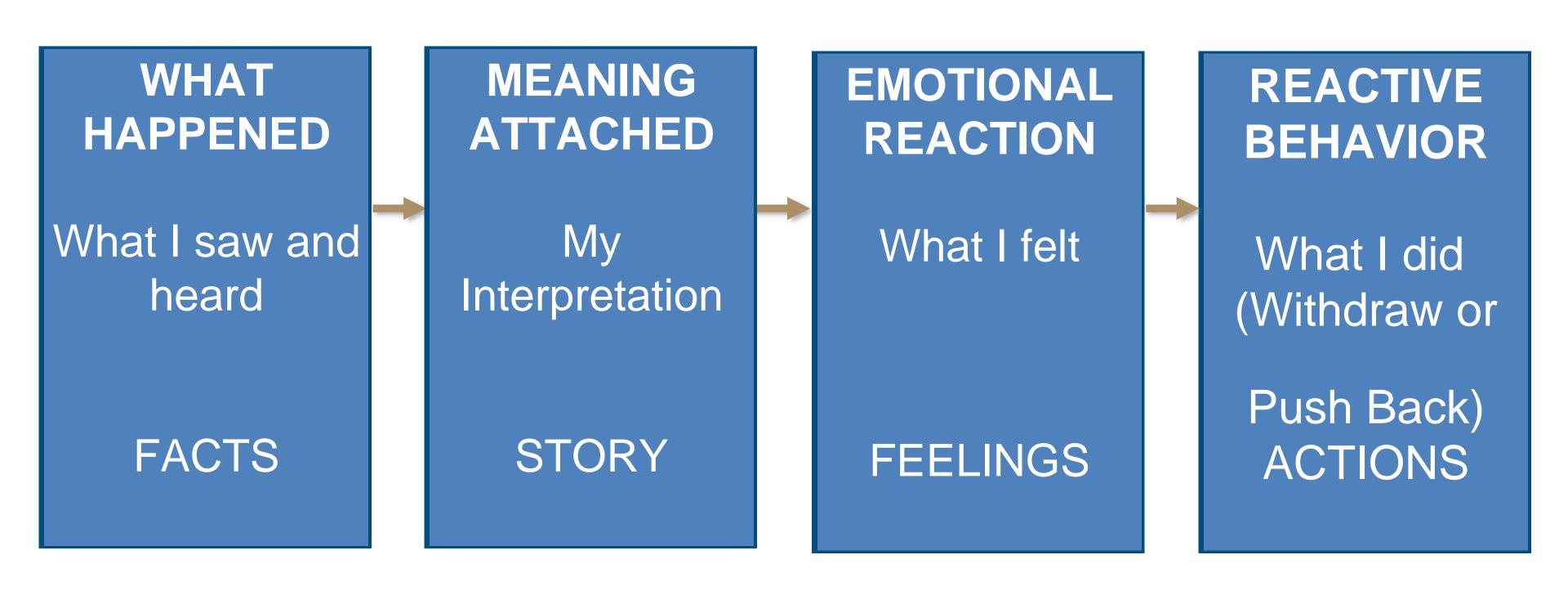
"He's trying to make me feel stupid!"

Third, you generate a feeling.

WHAT MEANING EMOTIONAL ATTACHED **HAPPENED** REACTION What I saw and My What I felt Interpretation heard FACTS STORY **FEELINGS**

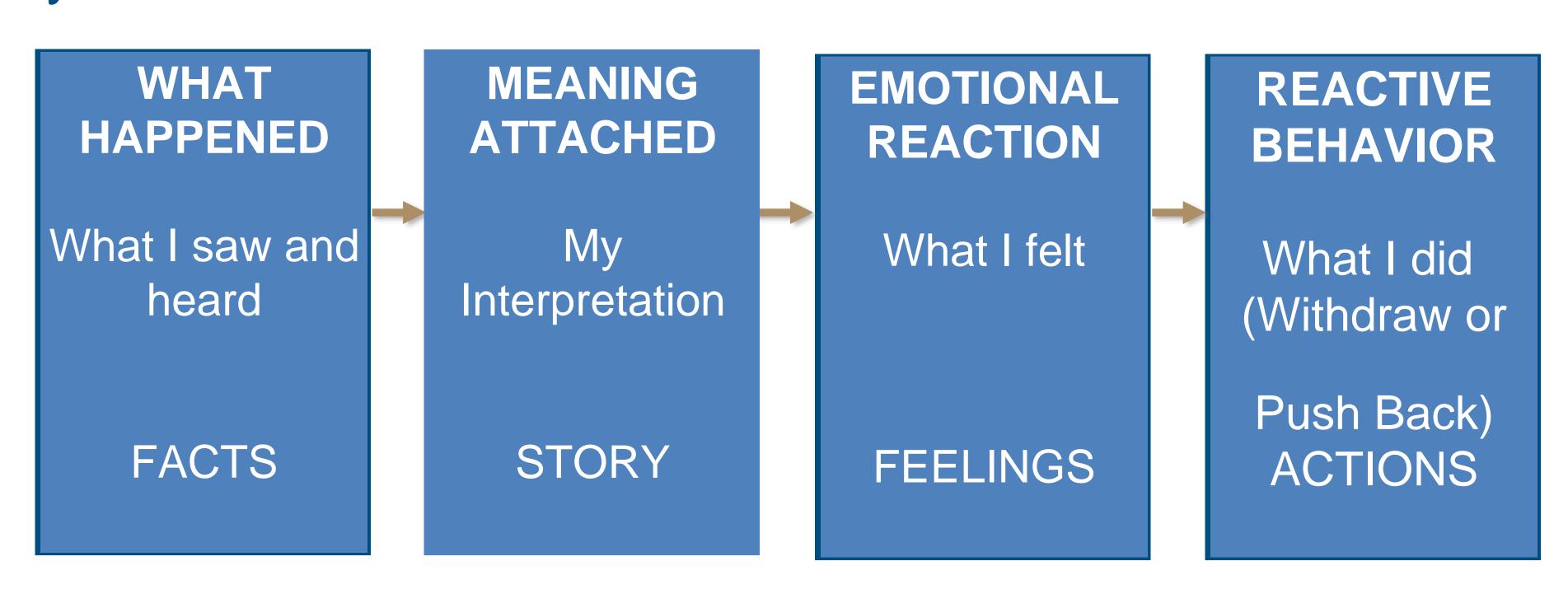
You feel hurt, angry and defensive. You feel disrespected because he's making you feel not as smart as he is. What might these feelings lead you to do?

Fourth, you act.



You blow up in front of your friends.

How you are *acting* depends on how you are *feeling*. And how you're *feeling* depends upon the *story* you told yourself.



SEPARATE FACTS FROM STORIES

What is a fact? An actual occurrence; something that can be proven through observation (what you saw vs. what you thought about what you saw)

SEPARATE FACTS FROM STORIES

- How are stories different from facts?
- Stories are judgments, conclusions and attributions that we make from facts.
- •Judgments determine whether facts are good or bad.
- Conclusions help us fit the elements together.
- Attributions tell us why people do what they do.

FACT OR STORY?

☐ He was really disrespectful. ☐ She went to her office & pouted like a child. All ☐ She scowled at me. Stories ☐ He was very controlling. ☐ He jumped down my throat. ☐ She was afraid of where the conversation was going. ☐ He became very aggressive. ☐ She abandoned me in the middle of the discussion.

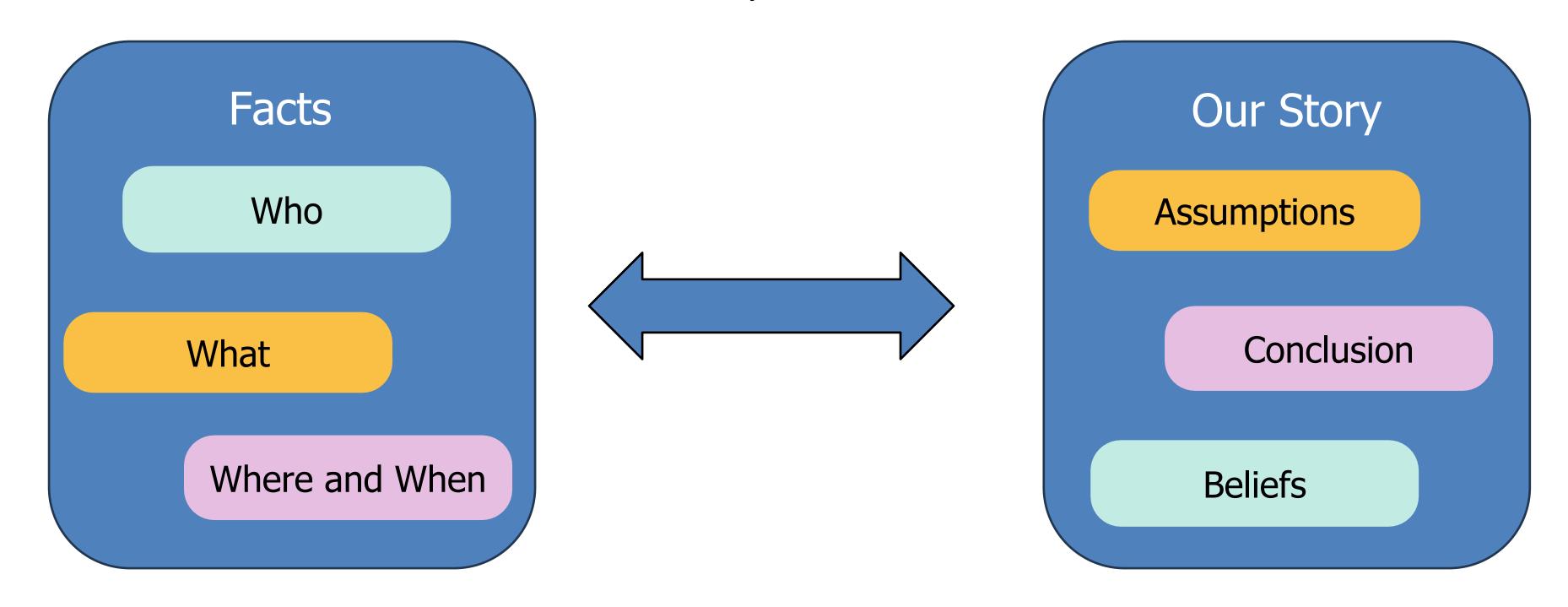
FACTS:

- Her face turned red.
- •He raised his finger.
- He looked away and never spoke up again.
- •She raise her voice.

STORIES:

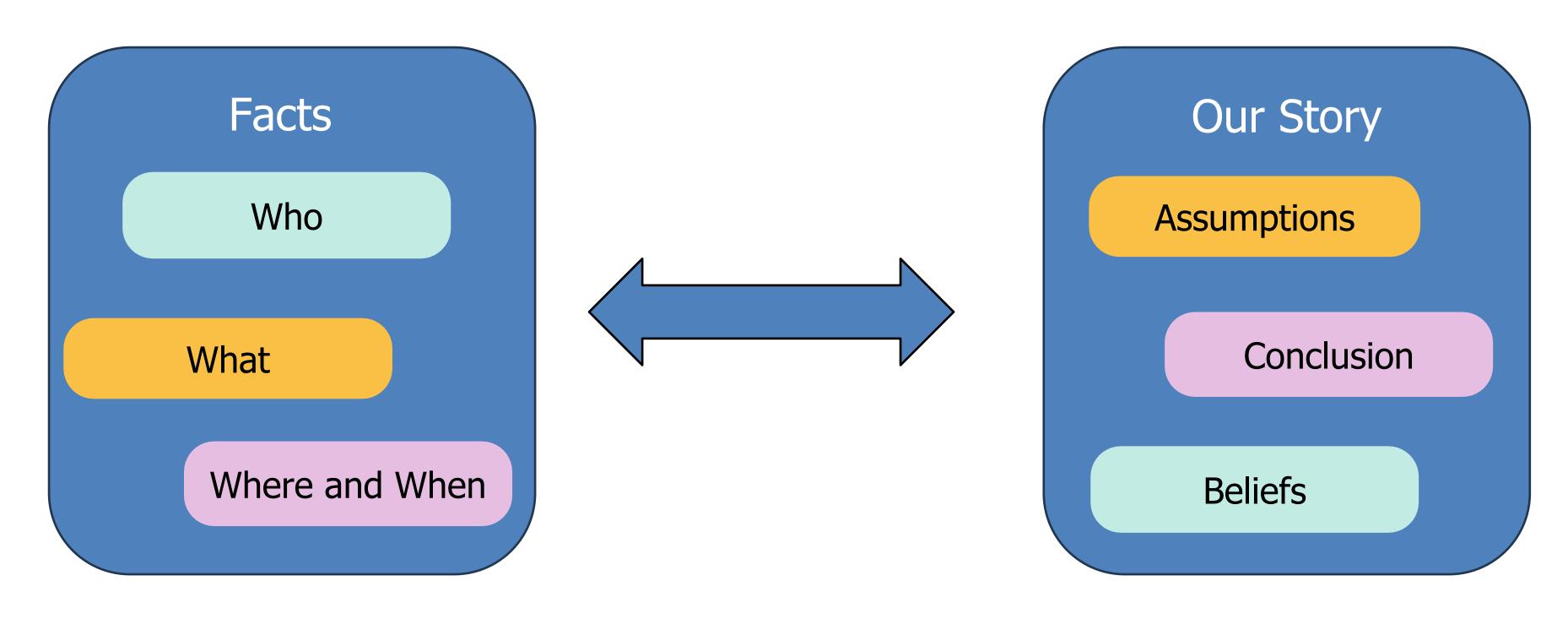
- That person is dishonest.
- •She is really needy.
- •He was being impatient with me.
- •My coworker is unreliable.

The Idea is to be able to Separate Fact from Stories.



So that we can hold our story tentatively and remain curious.

The same facts can tell an infinite number of stories.



Problem: We believe that the stories we tell are fact. Better Choice: Separate stories from facts, suspend judgment and open our minds to alternative stories.

Bottom Line: That creates emotion that are different.

Directions: Use the REACT Exercise to reconsider the challenge you wrote about in the Our Narrative Matters Exercise. Use Part 1 to honestly assess how your story is affecting how are showing up. Use Part 2 to explore how a Big Picture (Christ-centered) Narrative 1) Provides a framework that helps us to weave the facts into a story rooted in God's truth and 2) Makes it easier for us to choose actions that move our goals and dreams forward.

Paper Activity

REACT Exercise (Part 1): Assessing the Impact of our Story.

Directions: Reconsider the challenge you wrote about in the Our Narrative Matters Exercise. Use the prompts to honestly assess how your story is affecting how you are showing up.

R	E	A	С	Т	
REALITY	EMOTIONS	ACTIONS	ATTITUDES	CARE	THINK
Describe a challenge you are facing. List some of the facts here: What is the story you are telling yourself?	How do you feel? at ease connected courageous confident curious excited grateful loved, loving. positive proud remorseful supported OR angry indifferent overwhelmed stressed tired/bored irritated sad fearful. worried embarrassed disconnected uncertain powerless Other:	lam choosing to: be honest in my evaluation of my choices. be focused & attentive. seek to understand by remaining curious and engaging in constructive, respectful conversations. ask questions & accept help. give/receive feedback. collaborate with others. utilize available resources. be available to help/ serve those in need. stay organized, be prepared & on time. celebrate the success of others. say I'm sorry & ask for forgiveness. lean into my faith. balance challenges with self-care. OR I am choosing to: lose focus or distract others. be disrespectful in words/tone/actions. not give my best effort. be unsupportive or unhelpful. not follow through on commitments. not listen or seek to understand. Be defensive and argumentative. shut down emotionally. blame, gossip, slander. disobeyed the rules. Other:	I am being: gracious considerate brave perseverant encouraging gentle, calm grateful respectful sincere, honest supportive trustworthy-loyal warm, friendly OR I am being: disrespectful defensive selfish critical/judgmental demanding/ bossy unforgiving ungrateful harsh/ rude impatient irritating rebellious self-righteous inconsiderate Other:	My Top Motivations I want to: be a positive role model. build healthy relationships. create solutions & win together. reach my full potential. support others. grow from my challenges. succeed with & for others. live out my faith loving God & others. Trusting God Me Others OR I want to win my way. avoid failure or rejection. gain approval. look important. avoid hardship. be in control. Self-Centered/Co-Dependent Me/Other Others Others	The narrative framing your story. Big Picture? I play an important role in a bigger story. I can do this. Everyone has value including me. My circumstances uniquely position me to drive positive change. I can learn from my successes & failure. I m a beloved child. God with purpose. God gives me all I need to grow. OR Scarcity? I am not enough. It is too hard. I can't do this. My needs & hurts matter more than others. It is not worth my effort. If I'm rejected, I'm a reject. Other:

REACT Exercise (Part 2): Realigning

Directions: Use the prompts to explore how a Big Picture (Christ-centered) Narrative 1) Provides a framework that helps us to weave the facts into a story roots in God's truth and 2) Enables hope and confidence to grow so it is easier to choose motivations and actions that move our goals and dreams forward despite or sometimes even because of our circumstances.

Т	С		A	E	R
THINK	CARE	ATTITUDES	ACTIONS	EMOTIONS	REALITY
A Big Picture Narrative can remind me: I play a significant role in a bigger story. I can do this. Everyone has value, including me. My circumstances uniquely position me. I can learn from my successes & failures. I am a beloved child of God with purpose. Nothing can separate me from God's love My Big Picture (Christ-centered) Story about the situation:	I want to: be a positive role model. build healthy relationships. create solutions & win together. reach my full potential. support others. grow through challenges. succeed w/ others. live out my faith loving God & others Trusting God Me Others	I can be more: gracious considerate perseverant brave encouraging gentle, calm grateful respectful sincere, honest supportive trustworthy- loyal warm, friendly Other:	I can be more: □ self-aware; honestly evaluating the impact of my choices. □ focused & attentive. □ perseverant through problems. □ seek to understand; ask questions & accept help. □ collaborative with others. □ resourceful; utilizing available resources. □ willing to help/ serve others. □ Organized, prepared, on-time. □ encouraging; celebrating the success of others. □ engaged in respectful conversations. □ willing to reconcile, say I'm sorry. □ open to giving/ receiving feedback. □ engaged in opportunities that cultivate growth. □ humble; leaning into my faith. □ balanced, integrating self-care & fun Other:	As a result, I will feel more at ease connected courageous confident curious grateful hope joyful loved, loving. positive supported open Other: Recall feelings are neither right nor wrong. They are spontaneous.	Describe how these choices could help you grow in the next: 10 Minutes: 10 Months:



Talk About It

- Work together to create a list of the ways a Big Picture Narrative can help us grow through challenges.
- Work together to create a list of the ways a Scarcity Narrative can hinder us from growing through challenges.
- 3. How are you feeling about the challenge you described right now? What connection do you see between how you feel and your narrative?
- 4. What is one thing you can do this week to cultivate a Big Picture Narrative about your challenge?
- 5. What support would you like?