



Finding Your North

Critical Thinking and Questioning Toolkit

April 2022



From Serving to Partnering



Question Funnel



As we work down the questioning funnel, answers become clear, and assumptions are minimized.



Open questions

- How can you help?
- Can you share the back story?

Probing questions

- Ok, so I've heard you say X, can we dig into that a little bit more?
- I'm confused over this point, can you explain it a different way?

Recommend

- Now that I am clear on X, I recommend Y, and here are my reasons why
- Given time is most important right now, I recommend we....

Explorative questions

- That's really interesting, why do you think that's the case?
- What leads you to that conclusion?

Clarifying

- I don't think I fully got the point on X, can you clarify?
- Let's pause for a second just so I can clarify, did you say....?

Close

- Let's align now on next steps so everyone is clear. We have said.....
- Let's go around the table and hear everyone's individual actions so we know they are all captured and we know who's doing what.

Question Matrix



Often the most critical moment of a project is at the very start, during the briefing. Use the questions below to ensure you're getting the right information and content at the right time.

Context

- What's the big picture?
- How do you know this to be true?
- What problem does this solve?
- Is it the right problem?
- Is it the right solution?
- How does this fit in with the strategy?

Constraints

- Budget/time
- Who/what does this effect?
- Who needs to know?
- When do you need outputs?
- What hard deadlines exist?

Politics

- What else do I need to know?
- What are the different agendas?
- Who might be against this? Why?
- Who is in favor of it?
- What resistance might we meet?
- What if what we think is wrong?

Vision of success

- What does success look like?
- How would you like it to be?
- What do you want people to say/think as a result of this?
- Who is for it?
- How will it make a difference to you/the brand?

Conversational Skills



Affirmations...

Praise people and **be precise** about what it is you are praising.

Reflection...

Reflection - reflecting back a person emotions or words they have said.

Foreshadowing...

Say what you're about to do to give people a moment to register and mentally prepare.

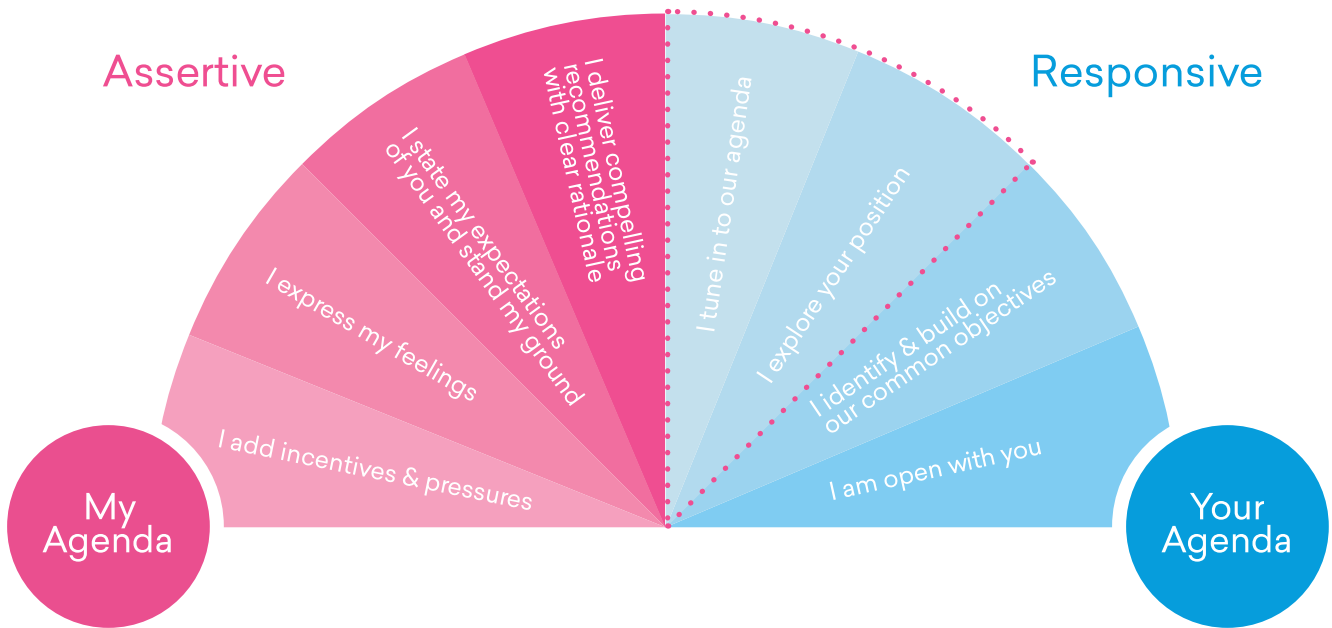
Labelling...

Say what you see. Instead of registering body language but doing nothing about it (but get nervous) call it out, in an empathetic way.

Summarise & Clarify next steps...

Summary - reflecting back what you believe someone has told you.

Push vs Pull communication style





Problem Reframing



Rapid Questioning: HMWs?



Use the following technique to get to the core of a brief, problem or solution.

Materials

- 3 briefs (one from each participant)
- Post-its
- Markers
- Flipchart

Instructions

Step 1

With your teammates, decide which of the 3 briefs you will work on. The owner of this brief will be the Presenter.

Step 2

In 3 mins, the Presenter will present their brief to the group. While the Presenter is speaking, the group will write down any and all questions (one per post-it!) about it individually and in silence. When the 3 minutes are up, put all the post-its on a flip chart, grouping together similar ones.

Step 3

Now who will be the Questioner and who will be the Observer (the Presenter stays the same). The Questioner must ask **ONLY** expansive questions of the Presenter while the Observer must listen and capture/ formulate as many “How Might We” questions as possible in 5 mins. *Ex. “How might we make powerful partnerships to amplify the brand’s credibility?”*

Examples of expansive questions:

“Why is that important...?”

“What was behind that decision...?”

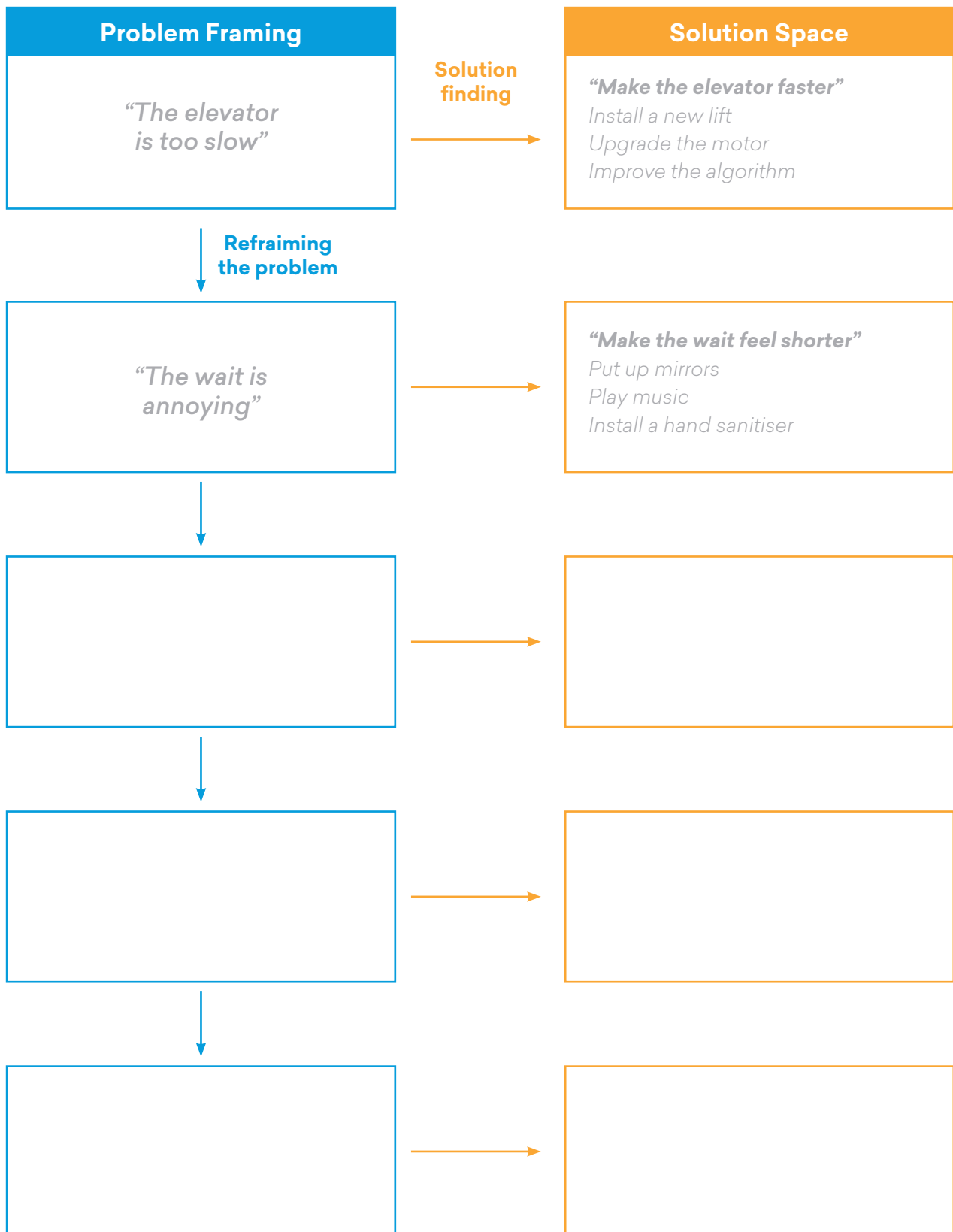
“How do we know that...?”

“What makes you think that...?”

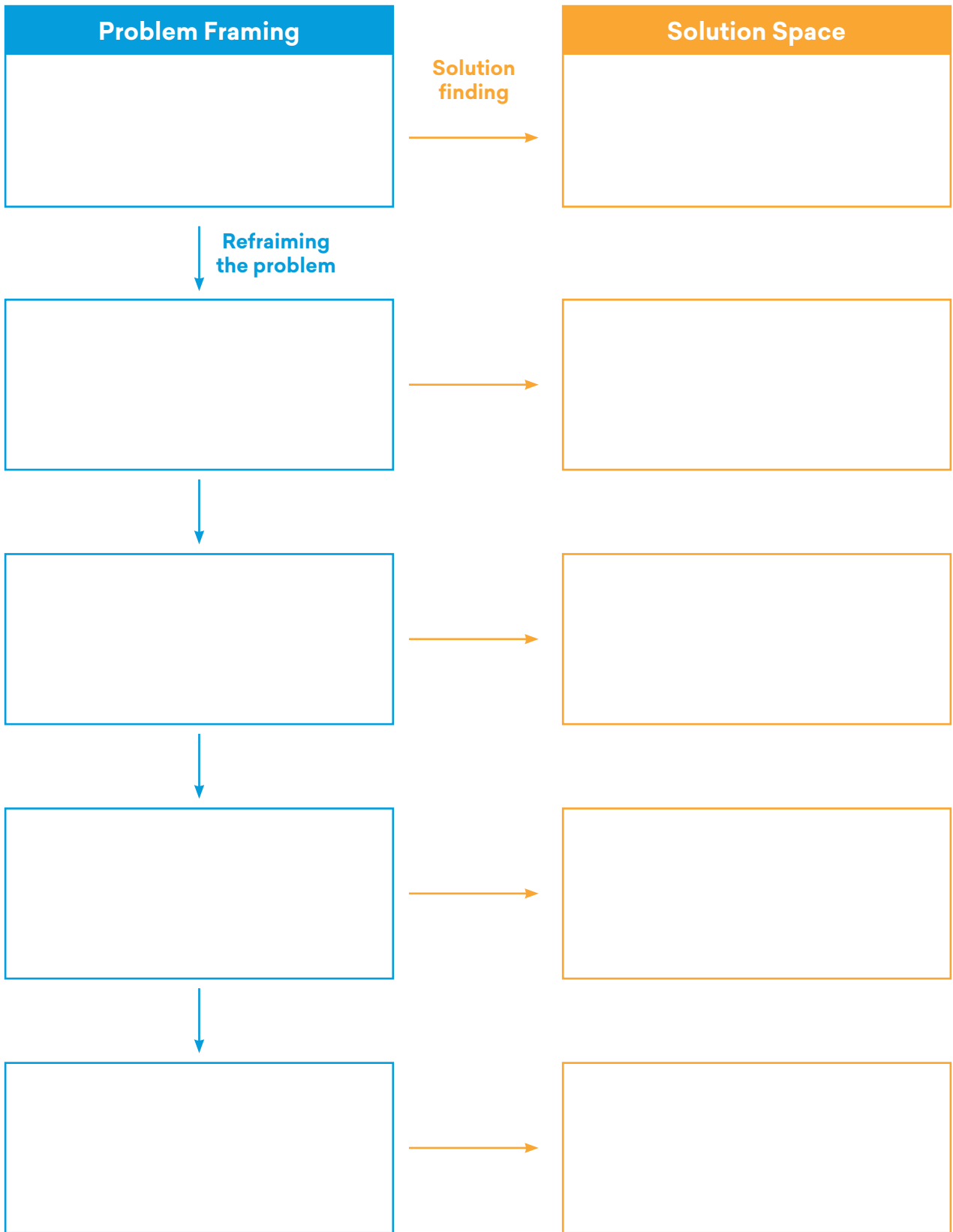
“What if...?”

“How could we...?”

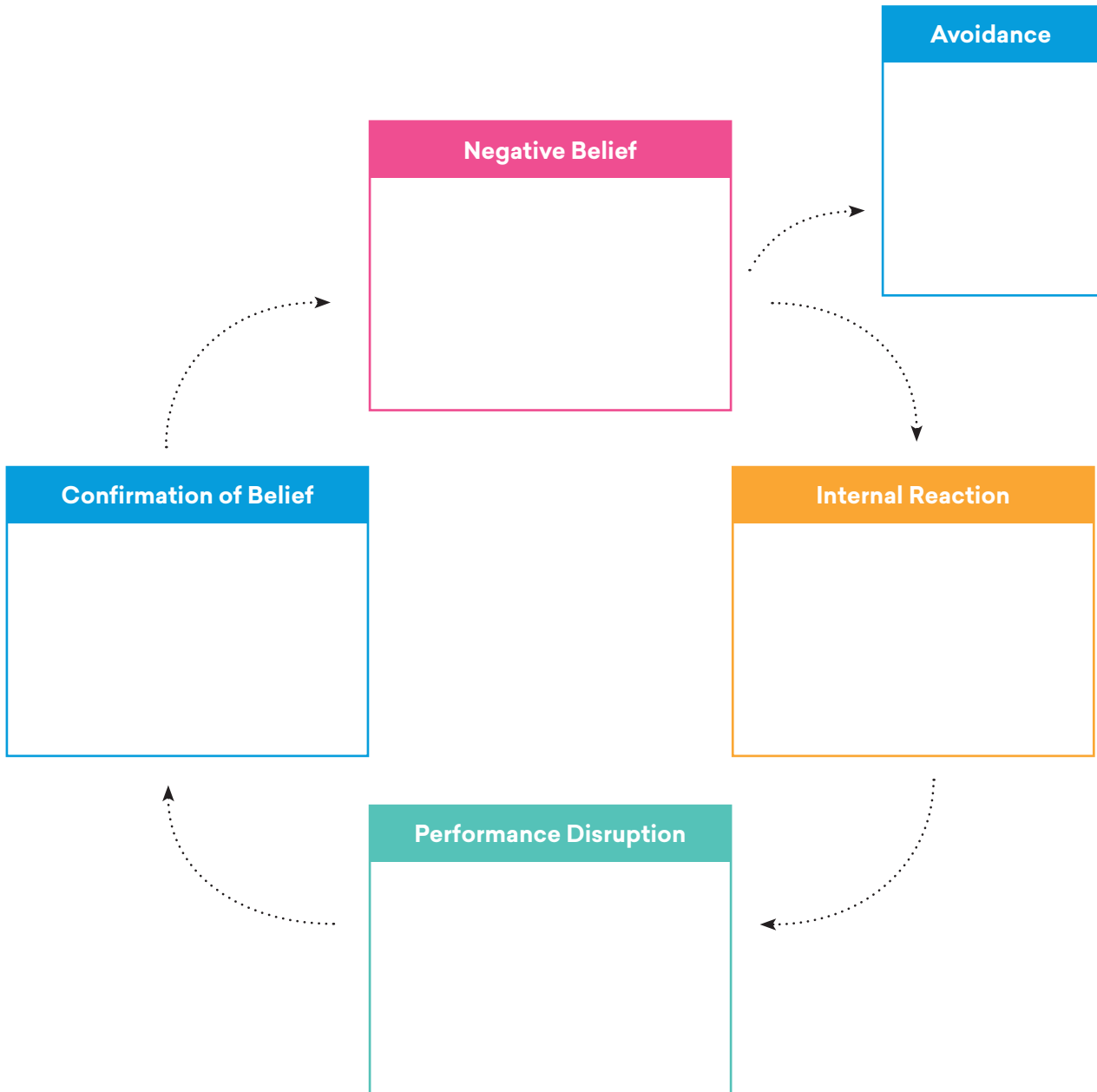
“So What?”



“So What?”



Reframing Your Blockers



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