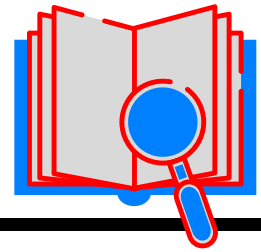


# IN-DEPTH REFLECTION ON MY THEORY OF CONFLICT & CHANGE



Below is a longer set of reflection questions I encourage you to read through, sit with, and journal about. It's a lot of questions, and don't feel the need to thoroughly answer each one in a single sitting! But I hope you will work with some of the questions, and keep these kinds of questions in mind as you think about and engage in political discourse:

- Do I believe that conflict can be constructive, or do I think it is mostly destructive? Why? How did messages from my family or culture impact my beliefs about conflict? How have past experiences impacted my beliefs about conflict? How do my beliefs about the nature of conflict impact how I react to conflict situations?
- Do I believe that people are fundamentally good, fundamentally bad or selfish, or somewhere in between? Why do I believe that? How does my belief impact how I approach other people in conflict?
- Do I believe that people are fundamentally rational, and that people should be persuaded by facts? Or do I believe that we are fundamentally governed by our emotions, and that we are shaped by feelings about our experiences? Or something in between? How does this belief impact how I approach people with different views than me?
- Do I believe that people can change? Why or why not? How have my life experiences shaped this belief? How does this belief impact how I interact with people and approach conflict?
- Do I fundamentally believe that people are masters of their own environment, that people are at the mercy of the world around them, or that people are constantly negotiating the things they can and can't control in life? Why? Does this belief impact the way I choose to take action, or to engage in conflict? How?
- Do I believe that it's best to just address the problems that are showing up in the present moment when I'm in conflict, or do I believe that things that happened in the past are important parts of understanding the present conflict? How does that impact how I approach conflicts?
- Do I usually think about change (in relationships, at work, in society, etc.) as the product of cause-and-effect processes? Or do I think change unfolds in unexpected and unpredictable ways? Or does it depend? How does my belief about how change happens impact the choices I make—in personal relationships, at work, in the voting booth, etc.?
- Where do I think change starts? Does it start with individuals, or in groups, or within organizational structures, or within government?
- How do I think change in society happens? Does it come from changes in top-down policies, grassroots organizing, or some combination? How does this impact how I engage?
- How do all these beliefs impact what I think our country needs right now? How do these beliefs impact how I approach people with different views? How do these beliefs impact how I think about the nature of our country's polarization and how we can reduce it?