Value-Added Facilitation

Presented by Joan Frye Williams
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Infopeople helping libraries think differently

This presentation is not about basic facilitation skills

Rules.
- Welcome to the YES room.
  Please don't use No use Yes and ... .
- Everyone's input is equally valued
- Respect each speaker; listen + ask clarifying Questions
- keep jargon to a minimum
- Cut to the chase
- Signal when we are going off track
- Discussions will focus on interests not people + criticisms
- No idea is bad
- Phone silent
- Job titles are left at the door
- Have fun

It is possible to serve and lead at the same time
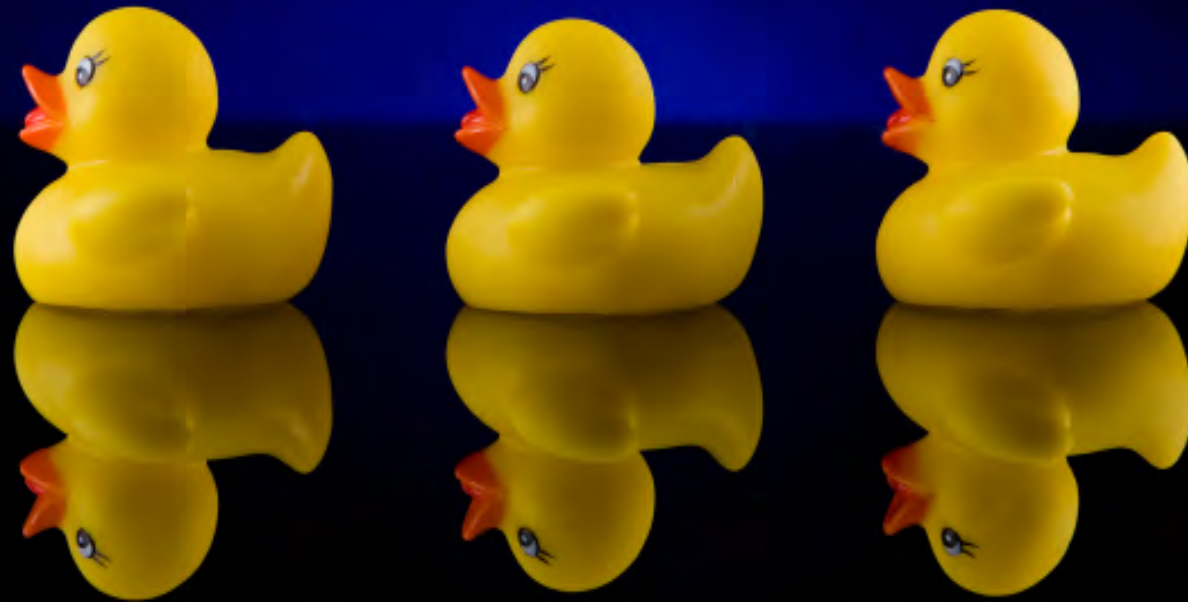
Today's discussion

1. Before you start facilitating
2. Ensuring credibility
3. Addressing conflicts
4. Stimulating the group's best thinking
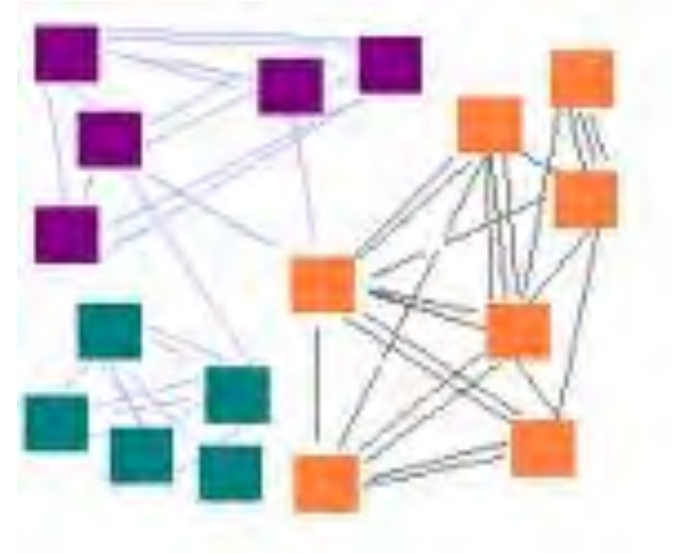5. Consolidating progress

1. Before you start facilitating

Identify the client

Review the context

- Topic(s) for discussion
- Perceived problem(s)
- Related or larger issue(s)
- What happens after this discussion
- Time constraints

Identify and scope
the desired work product
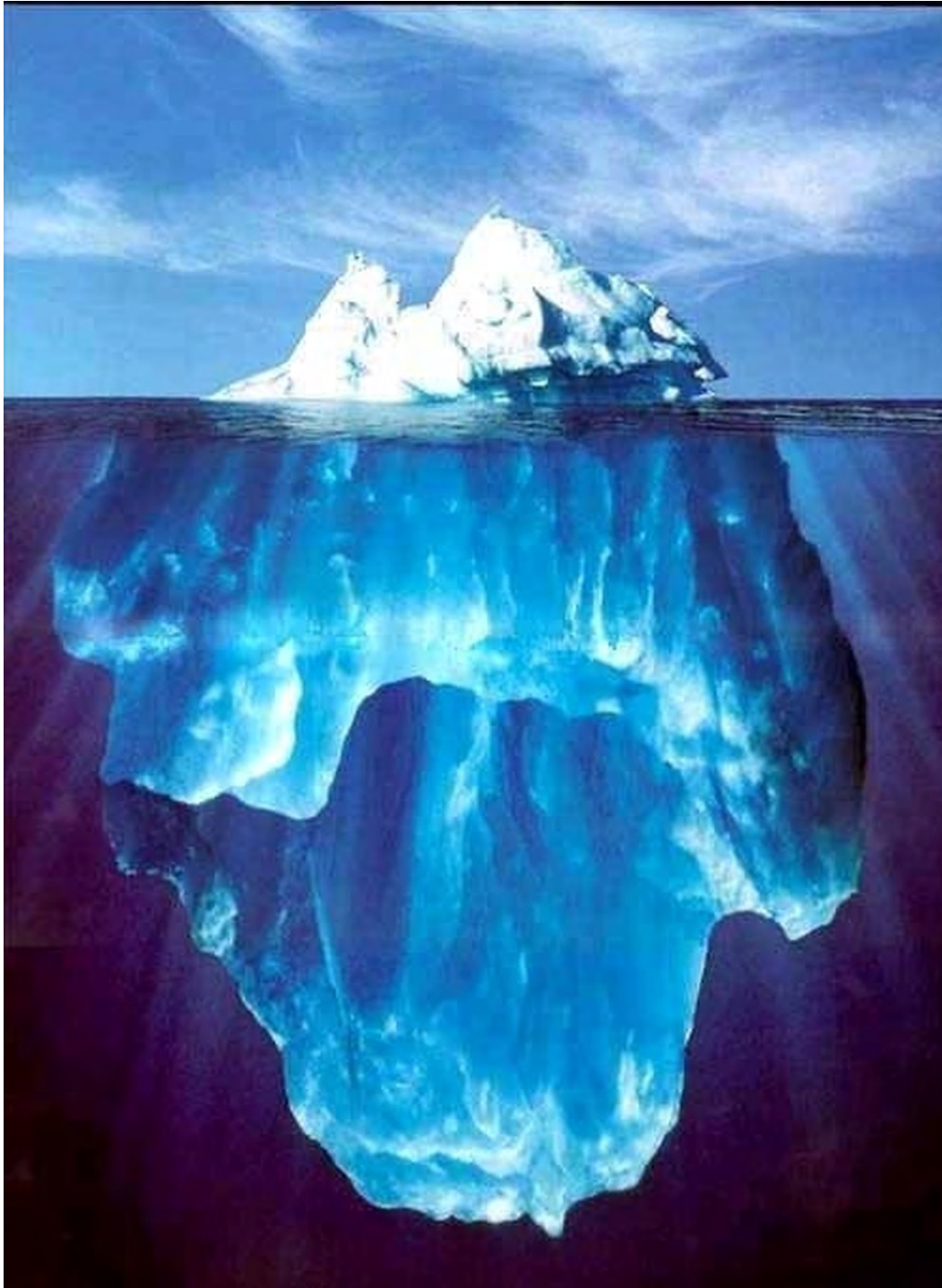
Identify the client's evaluation criteria

Confirm the group's level of authority

- Comment
- Recommend
- Decide
  - For the group
  - Beyond the group

Share all of this with the group

**Other things
to ask the client
up front…**

How was the group constituted?

- Selection process/criteria

- Standing group or this task only?

- Participating as individuals or speaking for a specific constituency?

- Well acquainted with one other?

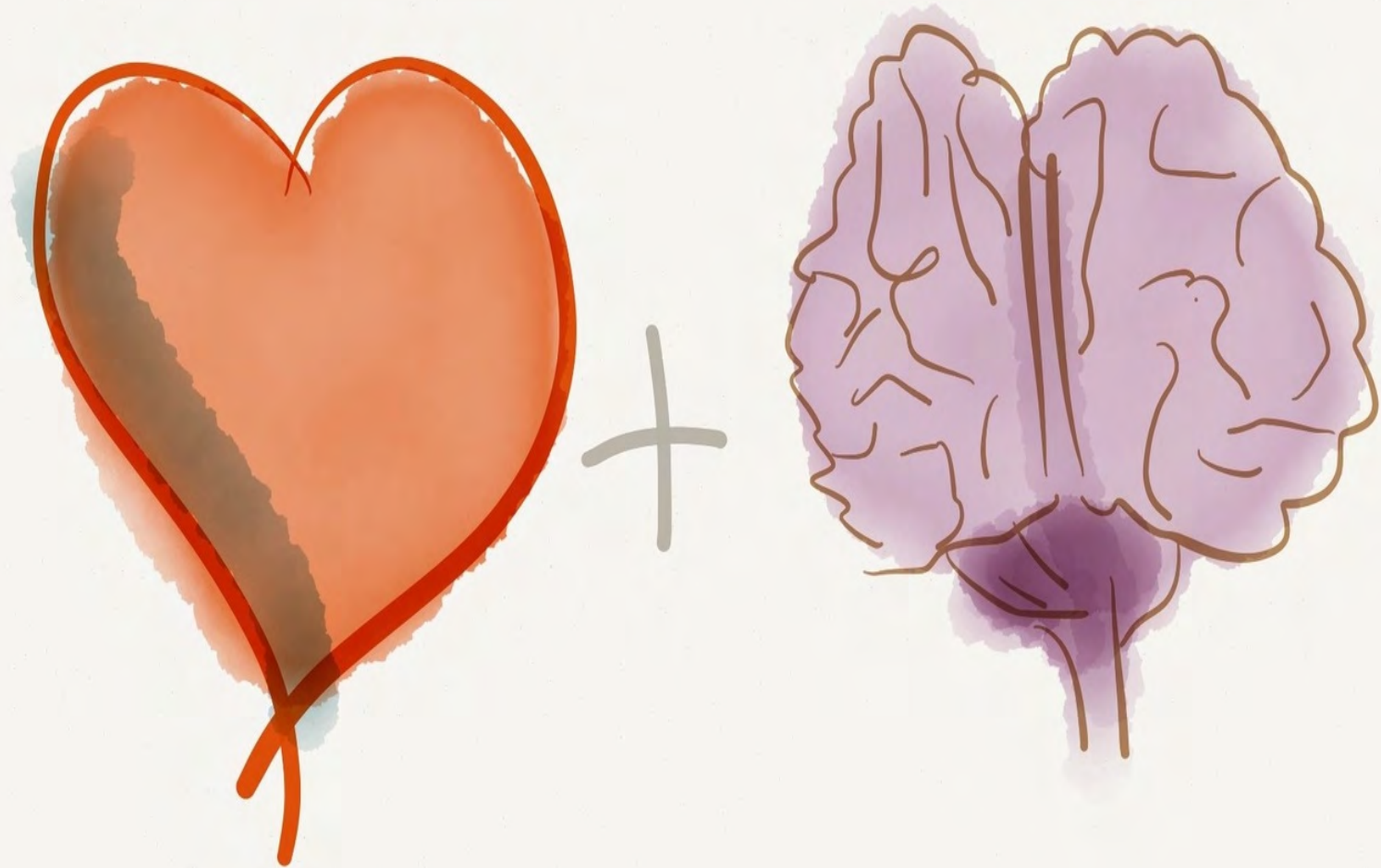- Similar levels of authority?

Are there likely points of conflict?

- Trigger event(s)
- Past attempts to address the same topic
- Challenging relationships

Is there any option
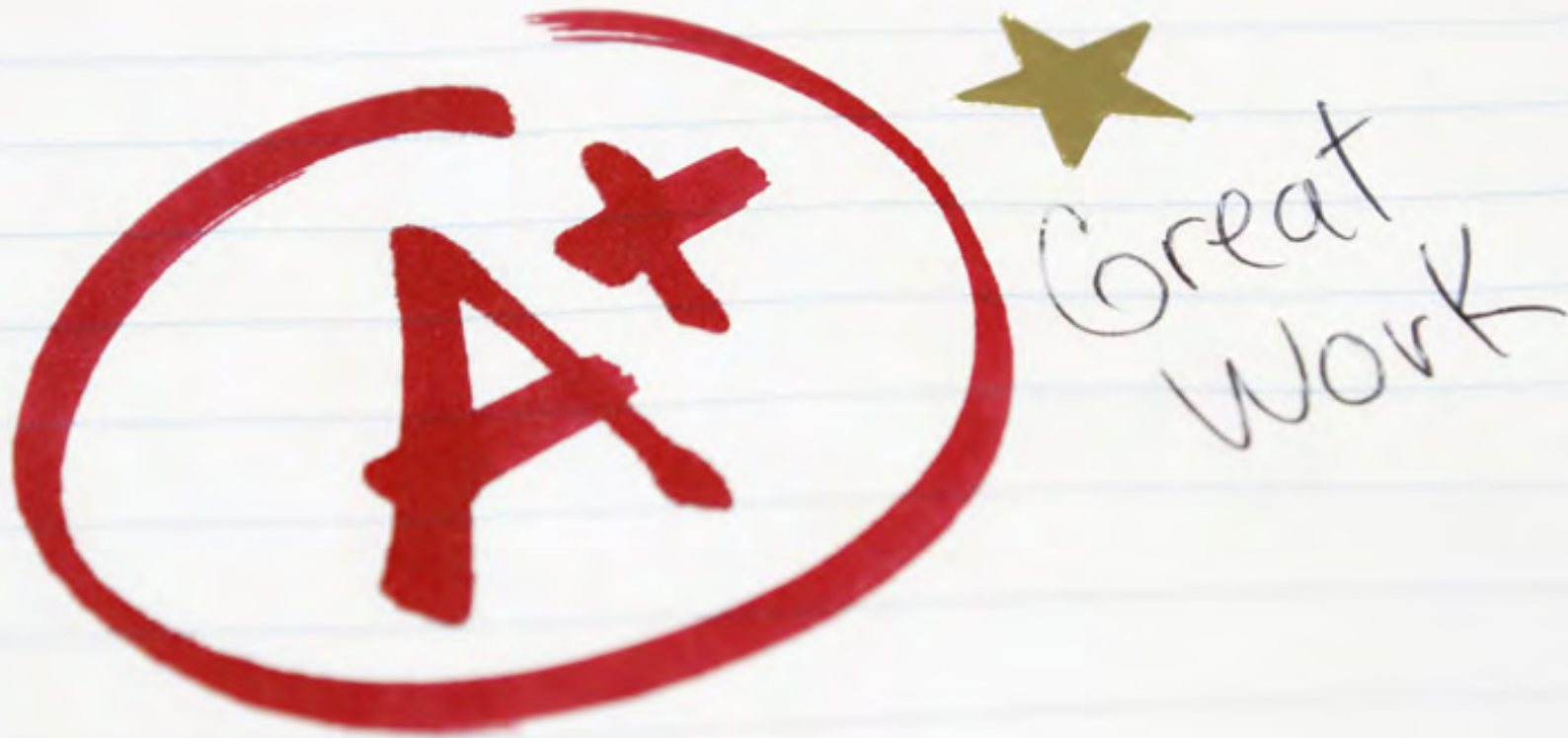# we should be sure to consider?

Do you have developmental expectations?

How much leeway do I have to challenge or redirect group members?

2. Ensuring credibility

Compare the group's evaluation criteria with the client's

Establish baseline facts

1. What do we know?

2. How do we know it?

3. Can we agree on these facts?

4. Is there anything else we need to know before we can move forward?

Check for assumptions

Always pause to illuminate

- Unsupported assertions
- Vivid anecdotes
- Editorial comments
- Attributions of intent

Engage reluctant participants

- Eliminate competition
  - Round robin
  - One-on-one pairs
  - Show of hands
- Anonymize input
  - Write, then hand in
  - Write, then post

Mine past successes

Speak up for absent stakeholders

Document your work in progress

3. Addressing conflicts
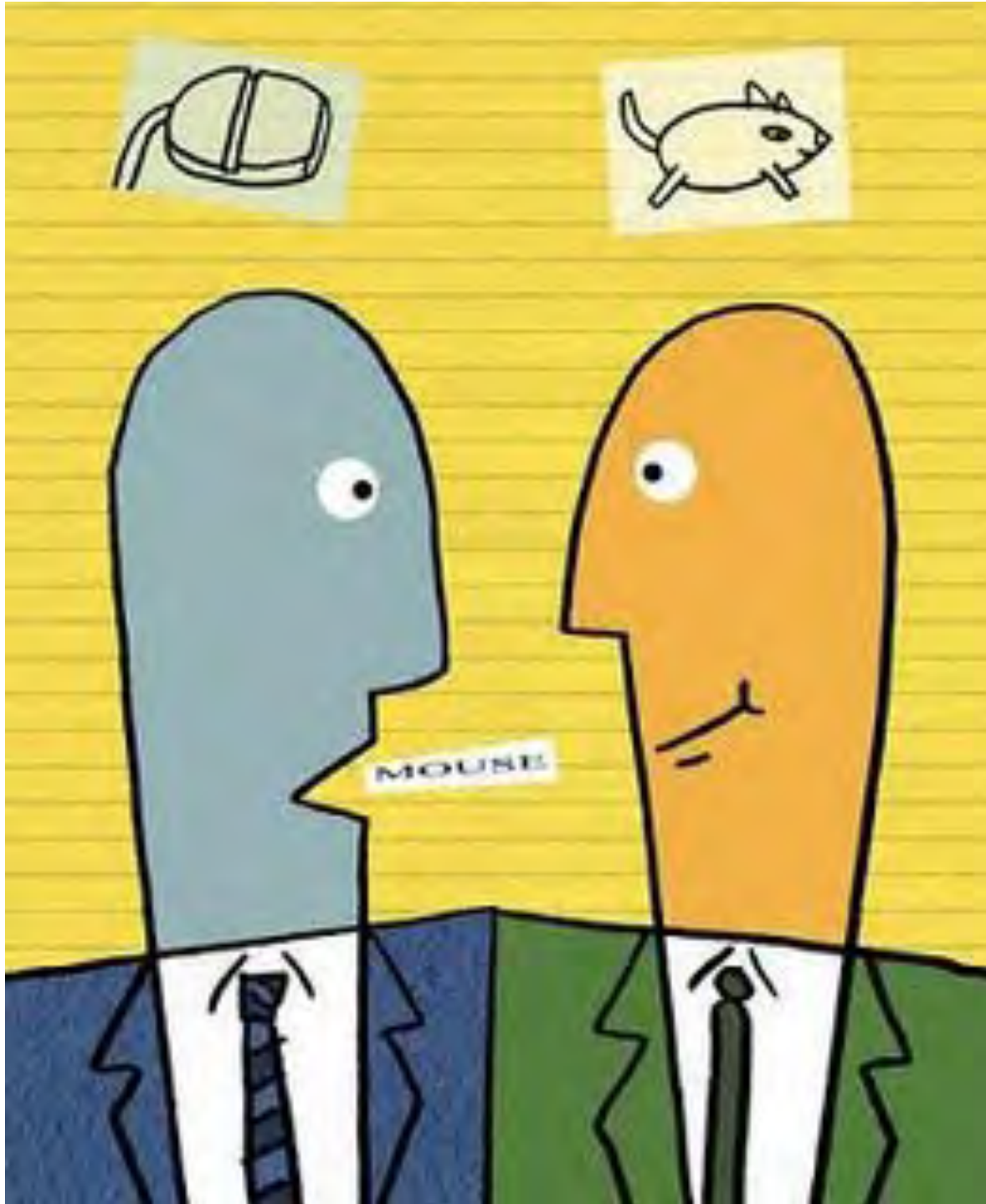
Acknowledge the point(s) of disagreement

Reframe as a design question

Assess the stakes

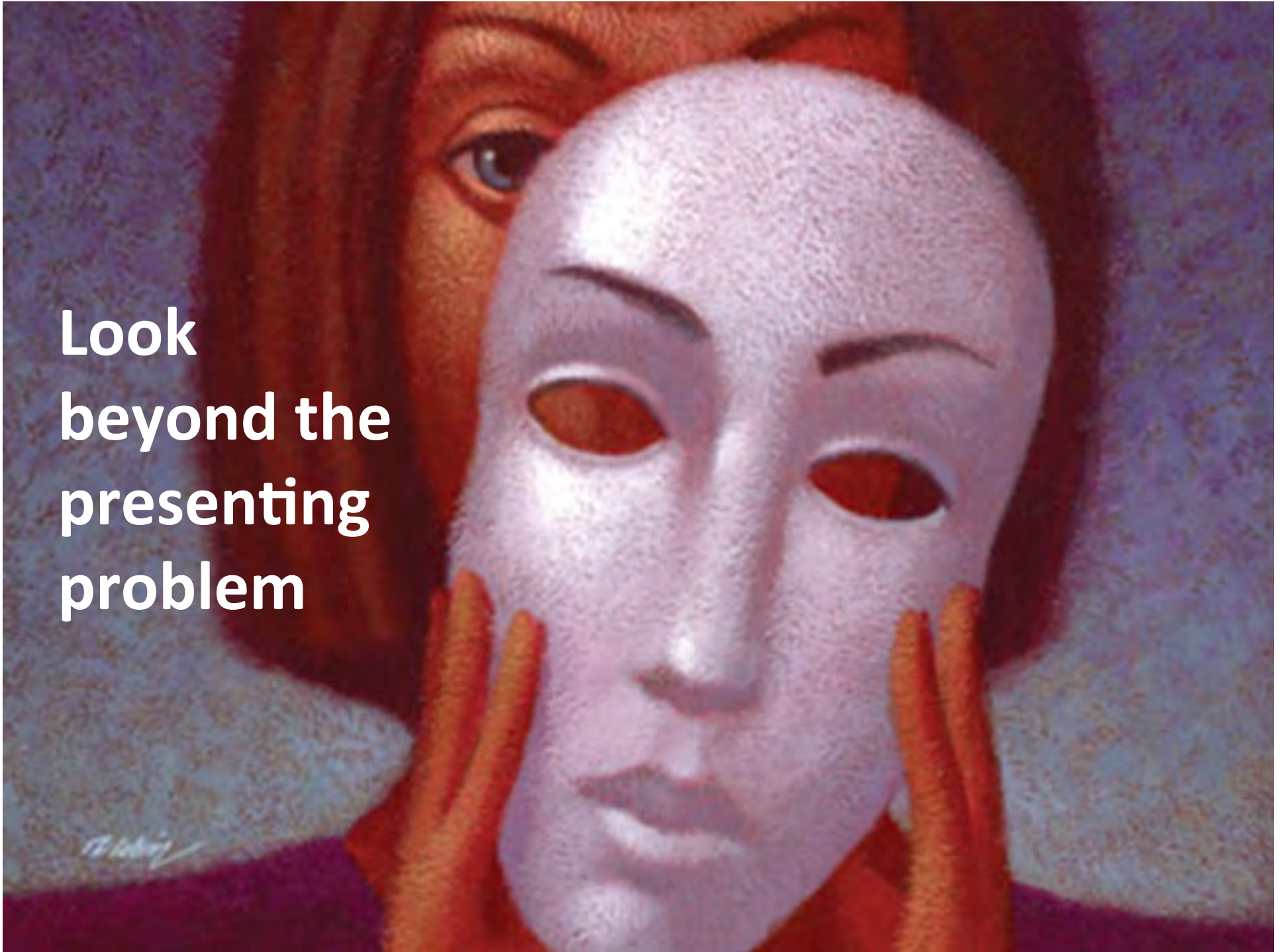Explore a variety of choices

Propose an acceptable solution
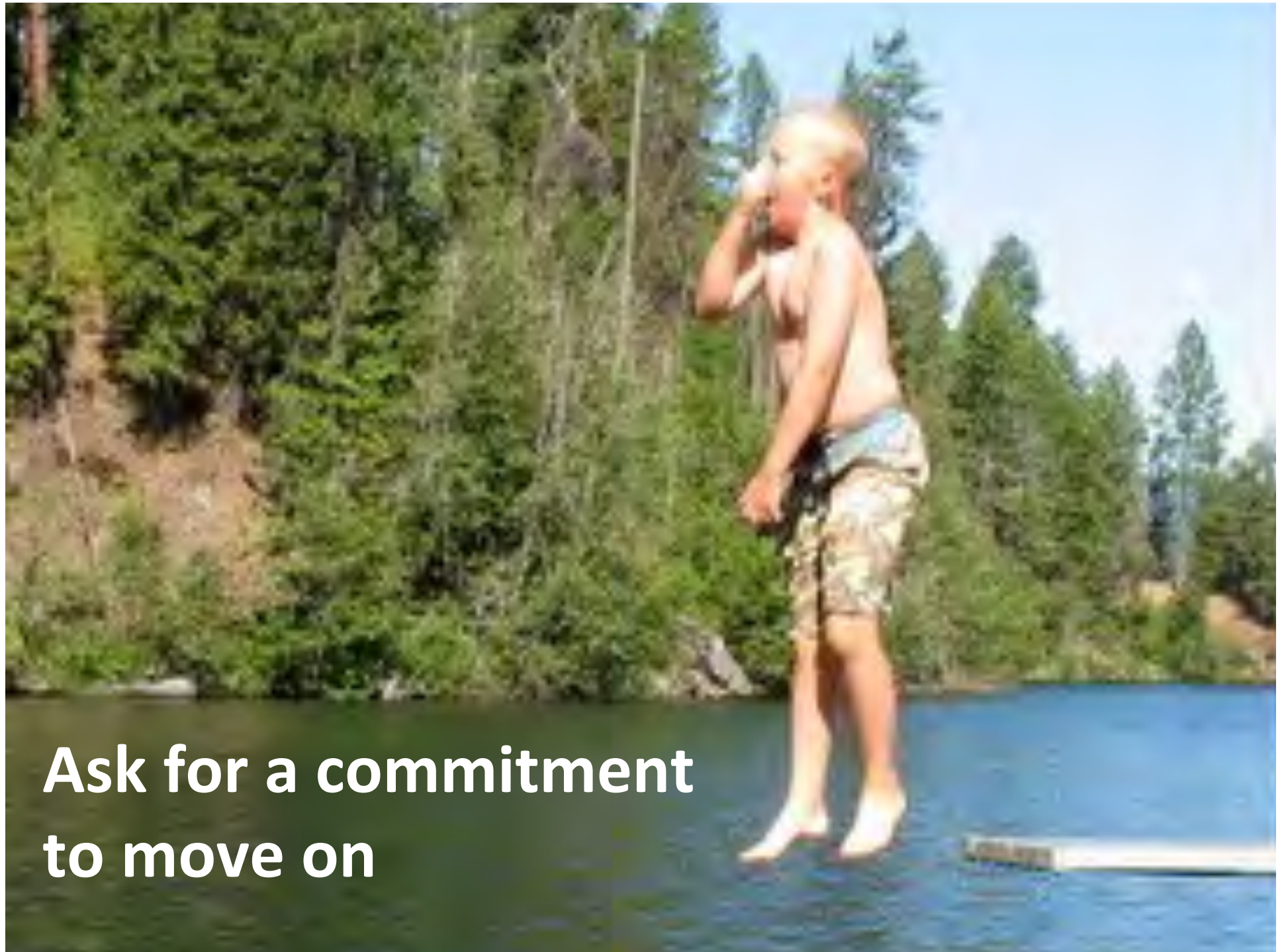
Ask for a commitment
to move on

4. Stimulating the group's best thinking
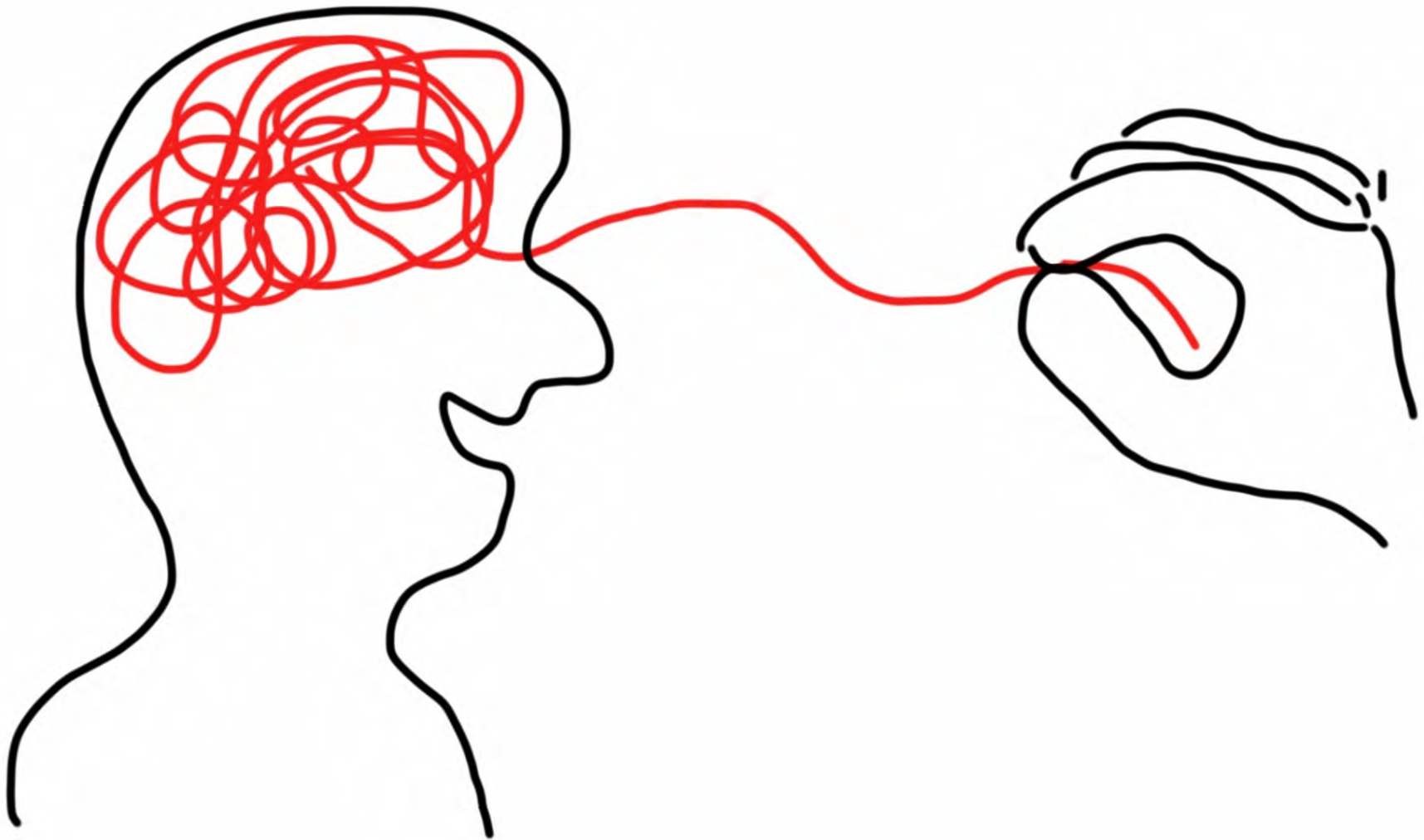
Look
beyond the
presenting
problem

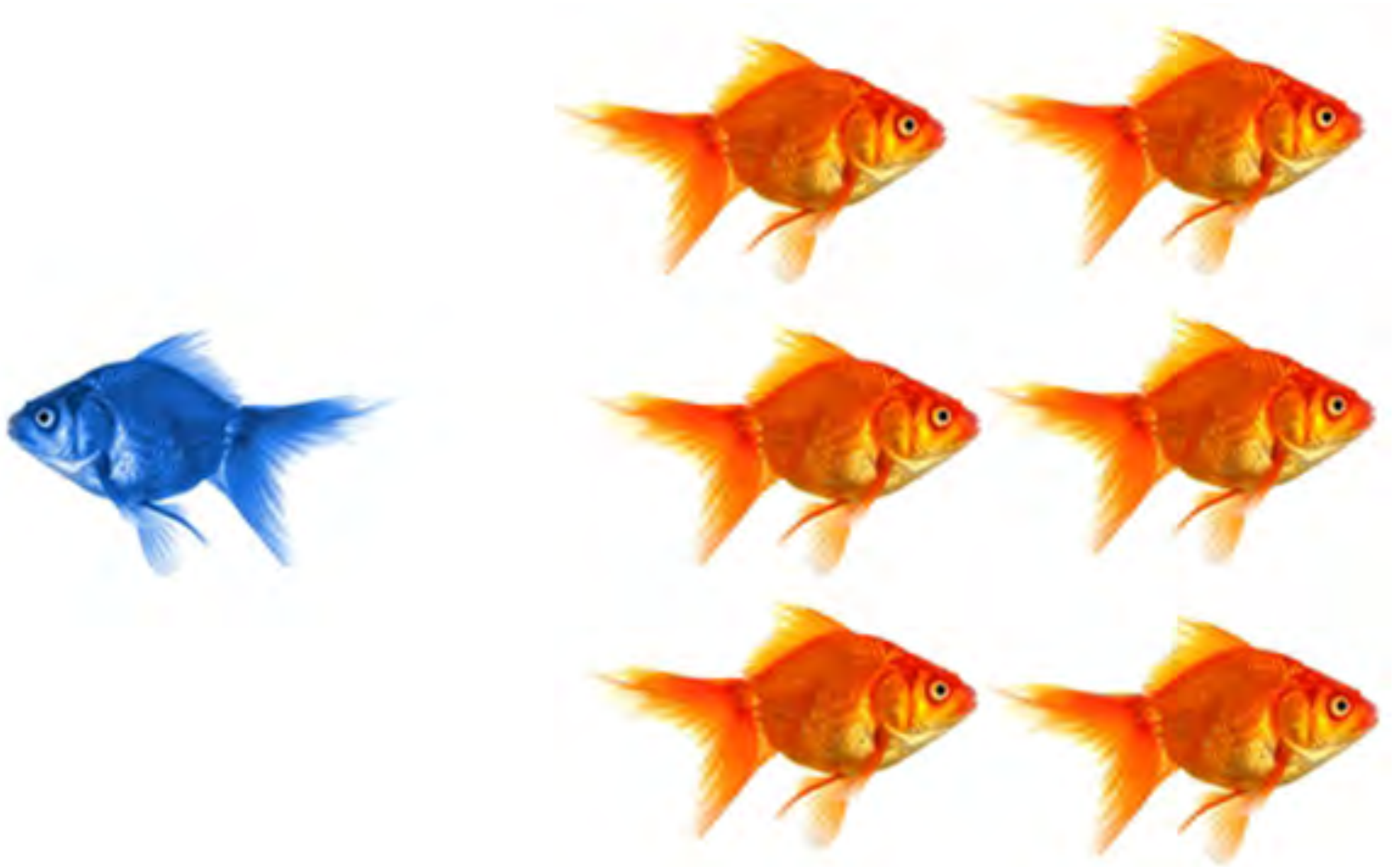Challenge perceived barriers
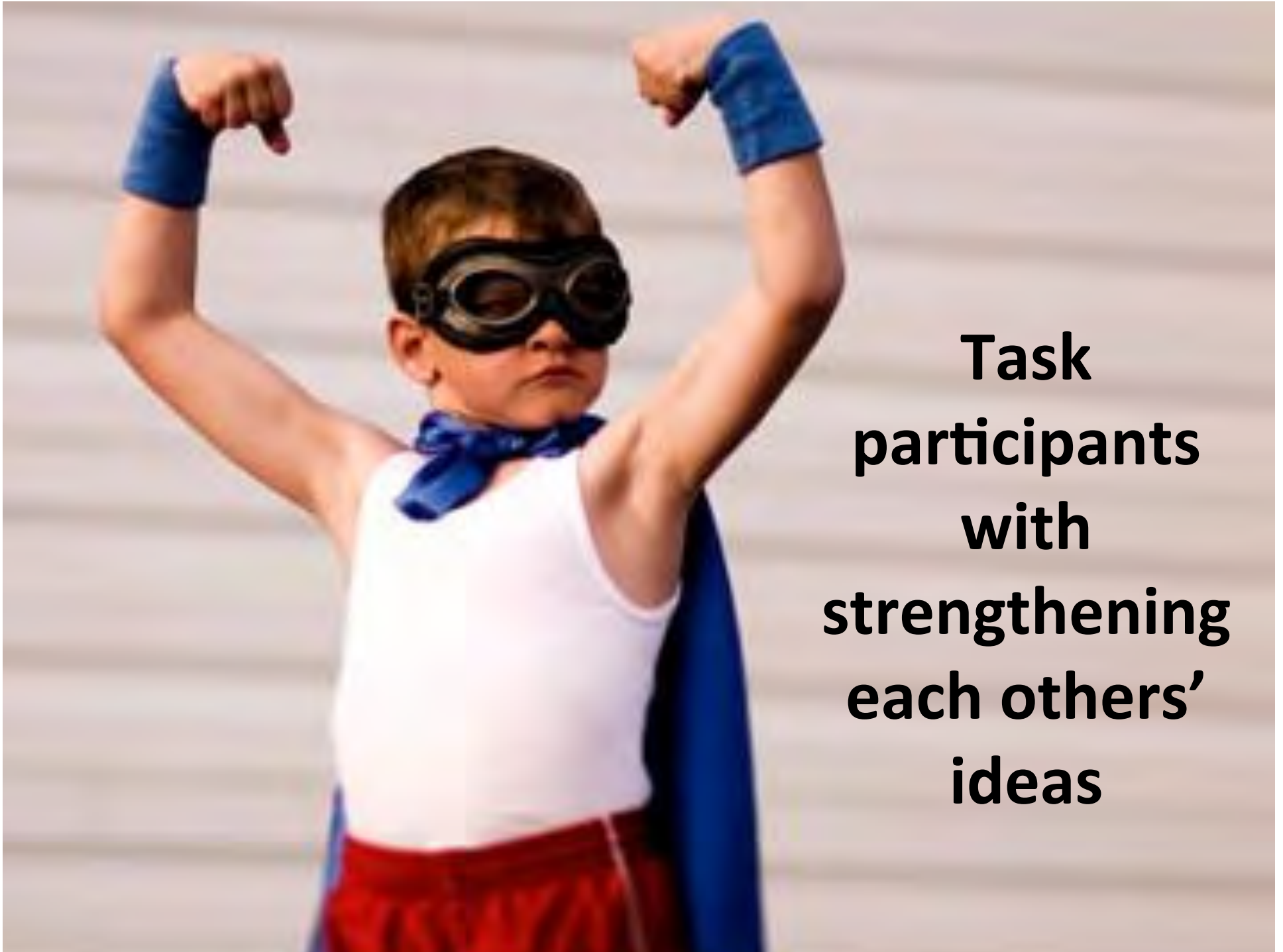
Task participants with strengthening each others' ideas

Point out recurrent themes

Explore the contrarian view

Extend trend lines

Combine the best elements of multiple ideas

5. Consolidating progress

Recap key points separately

Create one or more versions of the work product

Test against the client's criteria and revise as necessary

**Anticipate
questions
and prepare
talking points**

Ask each participant to confirm buy-in

- The process was fair

- I understood the decision criteria

- There was an opportunity for my voice to be heard

- Even if the result isn't exactly what I would have chosen, I will support it with positive communications and actions

Move forward

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Let's continue the conversation...

Photo by Martin Helmke

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