

Diagnostic for Competing Values and Big Assumptions

(source: *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*, by Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey. Jossey-Bass, 2002 // compiled by Abram Kielsmeier-Jones)



A Commitment/Value/Belief (really great if this happens)	B What I'm Doing or Not Doing That Prevents My Column #1 from Happening	C Therefore, Competing Commitment/Value/Belief (really bad if this does not happen)	D Big Assumption behind Competing Commitment
I am committed to the value or importance of...	For example...	I may also be committed to...	I assume that...
E Step 1: See self in relation to D	F Step 2: Evidence against D	G Step 3: The Biography of D	H Step 4: A modest, safe test
Because I assume this:			

The diagnostic reads from left to right, from Column A to Column B and so on up through Column H. The exercise reaches one culmination point in Column D when I find a Big Assumption I didn't know was there. The second row, then, has me see myself in relation to this assumption, find some evidence against it, explore the biography of that assumption and how it came to be, and finally design and execute a “safe, modest test” to show how that Big Assumption may be mistaken, the culmination of the exercise.