

EXPANDING AWARENESS

TOOL 4

CHECKLIST TO AVOID TRAPS IN THINKING

To avoid the traps of false consensus and overconfidence

- Conduct a pre-mortem
- Consider the opposite: What is the strongest case you can make for the other person's or side's view or proposal?
- Recall a time when you lacked power: spend five minutes thinking or writing about it
- Use a consultant to test assumptions, proposals/ options, and arguments

To avoid fixed-pie bias

Look for differences in . . .

- Interests (yours and theirs)
- Capabilities or resources
- Priorities (compare your ranking of issues to theirs)
- Time horizons
- Beliefs about the future
- Risk preferences

To avoid the trap of reactive devaluation

What is their likely proposal?

- How would you feel about it if it came from someone you respected (a third party) rather than the other side?
- Are there any ways it might be good for you?
- How can you improve it, rather than opposing it?

To avoid falling prey to the Fundamental Attribution Error

Ask yourself:

- ❑ How can I understand the other side's behavior, statements, or demands in terms of their interests and the constraints they face in this situation?
- ❑ Why might my counterpart be acting like a jerk? (Tough tactics have worked previously; has strong BATNA; is rewarded for this behavior; is under pressure to reach target; bad mood; needs to impress someone; other factors?)

To guard against helplessness/pessimism

- ❑ Conduct a pre-rebus: imagine the best outcome; how did it come about?
- ❑ Recall a time when you were powerful
- ❑ Seek support from a friend or ally
- ❑ Look for different kinds of power; remember that there is power in:
 - An elegant solution
 - A strong precedent, compelling example, or principle
 - Subject-matter expertise
 - A fair or transparent process
 - The ability to affect your counterpart's reputation or future dealings, perhaps in a coalition with others
 - Clarity: questions that can sharpen your focus and your mandate
 - Rehearsal
 - A positive mood and mindset