

Learning from Differences: A Critical Method to Repairing Trust



Washington State Lean
Conference 

October 2020

Dr. Wendy Fraser



Kathryn Schultz “On Being Wrong”



TED talk filmed
March 2011

“

Trusting too much in the feeling of being on the correct side of anything, can be very dangerous.

”

“ When we stop entertaining the possibility that we could be wrong, we wind up doing things like...torpedoeing the global economy.”



When people disagree, we tend to think that the other person is:

- **Ignorant – the other person must not have all the same facts as I do.**
- **Idiot – the other person has the same facts, but they just can't put it together right.**
- **Evil – the other person is distorting the data for their own malevolent purposes.**

Reflection: Think about a time when you knew you were right and the other person was wrong.



1. What makes you so certain that you are right?
2. How would things change if it made no difference who was right or wrong?
3. What gets in your way of being “curious” and open to the possibility that you could be wrong?

A background image showing three people in a professional setting. In the foreground, a woman with curly blonde hair is looking towards the left. Behind her, a man with dark hair and a beard is looking towards the right. To the left, another person is partially visible, looking towards the center. The image is slightly blurred, giving it a soft, professional feel.

Learning from Differences

- When we are in judgment mode, we stop being curious and tend to not gather sound and current data.
- Our beliefs may block us from learning from differences.



Learning from Differences

- Learning from differences is not tolerating differences or agreeing to disagree
- When we explore the difference, we actually learn something about ourselves from the other person(s)

“When wounds, ego,
and fear get involved,
they interfere with
accurate perception.”



Dr. Darya Funches



Amygdala Hijack

Emotions Spike

Experience

Prevents Thinking

Reaction



Amygdala Hijack

Experience

Emotions Spike

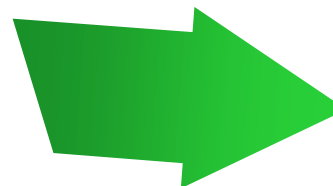
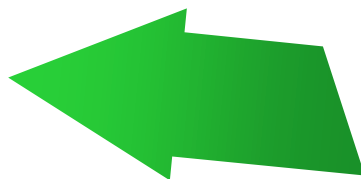
Prevents Thinking

Time Passes

Reaction
or
Response

Reflect
Curious
Reframe

Choices



Curious



How to have a “Learning from Differences” Conversation

Part One: Reflect and Prepare

1. Think about someone who did something different to shared a different opinion or perspective that triggered a negative thought or emotion in you.
2. Identify what triggered your negative perception. How is it different from what you think or believe?
3. Identify what you want to learn from that person about *their thoughts and beliefs*.





How to have a “Learning from Differences” Conversation

Part Two: Invite and Engage

4. Ask the person to have a conversation with you.
5. Describe the event or situation that you are curious about *without disclosing why it impacted you*.
6. Ask the person about their thoughts, beliefs, or experiences that influenced their behavior.
 - Seek to understand.
 - Ask open ended questions (not leading ones)
 - Let something new into your thinking



How to have a “Learning from Differences” Conversation

Part Three: Reflect and Grow

7. What did you learn about yourself?
8. What are you still curious about learning?
9. Check in on the relationship – is it in good shape after the conversation?



Tool: Reframing

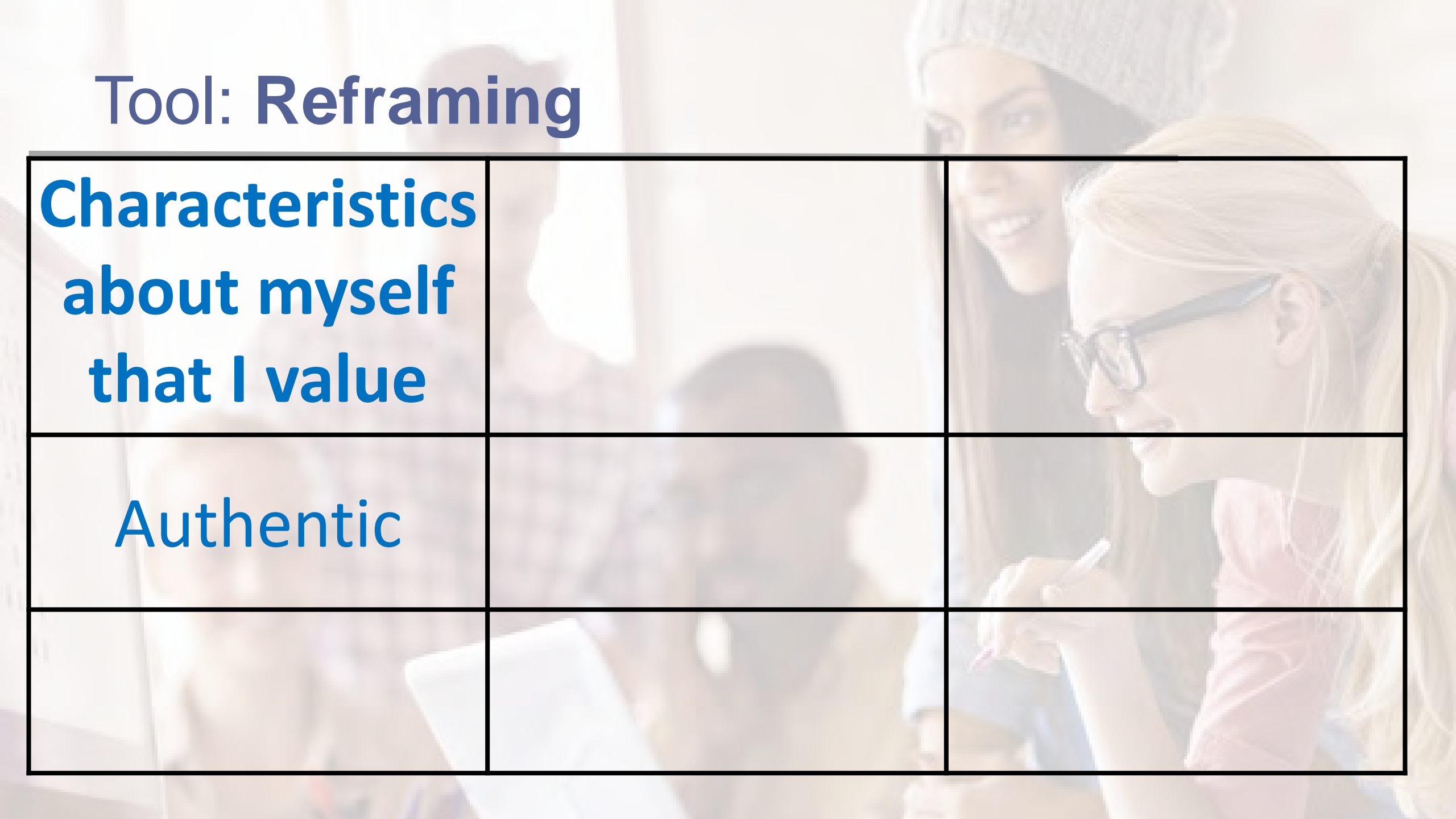
**Characteristics
about myself
that I value**

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Characteristics about myself that I value | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Tool: Reframing

**Characteristics
about myself
that I value**

Authentic

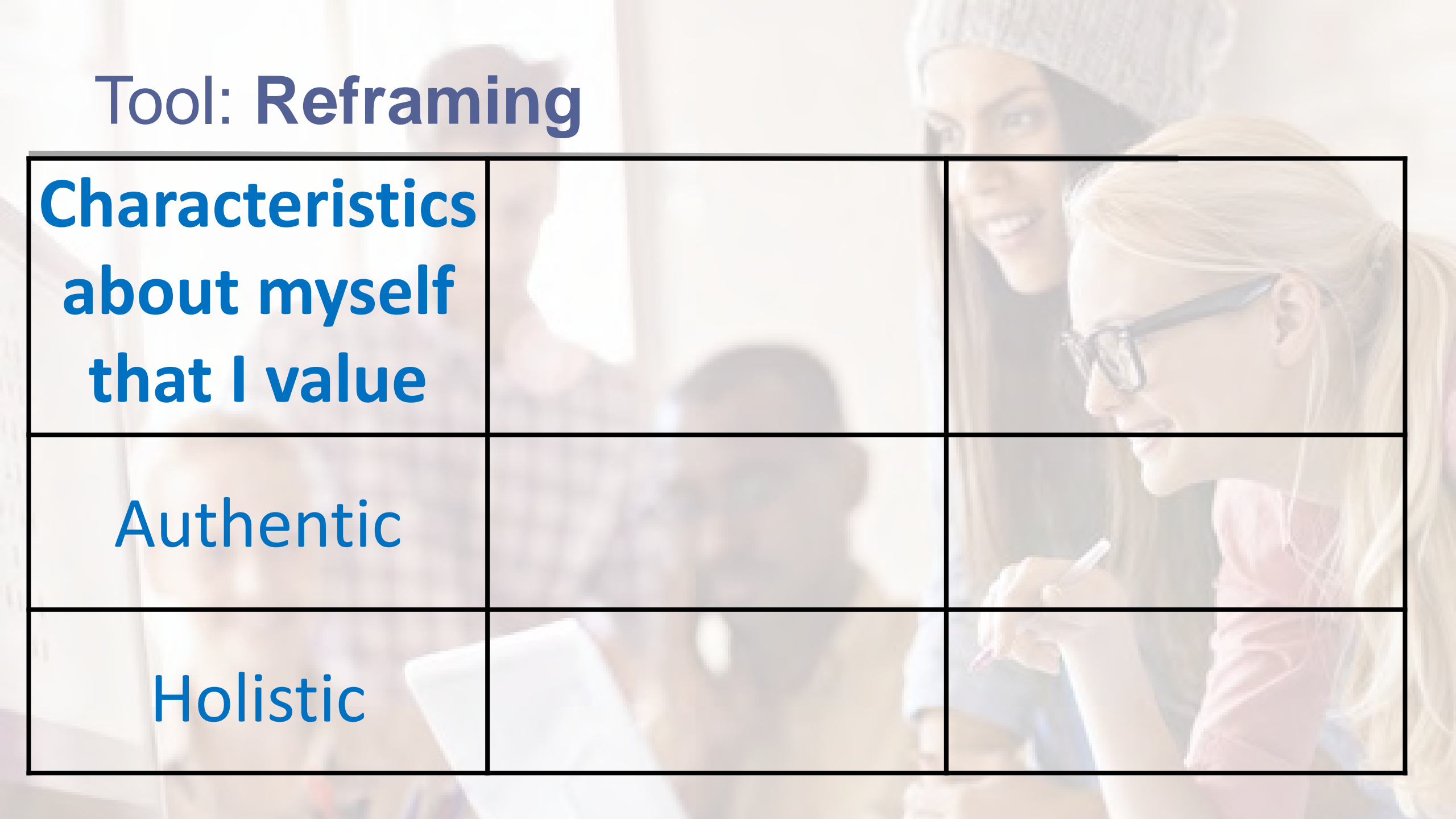


Tool: Reframing

**Characteristics
about myself
that I value**

Authentic

Holistic



Tool: Reframing

| Characteristics about myself that I value | Psychological Opposite | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Authentic | | |
| Holistic | | |

Tool: Reframing

| Characteristics about myself that I value | Psychological Opposite | |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Authentic | Shallow | |
| Holistic | | |

Tool: Reframing

| Characteristics about myself that I value | Psychological Opposite | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Authentic | Shallow | |
| Holistic | Selfish | |

Tool: Reframing

| Characteristics about myself that I value | Psychological Opposite | Reframe |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Authentic | Shallow | |
| Holistic | Selfish | |

Tool: Reframing

| Characteristics about myself that I value | Psychological Opposite | Reframe |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Authentic | Shallow | Cautious |
| Holistic | Selfish | |

Tool: Reframing

| Characteristics about myself that I value | Psychological Opposite | Reframe |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Authentic | Shallow | Cautious/Shy |
| Holistic | Selfish | Protective |

Questions?

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Groups Get Unstuck

Wendy Fraser, Ph.D.