

Paul and Women

Highland Oaks Church of Christ

Dallas, Texas

May 18, 2014

1. We must be aware of the “soundtrack” that is playing from our life.

2. The Bible was not meant to be read in small chunks- it must be seen in light of the whole.

3. When we read, we read in light of the journey and not a single destination.

4. Scriptural authority points to a person more than an intellectual position or system of belief.

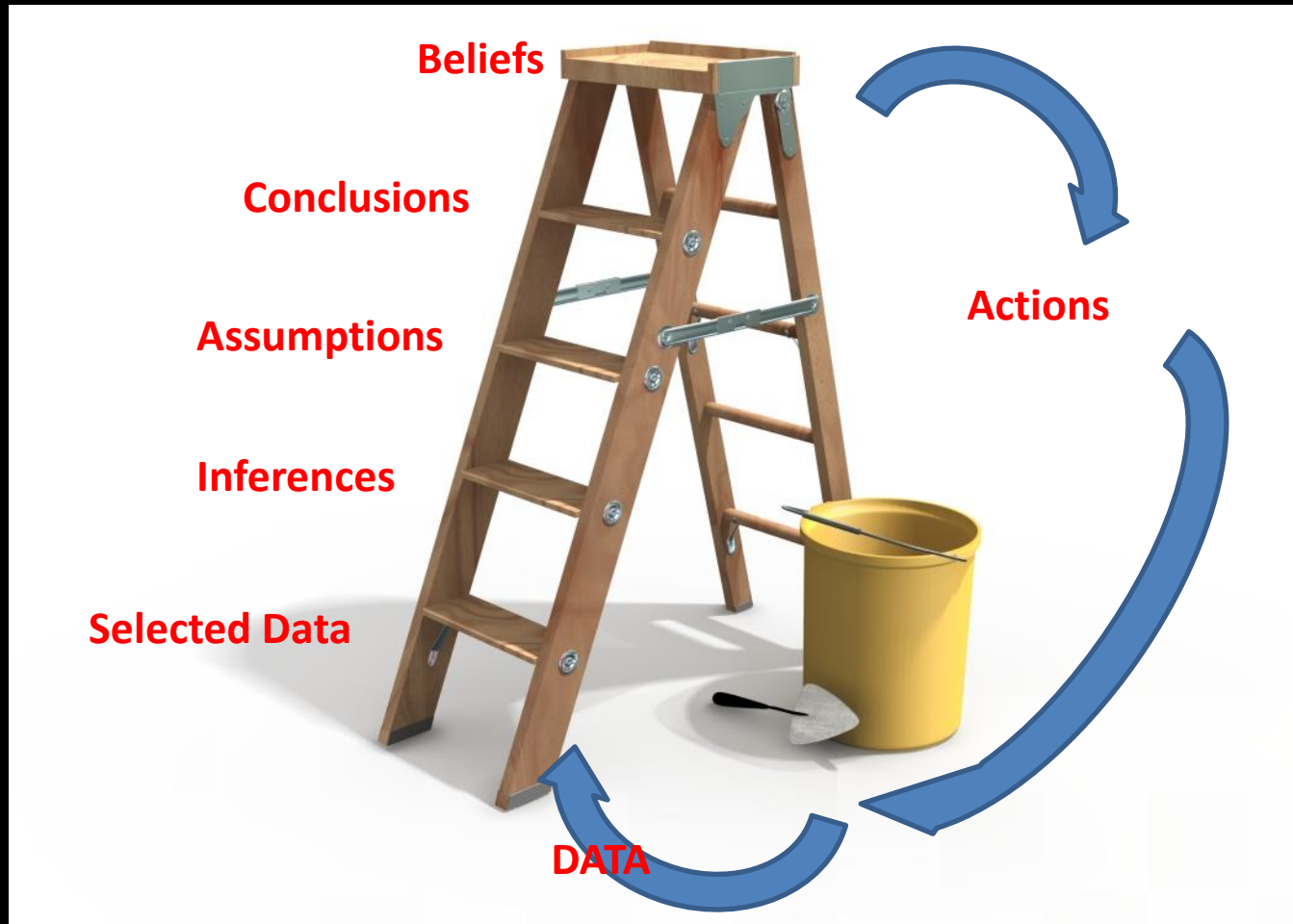
5. Studying scripture points us to living life together as much as living life as an individual.

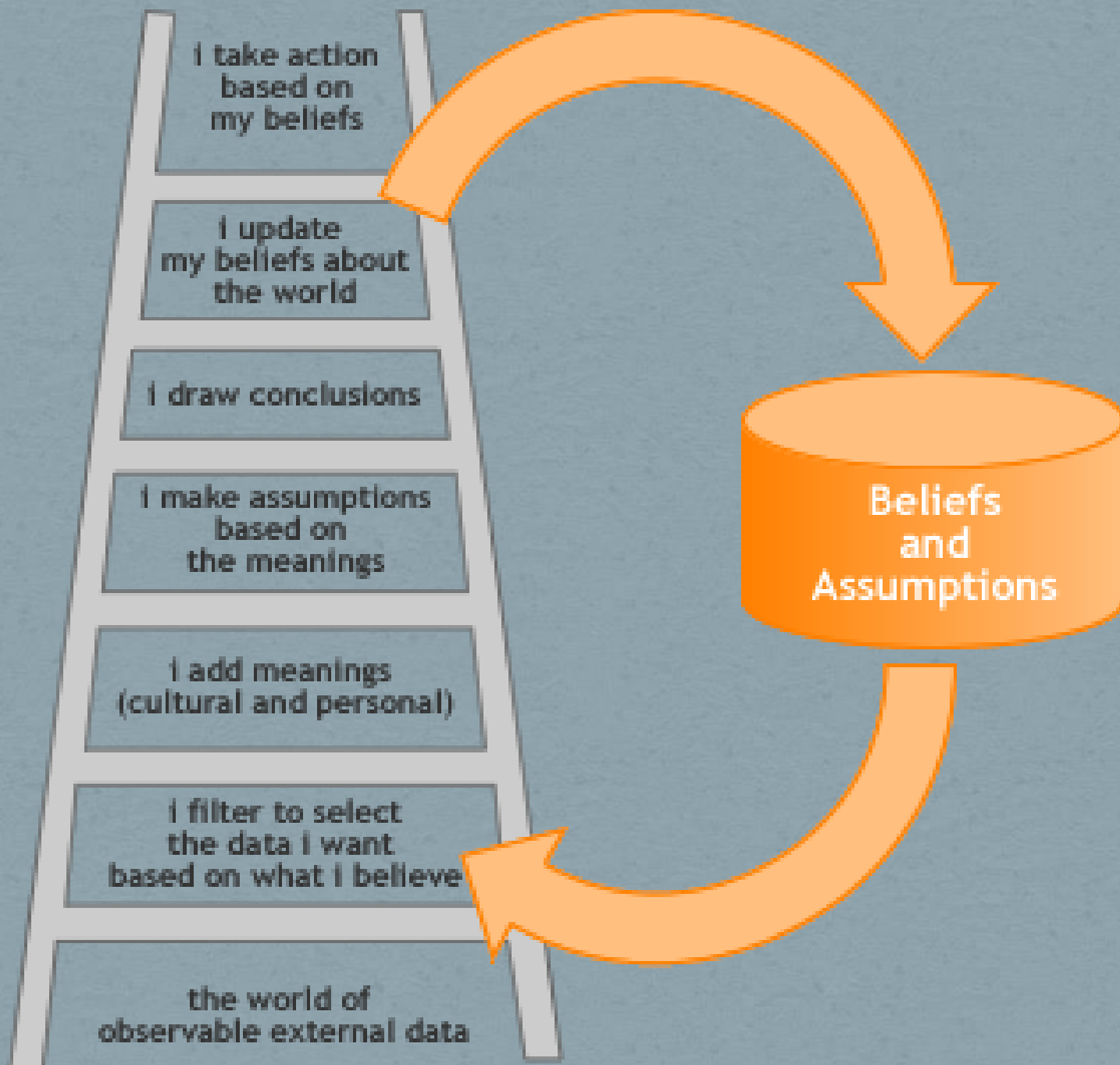
Reading Scripture: *Paul and Women*

It's *How* We Read, not *What* We Read

Ladder of Inference

Chris Argyris/Peter Senge





Understanding Brain Function

- Limbic (emotional brain) - automatic guidance system organized by the emotional or instinctual processes that are necessary to maintain life
- Neocortex (thinking brain) – mostly organized in the cerebral cortex or frontal lobe that functions by processes of thought, reasoning, logic

Understanding Brain Function

- Brain Process
 - Instinctive Reaction – Fight or Flight
 - Emotional Response
 - Reasoned Response
- Reason and Emotion function together to produce complex decision-making.
- Only simplest of decisions are made by the reasoning function alone.

Implications for Reading Scripture

“Come, let us reason together”

A Change of Form is Always Perceived as a
Change in Content!

Head and Heart: The Distance between my
intellectual decision making and my emotional
heartstrings.

A Confessional Journey

“Children are the world’s best recorders and the world’s worst interpreters!”

Terry Smith

What I (implicitly) learned as a child: Rules for Reading Scripture

NT > OT

Acts > Gospels

Acts 2:38 > John 3:16 or Luke 23:43

Paul > Gospels

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What I (implicitly) learned as a child

Rules for reading Scripture

Paul > Paul!

Roman 6:3-4 > Romans 10:9

My Head and My Heart

My Head: Many things we do in church no longer make sense to me.

My Heart: If we change, we will no longer be “Church of Christ”!

Paul and Women

Paul > Paul!

I Corinthians 14:34 > I Corinthians 11:13

Eph. 5:22 > Eph. 5:21

I Tim. 2:12 > I Tim 2:1-2, or 2:8, or 2:15

I Tim 2:12 > Romans 16

I Tim 2:12-14 > Gal. 3:28 or II Cor. 5:17

Paul and Women

Paul > Paul!

The Sin of Eve (I Tim. 2:13-14) > The Sin of Adam (Romans 5:12-14)

The Hierachy of God > Christ > Man > Woman makes women subservient to men from Creation itself. (I Cor. 11:3 > Col. 1:15-20 or Phil 2:6)

Privileging Texts

Who gets to decide which of Paul's words should be given priority?

On what basis?

The "Culture Card" – Who gets to play it, and when?

Models for Reading that are often Assumed

- The Bible is Literal History – any doubts about that are attacks on Inspiration and a threat to the existence of God.
- The Bible is “God’s Instruction Manual” – God’s rule book for life.
- The Bible is a collection of Timeless Moral Principles
- A corollary – a collection of proof-texts that function proverbially.

Assumptions about Internal Consistency

The Regulative Principle: Regarding worship specifically (but by implication other beliefs as well?), believers are required to do what the Bible commands but equally required to not do those things about which the Bible is silent.

A More Helpful Model

- The Bible as the Unfolding Drama of Creator God
 - Creation
 - Crisis
 - Conversation
 - Christ
 - (Embodied in Humans through Holy Spirit – the Church!)
 - Consummation

Re-imagining *Gospel* from the Beginning

- Thinking about Creation and Salvation as the Journey into Relational Intimacy.
- Sin as Broken Relationship rather than broken rules.
- What broken trust does:
 - God and Humans
 - Human self-understanding (guilt/shame)
 - Humans with each other (power/jealousy/envy....)
 - Relationship to the Land – the curse

The Gospel

- Relational God (Father/Son/Spirit) fulfills promise to reconcile “all things.”
- Salvation as the Healing of all Relationships:
 - The Self – Image of God/Reception of Holy Spirit
 - Other Human Beings – seen with “new creation” eyes
 - Creator God – Intimacy as “Abba,” shared Presence
 - Creation/Land – ultimately new heaven/new earth, but stewardship of new creation already in process

Paul's Writings and Specific Circumstances

- **The letters of Paul are all written to specific audiences to address specific circumstances.**
- **The First Century World has many things in common with the 21st Century World – and MANY THINGS NOT in common.**
- **The Roman Empire and American Democracy – The Same/NOT the same.**
- **Culture then and Culture now – The Same/ NOT the Same**

Paul and Women

- New Creation and Kingdom of God
Redeeming Space and Time
- No More Sacred/Secular Dualism
- No more Hierarchy of God, but communal
Triune God in relationship with Creation
- The “Baptized Vision” of Race/Class/Gender
- Seeing ourselves on the continuum of the
Journey

Culture Then And Now

- Haidt and Graham: Five Moral Foundations
 - Harm/Care
 - Fairness/Reciprocity
 - Ingroup/Loyalty
 - Authority/Respect
 - Purity/Sanctity

Culture Then And Now

- For prior generations, Gender/Church decisions based on Purity/Sanctity and Ingroup/Loyalty
- In the last 3 decades in America, in every other aspect of life Gender is about Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, and Authority/Respect

Christian Smith: The Bible Made Impossible (Brazos, 2011)

“By ‘biblicism’ I mean a particular theory about and style of using the Bible that is defined by a constellation of related assumptions and beliefs about the Bible’s nature, purpose, and function. That constellation is represented by ten assumptions or beliefs:

1. Divine Writing: The Bible, down to the details of its words, consists of and is identical with God’s very own words written inerrantly in human language.
2. Total Representation: The Bible represents the totality of God’s communication to and will for humanity, both in containing all that God has to say to humans and in being the exclusive mode of God’s true communication.

Christian Smith: The Bible Made Impossible (Brazos, 2011)

3. Complete Coverage: The divine will about all of the issues relevant to Christian belief and life are contained in the Bible.

4. Democratic Perspicuity: Any reasonably intelligent person can read the Bible in his or her own language and correctly understand the plain meaning of the text.” (It says what it means and means what it says, and anyone can understand it – my paraphrase of ‘perspicuity’: plainness, clarity)

Christian Smith: The Bible Made Impossible (Brazos, 2011)

5. “Commonsense Hermeneutics: The best way to understand biblical texts is by reading them in their explicit, plain, most obvious, literal sense, as the author intended them at face value, which may or may not involve taking into account their literary, cultural, and historical contexts.
6. Sola Scriptura: The significance of any given biblical text can be understood without reliance on creeds, confessions, historical church traditions, or other forms of larger theological hermeneutical frameworks, such that theological formulations can be built up directly out of the Bible from scratch.

Christian Smith: The Bible Made Impossible (Brazos, 2011)

7. Internal harmony: All related passages of the Bible on any given subject fit together almost like puzzle pieces into single, unified, internally consistent bodies of instruction about right and wrong beliefs and behaviors.
8. Universal Applicability: What the biblical authors taught God's people at any point in history remains universally valid for all Christians at every other time, unless explicitly revoked by subsequent scriptural teaching.
9. Inductive Method: All matters of Christian belief and practice can be learned by sitting down with the Bible and piecing together through careful study the clear 'biblical truths that it teaches.'"

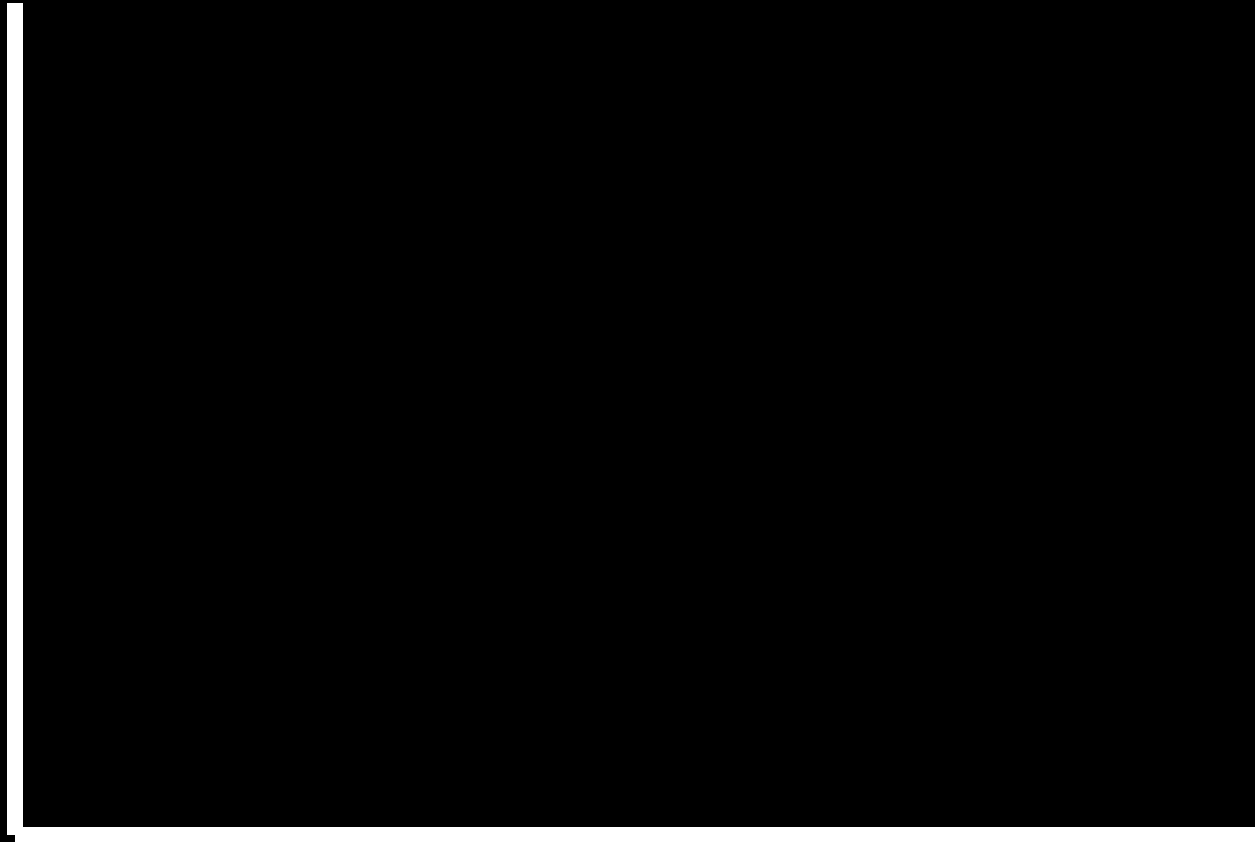
Christian Smith: The Bible Made Impossible (Brazos, 2011)

“The prior nine assumptions and beliefs generate a tenth viewpoint that – although often not stated in explications of biblicist principles and beliefs by its advocates – also commonly characterizes the general Biblicist outlook, particularly as it is received and practiced in popular circles:

10. Handbook Model: The Bible teaches doctrine and morals with every affirmation it makes, so that together those affirmations comprise something like a handbook or textbook for Christian belief and living, a compendium of divine and therefore inerrant teachings on a full array of subjects – including science, economics, health, politics, and romance.” (pp.

When We Disagree: Options

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COOPERATIVE

Resolution Options

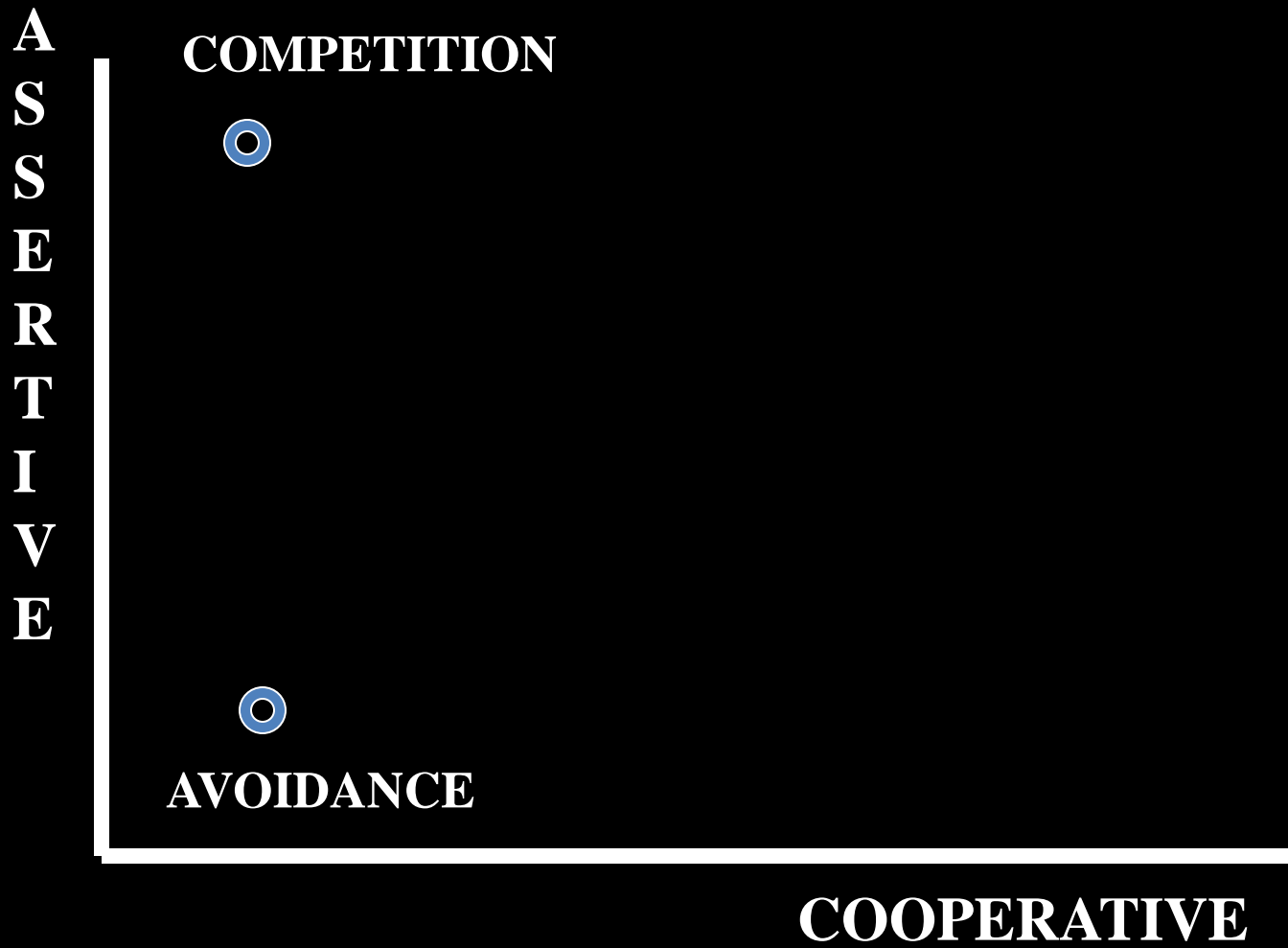
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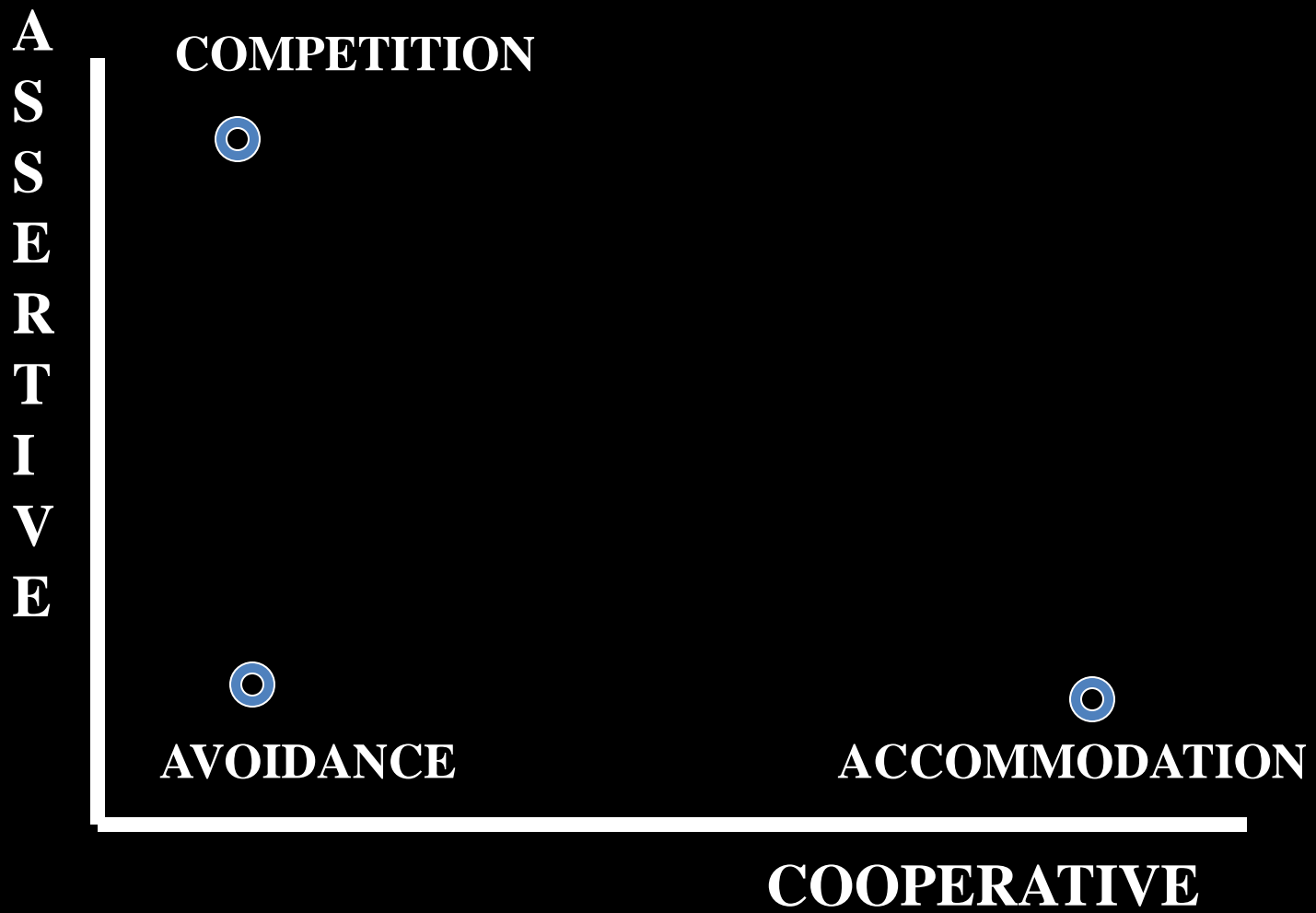
AVOIDANCE

COOPERATIVE

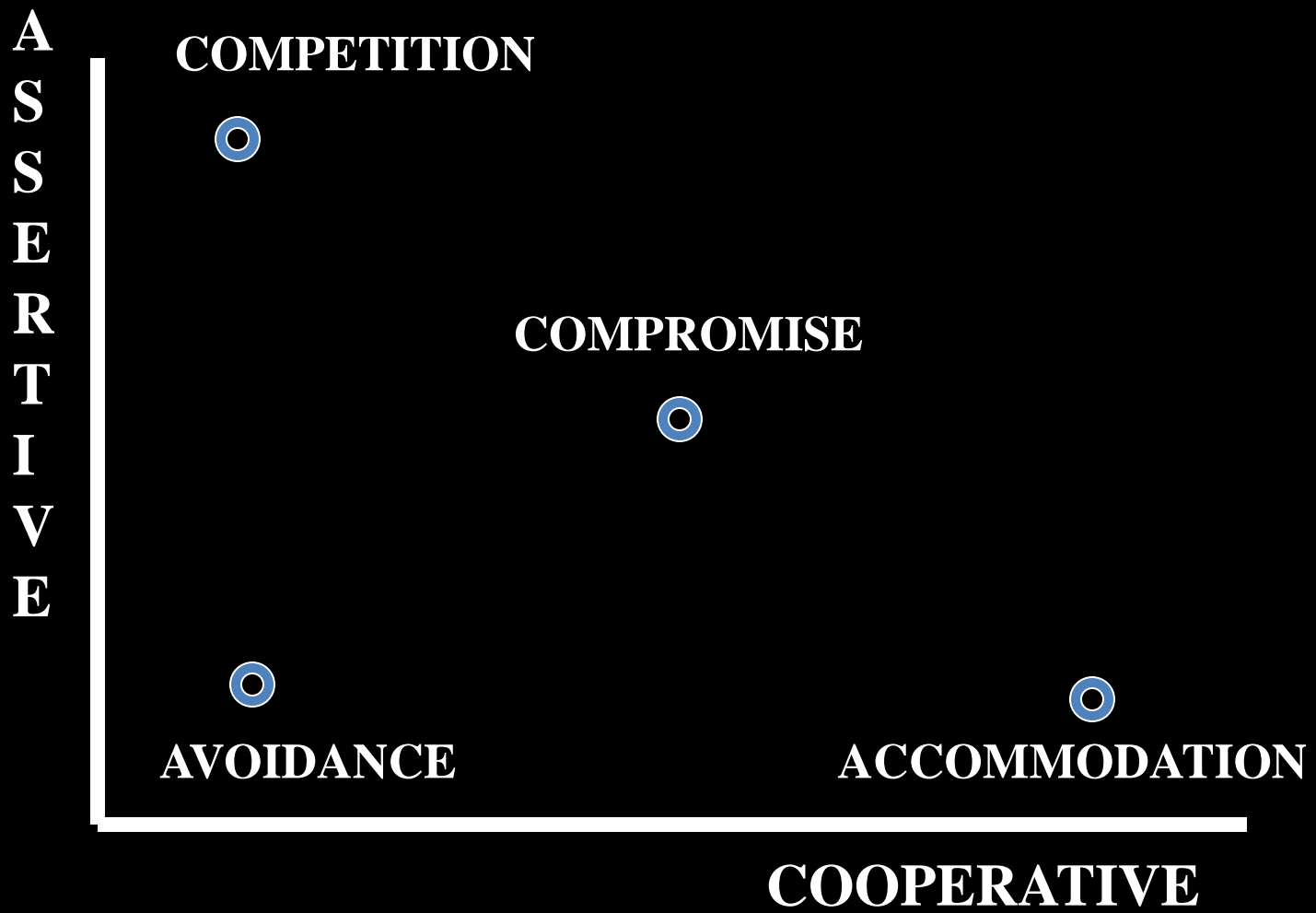
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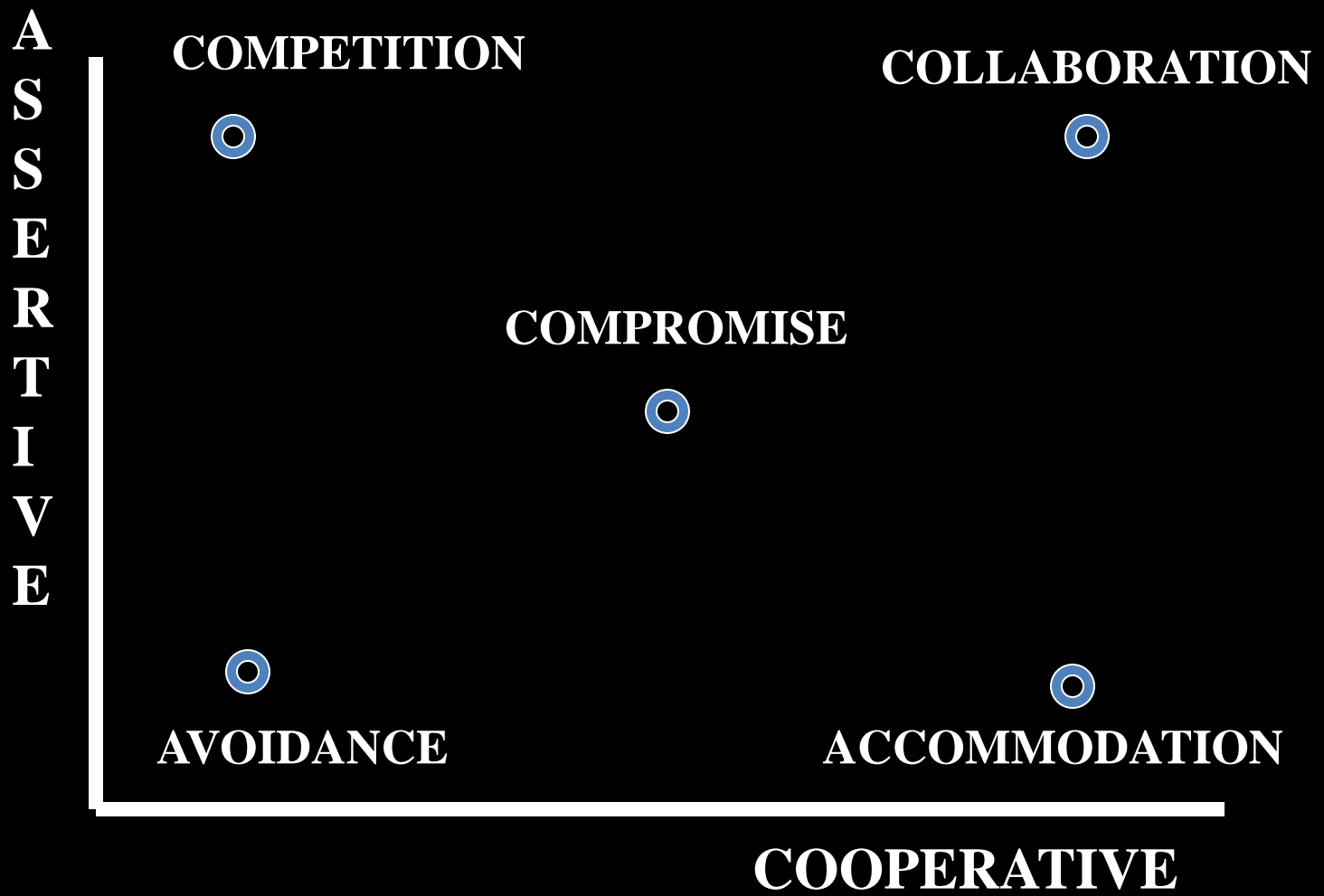
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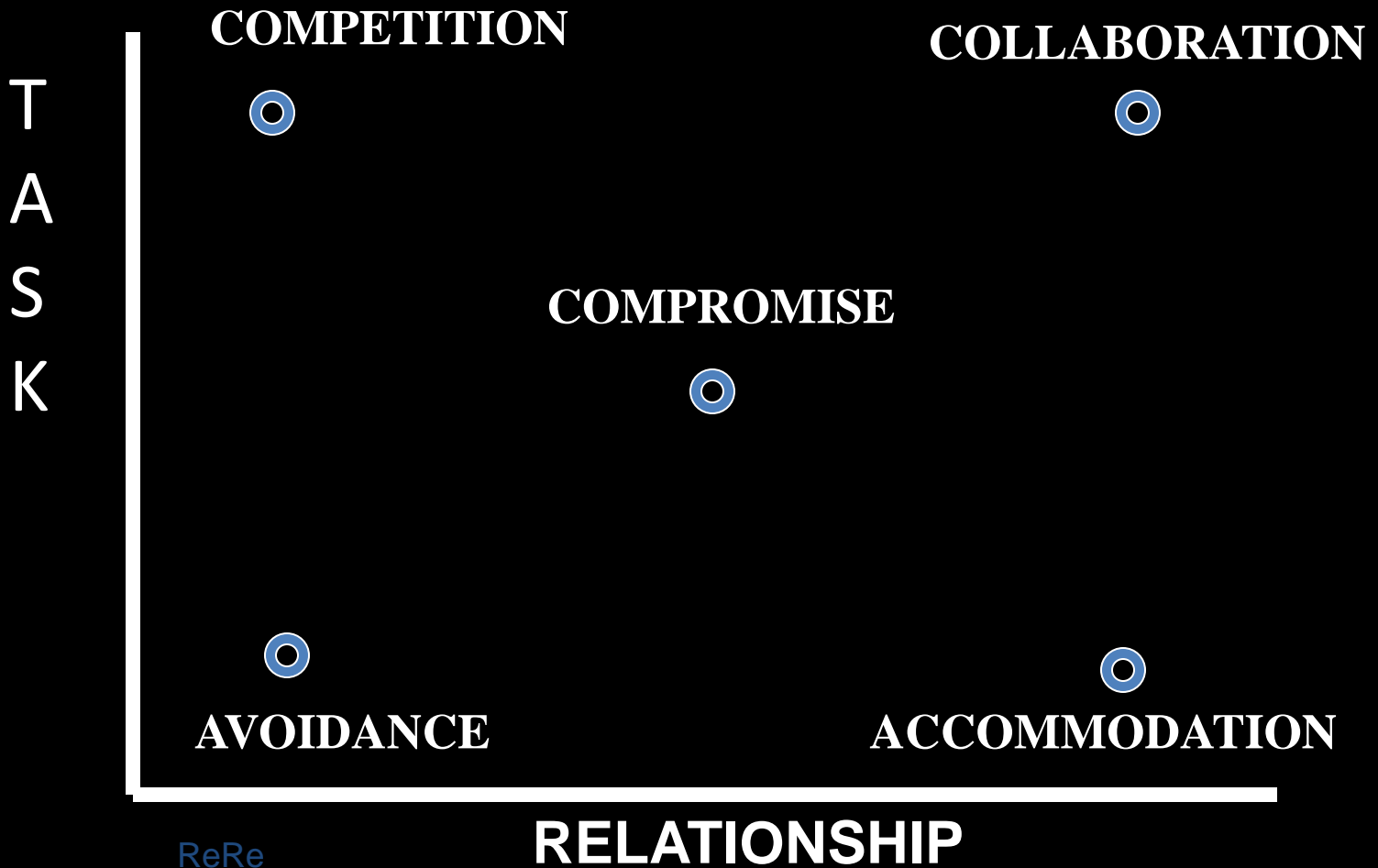
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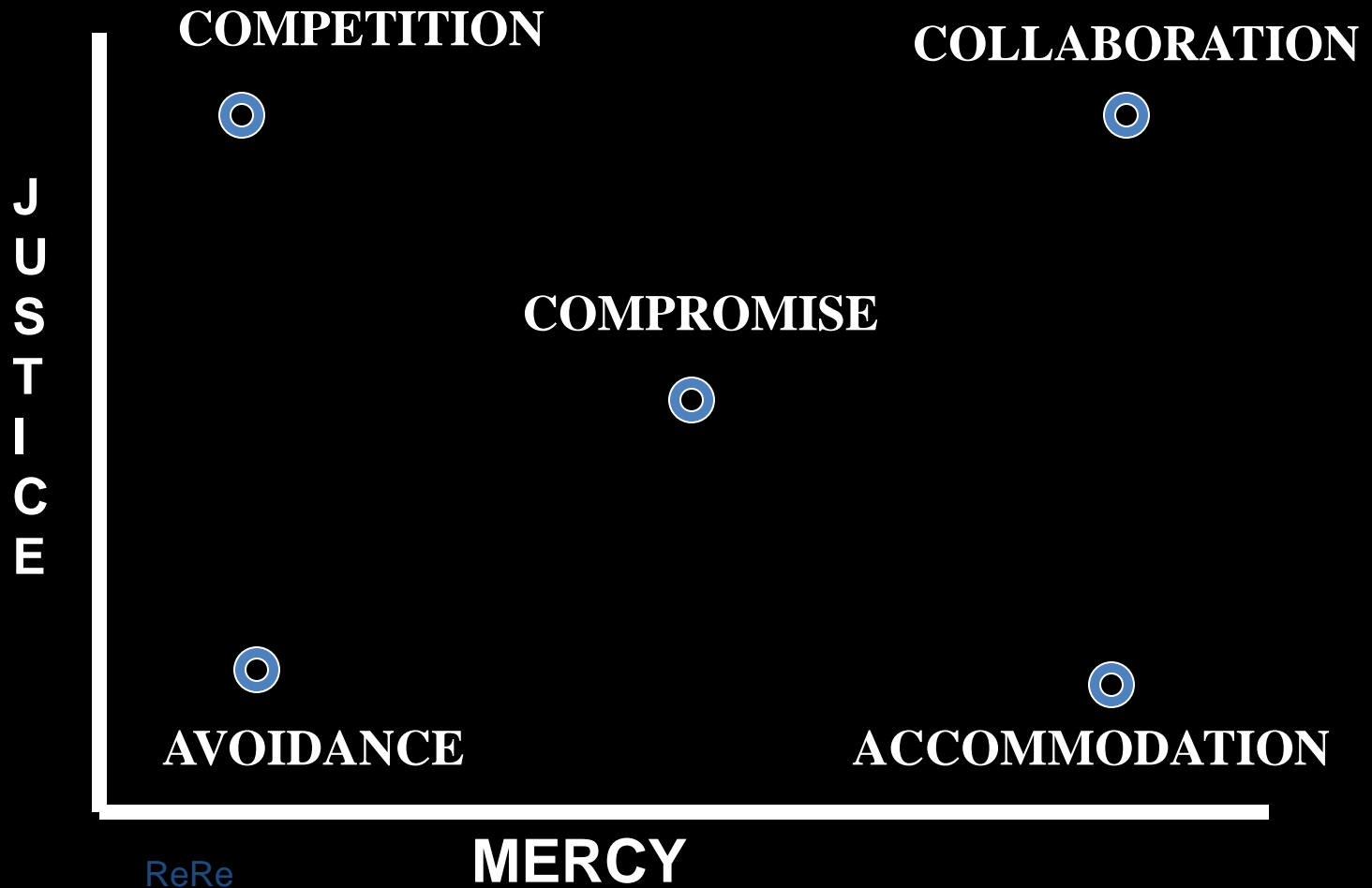
Resolution Options



Resolution Options



Resolution Options



Resolution Options

ISSUE

INTERESTS

Going Below the Line