MEET IN THE MIDDLE: How to Build Consensus

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- Start by telling your story
- It may take numerous attempts until understanding and consensus happens
- It’s a process but know where you want to go
Focus on your end goal not people or positions

- **Positions:** What you want
- **Interests:** Why you want it
- **Needs:** Must haves
In a tough consensus situation... keep emotions under control.

Don’t react... Let the other party let off steam... Keep your eye on the ultimate goal.
COMMUNICATE

- Keep the issue in front of the participants
- Actively listen and get to know the opposition to build a working relationship. Make it collaborative.
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- Talk about your interests and the common interests of the group
- Commit to your interests
- Identify areas of agreement
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- Look for options that work for all parties
- Search for mutual gains
MEDINA COUNTY Process to Consensus

THE STORY

➢ Evaluating a change in solid waste management after 25 years.
➢ The evaluation process was written into our solid waste plan.
Be **transparent**, no matter how good or how bad the facts of the situation.
Be available

Our visibility in the community represents that we are intent on making a difference and we won't shy away from any difficulties.
Smile, and remember, *it's not personal*

Each entity that's weighing in on solid waste and recycling interests are expressing their specific interests; it's our job to consider ways to merge those specific interests in Medina County and we are not a "one size fits all" solid waste solution.
Know your stuff, and solicit assistance from technical experts (i.e. GT Environmental and Eastman & Smith)
Be open to both old and new technologies
For example, traditional curbside recycling is a known program with proven success and statistics that can be applied in making volume projections.

Mixed waste processing continues to be of interest to many in our community.
Gain a complete understanding of the current technologies and potential options. Many will try and sell you on the next best black box.

Make sure you can kick the tires before you buy!
The key is to find a MWP that's self-sustaining, meaning:

- It is profitable by the product it produces; and
- It is not reliant upon a guaranteed term government contract absent a proven recovery rate (risk minimization)
The ongoing story - how did Medina County’s process to reach consensus work?
QUESTIONS?

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