The Ladder of Inference

Taking Action

Protect myself from further embarrassment. Try to get off the customer service team. Carefully talk to my boss about his views toward Susan to see what he says. Avoid working with her if possible. If she holds power here, begin looking for a new job!

Developing Feelings

Frustrated that my voice doesn't count. Anxious about my future here since Susan's voice seems to matter to others. Angry that my ideas aren't given fair consideration.

Adopting Beliefs

Susan isn't interested in hearing my ideas; she is driven by her own ego needs; she may even be threatened by my fresh perspective (since she has been here *forever*). It's all about Susan.

Forming Judgments

It's clear that Susan has no respect for me and that her attitude toward me isn't likely to change. She thinks that her experience is all that counts and, as a result, me and my ideas aren't valued!

Drawing Inferences

Her behavior and attitude toward me seems rather fixed. She gives no sign that her attitude toward me is likely to change.

Making Assumptions

She doesn't respect me, my experience, or my ideas. I simply don't count with her.

Adding Meaning (Interpreting)

Clearly Susan doesn't think much of my ideas or what I bring to the group discussion. She obviously thinks that her experience counts more than mine.

Paying Attention to Select Data

Susan routinely seems to dismiss my ideas in front of the group. She shifts focus from my suggestions to her own. Her eye-rolling is obvious.

Observing and Experiencing
[What we actually see and hear – without interpretation.]

I'm new to the company. Susan and I are peers but we don't have much of a working relationship. We're both on a company-wide workgroup charged with solving customer service problems. In each of our last three meetings, she has rolled-her eyes and sighs whenever I offer an idea to the group. Then she says: "*Let me offer something based upon my experience . . .* "
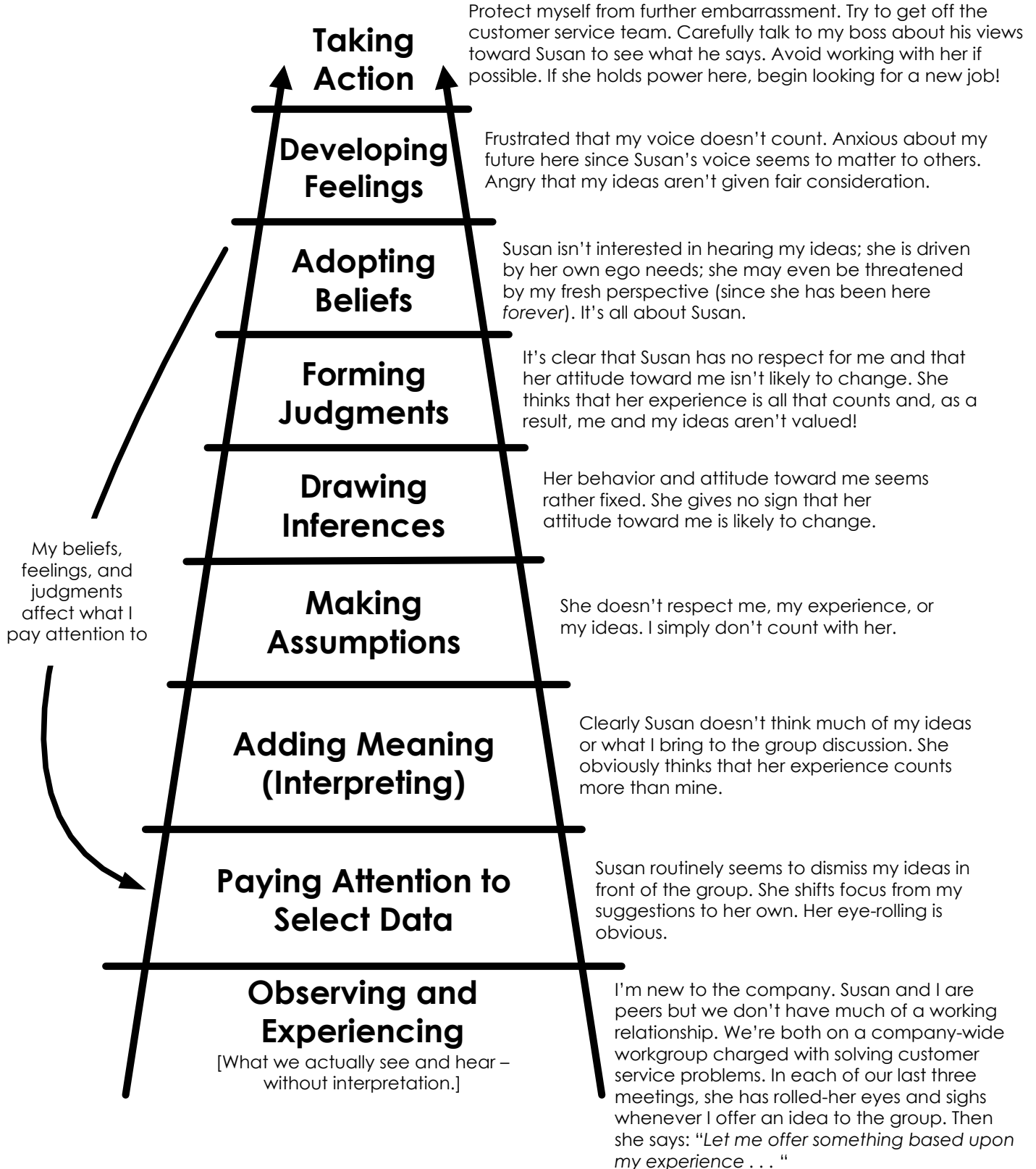
My beliefs, feelings, and judgments affect what I pay attention to

Based upon the work of Chris Argyris, Peter Senge, and William Isaacs.

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