Case Example

1. Scenario:

A mid-sized manufacturing company is debating whether to invest in AI automation for its order-processing department.

Two senior leaders, Sarah (VP of Operations) and Mark (VP of People & Culture), hold opposing views.

The discussion isn't yet toxic, but progress has stalled.

2. Their Positions (X-Axis):

Sarah
Position: D - Lean proposition B (automate)

Believes automation will improve speed and accuracy, but acknowledges unknowns.

Mark
Position: B - Lean proposition A (don't automate)

Believes automation will damage culture and reduce loyalty, but is open to refining view.

So far, things look manageable. They disagree, but not absolutely.

3. Their Mobility (Y-Axis):

Sarah – Open (higher mobility)
Requests pilot project, wants data before final call.

Mark – Closed (lower mobility)
Rejects pilot project, calling it a "slippery slope".

They are both within the epistemically constrained range (B & D). But Mark is immobilized. His belief is now functioning as identity, not analysis.

Result: Data will not advance the discussion. Mark is not protecting an idea; he is protecting a narrative of leadership and loyalty he believes automation violates.

4. What the Spectrum Reveals:

The problem isn't disagreement. The problem is immobility at B.

Mark appears moderate, but his belief sits defensively.

This explains why the dialogue feels "stuck" even though neither side is at A or E.

Conversation misreads position. It must observe mobility.

5. How to Proceed:

Once mapped, the 2D spectrum guides the approach:

Scenario	Recommended Method
Disagreement + Mobility	Present data, build models, test ideas.
Disagreement + Immobility	Shift focus away from outcomes and instead toward underlying values and identity fears

Instead of pushing Mark on ROI numbers, the discussion shifts to: **"What part of our culture are you afraid this might compromise?"**
"Is there a way to test this without betraying that value?"
The conversation moves from battle of proposals to exploration of values. That makes dialogue possible without forcing agreement.

6. Leadership Insight:

The spectrum tells us where someone stands. Mobility tells us how we need to speak to them.

If mobility is present, focus on data.
If mobility is absent, focus on identity.

Neither is irrational, but each requires a different kind of respect.

Leaders don't need everyone to agree. They need to know where belief has set and whether movement is still possible.

The job is not to win arguments, but to preserve intellectual integrity and protect the conditions for future dialogue.

Reflection

This method can be applied to other topics with the same usefulness. Consider how this would change your approach the next time you debate politics or religion.

Models for Reference

Ideologically-Constrained	Epistemically-Constrained			Ideologically-Constrained
A Certain Proposition A	**B** Lean Proposition A	**C** Suspension of Judgment	**D** Lean Proposition B	**E** Certain Proposition B
Are certain that proposition A is objectively true	Don't know but judge proposition A more likely true than not	Don't know and suspend judgment	Don't know and judge proposition B more likely true than not	Are certain that proposition B is objectively true

MOBILITY / HIGH / LOW / POSITION / A B C D E