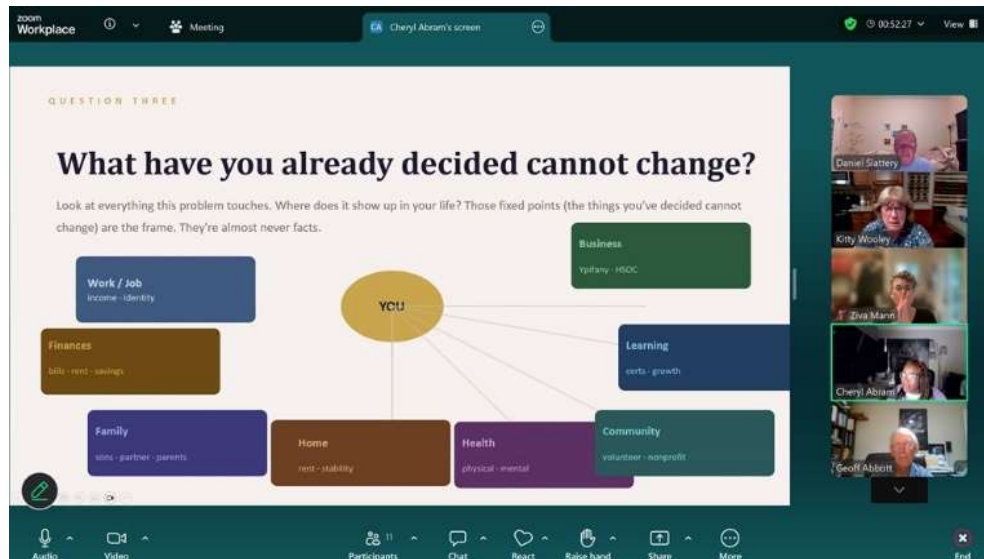


SENIOR FELLOWS AND FRIENDS

Alert. Relaxed. Collegial.



Recap of 6/30/26 conversation with Cheryl Abram on Finding the Edge of your Frame

Dear Senior Fellows and Friends,

Cheryl Abram is a cybersecurity analyst and curriculum designer who founded Ypifany LLC, a Virginia-based consulting and executive development firm. Ypifany specializes in leadership development, person-centered cybersecurity, and operational decision visibility for businesses and government agencies. Cheryl and I have known each other since before she worked at OPM's Federal Executive Institute a few years ago. This session's timing was auspicious, as Cheryl was embarking on an unanticipated job change and was beginning to use the above graphic herself to think about it.

Cheryl told us that the graphic is an example of a rich picture (Wikipedia: "The creation of a rich picture provides a forum in which to think about a given situation"), which can be made even richer by building with LEGO pieces as well. Cheryl's statement brought to mind our 12/14/22 "Undisciplined by Design" conversation with Col. Jason TOGA Trew, who at the time was serving as Commandant and Dean of the USAF School of Advanced Air and Space Studies. TOGA continues to host innovation sessions using LEGO.

We analysts love complicated diagrams that capture the important aspects of a situation and go right to the crux of the matter. And yet, when we are confronted with an urgent need to change something *in our own lives*, complicated diagrams are useless – they don't tell us what we're clinging to that we need to let go of, or how not to be afraid, or what to do next.

This was a useful discussion about a personal problem-solving approach that can expand our thinking when we know something has to change. Cheryl's point was that, when we make a rich picture and then ask the following questions, something shifts and an opening for new possibility begins to emerge:

- **What is the problem?**
- **What has been tried or ruled out?**
- **What feels fixed that might not be?**

The discussion went in several different directions, evoking comments like these:

- You've got to have a vested interest in solving the problem
- Maybe the problem needs to be evolved, not solved
- There are different ways to look at failure

At some point, the discussion veered from personal to organizational problem-solving, which was interesting, although not something Cheryl made any claims about.

Finally, someone contributed a method by which colleagues in the room can help the person with the problem without putting them on the spot. Several of us have read about this and think it could work. Here's how it starts:

1. The person states the problem, then remains silent and just listens.
2. Group members make statements such as, "I wonder if she thought about doing this: ...?"

A fruitful discussion was had by all! If you wish to view Cheryl's slides, they are available at this [[link](#)].

Participant affiliations

American Society for Public Administration
Arkansas Department of Transportation
ASPA Arkansas Chapter
ASPA National Capital Chapter
CPS HR Consulting
Old Dominion University
Securities and Exchange Commission

U.S. Department of Education, retired
U.S. Department of Labor/Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)
Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner
Ypifany LLC
ZMM Consulting LLC

People joined from Olympia, WA, Colorado Springs, CO, Bentonville, AR, Beckley, WV, Wickford, RI, the Boston, MA area, Spotsylvania, VA, and the DC/MD/VA Metro Area.

Each time, we begin with a round of introductions to warm up the space. Afterward, participants are sent a "who was in the room" message to facilitate ongoing connection. Please consider joining us in the future.

Sincerely,
Kitty Wooley

