

Introduction: What is Power?

How have we experienced power? Why do we want and need it to create change?

Session Goals

- 1 Explore **what power means to us** – personally and collectively
- 2 Understand two key **definitions of power** used in organizing
- 3 See how power is important to understanding **how organizing differs from other approaches to social change**
- 4 **Practice** applying these ideas through a roleplay about power

Agenda

Faith Reflection

Grounding in Nehemiah – the first revolution is internal – what it means to see suffering, take responsibility and act.

Personal Reflection

In pairs: when have you felt powerless? When have you felt powerful?

Core Content

Two definitions of power and how organizing is different from other approaches to change

Role Play

Apply the ideas: how a community responds to a threat

Evaluation & Next Steps

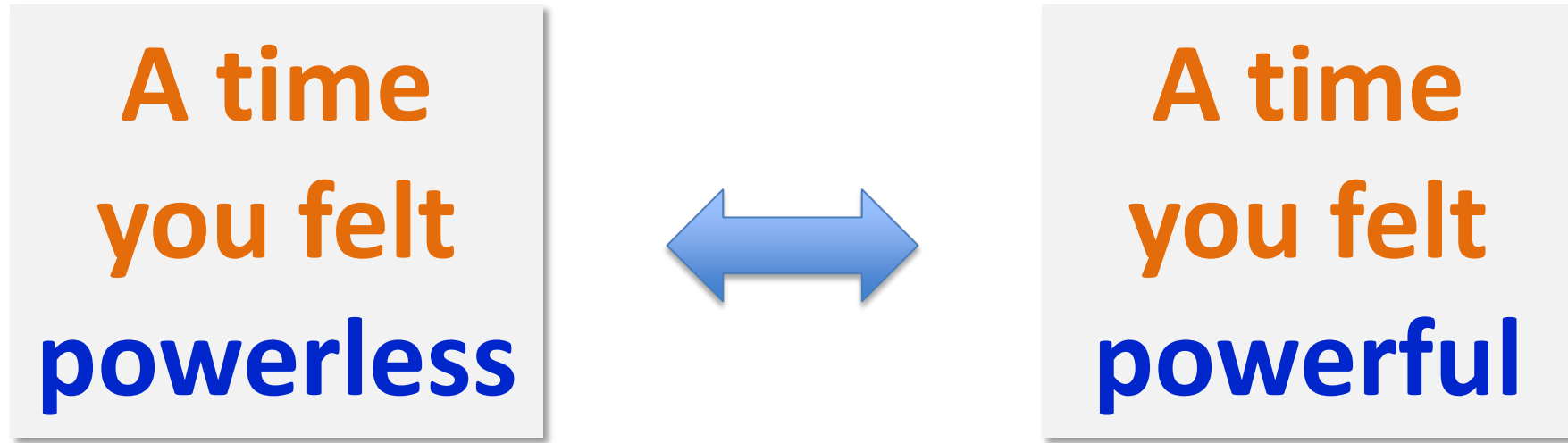
What was useful. What can you practice before next month's session?

Nehemiah 1:1-11

3 They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Personal Reflection



What is Power

Definition #1

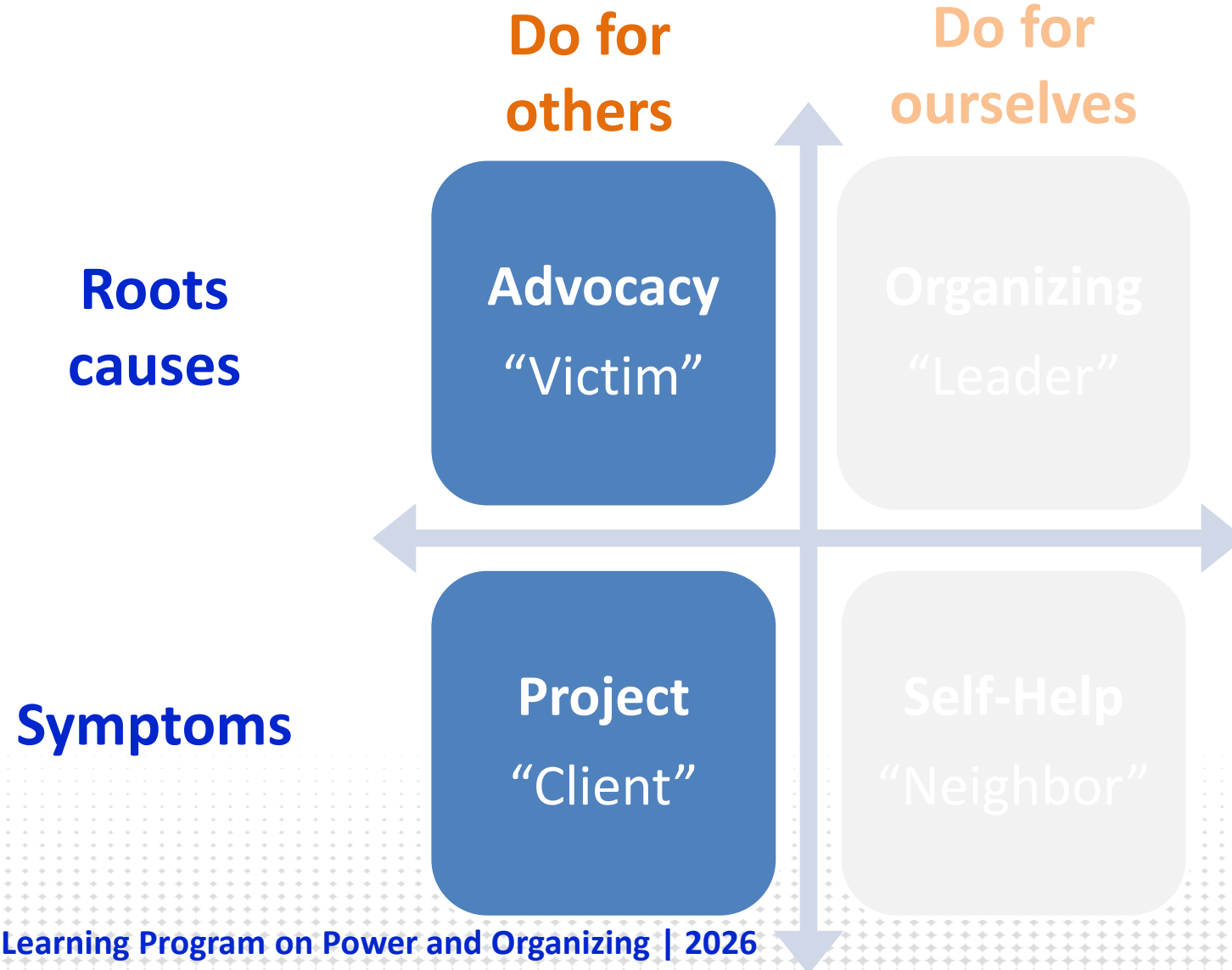
**The ability to
act to achieve
purpose**

Definition #2

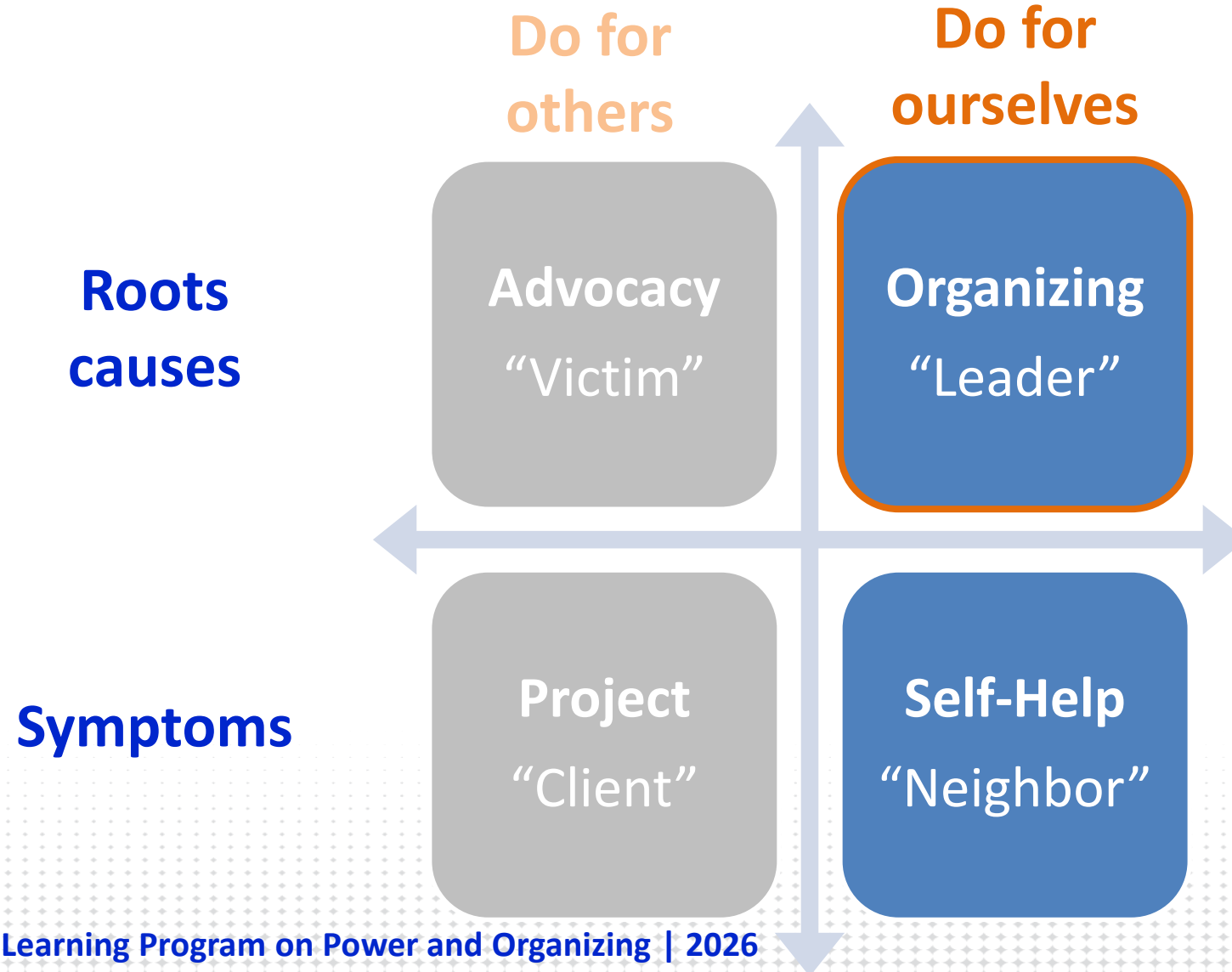
**The ability to
persuade a decision-
maker to act**

Organizing Principle: We get as much justice as we have the power to compel.

How organizing differs from other approaches



How organizing differs from other approaches



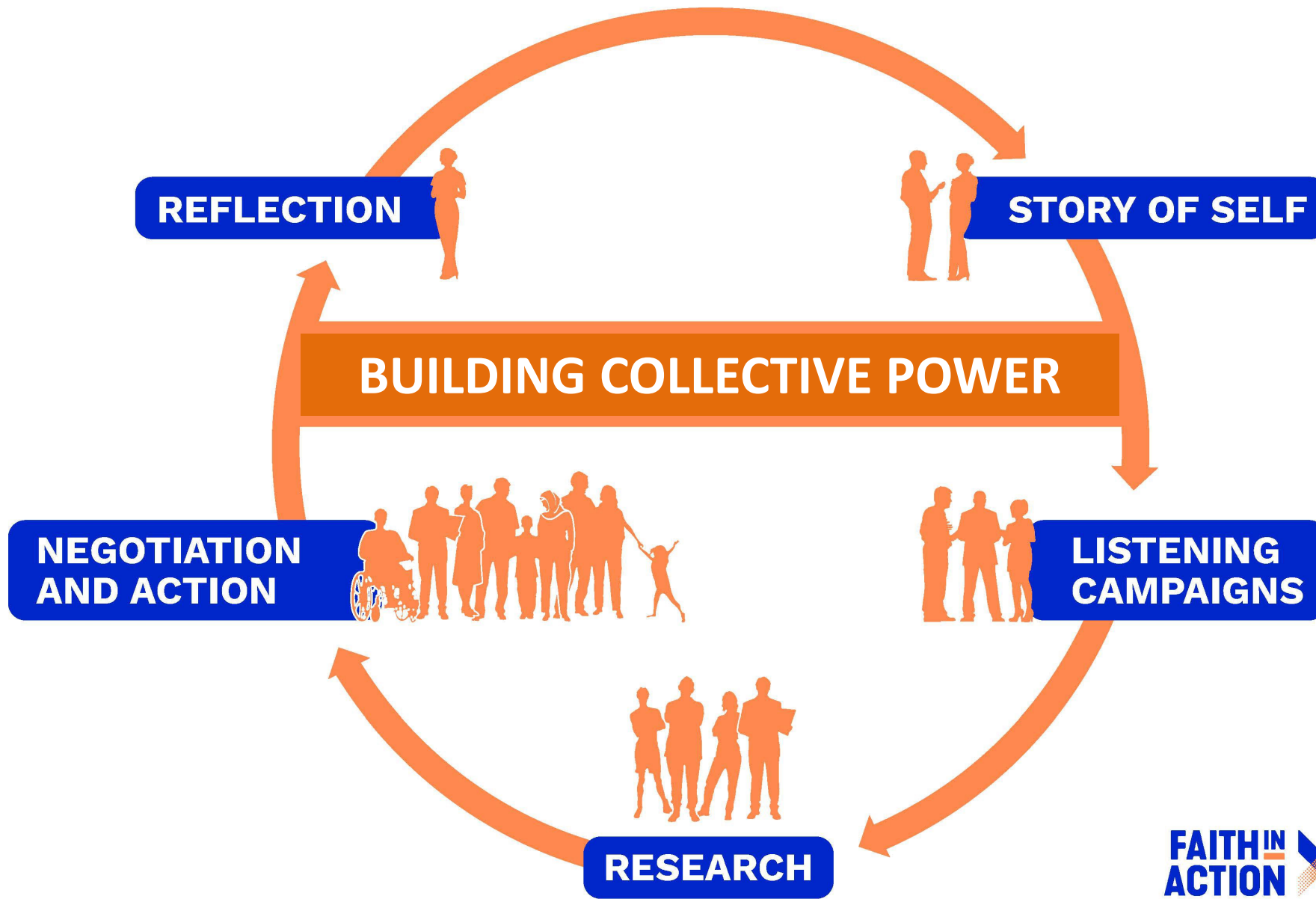
Role Play

Scenario

You are a local organizing committee representing a farming community that depends on water from a small stream for drinking and irrigation. You learn that a bottling plant is being opened upstream that could dry up your stream.

Your task

Identify three concrete steps your community organizing committee will take to respond. Be specific about who holds decision-making power and what it would take to move them.



Main ideas

1. Change begins with confrontation with ourselves
2. Power is not inherently bad. Question is whether we choose to build it and use it for good.
3. Organizing = collective power to act + leverage with decision-makers
4. We get as much justice as we have power
5. Building power is a process tied to building people's organizations

Next Call

- Thursday, March 19
- Have at least one conversation about power with a leader