



# 7th Generation Labs

*Creating the space to learn what matters*

## **CHARACTERISTICS of a STUCK CONVERSATION**

1. People on one side do not listen to those on the other side.
2. Questions posed by one side to the other side tend to be rhetorical and often are designed to reveal suspected inconsistencies or ulterior motives on the part of the side being questioned.
3. Members of an opposing alliance are seen as being all alike; the most extreme leaders of the opposition are assumed to be representative of the entire group.
4. Within each alliance, members de-emphasize differences among themselves, especially in the presence of an adversary. This behavior tends to reinforce the other side's perception that their opponents are all alike.
5. Those who join neither side are viewed as suspect by both sides.
6. Blaming the adversary is common. Taking responsibility for problems is uncommon.
7. Mind reading of the other side is common; genuine curiosity about what they really believe is rare.
8. Fixed opinions about the other side are common. Open-mindedness is uncommon.
9. Statements made by the other side that indicate openness to conciliation are seen as propaganda ploys or as revealing logical inconsistency.
10. Fixed and simple convictions are openly displayed. Complexity, ambivalence, confusion, and inner conflict are concealed.
11. Adversarial parties to a stalemated controversy tend to think that it is valuable to persist in the struggle, even though people who are outside the controversy may tell them that the persistence of the deadlock may well be more destructive than almost any alternative outcome.

*[7thgenerationlabs.com](http://7thgenerationlabs.com)*

Source:

“Creating Systemic Interventions for the Sociopolitical Arena,”  
by Richard Chasin and Margaret Herzog of the Public Conversations Project