

Stuck happens.

But we know how to unstick!



5 QUESTIONS THAT GET US UNSTUCK



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BEING STUCK

How do you describe being **stuck**, in anything you're doing?

Here's one way of seeing stuck: when what's happening isn't great or getting better.



WAYS WE GET UNSTUCK

How do you help yourself, or someone else, get unstuck?

When we get unstuck, we usually see one of these in a new way:



These five powerful questions help people of all ages, in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities, stuck in arguments, choices, projects, big goals or little challenges, even when it feels like there's no time—which is all the time! These questions are like a compass to explore all sides of any **stuck!**

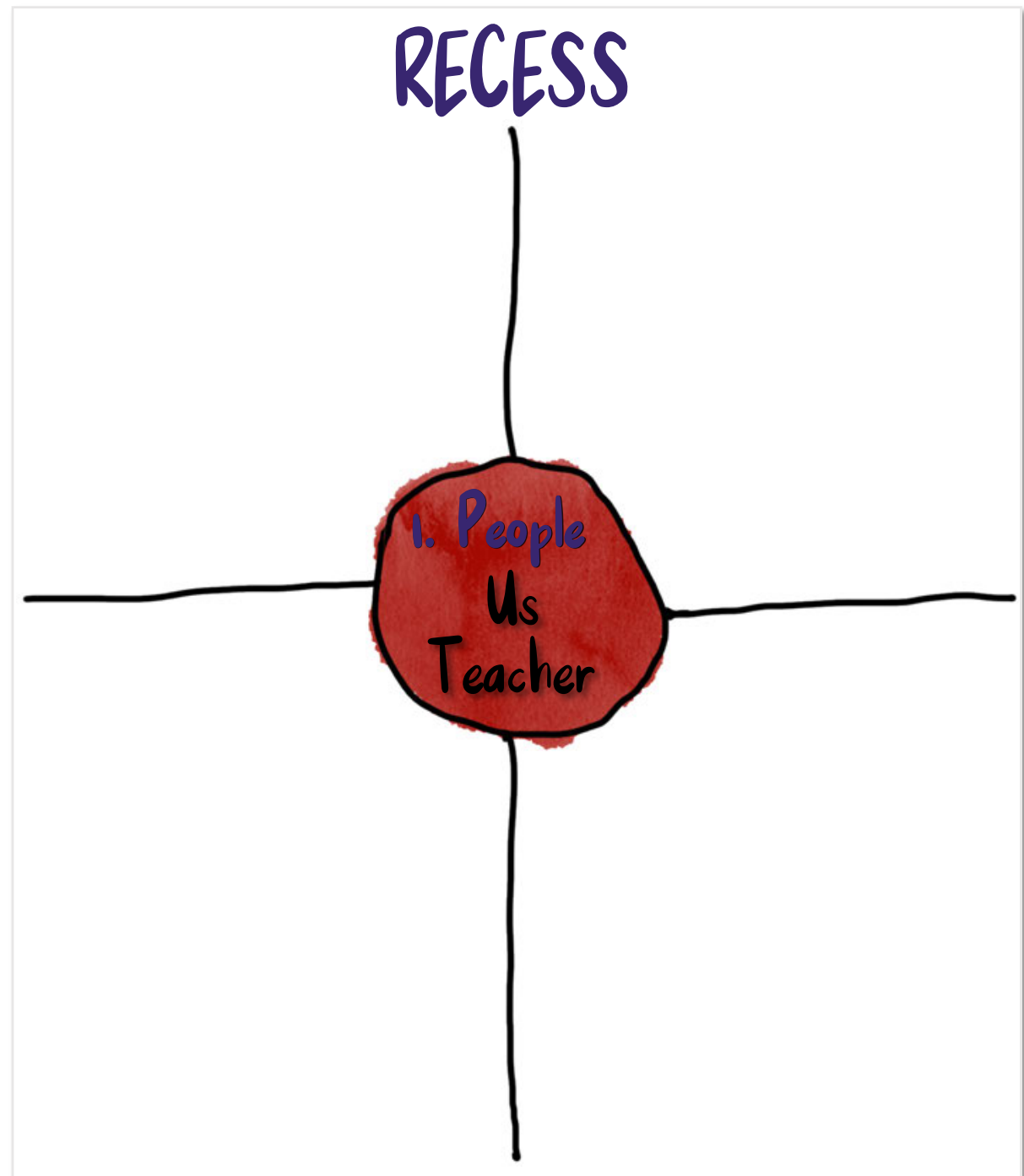


UNSTUCK STORY

Many schools have gotten unstuck around playground problems.

In one second-grade classroom, the teacher drew a big compass and invited his students to explore these questions together.

At the center, they considered *Who's involved?*



Using sticky notes, they explored
What's happening? Why?

They started with upsides:

Talking. Playing. Tag.

Then they explored downsides:

People keep telling on people.

People block the slide.

They always play tag.

They exclude me.



They explored **What matters most?**

Running and safety.

Having fun and including others.

Talking and listening.

Free choice and agreeing on rules.

Now they could see their challenge and get creative!

What Matters

3. Principles

• Talking - playing

• Fun

• included

• Running

• agree on our rules

• safe

• free choice

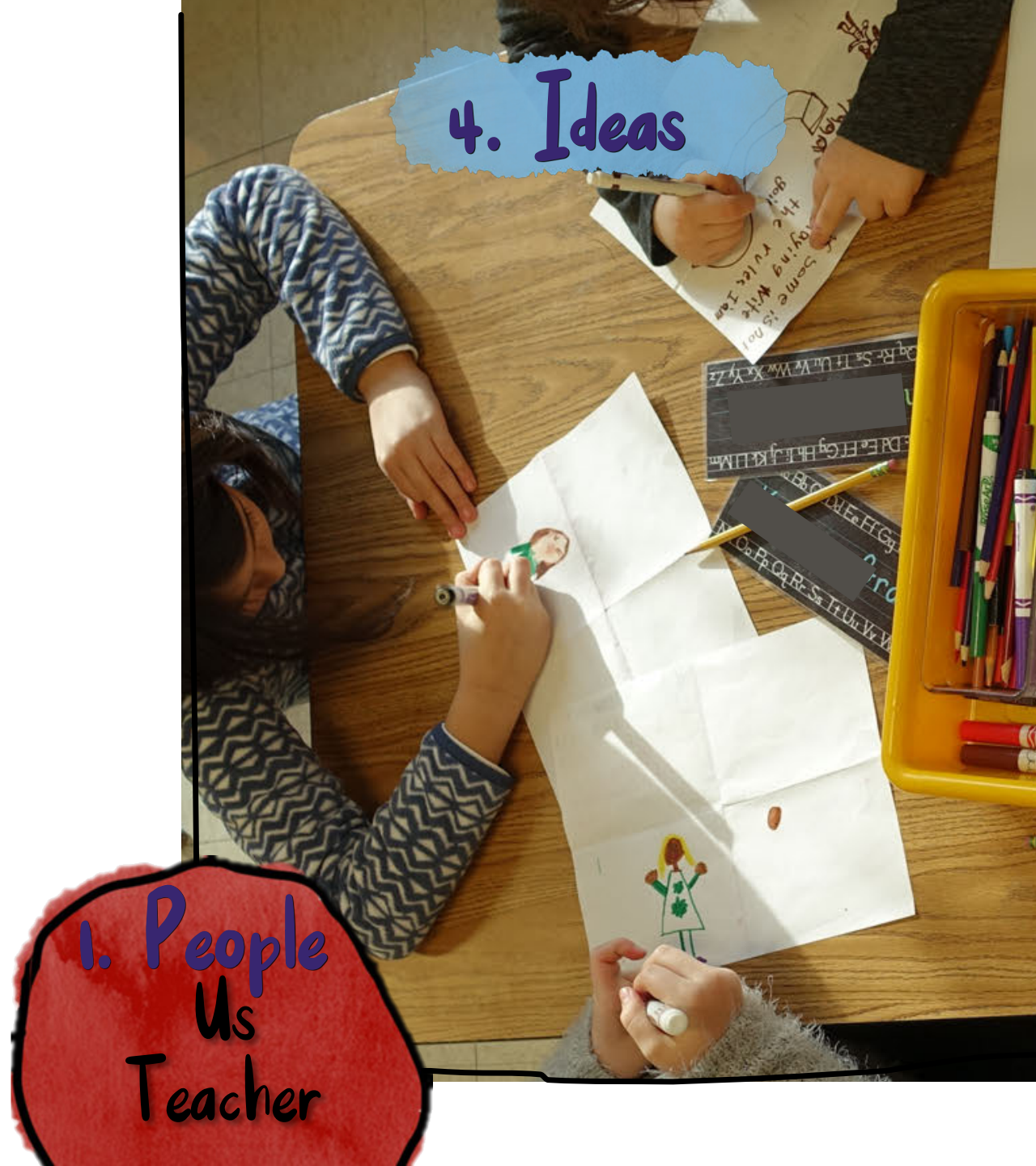
• people listen

1. People
Us
Teacher

On their own paper, they explored *What ways are there?* to do what matters to them.

They came up with many ideas to do what mattered to them on the playground.

Here they drew pictures of new games, rules, props and signs.



4. Ideas

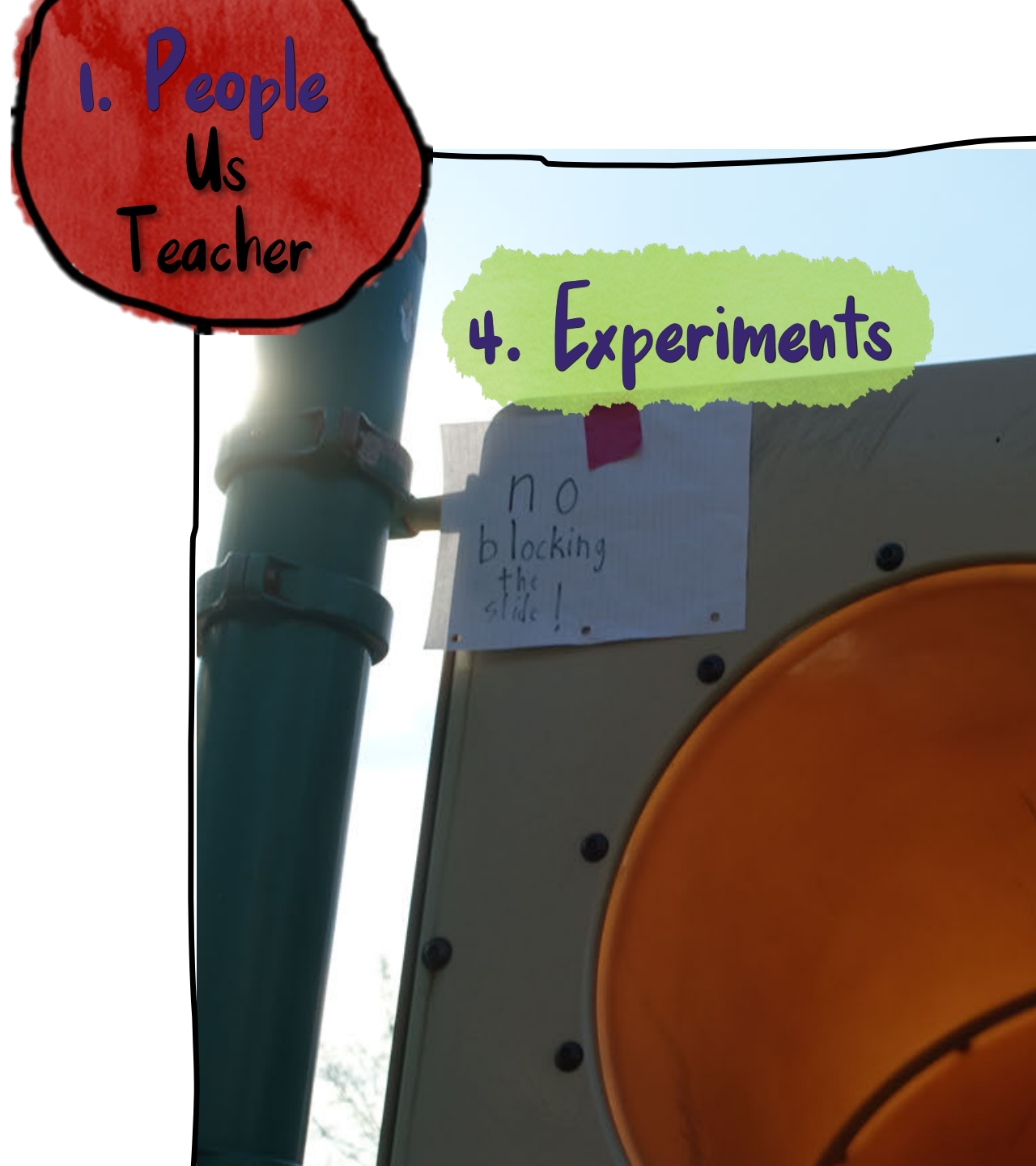
1. People Us Teacher

Then they dove in with *What's a step to try?* for the next recess.

They picked a few ideas that seemed to fulfill their principles and found the easiest step to try them!

In this picture we see a quick reminder they made on paper:

No blocking the slide!

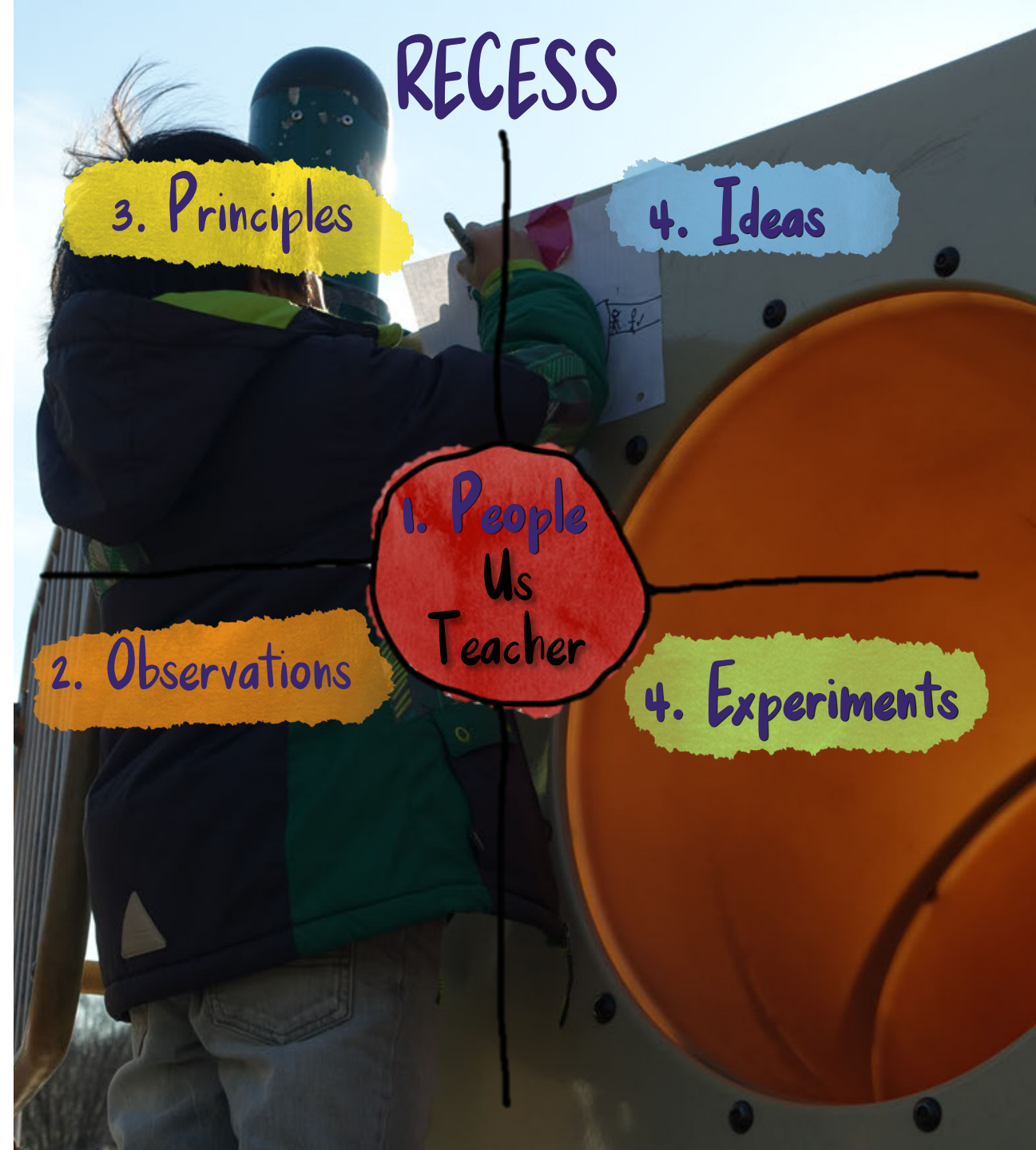


Then they again observed what happened. Some things got better, others didn't.

They didn't waste any time—but instead changed their ideas, or came up with new ideas.

And they tried again, making their recess more fun, safe, free, and inclusive.

Here they saw that their sign didn't work well and added a drawing to it.

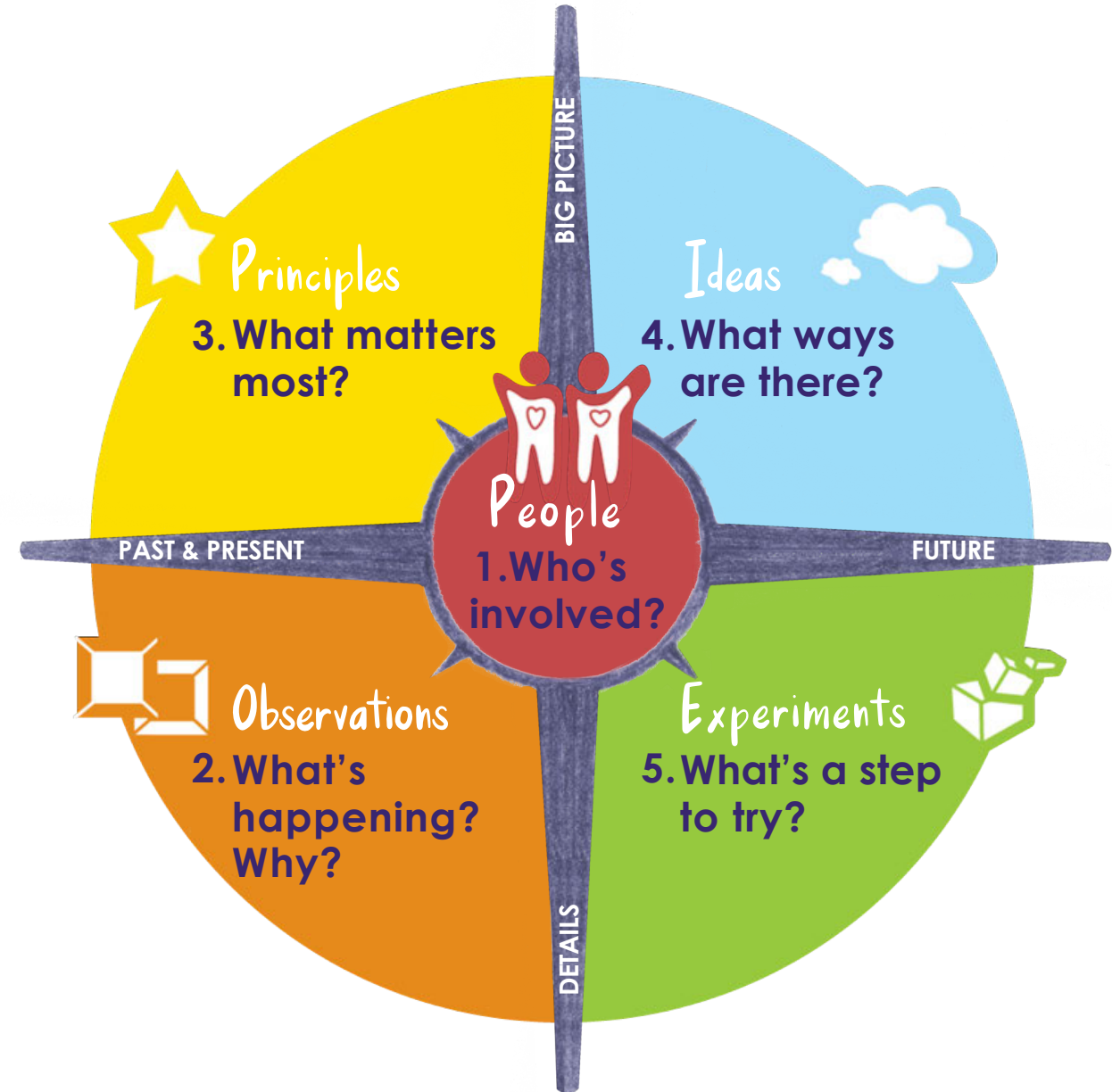


When we ask questions like these we don't stay stuck. We make things better. That's what **innovators** do.

This is our **INNOVATORS' COMPASS**: five super-powerful views we have of anything we do. Naming them helps us use them more.

We start by sensing "stucks" in our hearts: is what's happening now what matters most for all the people involved?

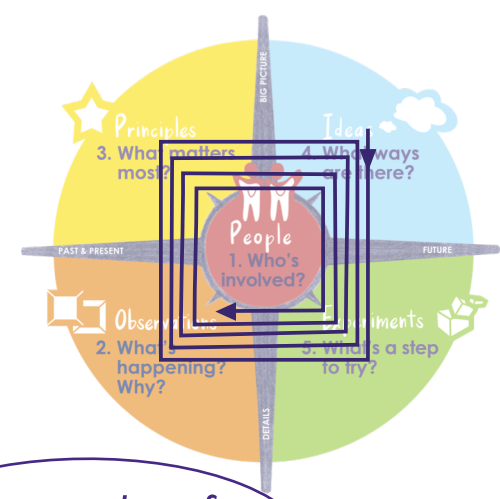
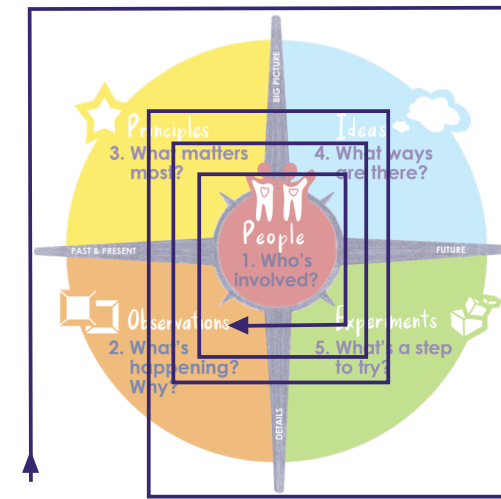
Our **INNOVATORS' COMPASS**



We can explore these questions in any way.

One question might be enough for a quick unstick (below)!

Or we can make and share our own maps for different challenges.



Let's go the careful, numbered way.

Rounds of try-and-learn?

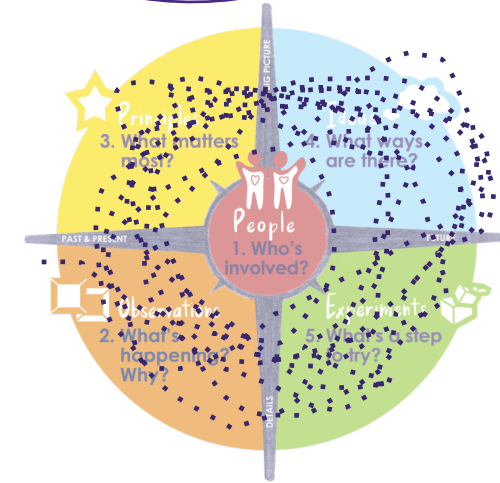
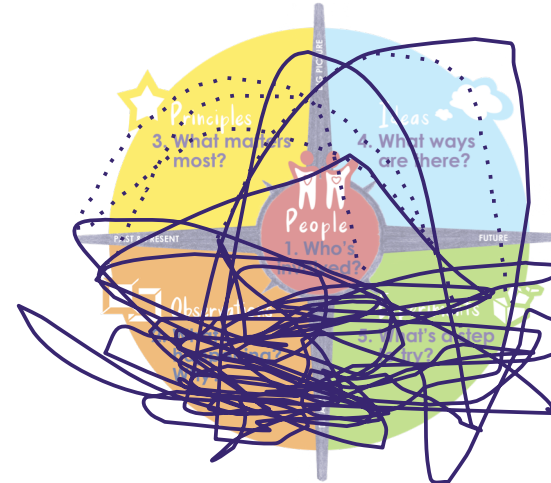
Let's mess around!



Oh yeah! We just did that!

UGH! This is so frustrating!

Great observation! Got an idea?



UNSTICK NOW!

Pick something on your mind to unstick or make better—
like something you're doing in the next hour, day, or week.

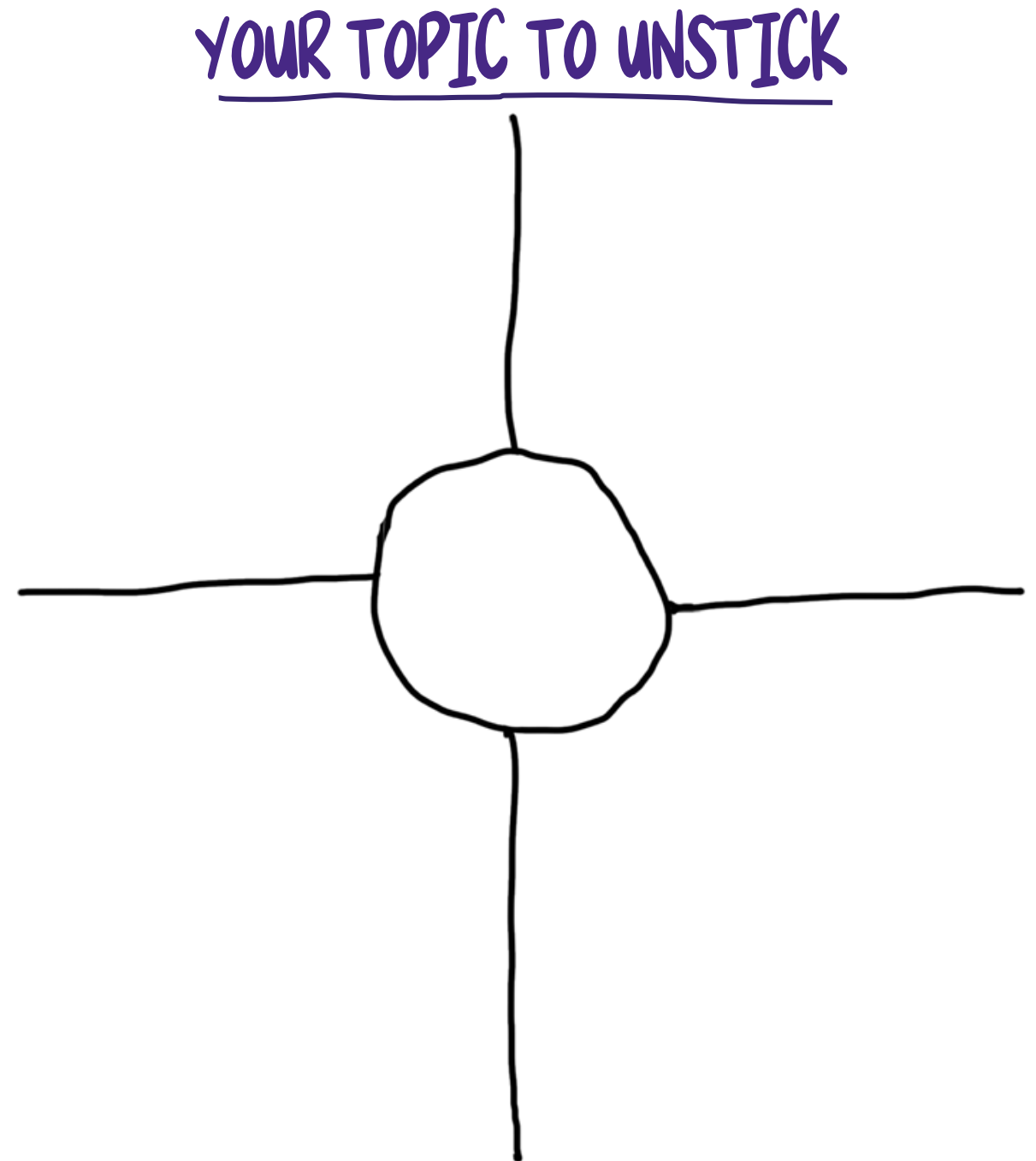
*It would feel AWESOME
to make _____ better!*



Make a compass on any scrap of paper, board, screen...or in your head or conversation.

Each of these five spaces unleashes one of our powerful unsticking tools.

Let's go!



We're often stuck going it alone.

We get unstuck when we fully see
People —or **Who's involved?**—and
explore these questions together.

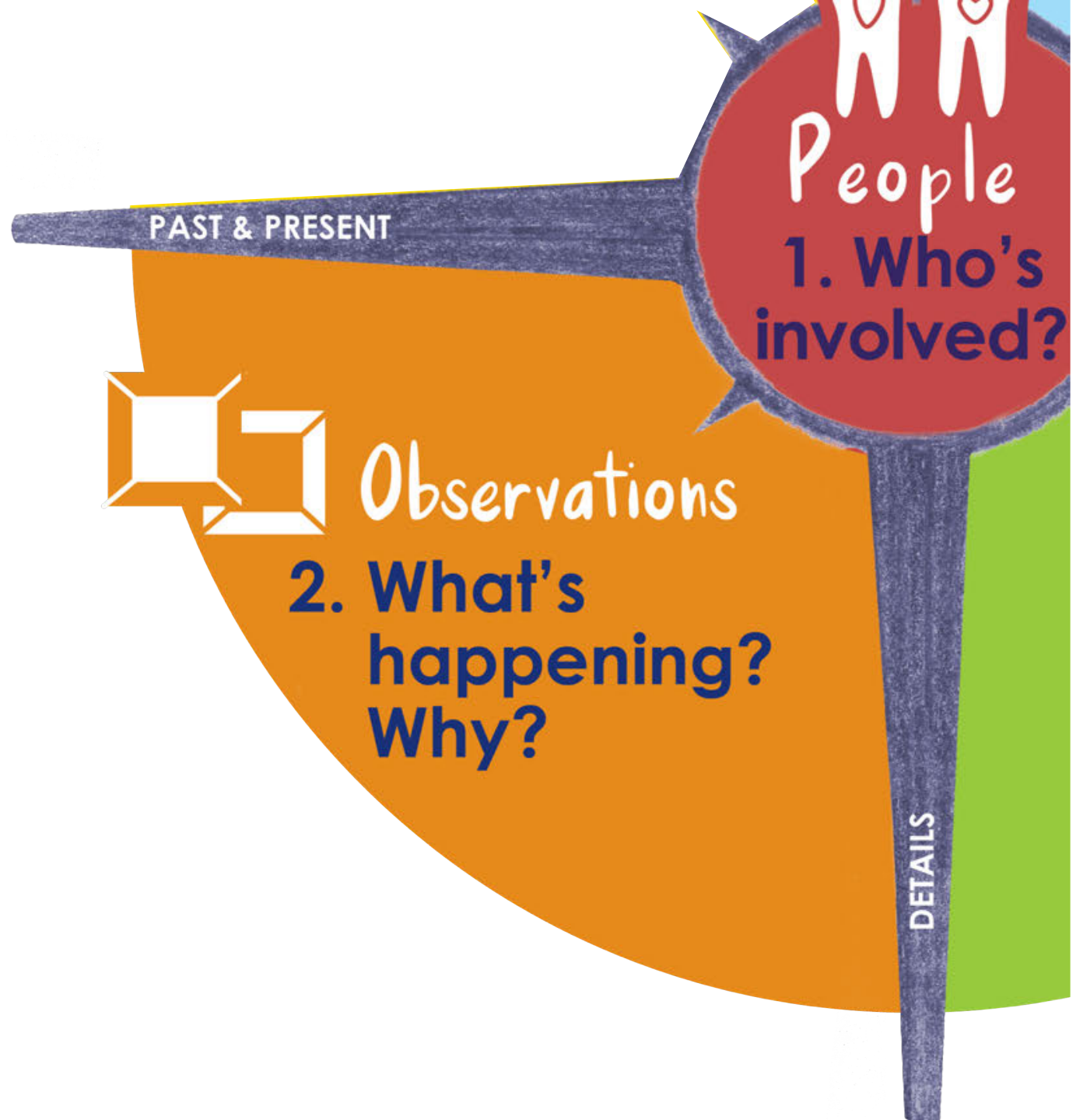
Put them at the center of your compass.
It's fine to start on your own; just add
? marks as you consider others' views.



When we can't see our stuck...

Observations unstick us with real details of **what's happening and why?**

Explore different sides of what people are doing, saying, thinking and especially feeling.

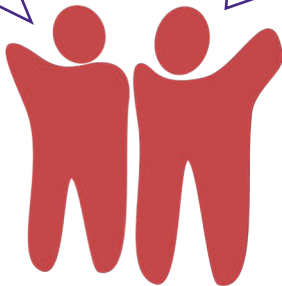


When there's a lot going on...

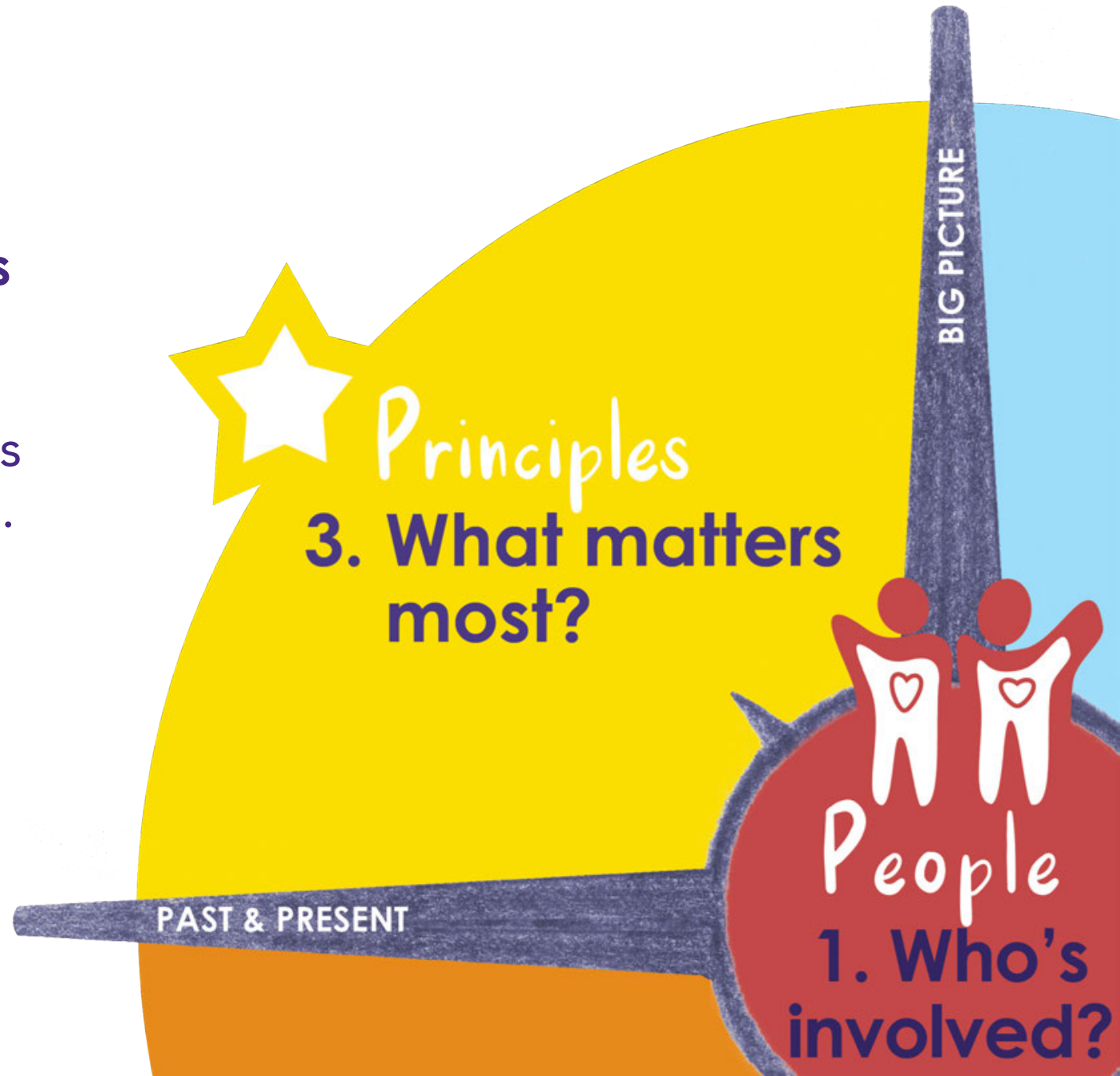
Principles unstick us by guiding us to zoom out and focus on **what matters most?** in whatever we do here.

Explore what might matter more or less (add a ? mark!) than you first thought.

Any Principles?



Oh, *THAT's* what matters most here!



Principles

3. What matters most?

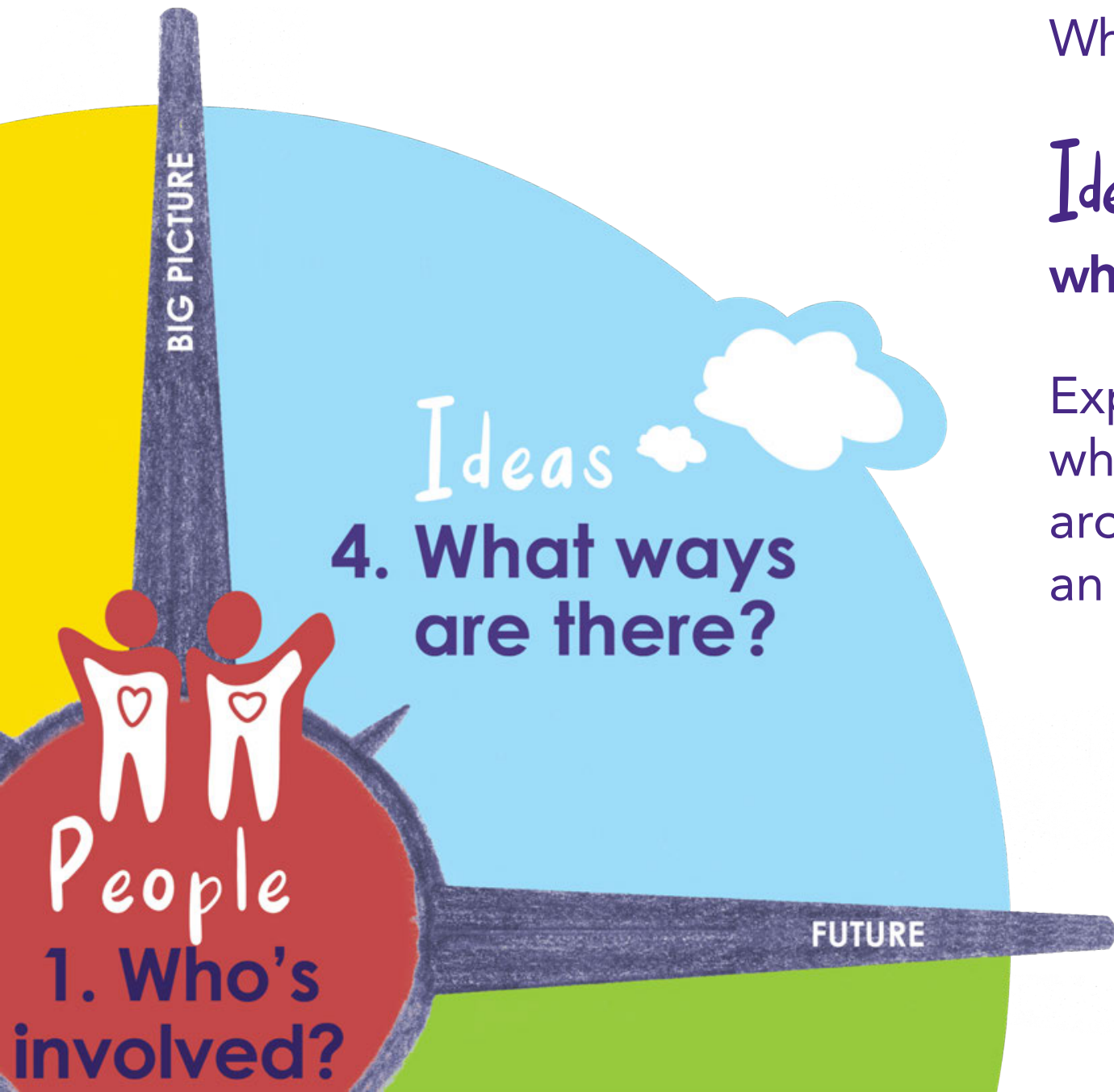
BIG PICTURE



People

1. Who's involved?

PAST & PRESENT

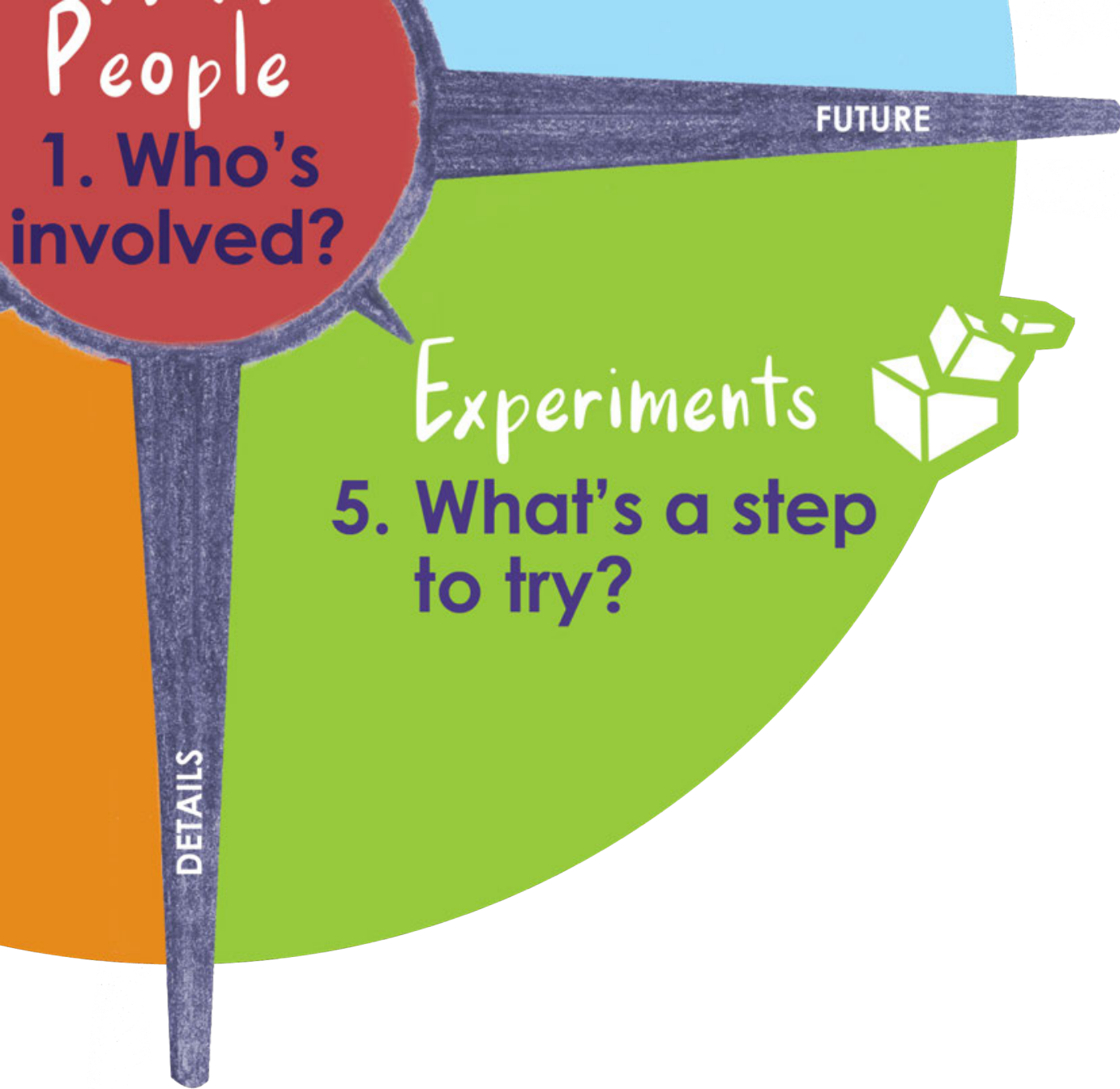


When we can't see another way...

Ideas unstick us with a bigger picture of **what ways are there?** to do what matters.

Explore different who/what/when/where/hows—anyone and anything around you can help. Don't hold back an idea: just add a ? mark!





When we don't get started...

Our **Experiments** unstick us by showing us **what's a step to try?** with real details so we DO it!

Pick a small, specific who/what/when/where/how to explore an idea or unanswered question.

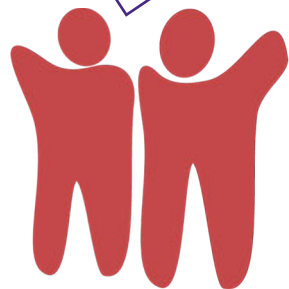


Try an experiment now!
What happens?

Not great yet? Find a new
observation, principle, or idea that
points you to your next step!

Any observations about exploring
these 5 questions? How'd it feel?

Woohoo! We're
UNSTICKING!



So ask these questions more in any way to sense stucks and unstick them!

Share your ways of #unsticking with your #innovatorscompass!

Be an *unsticker!*

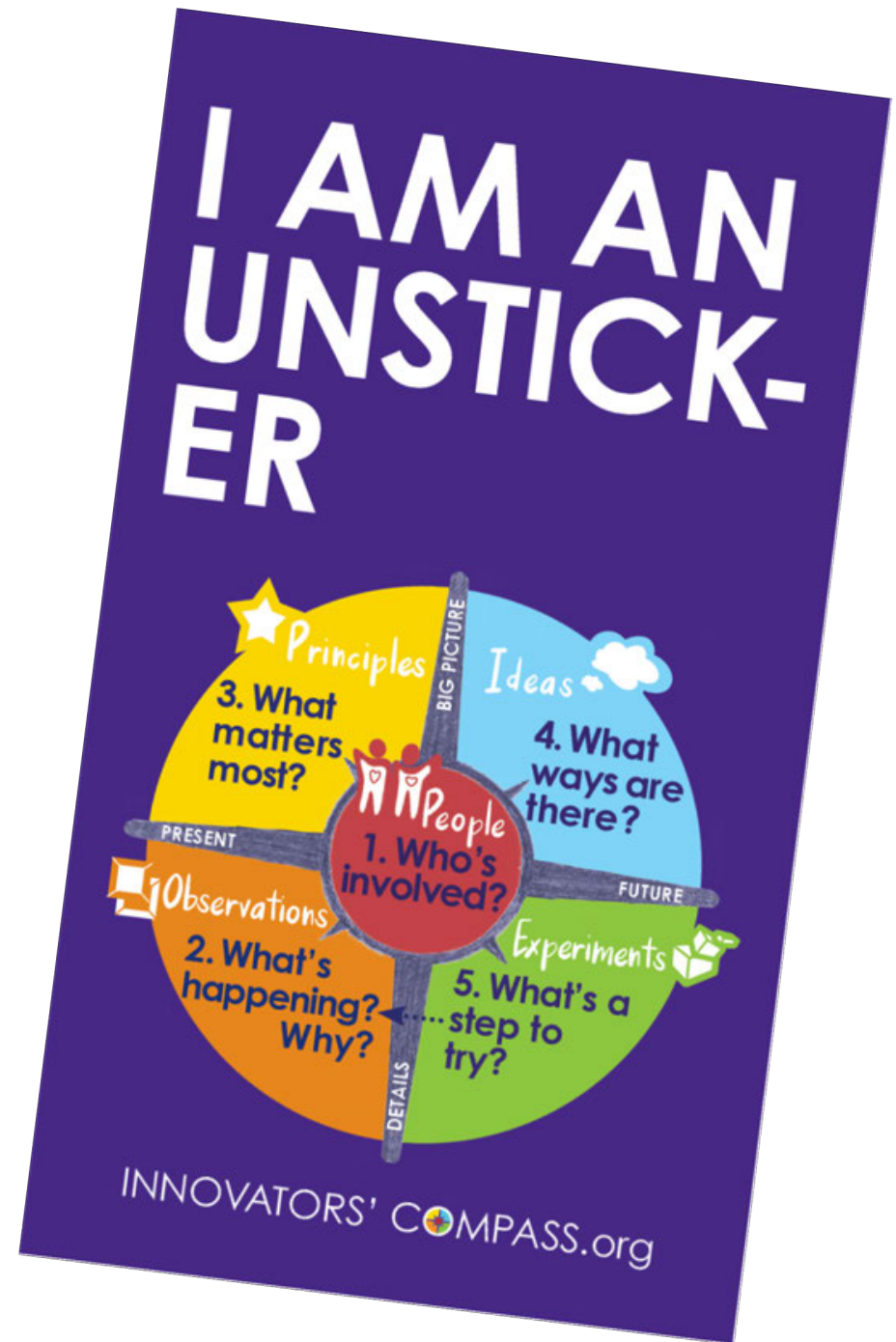


DIAGRAM OF

our INNOVATORS' COMPASS

Five ways we move forward in any challenge, big or small: with and for everyone involved, we explore new possibilities in...

We are all innovators when we unstick stuff and make things better!

Plural—we make things better together!

Use it to find your way and map your challenges.

These are our "guiding stars," and we "star" important things.

Blue sky because we're free to dream!

There are always lots of ways! Try a different who, what, when, where or how!

People are always at the center—and feelings are our best clues!

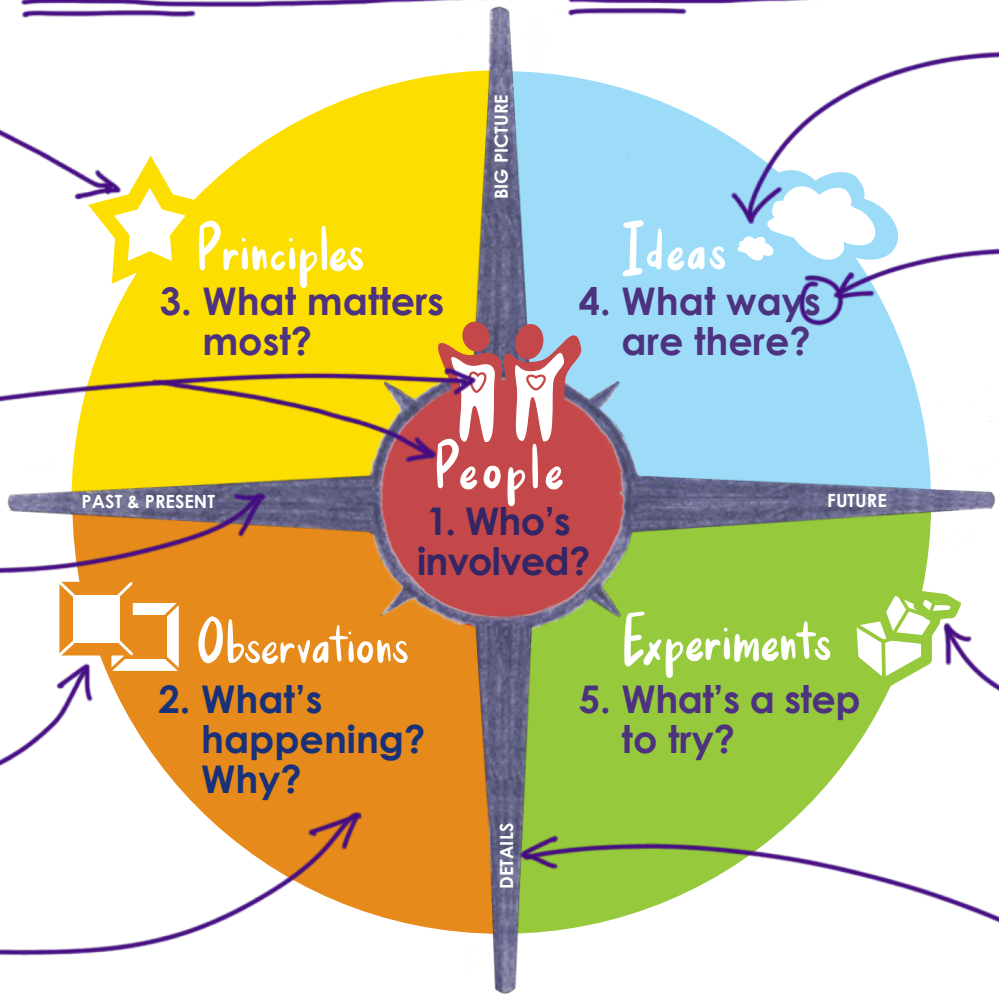
You can draw a compass to see your challenge! It's just a circle and four lines.

See different sides. Start with the upside!

Earthy orange since we're getting "grounded" in what's really happening.

Small steps that may not work at first—but help us and our ideas grow, so they're spring green.

Real details make observations and experiments more powerful!



Go wherever moves you forward! Try, question and change things. Or follow the numbered path—think: POPIE ("Pop-y"): People, Observations, Principles, Ideas, Experiments and back to what happens, for all involved.

GLOSSARY OF REIMAGINED WORDS

Innovator – Anyone seeing how things are, and how things could be, in new ways to make them better.

Innovators' Compass – Five questions that help us get unstuck and make things better, in one visual tool we can use anytime.

Stuck – (Adjective) Not great, or getting better, for everyone involved.
(Noun) The challenge that has us stuck.

Unsticker – Anyone sensing “stucks” and unsticking them.

Unsticking – Seeing a way forward that works for everyone.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ela Ben-Ur is an MIT engineer, former IDEO designer and leader, Olin educator, coach for people making a difference, and parent.

She's worked to find the common ground in ways of making lots of different things better. And, to share those in powerful yet simple forms that help *all* of us use them in any moment. So, she wrote this with her daughters:

Dalia Katz (7) loves cats and dreams of flying.

Maia Katz (9) loves bunnies and fairies.

Arrin Katz, engineer and Ela's husband, is a great supporter of this passion work—and no-nonsense proofreader.

We all love books and making them together!

