

Ladder of Inference

Why Morgan and Leo See Things Differently

Morgan's Ladder (Manager)

I have to let Lee go

Leo knows speed is critical
Leo's doing the best he can; he
just isn't up to the challenge

Leo's department is slow
Clients are unhappy

Conclusions

**Assumptions
& Beliefs**

Data

Leo's Ladder (Employee)

Morgan is coming to promote me!

Error rate is what matters most to Morgan
Morgan must be pleased with my performance

Morgan is coming to my field office to meet
with me. Historically, she only visits the field
to promote or fire people

Morgan fired my predecessor because of the
department's high error rate under his
leadership

Since I took over the department, we've been
practically error free

About the Ladder of Inference



- The ladder of inference explains how we come to conclusions about what is true or right
 - The top rung of the ladder is our conclusion
 - The bottom rung is the data our conclusion is based on. (Data are objective facts, not opinions)
 - The middle rung holds our assumptions and beliefs about how the world works and how people should behave
 - We arrive at conclusions by filtering the data we see through our assumptions and beliefs
- We get into trouble when we:
 - Mistake our assumptions and beliefs for data
 - Assume that others have the same data, assumptions and beliefs that we do
 - Assume that others are aware of our data, assumptions, and beliefs