



WATER WORDS
THAT WORK

Combat Communications for Conservationists:

*What to say -- and what not to say -- in controversial
situations*

Eric Eckl

Master of Controversy and Communications





Communications and Controversy

- Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955
- First March on Washington, 1957
- NC Lunch Counter Sit Ins, 1960
- Freedom Ride throughout South, 1961
- Arrested in Georgia, 1962
- Second March on Washington, "I Have Dream Speech," 1963
- Civil Rights Act signed, 1964



What Dr. King Wanted in Private

"(A) in determining whether any individual is qualified under State law or laws to vote in any Federal election, apply any standard, practice, or procedure different from the standards, practices, or procedures applied under such law or laws to other individuals within the same county, parish, or similar political subdivision who have been found by State officials to be qualified to vote..."

(Preamble to the Civil Rights Act)



What Dr. King Said in Public

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”



What Dr. King Said in Public



Many of the “Water Words That Work” are found in Dr. King's speeches and writing.

This Presentation

- Martin Luther King: Master of Controversy
- Basic Principles
- Environmental Attitudes and Controversy
- The Discipline of the Disabled Dog
- Message Discipline in Controversial Situations
- Environmental Jargon During Controversy
- Spin Doctor Secrets



Basic Principles



Basic Principles

- You must always tell the truth



Basic Principles

- You must always tell the truth
- You must always tell nothing but the truth



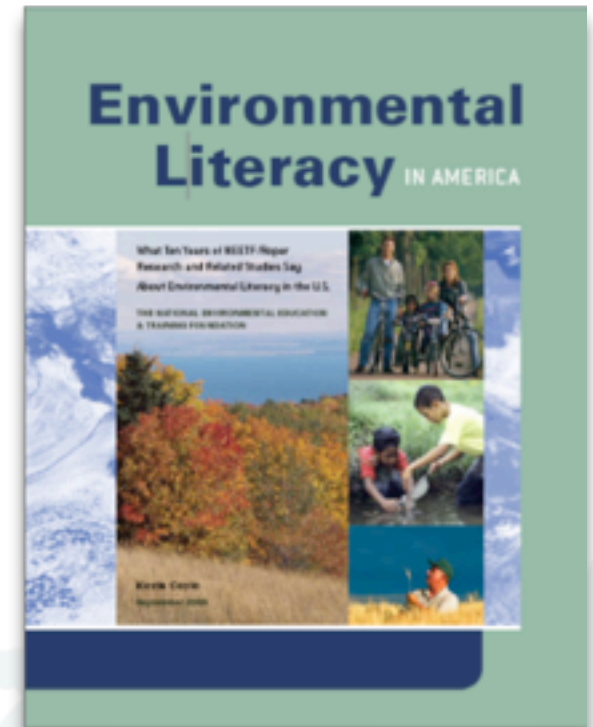
Basic Principles

- You must always tell the truth
- You must always tell nothing but the truth
- You must not withhold public information

Environmental Attitudes and Controversy



Similar But Different



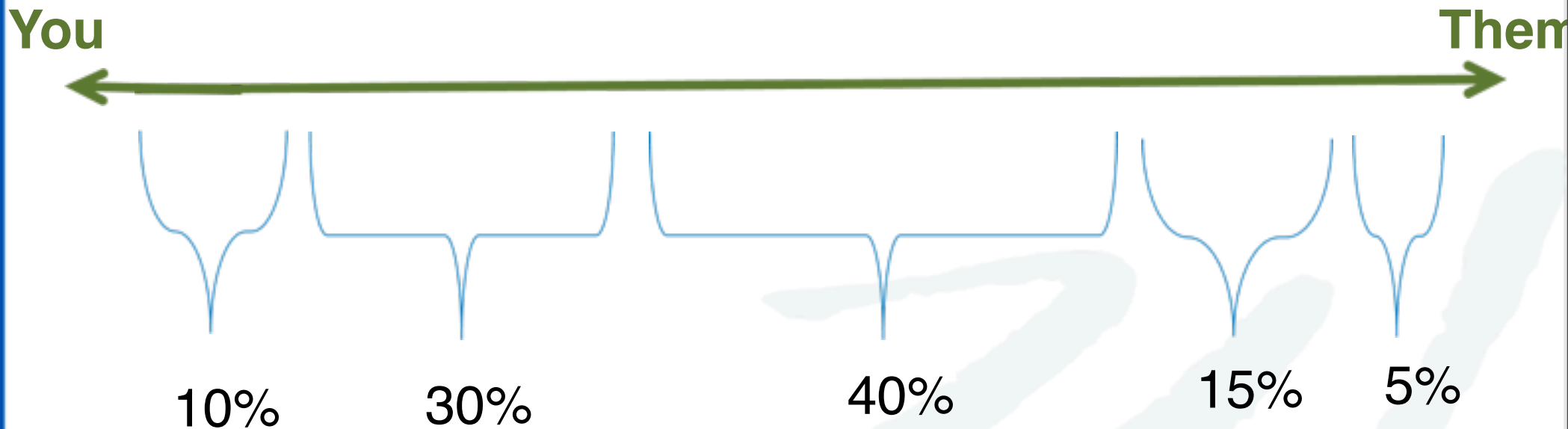
Three major studies that explored patterns of environmental attitudes, knowledge, and conviction among American citizens.

Similar But Different



Attitudes

Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:

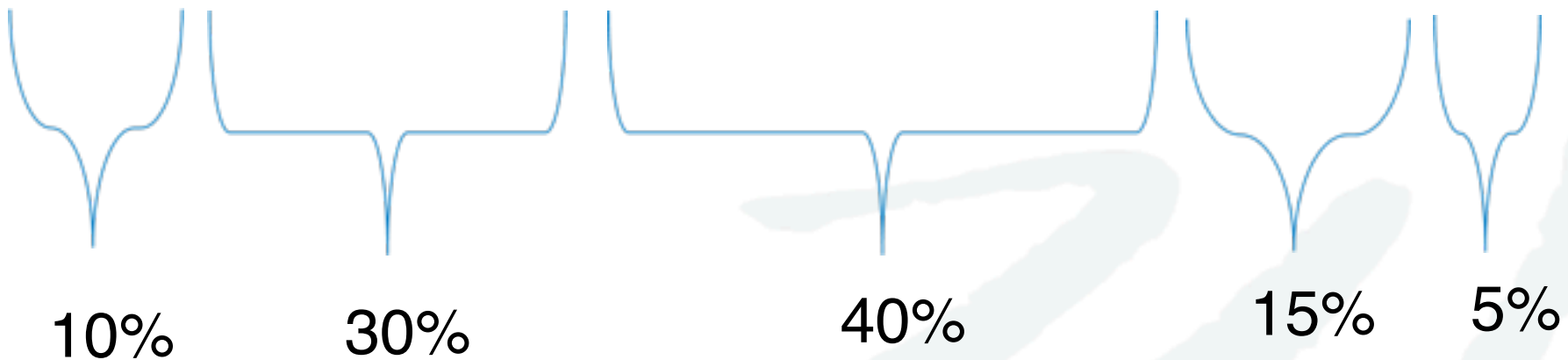


Attitudes

Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:

You

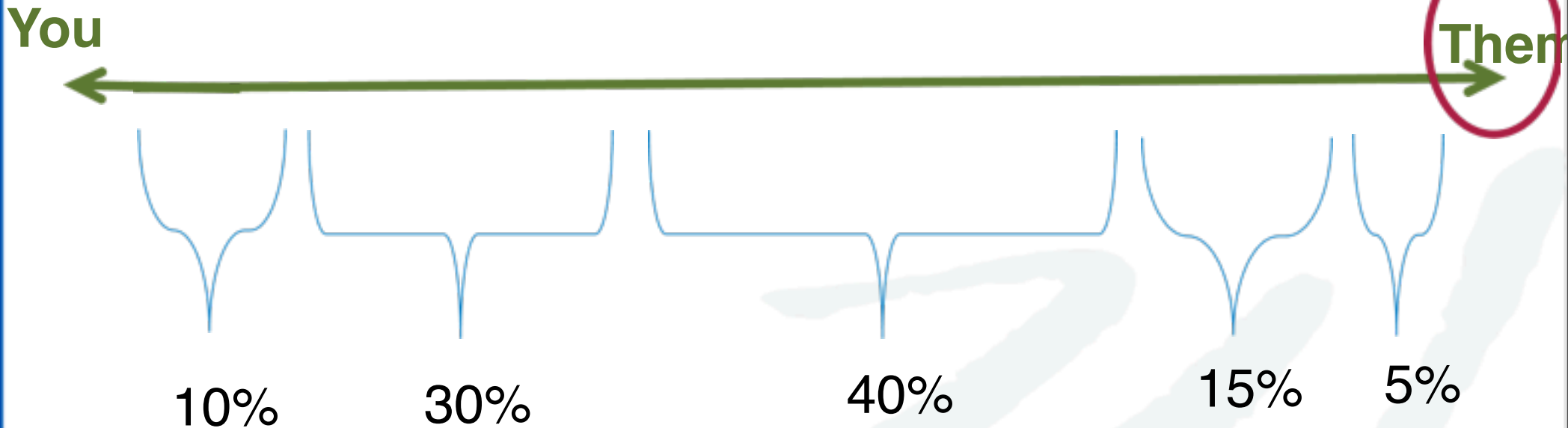
Them



You - .1 or .2%

Attitudes

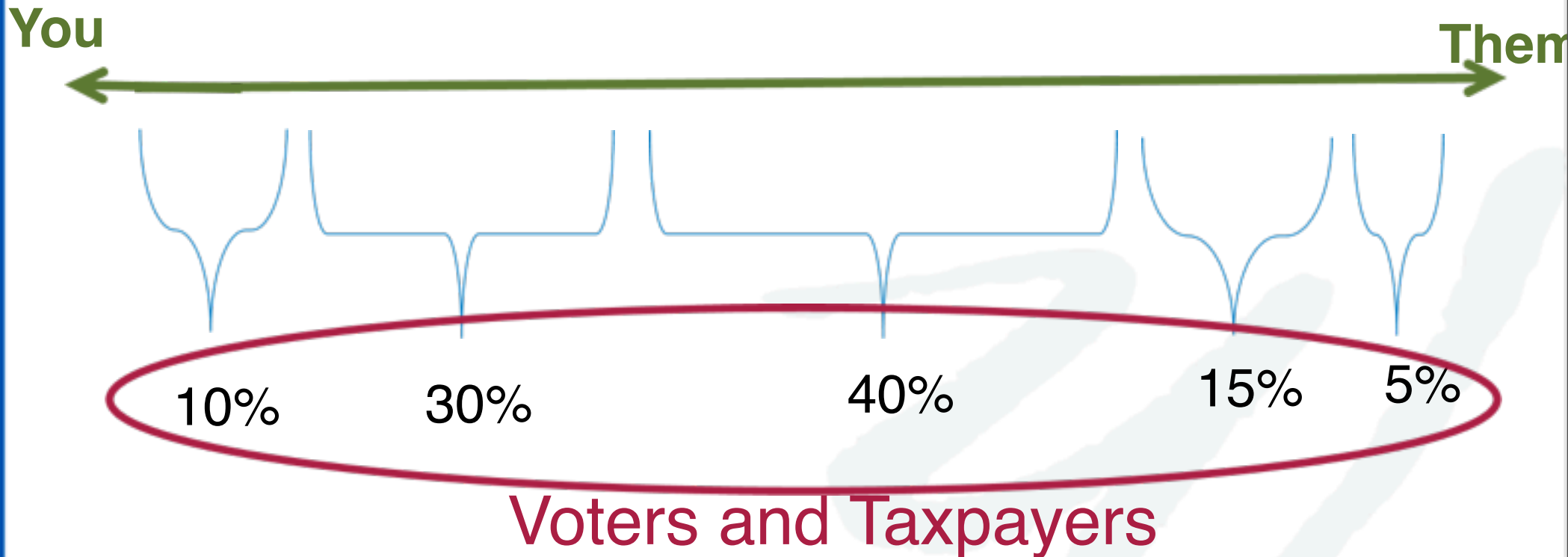
Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:



Their lobbyists, flacks, consultants, etc.

Attitudes

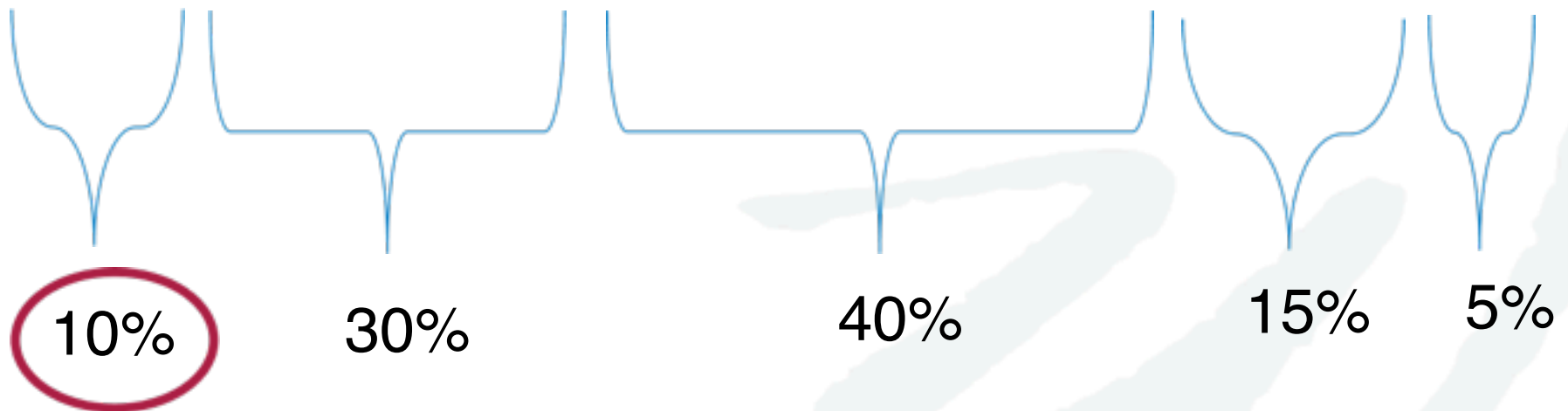
Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:



Attitudes

Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:

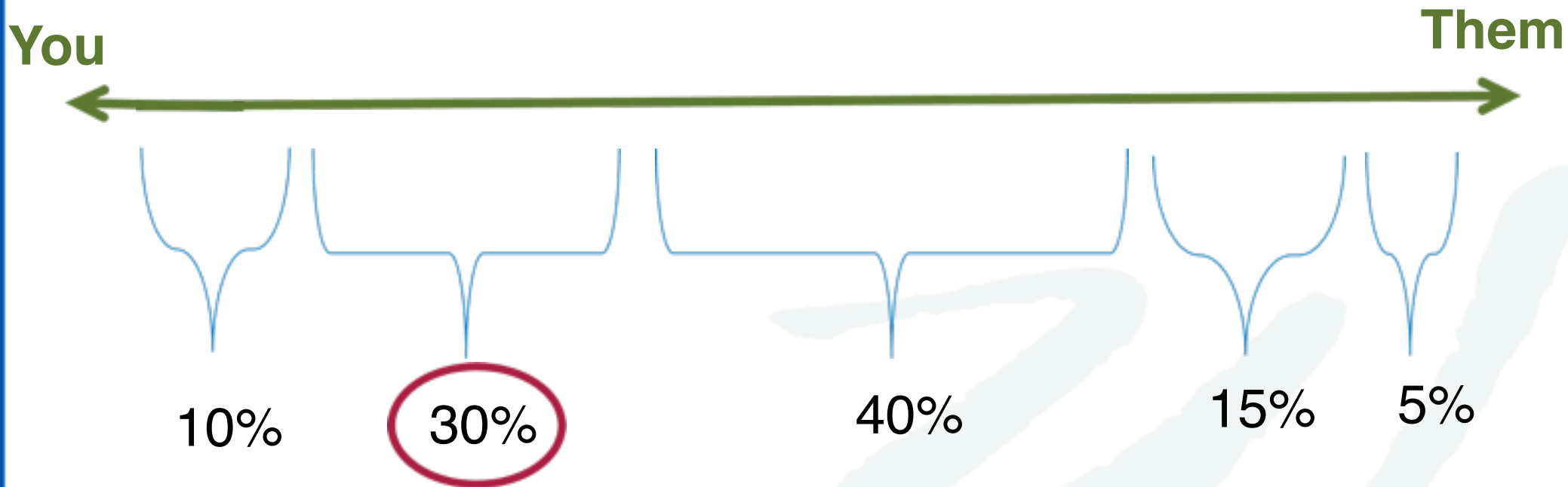
You Them



Staunch Supporters

Attitudes

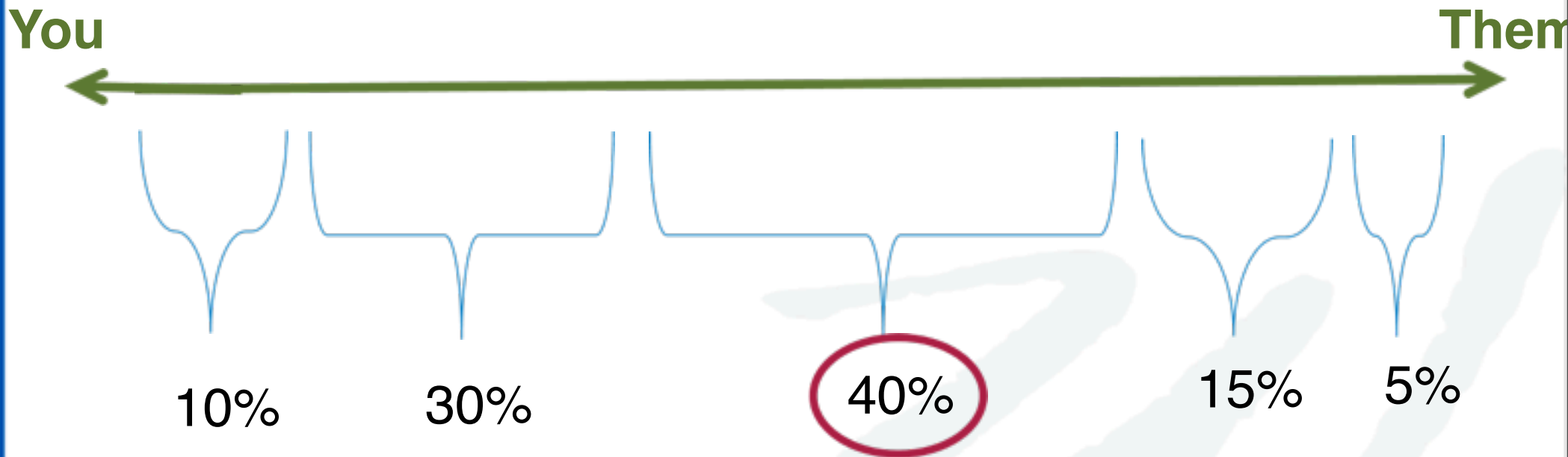
Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:



Generally Supportive

Attitudes

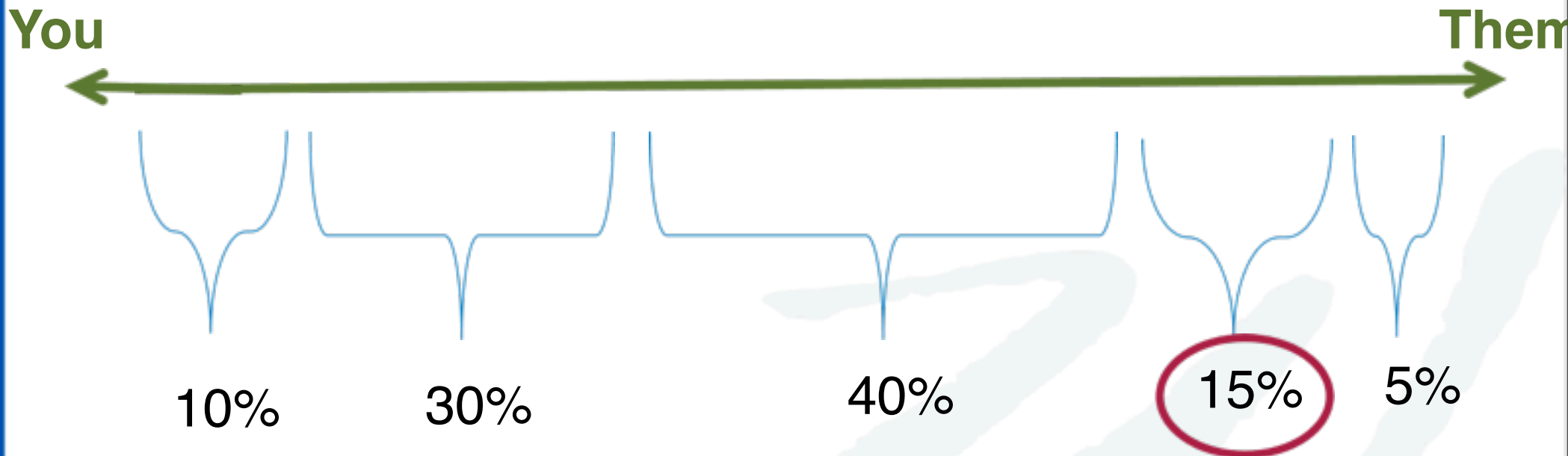
Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:



Well-meaning – but faint hearted

Attitudes

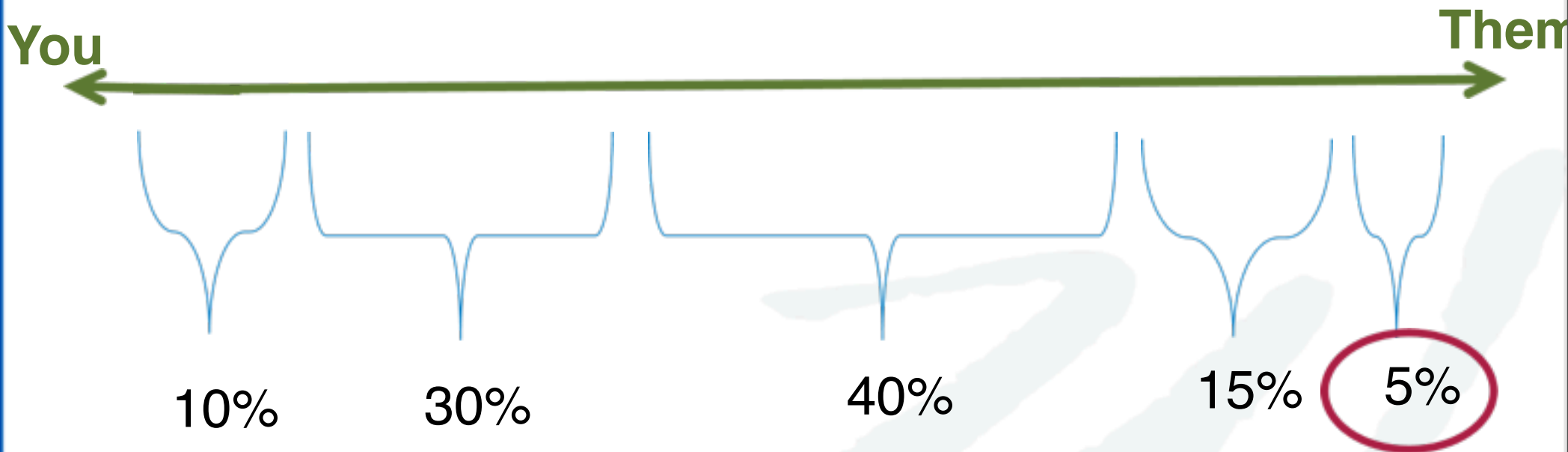
Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:



Just Lookin' Out for #1

Attitudes

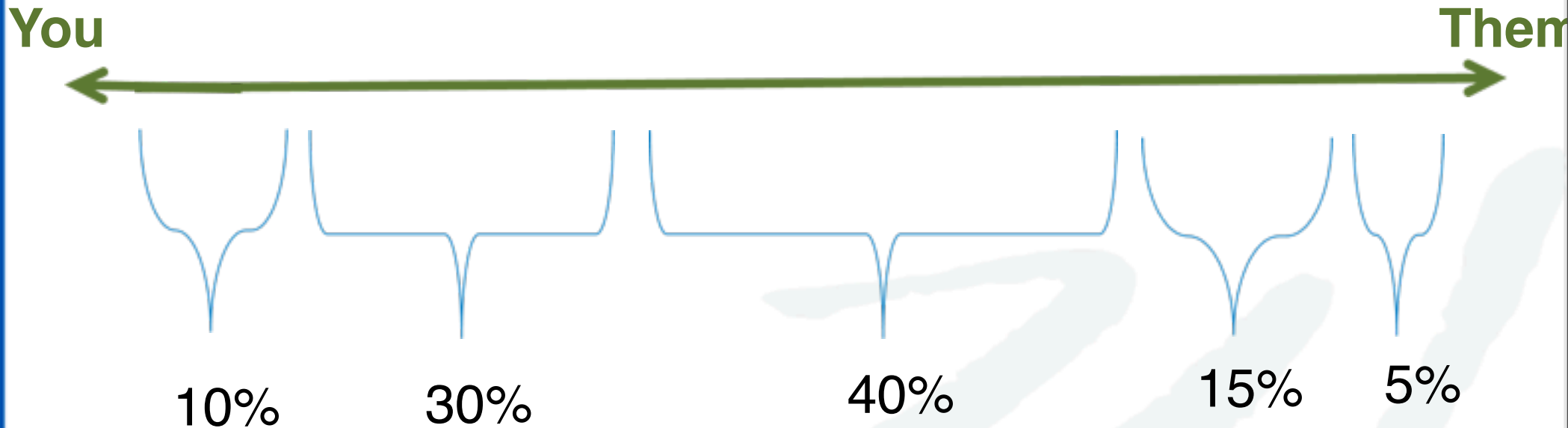
Before the mud starts flying, public attitudes are most likely distributed about like this:



Crackpots and Special Interests

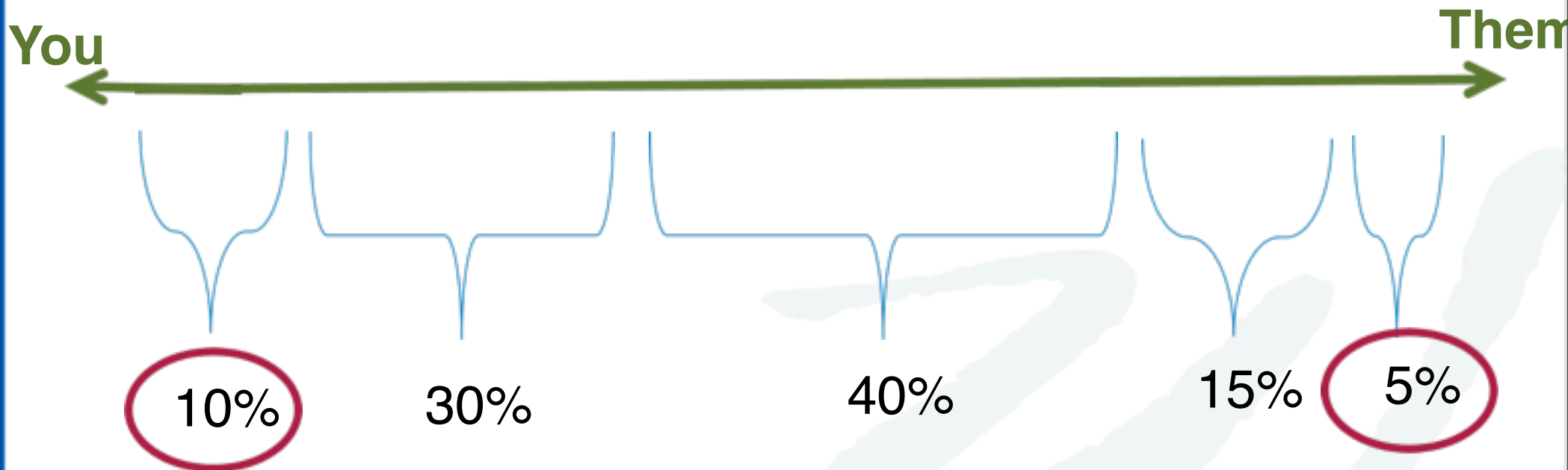
Knowledge & Attention

Before the mud starts flying, some know more than others



Knowledge & Attention

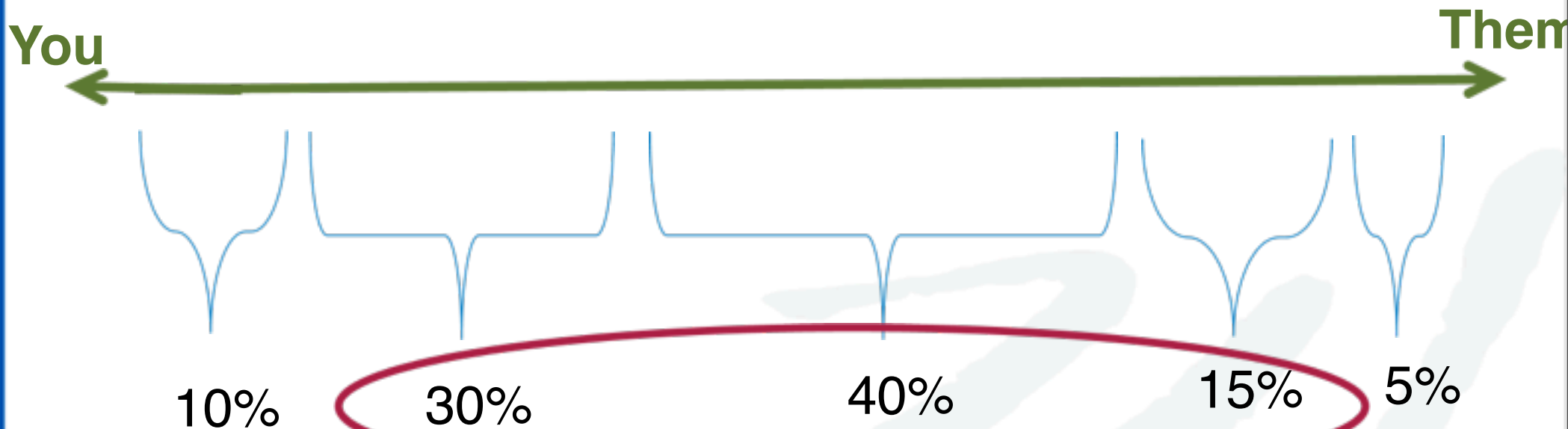
Before the mud starts flying, some know more than others



**Pay attention to the issue
before it becomes controversial**

Knowledge & Attention

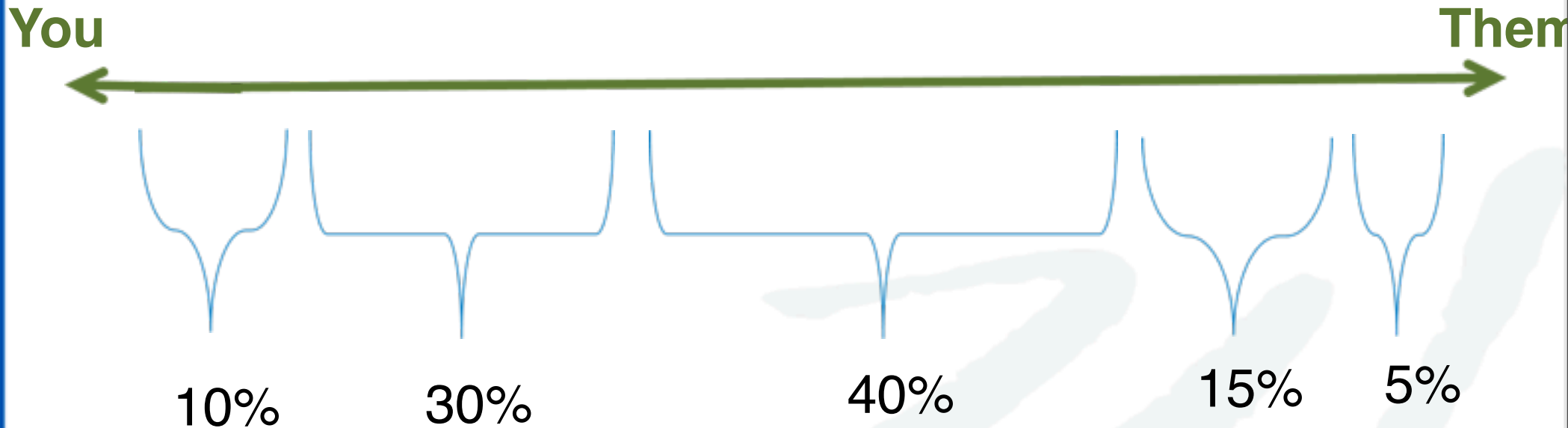
Before the mud starts flying, some know more than others



**Only pay attention to the issue
after it becomes controversial**

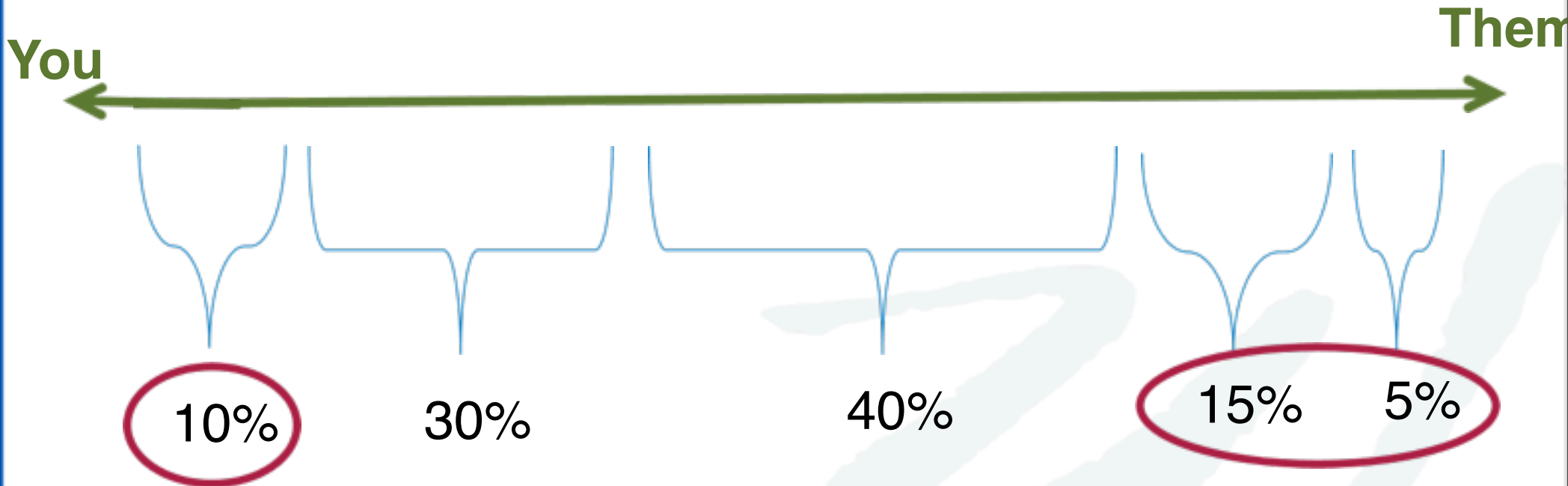
Conviction

Who can be persuaded -- and who can't



Conviction

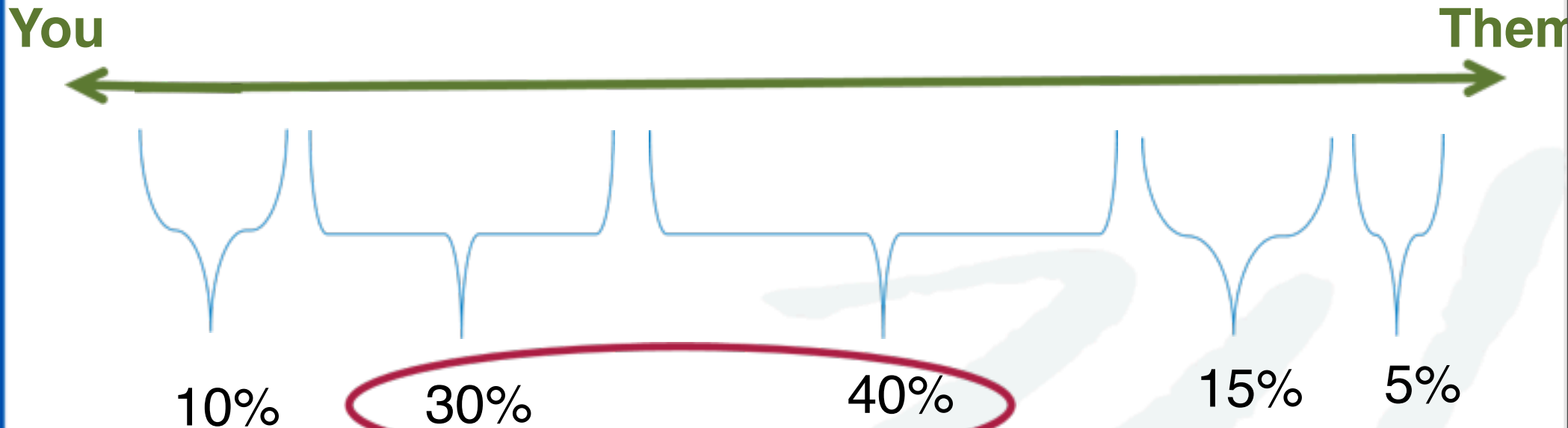
Who can be persuaded -- and who can't



Hold views firmly

Conviction

Who can be persuaded -- and who can't

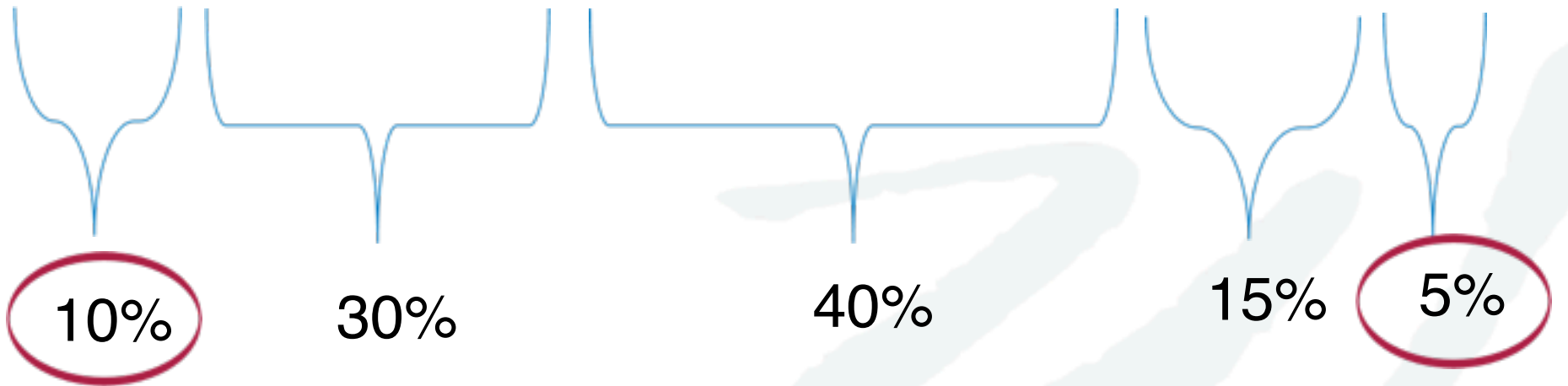


May change their minds

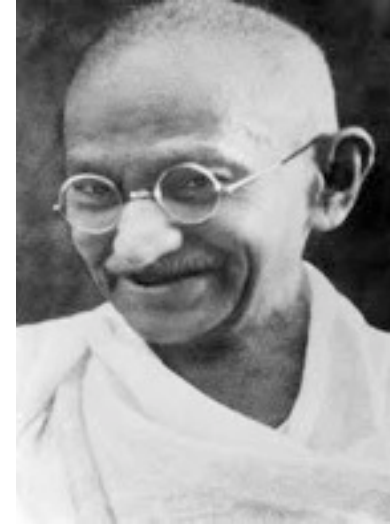


You

Them



They use fighting words to stir these people up!



You

Them



10%

30%

40%

15%

5%

They used confrontational behavior --
and conciliatory language
to win these people over

Discipline of the Disabled Dog



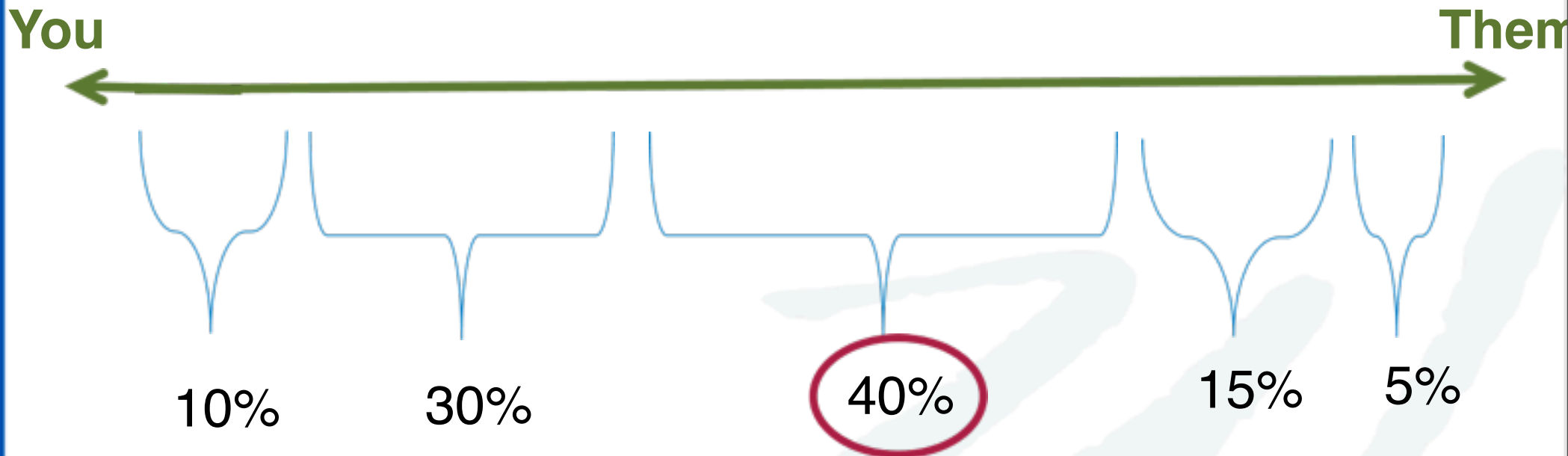


Exercise #1

Leader: Read members of your group the questions on the page labeled "Disabled Dog."

Participants: Take turns responding -- you must include the words "Disabled Dog" in your answer somehow

Sample Questions from This Group



Well-meaning – but faint hearted



Exercise #2

Leader: Read members of your group the questions or statements on the page labeled "Well Meaning but Faint Hearted."

Participants: Take turns responding to the question or statement -- you must include the Water Words That Work that are on the screen.

Family



Future Generations



Fair



Responsibility





Do Your Part



Make a Difference



Before it's too late



Message Discipline in Controversial Situations





Basic Principles



Basic Principles

- You must always tell the truth



Basic Principles

- You must always tell the truth
- You must always tell nothing but the truth



Basic Principles

- You must always tell the truth
- You must always tell nothing but the truth
- You must not withhold public information

What Did You Think?



“I wouldn’t lie to you”

“I am not
a crook”





“I did not
have sex
with that
woman”



“I won’t raise your taxes!”

The More *You* Deny It, The More *They* Believe it





Tuesday, October 9, 2012

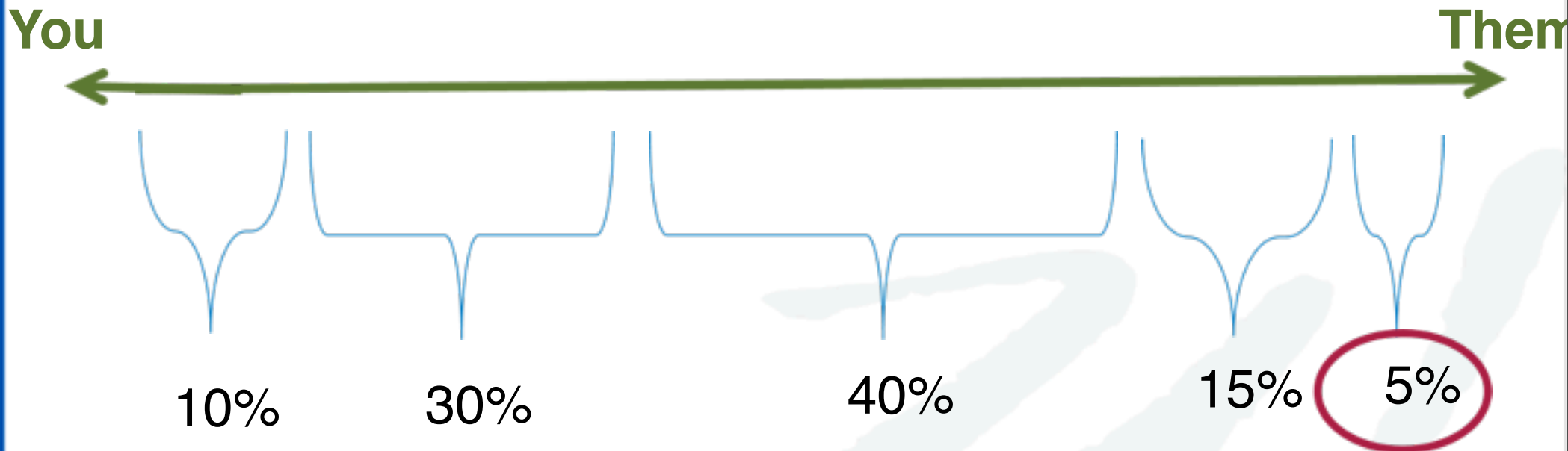


“We do not have black helicopters and we are not going to put you in concentration camps.”



“We will make you a **fair** offer
for your land if you make the
choice to sell it.”

Sample Questions from This Group



Crackpots and Special Interests



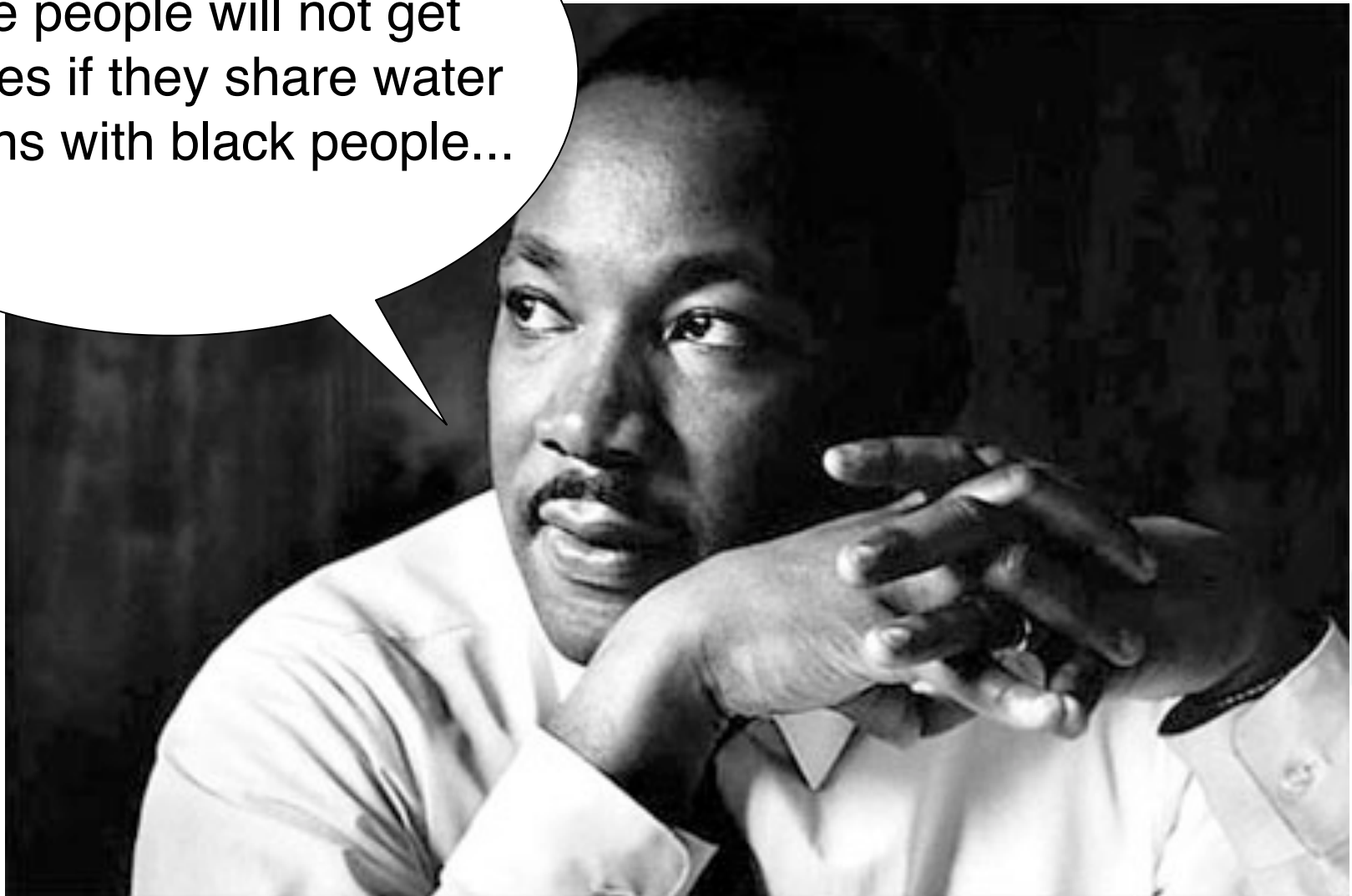
Exercise #3

Leader: Read members of your group the questions and statements on the page labeled "Hostile Questions."

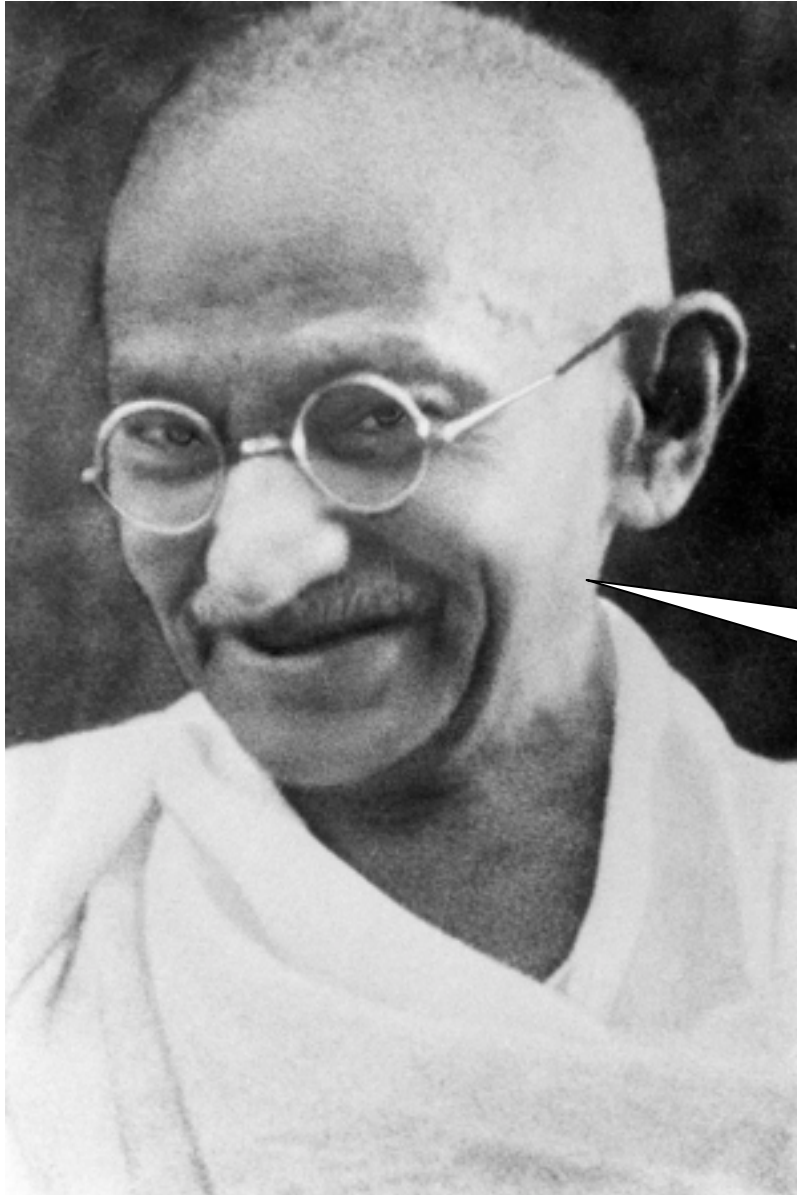
Participants: Take turns responding -- *do not repeat the accusation* -- and use at least one word from the Words That Work list.

Why Don't We Remember...

White people will not get diseases if they share water fountains with black people...



Why Don't We Remember...



Indian people are not an inferior race unable to govern themselves

Environmental Jargon & Controversy



Photo by Joe Jaszewski / Courtesy of the Idaho Statesman



Knowledge

Before the mud starts flying, some know more than others

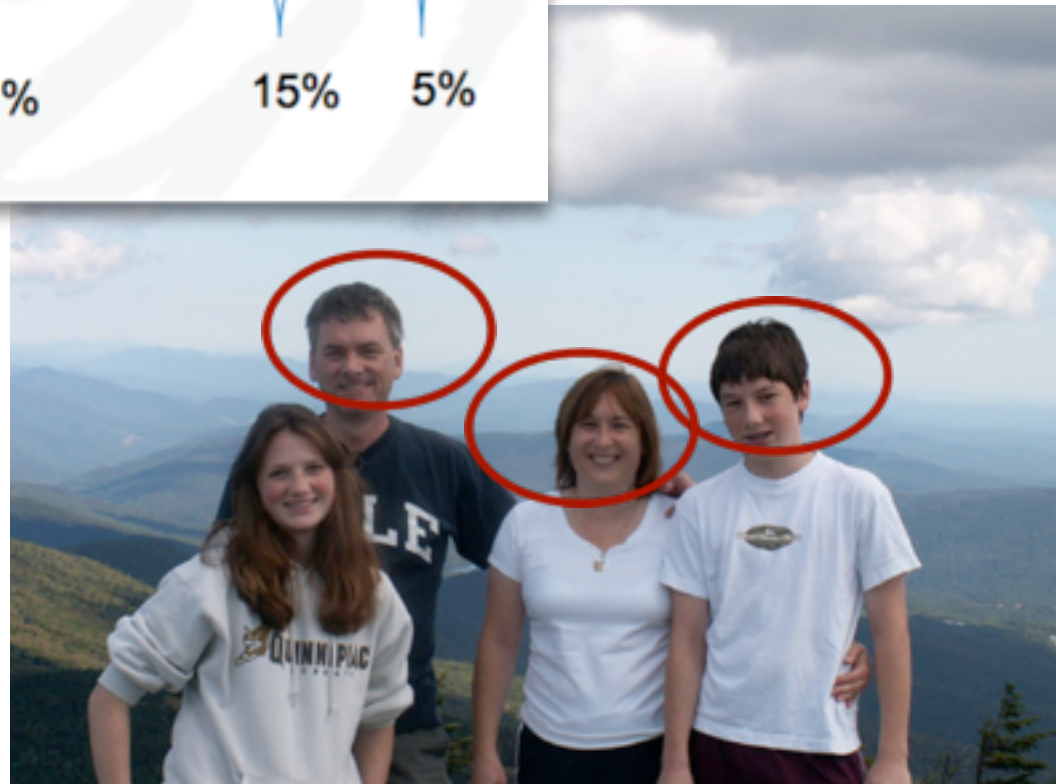
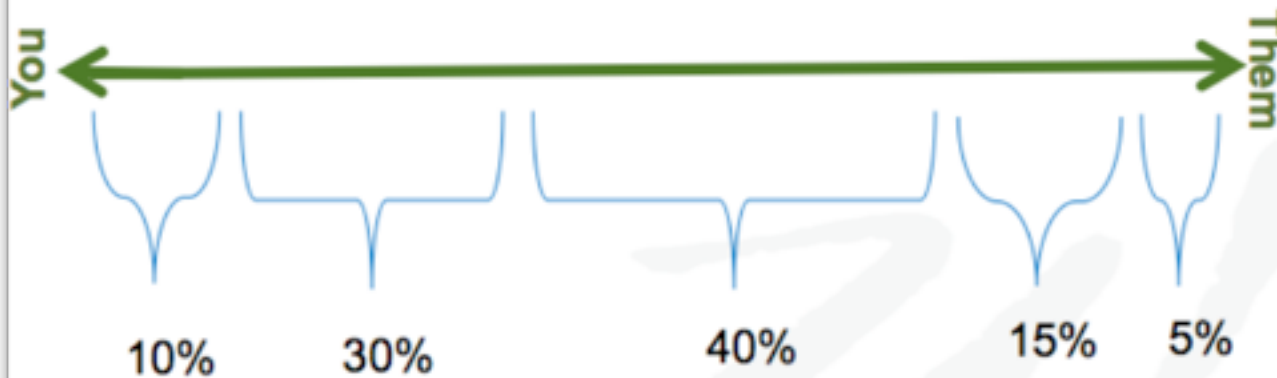


Photo: Flickr, Redacted



“Biodiversity”



The 2004 Survey of Kentuckians'
Environmental Knowledge,
Attitudes and Behaviors

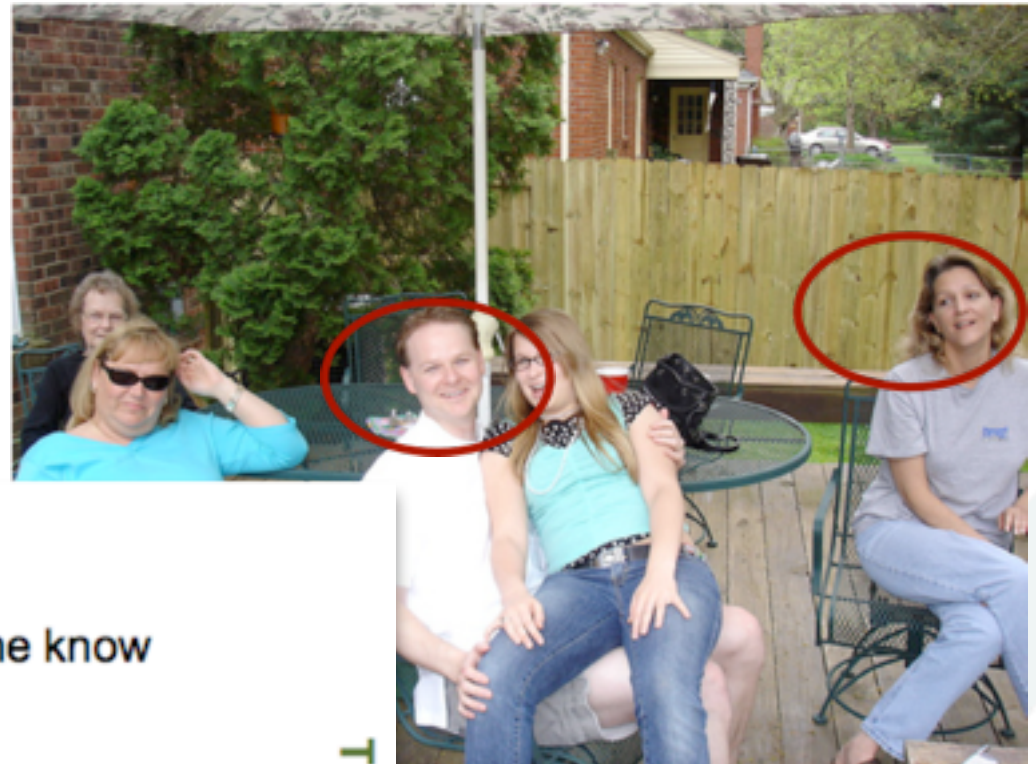
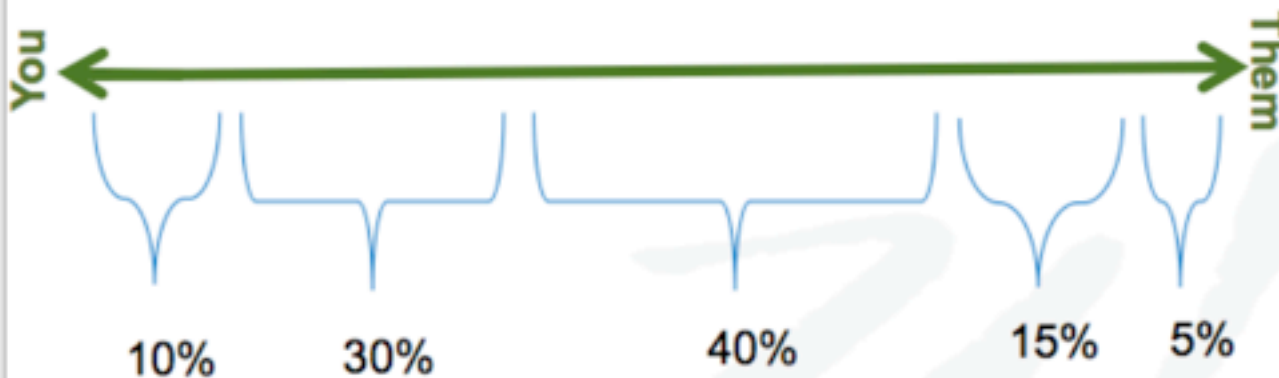


Photo: Flickr, merfam

Knowledge

Before the mud starts flying, some know
more than others





“Watershed”

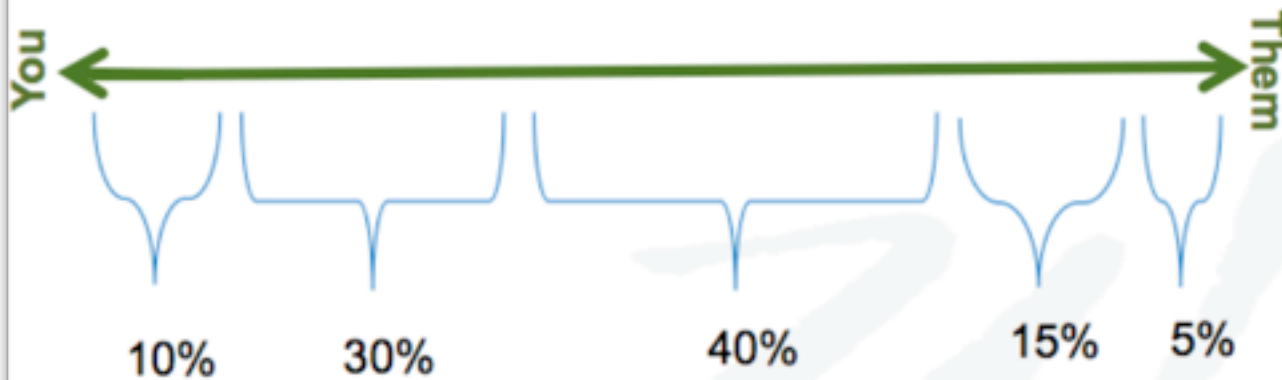
Final Report for
A SURVEY OF CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED RESIDENTS
KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS TOWARDS
CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED WATER QUALITY ISSUES

CMJ-HDD-02-01
Submitted: September 11, 2002



Knowledge

Before the mud starts flying, some know more than others



Ando Dall D'aqua

Spin Doctor Secrets



**STALLEM, BLUFF,
AND ASSOCIATES**

"Consultants to the Industry"
Robert Stallem
Co-Founder

1234 Main Street
Anytown, State ZIP

T 123-456-7890
F 123-456-7891
no_reply@apple.com

www.stallem-bluff.com

Punch #1: They Hit You This Way

"...we believe your methodology overestimates the amount impervious surface our project will produce in the riparian area, and underestimates existing hydrological alterations in the watershed due to the cumulative impact of 404(b) permit waivers..."



It's a Trap!



Punch #2: They Hit You This Way



Punch #2: Then They Hit You This Way

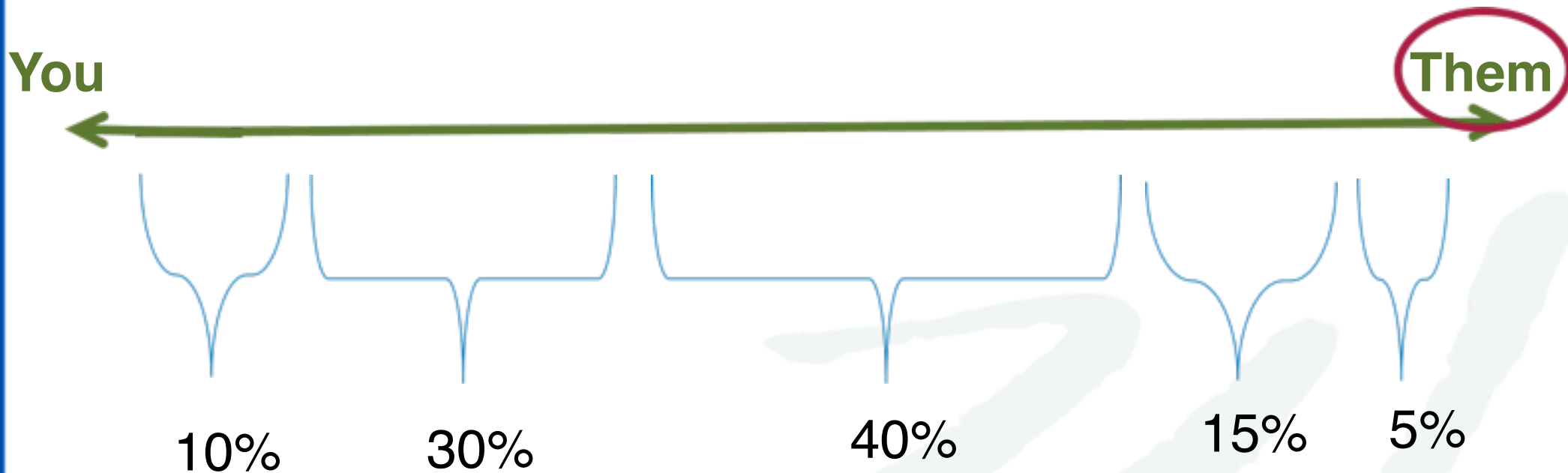


We protect,
so they can play.

Punch #2: They Hit You This Way



Sample Questions from This Group



***Their* lobbyists, flacks, consultants, etc.**



Exercise #4

Leaders: Challenge your table mates with the statements on the page labeled "Avoid Jargon."

Table Mates: Defend yourself from these challenges *without repeating the professional jargon.*

Spin Doctors in the Ring



Al Gore



Frank Luntz



The Backstory



The Backstory

- **The Year:** 2006, Inconvenient Truth is causing a stir! The United States inches towards action on “global warming!”



The Backstory

- **The Year:** 2006, Inconvenient Truth is causing a stir! The United States inches towards action on “global warming!”
- **The Firm:** Maslansky, Luntz & Partners

The Backstory

- **The Year:** 2006, Inconvenient Truth is causing a stir! The United States inches towards action on “global warming!”
- **The Firm:** Maslansky, Luntz & Partners
- **Their Slogan:** “We are a research driven communications strategy firm with a twist”

The Backstory

- **The Year:** 2006, Inconvenient Truth is causing a stir! The United States inches towards action on “global warming!”
- **The Firm:** Maslansky, Luntz & Partners
- **Their Slogan:** “We are a research driven communications strategy firm with a twist”
- **Their Clients:** Big Emitters of Carbon Dioxide

The Backstory

- **The Year:** 2006, Inconvenient Truth is causing a stir! The United States inches towards action on “global warming!”
- **The Firm:** Maslansky, Luntz & Partners
- **Their Slogan:** “We are a research driven communications strategy firm with a twist”
- **Their Clients:** Big Emitters of Carbon Dioxide
- **Their Assignment:** Stop the U.S. from regulating carbon dioxide!

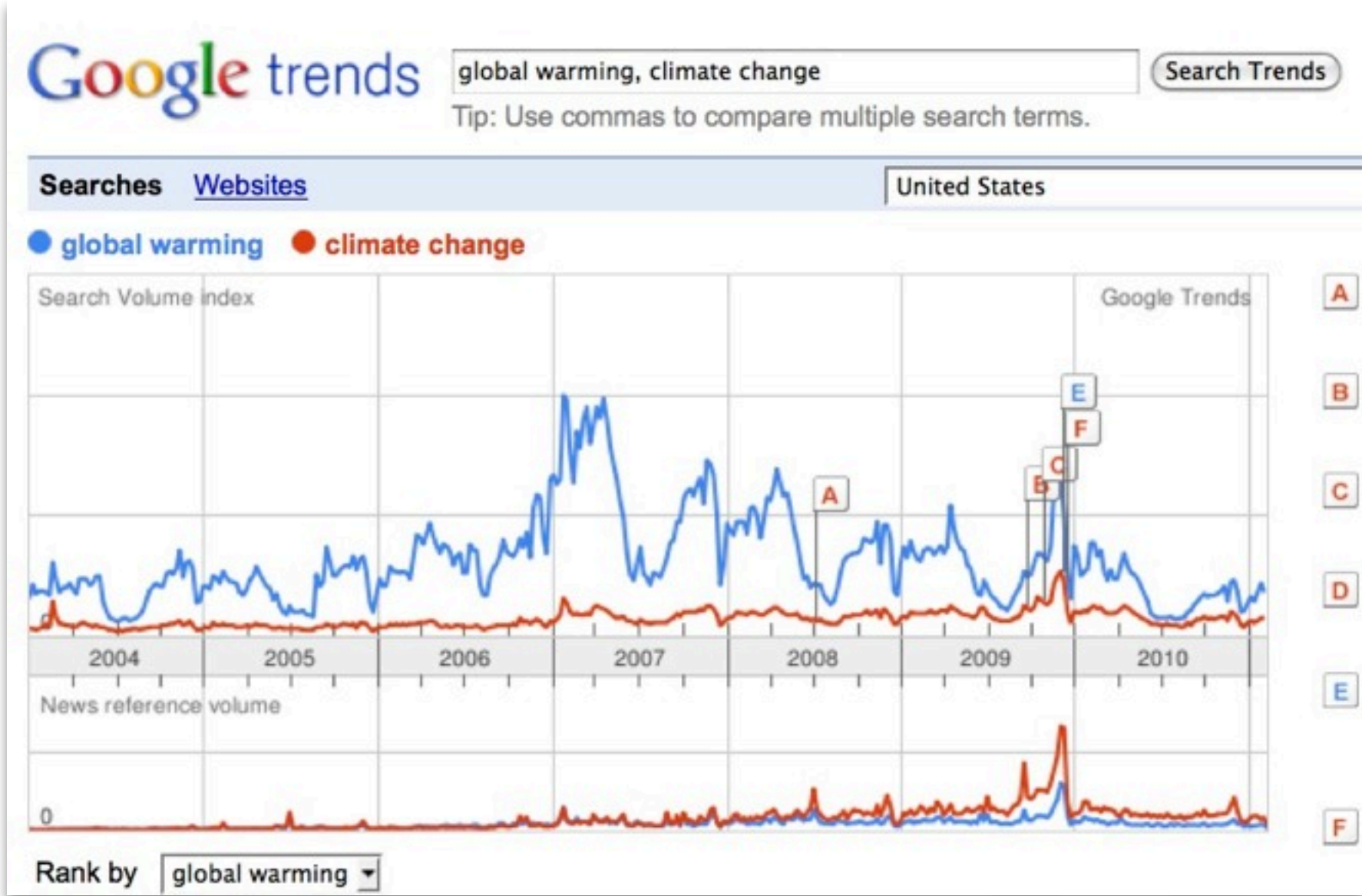
Luntz's Recommendations



“...Climate change’ is less frightening than ‘global warming’... It’s time for us to start talking about ‘climate change’ rather than ‘global warming’...”

Source: The Environment: A Cleaner, Safer, Healthier America, Frank Luntz, circa 2006

The Result



Luntz's Recommendations



“[T]he environmental community hasn't figured out how to communicate effectively... they keep losing and losing... But you understand, I'm not in the business of trying to explain this to them.”

Source: Frank Luntz interview with Grist.org, 2007



And Now It's the Leaders' Turn...

