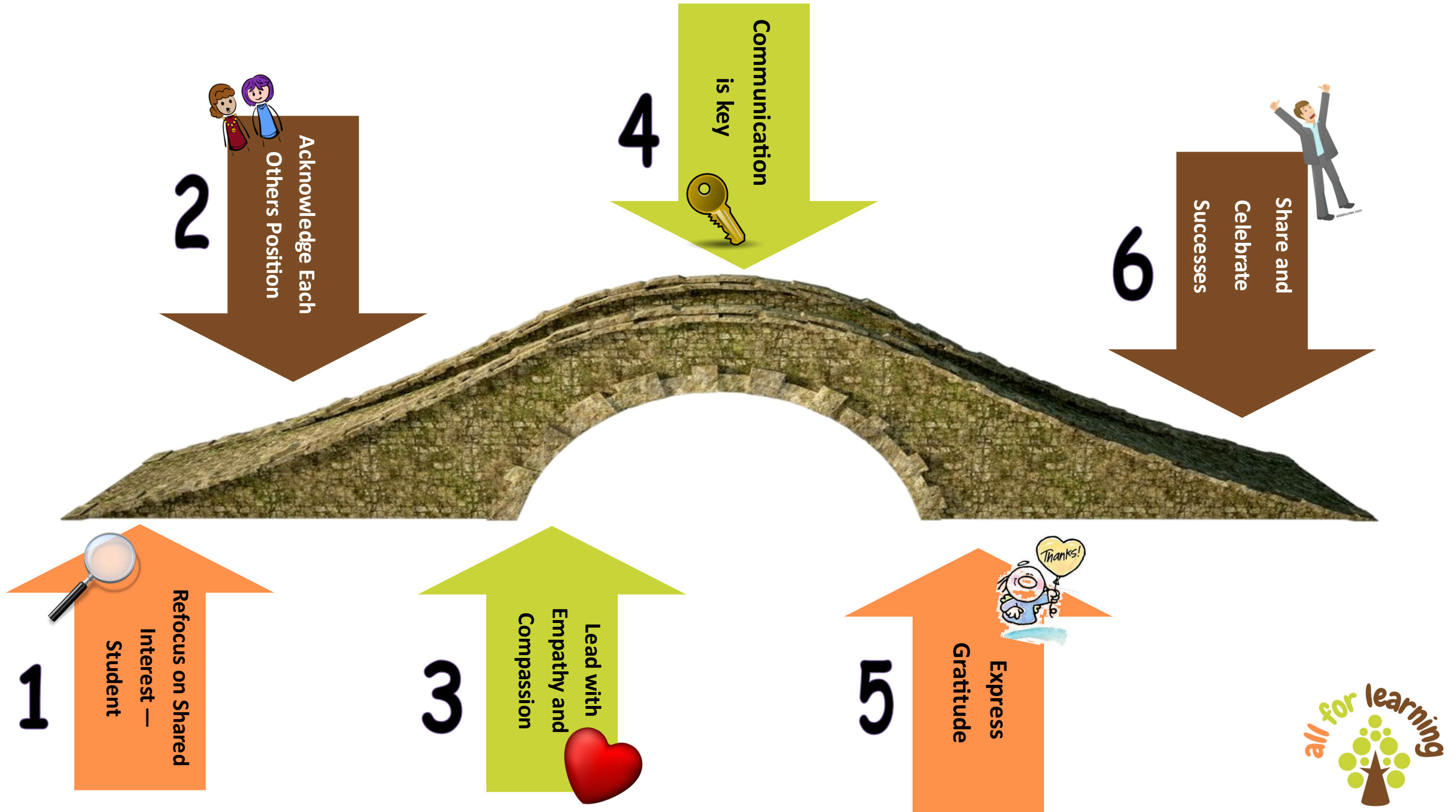




Mending Broken Relationships

Building Bridges

These steps are in no particular order and should be used according to what is needed, not in sequential order. Some may be applicable while others may not be.





Mending Broken Relationships

Building Bridges



1 Refocus on Shared Interest—the Student



It's NOT about you or them, it's about the best interest of the student/child.

Refocus on you shared vision, interest and calling; ensuring the best educational outcome and life opportunities for the student.

Lay aside pride, 'rightness' and feelings to ensure the focus is the child and not you.

2 Acknowledge Each Others Position



Both parents and teachers have extremely hard, tiring and unending jobs. Parents of children with a disability are often operating on empty. They have so many different individuals involved with their child, attend so many appointments and are constantly having to 'advocate' for their child to receive the same rights as other children that they are operating on nothing.

Likewise, teachers have 25+ students in their care, each with different needs, learning styles, skill levels and interventions required. They are dealing with parents, admin, data and curriculum expectations constantly. They too are only human.

This doesn't give the other a free pass for poor behaviour but allows you to understand the pressure the other may be under.

3 Lead with Empathy and Compassion



Sometimes after a difficult or tense interaction it can be challenging to approach future interactions with calmness and reset the tone. It's important to not lead with fear, anger or frustration but to lead with empathy and compassion, trying to create a level of understanding towards the other individual. If needed, politely excuse yourself from an interaction that isn't going as expected, walk away and schedule a later catch up when both parties have had time to think, reassess and check their emotions.

4 Communication is Key



When interacting with each other, if there has been a previous difficult or uncomfortable encounter, then ensure interactions are intentional and hold a stated purpose.

If needed have boundaries set around when interactions will take place and if third-parties or advocates need to be present. Sometimes it can help to have set times and places for interactions to take place for relationships that may have been particularly challenging ie Tuesday 3pm in D Block with case worker present etc.

5 Express Gratitude

This doesn't have to be over-the-top or uncomfortable but can be for the little things, even if they seem inconsequential. This can be as simple as a thank you for letting me know about their day, or a thank you for informing me about their morning etc. If you feel comfortable express gratitude for the job the other individual is doing, the effort that is being put in or the support they are showing you in some element or another.



6 Share and Celebrate Successes



There is no better way to bring individuals together, than to share areas of success that the student/child is succeeding in. This can be small steps or giant leaps made towards their success and goals. Regardless of where a relationship stands sharing the positives you are each seeing in terms of the child is essential. This doesn't need to be anything formal but can be simple as sharing it through a communication book, sending in a little note or email. Otherwise, giving the teacher a short update before or after school, and likewise for the teacher.