

BRINGING WILLINGNESS & VALUES TO CHALLENGING TIMES

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It's What Minds do....



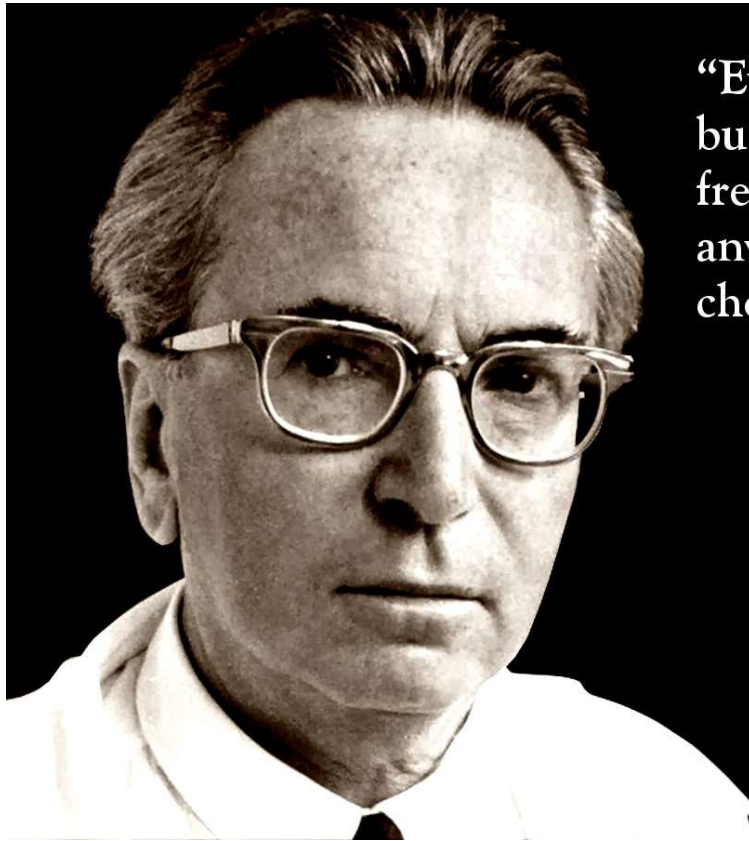
- Predicting and avoiding danger is an almost automatic response of the human mind, particularly in times of uncertainty.
- This is our evolutionary heritage.
- We are in fact so “good” at this, we rarely are aware of it going on...



MORNING BOYS,
HOW'S THE WATER?

WHAT THE HELL
IS WATER??

-DFW-THIS IS WATER-



“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

Viktor E. Frankl



Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

In a (very small) nutshell

What's it all about?



- Creating a rich, full, and meaningful life while accepting the pain that inevitably goes with it.
- Bringing a willingness to hold your internal experiences while making and keeping behavioral commitments that reflect your personally held values.

Values



Values are desired personal **Qualities of Being**

□ Values are not...

▣ GOALS. Goals are just stops on the way

▣ RULES. Values have a sense of being chosen and expressed, not followed—even though they may align with religious or moral principles

▣ DESIRED STATES of OTHERS. (e.g. “It is important I be respected”)

Values



- Values are what gives life meaning, and can be expressed in **any circumstance...**
- ▣ Illness, school closings, and social distancing and may constrain HOW we express our values
 - (We may need to give up some goals, and create new ones)
- ▣ Values underlie the deepest responses to the question: “How do I want to BE about my circumstance”

Why is life so hard?



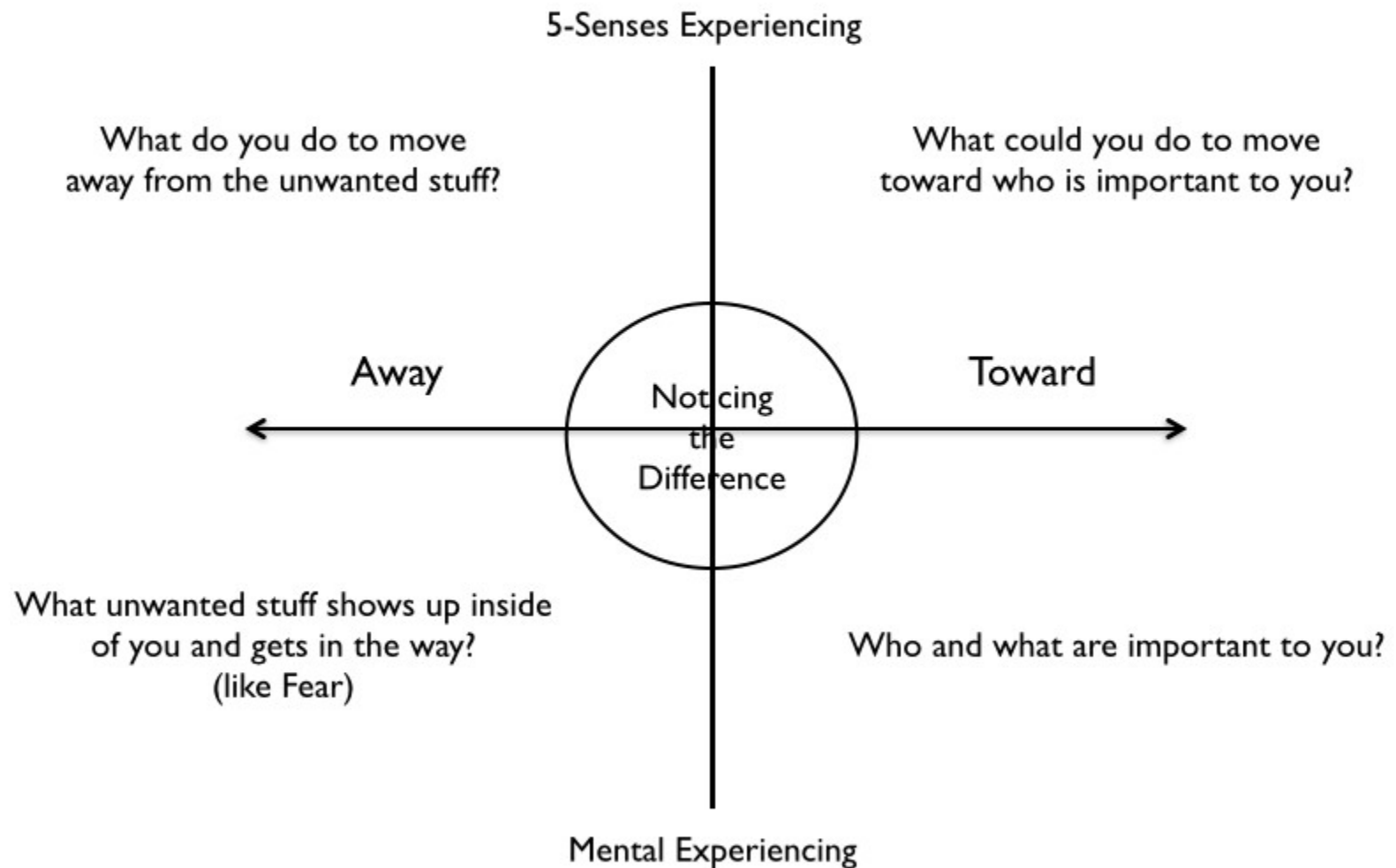
□ From the ACT perspective, human suffering is not a distinct pathologic state but arises when two **fundamentally normal processes** of the human mind are undistinguished:

□ Cognitive Fusion

□ Experiential Avoidance

The Psychological Flexibility Model Matrix

Kevin L. Polk, Ph.D.



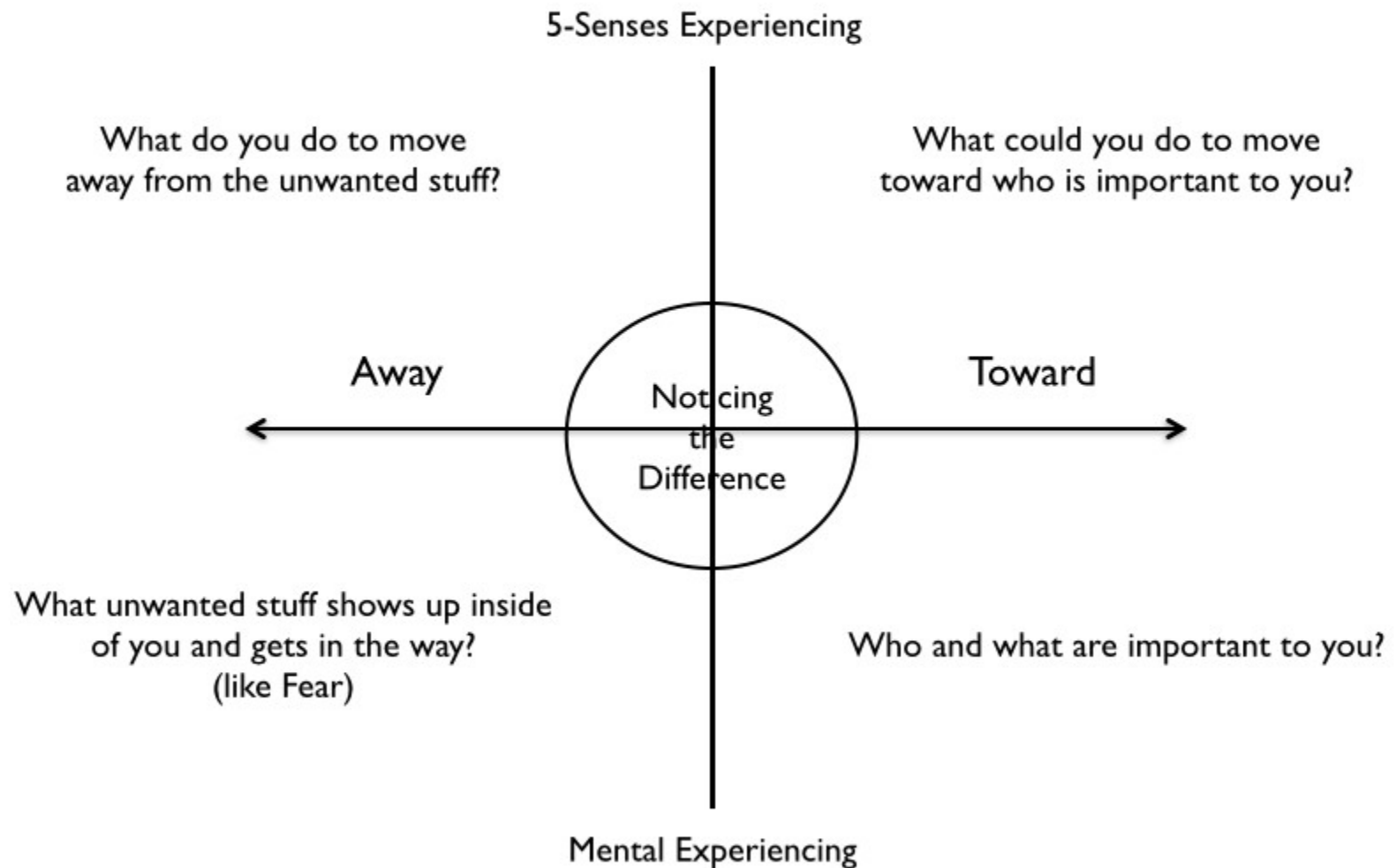
The Two Basic Questions



- Are your actions “in your head” or “in the world”?
- Are your behavioral primarily about moving **towards** (values) or **away** (from unwanted experience)?

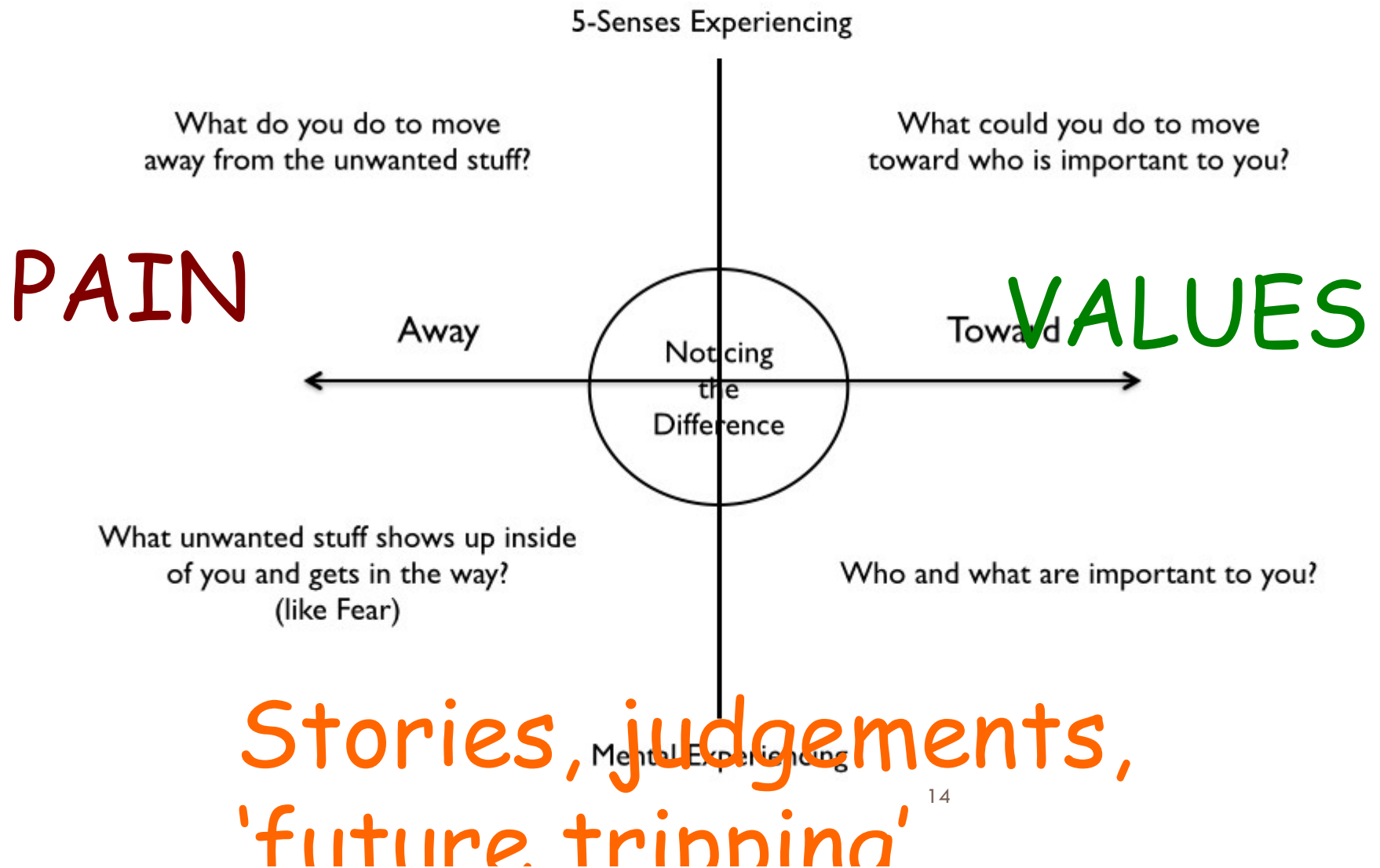
The Psychological Flexibility Model Matrix

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The Psychological Flexibility Model Matrix

Present moment awareness



Cognitive Fusion



- Relating to thoughts, mental images, memories, and personal narratives as qualities of the self or direct reflections of the truth, rather than mental events
- This is a HUMAN UNIVERSAL, and is the source of the power of language and symbolic representation



THE D+
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Cognitive Fusion



It is also a route to suffering:

- ▣ Re-experiencing painful histories
- ▣ “Pre-experiencing” dreaded futures
- ▣ Relating interpretations about oneself and the world as if they are the TRUTH
- ▣ Substituting mental rumination for behavioral engagement.

NEWS IN BRIEF

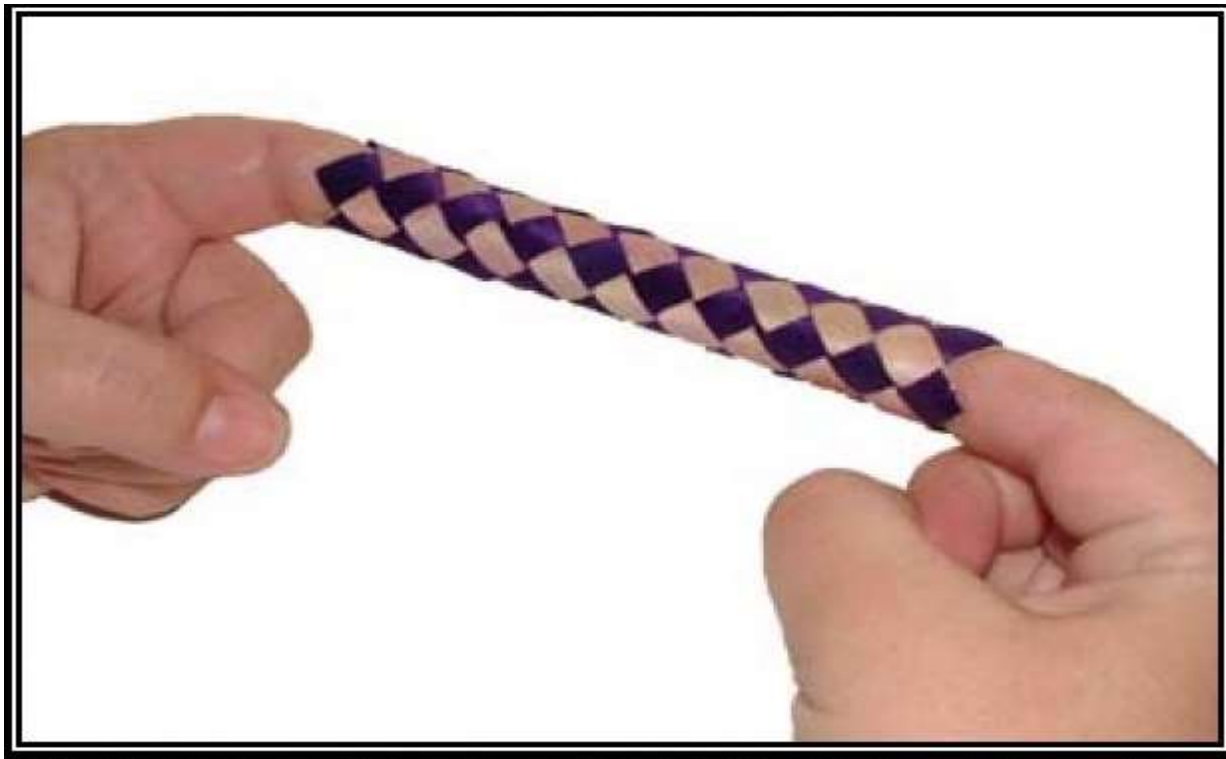
Woman Hopes She Did Enough Worrying To Help Biden Campaign

11/02/20 11:55AM

ERIE, PA—Waiting on tenterhooks on the eve of the election, local woman Elise Stalter expressed her hope Monday that she had done enough worrying to help the Biden presidential campaign. “I’ve been panicking pretty much every day for the last few months, but now that there’s only one day left, I wonder if I could have done more,” said Stalter, admitting that while she had regularly taken to the streets to collapse in a puddle of despair, she couldn’t shake the feeling that she could have gone even further with her mental breakdown. “I’ve been sending out texts telling everyone I know that I’m constantly on the verge of a full-blown anxiety attack, and I’ve spent hundreds of dollars supporting a variety of self-soothing products. Now I just pray that I’ve experienced enough existential dread to make a difference.” At press time, Stalter consoled herself that she still had almost a full day to slip into a catatonic state.



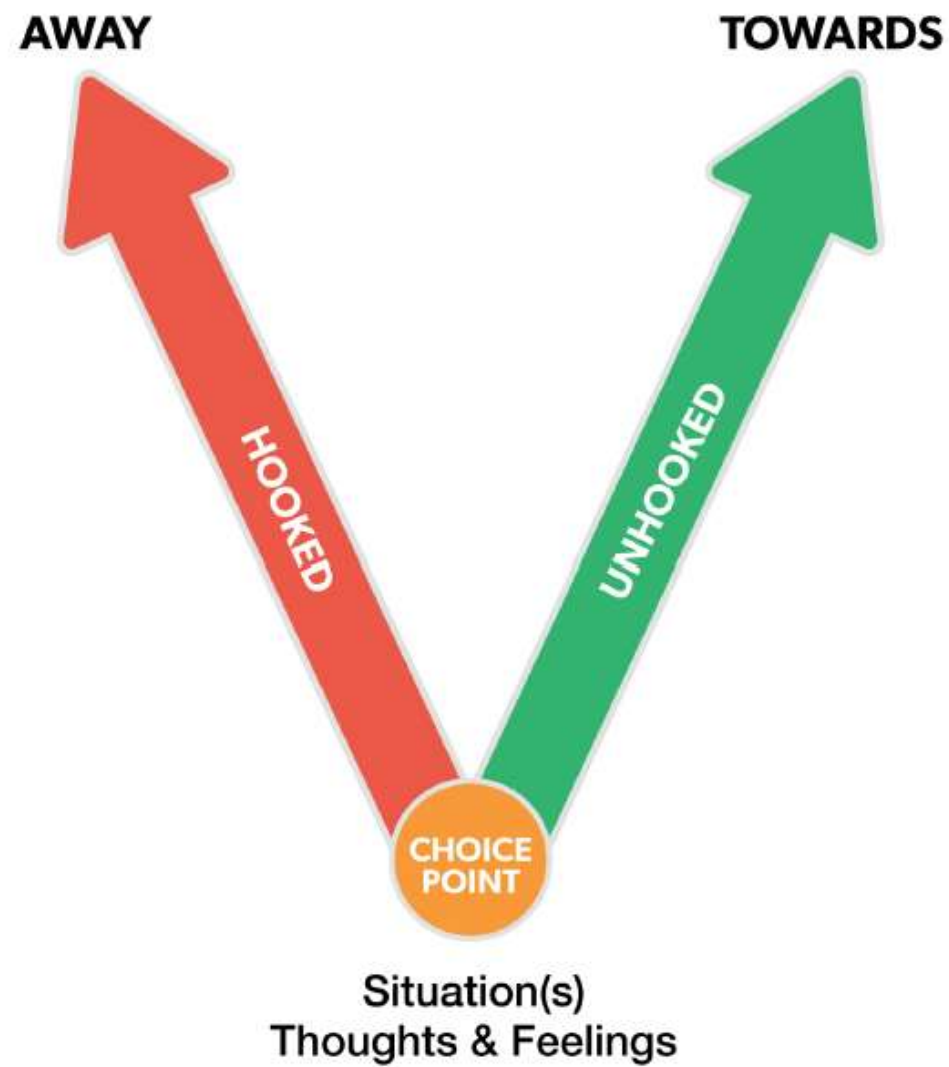
Experiential Avoidance



Unworkable Avoidance



- Digital Distractions
- Social Withdrawal
- Substances
- Resignation or “Sour Grapes”
- “Doom Scrolling” – (yup that’s avoidance too!)
- **Values Disconnection**





Eliciting Values

Given everything that you are dealing with, including all the uncertainty and all the unknowns...what way of being would leave you and those around you inspired and engaged?

Values for Challenging Times



- ☐ Courage
- ☐ Perseverance
- ☐ Connection
- ☐ Contribution
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Love
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Patience

IN PRACTICE

Working with
Values and
Willingness:

- ☐ What experience are you trying to avoid or get rid of?
- ☐ What have you done?
- ☐ How has worked?
- ☐ What has it cost you? Does it leave you more or less connected to your Values and What Matters?
- ☐ If you could be willing to have that [unwanted experience], how could you be freer to express your values?

IN PRACTICE—Example

Working with
Values and
Willingness:

Unwanted
experience

- What experience are you trying to avoid or get rid of?
 - *“I’m anxious and bored at the same time. I don’t know when this will end or if things will ever go back to normal.”*

IN PRACTICE—Example

Working with
Values and
Willingness:

Avoidance

- What have you done to avoid *boredom and anxiety?*
 - ▣ “*I mostly just stay in bed look at my phone. I alternate between going down news holes and watching cat videos.*”

IN PRACTICE—Example

Working with
Values and
Willingness:

Giving up Control

□ How has worked?

- *“Well, it passes the time. But every time I read the news, I get more anxious, but then when I watch cat videos, I start to feel gross and worry if I am missing something important.”*
- *When my family tells me to get off the phone, we just stare at each other.*

IN PRACTICE—Example

Working with
Values and
Avoidance:

The finger trap

- What has it cost you? Does it leave you more—or less—connected to your Values and What Matters?
 - ▣ “I used to feel creative and engaged, but now it seems like I am spinning my wheels. And even though I am around my family more, we are really disconnected. And I just get more anxious.”

IN PRACTICE—Example

Working with
Values and
Willingness:

Opening up

- If you could be willing to simply be with the uncertainty of these times and all regulations that are out of your control, what would **Being Creative** and **Engaged** look like in the current circumstances?

IN PRACTICE—Example

Working with
Values and
Willingness:

Do What matters

- [With Willingness]
 - “I could be **Be Engaged** by reaching out to family and friends and ask about their experience these days.”
 - “I could also **Be Creative**, about looking where I can make a difference locally.”

IN PRACTICE

Working with
Values and
Willingness:

- What experience are you trying to avoid or get rid of?
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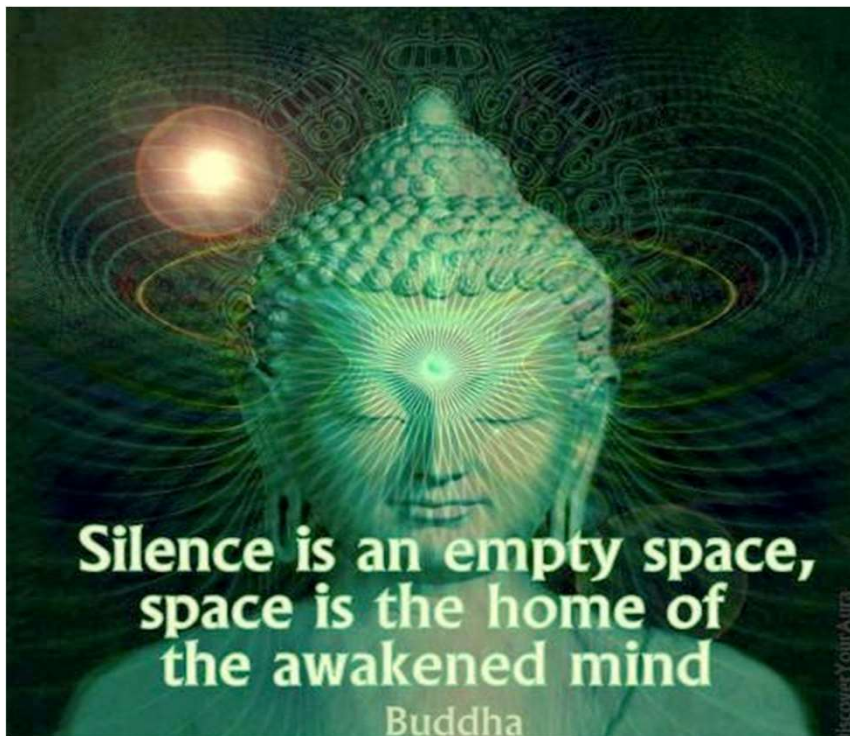
Mindfulness

It is fundamentally about willingness and attention



When Have You Last Met an Empty Mind?

What the mind thinks
meditation “should” look like



What meditation actually
looks like...



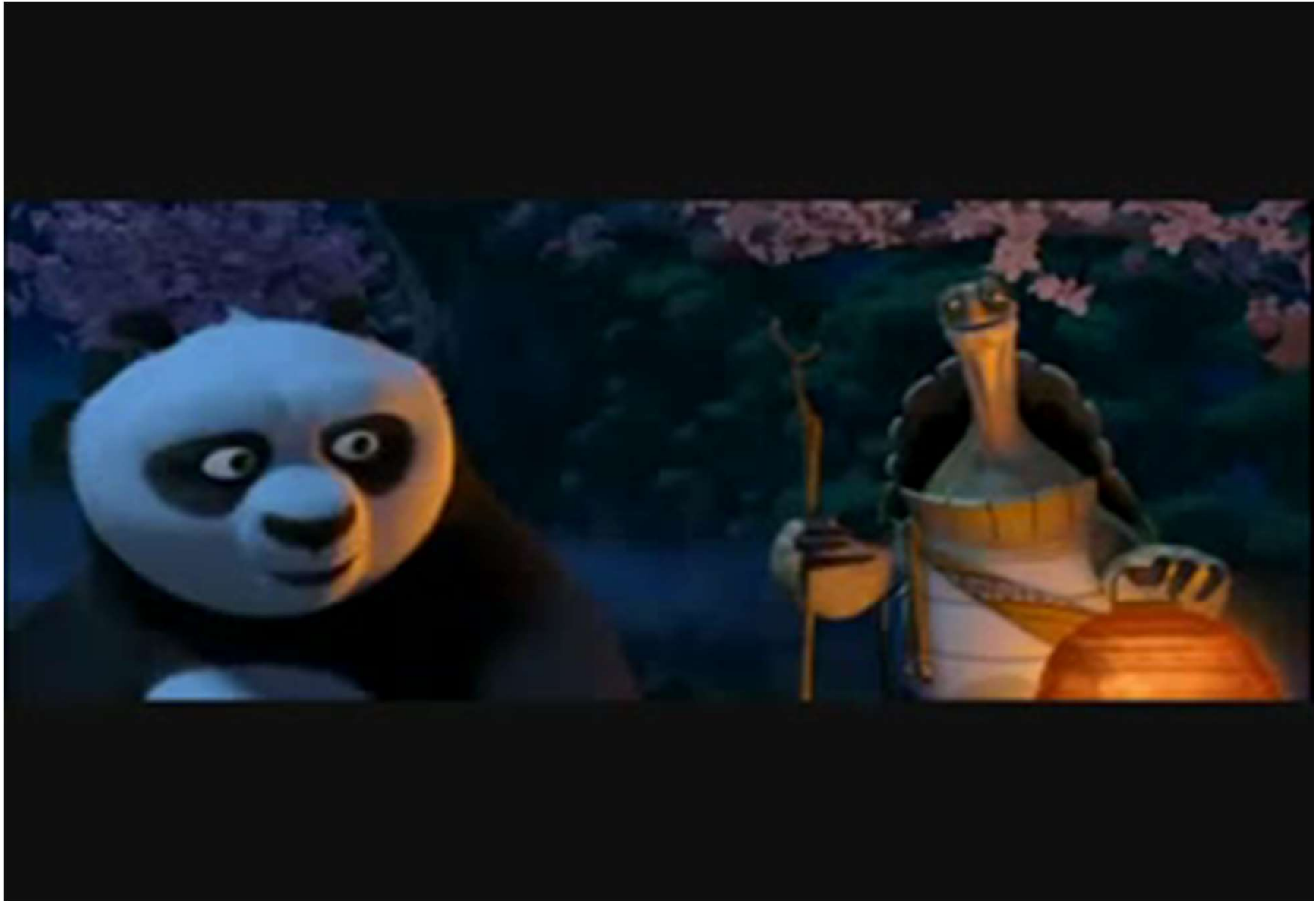
Mindfulness



Mindfulness is the awareness that arises through paying attention in a particular way: On purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.

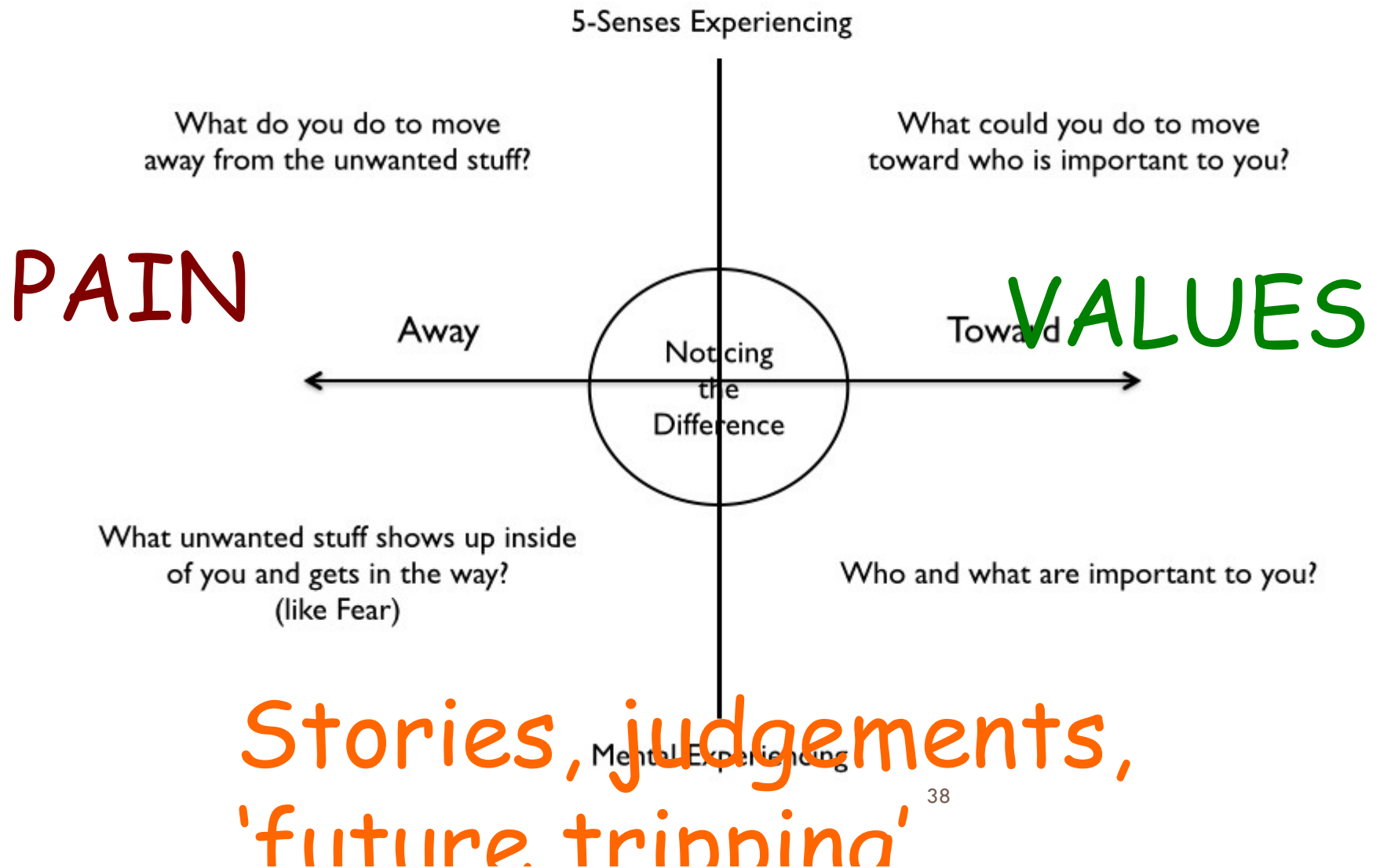
-Jon Kabat-Zinn

Present Moment Awareness



The Psychological Flexibility Model Matrix

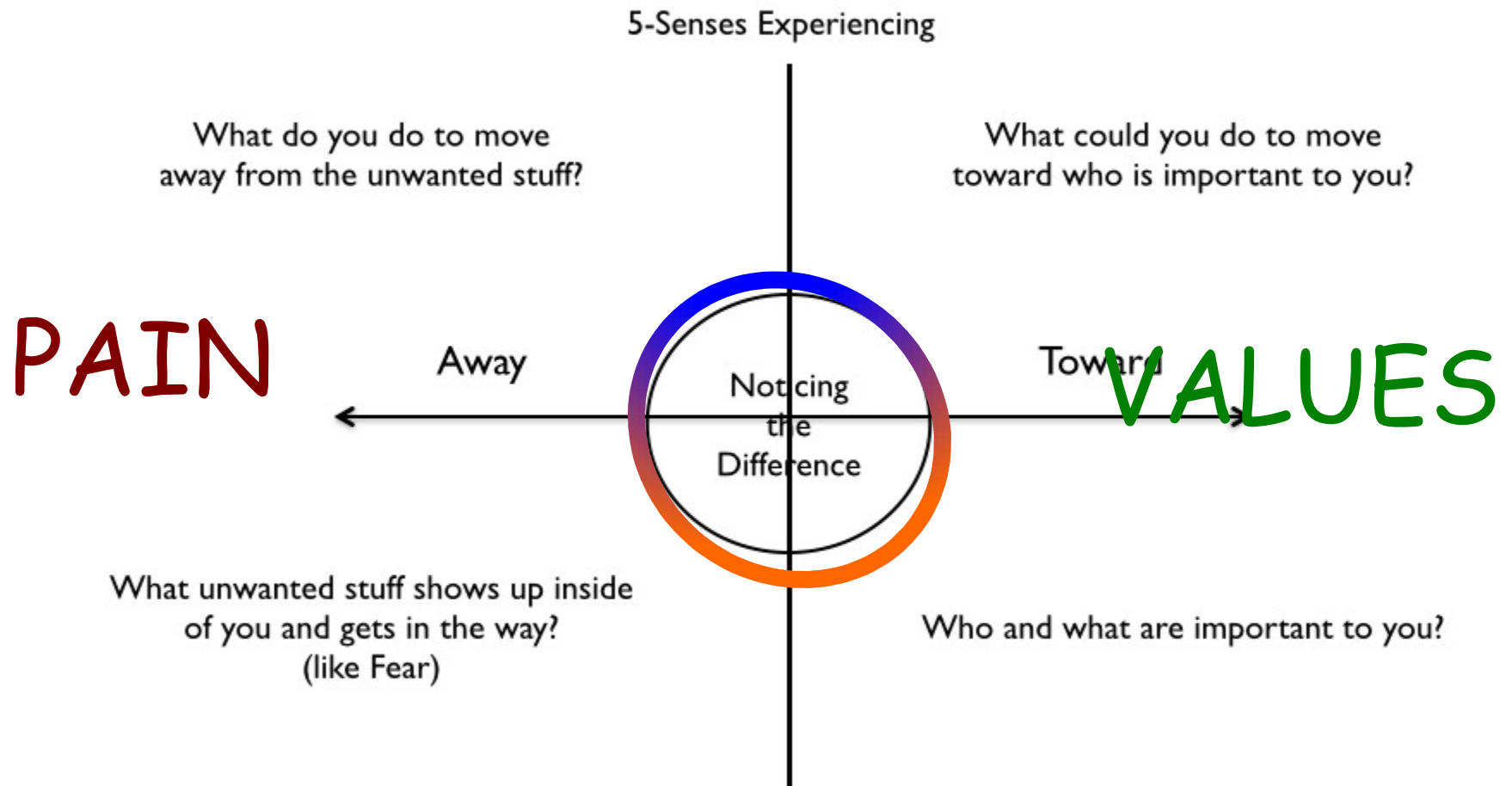
Present moment awareness



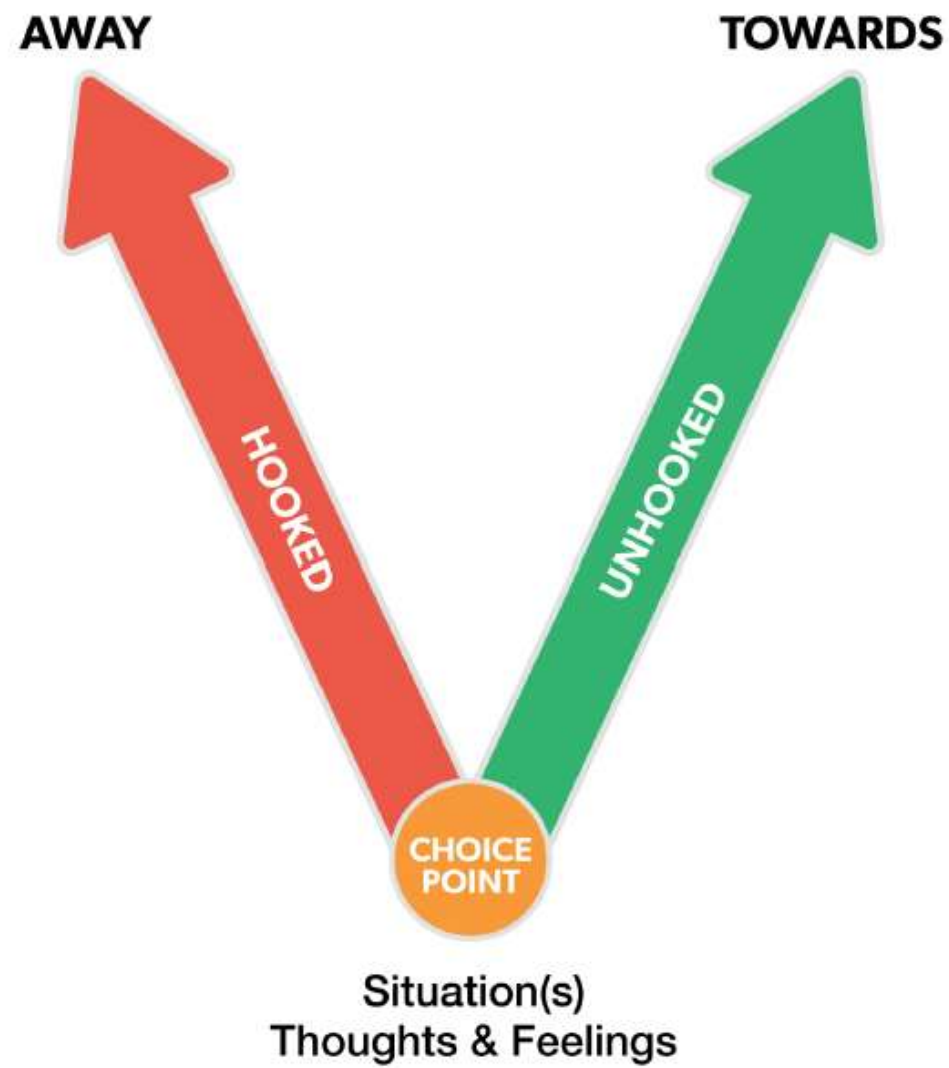
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Present moment awareness



Stories, judgments,
'future trinnina'



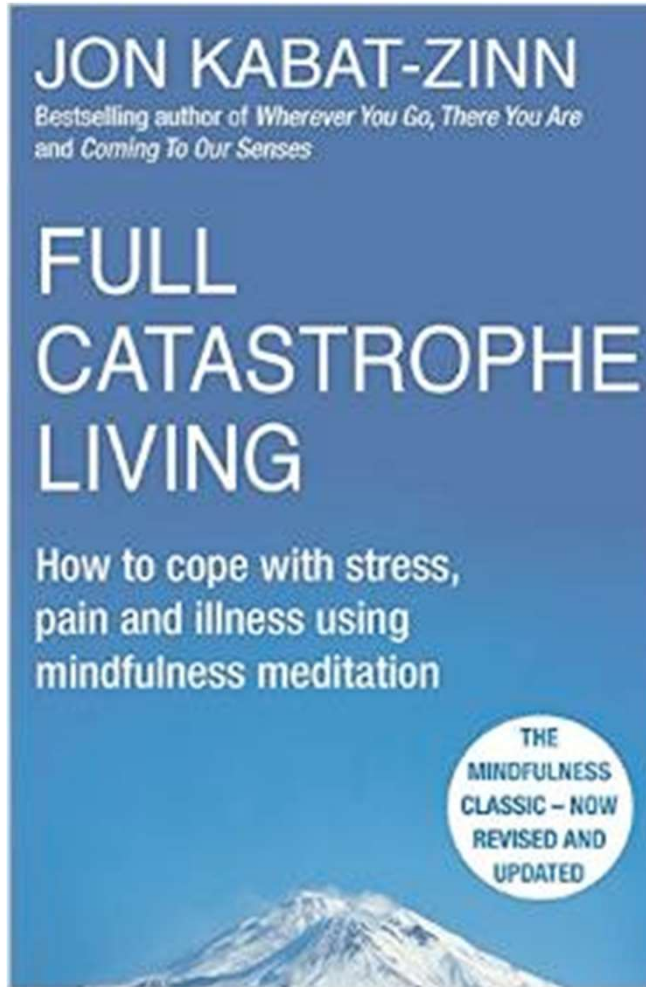
JON KABAT-ZINN

Bestselling author of *Wherever You Go, There You Are*
and *Coming To Our Senses*

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pain and illness using
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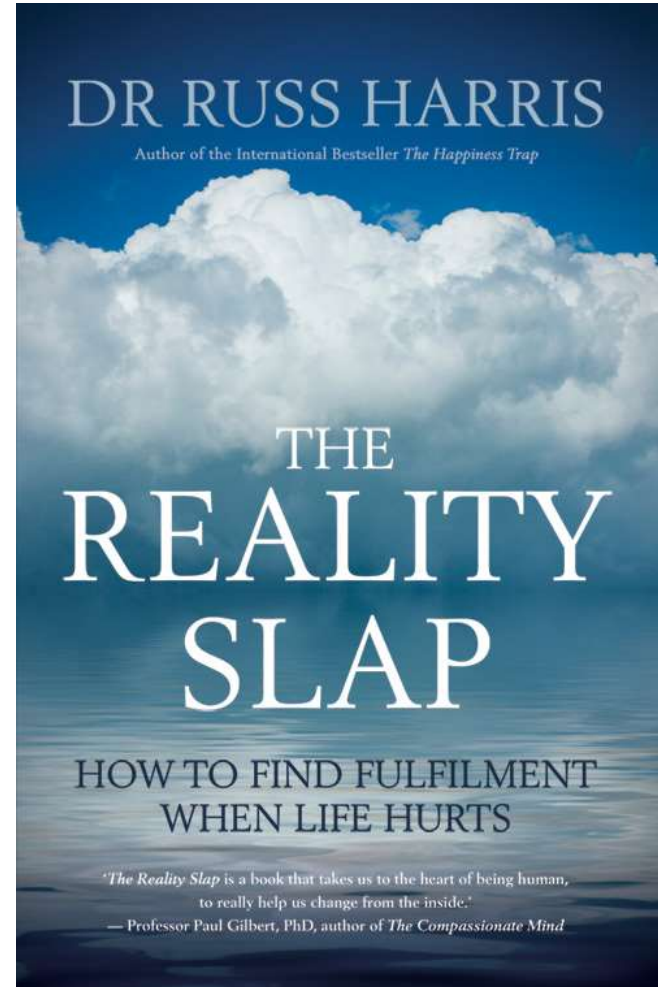
Author of the International Bestseller *The Happiness Trap*

THE REALITY SLAP

HOW TO FIND FULFILMENT
WHEN LIFE HURTS

*'The Reality Slap is a book that takes us to the heart of being human,
to really help us change from the inside.'*

— Professor Paul Gilbert, PhD, author of *The Compassionate Mind*





FACE COVID

How to respond effectively
to the Corona crisis

by Dr Russ Harris, author of The Happiness Trap

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MZJybtT9KmiE9Dw9EKvPJsd9Ow7gXaMe/view>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM>