



Eco-Therapy in Action: Addressing Climate Concerns in Clinical Work

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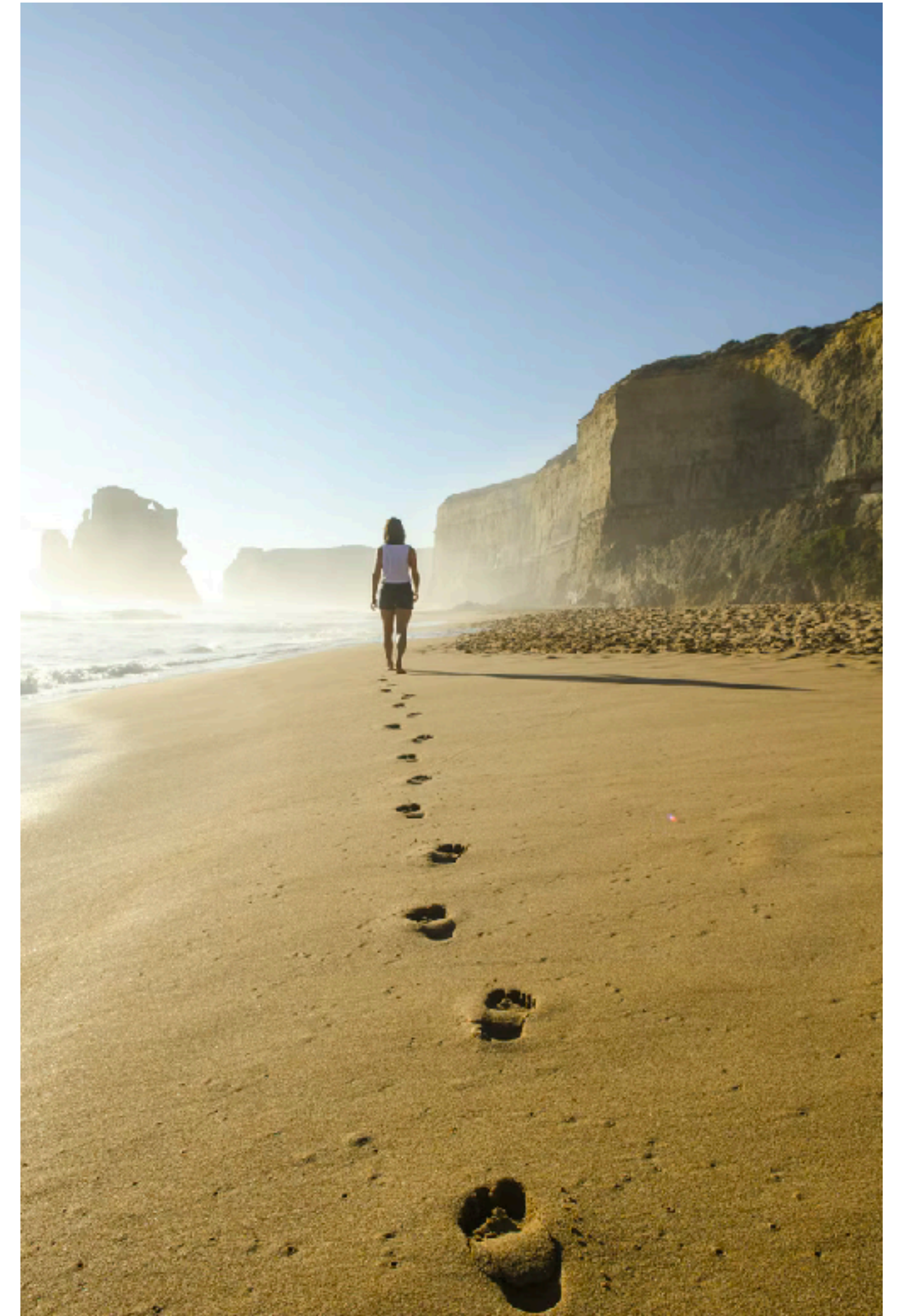


2024
PSYCHOTHERAPY NETWORKER
SYMPOSIUM

Contact, Handouts and References



clientcare@selfsustain.com



Greetings to the Group! (In the Room and Online)





Opening Exercise: Being “Congruent”

DEFINITION

In psychology, congruence refers to the alignment between an individual's internal experiences, feelings, and thoughts, and their external expression or behavior. This concept, introduced by Carl Rogers, is fundamental to achieving authenticity, self-actualization, and psychological well-being.

Today's Outline

Morning

- How to Think and Feel, Ground Rules
- Case Studies
- Environmental Identity and Values
- Nature Connections

Afternoon

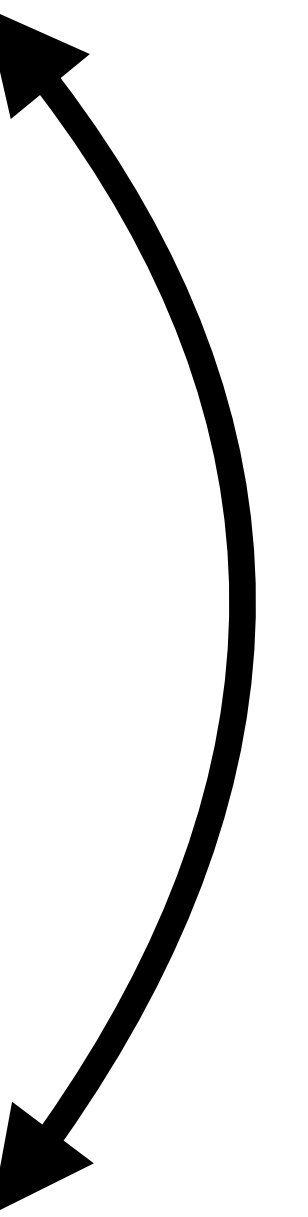
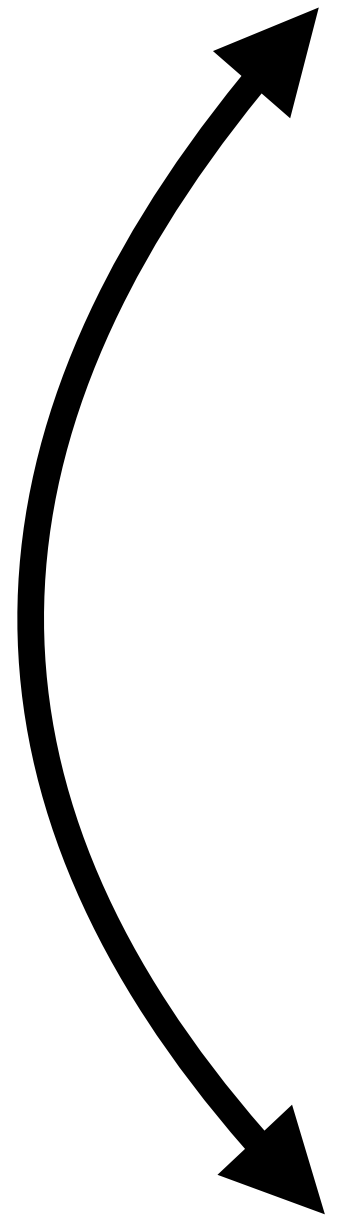
- Exercises
- Eco-Distress and Therapy
- Flourishing: Nature Activities, Relationships, Arts, and Spirituality
- Values-based Action and Overcoming Barriers

Engaging with Eco Issues in Therapy

Assess your environmental identity, beliefs and experiences (including sources of trauma and resilience)

Adapt your existing therapeutic orientation and skill set

Apply this into counseling and healthcare efforts with diverse individuals



About Thomas





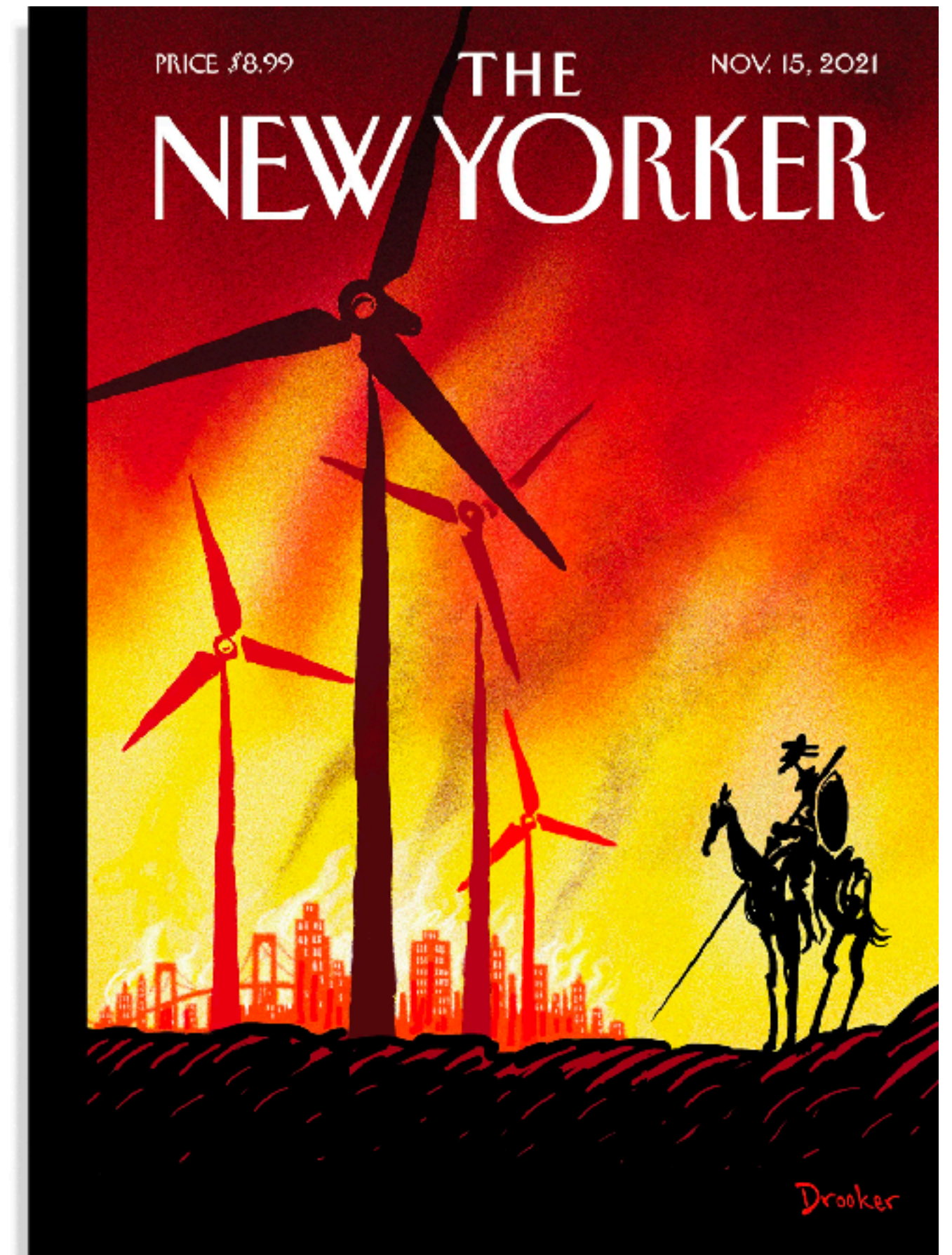
Climate Change and Happiness Podcast

with Panu Pihkala

www.climatechangeandhappiness.com

Some Ground Rules

- First Do No Harm
- Ecological Issues (and Stay on Task)
- Honor Emotions (and stories)
- Meaning (The Climate Elephant)
- Environmental Problems = Justice Problems



Facilitation Tips

- Sequence Concepts and Challenge Level
- Offer Choice (Motivation Interviewing)
- Name the Shadow (Carbon Footprint, Privilege)
- Co-Regulation, Transference, and Commonality
- Set your Emotional Compass (Gratitude, Patience, Awareness, Presence, Compassion, Curiosity)



Ethics and Eco & Climate Therapy

- **Beneficence** and Nonmaleficence (First Do No Harm)
- **Emerging areas** (Take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients/patients and others from harm.”
- “**In emergencies** (may provide such services... until the emergency has ended or appropriate services are available.”
- **Conflict of Interest** (personal, professional, political)



More on Ethics

Enhancing **human development** throughout **the life span**

Honoring **diversity** and embracing **a multicultural approach**

Promoting **social justice**

Safeguarding the counselor–client relationship

Practicing in a **competent** and **ethical** manner





Eco & Climate Therapy

“Setting a Frame”

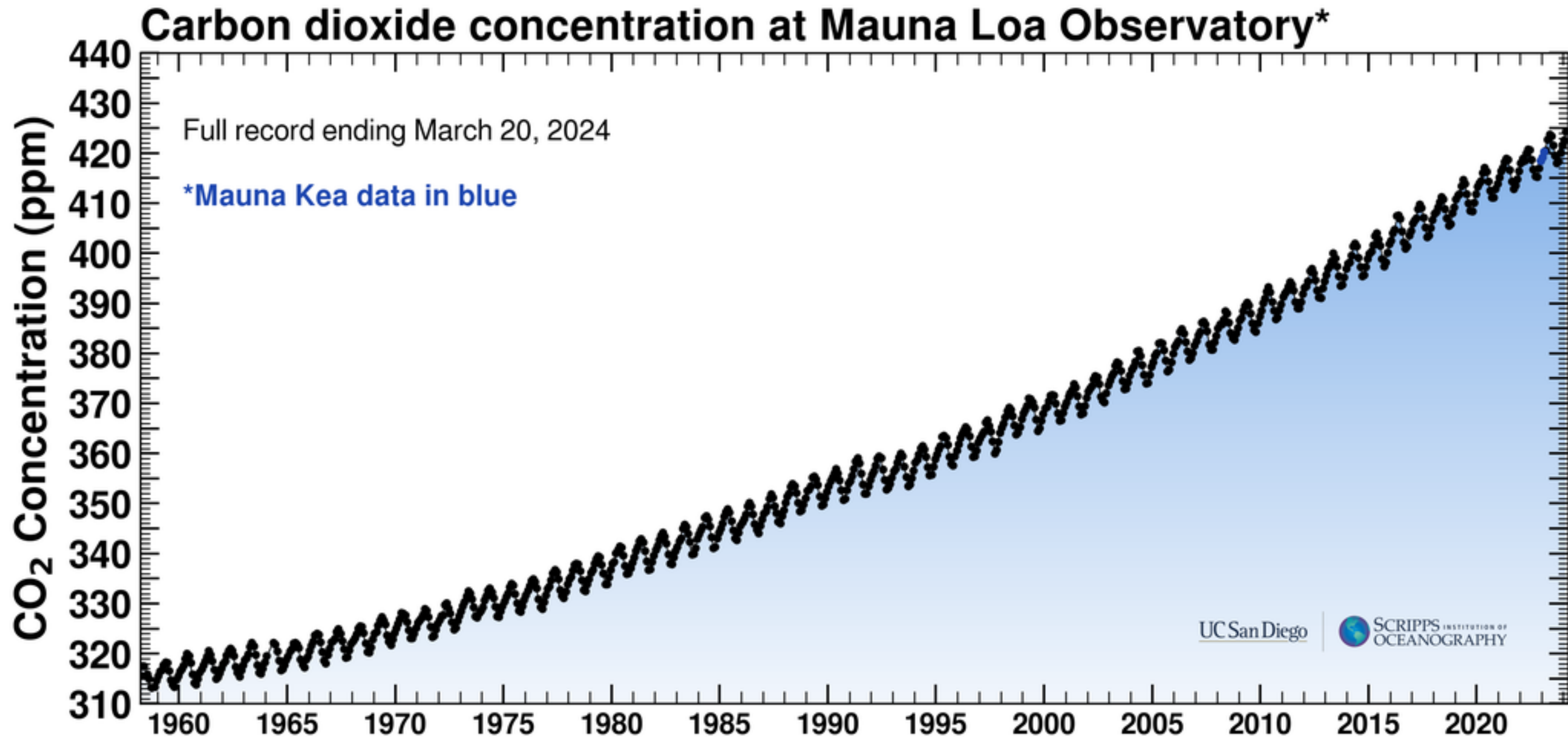
Agnes, age 17

- Sunrise Movement
- Keeling Curve
- “Youth Washing”
- “Gov-splaining”

“Will you make a deal with me?”

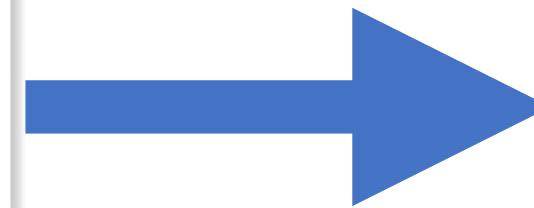


The Keeling Curve



“Validate, Elevate, Create...”

Get Creative
About Them



Create
Educate
Delegate
Moderate
Meditate
Etc.

Elevate Them
in Importance



Validate Concerns

“You don’t have to solve a problem in order to cope with it.”

“We hurt where we care”



Deeper Insights



“We have Issues and issues.”

Overwhelmed is Normal



"Do you have a minute for a problem whose solution has eluded humanity since the dawn of civilization?"



Despair is fatigue in disguise.

Having a Growth Mindset



GROWTH MINDSET

"I believe that my intelligence and most things about me can be grown.
My true potential is unknown."

Understanding that intelligence can be developed makes you want to learn.



FIXED MINDSET

"I believe that my intelligence is fixed.
Some things I can do, some I won't
ever be able to do."

Believing that intelligence is fixed makes you want to look smart and not look dumb.

How to Feel ...



Roman

- Glaciologist who studied in Antarctica
- Example of **scientists**, conservationists, and others who are overwhelmed at the scope of the issue, or depressed about a possible legacy of failure
- Unsure about career direction
- Feeling out of place, despondent at home
- Making life plans with fiancée



Developing a Feelings Vocabulary for Eco and Climate



Feelings – Sensations – Actions List

Accepting:

Calm
Centered
Content
Fulfilled
Patient
Peaceful
Present
Relaxed
Serene
Trusting
Vulnerable

Aliveness /

Joy:

Alert
Amazed

Bitter

Contempt

Cynical

Disdain

Disgruntled

Disturbed

Edgy

Exasperated

Frustrated

Furious

Grouchy

Hostile

Impatient

Intolerant

Irritated

Irate

Moody

Fulfilled

Present

Safe

Warm

Worthy

Courageous / Powerful

Adventurous

Brave

Capable

Confident

Daring

Determined

Free

Grounded

Proud

Teary

Unhappy

Upset

Weary

Yearning

Disconnected / Numb:

Aloof

Bored

Confused

Distant

Empty

Indifferent

Isolated

Lethargic

Listless

Focused

Alert

Aware

Confident

On point

Present

Quick

Ready

Sharp

Fragile

Helpless

Sensitive

Grateful

Appreciative

Blessed

Burned out

Cranky

Depleted

Edgy

Exhausted

Frazzled

Mobilized

Overwhelm

Rattled

Rejecting

Restless

Shaken

Suspenseful

Tense

Tight

Weary

Worn out

“How to Feel” About Climate and Environmental Issues?

- What do I feel? (Expression)
- What do I want to feel? (Regulation)
- What should I feel? (Wisdom, Growth)



You don't need to be a climate expert.

When in doubt, stay with expression.
Validation has value.

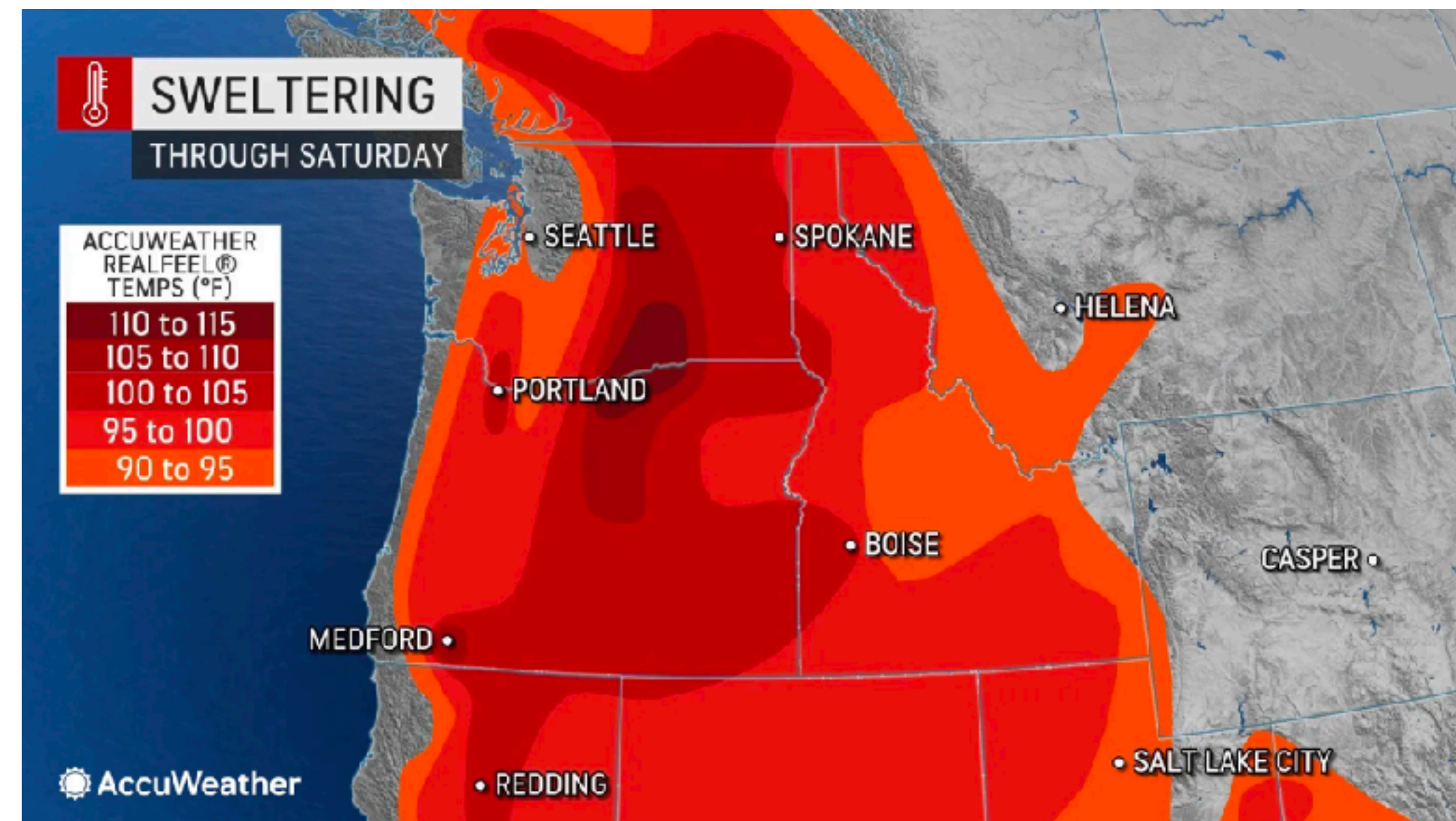
Reclaiming our Nervous System

Marcus

- Director at a City Office of Urban Planning and Sustainability
- Addressing heat stress and living conditions in marginalized neighborhoods
- New to counseling, recommended by his spouse
- Fatigue, Tension at home
- Health concerns, history of cardiac disease and Diabetes in family

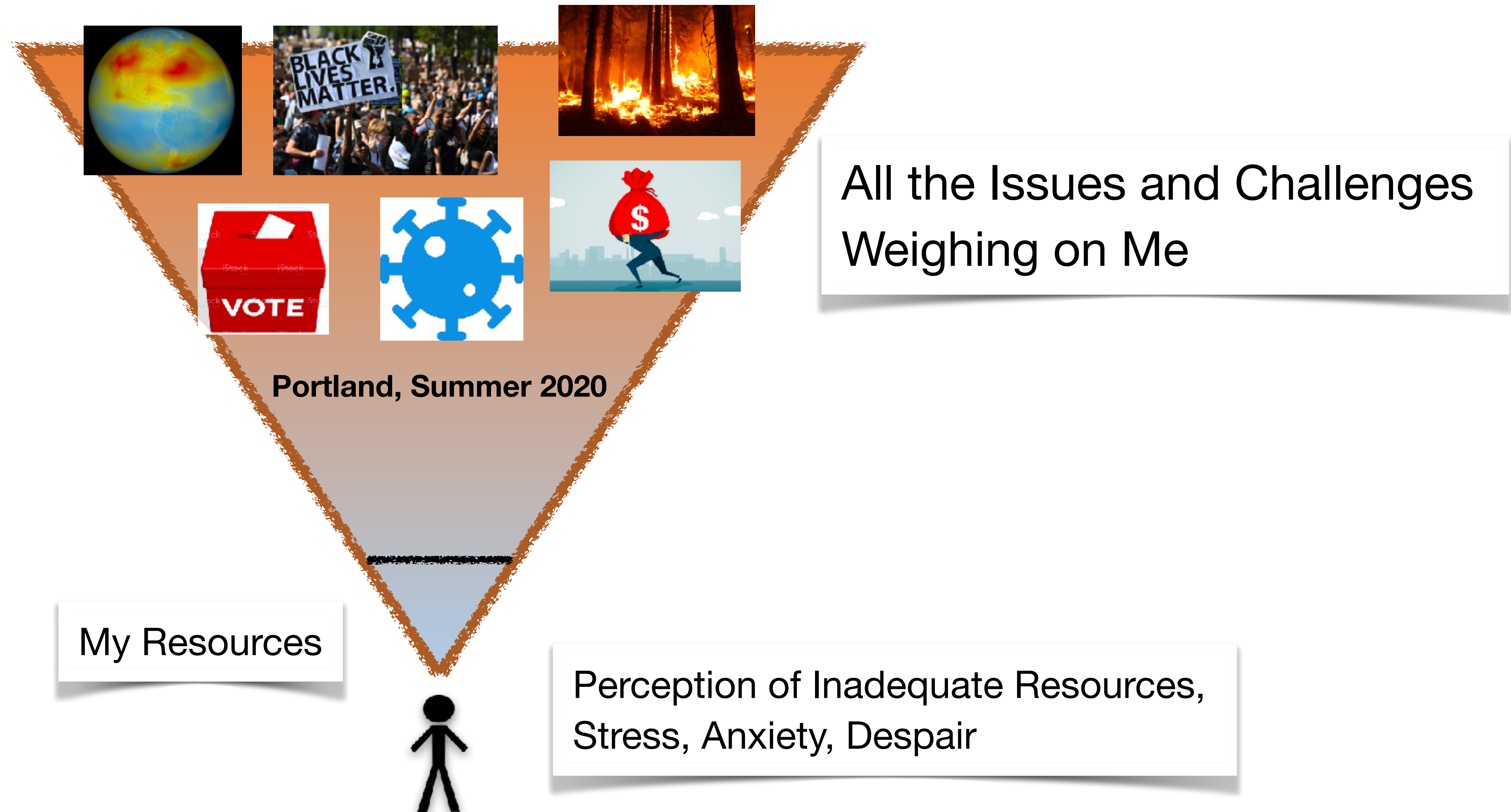


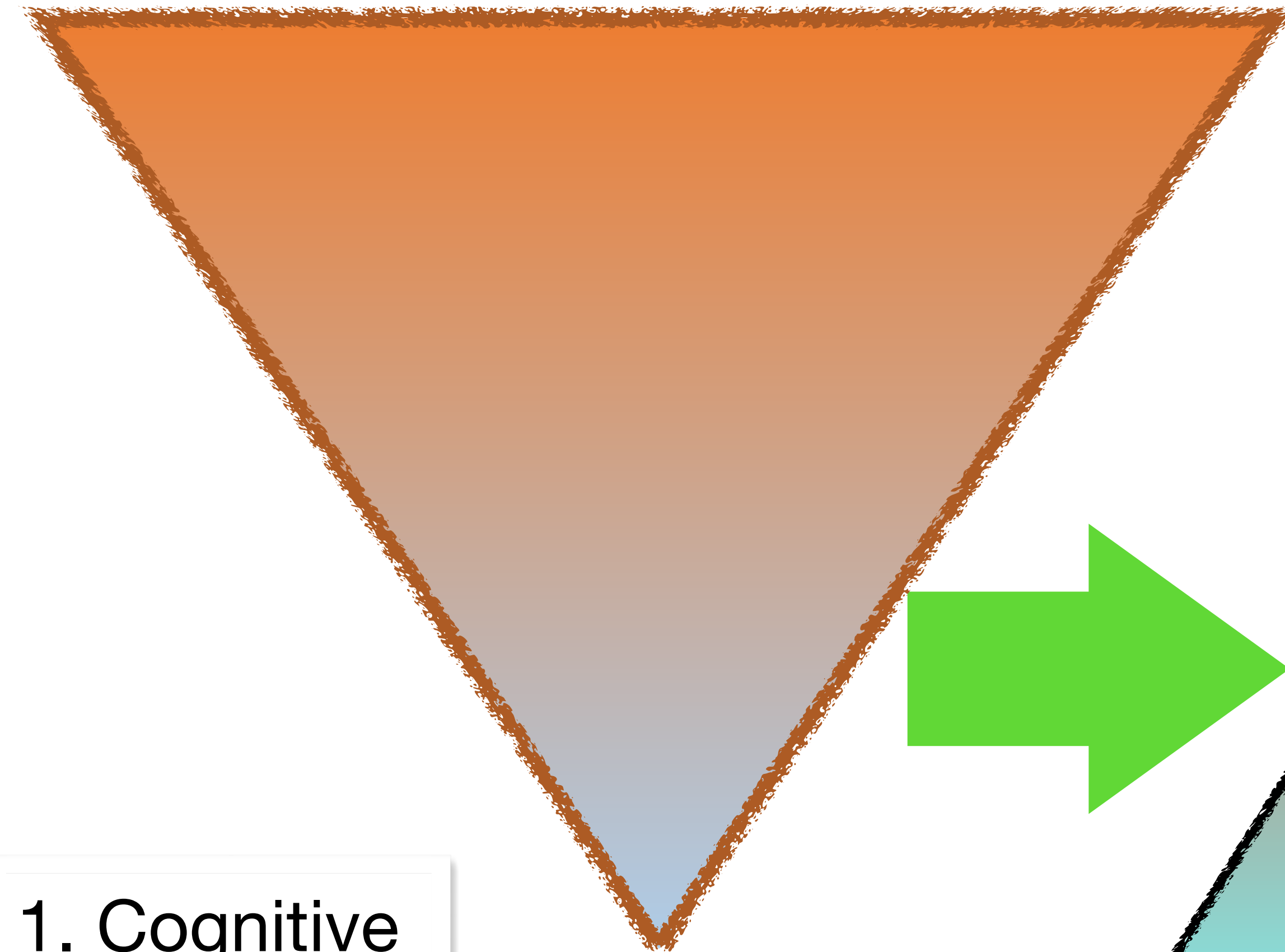
Expanding the Frame: Eco Stress And the Summer of 2020



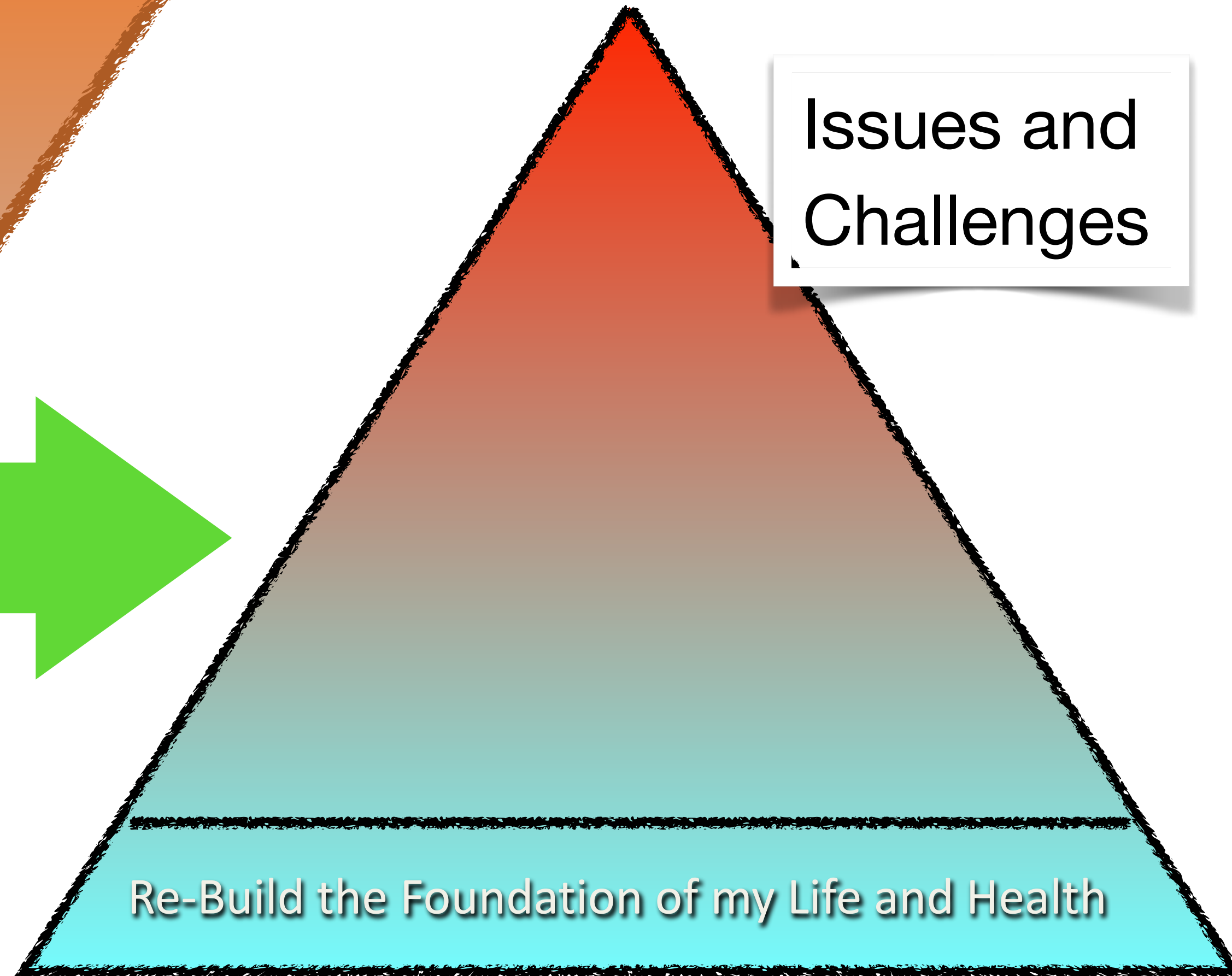
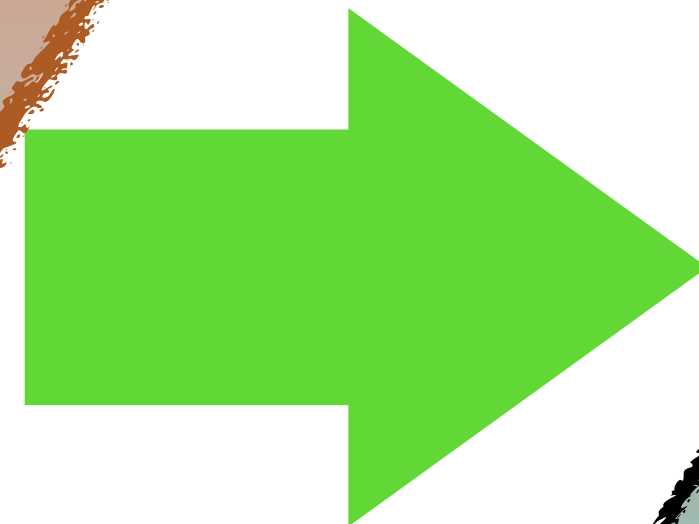
The “Upside Down Pyramid”

The “Upside Down Pyramid” Image





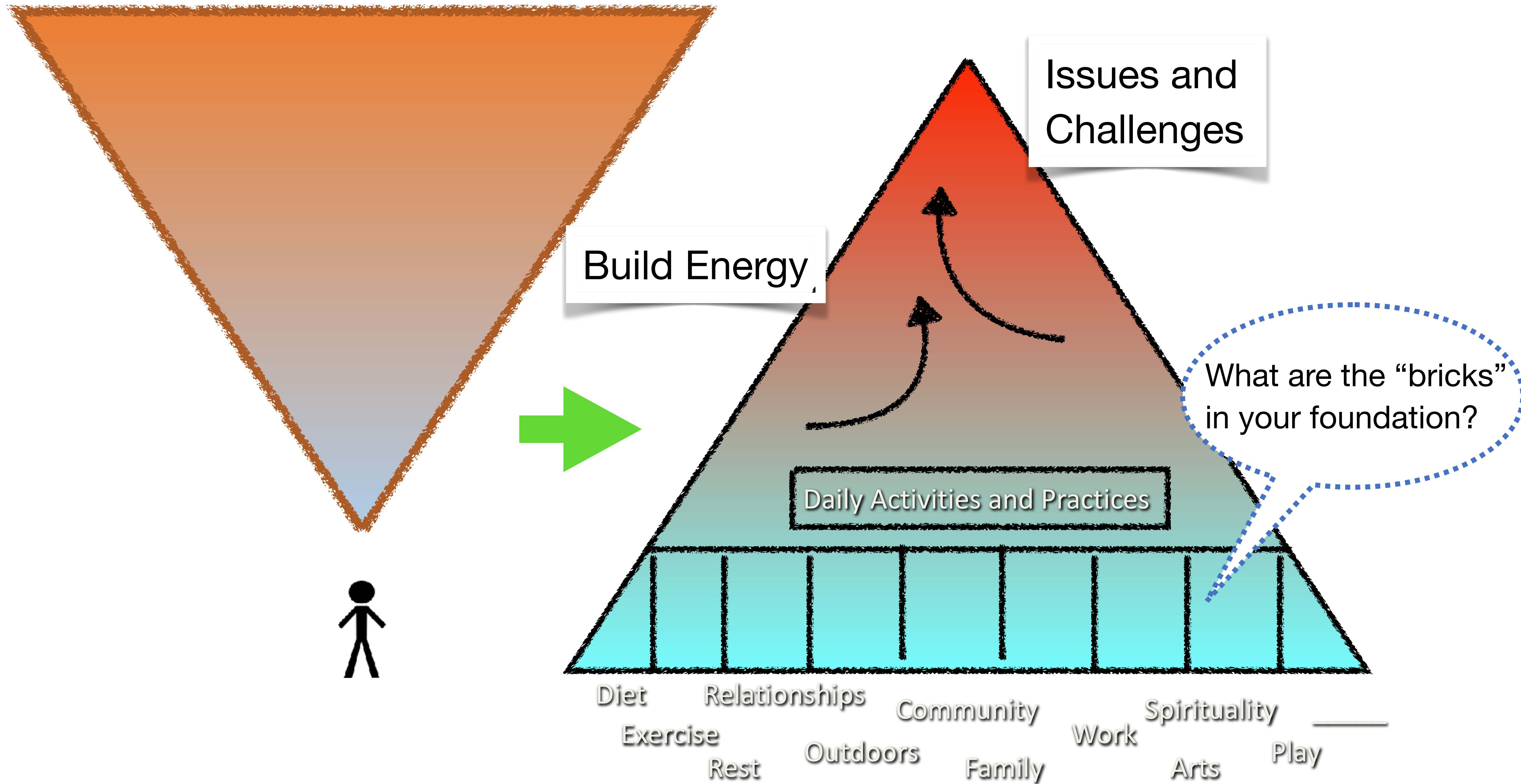
1. Cognitive
Reframe

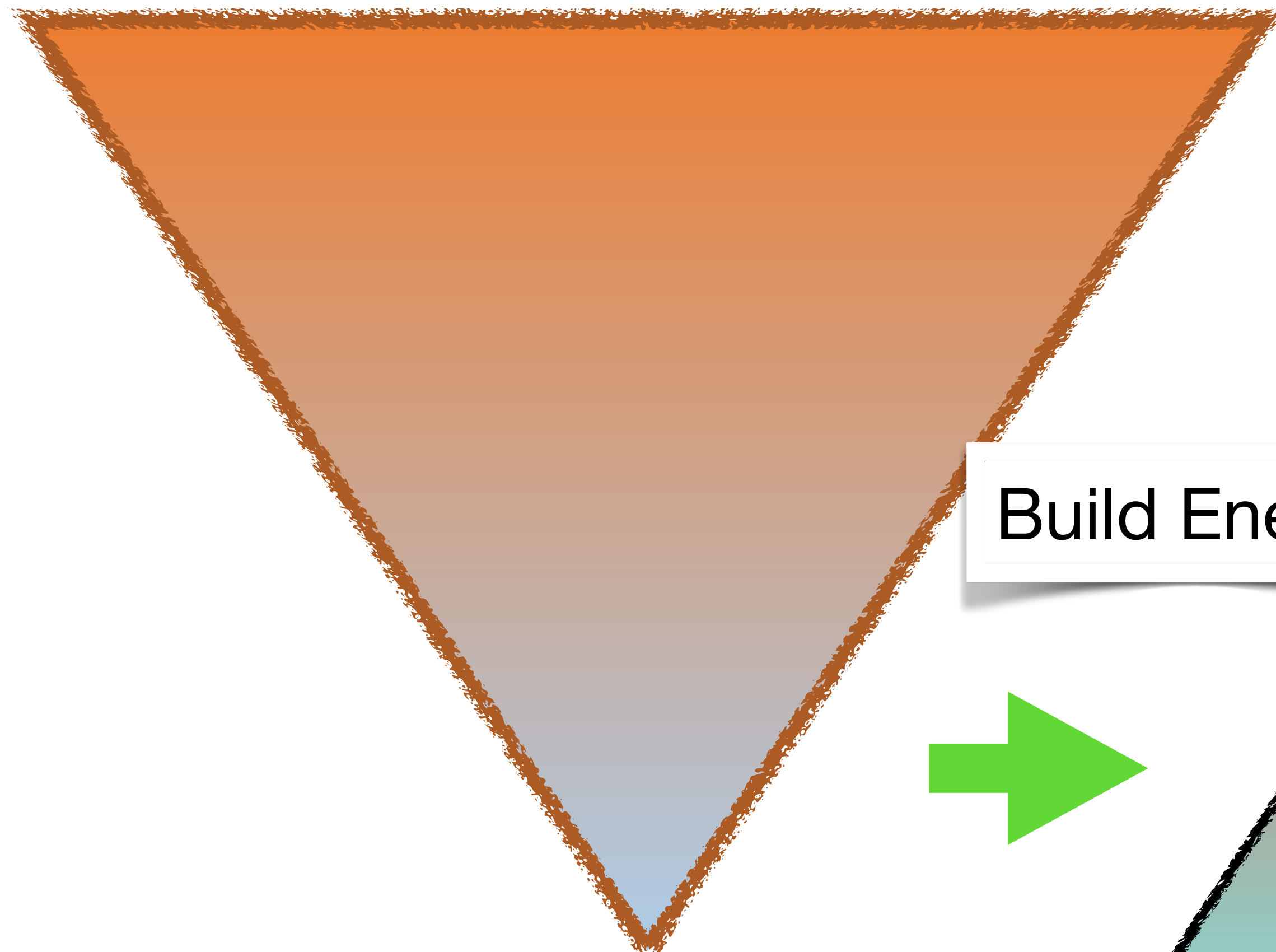


Issues and
Challenges

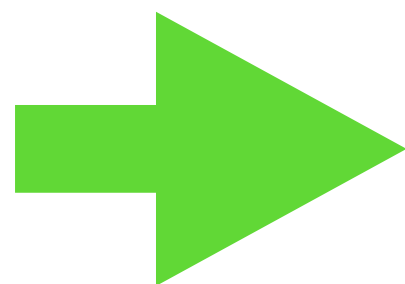
Re-Build the Foundation of my Life and Health

2. Focus on the Foundation



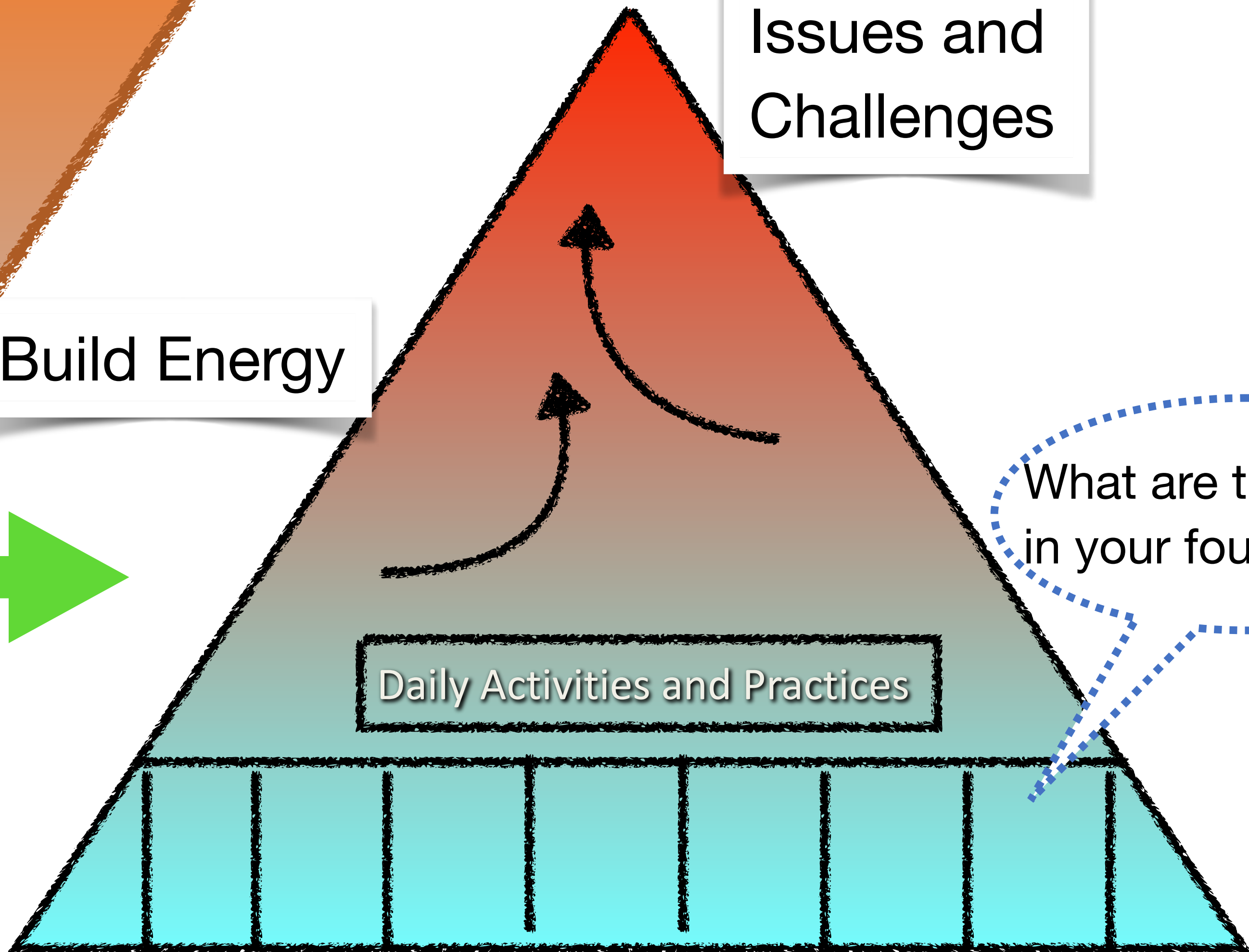


Build Energy



Issues and Challenges

What to Keep?
What to Remove?
What to Add?



What are the “bricks”
in your foundation?

Diet

Relationships

Community

Spirituality

Exercise

Rest

Outdoors

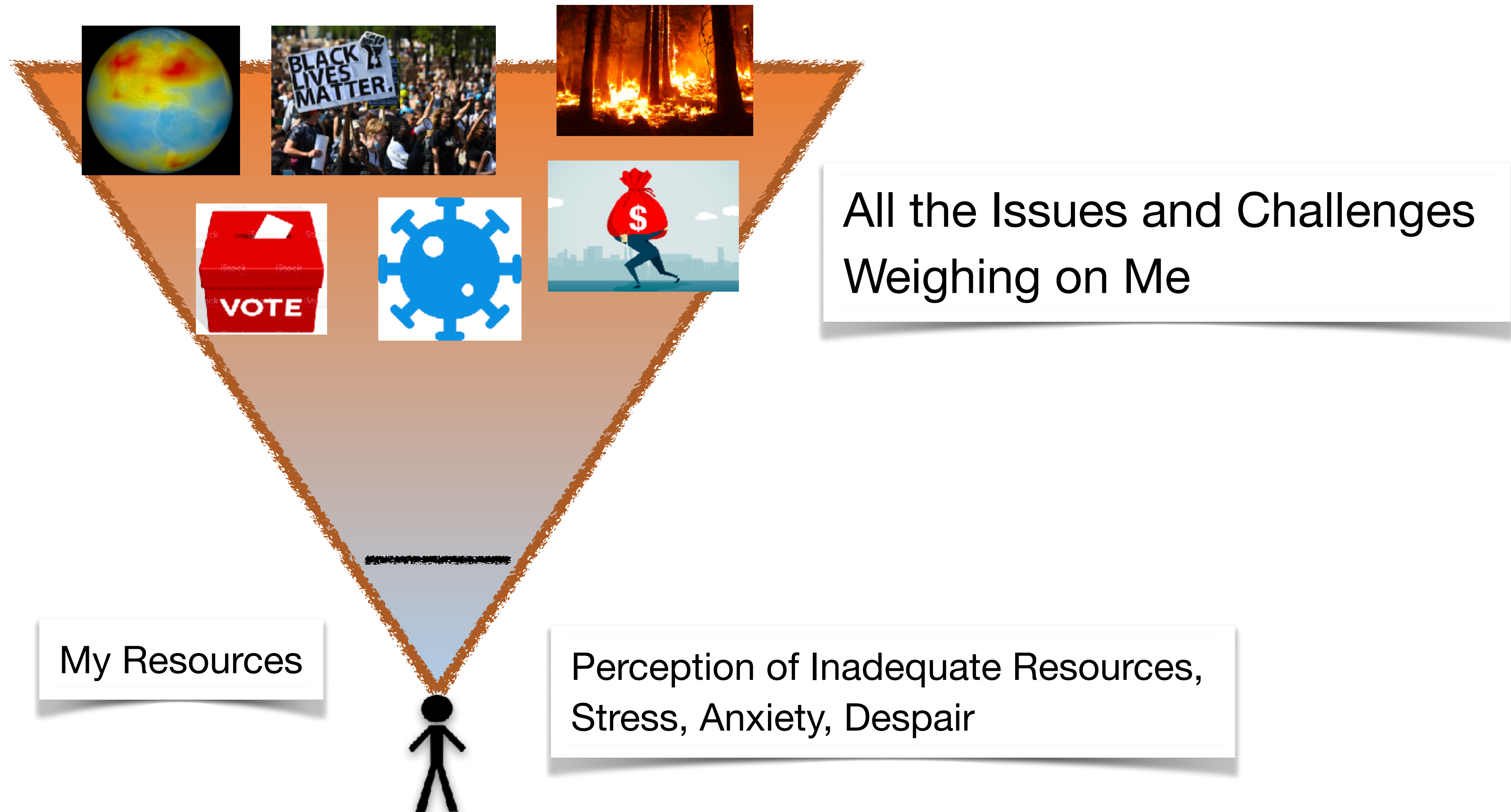
Family

Work

Arts

Play

Getting “Upside Down”



Brief Meditation



Creating your Own IPCC* Report

*Individual Problems with Climate Change

Reed

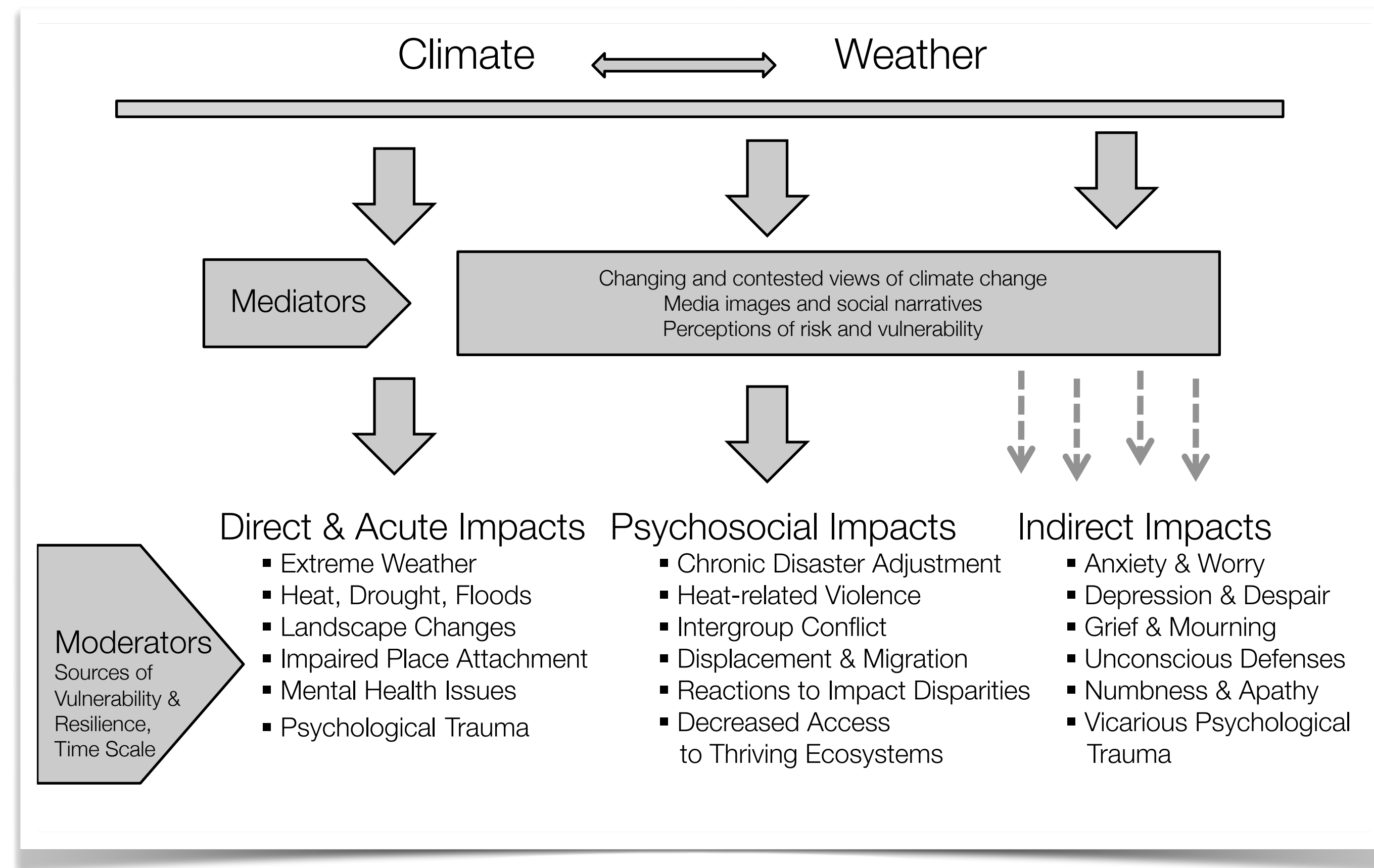
- **Reed** is a teacher in Texas who experienced the climate related natural disaster of Hurricane Harvey
- Family in Oil Industry
- Loves the Gulf lifestyle but is considering relocating from the coast with his family
- “Teaching When the World is on Fire”



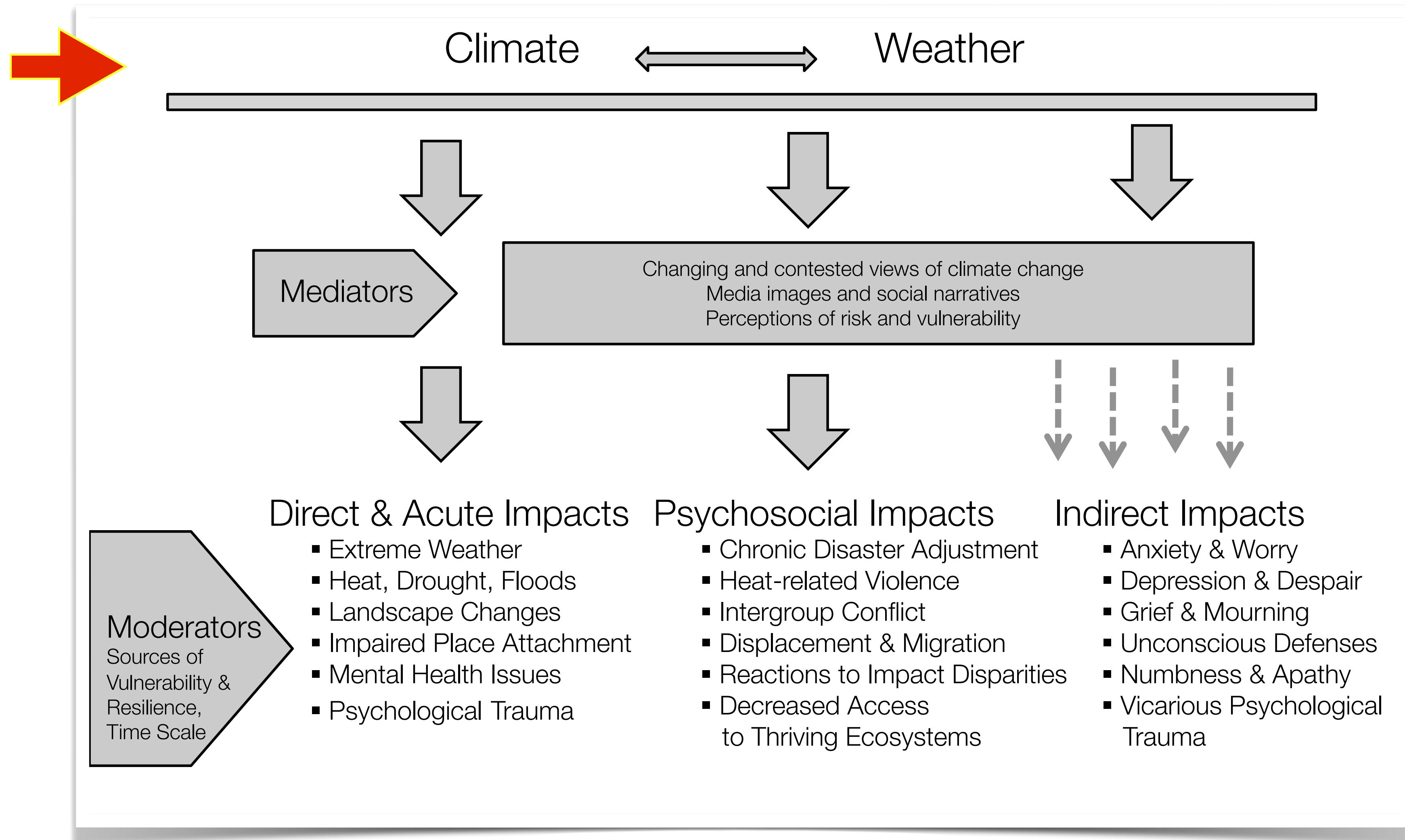
Mental Health Impacts of Climate Change



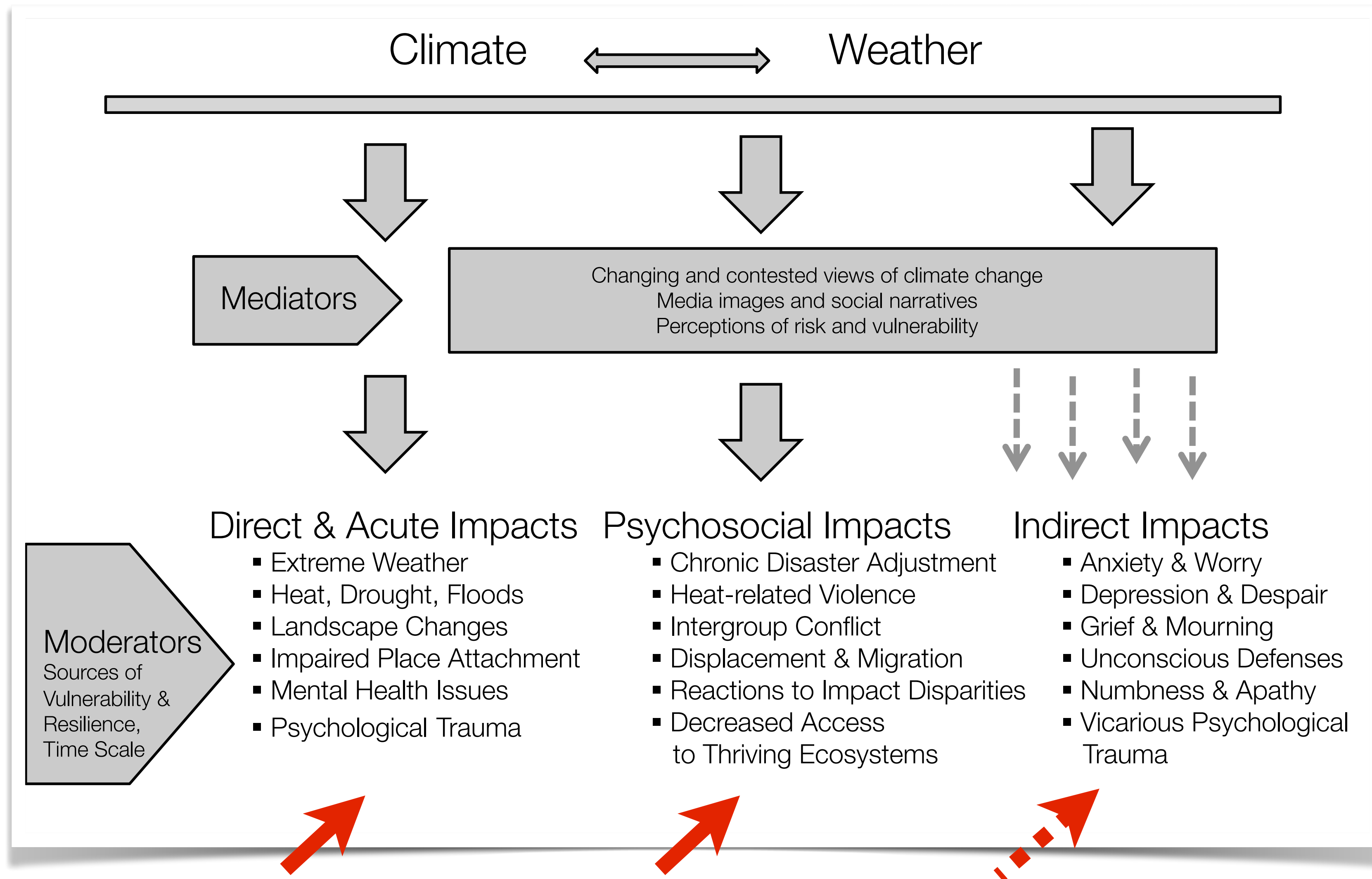
Climate Change Impacts [Environmental Psychology, Public Health, Epidemiology]



Classes of Psychological Impacts



Classes of Climate Change Impacts

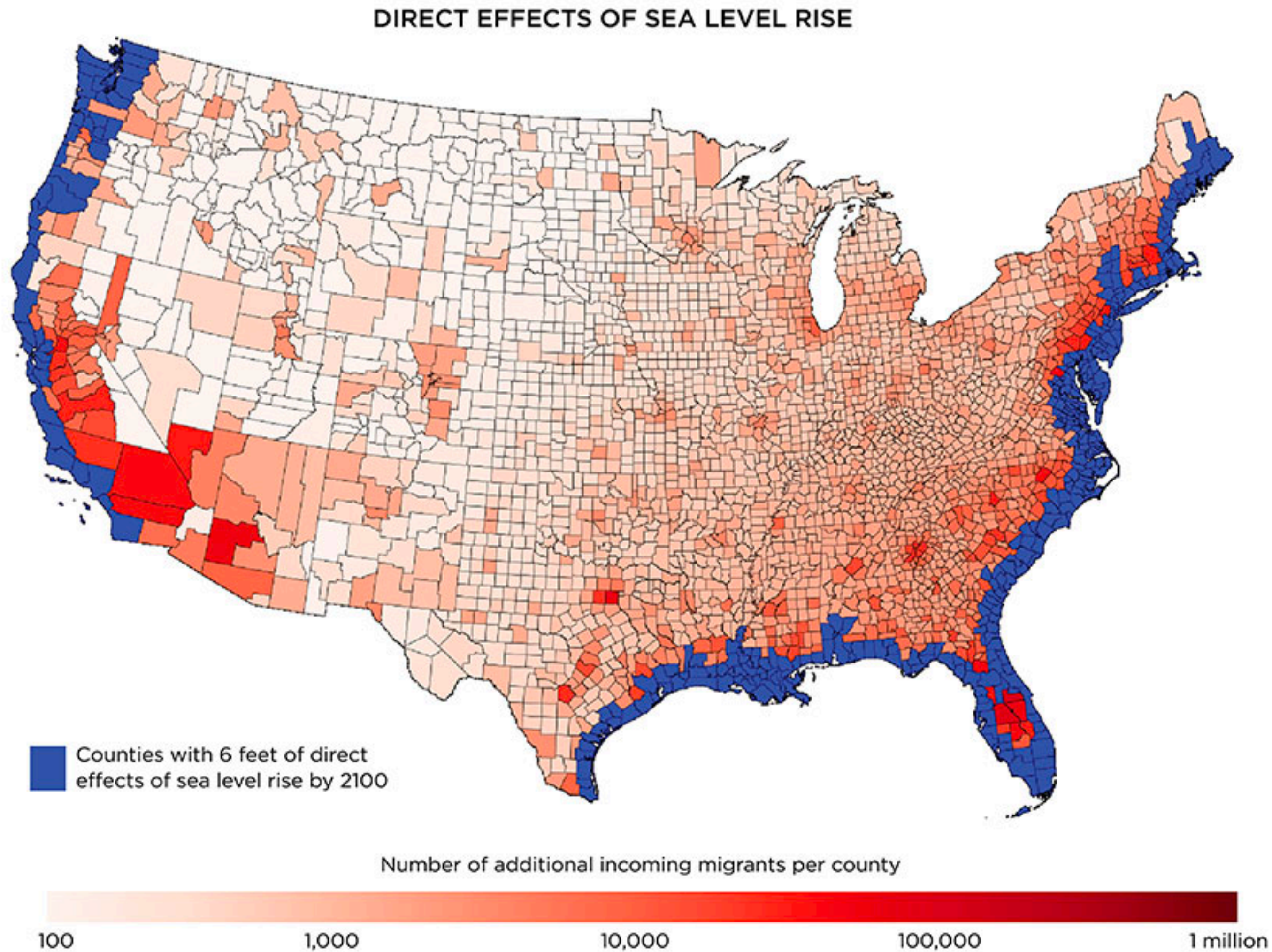


Classes of Climate Change Impacts

Disasters

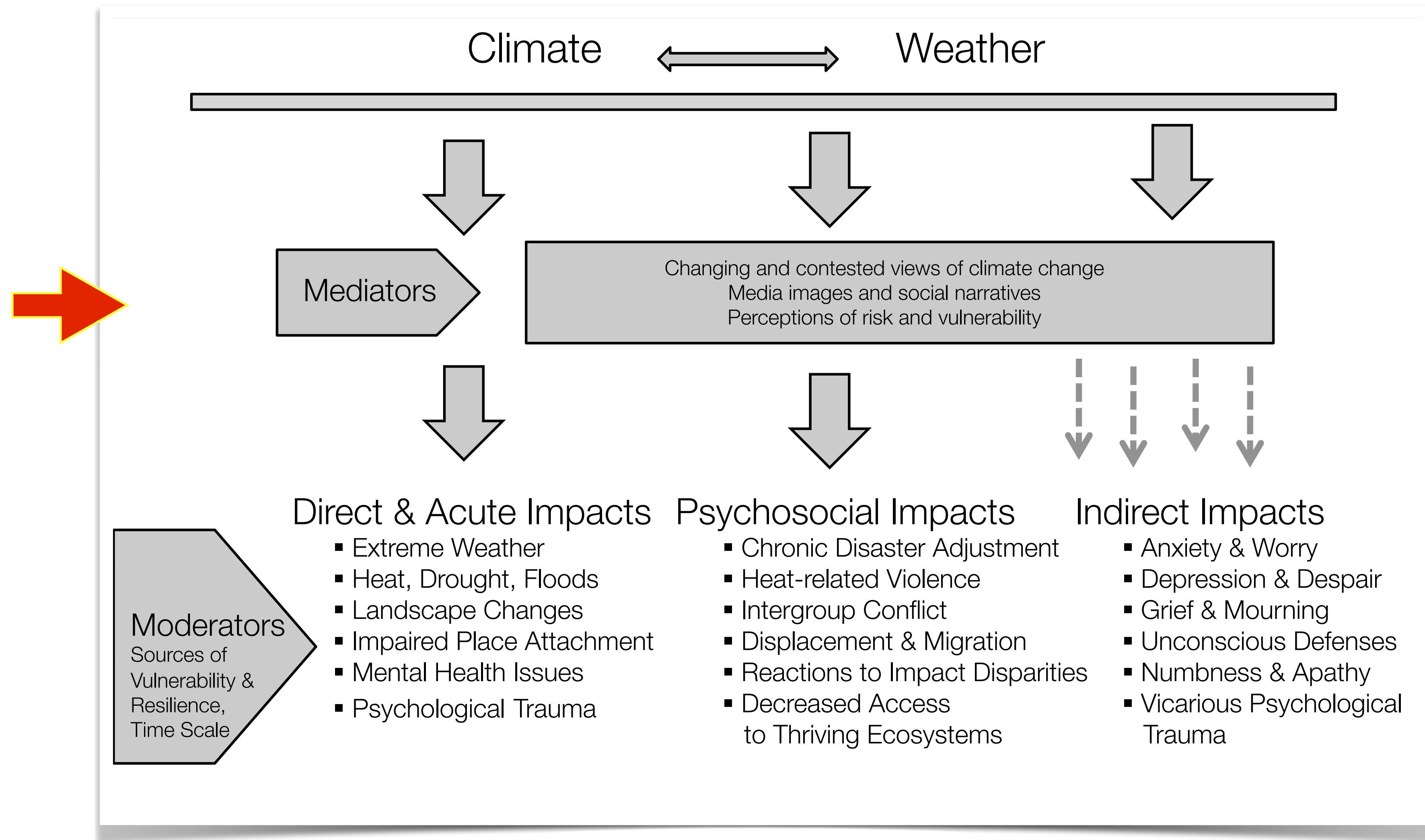


Societal Ripple Effects

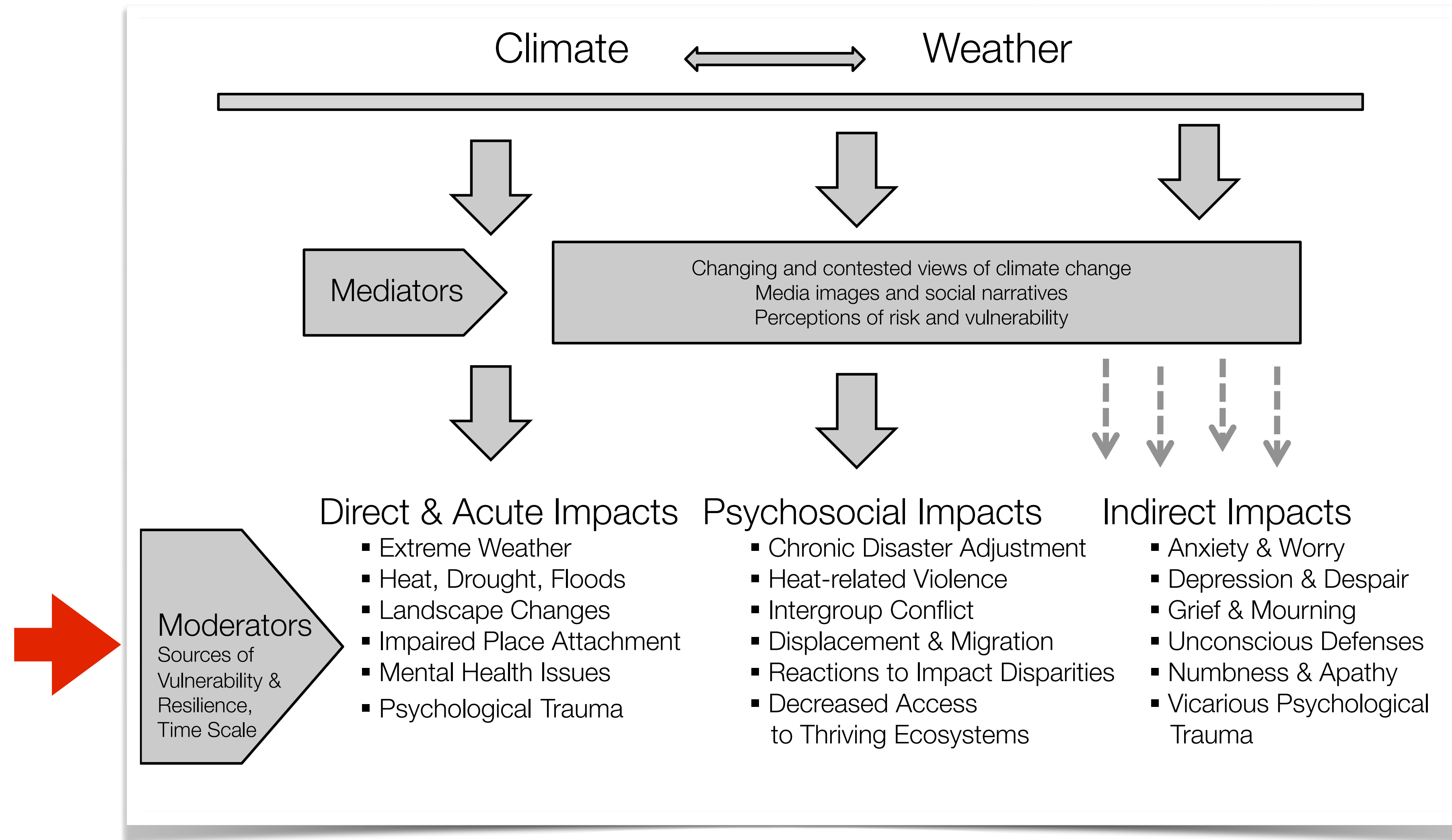


Emotional Impacts like “Eco-Anxiety”



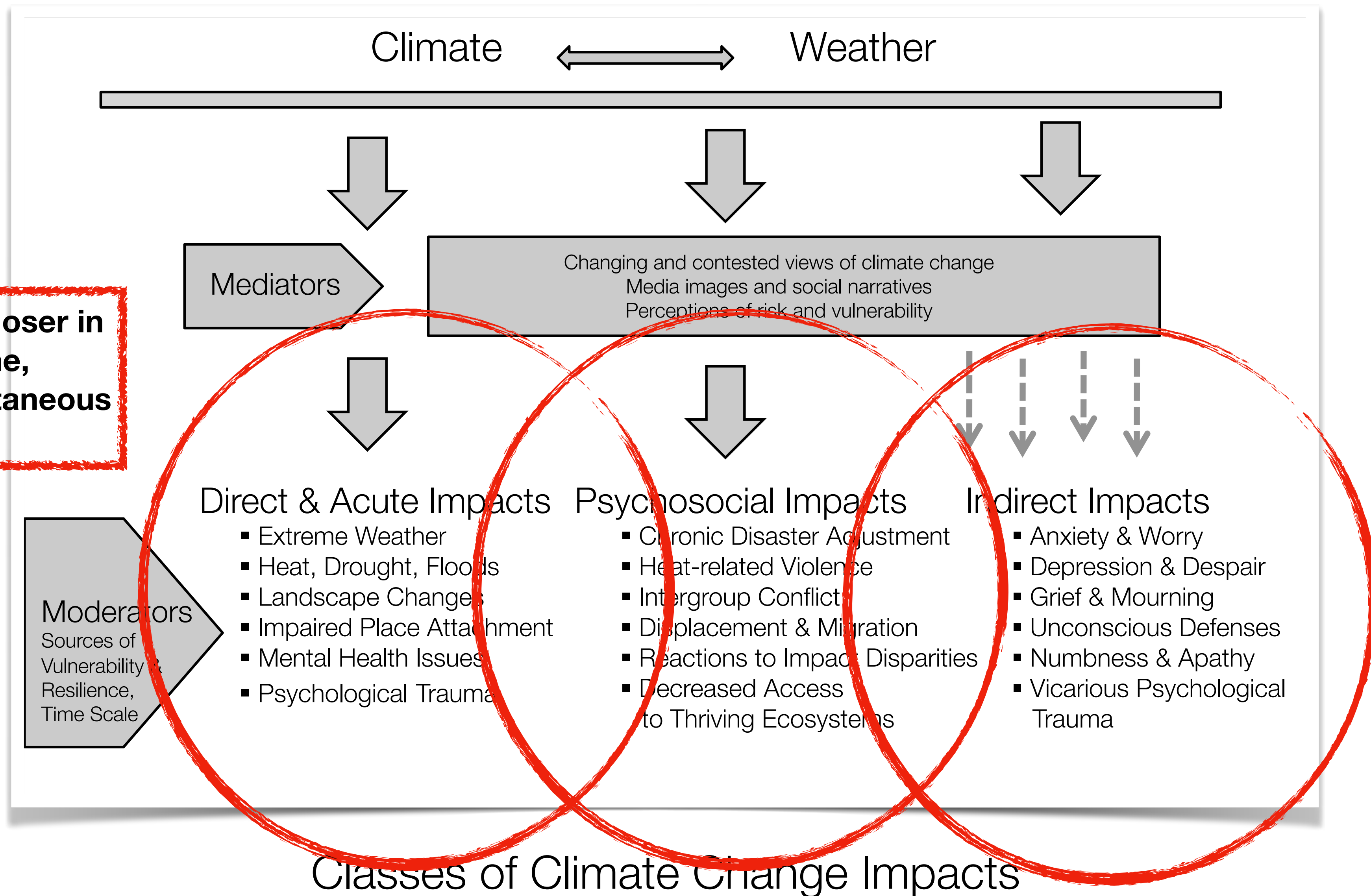


Classes of Climate Change Impacts



Classes of Climate Change Impacts

Impacts are now closer in space and time, with multiple simultaneous impacts



Practicing Discussing Climate Impacts

Impact Experiences?

Impact Severity?

Priority Issues to Address?

**Direct Experience
of Disasters**

**Indirect Disaster
Effects**

Emotional Impacts

Assessing Climate Impacts: 4 Key Questions

What is your understanding of Climate - Weather? (In general and in your region)

Impacts you have experienced? (Disaster, Societal, Emotional ...)

What are your Risk Factors and Protective Factors?

How do you understand understand impacts? What are the Lenses and Filters through which you view information? (Blind Spots?)

Discussing Climate Impacts

— Social, Economic

Impact Experiences?

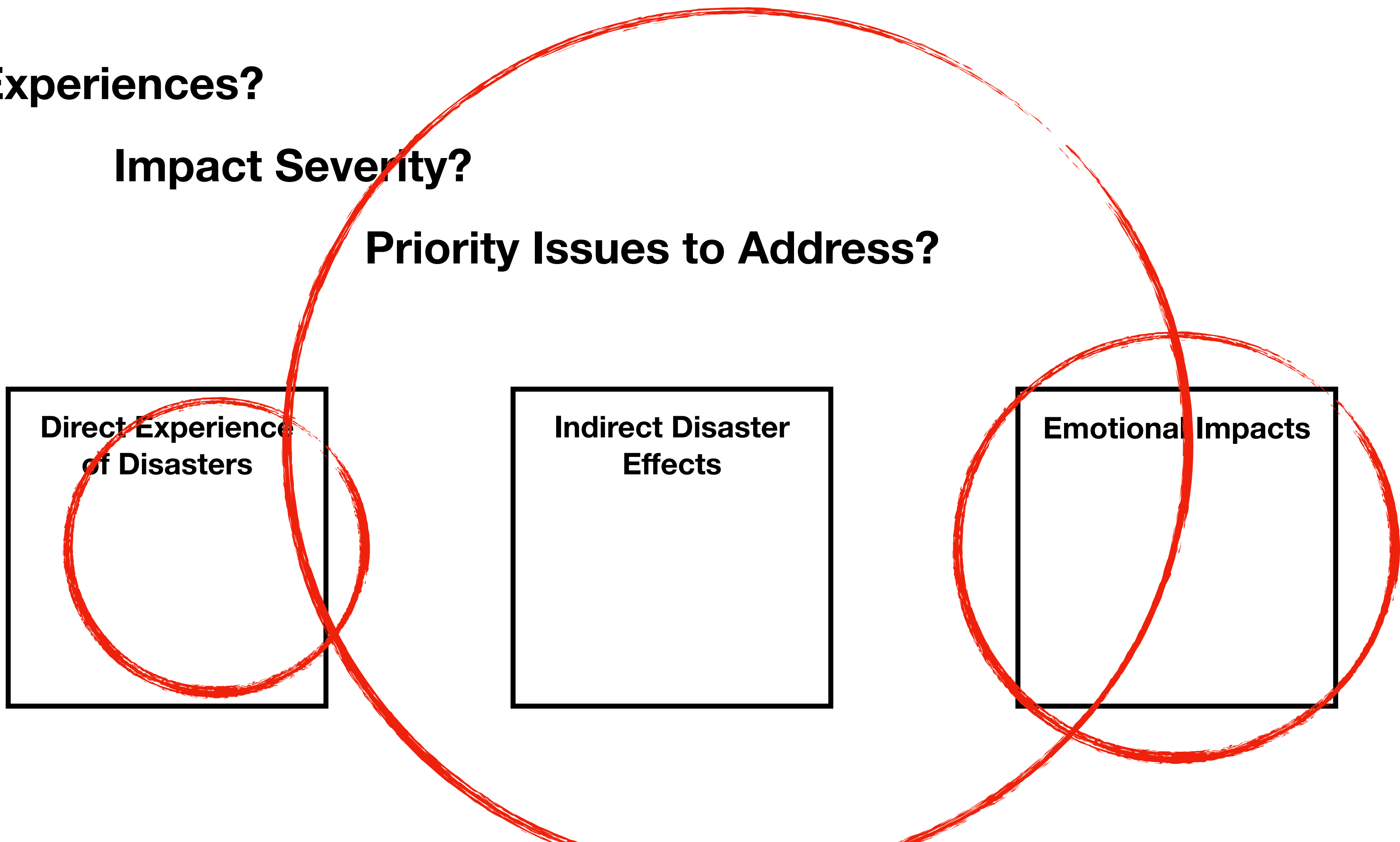
Impact Severity?

Priority Issues to Address?

**Direct Experience
of Disasters**

**Indirect Disaster
Effects**

Emotional Impacts



Discussing Climate Impacts — Disaster Focused

Impact Experiences?

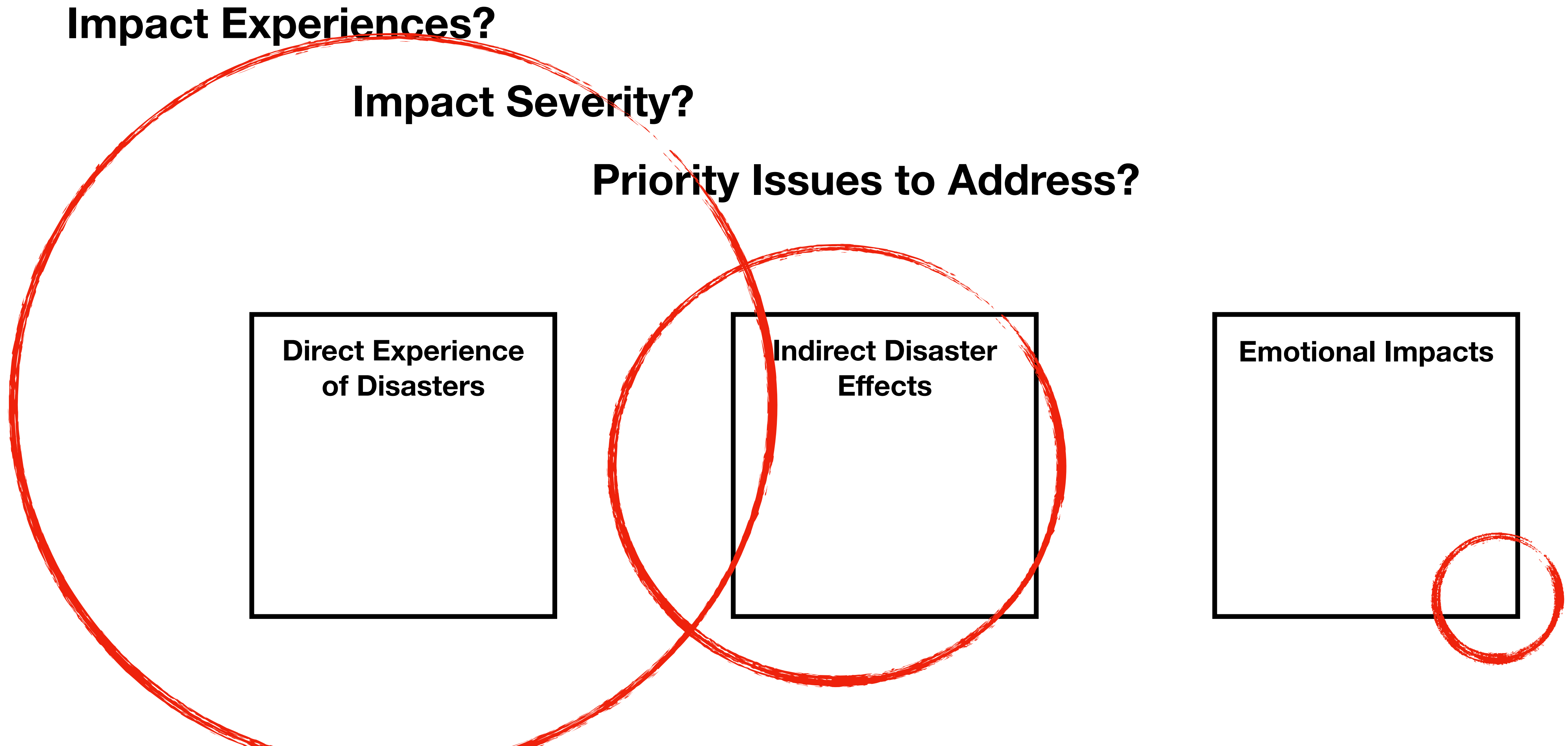
Impact Severity?

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**Indirect Disaster
Effects**

Emotional Impacts

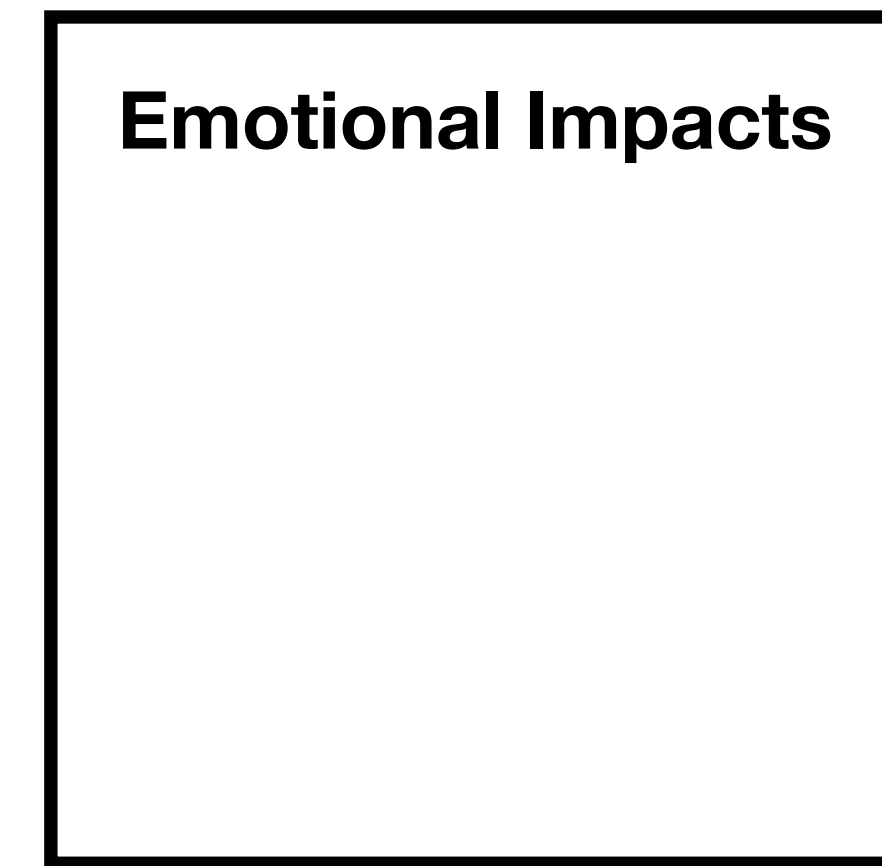
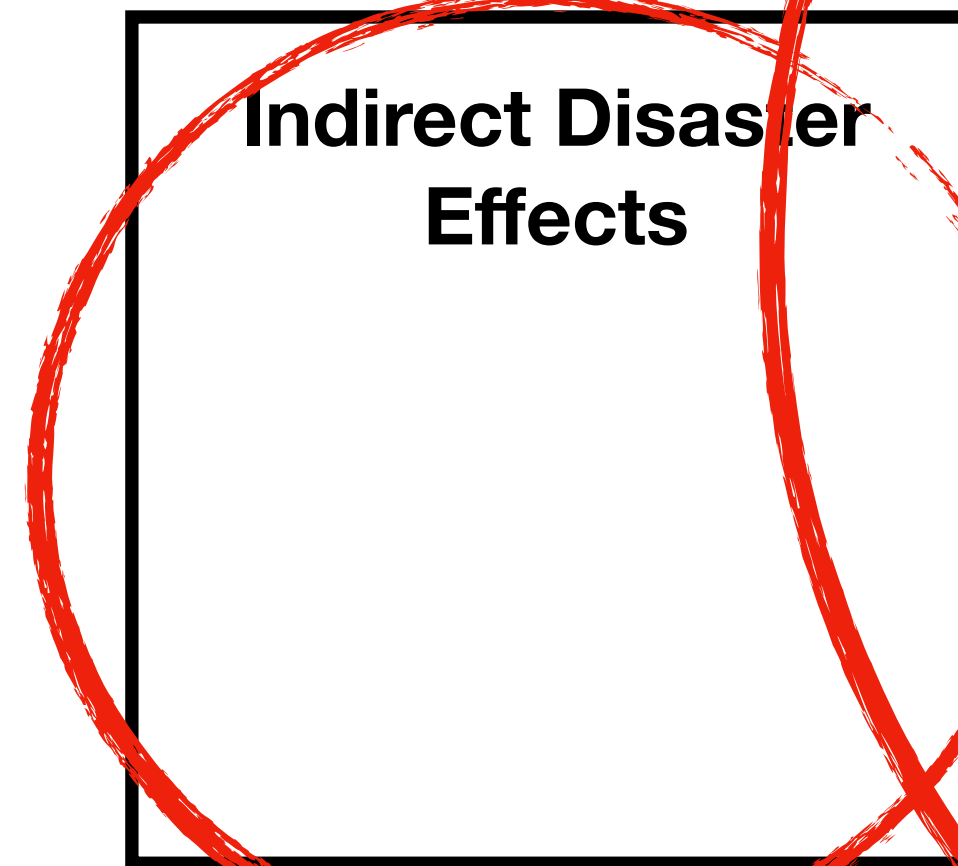


Discussing Climate Impacts — Primarily emotional without personal disaster experience

Impact Experiences?

Impact Severity?

Priority Issues to Address?



Assessing Climate Impacts: 4 Key Questions

What is your understanding of Climate - Weather? (In general and in your region)

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Environmental Identity

Jann

Wildlife Biologist Parks Canada

Administrator and Director Seeking Next Chapter

Environmental Identity

Enjoyed Eco-timeline Exercise

Career Transition / New Life Stage

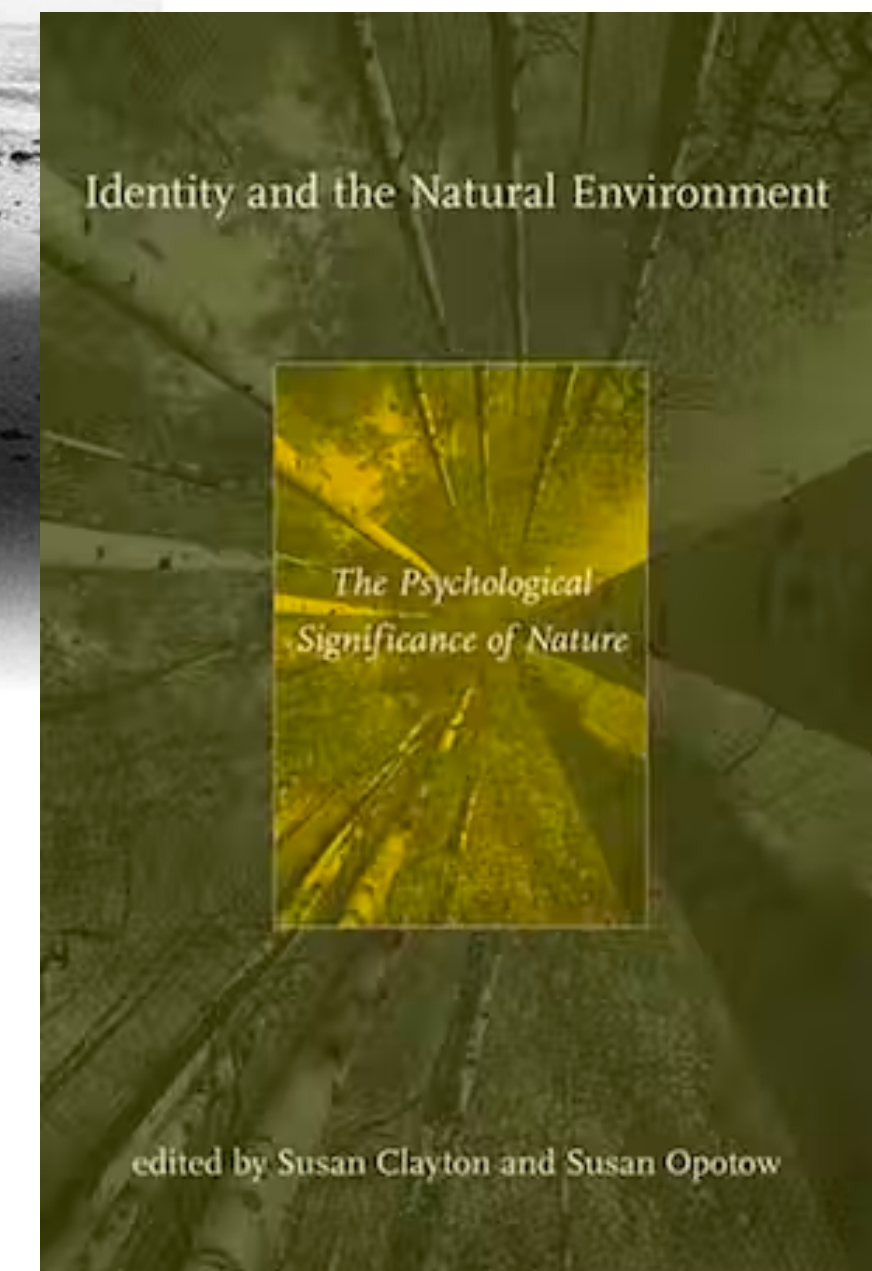
Seeking “Beginners Mind”



To Find Eco and Climate Tools
you often have to look outside of
Therapy

Conservation Psychology

- A subfield of psychology that seeks to understand the attitudes and behavior of individuals and groups toward the natural environment so as to promote their use of environmentally sustainable practices.
- Although related to **environmental psychology**, conservation psychology is distinct in its orientation toward protecting ecosystems and preserving resources while ensuring quality of life for humans and other species.



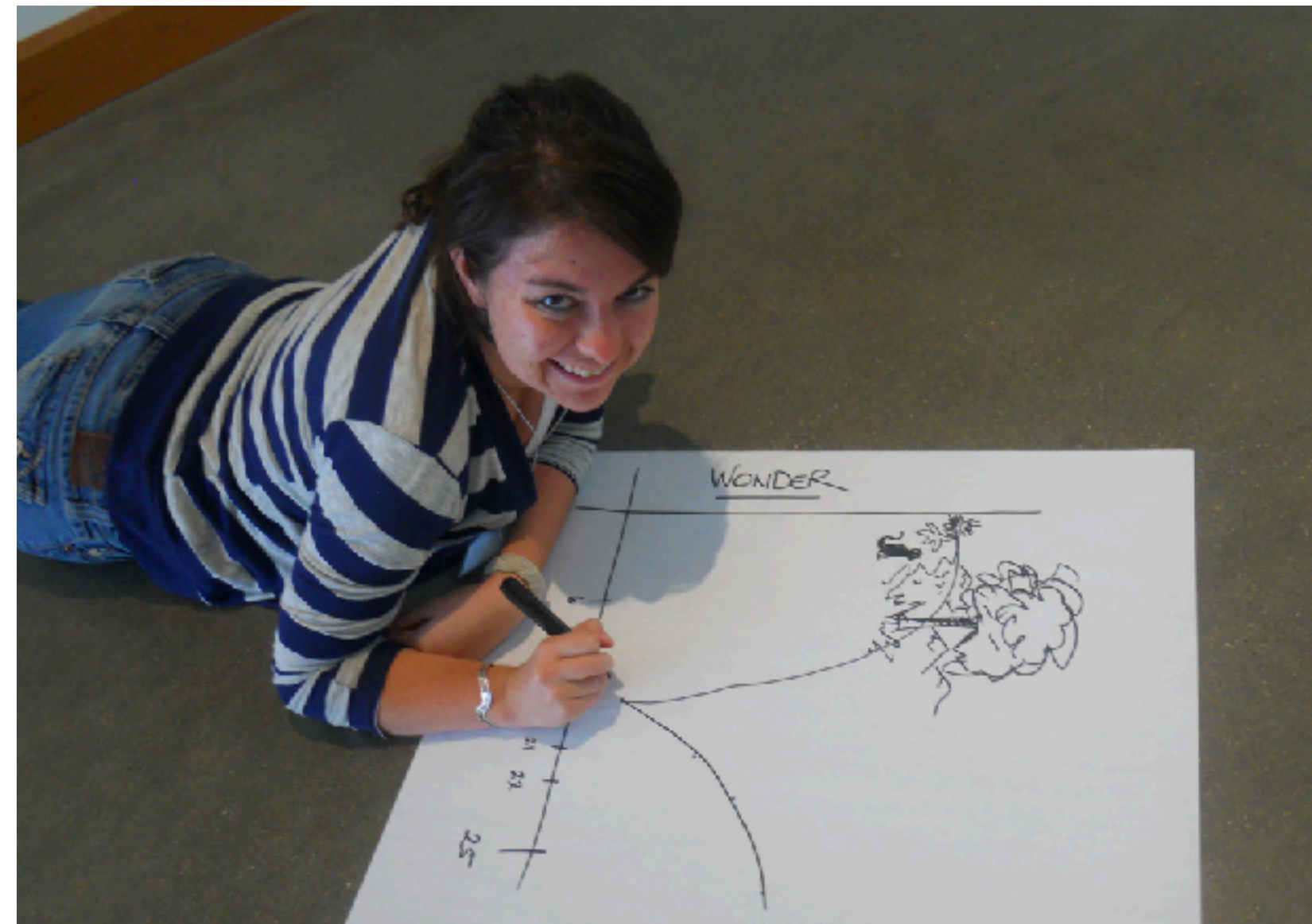
Environmental Identity

- Environmental Identity (EID): one's self concept, values, and affiliations in relation to nature and other species
- An important sub-identity analogous to gender, sexual and other forms of social identity recognized in psychotherapy
- Foundational construct for eco-counseling and therapy.



Environmental Identity Time Line

- Draw a simple time line from your birth to the present
- Identity significant nature experiences, memories, favored places, losses or traumas, contact with other species, family activities, mentors, the arts, world events...



First place you remember?

First animal relationship?

“Nature” w/ family, friends?

1st “Camping” or Outdoors Living?

First time seeing Milky Way?

First time gardening, hunting or fishing?

First contact with “the wild?” (place, animals, weather)?

First sense of competence or discovery?

Key role models, teachers, mentors?

Peak experiences (joy, transcendence, epiphany)?

Tragedy, trauma, loss?

Rites of Passage (formal or informal)?

Books, movies or art?

Professional or community roles?

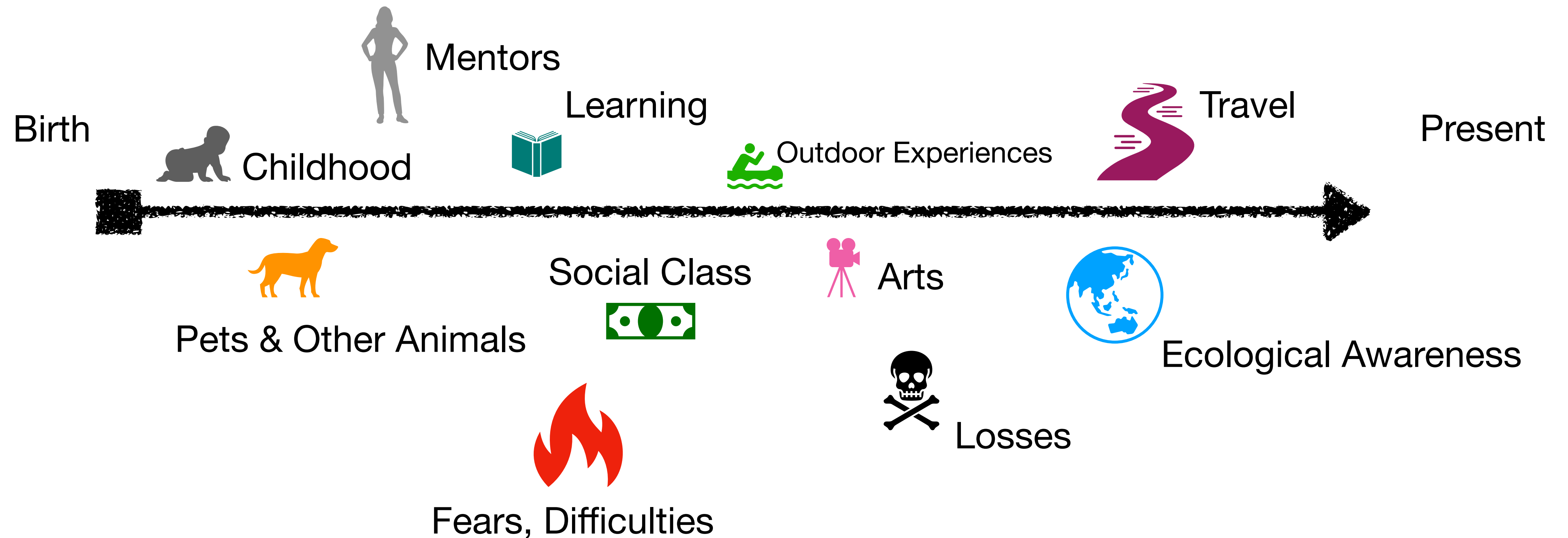
Travel

Parenting & child-rearing?

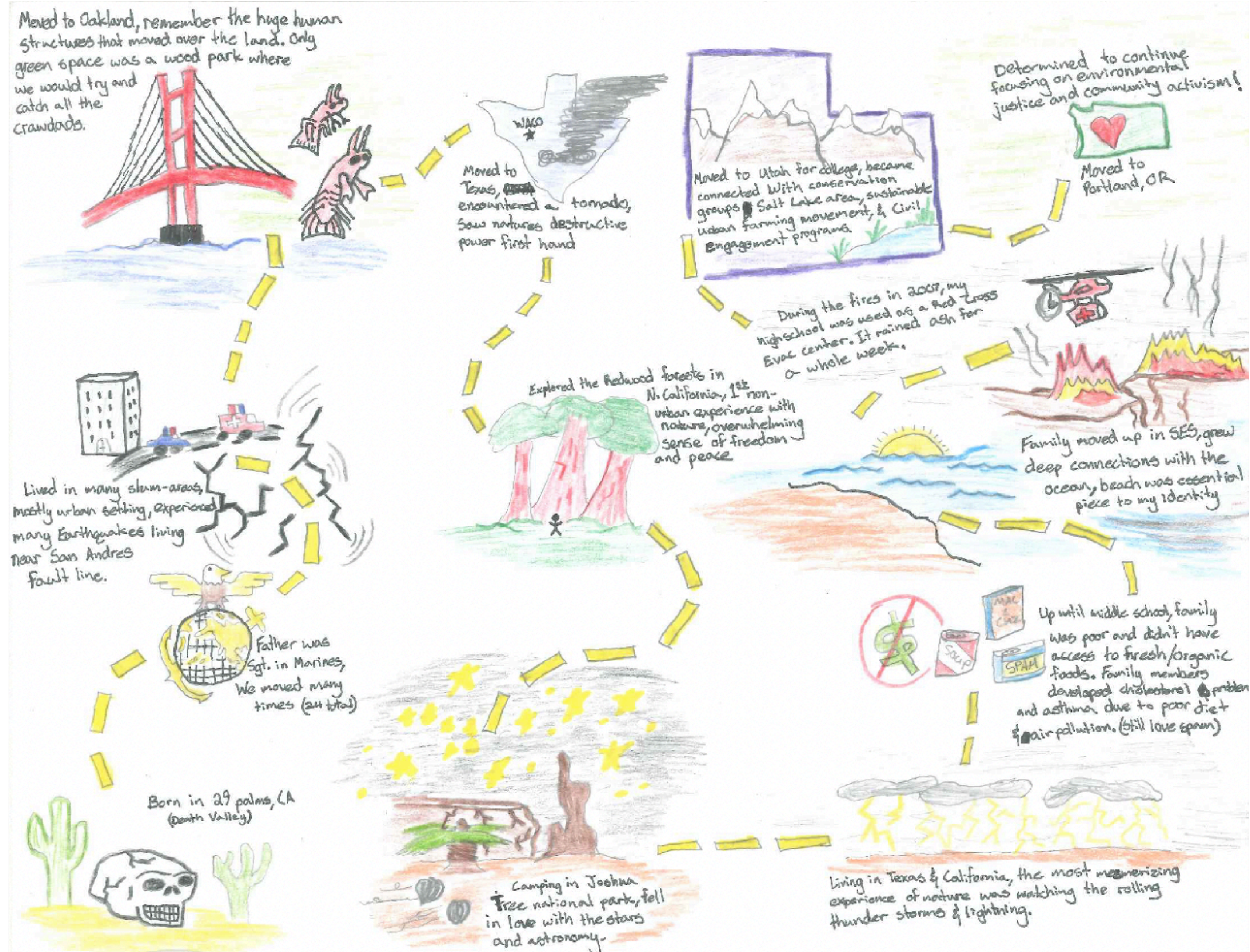
Other: _____

Eco Time Line

Key Experiences and Milestones



Detailed Eco Time Line / Place Map



Building on Environmental Identity: Lessons from the Life Experiences of Activists

Lessons from the Life Experiences of Activists: Synergy between Awareness, Empowerment and Know-how

Salience: Increased awareness of environmental issues and threats

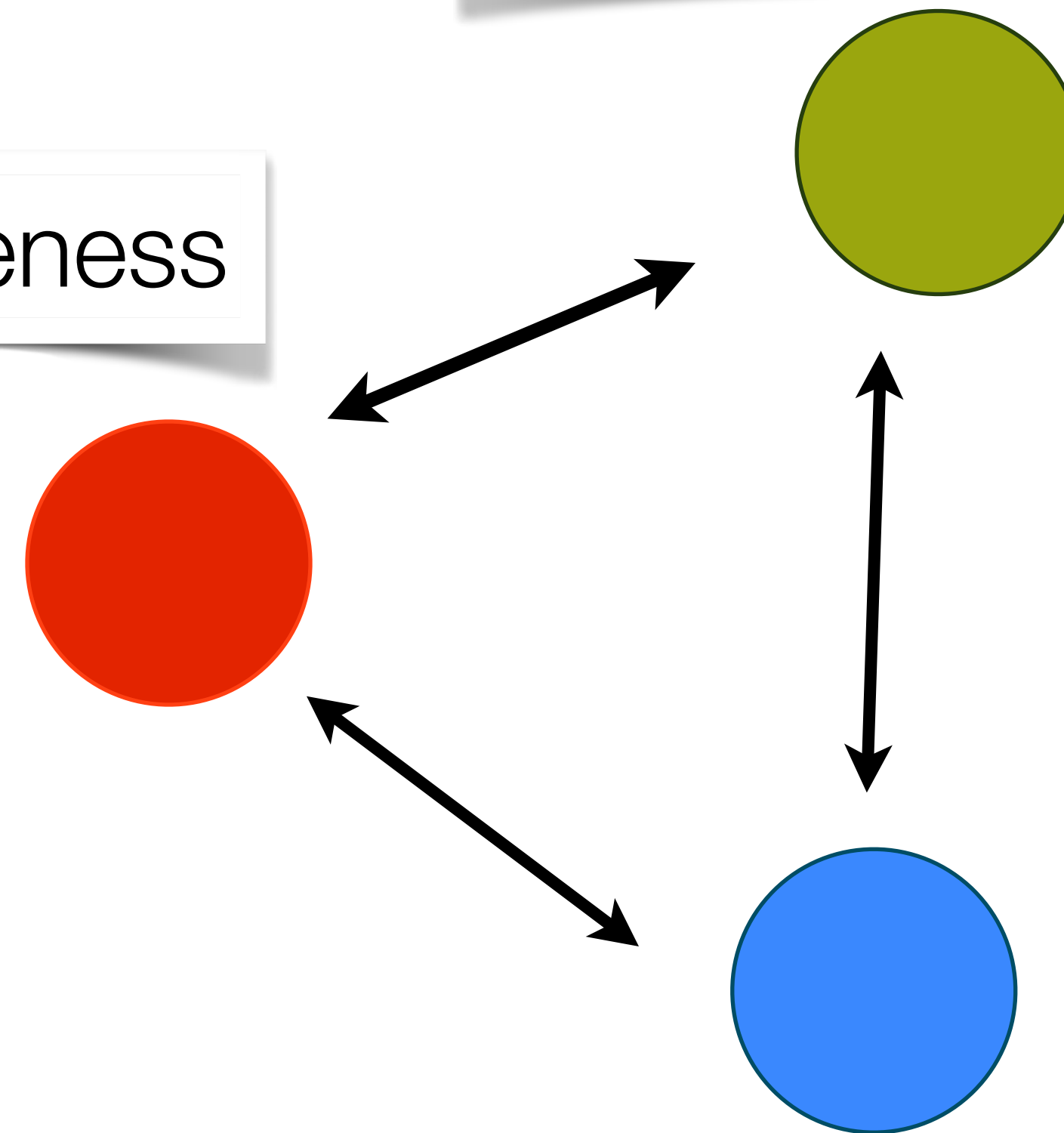
Empowerment: Identification as an actor, placement in a leadership role

Practical Knowledge: Ability, experience, networks & resources

Awareness

Empowerment

Practical Knowledge

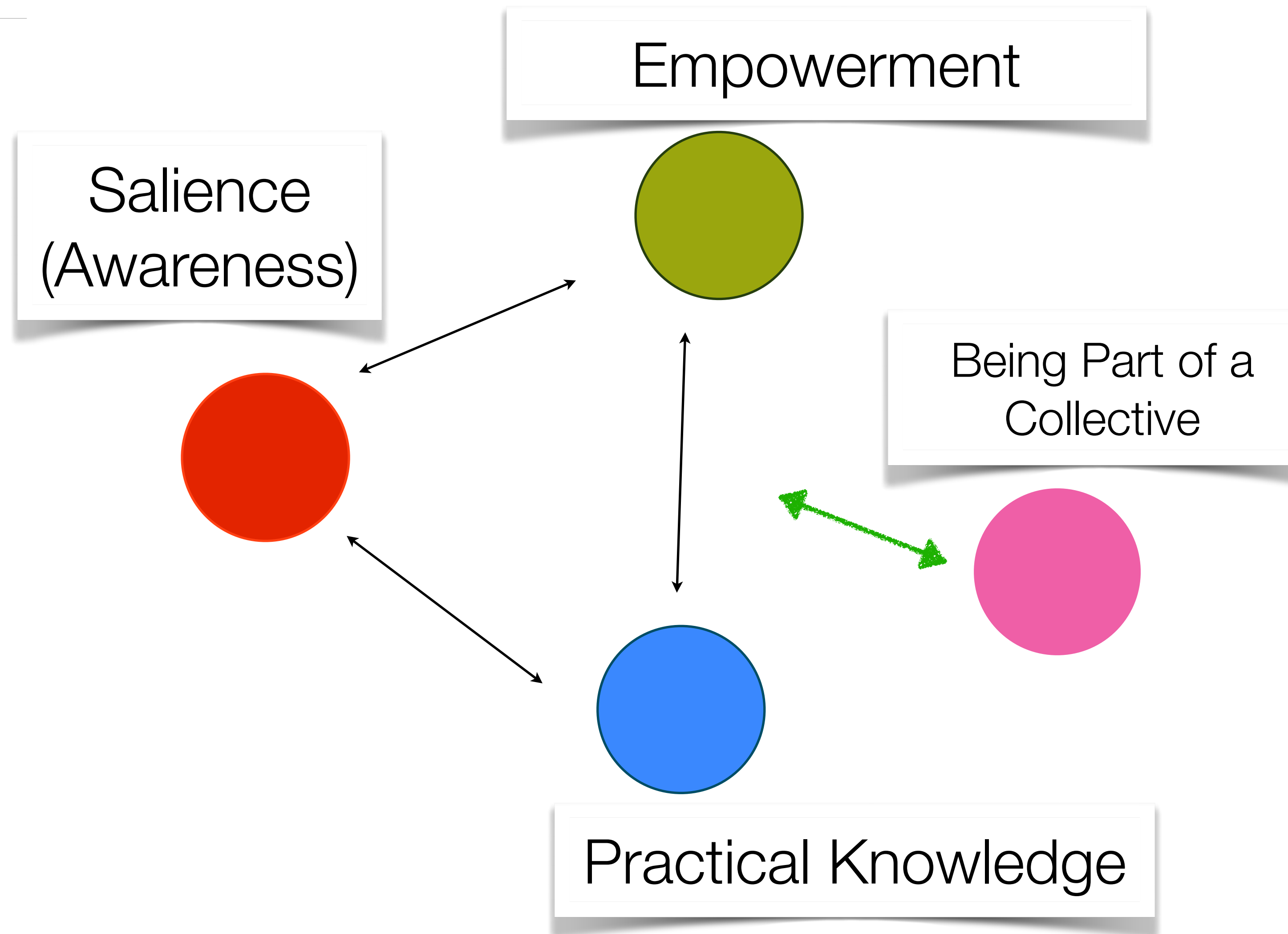


Lessons from the Life Experiences of Activists: Synergy between Awareness, Empowerment and Know-how

Salience: Increased awareness of environmental issues and threats

Empowerment: Identification as an actor, placement in a leadership role

Practical Knowledge: Ability, networks & resources



Environmental Values



Sally and Martin

- Sally (Salvatore) and his husband Martin
- Issues with household and finances
- Debates about recycling and sustainability
- Education on environmental values exercise revealed the deeper split
- And revealed a way forward for both partners to play to their strengths

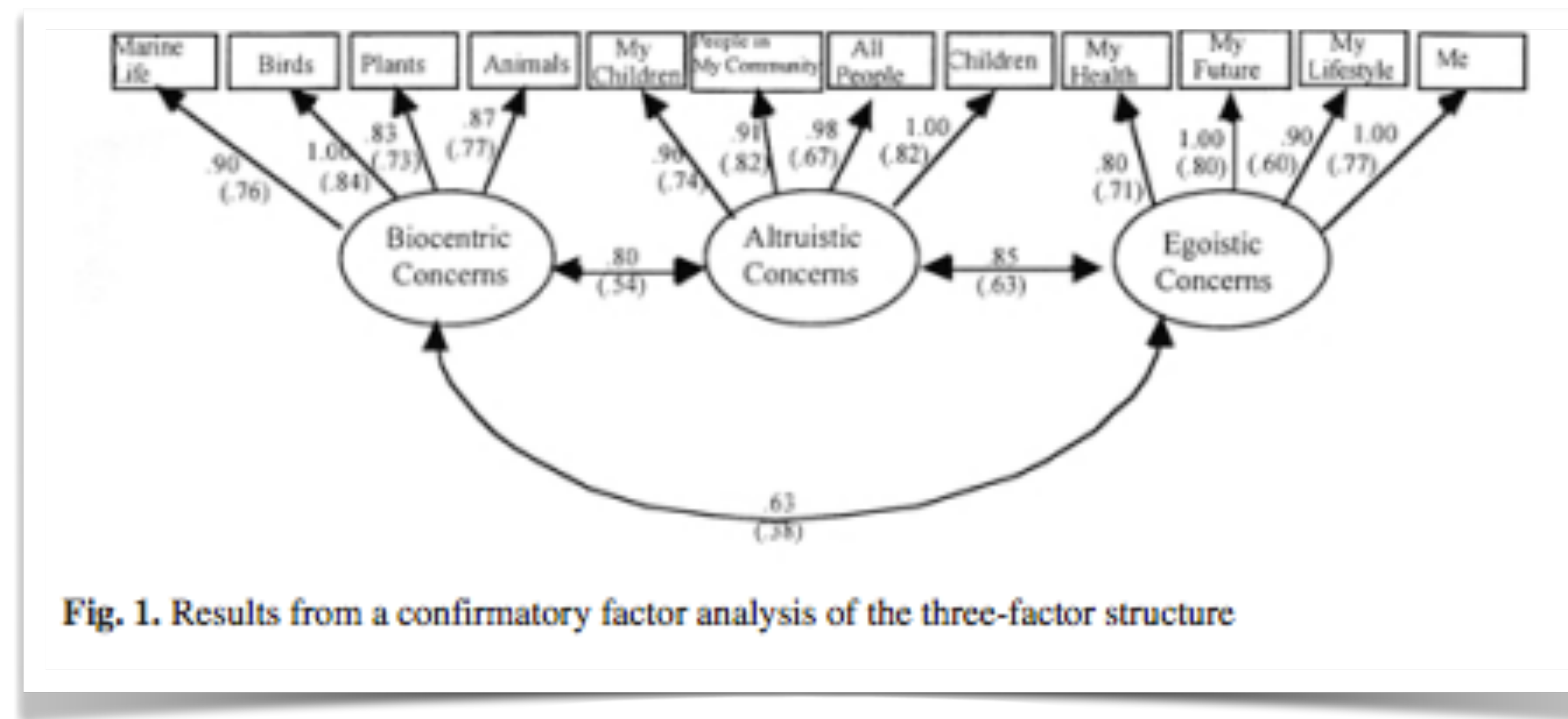


Basic Values That Drive Environmental Concerns

Biocentric

Altruistic

Egoistic



Nuanced Values about Animals and Nature

Beauty	Primary interest in aesthetic appreciation of nature, and the physical attractiveness and appeal of animals, in particular charismatic species
Mastery	Primary interest in the mastery and control of nature and animals
Scientific	Primary' interest in the systematic study of nature, and interrelationships between species and natural habitats
Relationship	Primary interest and strong affection for specific places, trees, plants and individual animals such as pets
Moral	Primary concern for the right and wrong treatment of natural resources and animals / opposition to overexploitation or cruelty
Experience	Primary focus on the direct experience of and contact with nature and wildlife (e.g., through outdoor recreation)
Fear	Primary orientation on avoidance of natural settings and animals due to indifference, dislike, or fear
Symbolic	Primary interest in the human tendency to use nature, places and animal imagery in language and thought
Utilitarian	Primary interest in the practical value of natural resources, or in the subordination of animals for the practical benefit of people.

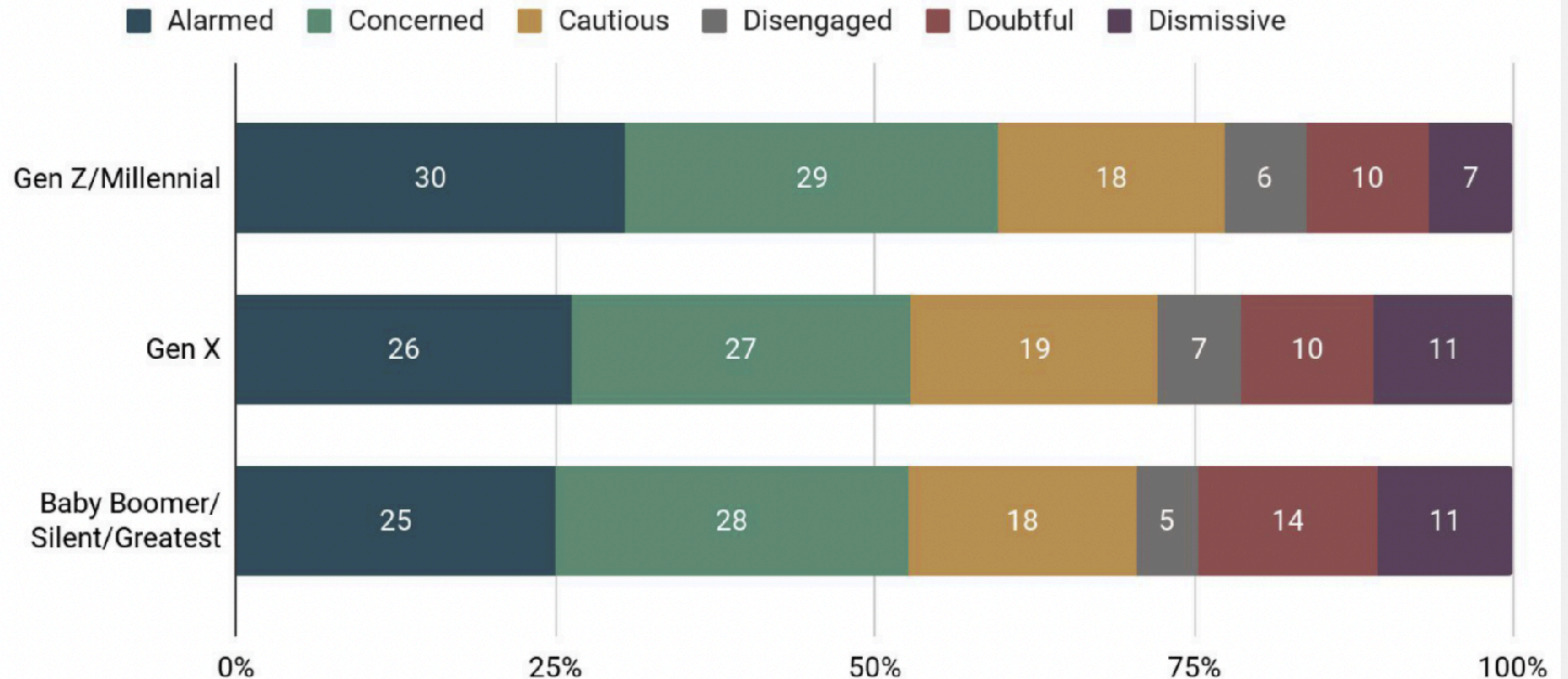
Other Important Values:

Spiritual
Ecological
Health / Wellbeing
Basic Survival
Regional / Cultural

etc.

Age and Attitudes

Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to be Alarmed or Concerned about global warming and are less likely to be Doubtful or Dismissive than are older generations



Global Warming's Six Americas

April 2020, December 2020, March 2021, September 2021, April 2022, December 2022. Base: 6,211 U.S. adults
(Gen Z/Millennial $n = 1,707$; Gen X $n = 1,567$; Baby Boomer/Silent/Greatest $n = 2,937$)

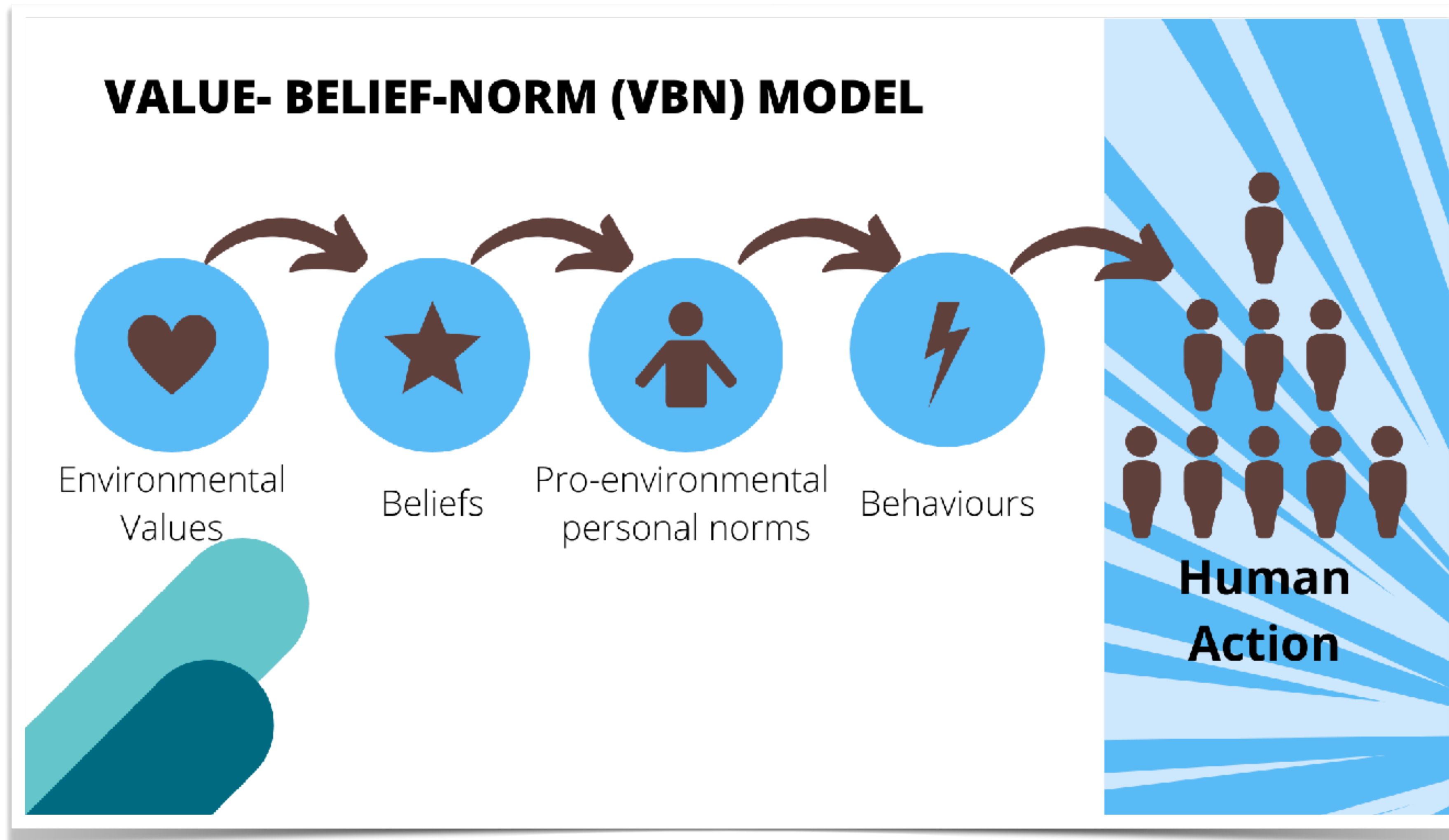
Source: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication;
George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication

Why Values?



Values and Coping: Keel Metaphor

Values Guide our Voluntary Behaviors



Eco-Couples Issues

Washington Post 14 Feb 2023

The study also found that many couples were unable to accurately pinpoint their partner's beliefs and behaviors on climate change, which Goldberg said may be because people assume their partner has the same view as them, or because they don't talk openly about it.


That part wasn't so surprising to him — [previous research from the group](#) showed that around 67 percent of Americans “rarely” or “never” discussed climate change with friends or family, even though around 64 percent reported being “very” or “somewhat” worried.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness


Climate Environment Weather Climate Solutions Climate Lab Green Living

HIDDEN PLANET




Is your partner worried about climate change? You might be surprised.

 By [Kasha Patel](#)

February 14, 2023 at 4:17 p.m. EST



(Illustration by Emily Sabens/The Washington Post; iStock)

 Listen 6 min  Comment 10  Save  Gift Article  Share

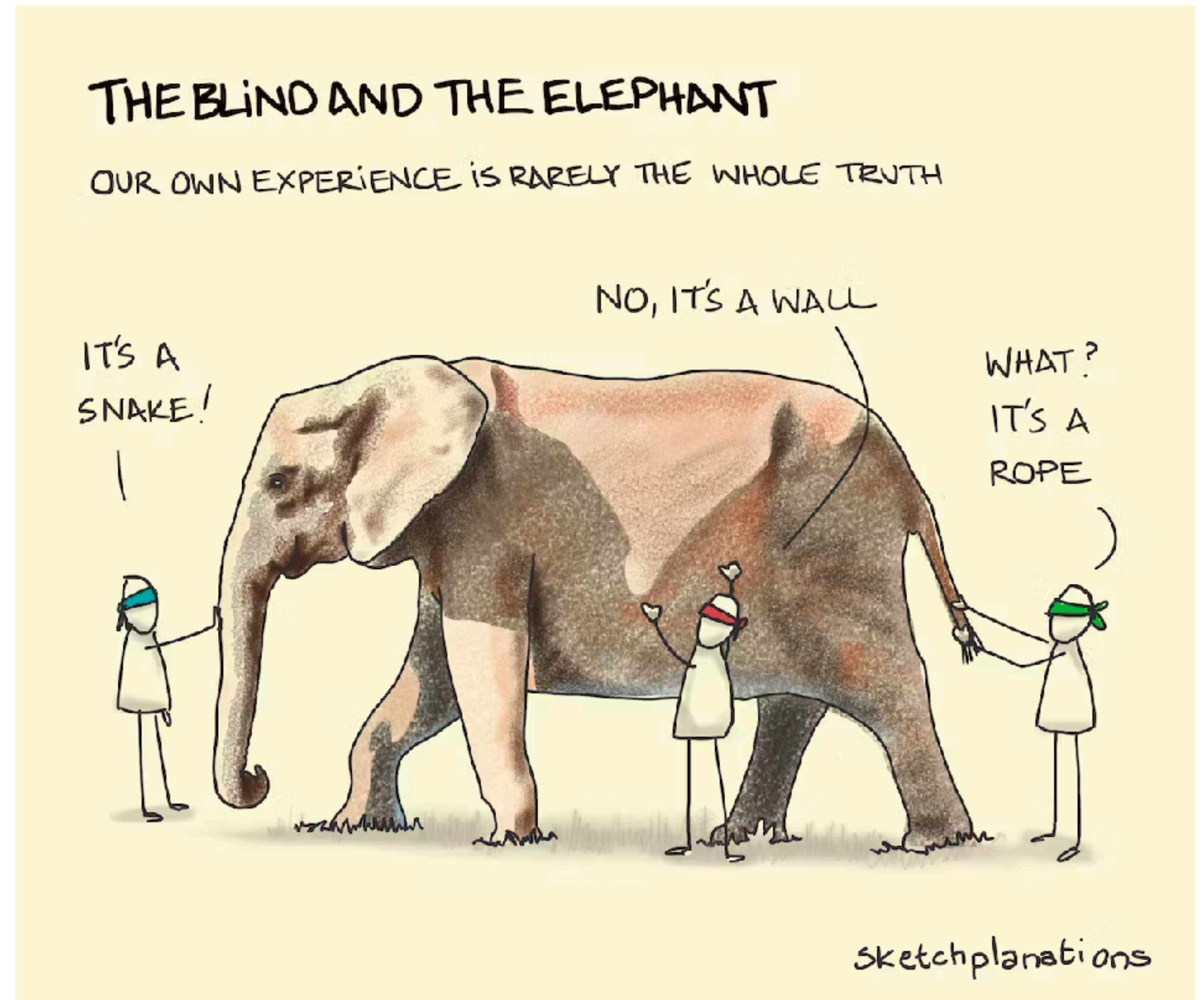
Back to Sally and Martin

Environmental Identity in Your Family and Culture

“The Climate Elephant”

“The Climate Elephant”

Adopting The Blind Men and the Elephant Parable to illustrate our differing views on climate disruption and other ecological issues



Seeing the Elephant

Children

Education

Mitigation

Adaptation

Governance

Elders

Jobs and Wages

Food Systems

Physical Sciences

The Arts

Social Sciences

Social Justice

Technology

LGBTQ

Spirituality

Culture / Diversity

Women's Rights

Indigenous Peoples

Business & Profit

Ability

Carbon Emissions

Communities

Other Species



Climate Cosmopolitanism

- Much like a cultural cosmopolitan, do you have ability to move between different climate and sustainability subcultures?
- Science, Policy, Business, Governing, Technology, Academia, NGO's, Activism, Spirituality, Arts, Indigenous Groups, Youth ...



Rachel, age 50

Enviro Identity

Personal Impact Report

Values

Life Development

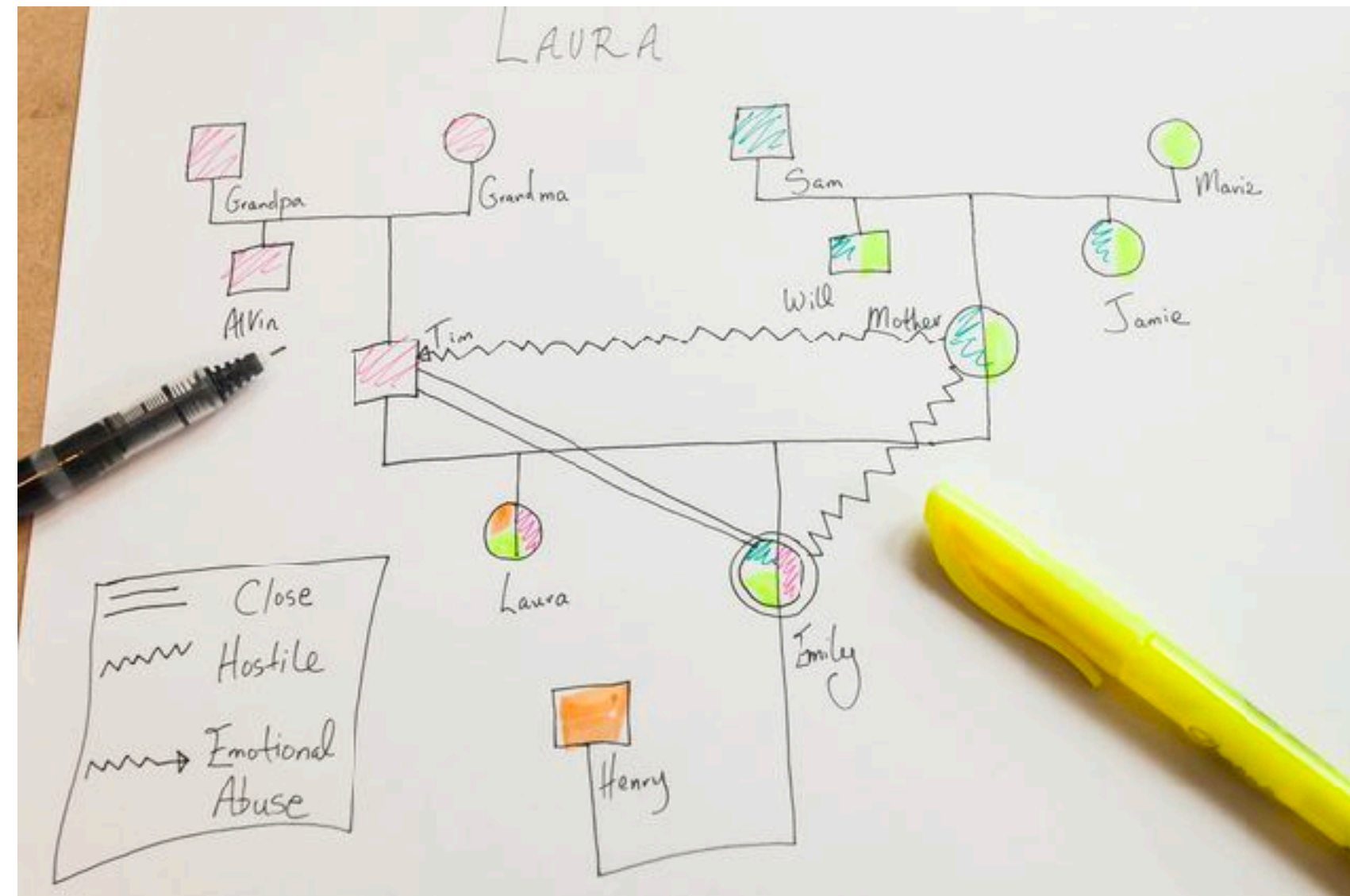
Logic of Appropriateness

Self Education

Growth Mindset



Eco-Genogram Exercise



Draw an Eco-Family Tree

Create 2 to 3 generational layers

Include main bio-relatives and other close relationships

For people in the family system: Consider key aspects of environmental identity, values & formative experiences.

What trends or patterns do you see? (Be mindful of sensitive areas.)

Optional: Add pets and place details

Large Group Exercises

What age did you first learn about climate change?

Front line exercise

Stages of Change

Identity, Nature and Place



Place Visualization

Theresa

Distance / Disconnection
Spectrum of Nature
Health Benefits

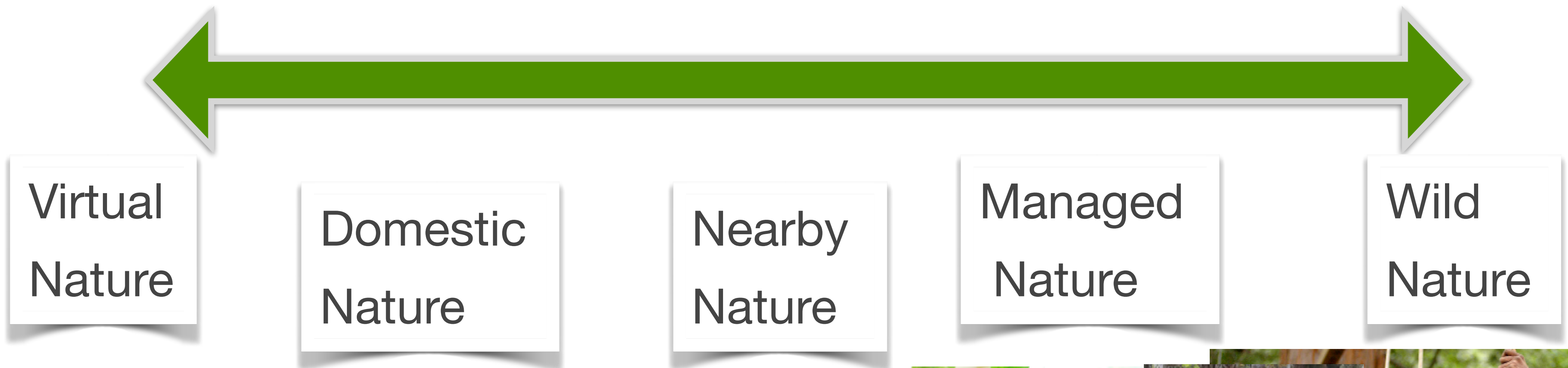




Andrew Wyeth (1948) Christina's World

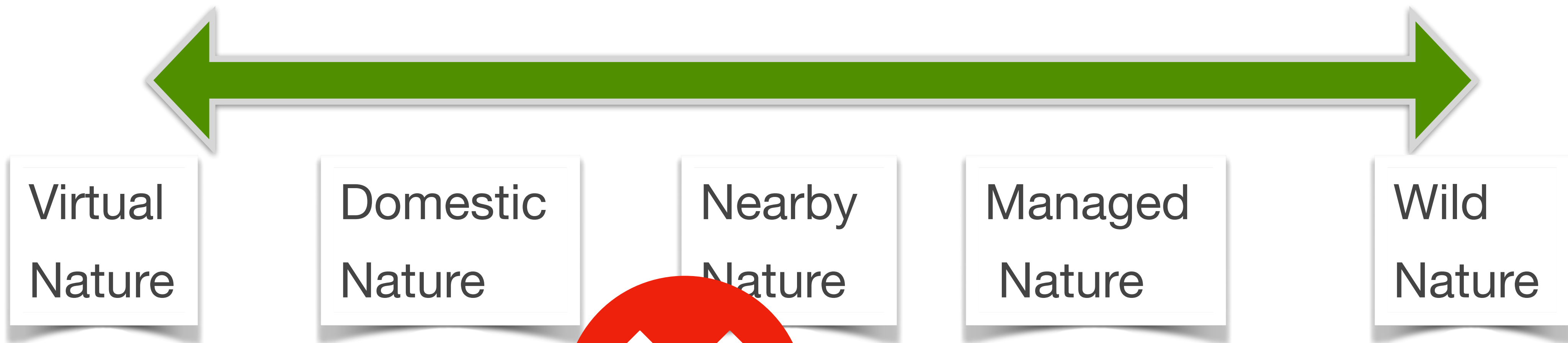
A Spectrum of “Nature” and Restorative Benefits

“From Nearby Nature to Wilderness”



A Spectrum of “Nature” and Restorative Benefits

“From Nearby Nature to Wilderness”



**Address Access and
Environmental Justice Issues**



Research on Restorative Nature

- Green window views in hospitals aid recovery (Ulrich, 1984) —> Healing Gardens —> Horticultural Therapy
- Greenery in neighborhoods improve mood and lower stress / Outdoor green spaces improve ADHD issues in children



- 
- Aesthetic Experience
 - Diminutive
 - Deep Flow
 - Restorative-Familiar
 - Restorative-Compatible

Transcendent Experiences In Nature

Words for Nature Connection Around the World

- **Autosustentabilidad** (Spanish) – The ability to maintain something sustained by its own means, regardless of external means.
- ***Buen Vivir*** (*Quichua*) Attainment of the "good life" within a community that includes Nature.
- ***Friluftsliv*** (Norwegian)- “Free air life,” a way of life that is spent exploring and appreciating nature
- ***Hozho*** (Navaho) loosely translated as peace, balance, beauty and harmony.
- **Smultronstralle** (Sweden) “strawberry patch” a personal nature retreat place
- ***Tangata whenua*** (Maori) “people of the land” - Humans are born of the earth and achieve fulfillment when the earth speaks through the human community

Nature and LGBTQ+ Identity

- **Non-judgment:** Nature Is Welcoming
- **Validation:** Nature Is Queer
- **Exploration:** Nature Is Full of Nongendered Possibility
- **Vulnerability:** Nature Also Attracts Humans With Cissexist and Heterosexist Biases
- **Representation:** We Belong in Nature
- **Justice:** Environmental Issues Are Social Issues.



Meta-Coping Questions

“What do I do when being out in nature itself becomes a trigger for grief and stress?”

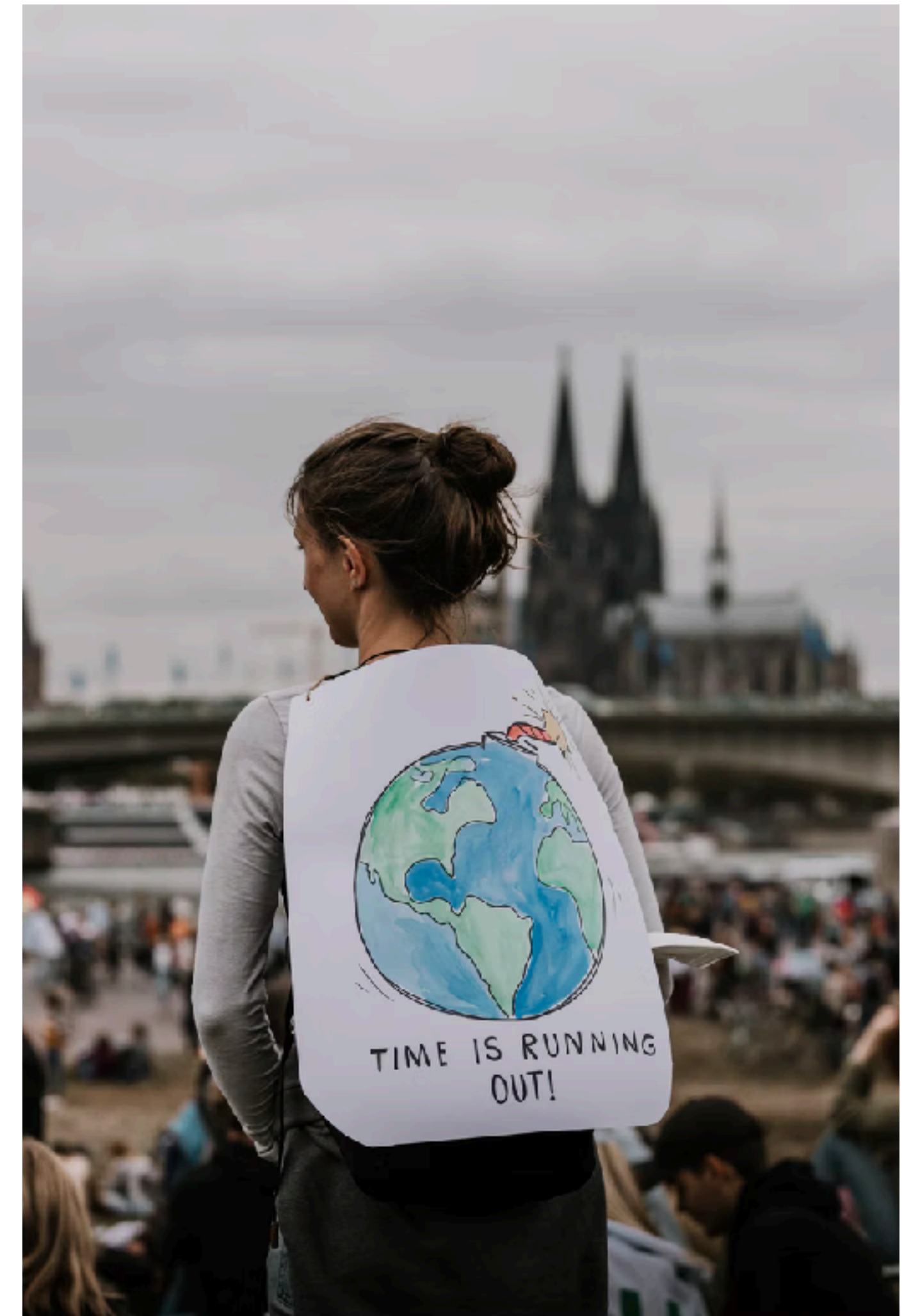
“Can you see this issue as a threshold to move through versus a barrier?”

“Can you have compassion for the landscape, and yourself, and risk re-committing to connection?”

Eco-Distress

Eco-Distress: Issue Frame

- Consciousness Raising “Waking up Syndrome”
- Disaster Victims / Trauma Survivors
- Pre-existing Mental Health Issues
- New and Prospective Parents, Grandparents
- “Climate Workers”:
 - Public Health / Medical / Safety Professionals
 - Social and Environmental Activists
 - Conservation Scientists, Researchers, Journalists
- Career Change / Life Transition



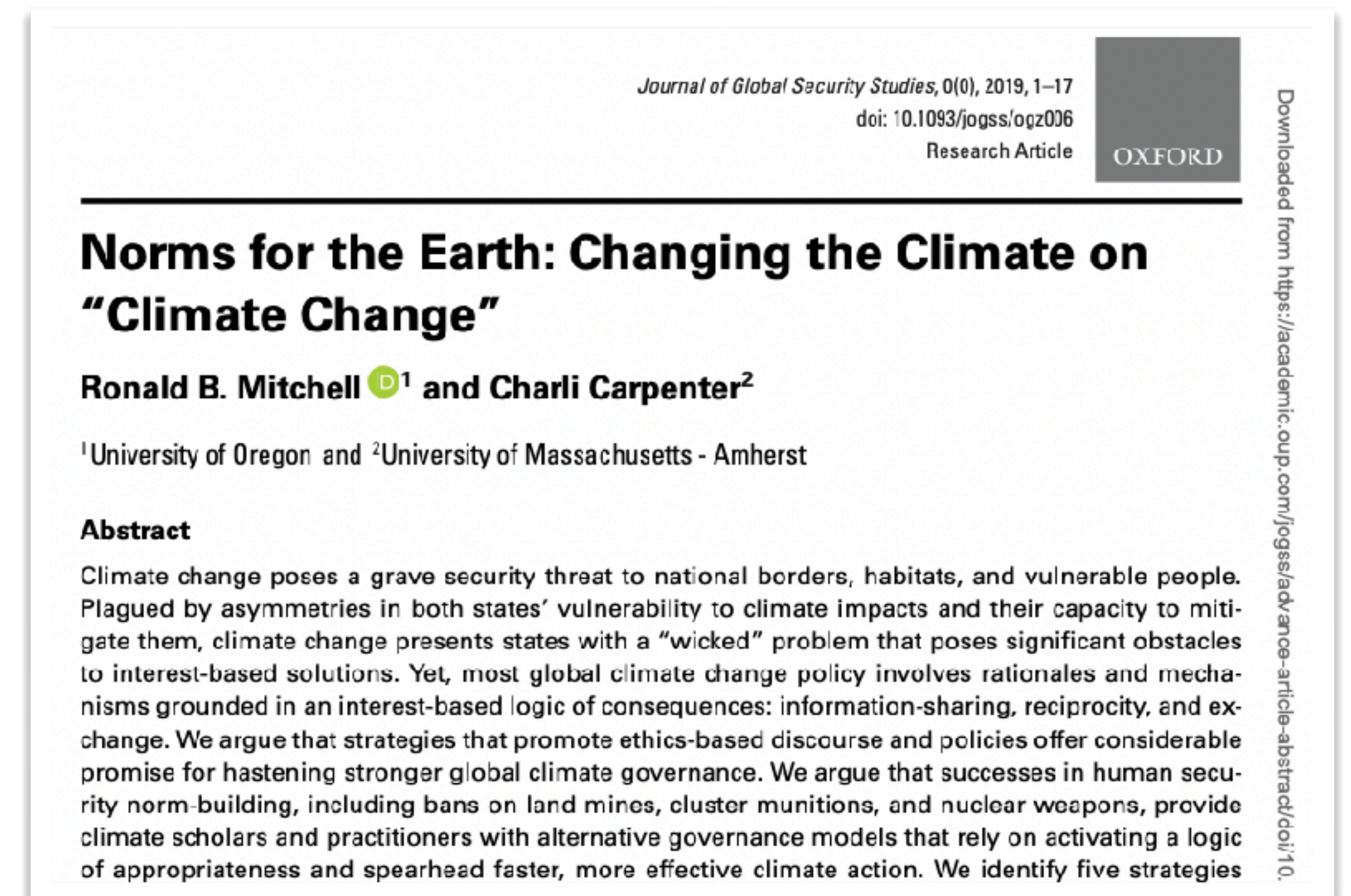
Eco Distress: Developmental Frame

- Children (Developmental anxieties, temperament, precocious learners, negative experiences)
- Adolescent (Student, High Functioning, Other Identity or Developmental Stressors)
- Young Adult (Immersed in activism, forming new identity, separating from family)
- New or Prospective Parents (Child bearing choices, concerns for children, fatigue, life changes)
- Eco or Conservation Professionals (Life-work balance, relationships, cognitive style, fatigue / burnout)
- Elders (Health and mortality concerns, family relations, despair or failure thinking)



A Logic of Self Interest vs. A Logic of Appropriateness

- People act in self interest or reciprocity (I'll do something if it's in my best interest, or if you do it too)
- Some things are always off limits. I will do the right thing, despite benefits or if others follow suit.



Politics and Eco-Anxiety

Fossil Fuel Industry “Public Relations” and Disinformation

Volume 4, Issue 5, 21 May 2021, Pages 696-719

Article

Rhetoric and frame analysis of ExxonMobil's climate change communications

Geoffrey Supran ^{1, 2}  , Naomi Oreskes ¹


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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2021.04.014>

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Highlights

- ExxonMobil's public climate change messaging mimics tobacco industry propaganda
- Rhetoric of climate “risk” downplays the reality and seriousness of climate change
- Rhetoric of consumer “demand” (versus fossil fuel supply) individualizes responsibility
- Fossil Fuel Savior frame uses “risk” and “demand” to justify fossil fuels, blame customers

Fossil Fuel Public Relations (Propaganda)

- Knowledge of GCC risks as early as 1950's, concerted campaign in the 1980's. Basic tropes:
- Climate disruption framed as “**risks**” rather than a present-day emergency
- Shifting the problem to **individuals** with a “we are all to blame” narrative supported by personal **carbon footprint** imagery
- Rationalizing fossil fuel use as reasonable and **inevitable** despite evidence of the need for rapid decarbonization to avoid severe climate disruption

Downward Spiral: Psychological Challenges of Climate Change Era

Fossil Fuel Industry Propaganda

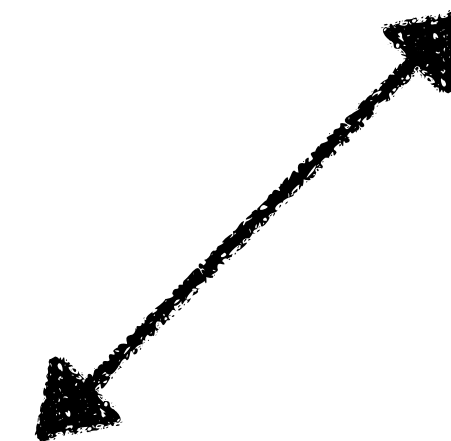
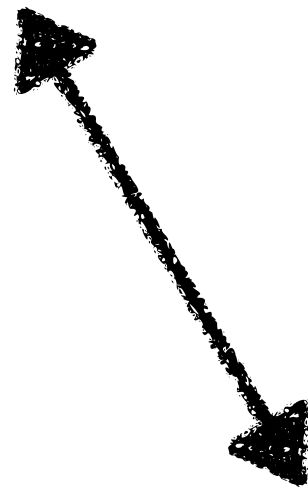
- Denial / Confusion about GCC
- Fossil Fuel Inevitability Myth
- Personal Responsibility Myth

(-) Cognitive Scripts

- Society is doomed
- I am not Doing Enough
- I am a Bad Person

Stressors / Media

- Mental Health Impacts
- Personal Context
- Media Use



Being a “Climate Hostage”

Thomas Doherty Works at the Intersection of Psychology and Environmental Science

By Della O'Hara June 7, 2018

Clinical psychologist **Thomas Doherty** has coined a term — “climate hostages” — to describe people who feel the urgency of the climate change crisis but must cope with denial of the phenomenon among segments of the population.

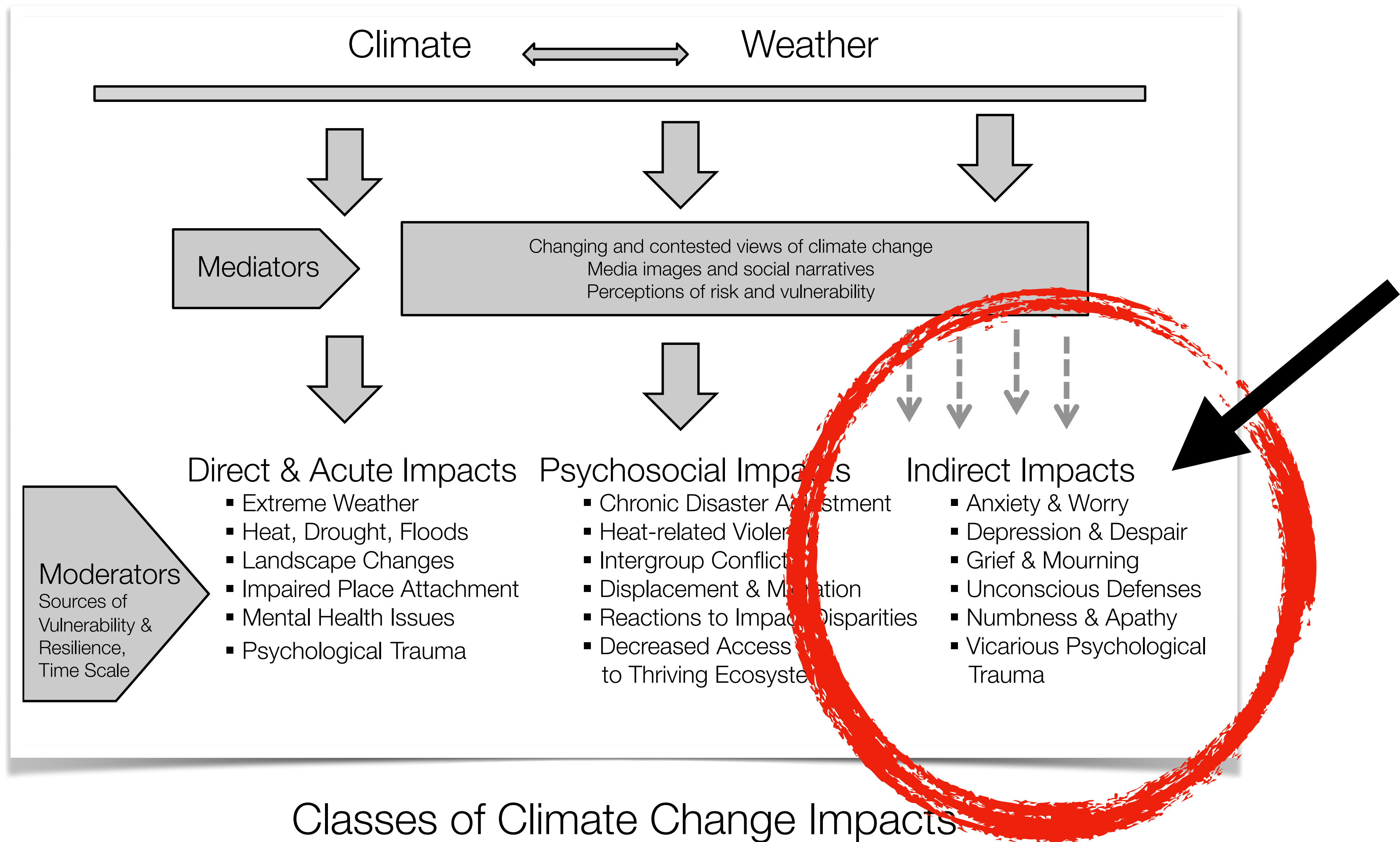


See Amy Westervelt and <https://www.drillednews.com/>

Eco-anxiety

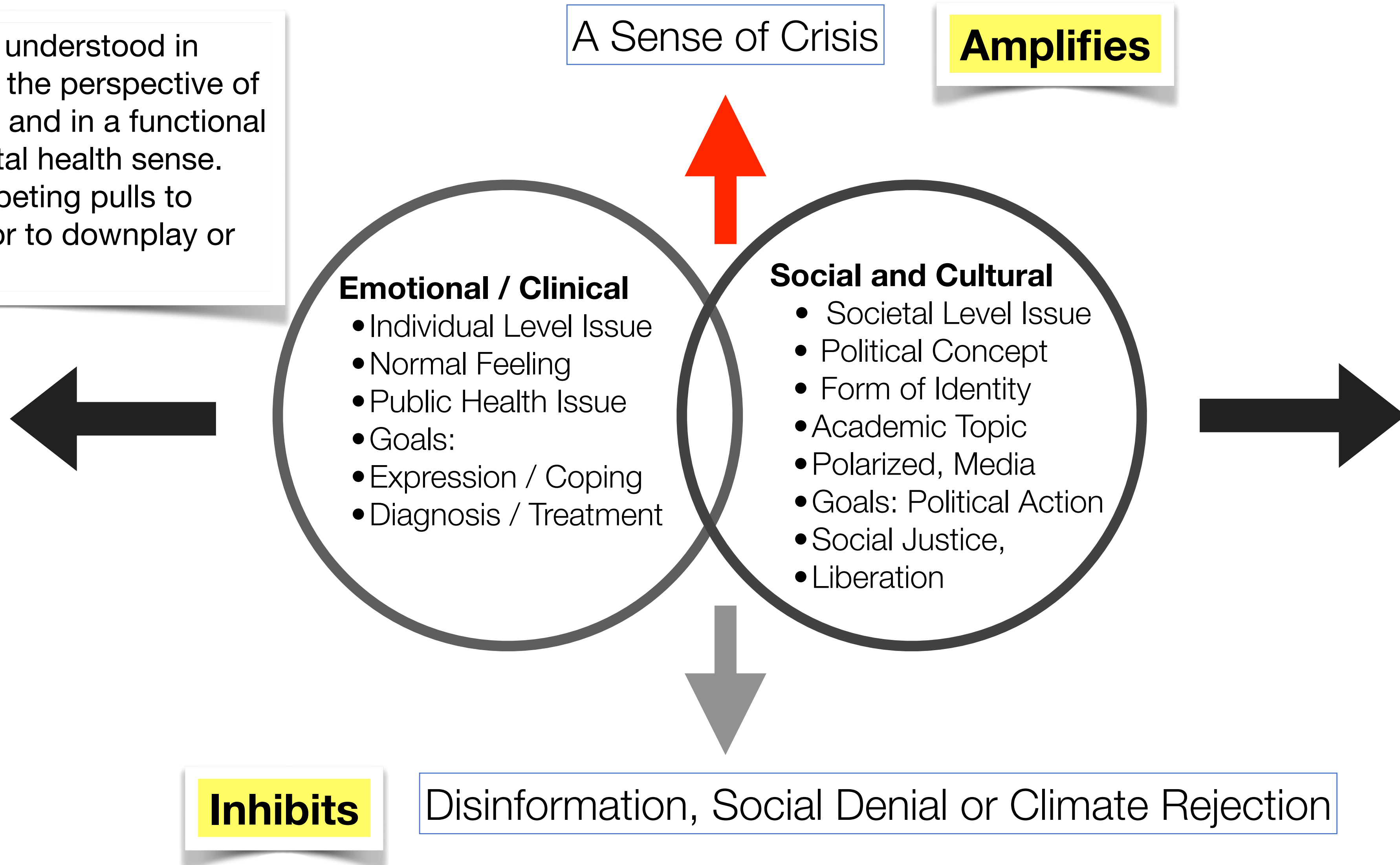
- Media / pop cultural term first noticed around 2007
- First used in association with fears about endocrine disrupting chemicals
- Not a medical or diagnostic term
- Earlier research on “Environmental Anxiety” looked at stress reactions related to chemical exposures and pesticides
- Eco-anxiety has grown to encompass a number of environmental and climate change concerns





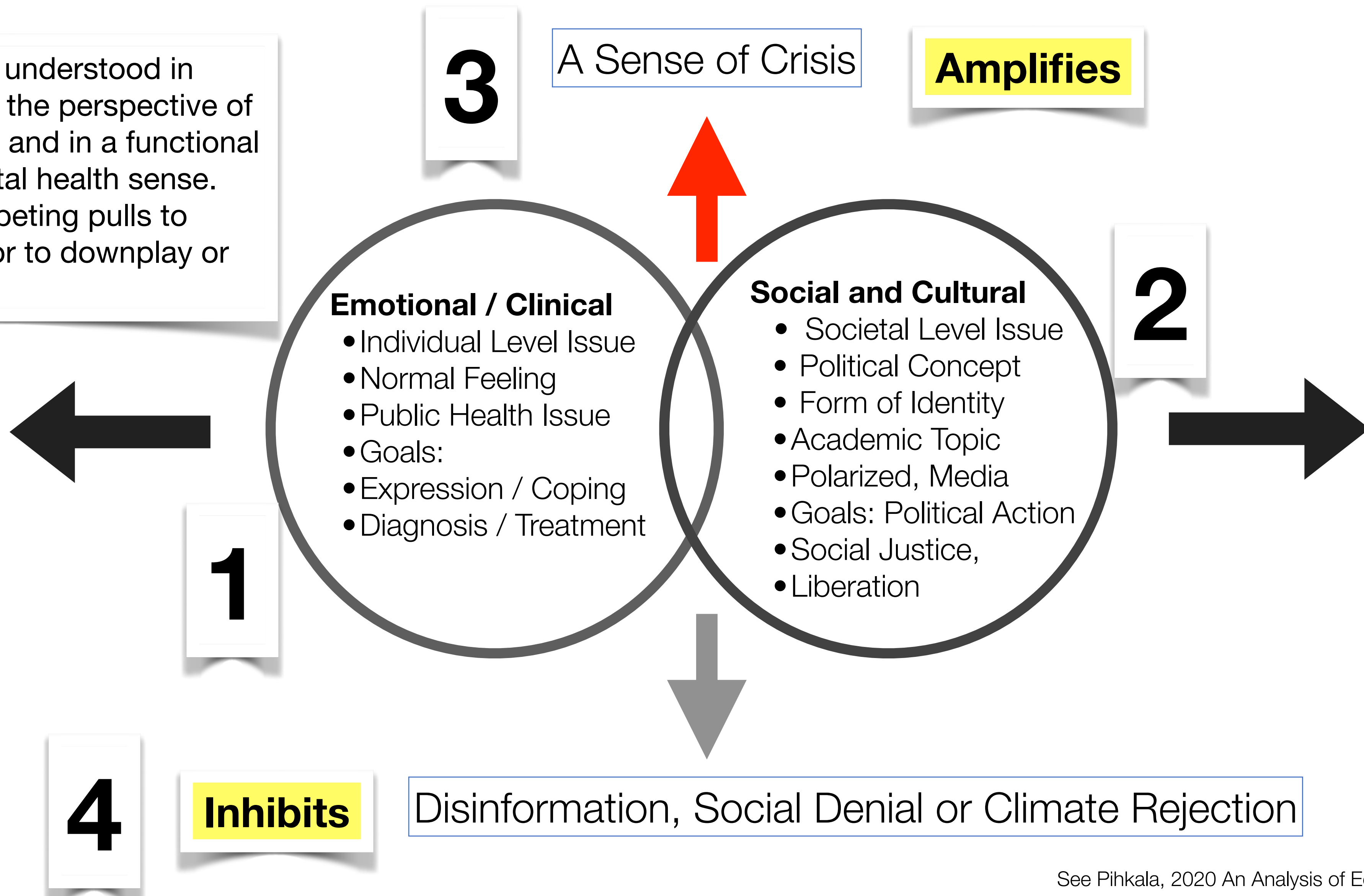
Challenges Defining Eco-Anxiety

Eco-anxiety can be understood in multiple ways, from the perspective of society and culture, and in a functional emotional and mental health sense. There are also competing pulls to highlight the issue or to downplay or minimize it.



Challenges Defining Eco-Anxiety

Eco-anxiety can be understood in multiple ways, from the perspective of society and culture, and in a functional emotional and mental health sense. There are also competing pulls to highlight the issue or to downplay or minimize it.



Diagnosing Eco-Disorders

Basic Diagnostic Approach

Normal emotions about environmental stressors; minimal interference in daily functioning; efforts at coping and adjustment	No Diagnosis
Strong or excessive reaction to environmental stressors; impaired coping; significant interference with social, occupational or educational functioning	Consider Adjustment Disorder, and Subtypes
Clear diagnostic syndrome; Symptoms of anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive, or trauma disorders; significant impairment; Presence of co-occurring disorders	Diagnose as Appropriate

Diagnostic considerations using ICD-10 and DSM-5

- **Adjustment Disorders**
- **Disaster-related and Vicarious Trauma**
- **Anxiety & Depression**
- **Co-Occuring Disorders**
- **Risk Factors, Temperament, Culture**

Delphina

- Veterinary Science and Medicine Student
- Chicago, Greek Family
- Studying PFAS “Forever Chemicals” in the Great Lakes
- Guilty about personal impacts
- Seasonal mood issues, high standards, sleep problems
- Dreads sharing concerns about having children with her parents



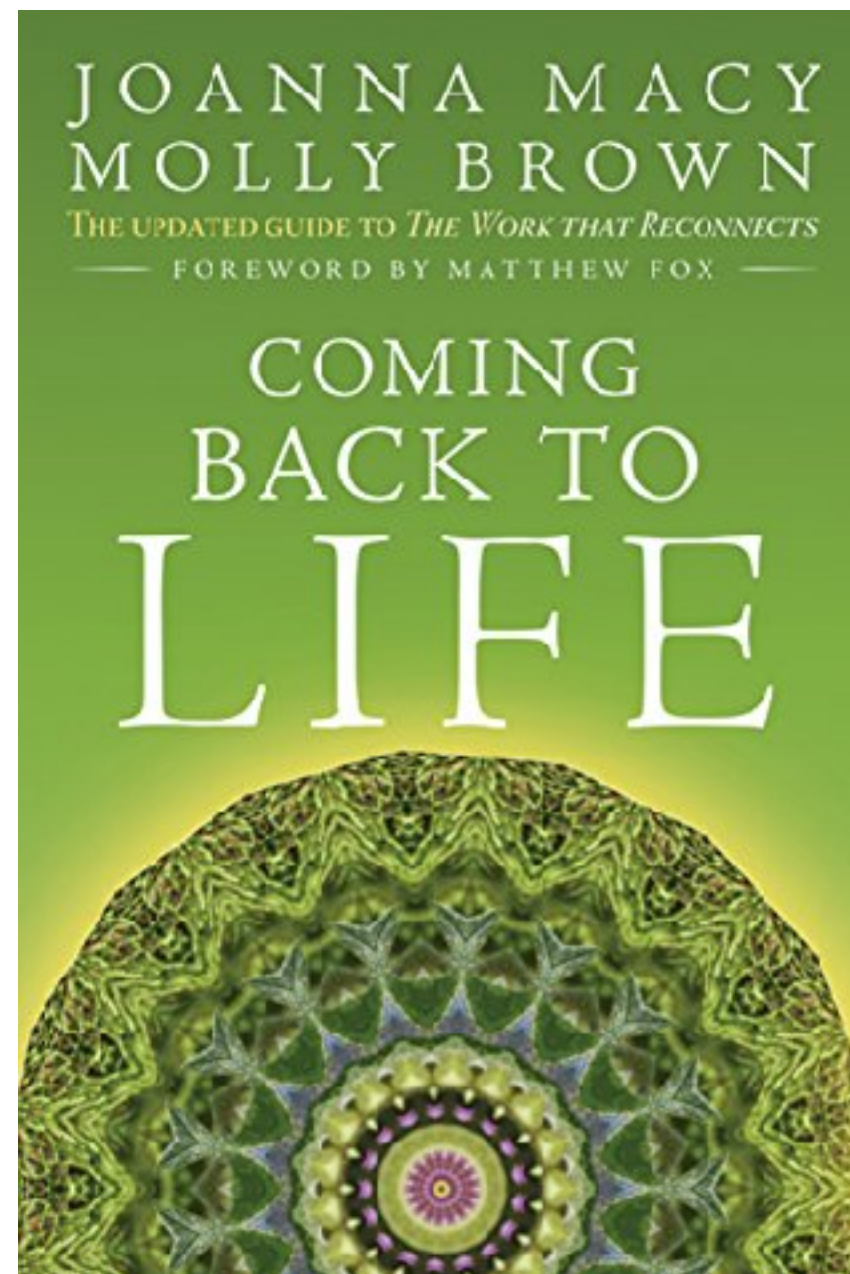
Supporting Positive and Negative Emotions



Despair and Empowerment
vs.
Broaden and Build

Toggling Between
Despair Work ...

Macy's "The Work that Reconnects"



"Of all the dangers
we face, from climate
chaos to nuclear war,
none is so great as the
deadening of our
response."

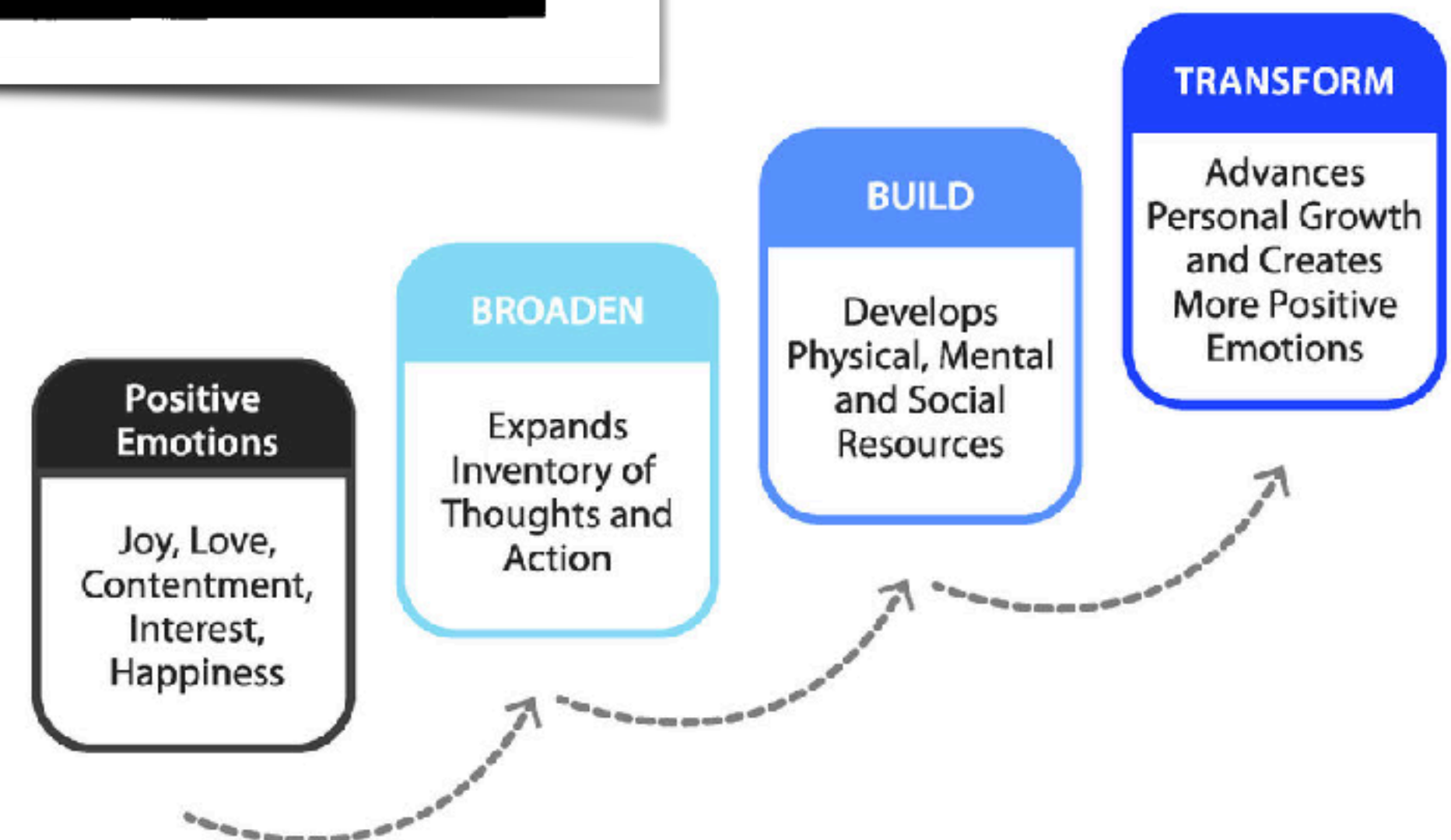
...and Broaden
and Build

Fredrickson's "Broaden & Build Theory"

The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology

The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions

Barbara L. Fredrickson
University of Michigan



Cognitive Scripts Underlying Climate Guilt

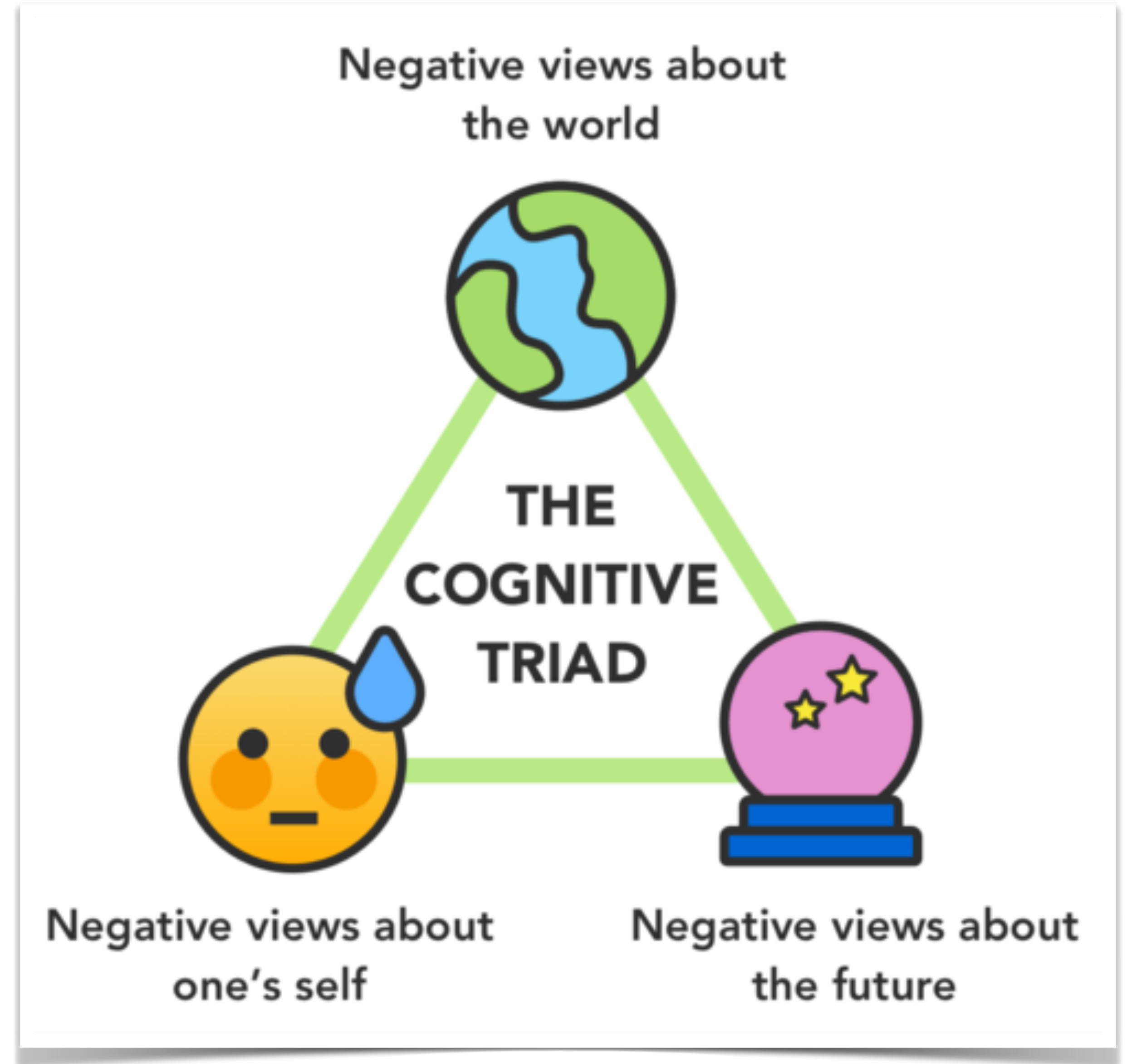
Cognitive Scripts #1

1. The world is beset with ecological problems and environmental injustices.
2. I am personally responsible to act (e.g., adopt a sustainable lifestyle, become politically active).
3. My pro-environmental actions are inadequate or non-existent (Risk factors: self-judgement, perfectionism).
4. I feel guilty and ashamed. I am a bad person.
5. Worsening eco-issues increase my sense of failure (Risk factor: habitual exposure to electronic media and news).
6. I try to avoid environmental problems, but each new crisis fuels a negative mood cycle.
7. I have a sense of hopelessness and burnout.

Cognitive Script #2

1. Government and industry have created systems that drive climate change and other environmental issues.
2. I am embedded in these systems that I did not design and have limited ability to change; I can recognize and accept my limits of control.
3. Economic policies and marketing continue to promote constant growth and consumerism despite evidence of climate crisis; I validate my concerns.
4. Fossil fuel propaganda promotes a “we are all to blame” narrative about climate change that diverts from industry responsibility: I call these issues out.
5. Just because I care about climate change, it does not mean it is my fault.
6. I can educate myself about climate change and act according to my values.
7. I can seek support and shared meaning with others who care about these issues.

Cognitive Triad



Climate and Environmental Grief



Troubled feelings about past, current, or future losses associated with climate change and disruptions. Losses can be personal or global, tangible or symbolic, concerning our lifestyle, our comforts, as well as places and other species ...

Loss and Climate Change: The Cost of Parallel Narratives

Rosemary Randall

Director, Cambridge Carbon Footprint, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

(Climate Outreach Information Network www.coinet.org.uk) have been influential in persuading both activists and government to adopt techniques from social marketing, to examine their image and communication style and to match their message to the concerns and aspirations of their audiences. Despite this, news from

Randall Applies Worden’s Tasks Model to Eco-Grief

Table 1. The Tasks of Grief		
	THE TASK	POSSIBLE NEGATIVE RESPONSES
1	Accepting the reality of the loss, first intellectually and then emotionally	Denial of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• facts of the loss;• meaning of the loss;• irreversibility of the loss.
2	Working through the painful emotions of grief (despair, fear, guilt, anger, shame, sadness, yearning, disorganization)	Shutting off all emotion, idealizing what is lost, bargaining, numbing the pain through alcohol, drugs, or manic activity
3	Adjusting to the new environment/acquiring new skills/developing a new sense of self	Not adapting, becoming helpless, bitter, angry, depressed, withdrawing
4	Reinvesting emotional energy	Refusing to love, turning away from life
Source: Adapted from Worden (1983).		

See also: Cunsolo, (2017) *A. Mourning Nature: Hope at the Heart of Ecological Loss and Grief*

Dual Process Models for Bereavement Adapted to Environmental Grief

THE DUAL PROCESS MODEL OF COPING WITH BEREAVEMENT: RATIONALE AND DESCRIPTION

MARGARET STROEBE and HENK SCHUT

Utrecht University, The Netherlands

There are shortcomings in traditional theorizing about effective ways of coping with bereavement, most notably, with respect to the so-called "grief work hypothesis." Criticisms include imprecise definition, failure to represent dynamic processing that is characteristic of grieving, lack of empirical evidence and validation across cultures and historical periods, and a limited focus on intrapersonal processes and on health outcomes. Therefore, a revised model of coping with bereavement, the dual process model, is proposed. This model identifies two types of stressors, loss- and restoration-oriented, and a dynamic, regulatory coping process of oscillation, whereby the grieving individual at times confronts, at other times avoids, the different tasks of grieving. This model proposes that adaptive coping is composed of confrontation avoidance of loss and restoration stressors. It also argues the need for dosage of grieving, that is, the need to take respite from dealing with either of these stressors, as an integral part of adaptive coping. Empirical research to support this conceptualization is discussed, and the model's relevance to the examination of complicated grief, analysis of subgroup phenomena, as well as interpersonal coping processes, is described.

See also Panu's article:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200402-climate-grief-mourning-loss-due-to-climate-change?ocid=ww.social.link.email>



Figure 1. The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 1999)

Grief Map

What We Will lose

“Lost Possible Self”

What We Stand to Lose

Future Losses

Threats

End of Life / Hospice

Rapid Changes

Present Losses

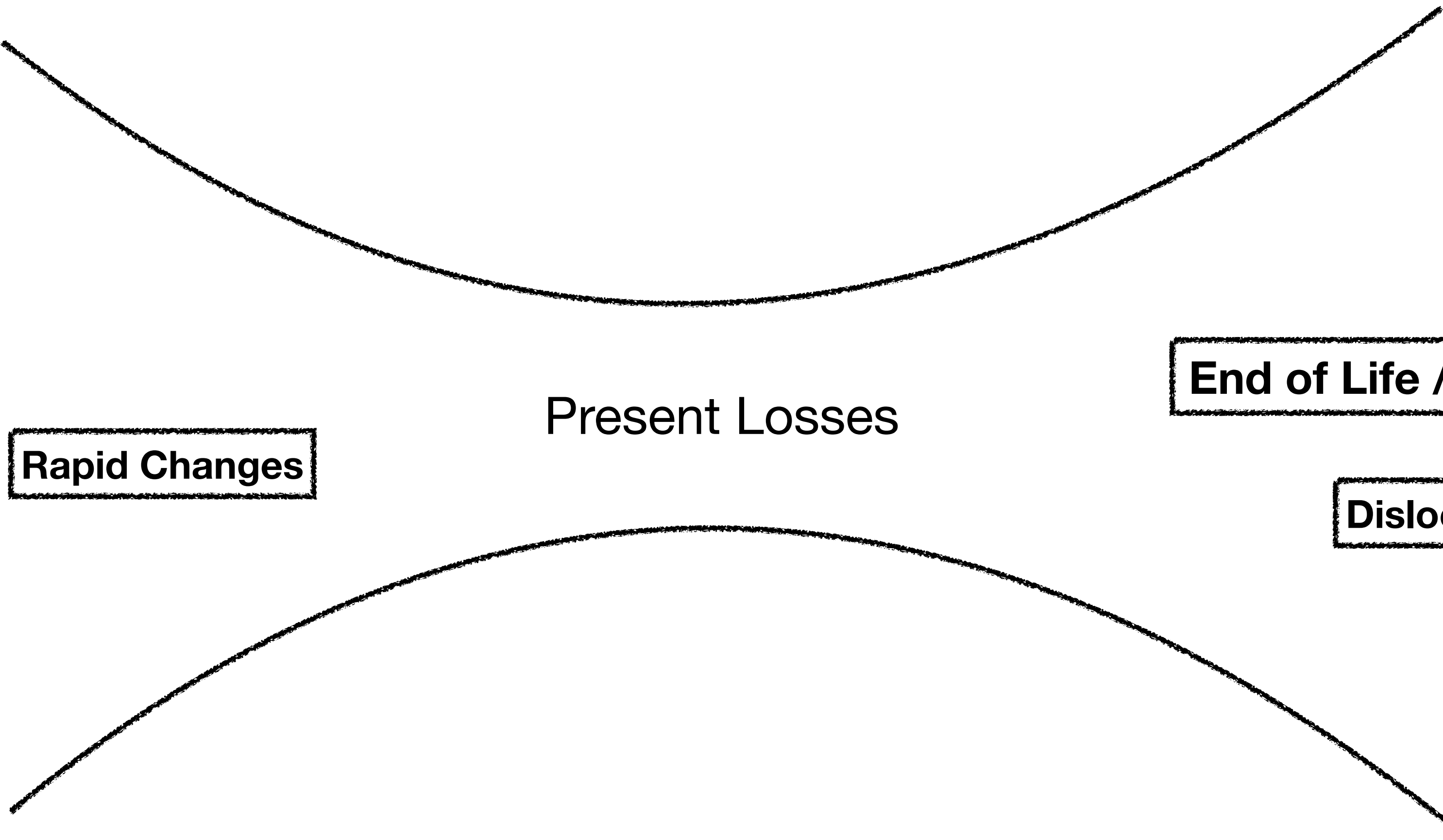
Extinctions

Dislocation / Solatalgia

Gone But Not Forgotten

Past Losses

Memorial / Living in the Spirit of



Rituals of Mourning

- “Grief is a Feeling,
Mourning is an Action”

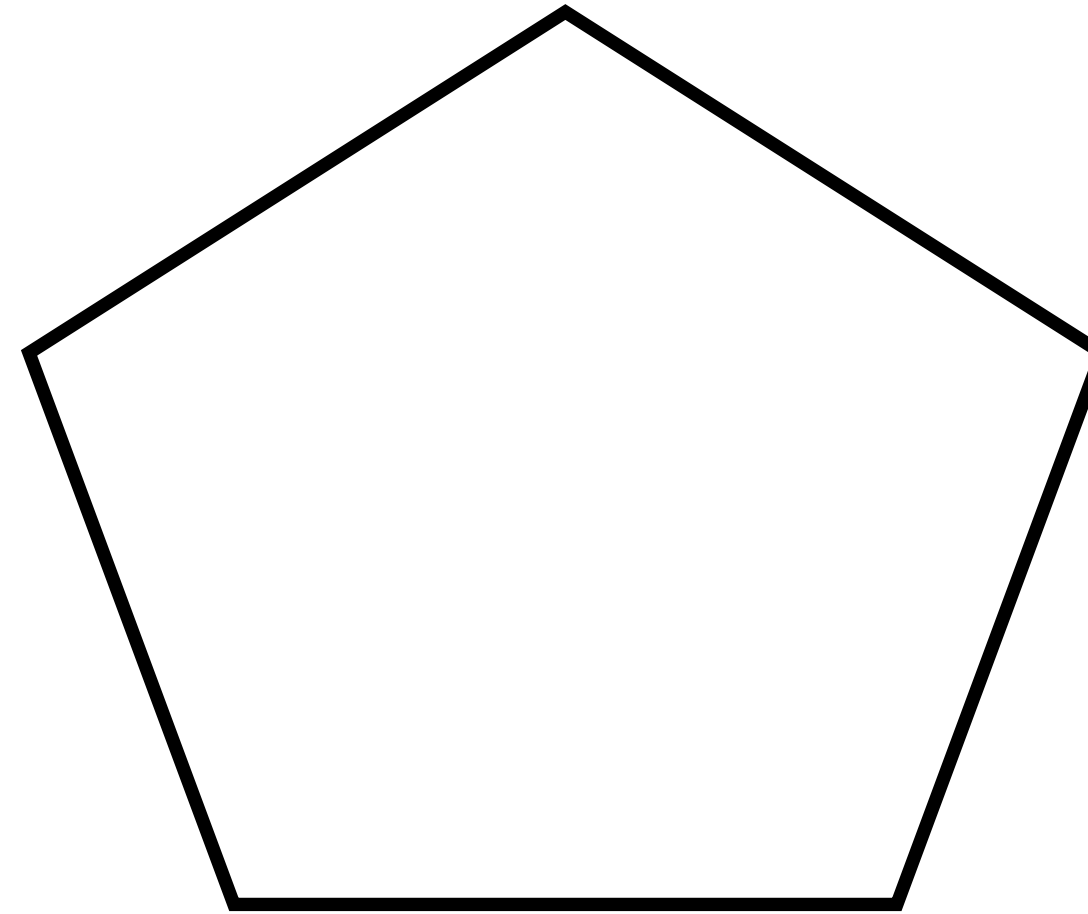
- _____
- _____
- _____



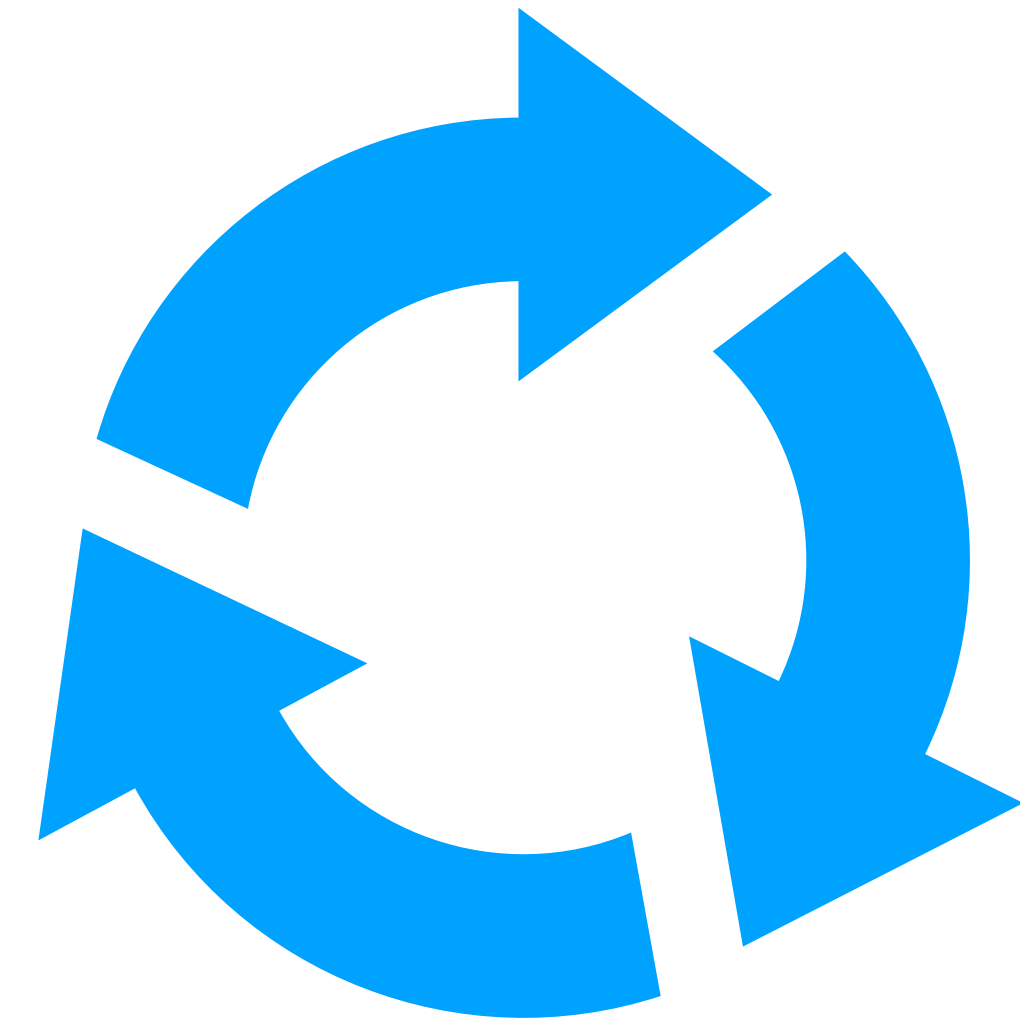
Environmental Identity Based Therapies

Modularity: Add Eco ID Tools + Therapy

Therapy Technique



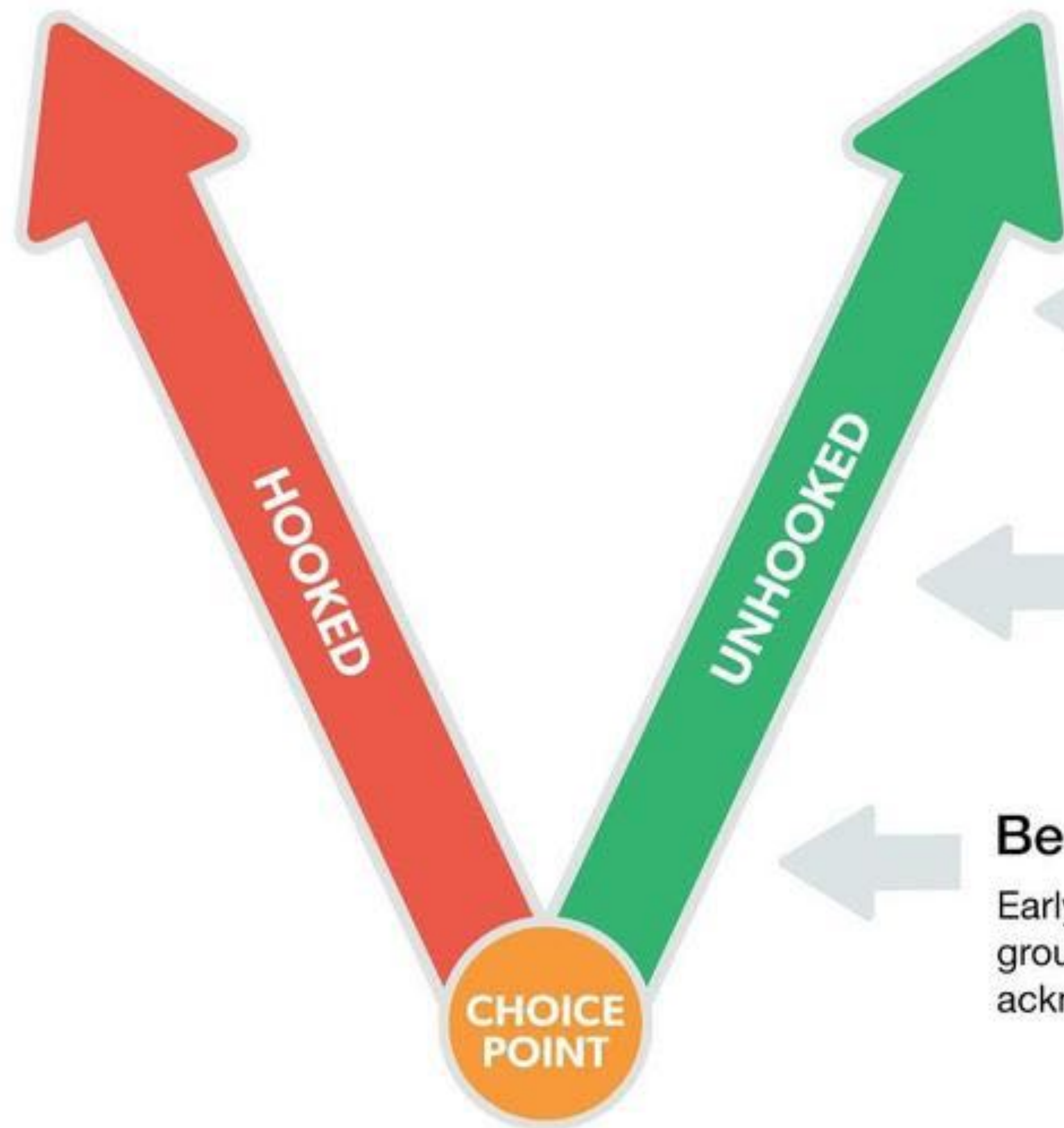
Environmental Identity Tool



ACT Choice Point Example

AWAY

TOWARDS



Do what matters

Connecting with values facilitates unhooking, and vice-versa. Values then guide subsequent action.

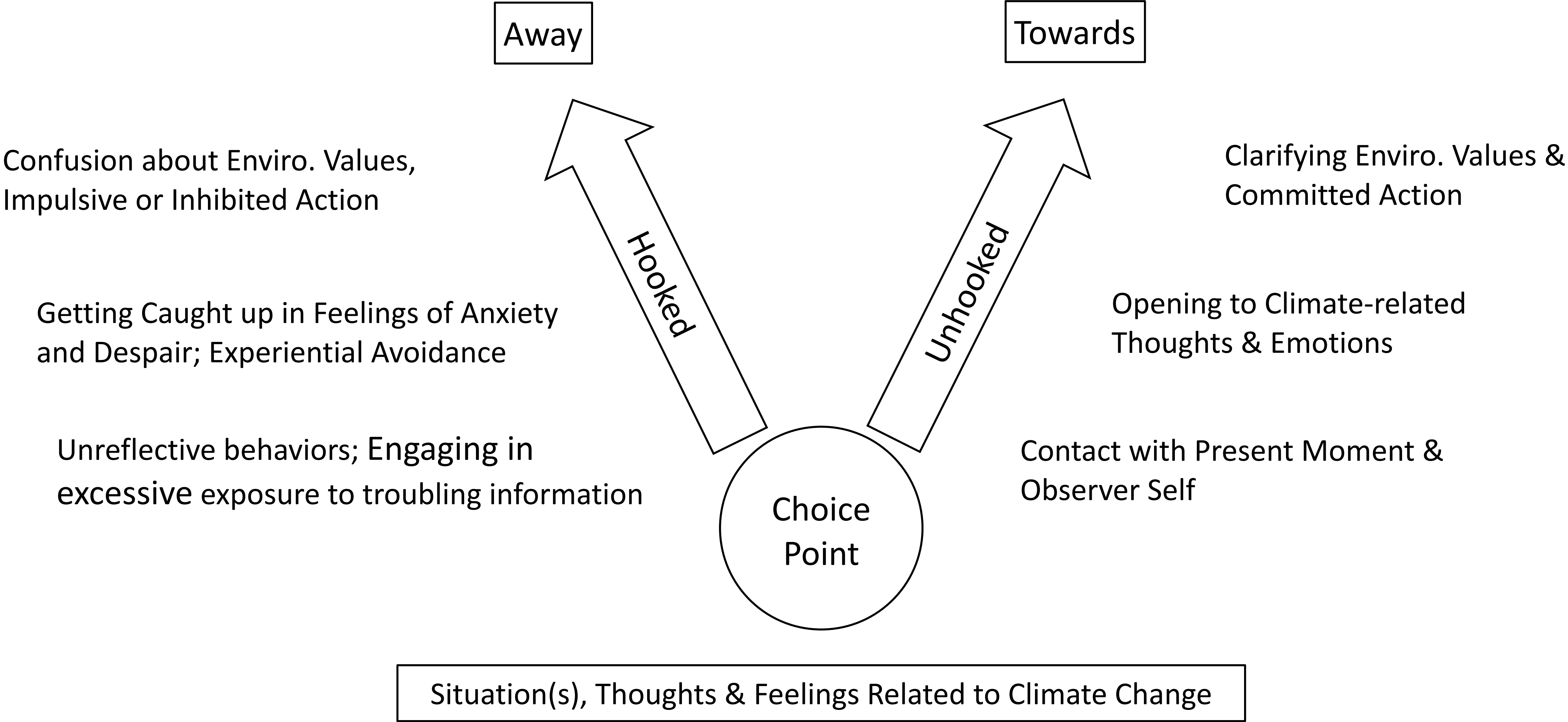
Open up

Later steps in unhooking often include active use of defusion, acceptance and self-compassion skills.

Be present

Early steps in unhooking often include grounding & centering, noticing, naming and acknowledging the thoughts & feelings present.

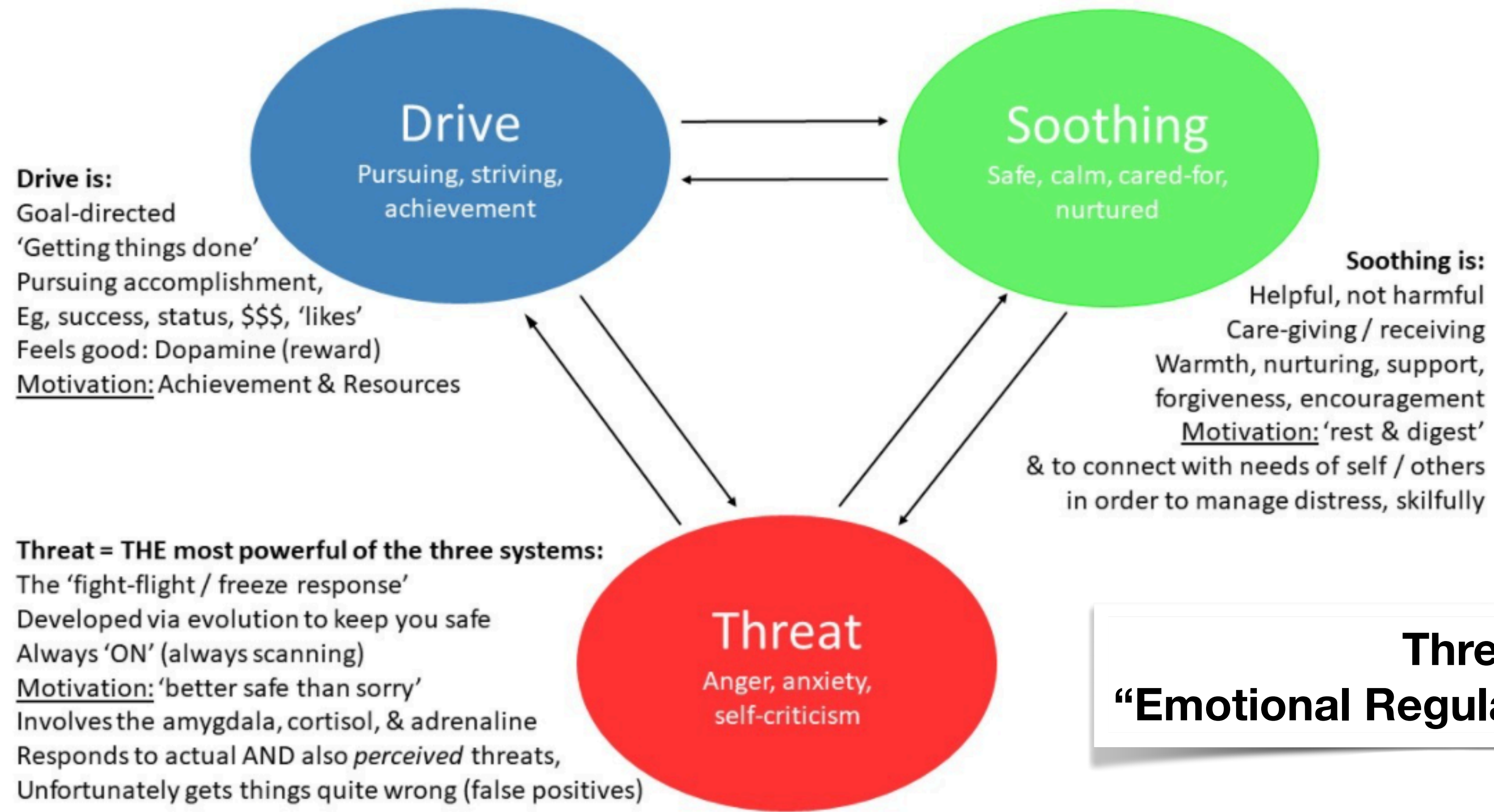
Adapting the ACT Choice Point Tool in a Climate Change Context



Adapted from [Harris, 2017](#)

Compassion-Focused Therapy

Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT)



**Three
“Emotional Regulation Systems”**

Adapted from Gilbert, P (ed) (2005). *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

“Threat-based Drive”

Describes Climate Coping Issues

Failure Triggers THREAT via self-criticism

- When faced with Threat, people often overlook their Soothing system (*in grey*)
- Instead, the common solution is to use the Drive System to distract from - or avoid - the threat (“do more, be more, earn more, achieve more” etc...)
- However, when we fail at this (*which we eventually will, because no one can achieve perfection 100% of the time and some things are simply out of our control*), this failure to achieve once again triggers THREAT (e.g., we attack ourselves for failing)
- Most people are stuck in a ‘ping-pong’ between their Threat and Drive systems: Using the Drive system to escape Threat, and then attacking one’s self when one fails, which inadvertently triggers Threat (and Threat feels ‘bad’, so we return to Drive and the Threat-Drive cycle continues...)



I Practice “Environmental Identity-based Therapy.”

For me that looks like:

EI-CBT, EI-ACT, EI-EFT, EI-DBT...

Applying your Tx Model

- Psychodynamic
- Interpersonal
- Behavioral
- Cognitive
- Mindfulness

- Family Systems
- Transpersonal
- Feminist
- Critical / Liberation
- Psychedelic

- Jungian
- Gestalt
- Existential /
Humanistic
- _____
- _____

Eco-Flourishing



Healthy Relationships During the Climate Relationships

“Coming Out,” Finding your Tribe,
Exploring the Elephant...

Nature-based Stress Reduction, Adventure, Outdoor Tx



Place Visualization



Attention Restoration Theory

Kaplan S. (1995) The restorative benefits of nature - Toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15, 169-182.

Compatibility





Escape



Soft Fascination

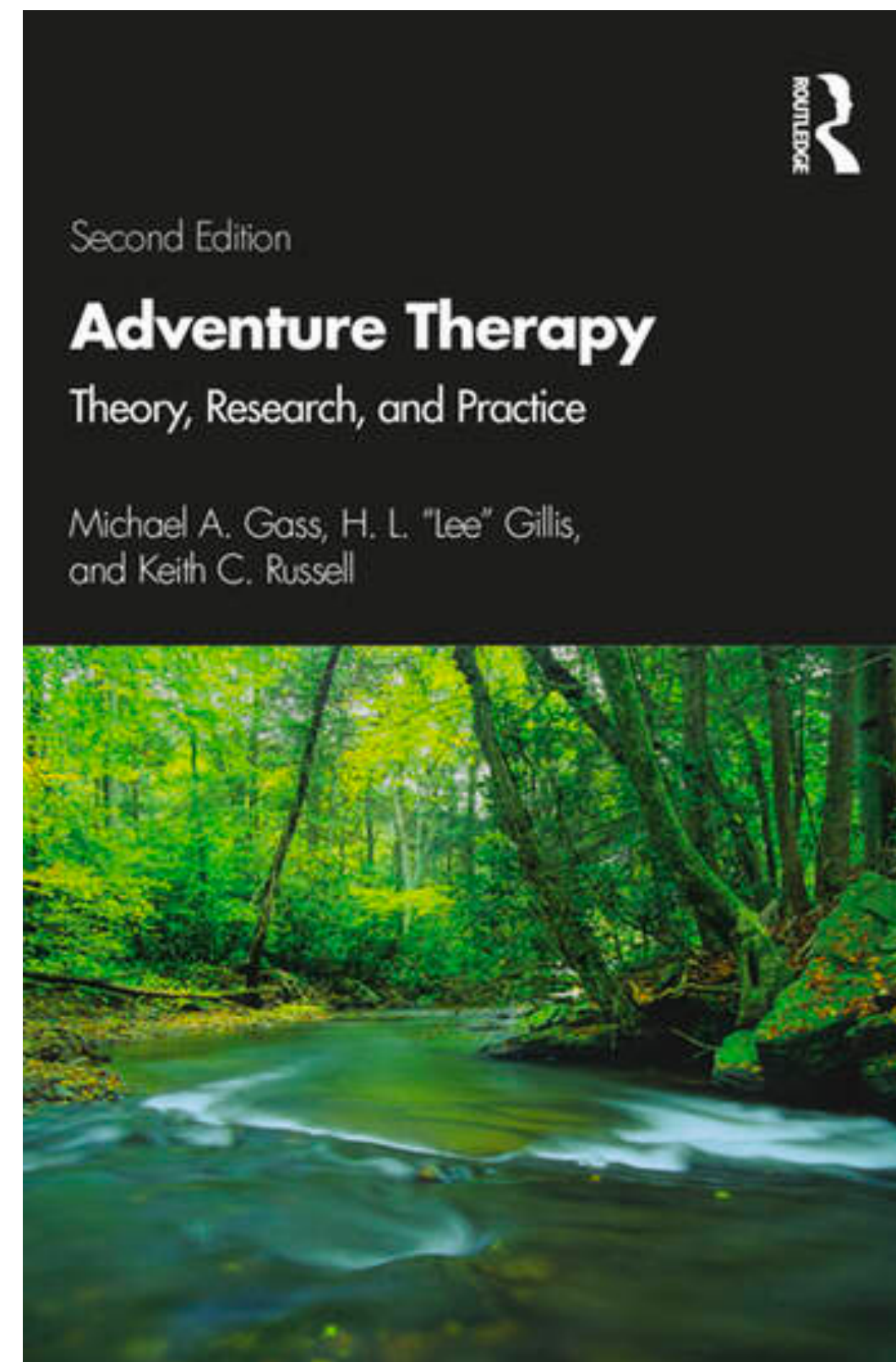
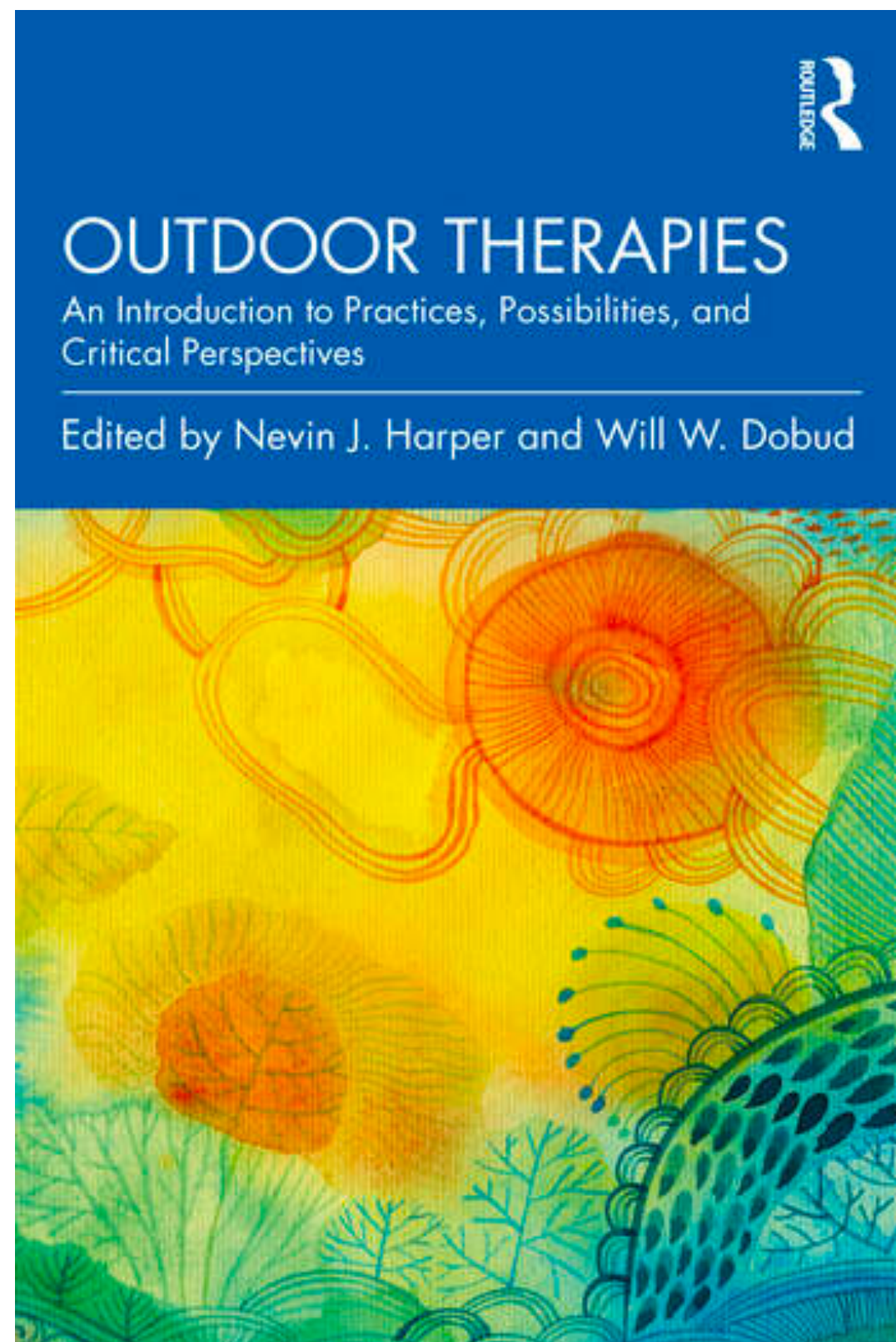
A photograph of a wooden boardwalk winding through a dense forest of large, vibrant green ferns. The path is made of light-colored wooden planks and curves gently through the foliage. The ferns are of various sizes and are very lush, filling the background and foreground. The lighting is soft, suggesting a shaded forest environment. The word "Extent" is overlaid in white text on the right side of the path.

Extent



Place Visualization

Outdoor Therapy



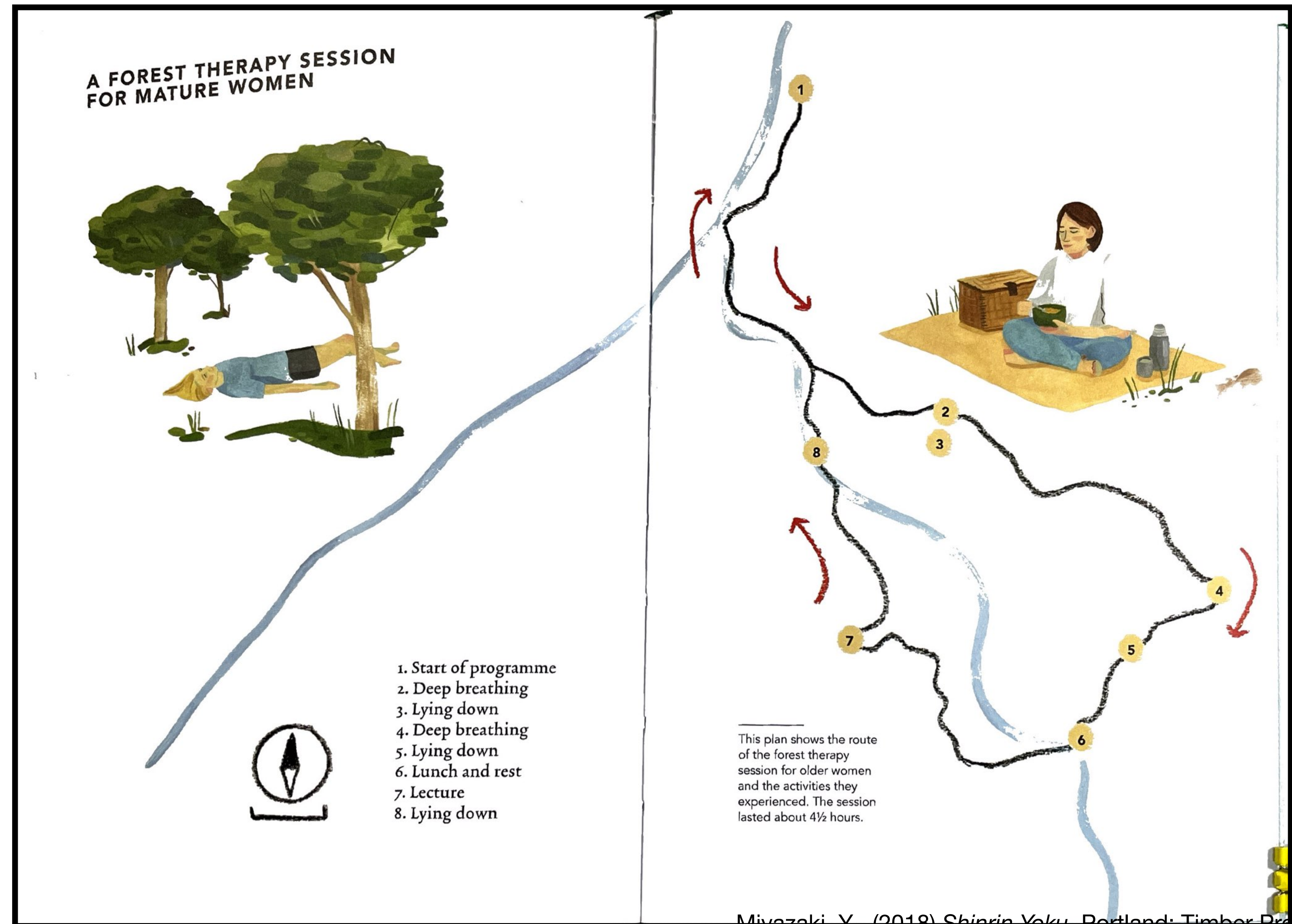
Selecting Outdoor Activities

Restorative outdoor activity is a function of (1) resources a person has vs. (2) level of challenge, and (3) the meaning it has for the person.

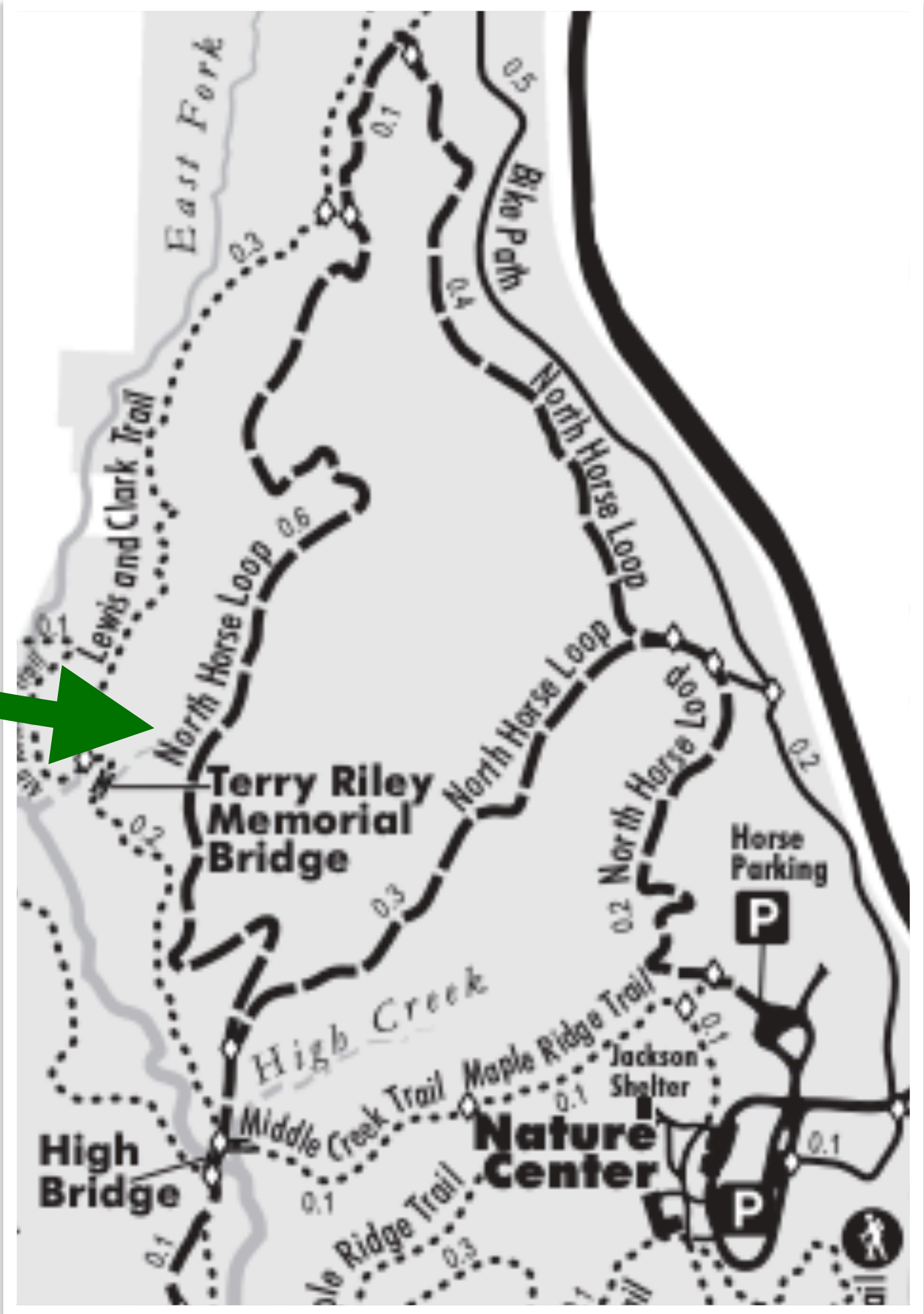
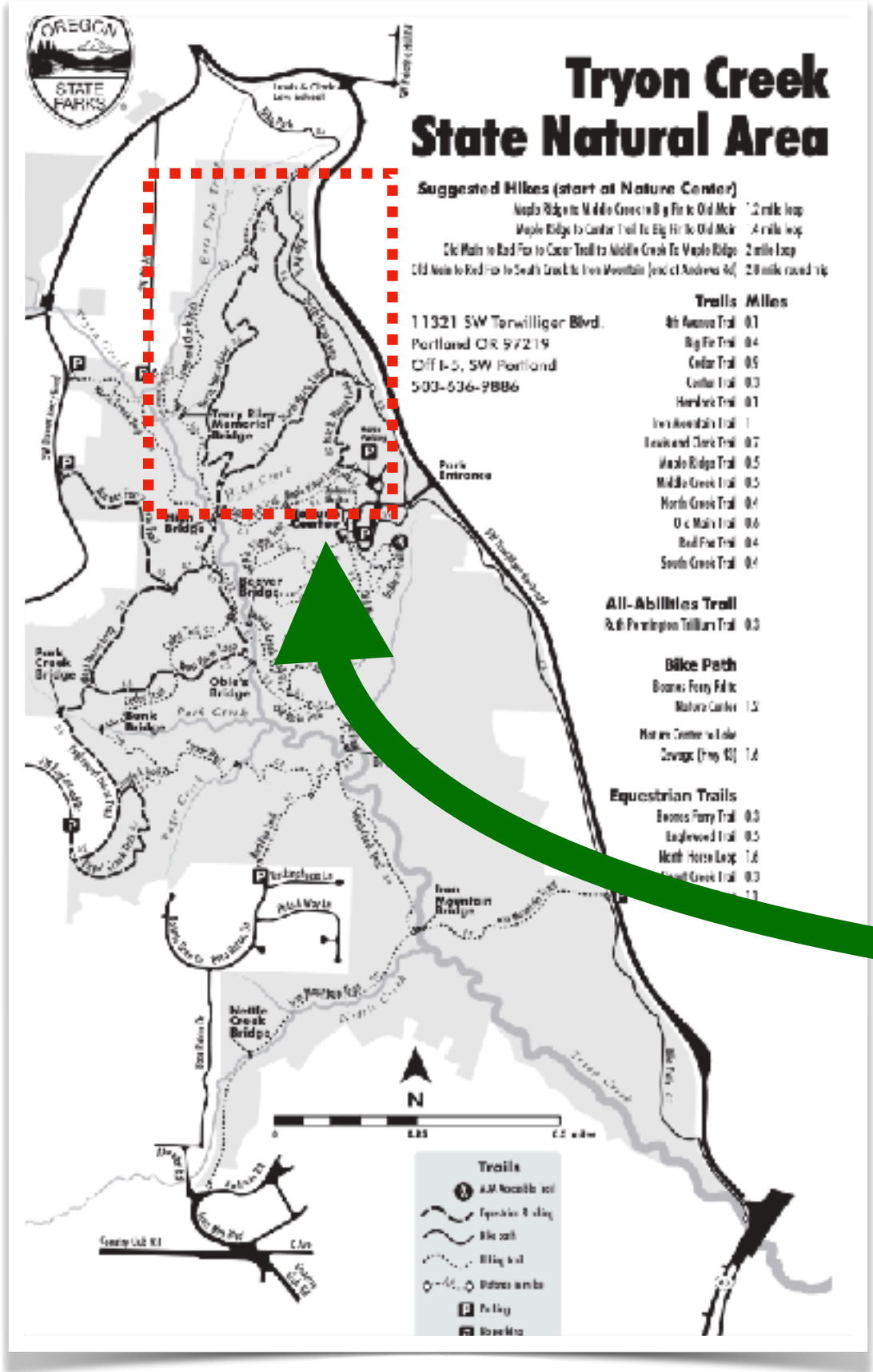
$$f: (R / C) \times M$$



Cultural Variations: Shinrin Yoku (Forest Bathing)



Thomas's Walking Tx Routes



Examples of Walking Clients

- 79 y.o. male “R” - long time outdoors person, skier, spouse w/ early dementia
- 33 y.o. female “C” - long distance hiker, crisis line supervisor, work stress, relationship,
- 42 y.o. male “B” - vigorous person, did “ecstatic dance” issues “Failure to launch,” \$ and career issues, family shame,
- 69 y.o. male “F” - Geology prof, climate advocate, Quaker, likes outdoors for “meeting in 3D space” and to “get off my butt”



The Arts and Ecotherapy

ARTS AND LETTERS

How Should Art Reckon With Climate Change?

As the environmental crisis accelerates, contemporary artists have taken up the mantle of addressing the precarious present.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/25/t-magazine/art-climate-change.html>



"Swale" (2017), by Mary Mattingly, a floating garden on a barge, with Lower Manhattan in the background. Courtesy of the artist and Cloudfactory

Poem Meditation

Watching the Jet Planes Dive

By William Stafford

We must go back and find a trail on the ground
back of the forest and mountain on the slow land;
we must begin to circle on the intricate sod.
By such wild beginnings without help we may find
the small trail on through the buffalo-bean vines.

We must go back with noses and the palms of our hands,
and climb over the map in far places, everywhere,
and lie down whenever there is doubt and sleep there.
If roads are unconnected we must make a path,
no matter how far it is, or how lowly we arrive.

We must find something forgotten by everyone alive,
and make some fabulous gesture when the sun goes down
as they do by custom in little Mexico towns
where they crawl for some ritual up a rocky steep.
The jet planes dive; we must travel on our knees.

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees

For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting —
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

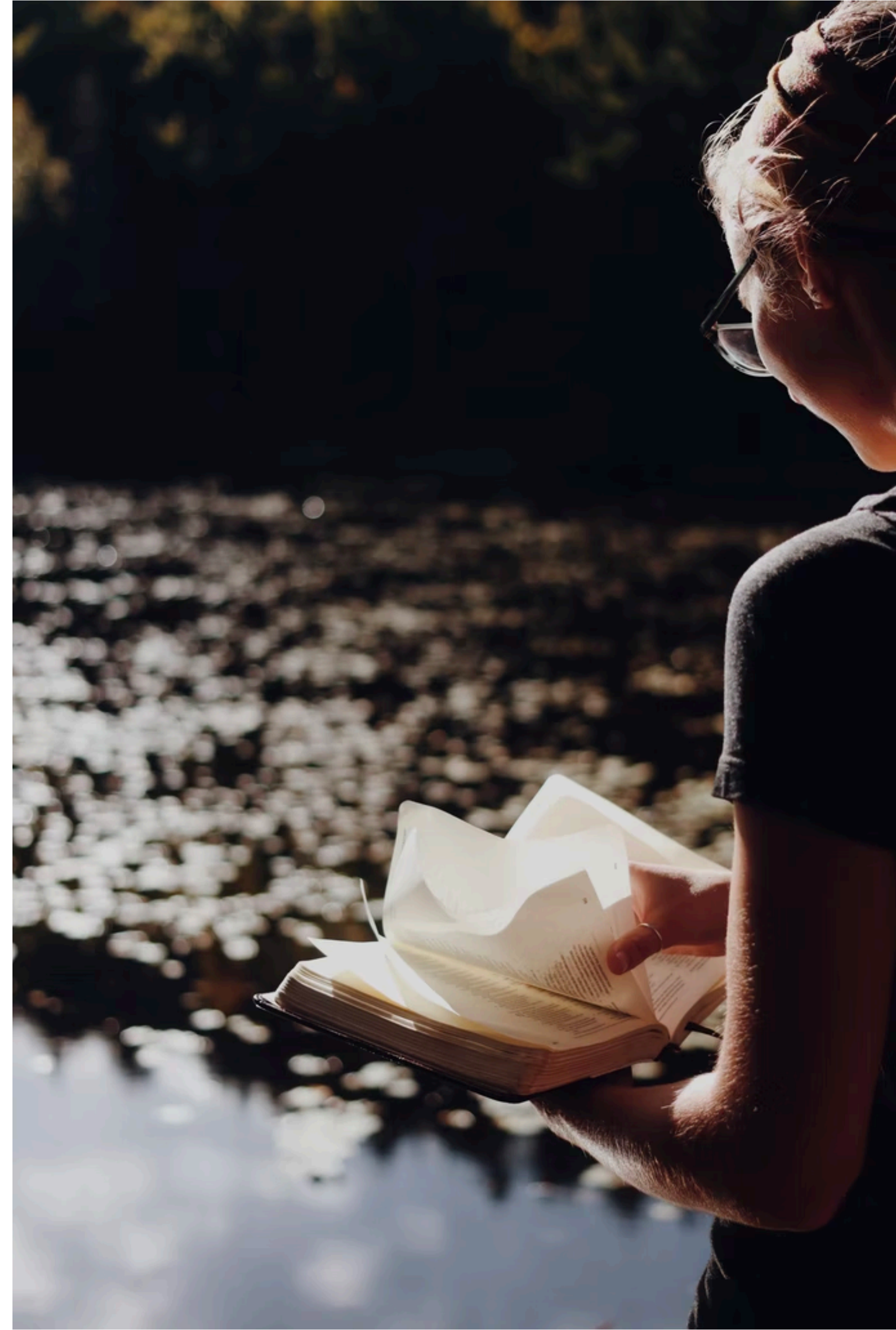
- Mary Oliver

James

- Adulting
- Sense of Privilege
- Exploring Consciousness
- Moving Through Despair Curve
- Action Prototypes
- Hero's Journey and “Master of Two Worlds”

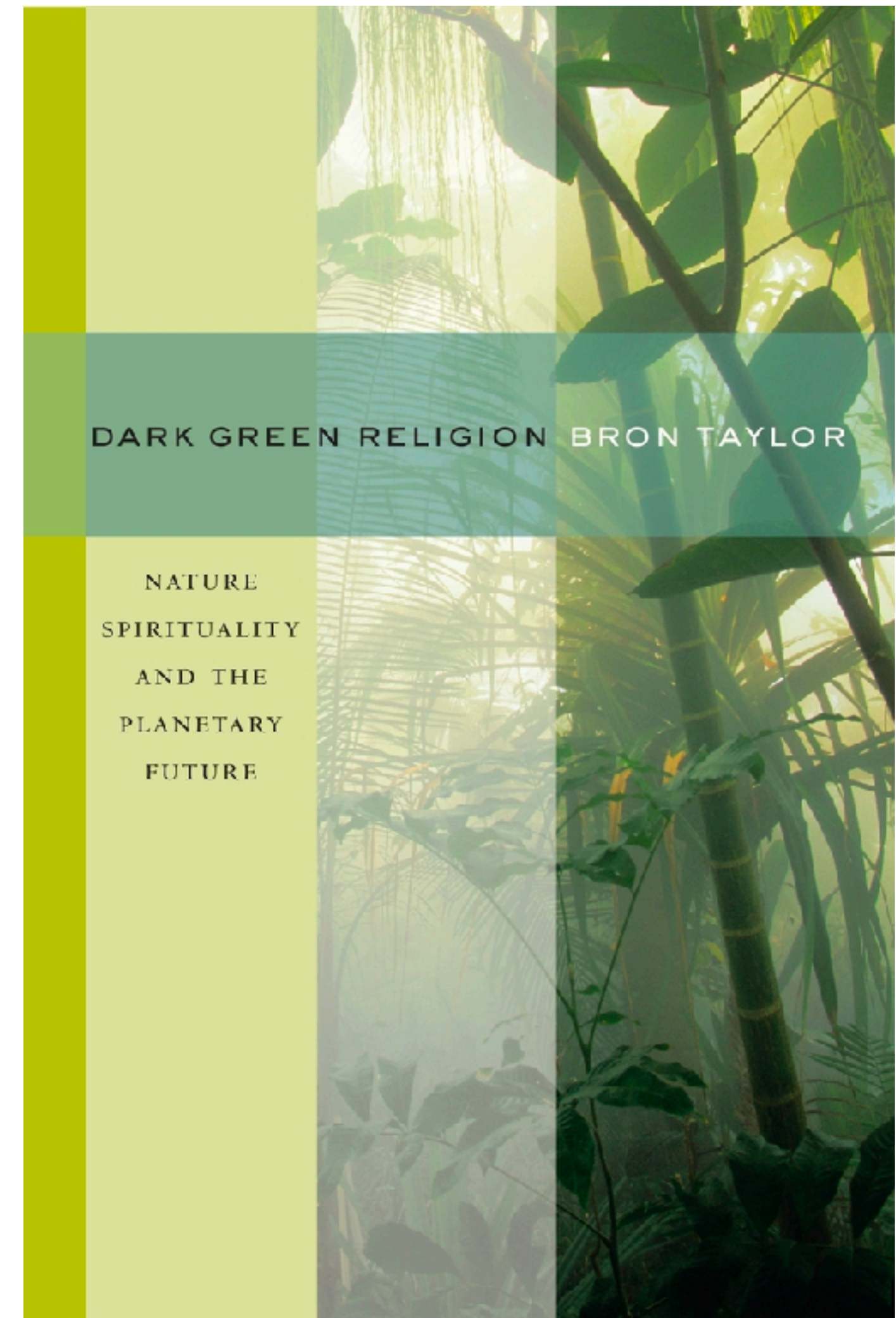


Spirituality



Light Green and Dark Green Religion

"It is important to distinguish between green religion (which posits that environmentally friendly behavior is a religious obligation) and dark green religion (in which nature is sacred, has intrinsic value, and is therefore due reverent care)."



Examples of Religious Nature Values

Stewardship — Judaism and Christianity

Kinship / Totemic Relationships — Indigenous Beliefs

Mysticism — Shamanism, Paganism

Interbeing — Buddhism, Transcendentalism

Other values: _____ — **Other Traditions:** _____

Eco-Confessional Exercise



From Mitchell Thomashow (1996) *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist*. MIT Press

Values-based Action and Engagement

Finding Your Place of Engagement

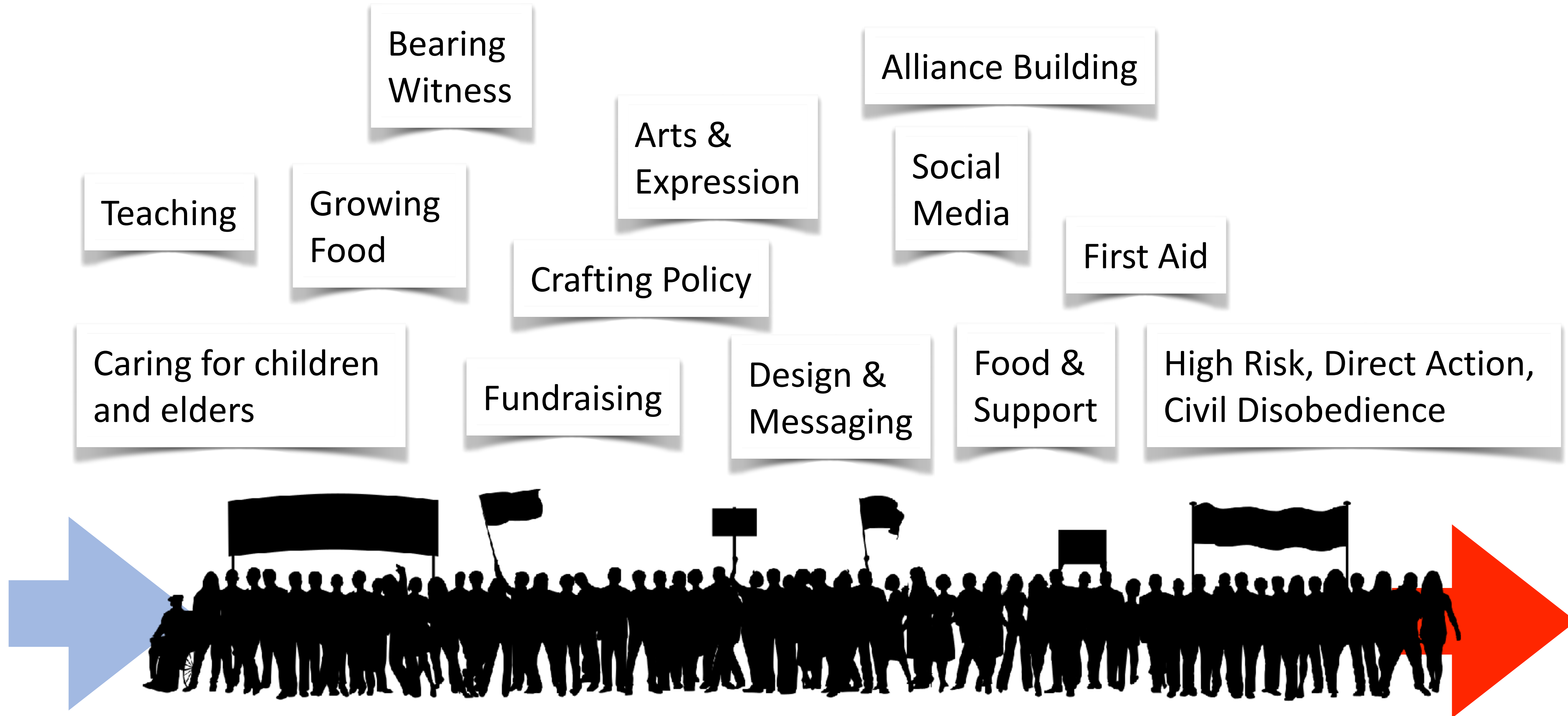
“Front Line” Exercise



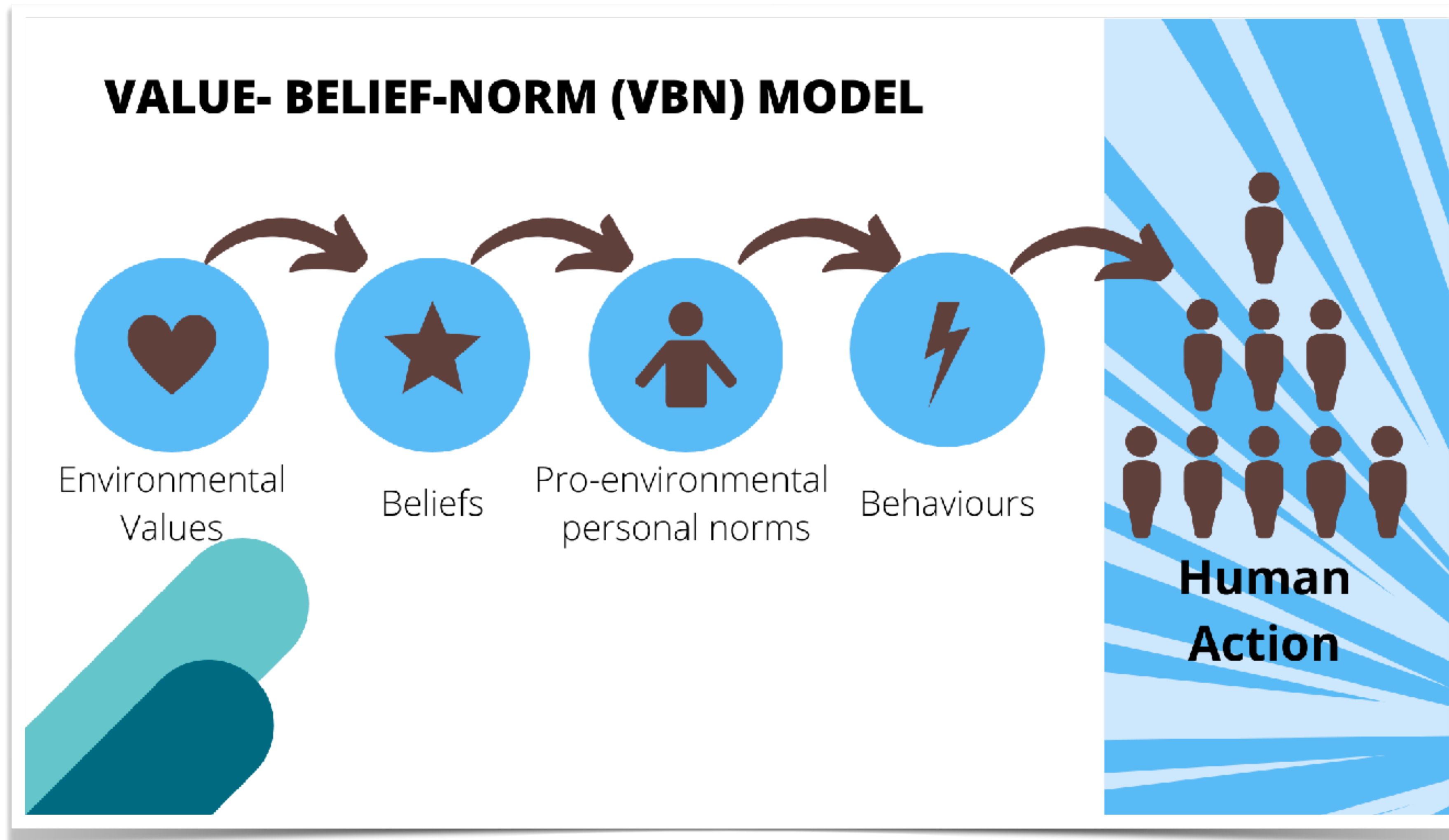
Front of the Line?



There Are Many Places to Stand in Relation to the “Front Line”

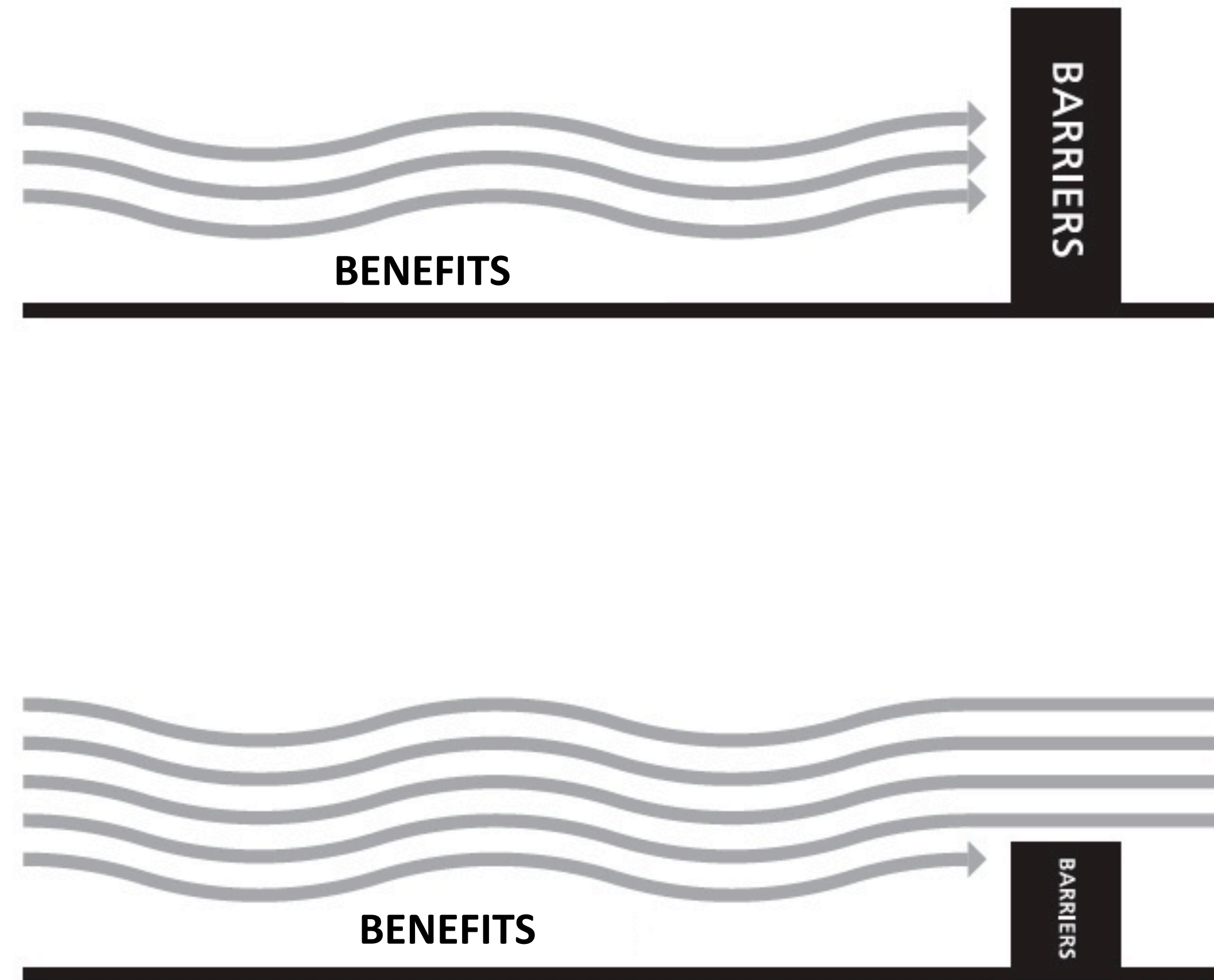


Values Guide our Voluntary Behaviors

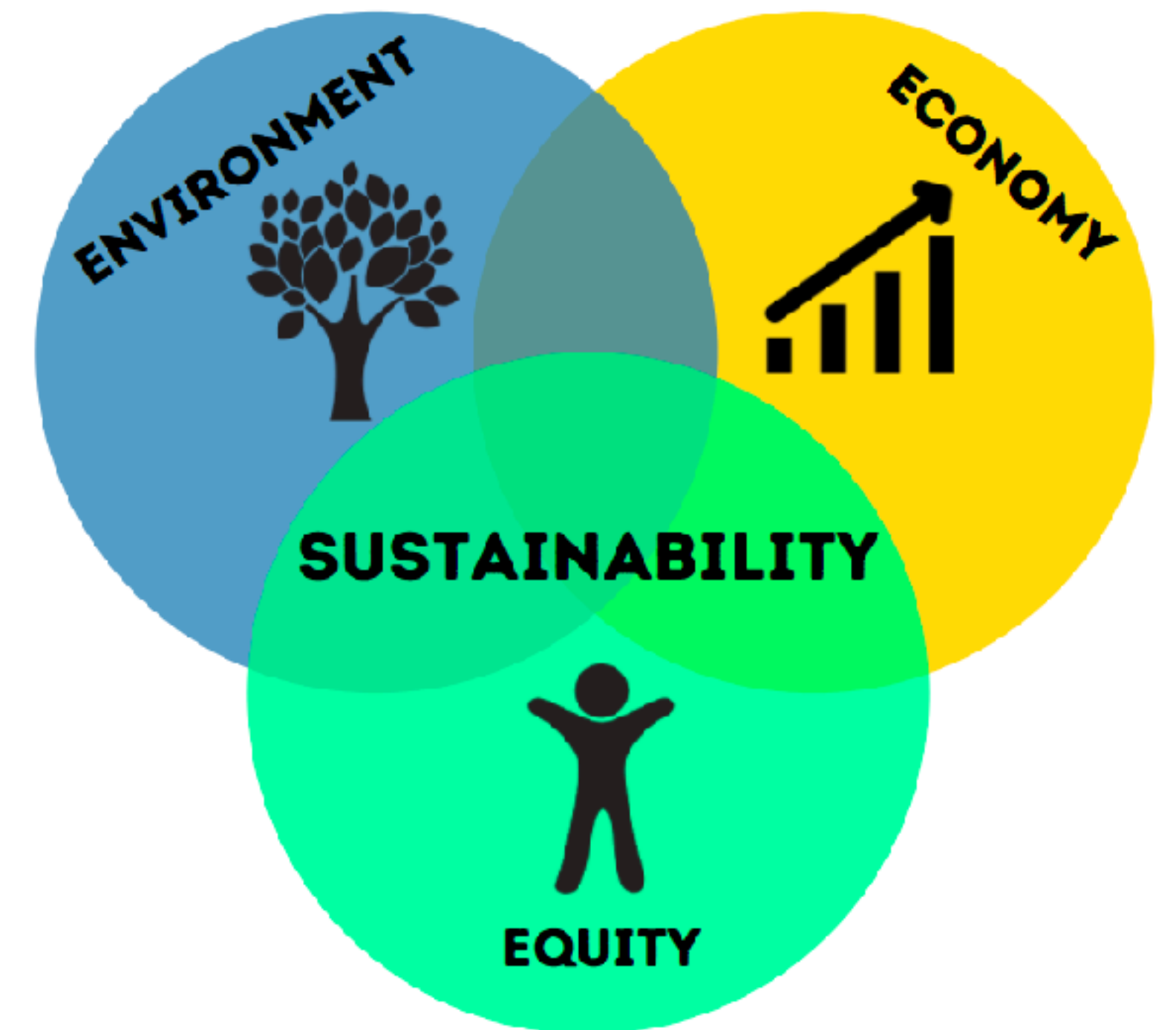
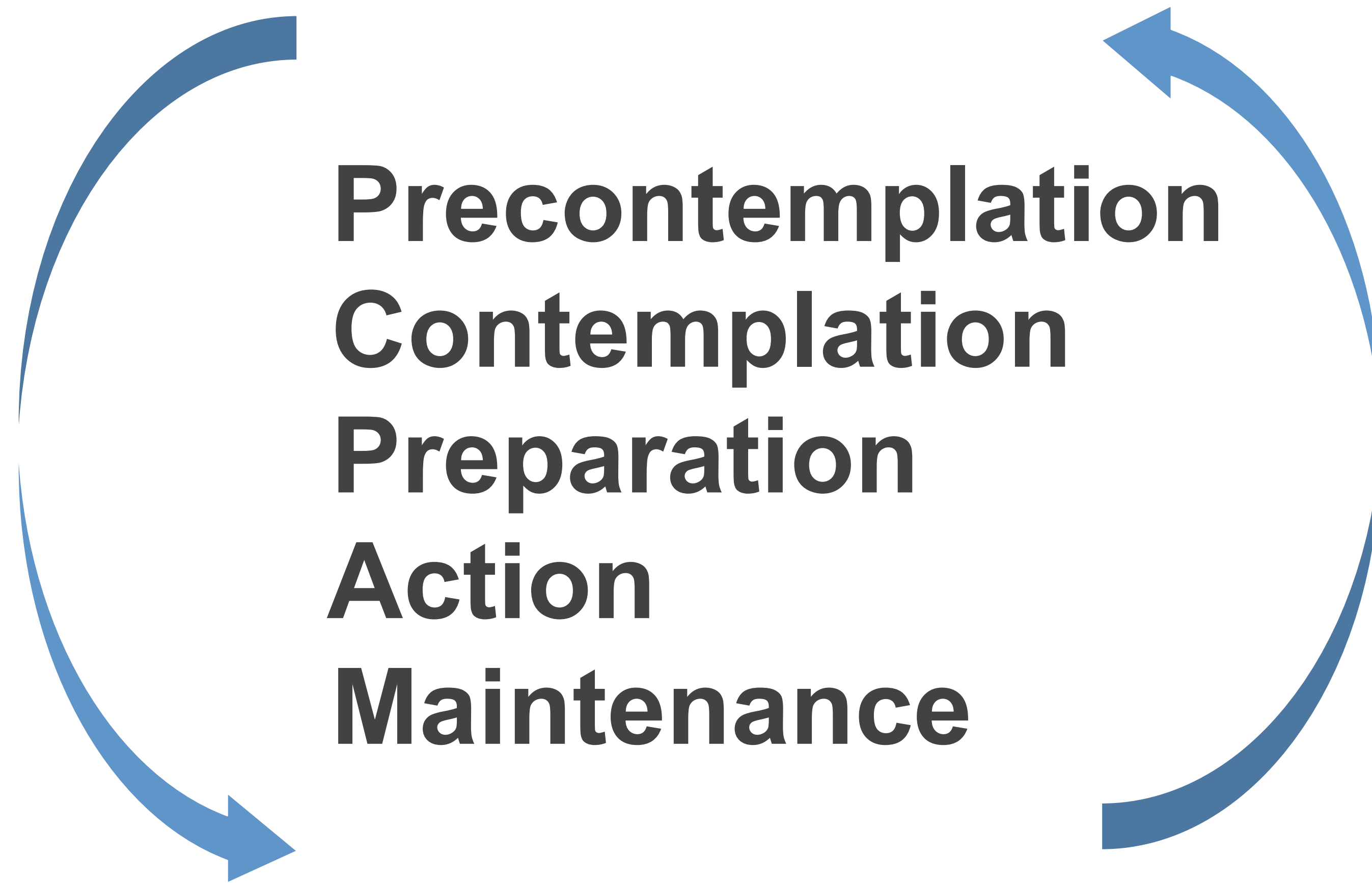


Behavior Change?

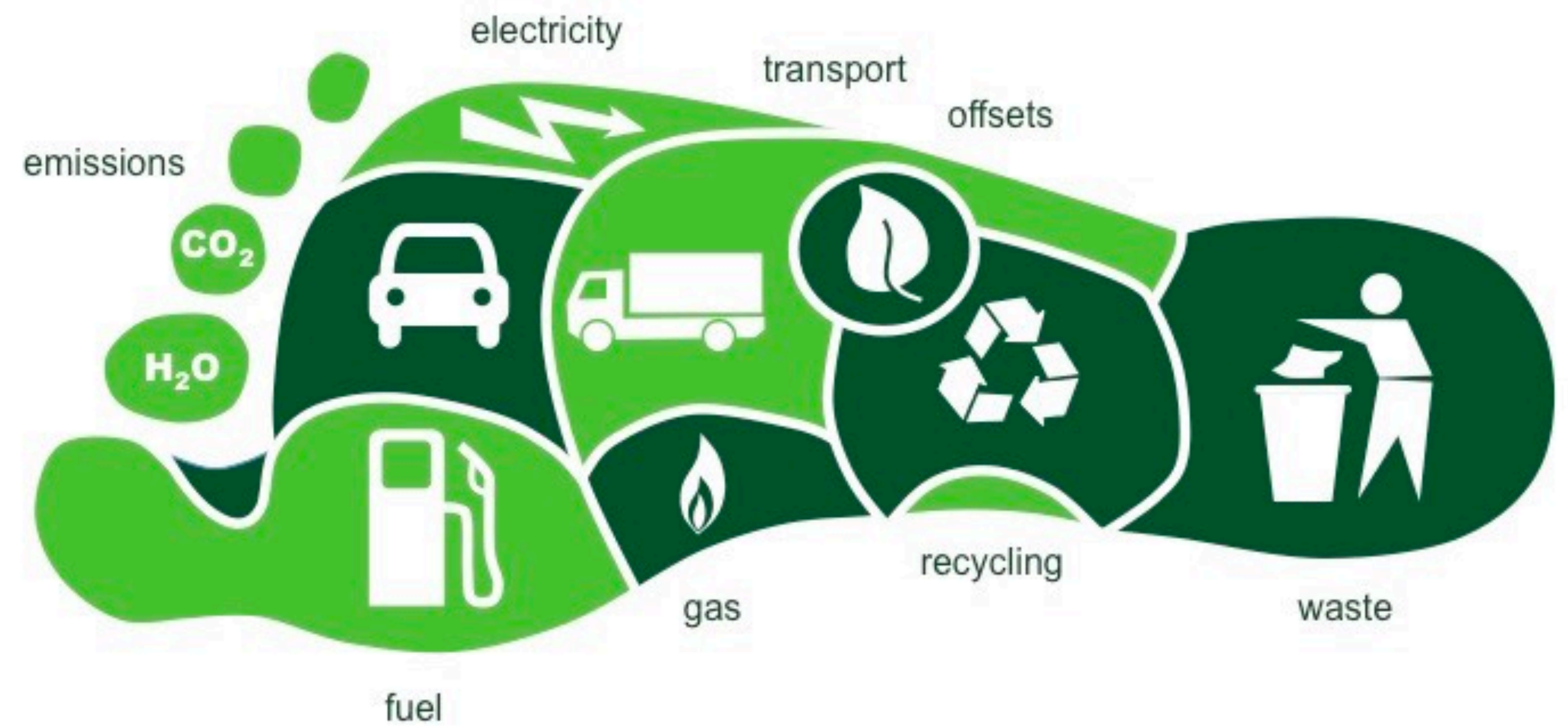
Reduce Barriers



Applying “Stages of Change” Theory to Sustainable Behaviors



The path to “green behavior”...



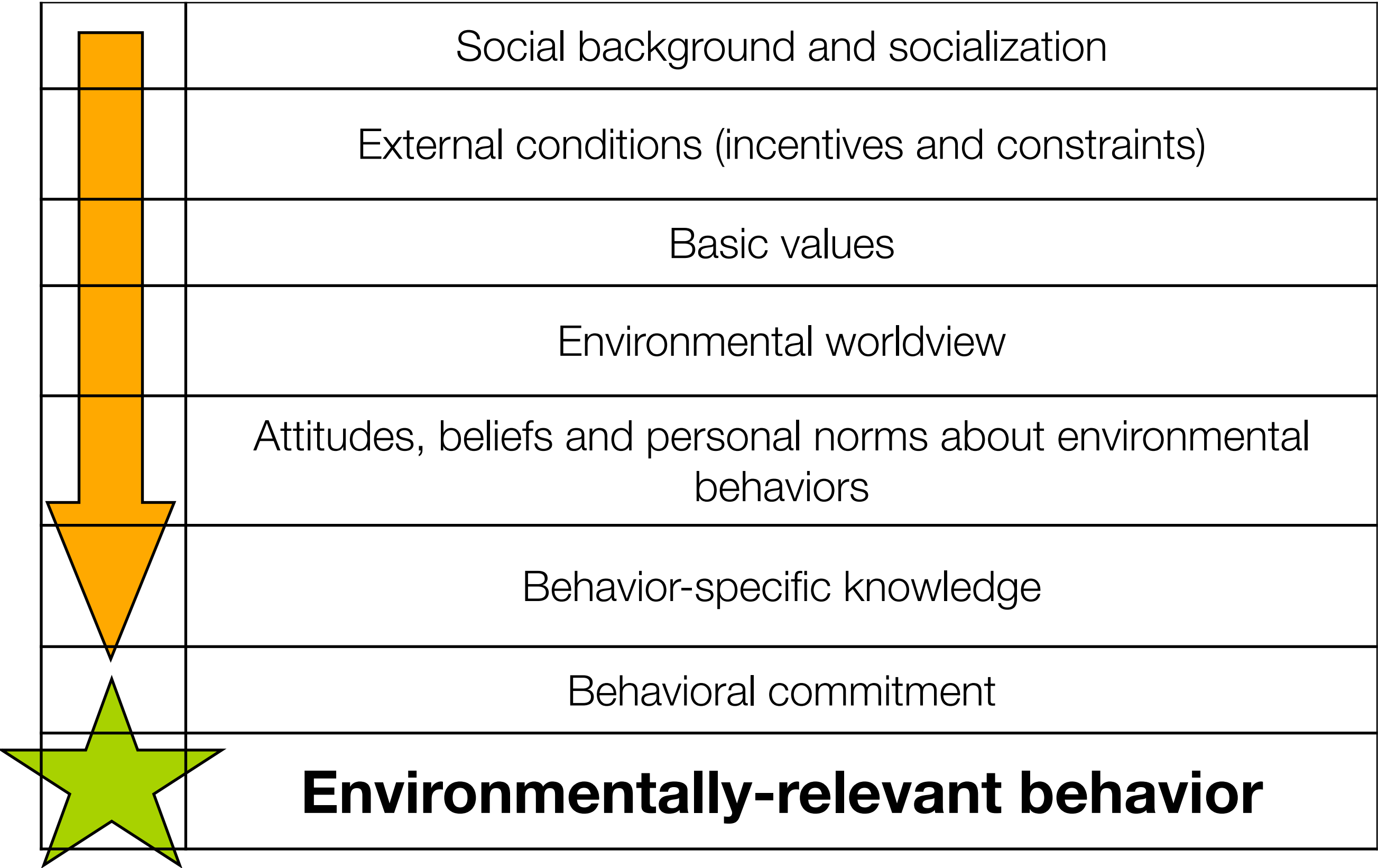
Getting to “Green”

8	Social background and socialization
7	External conditions (incentives and constraints)
6	Basic values
5	Environmental worldview
4	Attitudes, beliefs and personal norms about environmental behaviors
3	Behavior-specific knowledge
2	Behavioral commitment
1	“Environmentally-relevant behavior”

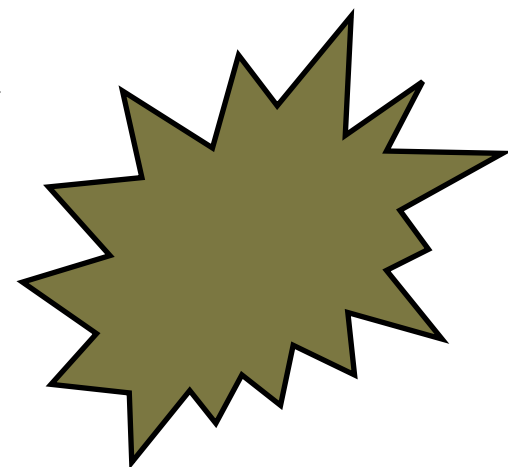
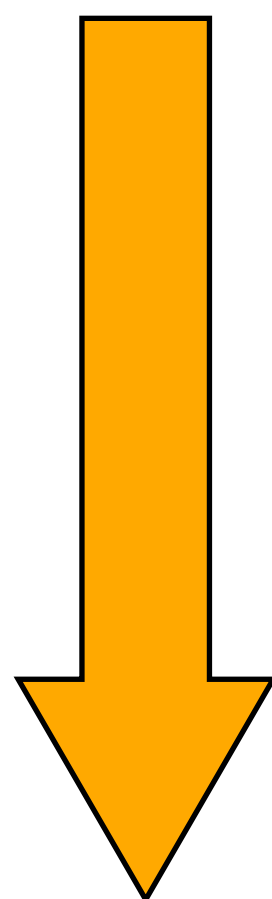
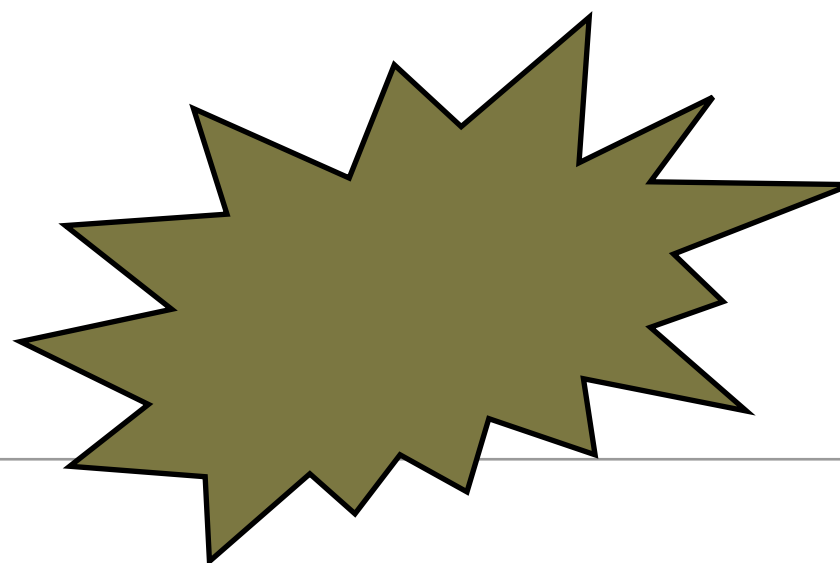


Stern, P. C. (2000). Psychology and the science of human-environment interactions. *American Psychologist*, 55 523-530.

Achieving the behavior

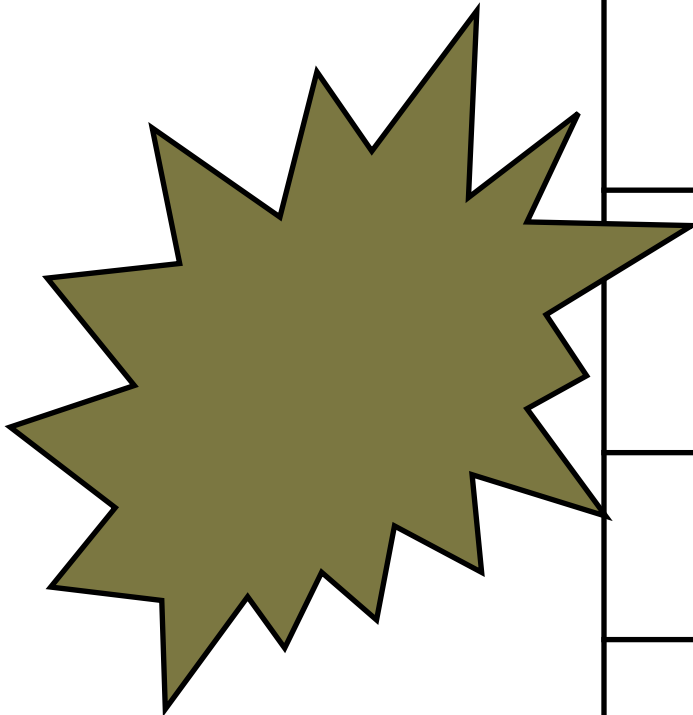
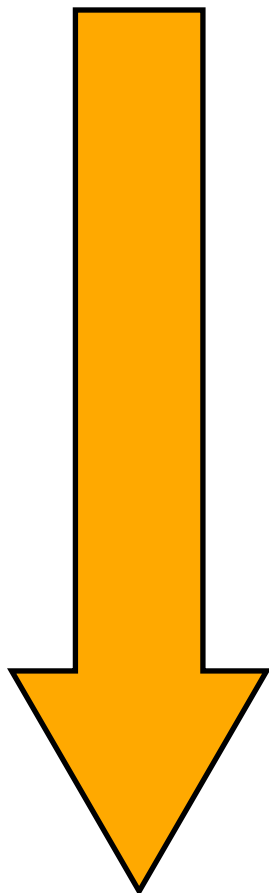
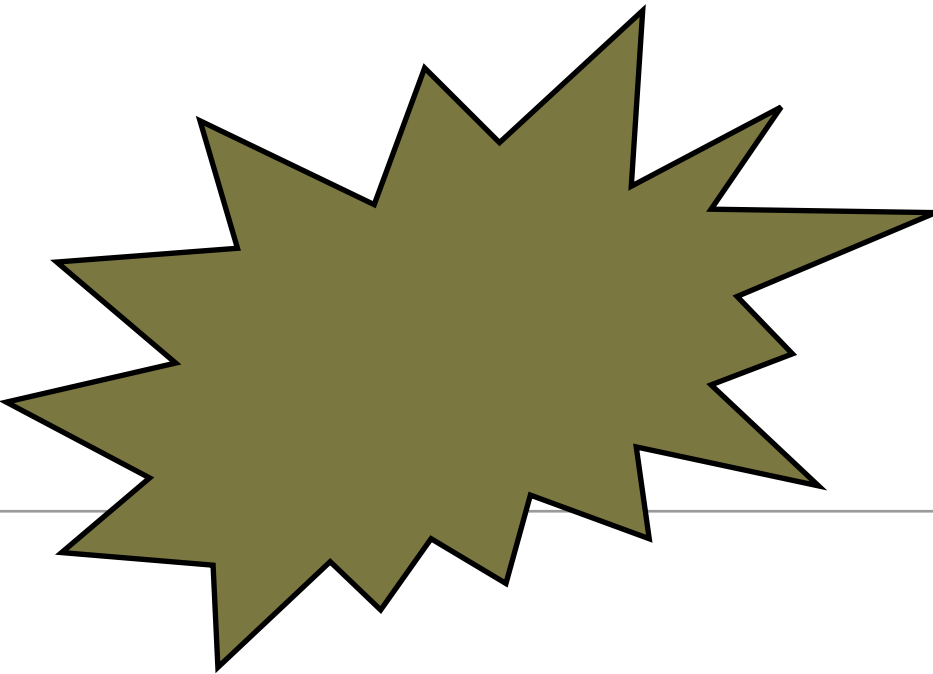


Hitting a barrier



	Social background and socialization
	External conditions (incentives and constraints)
	Basic values
	Environmental worldview
	Attitudes, beliefs and personal norms about environmental behaviors
	Behavior-specific knowledge?
	Behavioral commitment
	Environmentally-relevant behavior

Hitting a barrier



	Social background and socialization
	External conditions (incentives and constraints)
	Basic values
	Environmental worldview
	Attitudes, beliefs and personal norms about environmental behaviors
	Behavior-specific knowledge?
	Behavioral commitment
	Environmentally-relevant behavior

Points of Leverage?



?



8	Social background and socialization
7	External conditions (incentives and constraints)
6	Basic values
5	Environmental worldview
4	Attitudes, beliefs and personal norms about environmental behaviors
3	Behavior-specific knowledge
2	Behavioral commitment
1	Environmentally-relevant behavior

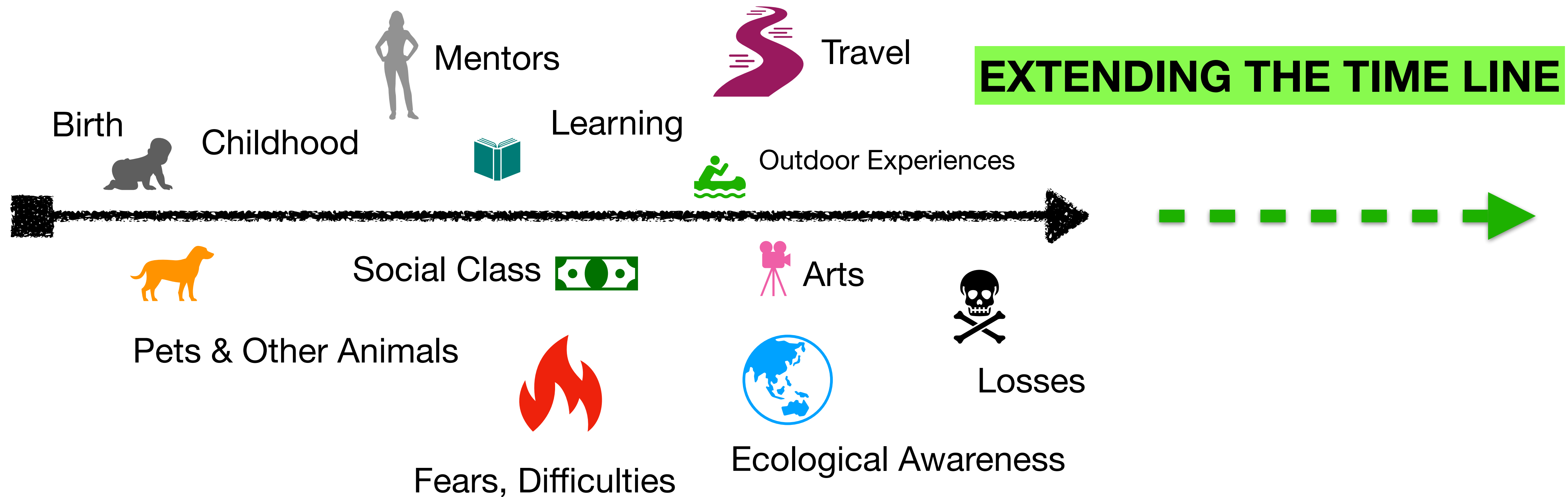


Ultimate Goal: Extending your Timeline



Eco Time Line

Key Experiences and Milestones



Integrating Outdoors & Nature



Ecotherapy in Office and Traditional Settings

Personal Acts



Your Practice Map

Climate Cafes

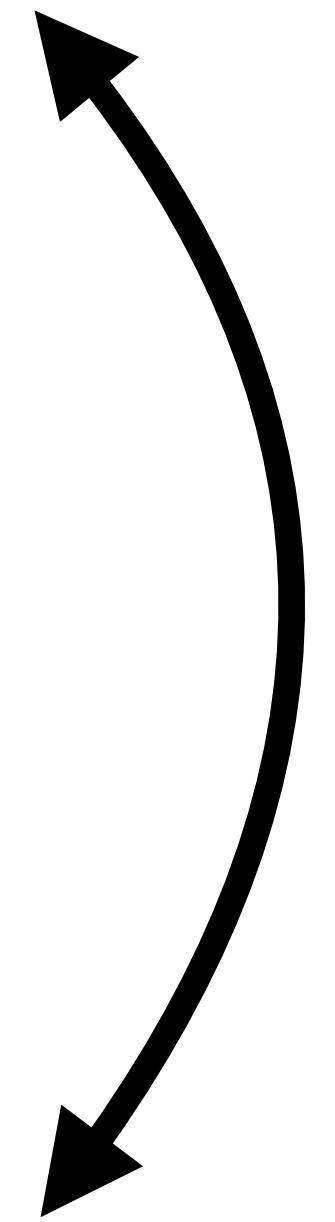
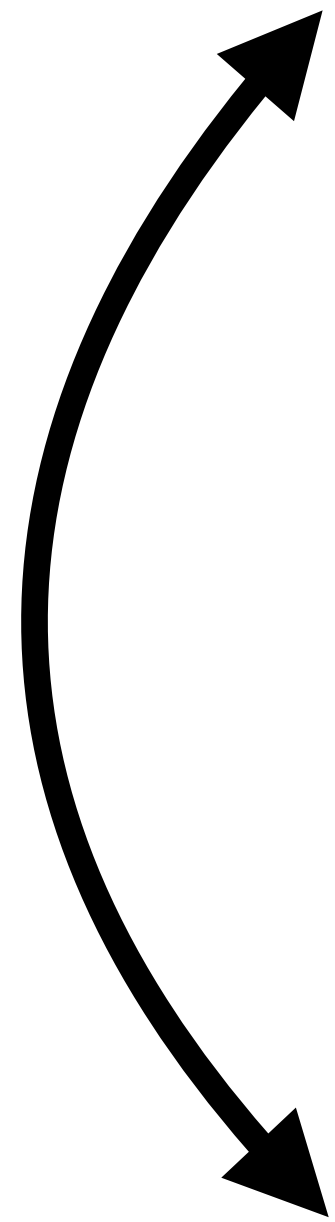
Advocacy & Activism

Research



Engaging with Climate and Environmental Issues in Your Life — Three Step Process

1. **Assess** our environmental identities, beliefs and experiences (including sources of strength and resilience and losses, traumas)
2. **Adapt** our existing worldviews and skills to address environmental impacts and concerns
3. **Apply** these insights into our diverse efforts on different levels of scale (personal, local, regional)



Deeper Creative Tensions

Opening Up vs. Containment

Insight vs Action

Adaptation vs Mitigation

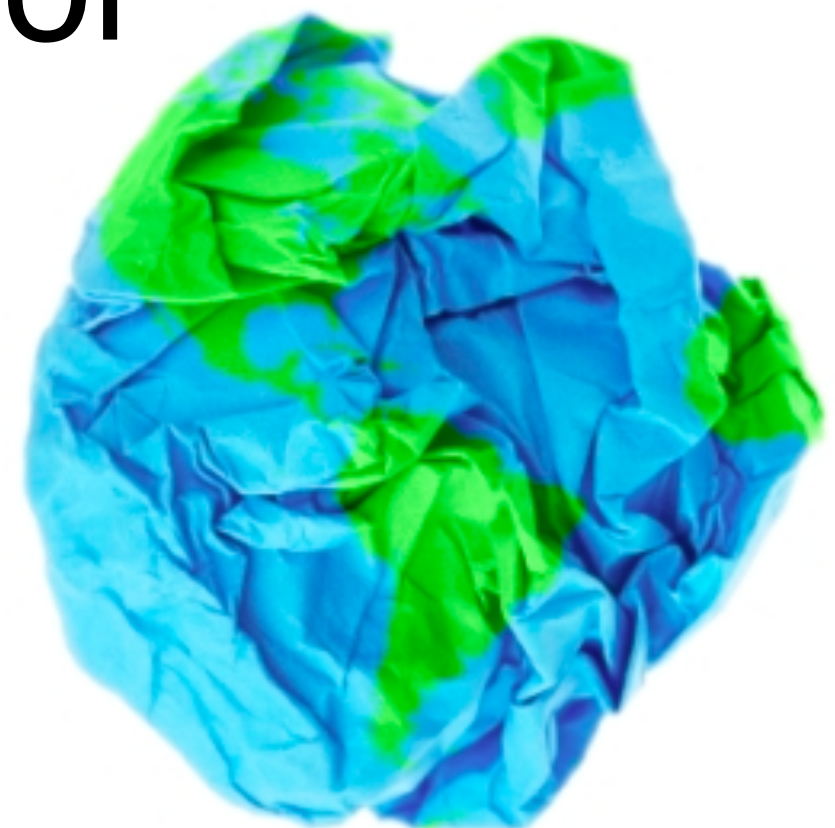
Adjustment vs Liberation



When to NOT do Eco or Climate Therapy

Contraindications to Doing Eco / Climate Therapy

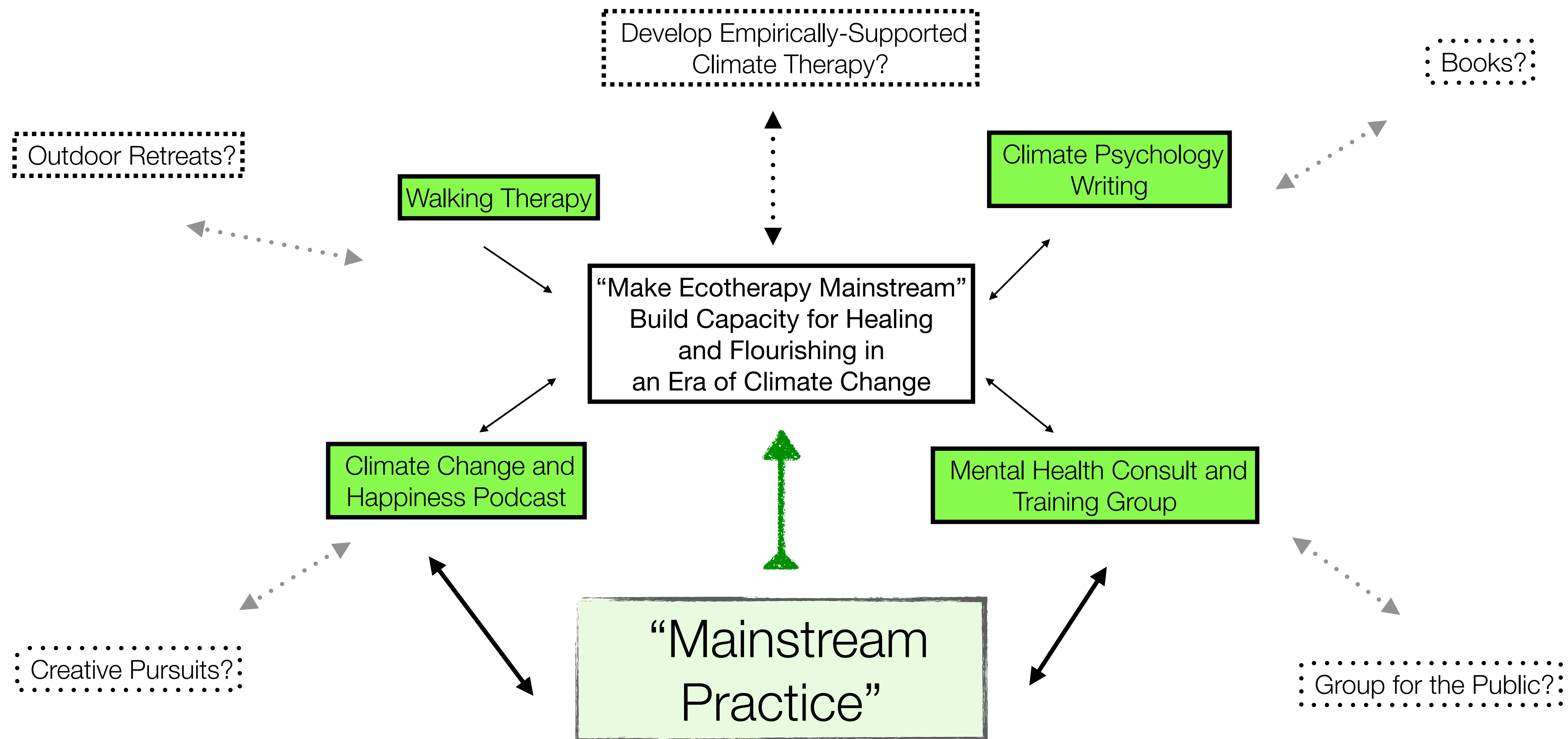
- Your energy is better directed elsewhere
- Your clients or patients need other services
- It's not the right time (in treatment process, in your career)
- Institutional barriers
- You're still building sense of competency or urgency
- You'd prefer to connect w/ nature or address environmental issues in other areas of your personal or professional life.



I'm a "Climate Conscious
Therapist" (or Educator, etc.)

For me this means: _____.

Mapping Thomas's "Clinical Environmental" Psychology Practice



Integrating Outdoors & Nature



Ecotherapy in Office and Traditional Settings

Personal Acts



Your Practice Map

Climate Cafes

Research



Advocacy & Activism



Dialog and Reflections



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