

Finding Balance

THE TOP 10 STRESS MANAGEMENT METHODS

Ingo Michél, M.Ed. | @balancewithingo



Finding Balance - Stress Management Guide

Top 10 Stress Management Methods

I Introduction

II Background

III Cognitive balance - The natural state

IV What is stress?

V What is anxiety?

VI The 10 most effective ways to manage stress and anxiety

1. The monk's way

2. Triage

3. Reduce stressors / Increase resilience

4. The diver's way

5. NLP Neuro Linguistic Programming

6. The Aboriginal way

7. The Native American way

8. From Cognitive Dissonance to Cognitive Balance

9. Trauma and Recovery

10. Mindset - From reactive to proactive

10.1. Applied Quantum Physics

10.2. Success Mechanics

10.3. Mindset Tweak

VII Conclusion

VIII Life design - Create the life you want

IX Bonus - Transaction Analysis

X About me



I Introduction

Hey there! I'm Coach Ingo. Nope, this is NOT some AI generated text. I have developed this guide based on over 20 years of personal study and experience in the fields of psychology, self-healing, and alternative therapies after going through a burnout myself.

If you're struggling with stress and/or anxiety, this guide can help you help yourself.

You know that feeling of being stressed out to the max, like you're barely holding it together, even if on the outside you manage to look like you're ok? Like it's all just a bit too much and you're not sure if you can keep going, like a hamster in a wheel? Or whether you even want to? Do you ever find yourself daydreaming of where you'd rather be? In the mountains, or living by the sea? The good news is: You can. Because you're free. You can be as you wish to be. "Believe it and you'll see it." As Dr. Wayne Dyer said.

There is truth to that as our beliefs create our actions which create our reality.

You can learn to manage stress and anxiety, to be in balance and well, and to realise your goals and dreams. I wrote this guide to help you with that.

The reason I combine stress and anxiety is that they most of the time coincide sooner or later, as they are connected. Excessive stress causes anxiety, a feeling of overwhelm and unspecific fear of negative consequences.

How do I know? Because I've experienced it. Let me tell you a bit more about my background, perhaps you can relate?

II BACKGROUND

About me

I used to be a corporate guy, jetting around the globe with supply chain management and internet logistics..



until..



..I had a burnout. When you have a burnout, you have no money, no friends, no energy, no motivation. You do what you need to do to stay afloat, take the jobs that come along..

If you're lucky you have a family that supports you. If not, you got to find a way by yourself. To heal yourself. You can do it. I did. So can you.

You can go on a healing journey. Find your balance, your inner peace, your flow.

And you can ask for help. That's OK too.

BUT it's so much easier and better to PREVENT burnout with just a few adjustments in your mindset and lifestyle, and avoiding stressful pitfalls like cult mind control or abusive relationships.

Burnout symptoms: Mental and emotional fatigue, anxiety, high blood pressure, tension pains, headaches, performance loss, errors, mood swings, depression, frustration, anger, apathy, sleeping problems, stomach problems — Any of that sound familiar?
If so, you're not alone.

Stress and anxiety

Stress is one of the major health risks today. Anxiety a related and often resultant mental health challenge. What is stress? Where does it come from? How do we deal with it? What are the causes of anxiety, and how do we best manage it? How do I avoid or heal burnout? These are questions I set out to answer with this guide, as I have myself faced and learned from these challenges, and I see my task as helping others do so more efficiently in order to avoid or heal burnout, to find their balance and flow, and to realise their goals and dreams.

To this end I draw on over twenty years of study and experience on my own self healing journey. These include psychology, katathym imaginative psychotherapy, native American and Australian Aboriginal wisdom, Zen Buddhist philosophy, and insights I have learned from amazing people I met on my journeys, and from nature and meditation. Traveling truly opens your mind to new ways of thinking and being, and I have lived in the USA (10 years), Australia (2.5 years), Japan (6 weeks), Spain (6 years), Grand Cayman (1 year), Thailand (2+ months) and Germany (20+ years).

Paradigms are our mental maps, the lenses through which we view and interpret the world. They are like invisible glasses on which everything we believe is written, our values, the way we see and interpret the world. Change countries and try on some different glasses, a new perspective, and you'll begin to see things in a different way.

I'm here to support you on your healing journey and you can reach out to me on my page balancewithingo.com or instagram @balancewithingo

So let's begin with a success principle:

TO SUCCEED

Begin with the end in mind.

How am I when I'm in balance?

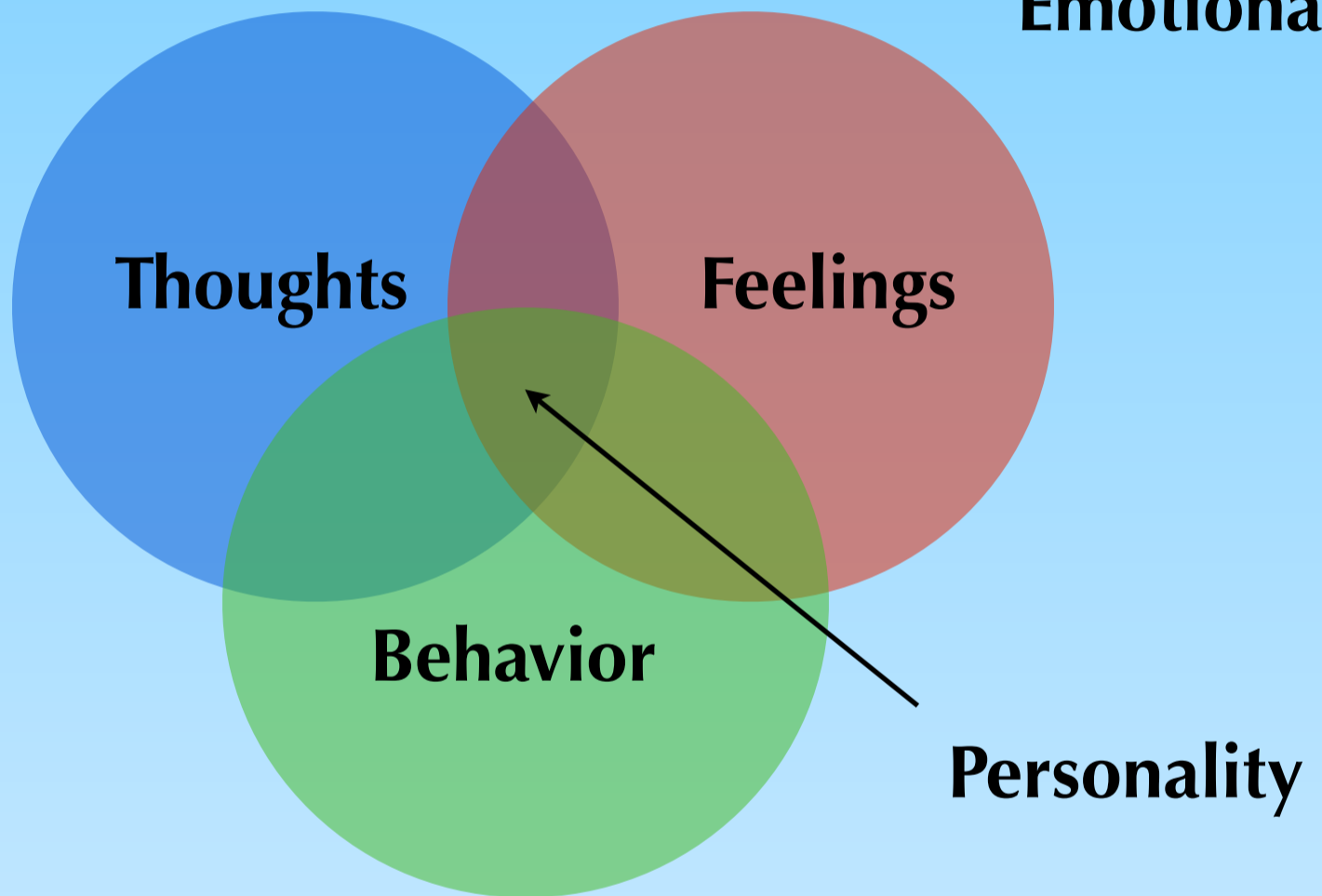


III Cognitive Balance

The natural state of being.

Mental

Emotional



Physical

Personality

COGNITIVE BALANCE

The natural state.

Balance between
thoughts, feelings, and actions.



How am I when I'm
in balance?

III What is stress?

Stress is a force exerted upon an object or person. The stress response is a natural response of the body to challenging or threatening situations, triggered when the brain perceives a potential danger or discomfort. This stress response causes stress hormones like adrenalin and cortisol to be released in our system so that we can respond more quickly and effectively to the perceived threat. The flight or fight response is a protective mechanism to help us survive.

Stress can be external causes like work pressures, financial troubles, or relationship challenges, as well as internal factors such as self-imposed expectations, negative thoughts, or health concerns. Stress can offer short-term benefits, providing the body with extra energy and focus. However, prolonged excessive stress can have detrimental effects on both physical and mental well-being, especially if we do not manage it, and learn to let go.

Negative stress is called distress, while positive stress such as exercise or a challenging goal is called eustress. Creating a balance between stress and relaxation is key to well-being.

Common stress symptoms encompass various aspects:

1. **Physical Symptoms:** These include fatigue, sleep disruptions, headaches, muscle tension, gastrointestinal problems like abdominal pain, nausea, and diarrhea, elevated blood pressure, and dizziness.
2. **Emotional/Psychological Symptoms:** Stress can manifest as irritability, burnout, depression, anxiety, nervousness, mood swings, feeling overwhelmed, anger, sadness, and restlessness.
3. **Cognitive Symptoms:** Stress often affects concentration, memory, and decision-making abilities, leading to cognitive challenges and mental exhaustion.
4. **Behavioral Symptoms:** People experiencing stress may withdraw from social activities, increase alcohol or nicotine consumption, overeat or lose their appetite, exhibit restless behavior, and

IV What is anxiety?

Anxiety is an emotion which is characterized by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil and includes feelings of dread over anticipated events. Wikipedia

Anxiety is

An unspecific feeling of fear, worry, or overwhelm which causes discomfort and distress.

A neurological response to overwhelming stimulus

A feeling a tightness of chest

Causes

Prolonged excessive negative stress, such as prolonged excessive work, financial or relationship demands, the inability to meet demands, unresolved trauma, Cognitive dissonance - conflicting beliefs, feelings, or behaviours, e.g. hating the job you're working at because it's not what you would like to be doing)

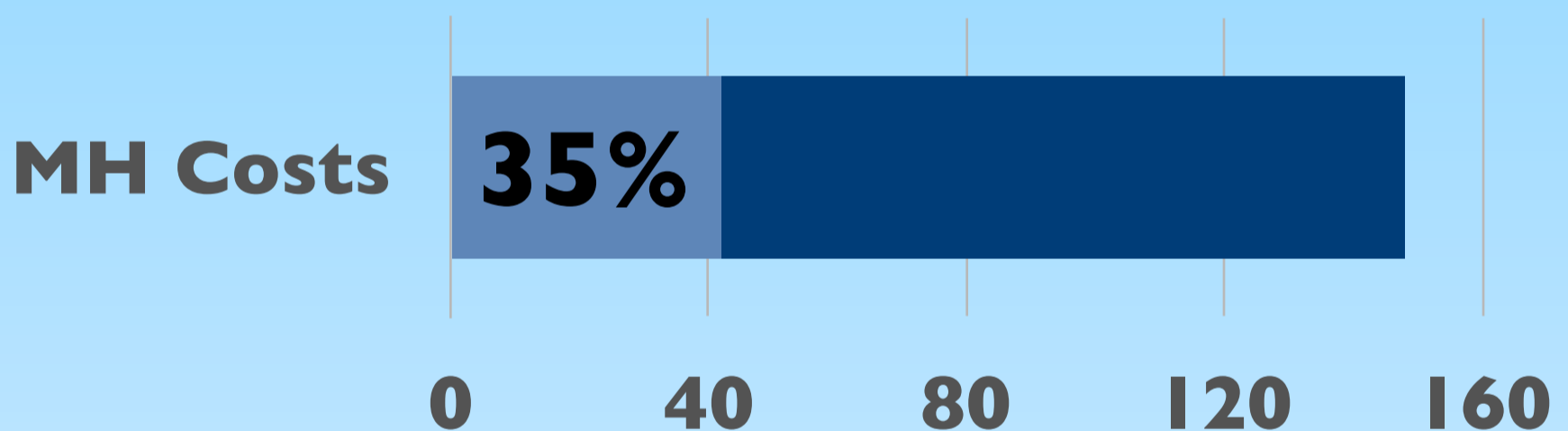
Some background facts

Anxiety disorder

- **the most common psychological disorder in the USA**
- **afflicts 40 million = 18% of the population**
- **is highly treatable but only 1/3 receive treatment**

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

Anxiety disorders
USA Mental Health Cost
\$42 Billion per Year in '99
\$60+ Billion in 2024

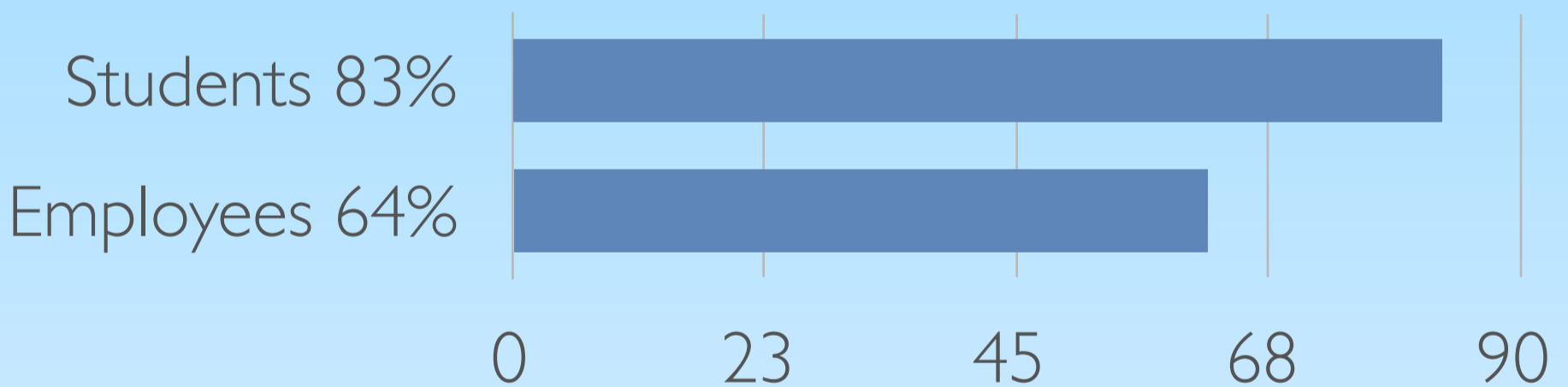


*Source: ADAA Anxiety and Depression Association of America
The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, 60(7), July 1999*

Top Stress Factors

Money - 64%

Work - 60%



Source: Statista.com

The Stress Response

Stress

(Pressure, Demands from the outside world, Inner conflicts)



Stress Response

Adrenaline, Cortisol
(Stress hormones released based on fight or flight response)

=> Stress is cumulative

Stress and Burnout

- **Stress is cumulative (emotional, hormonal)**
- **Consistent excessive stress causes high levels of the stress hormones cortisol and adrenalin, high blood pressure and can ultimately lead to system collapse (breakdown like heart attack, stroke).**
- **Burnout-Symptoms: Mental, emotional and physical fatigue, dissociation, memory and performance loss, anxiety, anger, frustration, depression**
- **2013 - 34% reported 1 hr/day performance loss**

Fear and anxiety

Fear is like a bully. It preys on the weak-minded. If you face it, it disappears.

Fear of the unknown, possibly bad outcome, can be a main stress factor.

So, when there is a vague feeling of fear or worry, ask yourself, “If I had an idea what the cause of this was, what would it be?”

Once you know what the cause is, ask yourself, “What is the worst possible outcome?” and “Is it life threatening?” If not, it’s not an A1 priority. And even if it is, you just notice that possibility and then let it go and focus on the desired outcome instead, and do what it takes to accomplish that.



VI The 10 most effective ways to manage stress & anxiety





1. The monk's way

**3 Zen steps
to manage stress and anxiety
and find inner peace in 1 minute:**

**1. Take a deep breath
(into your belly, diaphragm breathing)**

**2. Notice the pause
(Be the watching consciousness.)**

**3. Exhale.
(Letting go.)**

**Do this for 1 minute whenever you feel stressed.
Slowing down your breathing reduces stress
immediately.**

Connect to your center.

At the center - silence.

Be the watching consciousness.

Focus on the solution. 1 step a day.



2. Triage

In the emergency room they do TRIAGE, that is they first evaluate the severity of a case:

- 1. Urgent and Important (life threatening, immediate response required)**
- 2. Important but not urgent (the 1 thing that will make a big difference tomorrow)**
- 3. Urgent but not important (can wait)**
- 4. Not urgent, not important (later)**

This is what we need to do with problems. And if a problem is not life threatening - we can relax and take care of it.



TRIAGE

1

IMPORTANT
URGENT

2

IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT

3

URGENT
NOT IMPORTANT

4

NOT URGENT
NOT IMPORTANT



3. Reduce stressors & increase resilience

Identify and eliminate causes of stress wherever possible.

Work:

- Set boundaries (e.g. say NO when it's too much, or extend the timeline), reduce workload, take time off**
- Increase efficiency: Prioritize. Focus on the most important tasks and delegate where possible**
- Exercise 3 to 4 times a week (20 - 30 min) + Rest (take short vacations and spend time in nature, go for walks, hikes, runs etc.); Balanced diet (Less sugar & fat, more fruit & vegetables, sufficient water)**
- Relationships: Use non-violent communication (Marshal Rosenberg), focusing on behaviour and its effect on you, and expressing what you need and wish for.**

Give each other space.

Let go of unrealistic expectations.

It's OK to get professional help via coaching or counselling.





Efficiency

The pareto principle

**20% of the work
create 80% of the results**

**20% of the 20%
create 80% of the results**

So 4% produce 96% of the results

Focus on the 4%.

First things first.

**Book recommendation:
Tim Ferris - The 4 hour work week**





THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE (STEVEN COVEY)

- 1. BE PROACTIVE**
- 2. BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND**
- 3. PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST**
- 4. THINK WIN - WIN**
- 5. SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD**
- 6. SYNERGIZE**
- 7. SHARPEN THE SAW**





4. The diver's method Survival rule:

SBTA

Stop. Breathe. Think. Act.



5. The aboriginal way

**“Listen. Listen to the earth, the plants, the wind,
the silence.”**

**Son of the aboriginal chief at Lake Mungo National Park Unity
of the Tribes Peace Gathering 2000, NSW, Australia**

Those were words of advice from the son of the Matti Matti chief. So I spent three days sitting on the “Walls of China” dunes, meditating, listening. A swarm of flies molested me when I was upset, but when I relaxed and let go, doing some gentle “figure 8” tai chi moves, they left. The Australian aborigines go on walkabouts to follow their song lines, so they spend much time alone in nature, which they revere as sacred. They are among the most relaxed people on the planet. Learn from them. Go on a healing journey. Spend time alone in nature. And just listen. Just be.

Spend time in nature.
Don't try so hard.
Just listen. Just be.

Meditation Yoga





6. NLP Neuro Linguistic Programming **Change your inner communication.**

Identify and Change your emotional triggers to change your programs

Example Reframing: Remember a time when you felt totally relaxed and safe. Imagine a stressful situation, then change it in your mind by visualising a more effective, empowered response and outcome while feeling relaxed and safe. So if you were attacked, imagine having martial arts skills and defending yourself successfully.

Triggers: When in a heightened emotional state, we associate physical stimulus to the emotion. E.g. a cup drops and shatters during a fight. Later that sound can trigger the same emotions. Even 20 years later. You can “diffuse” the trigger by dissociating (emotionally disconnecting) the situation and visualising a different response.

Using this strategy you can reprogram your mind to respond differently to stressful stimulus.

Research tips: NLP, Milton Erickson, Richard Bandler und John Grinder, Tony Robins



7. The Native American Way

Be in harmony with yourself and nature.

In Native American philosophy/spirituality we are part of nature, and meant to be caretakers. Only when we are at peace and harmony with nature can we be at peace with ourselves.

According to a Ph.D. project I once listened to on the radio, a shaman is someone who has first healed himself, and then helps others to do the same. So if you have a mental or physical health challenge, see it as that: a challenge to overcome, so that you can then help others to do the same. In this way you give meaning and value to your struggle. Visualise: How am I when I'm completely and totally healed and fine?

An Inipi cleansing sweat lodge (like sauna) and a drum journey can also be helpful. It helped me a lot, as did living and studying with a native American shaman. Learning from nature. Does a bird, deer or fox worry about it's next meeting, meal or even death? No. It does its thing and nature provides. When I conducted guided visualization drum journeys at events like Healing Ibiza at the beautiful Atzaro resort, I helped participants meet their totem (spirit guide) to go on a healing journey. This is quite similar to katathym imaginative therapy. In the native American view, trauma causes a splitting off of part of the soul. The purpose of the healing journey then is to find and re-integrate those missing parts. Drum journeys and music meditation are powerful ways to achieve this end.



Take a deep breath. Notice the pause. Let go.

8. From Cognitive Dissonance to Cognitive Balance

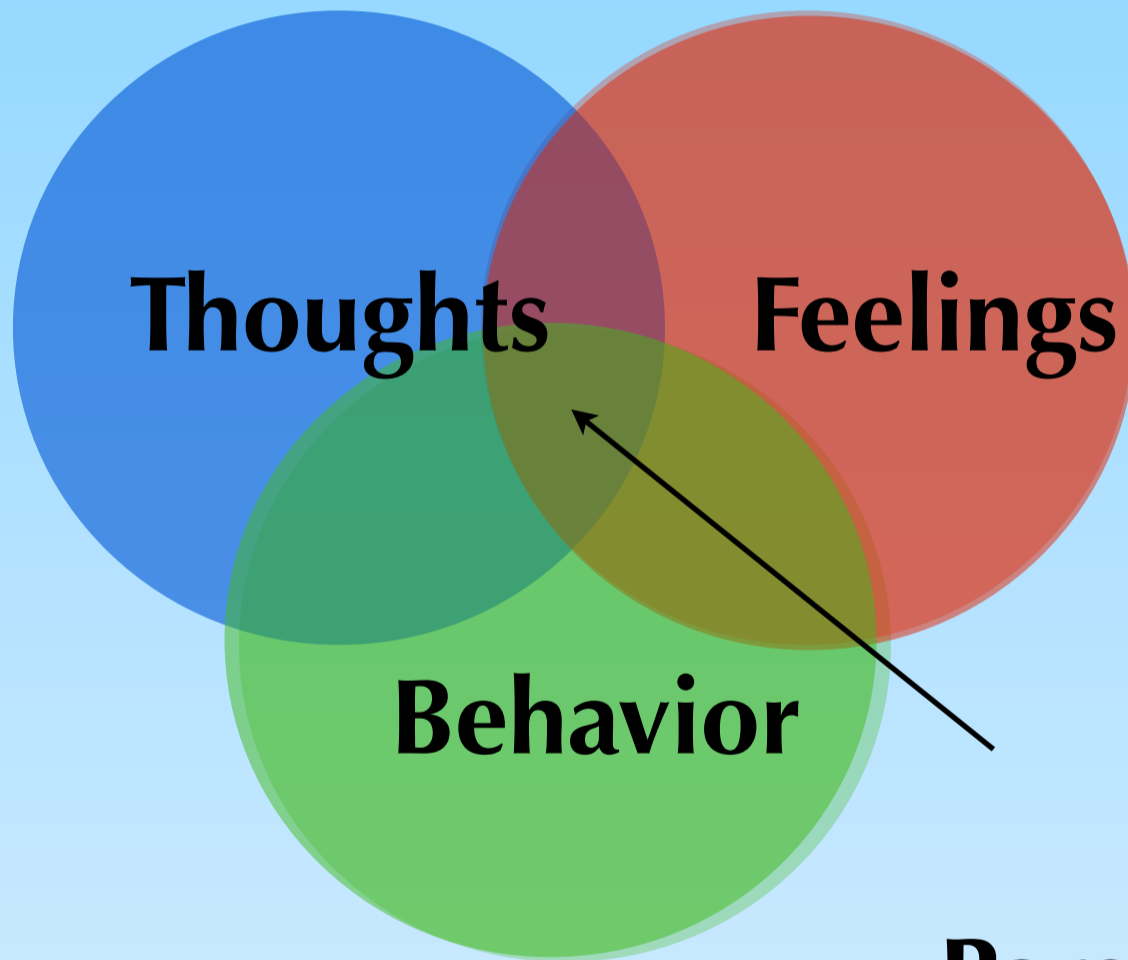
**What happens when we lose
our balance?**

Cognitive Balance

Our natural state of being

Mental

Emotional

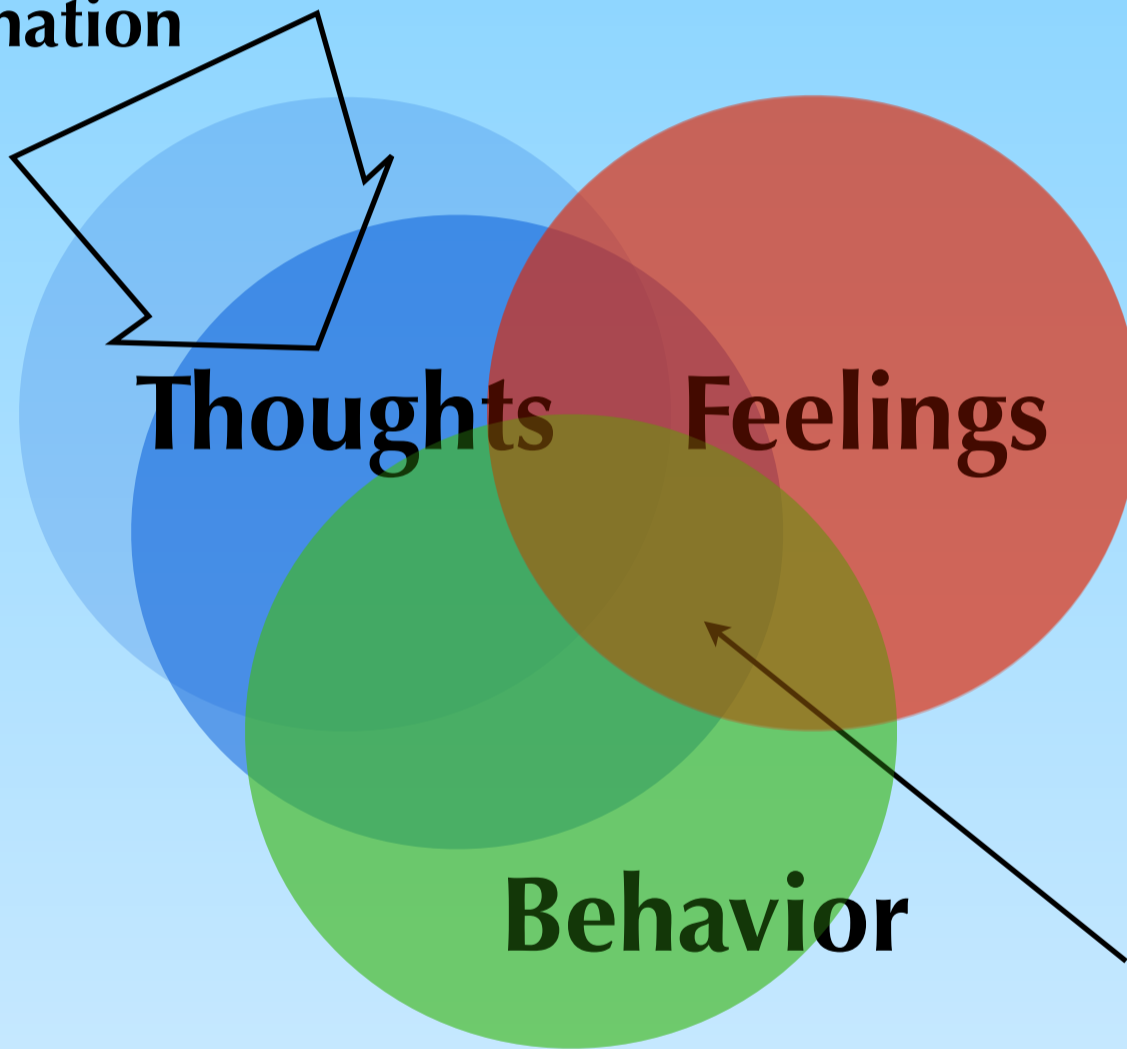


Personality

Cognitive Dissonance

External influence
Stressor

Information

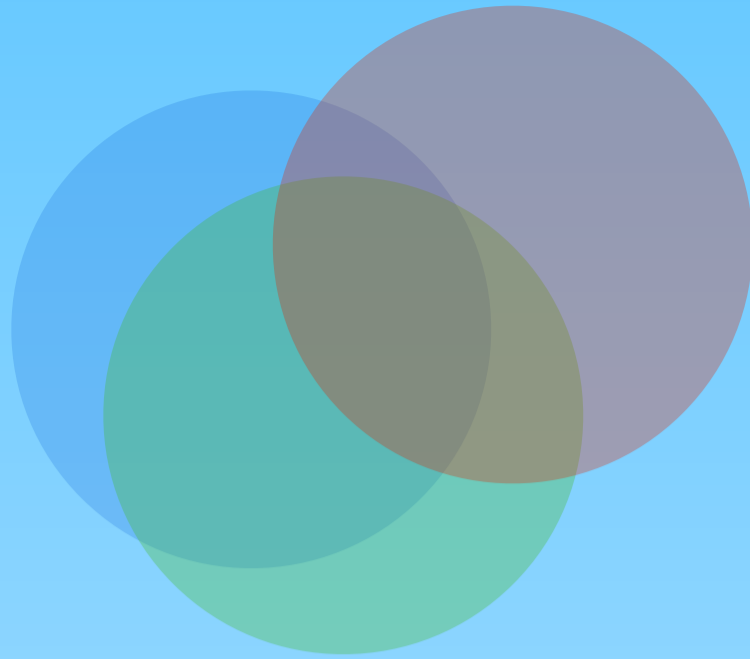


Thoughts

Feelings

Behavior

Dissonance
Imbalance



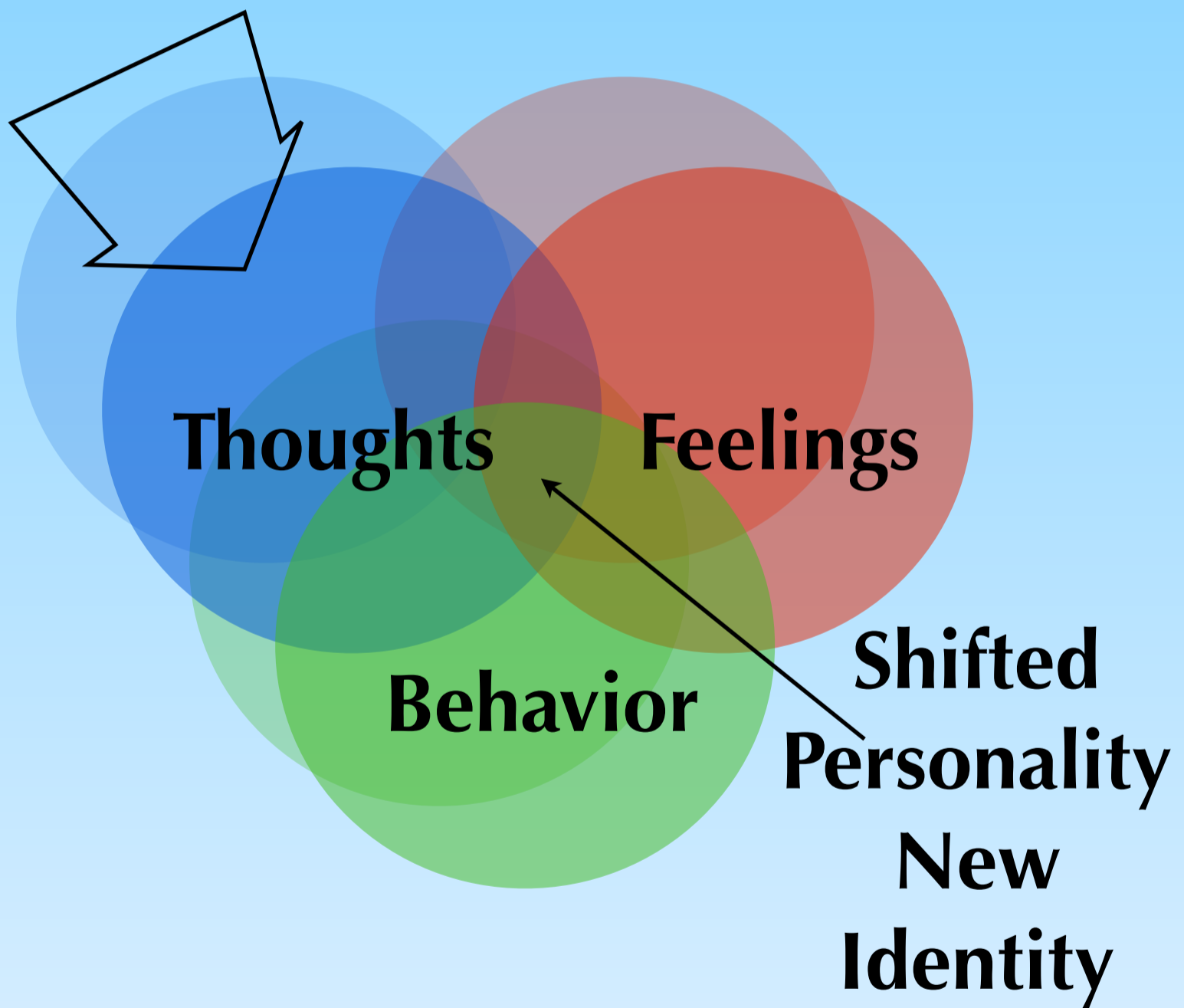
An individual can only tolerate a certain amount of cognitive dissonance until he/she needs to compensate.

Leon Festinger, American psychologist

Compensation Shift

to reestablish equilibrium

External influence

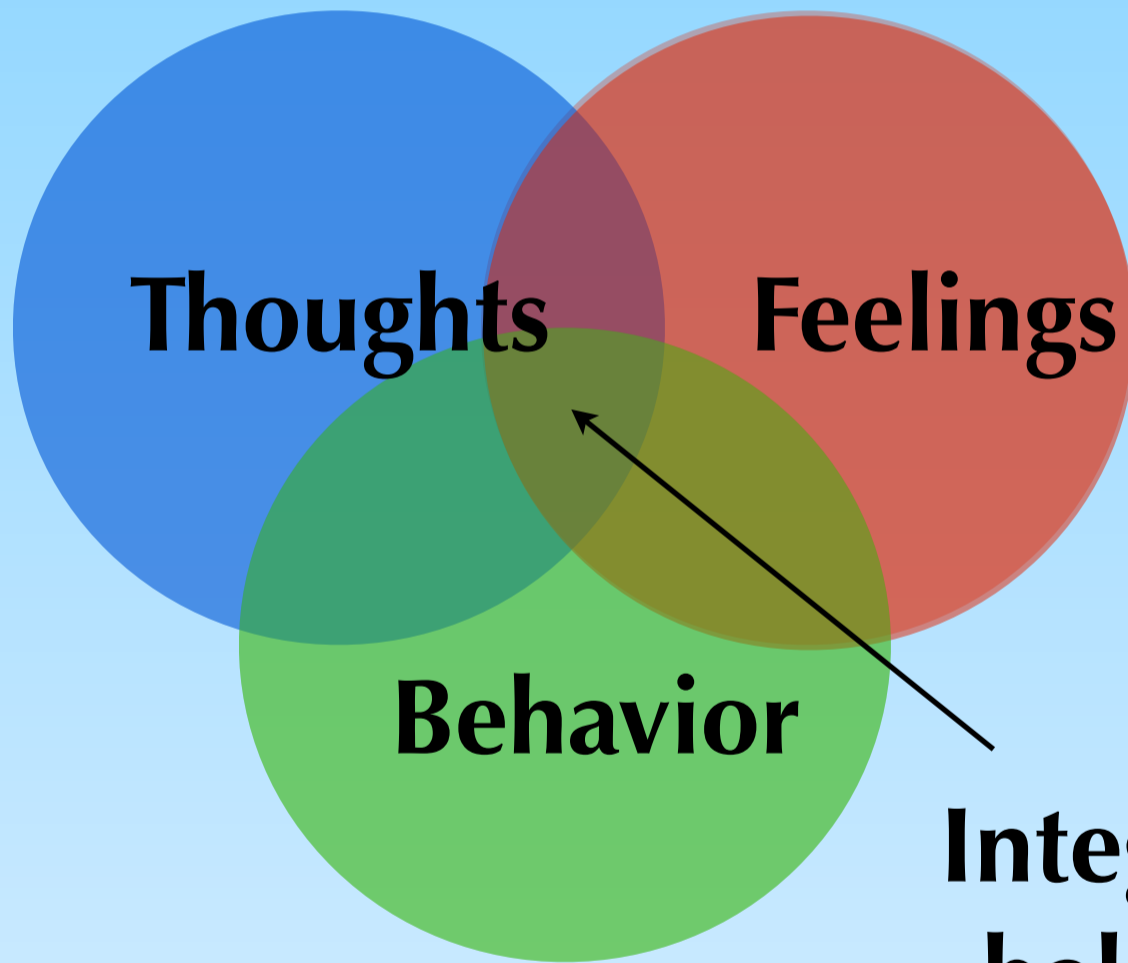


Cognitive Balance

The new equilibrium

Mental

Emotional



**Integrated,
balanced
personality**

9. Trauma and recovery

Extreme stress or trauma can make us feel broken.



Kintsugi bowl, Japan

Physical or emotional trauma, if unresolved, can cause long term effects like stress, anxiety, and burnout.

Artisans are those that create beauty out of brokenness. Heal yourself. Seek help with counselling or coaching if you need.

In the native American belief system, trauma can cause parts of our soul to be split off. The purpose of the healing journey (like the visualisation drum journey) is to find and re-integrate those lost parts, to make us whole again. We can learn to process our emotions, heal our emotional scars, let go of pain, anger and bitterness, and find new strength and inner peace.



10. Mindset

From reactive to proactive. From negative to positive.

Reactive = You just react to the demands and challenges of life. You worry about things you cannot control, like news or the opinions of others. Very stressful and unfulfilling. Worry is the misuse of imagination. You imagine that which you don't want, thus empowering it.

Proactive = Based on your values and vision, you consistently do the most important things to provide for those needs in the future, thus creating the future you desire. You focus on the things you can control, like your attitude and response, your actions. Very peaceful and fulfilling.

How? For example: Build an online business. Share your product, knowledge or expertise to solve a problem or enhance people's lives. Create a digital product or service. To overcome doubt and blocks, self-affirmations like "I'm good. I'm valuable. I can do this. I'm a successful entrepreneur." on stick-on notes on your mirror or fridge can help reprogram your subconscious mind, as can printed images of your desired outcome, like that beach condo. You can even try "mirror therapy" - looking into the mirror, tell yourself things like, "I'm good. I am enough. I can do this. I like myself. Therefore I take care of myself."

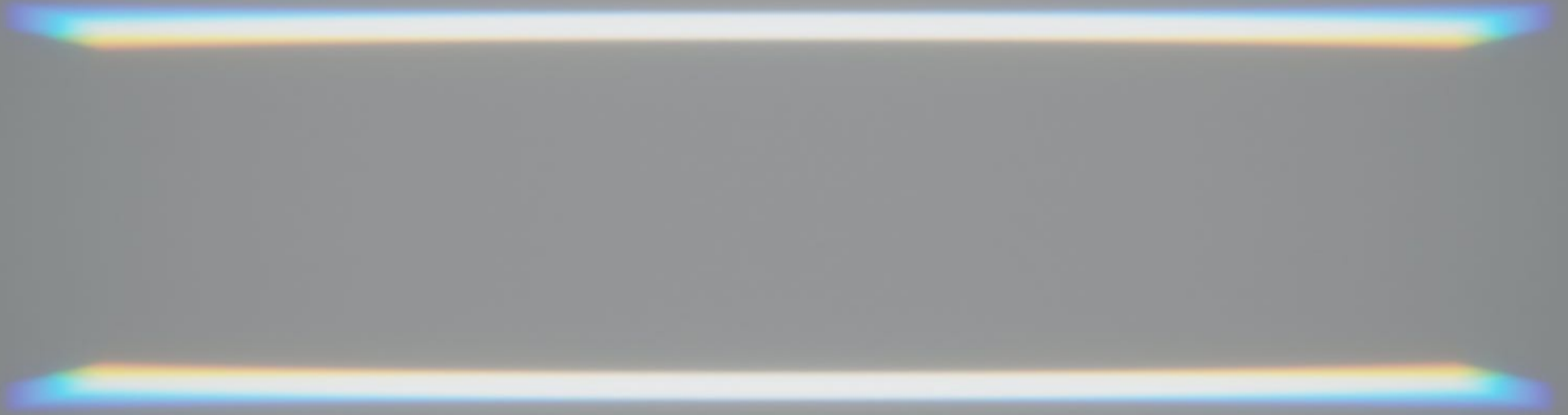
You focus on the desired outcome (positive focus) and do what it takes to get there, rather than the feared outcome (negative focus) which only reinforces that possibility. Whatever you focus on, expands. Let it be positive.

"You will fall, but get up and try again until you succeed." Richard Branson

"What the mind can conceive and consistently believe, it can achieve." Napoleon Hill

10.1. Applied Quantum Physics

Our focus creates reality.



The double slit experiment

Only when observed, a clear pattern is created when particles are projected through a double slit mask. So **our observation, our mental focus** actually **CHANGES the outcome of the experiment**, i.e. it changes reality. Perhaps because by observing we “freeze” one potential outcome of the quantum flux. I’d call that a quantum fixation. So you can see why **our mindset, our vision and focus are** so important: They **create our reality**. What you focus on, expands. Thoughts create actions create results.

10.2. Success Mechanics

Visualize the result you want to experience.



**Write it down.
Do what it takes to get there.**



10.3. Mindset tweak:

Be the watching consciousness.

Visualise your future self.

Imagine having become the person you need to be in order to succeed. Remember how you got there. See yourself doing the things you need to do to get there.

Then do them.

It's just a decision. Decide. Then do.

Which 1 most important thing can I do today?

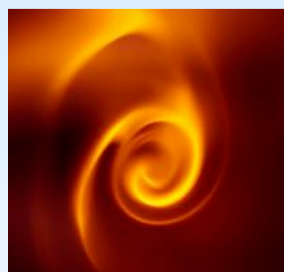


VII Conclusion: The solution to stress and anxiety?

**Find your balance. Your center. Your inner peace.
That is the key to healing and well-being.
(Quint essence of “Quantum healing”
by Deepak Chopra)**

**Reduce stressors. Evaluate. Be proactive.
Increase resilience and efficiency
with Sports, Nature, Nutrition, Music, Yoga, Meditation, Mindset,
Education, Counseling, Coaching, Self Help, Healing journeys.**

**Me, I like to stand in the forest and make like a tree.
Just be.**





VIII Life design

Vision + Strategy + Energy = Success

Begin with the end in mind.

Focus on the desired outcome.

1 step a day. First things first.

Relax and trust in the flow.

Create the reality you want to see.

Because you're free.



It takes time and effort, but you'll get there.

Step by step.

Believe it and you'll see it.

Wayne Dyer

What the mind can conceive and consistently believe, it can achieve.

Napoleon Hill

Life is what you make of it.

Coach Ingo

CoachIngo.net

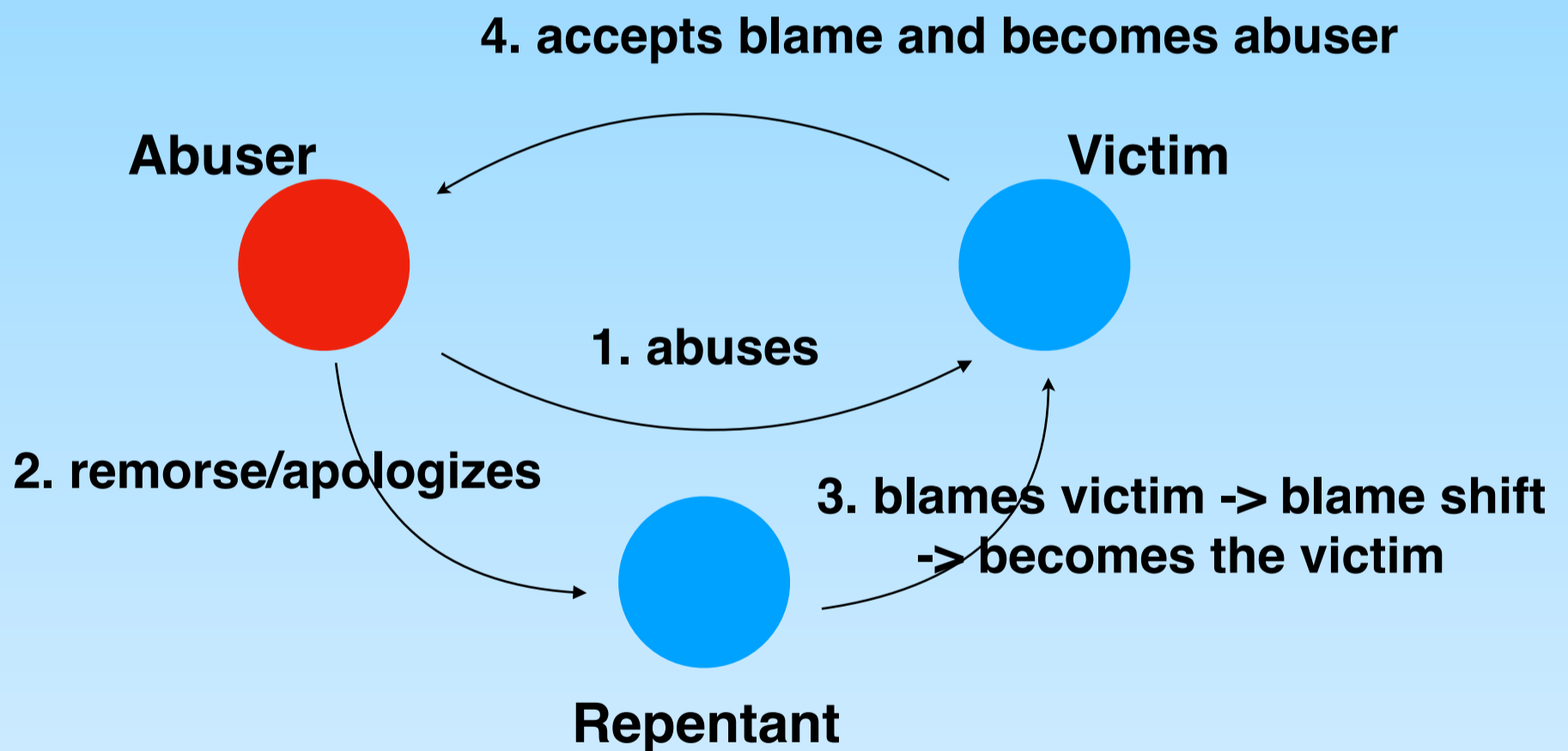
IX Bonus stress management tip:

Trauma prevention + recovery

A concept from Transaction Analysis TA

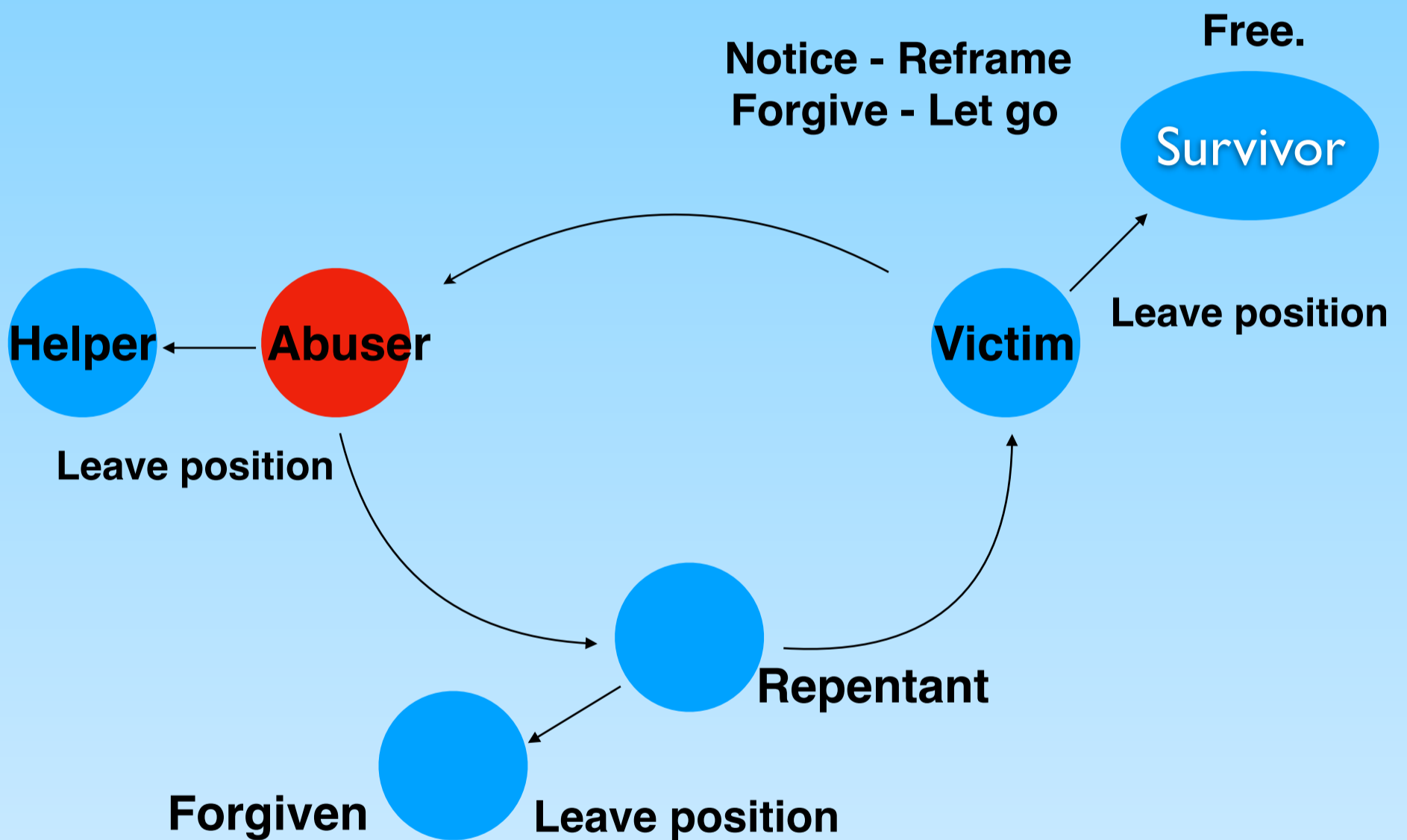
AVOID OR LEAVE

The addictive cycle of abuse in abusive relationships



A self-perpetuating, emotionally charged, addictive cycle of abuse in cults and abusive relationships.

IX.1. How to break the cycle of abuse

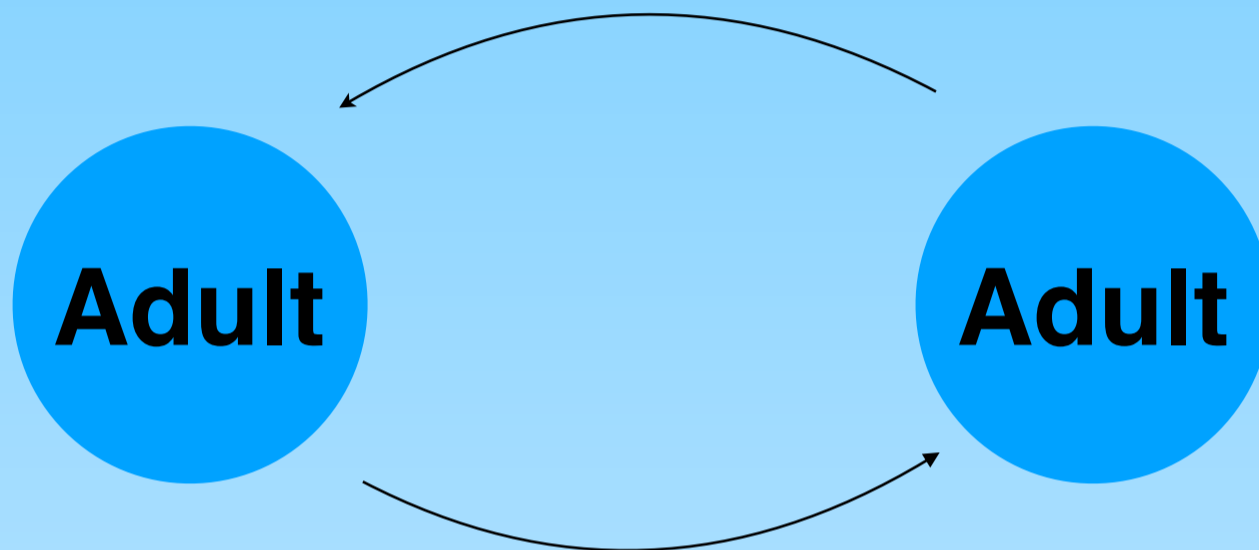


Enlightenment moves away from conflict.

IX.II The healthy relationship

I'm OK

You're OK



...and there's room for improvement.

Based on loving kindness and respect.

**Talk about your needs and theirs,
and how they can both be met.**

Negotiate. Compromise.

Focus on solutions that work for both sides.

Think win / win.

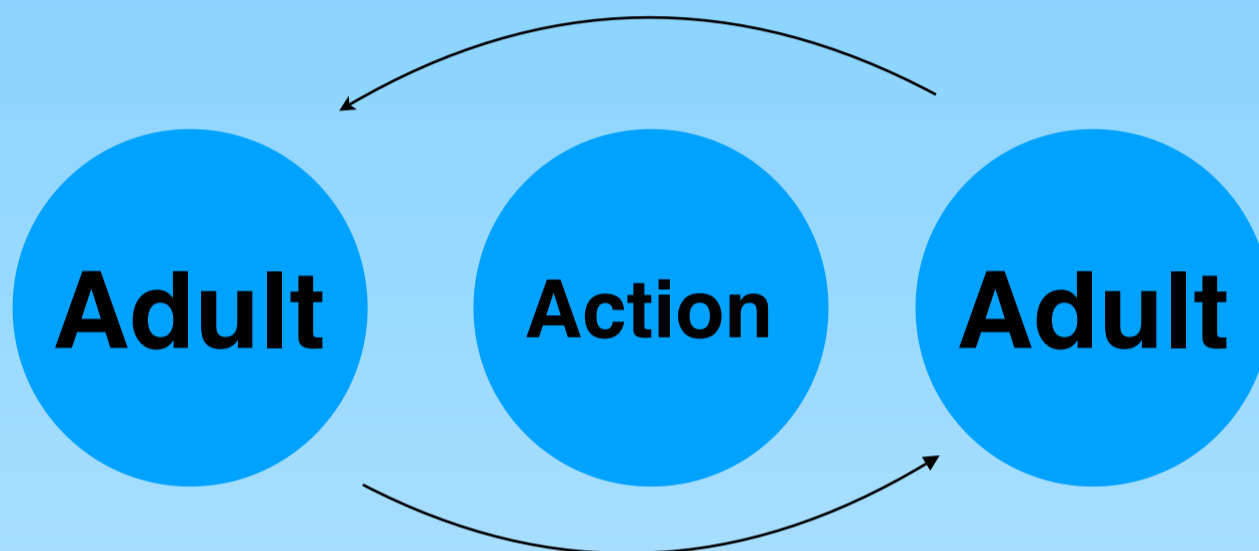
Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

You can agree to disagree. Because you're free.

IX.III Non violent communication

I'm OK

You're OK



Marshal Rosenberg, an American psychologist developed the concept of non-violent communication based on mutual unconditional regard. It focuses on needs and actions rather than personality or character flaws. So rather than saying “You are ...” you would say, “When you do or say this ..., I feel disrespected and not valued. I would ask to please rephrase or do this..” To learn more, google the term or consult a counsellor who is familiar with this technique.



IX.IV The Inner Child

Even though we grow up, our child self remains and can cause distress and blockages if we don't deal with it.

Have you made peace with your inner child yet?

Imagine walking a sunny path and meeting your child self. How would that feel?

What would you tell him / her?

Imagine telling your inner child that he / she is OK, that you love and accept him / her.

(You may find it helpful to do this work with a therapist.)

Imagine..

**How am I when my
life is in balance and flow?**

Inner peace.

Peace begins with me.



X About me

Hi there!

I'm Coach Ingo, a counselling psychologist and certified stress management coach.

I used to be a corporate guy, jetting around the globe with supply chain management software corporate sales and internet logistics, until ..I had a burnout. (No money, no job, no friends.. you take the jobs that come along..).

Luckily, I took some time out and went on several self-healing journeys to Grand Cayman, Australia, Thailand, and Spain. Which helped a lot. I felt I needed to heal myself first before I could help others. Which happens to be the Native American shamanic path as well, as I learned from an interview about a Ph.D. dissertation on the topic.

Sometimes you have to go on a journey outside to find yourself on the inside.

I did. And learned some very helpful insights and tools on the way, from my studies at a Buddhist monastery, with a native American shaman, and from the son of an aboriginal chief at a peace gathering.

It has been a long self-healing journey, and I am now ready to share what I have learned to help others heal themselves, be in balance and realise their goals and dreams. And, in doing that, advance mankind.

I hope these have been some helpful tips and concepts to help you manage your stress and anxiety, and I love to hear from you, so drop me a line about what you take away from this, what has helped you most, and what else you need help with. Find out more or schedule a session with me on my page balancewithingo.com if you need some coaching or counselling support.

Live your dreams
because you're free.
Visualize how you want to be.
Then how to get there.



Stress management is resource management.

Take care of yourself. Because you're worth it.

See you online.

Sunny Greetings

Coach Ingo



balancewithingo.com

Insta: [@balancewithingo](https://www.instagram.com/balancewithingo)