



The Biology of Emotion

Connection Care

May 18, 2023

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the bear

William James: “argued that when we encounter a potentially dangerous situation, such as a bear in our path, we do not consciously evaluate the danger and then feel afraid. Instead, we respond instinctively and unconsciously to the sight of the bear by running away from it and only later experience fear. In other words, we process emotion first from the bottom up—with a sensory stimulus that causes our heart rate and respiration to spike, leading us to flee—and only then from the top down—using cognition to explain the physiological changes that have taken place in our body.”

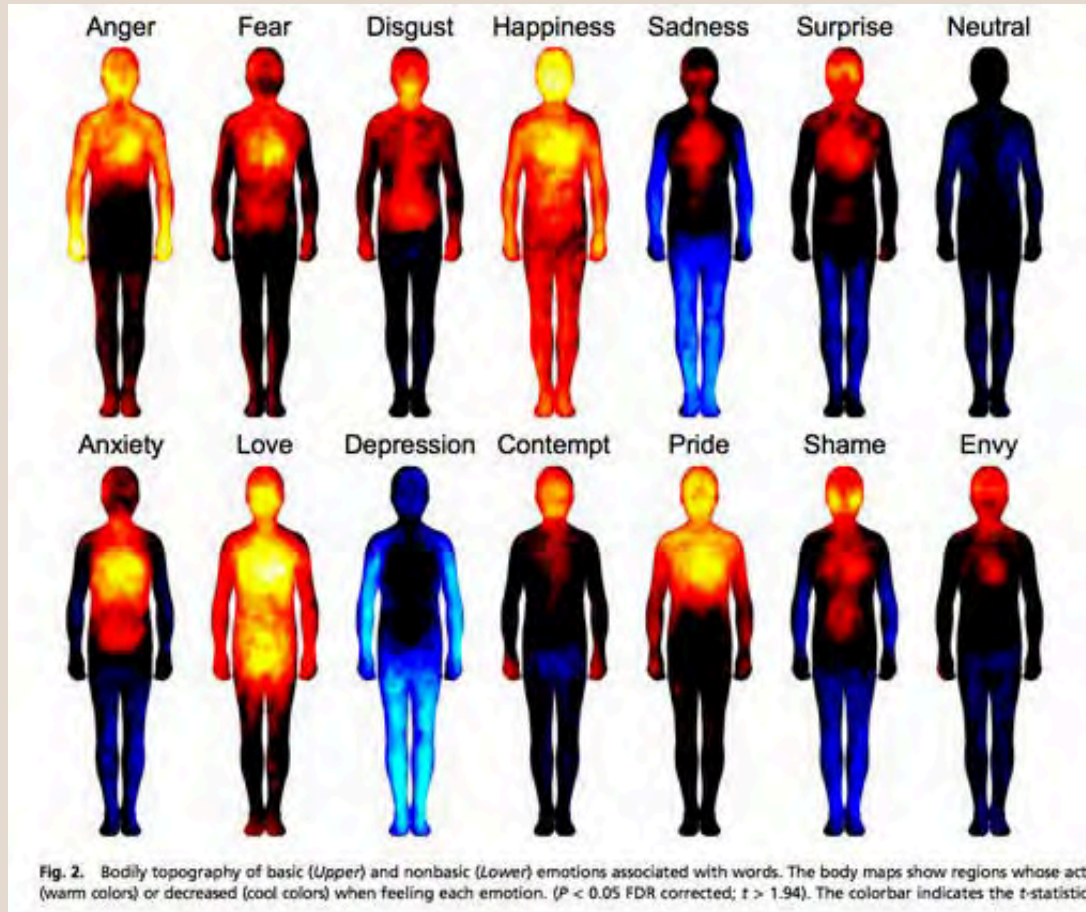




Emotions are Normal!

- Society makes us feel bad about emotions and teaches us to push them away.
- We have emotions for a REASON!
- Emotions give us important information about ourselves and the world around us.
- Emotions motivate us to act and help us make decisions.
- Emotions help us avoid danger.
- Emotions help others understand us better and deepen our understanding of ourselves.

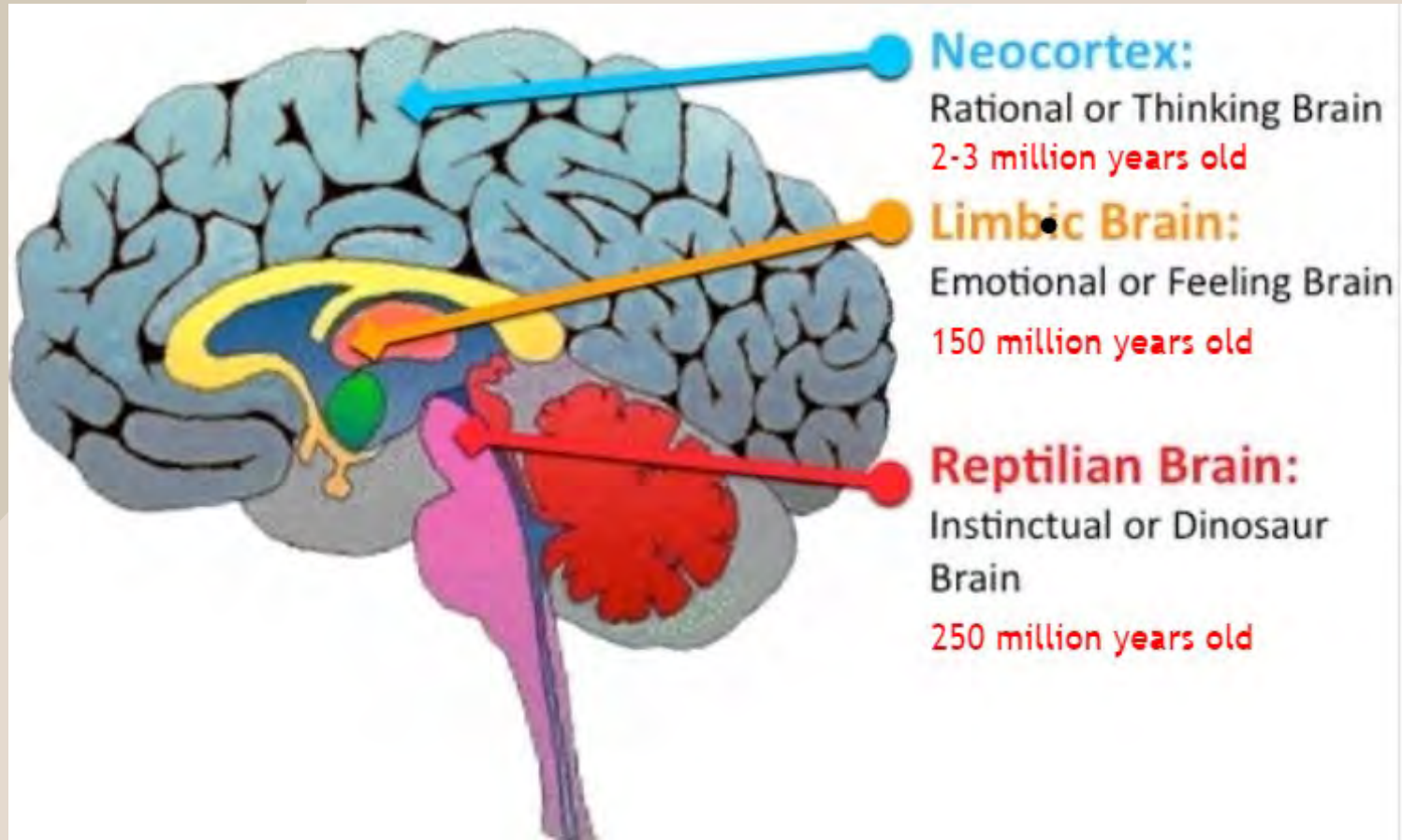
Emotions...a Biological Response



- Core emotions are “programs” that make us move to promote survival and thriving.
- They are physical which is why we feel them deeply and react strongly.
- Blocking emotions leads to anxiety, depression and other psychological and physical symptoms.
- Emotions help regulate our nervous systems.

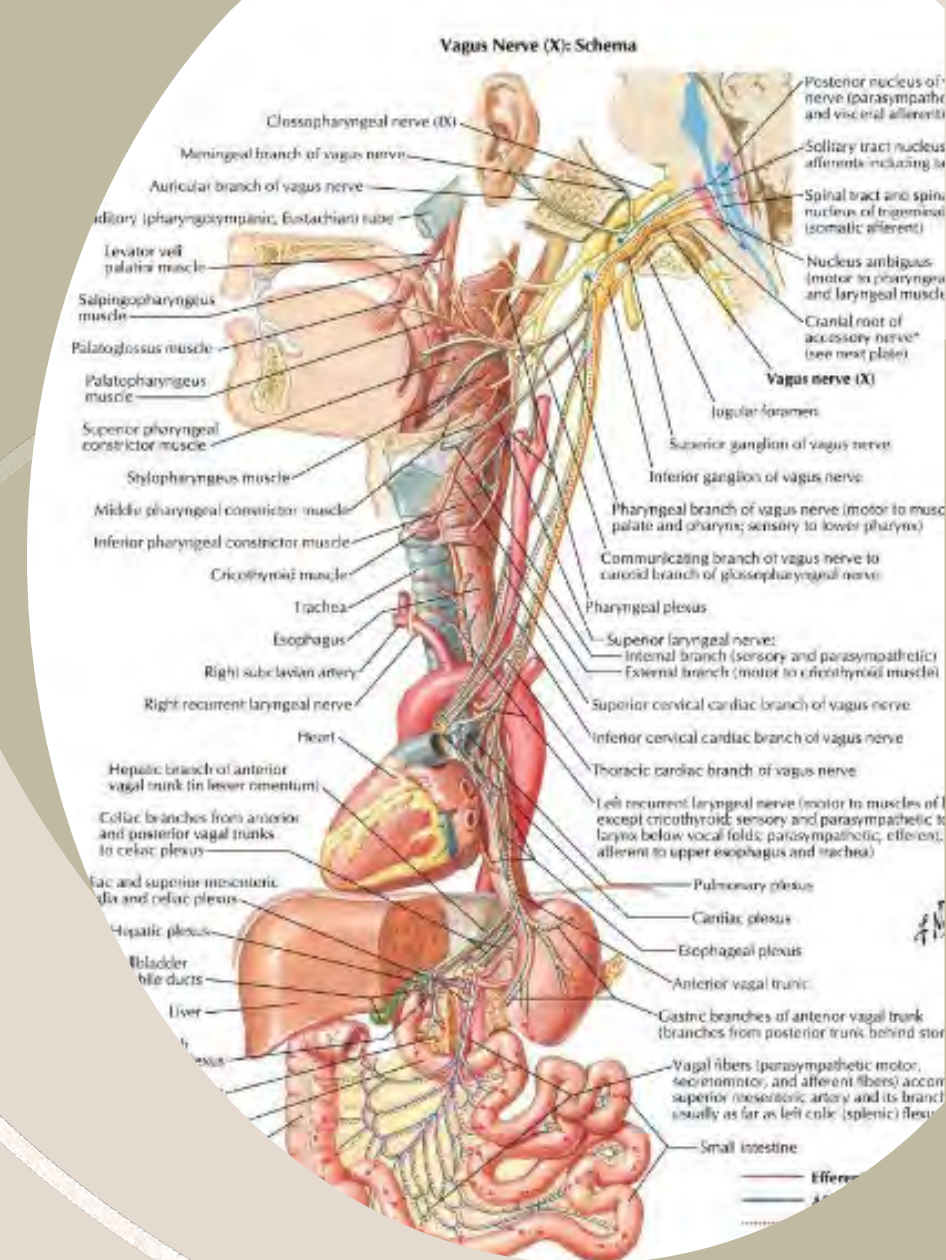
3 BRAINS

Thinking Brain, Emotional Brain, Physical (Body Brain)



Core emotions are in the body!

Vagus nerve connects the limbic system with almost every organ in the body





Emotions help
regulate and
integrate our
nervous systems



Two components of emotion

UNCONSCIOUS

- The first begins unconsciously and manifests itself as an outward expression

SUBJECTIVE/INTERNAL EXPRESSION

- Not only does our brain communicate with our body, but our body communicates with our brain.



Measuring emotion

VALENCE

- the nature of an emotion, with how bad or good something makes us feel on a spectrum from avoidance to approach.

INTENSITY

- the strength of the emotion, the degree of arousal it evokes



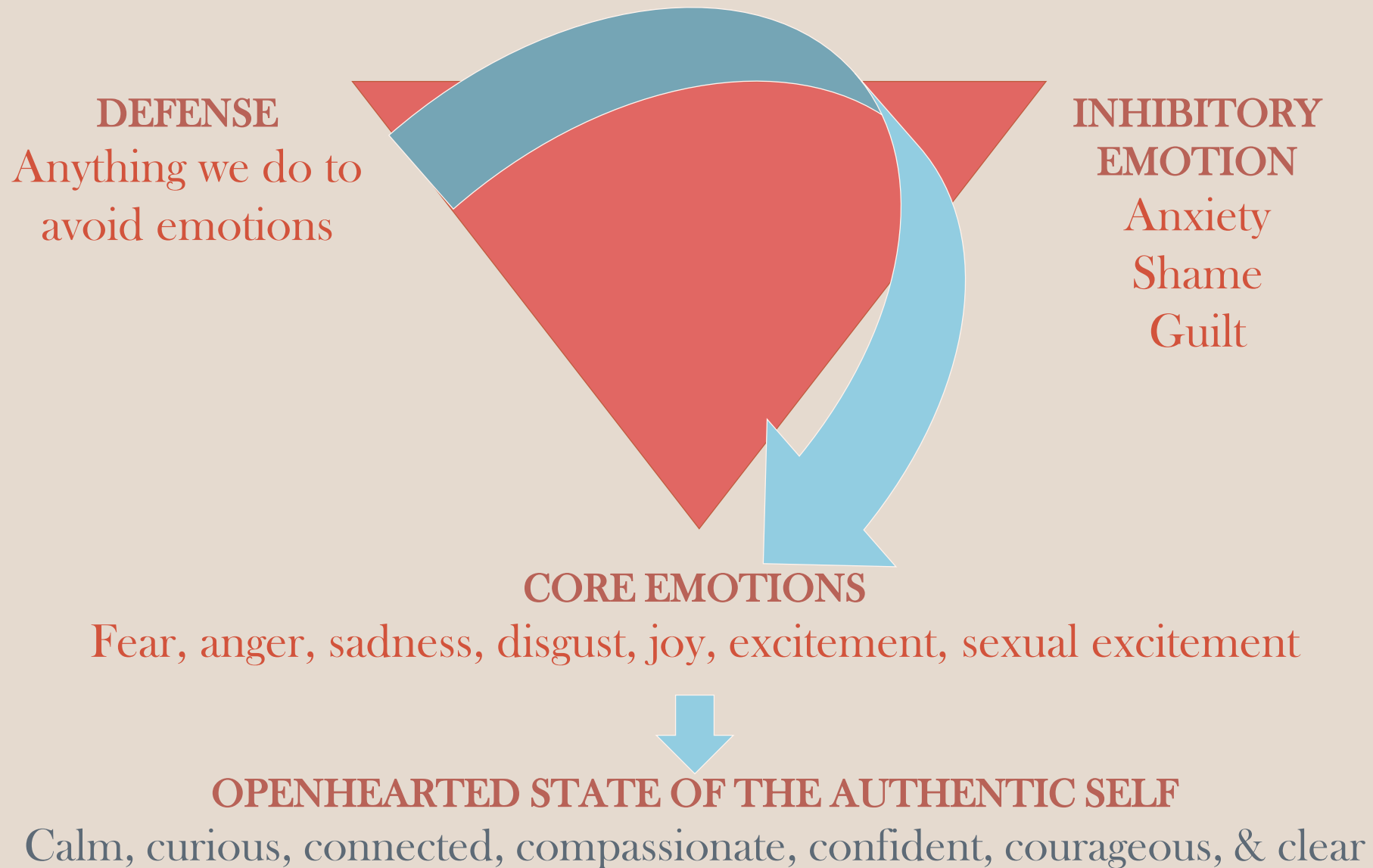
rewire

By focusing attention on physical sensations and emotions, we fire up nerve cells for brain change -- they can rewire. This gives us incredible power when we choose to use it to fosters calm, brain integration, and transformation.





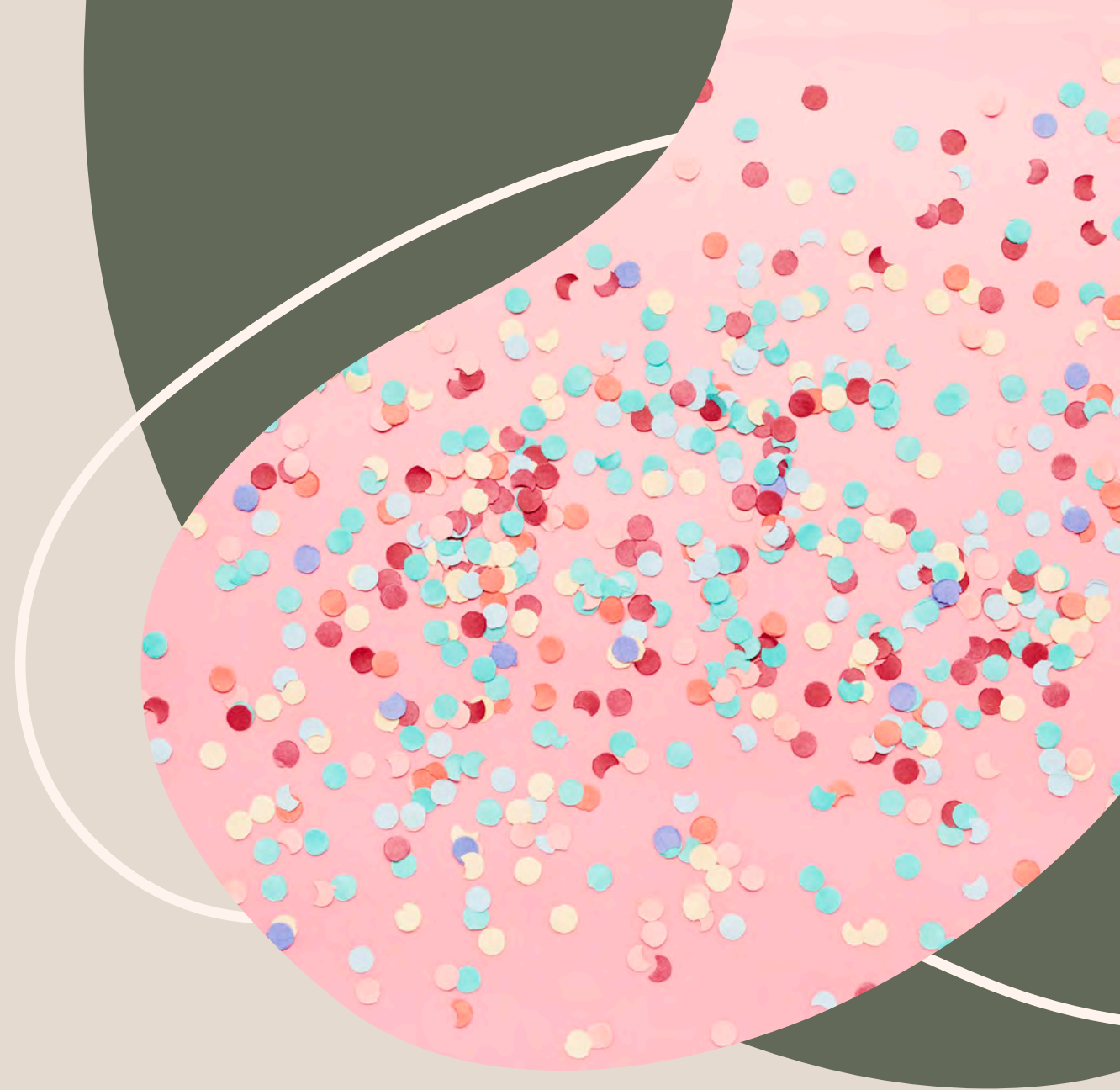
The Change Triangle®





Let's practice

The Joy Workout





ARISTOTLE

“Anyone can become angry—that is easy,” he wrote in *The Nicomachean Ethics*. “But to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.”



THINKING vs. FEELING

- We cannot THINK our way through an emotion, it must be experienced.
- Defenses are the brilliant and creative ways we protect ourselves from emotion and discomfort.
- Instead of judging them or avoiding them, we can be curious and compassionate in understanding their purpose.





Emotional Defenses

None of these are all bad or all good; and this list is not all inclusive.

- Overeating/undereating
- Alcohol, drugs
- Sex, relationships
- Videogames, social media
- Over-feeling a dominant emotion—
Anger or sadness
- Sleep (as escape)
- Helping others (focusing outside of yourself)
- Procrastination—What emotions does the task produce (boredom, anxiety, frustration, resentment, insecurity, etc.)
- Nostalgia (escaping the present)
- Fantasy
- Blaming others (not looking within)
- Excessive self-improvement (feeling anxiety, feeling not good enough)



Questions to Become Aware of Defenses

(Ask yourself with a stance of curiosity and compassion)

What behaviors cause me problems in general?

What behaviors cause me problems in relationships?

What behaviors cause me problems at work?

Do I engage in dangerous behaviors from other people's perspectives as well as my own?

How do I avoid anxiety?

How do I avoid emotions?

How do I avoid conflicts?

Am I aware of my flaws? Can I share them?

Am I aware of my good points? Can I share them?

How do I avoid feeling bad about myself?

Am I rigid or controlling?

Do I judge others a lot?

Do I judge myself a lot?

Can I relax?

Can I slow down and be in the present moment?

Can I tune into my body and sense my sensations?

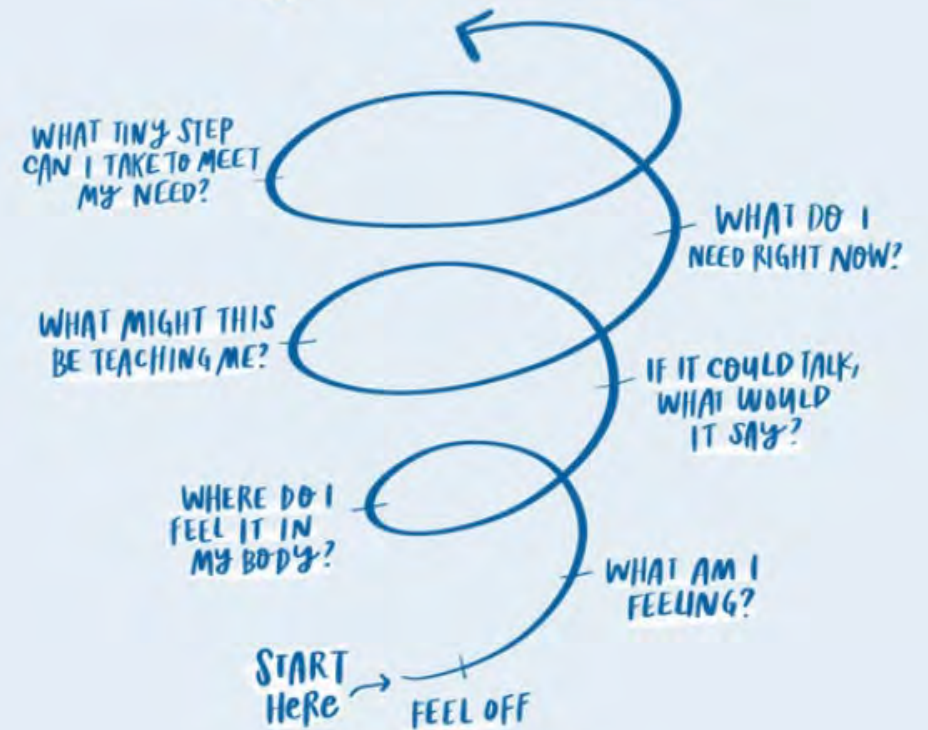
Do I think I am better or worse than everyone else?

Do I share my thoughts and emotions?

Do I spend all day worrying?

HONORING THE PAUSE-NOTICE

HOW TO FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

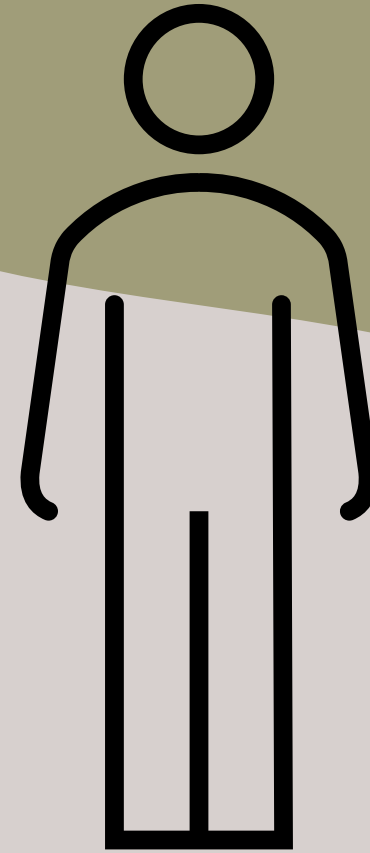


xo @heyamberrae



body mapping

Let's practice a body scan.





BREAKOUT GROUPS

Where do you notice emotion in your body?

What defenses do you use to avoid
discomfort?



takeaways

PODCAST: “UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS
WITH HILARY JACOBS HENDEL”

[HTTPS://FEELINWEIRD.COM/100-
UNDERSTANDING-EMOTIONS-W-
HILARY-JACOBS-HENDEL](https://feelinweird.com/100-understanding-emotions-w-hilary-jacobs-hendel)

“WHERE ARE EMOTIONS FELT IN THE
BODY?”

[HTTPS://GREATIST.COM/CONNECT/E
MOTIONAL-BODY-MAPS-
INFOGRAPHIC](https://greatist.com/connect/emotional-body-maps-infographic)



thank you

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www.ebbandflowcooperative.com