Acceptance & Commitment Therapy in Mental Health Practice 2018

SEPT. 30 - OCT. 5, 2018
THE OMEGA INSTITUTE

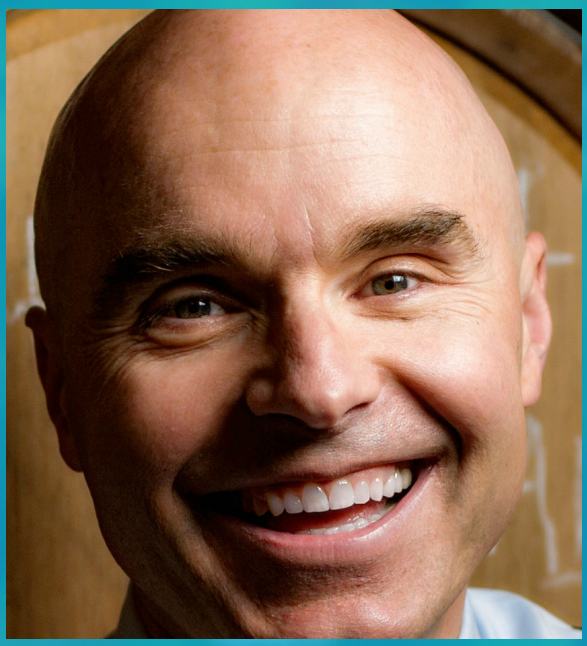
FORMS & EXERCISES PACK

with Drs. John & Jamie Forsyth

WWW.DRJOHNFORSYTH.COM

ABOUT US

Jamie R. Forsyth



John P. Forsyth

We are a husband and wife team, and together co-lead ACT professional workshops in the United States and abroad. Many of our multi-day trainings are retreat style in settings such as The Omega Institute and The Esalen Institute. We also do our best to live out ACT in our relationship and our lives.

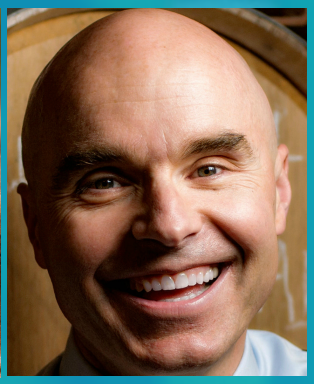
We are also clinical psychologists and inhabit various roles. Jamie spends most of her professional time in clinical practice and John is mostly involved in teaching and research. We also share roles as clinical supervisors.

John also gives talks and keynotes to various groups and organizations, and offers ACT consultation and supervision via Skype.

For more information, or to book a talk or ACT training, please reach us at contact@drjohnforsyth.com.

ACT TRAININGS

Jamie R. Forsyth


John P. Forsyth

~ 3-Day ACT Intensive, Banff, CA ~

July 3 – 5, 2019

~ 5-Day ACT Light ~

The Cape Cod Institute, Eastham, MA

July 22 – 26, 2019

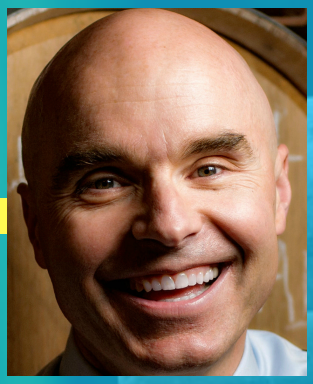
~ 5-Day ACT Training Retreat ~

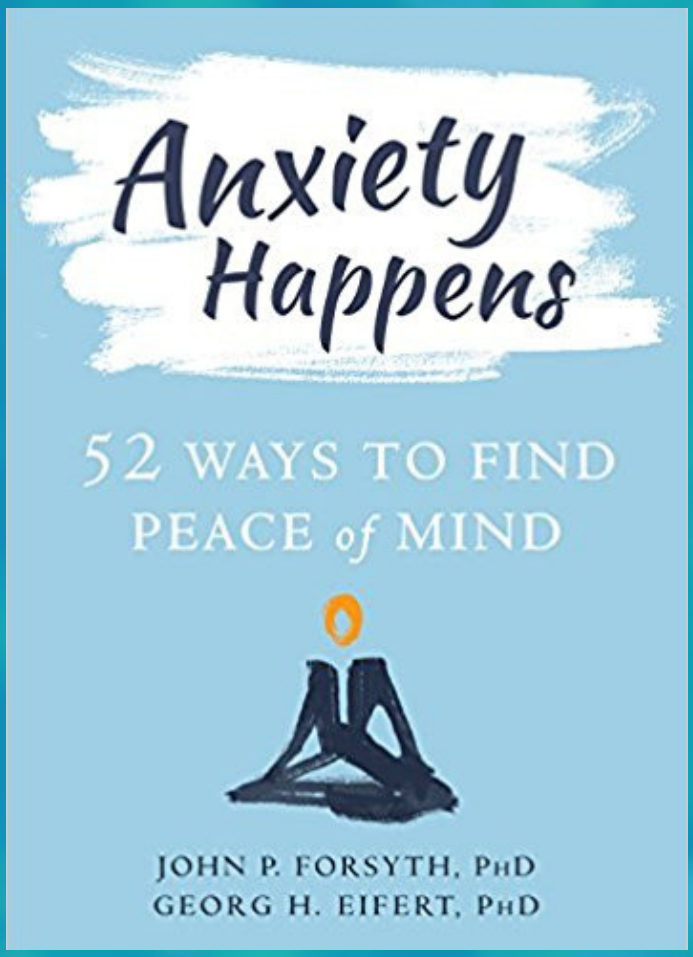
The Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA

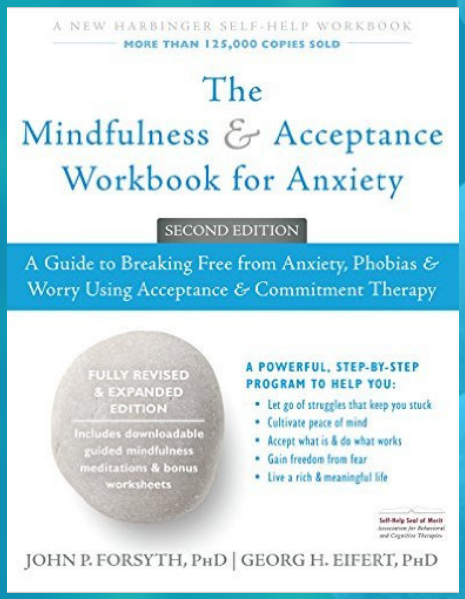
Fall 2019 Date TBD

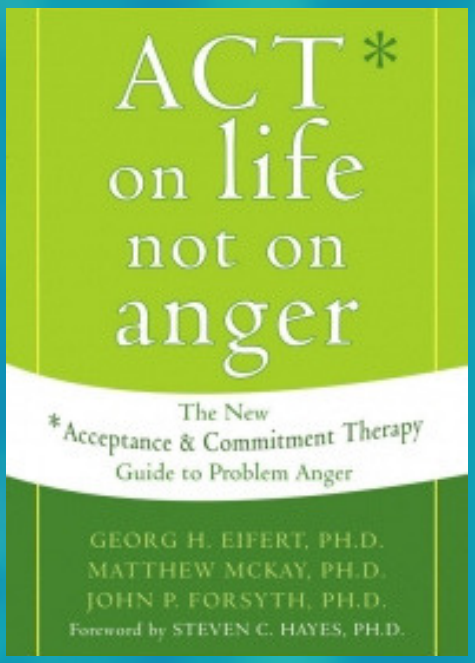
For more information,
or to book a talk or ACT training,
please reach us at contact@drjohnforsyth.com

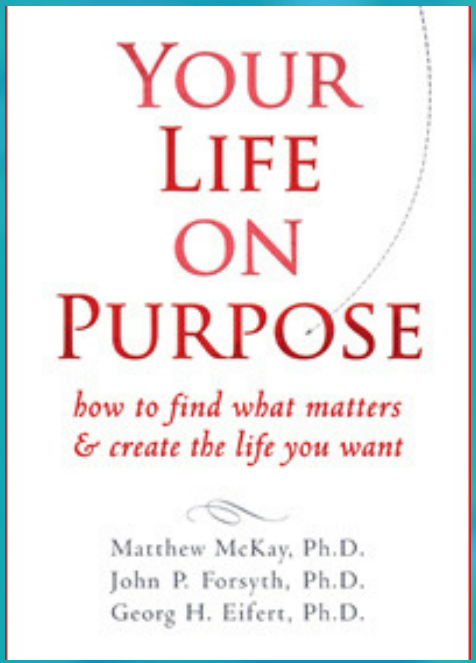
JOHN'S BOOKS

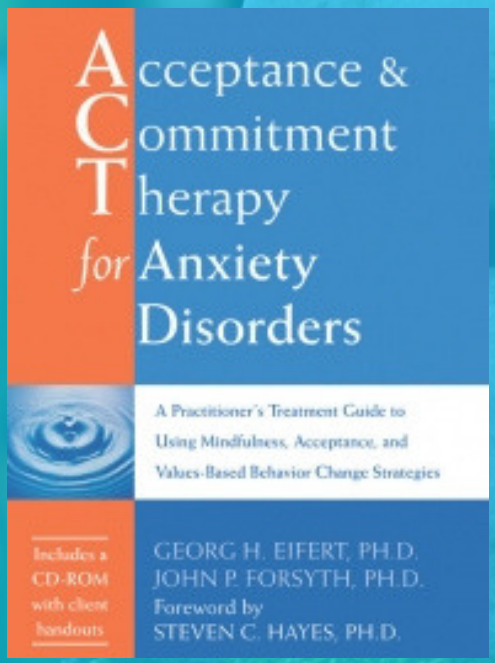












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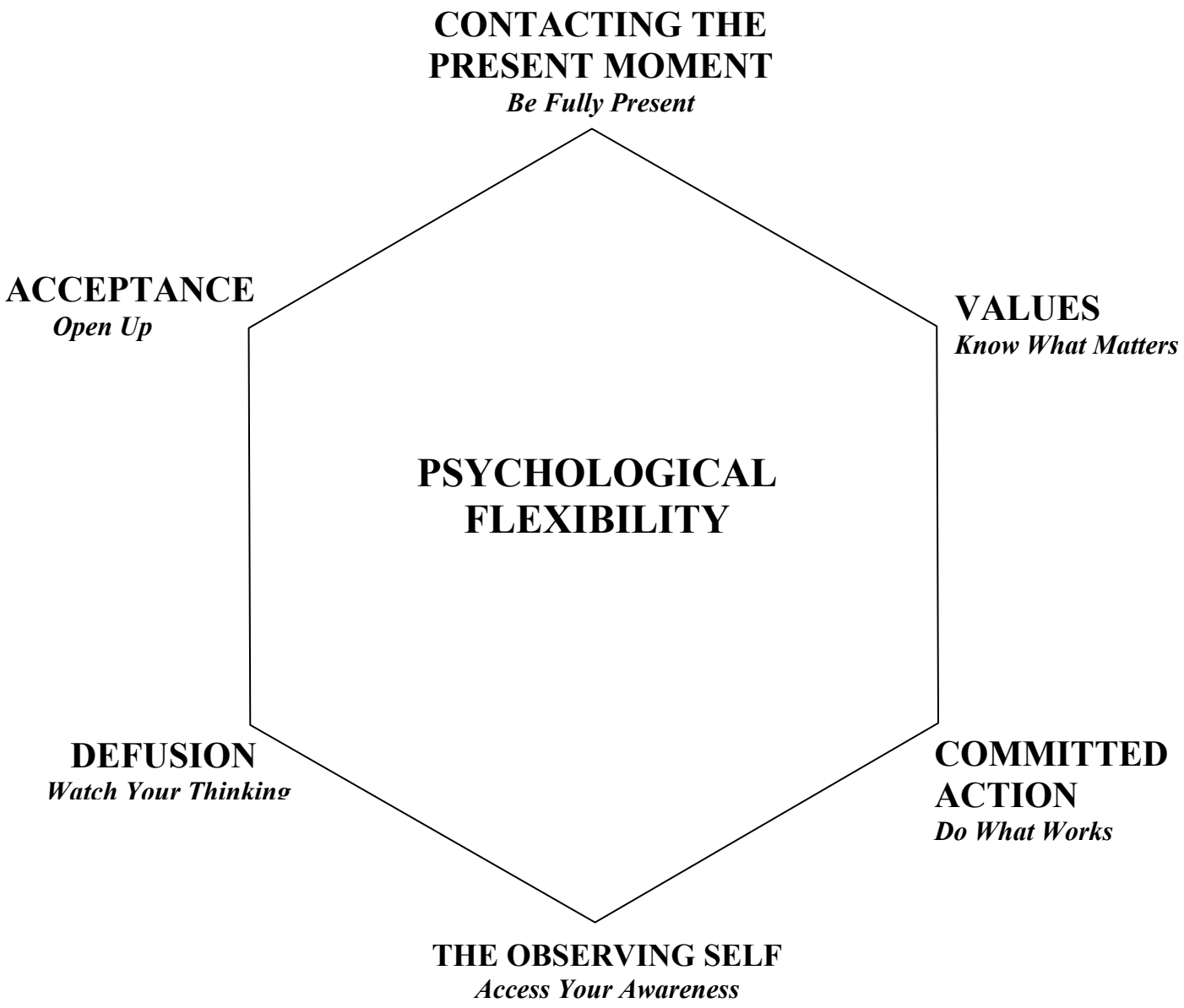
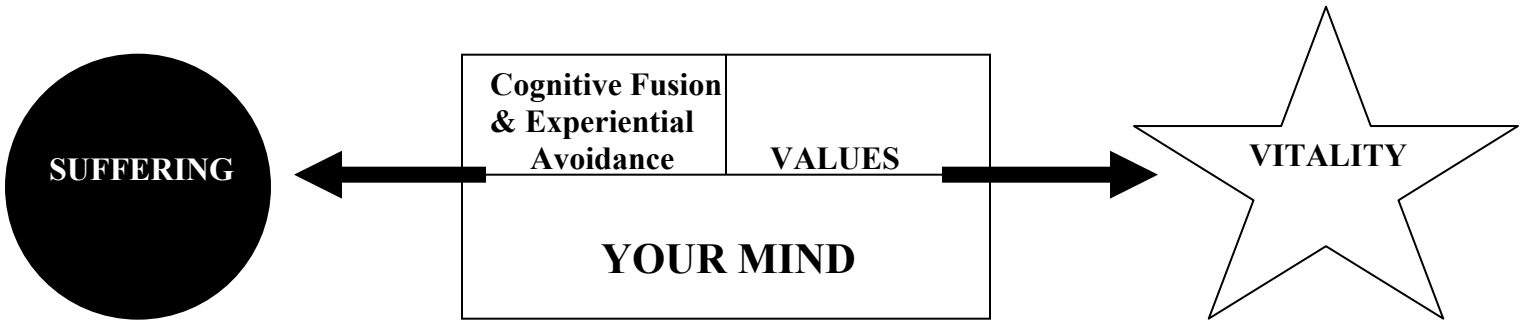
ACCEPTANCE & COMMITMENT THERAPY





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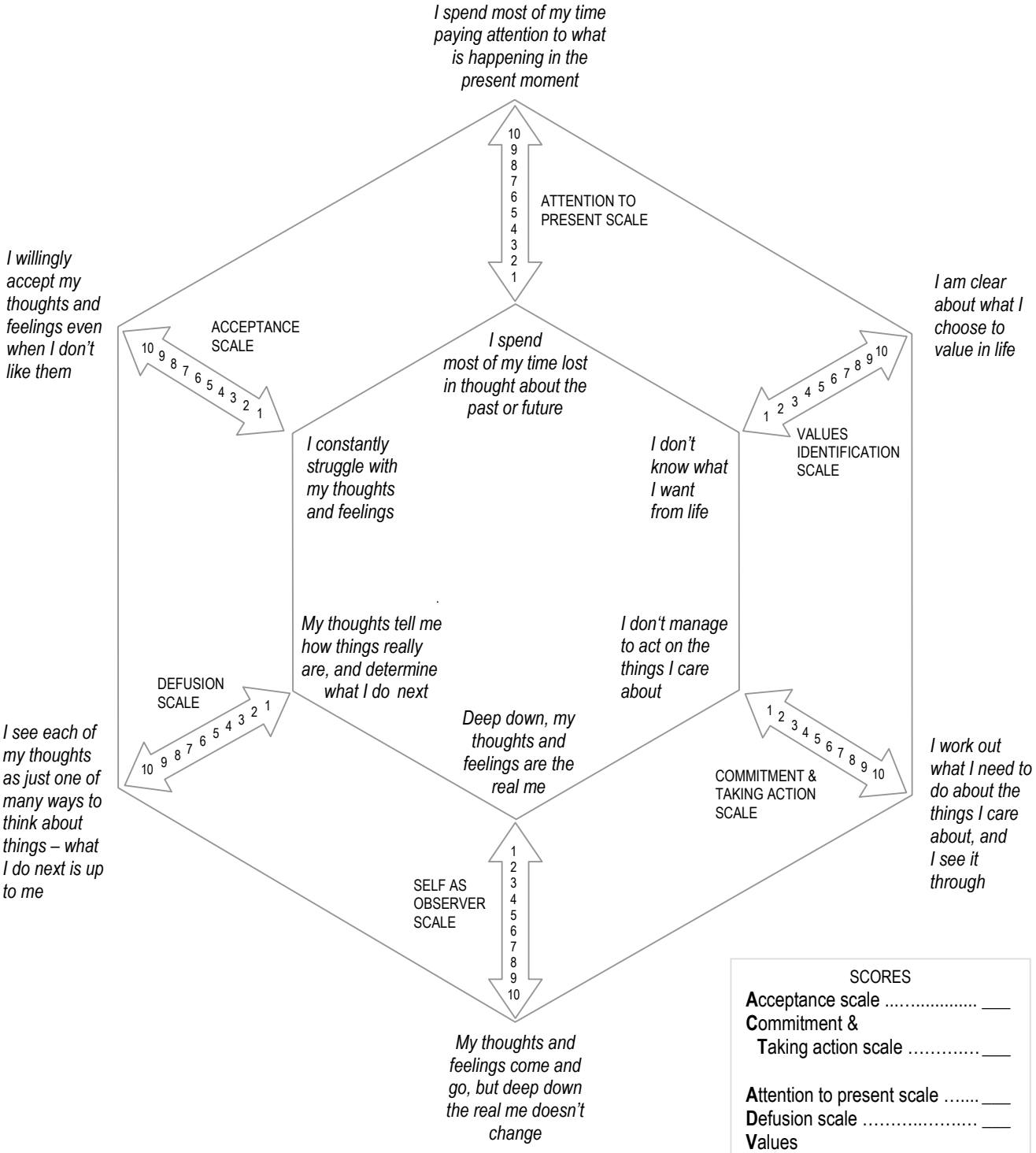
ACT ADVISOR Psychological Flexibility Measure

In this diagram there are six double-headed arrows, each with contrasting statements at either end. The arrows represent sliding scales, numbered 1-10, between each set of statements. For each scale, choose whereabouts you would place yourself (i.e., at which number), depending on how closely, or otherwise, you feel the statements apply to you. If you feel that the statements apply equally, or that neither statement applies to you, score 5. Enter your scores in the box below, then total them to give a Psychological Flexibility score.

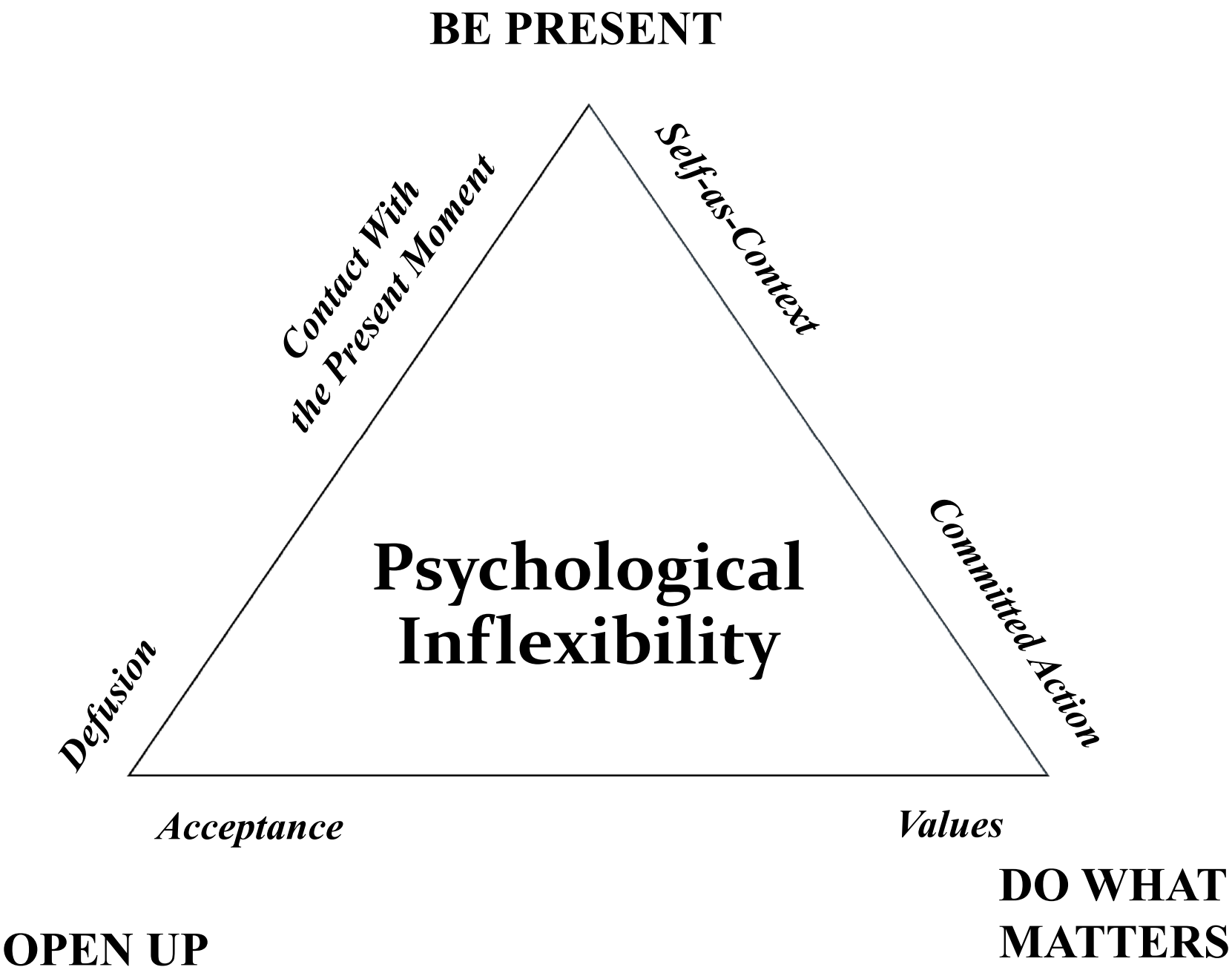


SCORES

Acceptance scale ..... ___
Commitment &
Taking action scale ..... ___

Attention to present scale ..... ___
Defusion scale ..... ___
Values
Identification scale ..... ___
Self as
Observer scale ..... ___
Resulting psychological
flexibility (TOTAL SCORE) ... ___

Developed by David Chantry


BE PRESENT
Contact With the Present Moment
Self-as-Context
Psychological Inflexibility
Defusion
Committed Action
Acceptance
Values
OPEN UP
DO WHAT MATTERS

The Present Moment
"Be Here, Be Now"
Values
"Know What Matters"
Committed Action
"Do What Works"
Self as Context
"Observing Self"
Defusion
"Watch Your Thinking"
Acceptance
"Opening Up"
Dominance of Conceptualized Past and/or Feared Future
Lack of Values Clarity
Inaction, impulsivity, avoidant persistence
Attachment to Conceptualized Self
Cognitive Fusion
Experiential Avoidance
Cultivating Psychological Flexibility

DSM - 6

Diagnostic Criteria

Criterion A. The person experiences one or more of the following events:

1) Thoughts
2) Feelings
3) Sensations

Criterion B. The person engages in behavior aimed at reducing, eliminating, changing, preventing, seeking, or otherwise controlling the Criterion A events.

Criterion C. The behaviors described in Criterion B cause clinically significant distress, which may result in impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Specify if: There can be more to life than the experiences and behaviors described in Criteria A and B, respectively.

A BASIC GUIDE TO ACT CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION

1) Brief History

a) The client's story of what the problem is
b) The client's story of how the problem evolved
c) What has the client tried, and how has it worked (short term & long term)?
d) Why does the client see the presenting complaint as problematic?
e) What would they start, stop, do more of or less of, if the problem was solved?
f) What direction would they like to take their life in?
g) When do they ever feel a sense of purpose or meaning? Doing what?

2) The Context

This includes health, work, finances, relationships, family, culture, etc. Also look for factors that reinforce the problem – e.g. getting attention, manipulating others, disability benefits, avoiding fears of rejection/ intimacy/failure, cultural beliefs, etc. *Watch for the processes below right before your eyes – in the therapeutic interaction*.

3) Psychological Inflexibility

a) *Loss of Contact With the Present Moment* – how much time does the client spend dwelling on/ reliving the past or daydreaming/ worrying about the future? What is the client's ability to be "in-touch" with the present moment? Notice when conversation derails from difficult content, or client hardening and struggling in front of you.

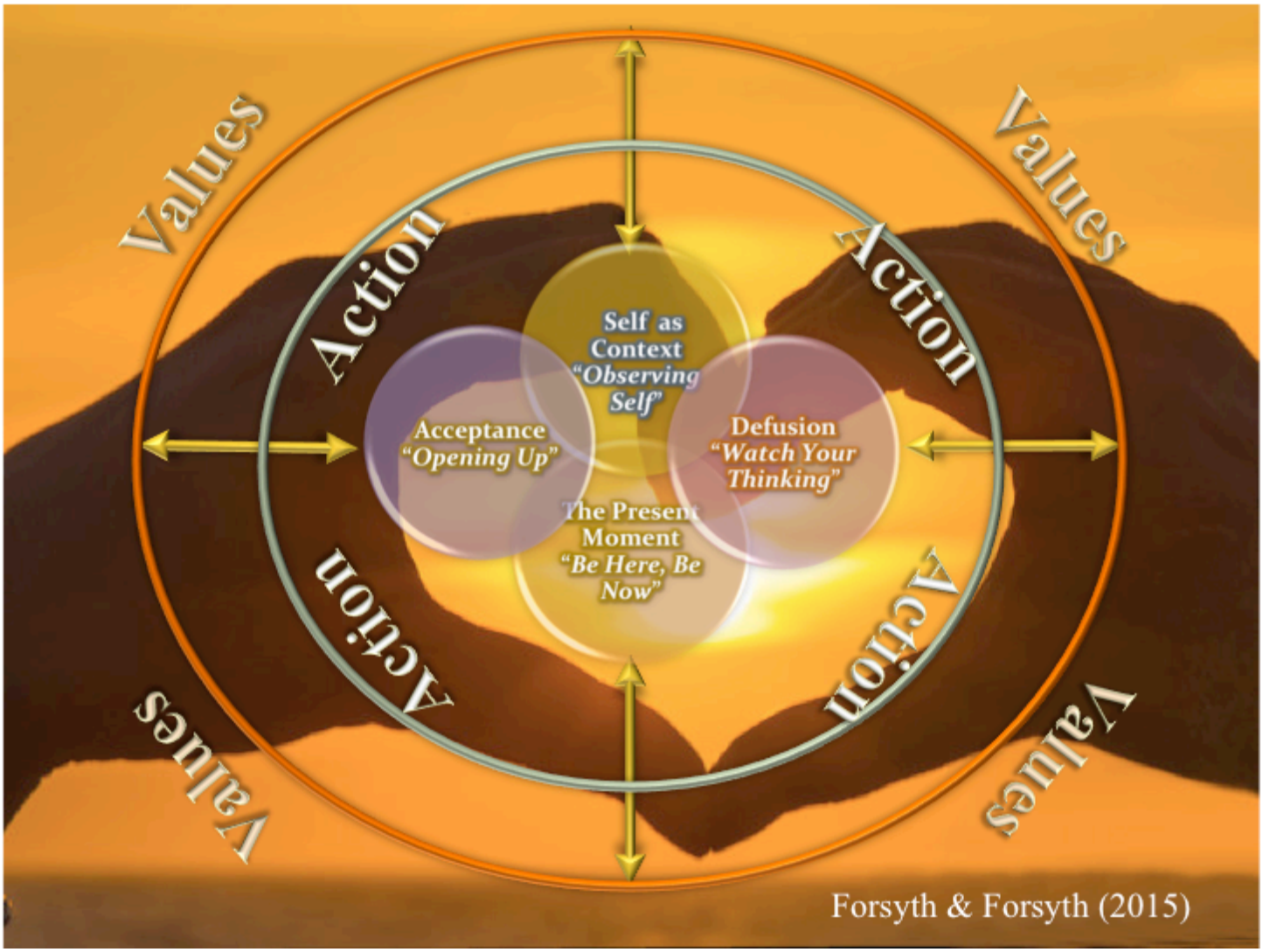
b) *Cognitive Fusion*. What sort of unhelpful cognitive content is the client fused with – rigid rules, self-limiting beliefs, unrealistic expectations, negative self-evaluations, reason-giving, being right etc. See if you can detect when they are buying into their thoughts – see the world through them vs. looking at thoughts as thoughts.

c) *Experiential Avoidance* – what private experiences is the client avoiding, and how? Look to situations that are avoided as a way into difficulty private experiences that are avoided. Also look for a sense of struggle with difficult private content and/or experiences that evoke difficult private content. What are the costs of EA? How pervasive is E.A. in the client's life?

d) *Self-As-Content*. What is the client's "conceptualized self"? (e.g., do they see themselves as broken/ damaged/ unlovable, defective etc.). Look at the narratives or stories clients relay about themselves, their lives, their problems, and solutions. How fused are they to this self-image?

e) *Lack of Values Clarity* – how disconnected is the client from their own true values? To what degree are they able to connect with what they really want in life? Do they even know what they care about, beyond relief from the pain and difficulty? Watch for choices in life that are meant to please others, conform to a standard, and those focused on avoiding pain, or being right. Generally, the client will have a hard time contacting what really matters to them.

f) *Inaction, Impulsivity, or Avoidant Persistence*. What you are looking for here is an absence of effective actions. For instance, in what ways are clients' actions self-defeating? Do they lack necessary skills for change? Do they fail to persist, when persistent action is required? Or do they inappropriately continue to persist when such action is ineffective? (trying harder when it is not working). Watch also for a sense of white knuckling it – a client who may be able to do something, but with great distress and unease (i.e., in a way, they are there physically, not fighting emotionally and psychologically). Watch for a lack of vitality, a sense that a person has checked out of his or her own life, and dominance of short-term goals such as feeling better, looking good, being right over long-term desired qualities of life (values).



The Sphere-a-Flex (Forsyth & Forsyth, 2015)

1. Values are the Context for ALL the work
2. Processes in the middle serve the outer rings
    a. This is what distinguishes ACT from other mindfulness-based interventions
3. ACTion with the other rings nurtures processes in the middle
4. Dance around the middle in the service of the outer rings
5. Use flexibly as a guide to your clinical work

Key response dimensions for psychological flexibility processes

Process	Key Features of Client Behavior	0 None or Very rarely	5 At times or with encouragement	10 Fluent and flexible
Present Moment	*Notes and makes use of internal and external events in the now*			
	Flexible attention – can persist or change as needed			
	Disentangled from past or future, rather than worrying, anxiously predicting, or ruminating			
Self	*Contact with a transcendent sense of self*			
	Sees perspective of others and other times / places			
	Disentangled from conceptualized self			
	Uses perspective taking to enhance effective action			
	Shows genuine empathy and compassion			
Acceptance	*Open and curious approach to painful experiences*			
	Can enjoy positive emotions without clinging or excessive fear of loss			
	Active and flexible in the presence of difficult thoughts, feelings, memories, or bodily sensations			
Defusion	*Able to let go of being right / looking good*			
	Disentangles from stories and reasons in the interest of effective action			
	Evaluates thoughts primarily on the basis of workability rather than "truth" in a literal sense			
	Notices thinking as an ongoing process rather than merely the world structured by thinking			
	Thinking seems open, penetrable, and flexible			
Values	*Clear sense of chosen values*			
	Values intrinsically rather thru compliance, avoidance, or fusion			
	Values provide meaning in the present			
	Distinguishes values and goals			
	Open to vulnerability of choosing values			
Committed Action	*Sense of lightness, flow, vitality in actions*			
	Client willing to change directions in service of values			
	Action is linked to chosen appetitive purpose, not avoidance			
	Larger and larger patterns of effective action emerge over time, rather than impulsivity, incapacity, or passive inaction			
	Client keeps commitments			

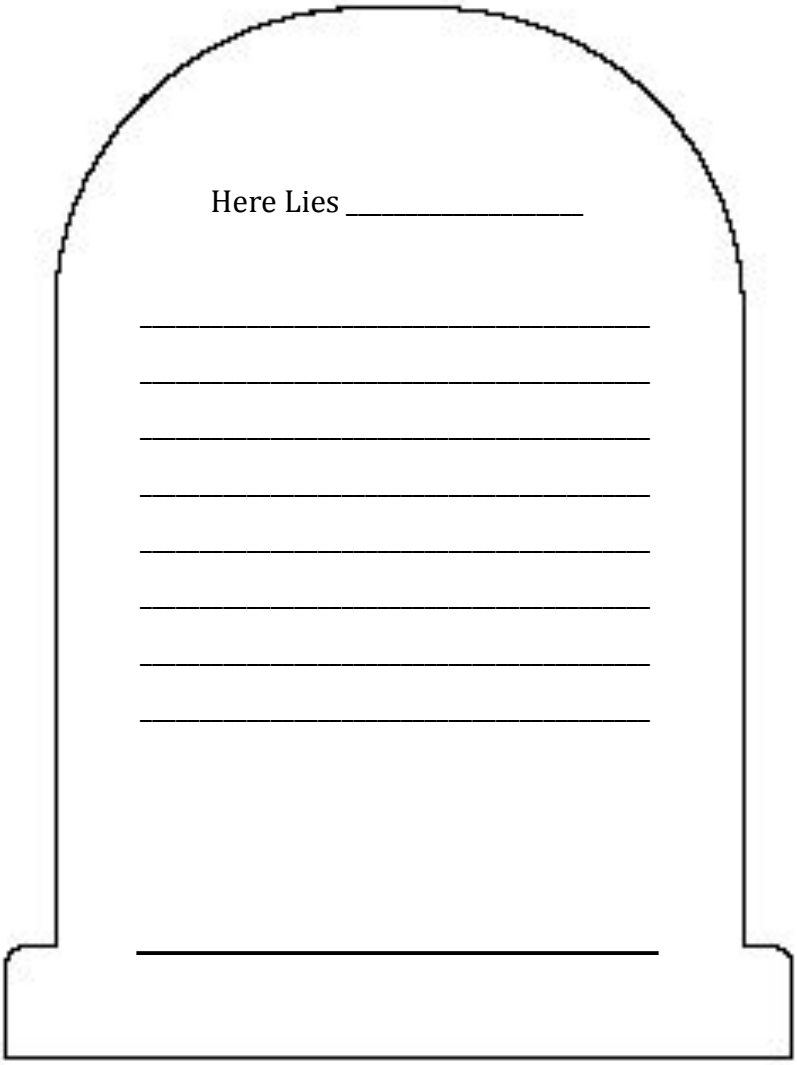
EXERCISE: The Masks I Wear

(What I Allow Others to See)

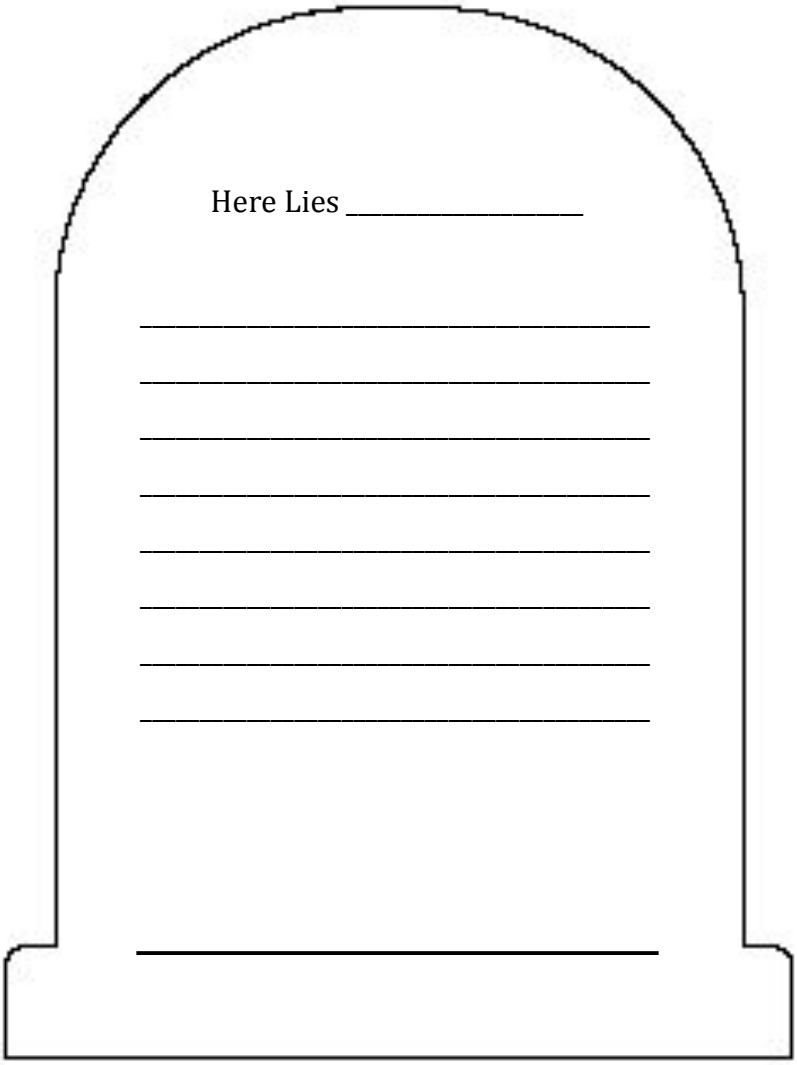
EXERCISE: The Masks I Wear

(What I Keep Hidden Inside)

Problem Management Epitaph



Life Management Epitaph



VALUED DIRECTIONS WORKSHEET

1. Work/career

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

Work may involve a paid job, unpaid volunteer work, or homemaking. What's important to you about your work, and what qualities does having a job provide for you? For some people it means financial security, independence, or prestige; for others it involves intellectual challenge or interacting with or helping others.

Have you put a valued career or volunteer job on hold because of emotional or cognitive barriers? Maybe it's a fear of failure or sense of unease as you consider a career that may mean giving up some of the comforts or luxuries of your current lifestyle. Or maybe you think it would be irresponsible to pursue your dream job.

Don't let those thoughts and emotions stop you from exploring this area. After all, most of us spend a major chunk of our waking hours involved in work. There are many ways to make whatever you do personally rewarding. Keep that in mind as you envision your dream job or how you'd like to use your energy, talents, and skills productively. What would that look like? What would you do if you could be doing anything? Describe the qualities of a job or endeavor that you believe would be perfect for you.

What do you want your work or career to be about or stand for? What is important to you about your work (for example, financial security, intellectual challenge, independence, prestige, interacting with or helping people)?

My Core Values in This Domain	*My Valued Intentions for Each Value*
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

2. Intimate relationships (e.g., marriage, couples, partnership)

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

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Reflect on your values and intentions

This area focuses on intimate relationships with a partner or spouse. Here, we're asking you to look and see what you'd like to bring to those kinds of relationships. What kind of partner would you most like to be within an intimate relationship? What values do you want to express here in your role—what would you like to bring to such a relationship (not what others may give you in return)? What would you be doing to show greater intimacy with a close partner or spouse? What type of marital or couple relationship would you like to have? How do you want to treat your partner, or a person that you share a special commitment and bond with?

My Core Values in This Domain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Valued Intentions for Each Value

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. Parenting

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

You may be a father, mother, or caretaker for a child. Or, you may have plans to someday be a parent. Here, look to see what you want to be about in this area. What type of parent do you want to be? How do you want to act to support your role as a parent? How do you want to interact with your children? What would your child see you doing to support your values here? What would others see you doing? What is it about being a parent that is important to you?

My Core Values in This Domain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Valued Intentions for Each Value

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. Personal growth/education/learning

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

You nurture your personal growth when you explore yourself and develop as a human being—emotionally, intellectually, physically, spiritually, behaviorally. This often means gaining a deeper sense of who you are. In fact, many of the domains you've already read about have everything to do with your personal growth as a human being.

Personal growth is often related to learning. Traditional schooling certainly counts, but growth and learning can happen just about anywhere. You don't need a classroom for that. For example, amateur athletes may experience health or social benefits from participating in a sport, but these activities can also offer a sense of being challenged and the pleasure of learning or refining a skill.

So look within yourself and see if you can find anything about personal growth and learning that's important to you. Would you like to sharpen skills you already have, or develop new ones? Are there areas of competence you'd like to explore? Do you enjoy learning new things? Do you enjoy sharing what you've learned with others? Why is learning important to you? What skills, training, or areas of competence would you like to acquire? What would you really like to learn more about?

My Core Values in This Domain	*My Valued Intentions for Each Value*
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

5. Friends/social life

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

While we're all social creatures, there's a lot of variation in what we value in the realm of social relationships and their depth and scope. Some people value knowing many people, even if they don't know any of them particularly well. Others place a premium on having a few close friendships. Still others prefer a mix of friendships, some with depth and others relatively shallow. And then there are people who prefer to be alone.

Depth relates to degree of intimacy, whether emotional, spiritual, or intellectual. So think about the importance and quality of your social life. Are social bonds important to you? What kind of relationships would you like to have? What personal qualities would you like to develop in and through your relationships? How would you interact with your friends if you were the "ideal you" with them?

Give some thought to your talents and passions, and to what might currently be missing in this area. What is unique about you as a person? What can you bring to any friendship? What kind of friend do you want to be? What does it mean to be a good friend? How do you behave toward your best friend? Why is friendship important to you?

My Core Values in This Domain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Valued Intentions for Each Value

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

6. Health/physical self-care

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

How and why do I take care of myself? Why do I want to take care of my body and my health through what I eat, by exercising, or by being physically fit? How important is physical health to me? What roles do exercise and healthy eating play in my life?

People have a variety of motivations for trying to stay healthy. Some do it out of sheer enjoyment; others do it in order to be successful in a physically demanding job. Still others see a healthy lifestyle as a way of taking care of themselves, perhaps so that they stand a better chance of living to a ripe old age and being around for those they love.

Many of us also have old wounds from losses or unfair treatment by others, and, sadly, some have suffered abuse and trauma. These experiences can change us for good or for ill. So often the darkness is all we can see, and this makes us harden up. We blame ourselves or others and retreat from the world and all it has to offer. This ultimately hurts us in the end.

The antidote is to practice acts of kindness and loving care—starting with yourself and then expanding out to other people in your life. This can help you stop being at war with yourself and will also take the sting out of the psychological pain and unhappiness you've lived through and may continue to experience now. And even if you don't have much pain in your life, you still might value kindness and compassion.

How important is it to you to learn to be kinder to yourself? How would your life be different if you were to practice more acceptance and compassion toward your feelings, memories, and wounds? Do you look for ways to practice acts of kindness toward yourself, and if so how does that look? What do you do? If you don't do this currently, what form might it take? Even if self-compassion seems difficult, does it seem important for you to start moving in that direction?

Think about what motivates you to stay healthy—mind and body. There are many possible reasons for actively pursuing good health, and all are valid. What is it about caring for your physical and mental well-being that's appealing to you, and how important is it to you to act in accordance with this value?

My Core Values in This Domain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Valued Intentions for Each Value

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

7. Family of origin (parents/caretakers/siblings you grew up with)

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

Take a moment now to consider your relationships with members of the family in which you were raised. This may include your stepfamily members too. Are your family bonds important to you? Do they give you a sense of meaning and purpose? What kind of relationship do you want to have with your parents, caretakers, or siblings? Are these roles and relationships important to you, and if so, how?

Be mindful of your passions and talents in this area too. What do you bring to this domain and what do you feel strongly about in this area? Also think about whether there's anything missing from your life in this area. How do you want to interact with your family members? If you have siblings or stepsiblings, what type of stepsister or stepbrother do you want to be? If your parent(s) is/are alive, what type of son or daughter do you want to be?

My Core Values in This Domain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Valued Intentions for Each Value

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

8. Spirituality

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

We are all spiritual beings in a sense. This is true whether you practice a faith, pray, meditate, ponder life's questions, or seek out ways to grow in awareness of yourself and your connections with other human beings and the world around you. So participating in an organized religion counts here, but for many people spirituality transcends the boundaries of a religion, place of worship, or belief in a higher power.

Take a moment to reflect on your spirituality. Do it broadly and on your own terms, and don't limit yourself to cultural or social expectations. What seems most appropriate and suitable for you? Are there things larger than your own life that inspire you? What are the mysteries of life before which you stand in awe? In what (if anything) do you have faith? Describe the role you'd like to see spirituality play in your life and how that would manifest. If you had this in your life, what kind of qualities would it provide for you?

My Core Values in This Domain	*My Valued Intentions for Each Value*
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

9. Community life/environment/nature

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

We all belong to a community of some sort. You can think of this area broadly or narrowly, from being a citizen of a country or state to being involved in your town or neighborhood to the particular role you play in a social group, your workplace, a religious or secular group, or an organization. You may feel a connection with community on one or many of these levels. And it's also likely that you place varying degrees of importance on giving back in terms of your time, talents, and resources.

With all of this in mind, is being part of a community—something larger than yourself—important to you? Do you care about giving back or making a difference in the lives of others in your community? What kind of person do you want to be at whatever level of involvement you find yourself? How would you like to share your talents and passions in your community? What pulls at your heart here?

Taking care of the environment is on the minds of many, and there are many ways to do that. But you can also think of environment more broadly, as anywhere you might be: school, work, home, shopping, and so on. So, as you think about environment and nature on your own terms, consider some of these questions.

Is serving the planet important to you? For instance, do you enjoy taking care of your surroundings? Beyond things like recycling or conserving energy or water, this could include landscaping, planting a tree, or caring for a garden, or it might mean attending to your home or work space. Enjoyment of the natural world can take many forms: hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, sailing, relaxing on the beach—the list goes on and on. Maybe you simply like to commune with nature in a contemplative way.

Look to see if sharing, helping, or reaching out is important to you, and if so, how you might express that. Also consider if you feel that anything is currently missing in this area of your life. What can you do to make the world a better place? Why are community activities (such as volunteering, voting, recycling) important to you? What do you care about when you consider the environment or nature?

My Core Values in This Domain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Valued Intentions for Each Value

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

10. Recreation/leisure

Is this life domain important in my life NOW (circle one):

YES = It's important to me **NO** = It's not important to me

How satisfied are you with this life domain right NOW (circle one):

0 = Not at all satisfied 1 = Moderately satisfied 2= Very satisfied

Reflect on your values and intentions

The way you spend your leisure time can profoundly affect your quality of life, so it's important to consider it carefully. This domain can include just about anything. You can have a spirit of play outside of work, and at work too.

When children are playing for fun, they're doing much more than just having fun. Children love playing because it allows them to fully absorb themselves in activities that often call on all of their senses. Children also use play to express themselves—their feelings, moods, and dreams. But play isn't just for children! Adults can and often want to play for the same reasons that children do: to be fully absorbed in an activity that's fun and that allows them to express the playful and creative part of themselves.

In this domain, look for the value you place on expressing that playful spirit. Do you cherish having time to unwind, have fun, be a kid again, challenge yourself, or develop new interests or skills like playing a musical instrument? Any activity that has a playful quality to it counts here.

So how would you describe the quality of this part of your life if it were exactly the way you would like it to be? And with that in mind, what activities, interests, or hobbies would you love to cultivate and explore if you could? How do you feed yourself through hobbies, sports, or play? Why do you enjoy these things?

My Core Values in This Domain

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Valued Intentions for Each Value?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Common Core Values Guide

Listed here are common values people find important to them. This list is by no means exhaustive, so feel free to add your own values. This list is a guide to help you identify and clarify what is truly important to you.

Empathy	Quiet	Kindness	Risk	Appreciation
Parenting	Admiration	Surrender	Action	Excellence
Inspiration	Beauty	Peace	Control	Challenge
Belief	Nurture	Hope	Gratitude	Self-Expression
Sacredness	Calm	Change	Learning	Accomplishment
Nature	Community	Fairness	Partnership	Faithfulness
Adventure	Contribution	Truth	Pleasure	Security
Service	Happiness	Power	Serenity	Enlightenment
Play	Relationship	Inner Strength	Invention	Encouragement
Fun	Equanimity	Reliability	Honor	Work
Order	Connection	Structure	Strength	Intellect
Spirituality	Passion	Self-Respect	Imagination	Planning
Humor	Patience	Friendship	Joy	Honesty
Wholeness	Persuasion	Intuition	Rules	Dignity
Family	Love	Home	Leadership	Dependability
Consistency	Grace	Mastery	Laughter	Integrity
Support	Winning	Growth	Creativity	Loyalty
Health	Tradition	Compassion	Sexuality	Respect
Safety	Attention	Spontaneity	Courage	Understanding
Pride	Rituals	Wealth	Sensuality	Justice
Trust	Discovery	Vitality	Feelings	Self-Control
Freedom	Kindness	Independence	Openness	Curiosity

Use the spaces below to add your own words:

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

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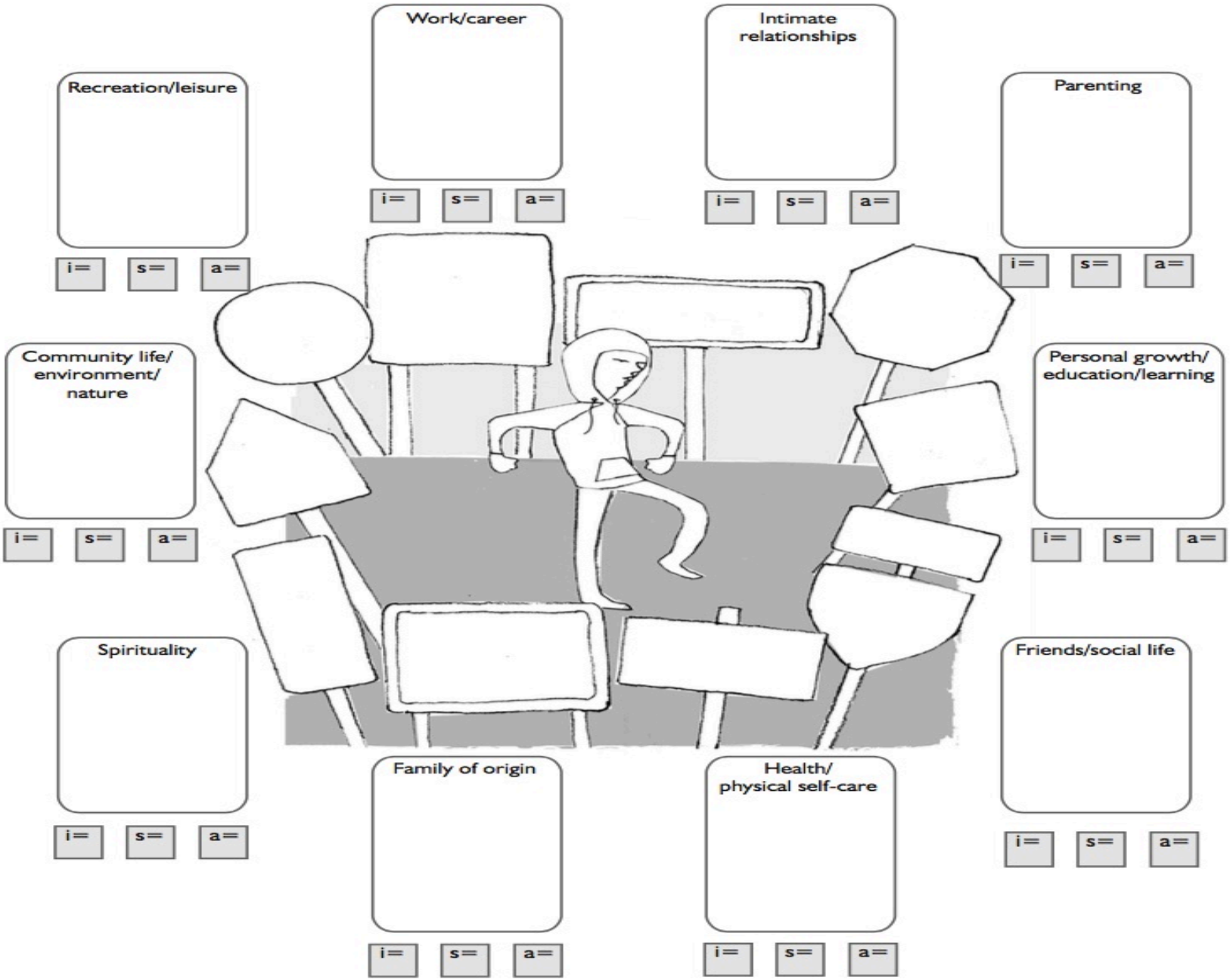

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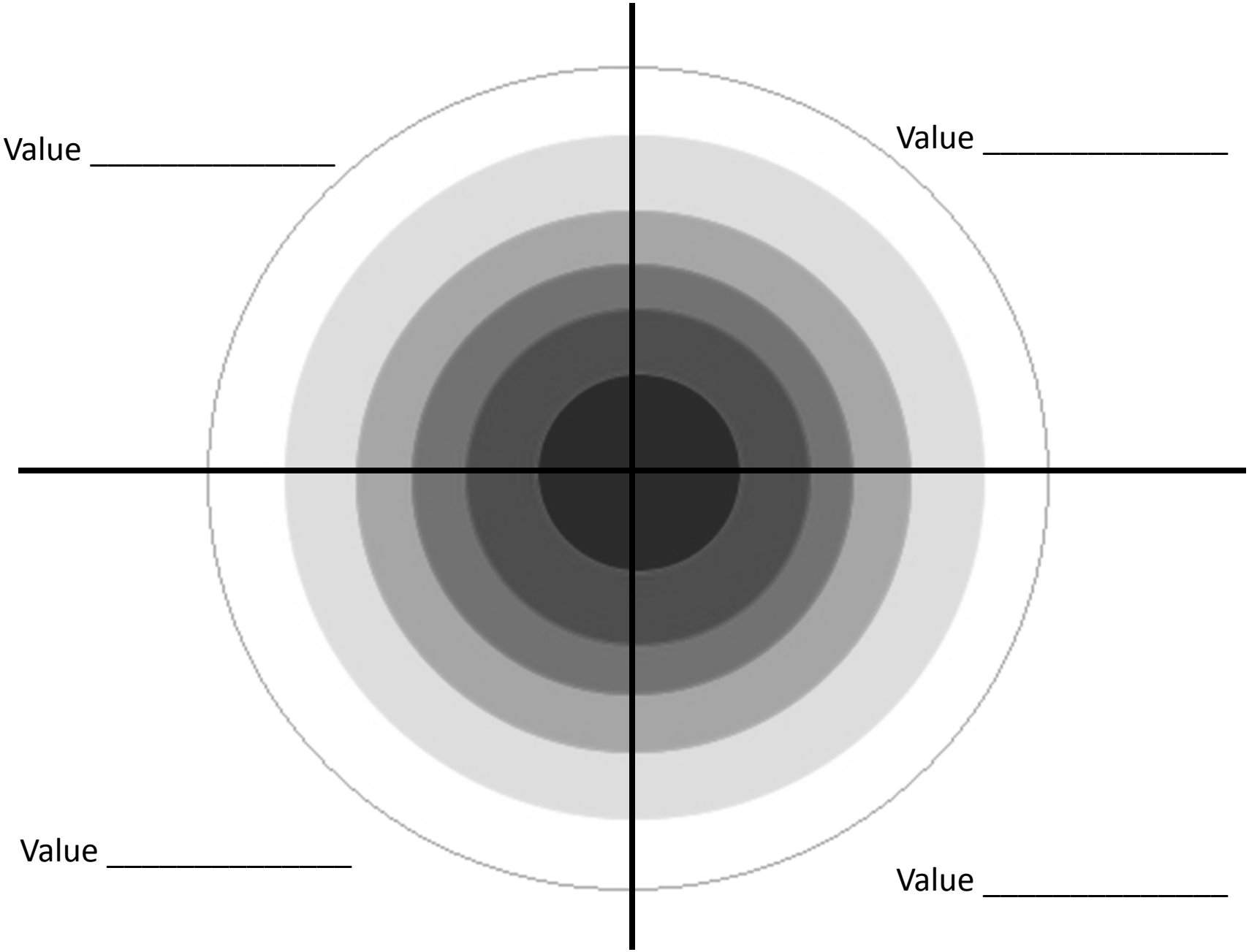
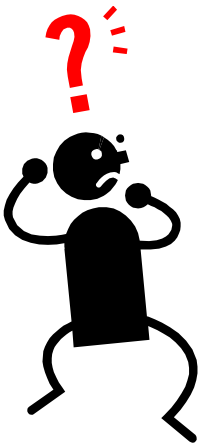

Value _____
Value _____
Value _____
Value _____

MY BARRIERS

Important Value Area (From Values Worksheet: _____

YOU	Barriers	VALUE INTENTIONS
		

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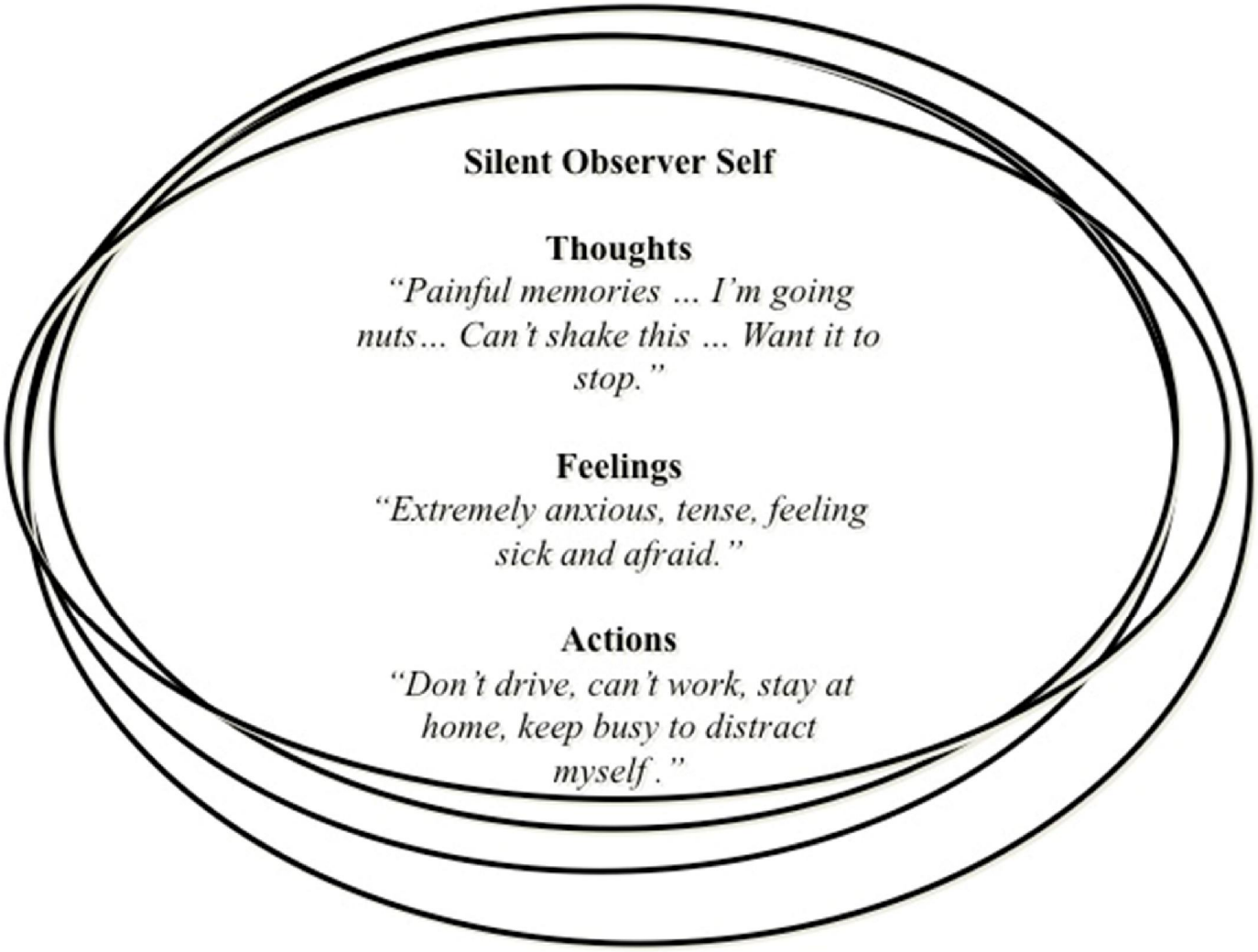
Silent Observer Self
Thoughts
"Painful memories … I'm going nuts… Can't shake this … Want it to stop."
Feelings
"Extremely anxious, tense, feeling sick and afraid."
Actions
"Don't drive, can't work, stay at home, keep busy to distract myself."

Silent
Observer Self
Thoughts
"Painful memories ... I'm going nuts... Can't shake this ... Want it to stop."
Feelings
"Extremely anxious, tense, feeling sick and afraid."
Actions
"Don't drive, can't work, stay at home, keep busy to distract myself."

VALUE AND GOALS WORKSHEET

My Value: _____

Goal I want to achieve: _____

Steps toward achieving my goal	Barriers	Strategies	Date(s) achieved
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

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EXERCISE: Simple Centering

Go ahead and get in a comfortable position in your chair. Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor, your arms and legs uncrossed, and your hands resting in your lap. [5 secs] Allow your eyes to close gently. [5 secs] Take a couple of gentle breaths—in … and out … in … and out. [10 secs] Notice the sound and feel of your own breath as you breathe in … and out … [10 secs]

Now turn your attention to being just where you are. Notice any sounds that you may hear close to you and then farther way. [5 secs] Notice how you're sitting in your chair and feel the place where your body touches the chair. [5 secs] What are the sensations there? [5 secs] How does it feel to sit where you sit? [10 secs]

Next, notice the places where your body touches itself, and bring your awareness to the spot where your hands touch your lap or legs. [5 secs] And now, imagine your awareness pouring down over your hips to where your feet touch the floor. How do your feet feel in the position that they are in? [10 secs] Notice too that your feet are firmly grounded to the floor and earth beneath you. [10 secs]

Now gently expand your awareness and just notice sensations in the rest of your body. [5 secs] If you feel any sensations in your body, just notice them and acknowledge their presence. [5 secs] Also notice how they may, by themselves, change or shift from moment to moment. Do not try to change them. [10 secs]

Now let yourself come back to being just where you are, here with this workbook. See if you can feel the investment of yourself here, right now. What are you here for? [10 secs] If you're thinking this sounds strange, just notice that and come back to the sense of integrity here. Be aware of the value that you are serving by being here. [10 secs]

And, see if you can allow yourself to be present with what you are afraid of. Notice any doubts, reservations, fears, and worries. [5 secs] See if you can just notice them, acknowledge their presence, make some space for them, and allow them to be there. You don't need to make them go away or work on them. [10 secs] With each breath, imagine that you are creating more and more space for them, more space for you to be you, right here where you are. [5 secs] Now see if for just a moment you can be present with your values and commitments. Why are you here, working with this workbook? [5 secs] Where do you want to go? [5 secs] What do you want to do with your life? [10 secs]

Then, when you're ready, let go of those thoughts and gradually widen your attention to take in the sounds around you, and slowly open your eyes with the intention to bring this awareness to the present moment and the rest of the day.

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EXERCISE: Let's Get Present by Coming Back to Your Breath

Go ahead and get in a comfortable position in your chair. Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor. [5 secs] Place one hand on your chest, just above your rib cage. Then place your other hand on your belly, just over your belly button. [5 secs] Allow your eyes to close gently. [5 secs] Take a couple of gentle breaths: in … and out … in … and out. Notice the sound and feel of your own breath as you breathe in … and out. [10 secs]

Now turn your attention to the movement of your hands as you simply breath in … and out … in … and out. [10 secs] Allow your breathing to be natural here as you simply notice the movement of your hands as they rise and fall with each breath. There's nothing else to do, no state to be achieved. Simply notice and watch. [10 secs]

As you settle in, you may notice that your attention gets pulled elsewhere. Maybe you notice thoughts … thoughts about you … thoughts about this exercise. That's okay. [5 secs] When you notice your attention being pulled into your mind, simply acknowledge that, and then bring your awareness back to the movement of your hands as they rise and fall with each breath. [10 secs]

You may also notice that your attention is drawn to sounds around you, maybe sounds in the room, or outside nearby. That's okay to notice too. [5 secs] Simply acknowledge those sounds, and then gently bring your attention back to your hands as they move with each breath in … and out … in … and out. [10 secs] Remind yourself too that your breath is always with you even if your attention goes someplace else. [10 secs]

There may be moments when your attention gets pulled into physical sensations in your body, or even strong emotions. Dull ones are fine too. Maybe you're tired, or bored, or feel a grumbling in your stomach. [5 secs] The practice here is still the same. Gently acknowledge where your attention led you, and then kindly bring your awareness back to your hands and to the breath. [10 secs] Notice again that the breath is always with you. [10 secs]

As this time for practice comes to a close, let go of any thoughts and slowly widen your attention to take in the sounds around you. [5 secs] As you do, take two or three cleansing breaths in and out. With each cleansing breath, fill your lungs as much as you can with each inhale, pause for a moment, and then slowly exhale. [10 secs] Repeat that one or two times, and then slowly open your eyes with the intention to practice bringing your attention back to your breath—your safe refuge.

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EXERCISE: Acceptance of Thoughts and Feelings

Get in a comfortable position in your chair. Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor, your arms and legs uncrossed, and your hands resting in your lap (palms up or down, whichever is more comfortable). [5 secs] Allow your eyes to close gently. [10 secs]

Take a few moments to get in touch with the movement of your breath and the sensations in your body. [5 secs] As you do that, slowly bring your attention to the gentle rising and falling of your breath in your chest and belly. [10 secs] Like ocean waves coming in and out, your breath is always there. [5 secs] Notice its rhythm [5 secs] the changing patterns of sensations [5 secs] the temperature of the air as it passes in and out of your nose [5 secs] the movement in your chest and belly. Take a few moments to feel the physical sensations of the breath moving in … and out. [15 secs]

There's no need to control your breathing. Simply let the breath breathe itself. [5 secs] As best you can, bring an attitude of generous allowing and gentle acceptance to your experience, just as it is. [10 secs]

Sooner or later your mind will wander away from the breath to other concerns, thoughts, worries, images, bodily sensations, planning, or daydreams, or it may just drift along. [5 secs] This is what minds do much of the time. [10 secs] When you notice that your mind has wandered, just acknowledge that awareness of your experience. Then, gently, and with kindness, come back to the breath. [15 secs]

If you become aware of feelings, tension, or other intense physical sensations, just notice them, acknowledge their presence, and see if you can make space for them. [10 secs] Imagine with each in-breath you are creating more space inside of you for all of you and see if you can welcome that as you return to the breath. [10 secs]

You may notice sensations in your body and how they change from moment to moment. [5 secs] Sometimes they're stronger, sometimes they stay the same, and sometimes they grow weaker—it doesn't really matter what they do. [10 secs] Breathe calmly in to and out from the sensations of any places where you feel discomfort, imagining the breath moving in to, and out from, that region of the body. [10 secs] As you do, remind yourself that you are getting better at feeling and being with all that is you, as it is, in this moment. [10 secs]

Along with physical sensations in your body, you may also notice thoughts about the sensations and thoughts about the thoughts. [10 secs] You may notice your mind coming up with evaluations such as "dangerous" or "getting worse," or "bored." [5 secs] If that happens, notice those evaluations and return to the breath and the present moment, as it is. [10 secs] Thoughts are thoughts, physical sensations are physical sensations, feelings are feelings, nothing more, nothing less. [10 secs]

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If you wish, you can name thoughts and feelings as you notice them. [5 secs] For instance, if you notice dwelling on the past, label that "a memory" and come back to the breath. [10 secs] Or, if you find yourself worrying about the future, label that "worry" and again, come back to the present moment, right here, right now, being with the breath. [10 secs] Perhaps there is judging … notice that, and then return to the present breath, bringing a quality of kindness and compassion to your experience. [10 secs]

Thoughts and feelings come and go in your mind and body. The breath remains in this moment. [5 secs] You are the observer of your experience and not what those thoughts and feelings say, no matter how persistent or intense they may be. [10 secs] You are the place and space for your experience. [5 secs] Make that space a kind space, a gentle space, a loving space, a welcome home. [15 secs]

As this time of formal mindful practice comes to an end, you may wish to commit to the intention of bringing this purposeful awareness of the present moment to the rest of your day. [10 secs] Then, when you're ready, gradually widen your attention to take in the sounds around you … and slowly open your eyes.

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EMOTIONAL
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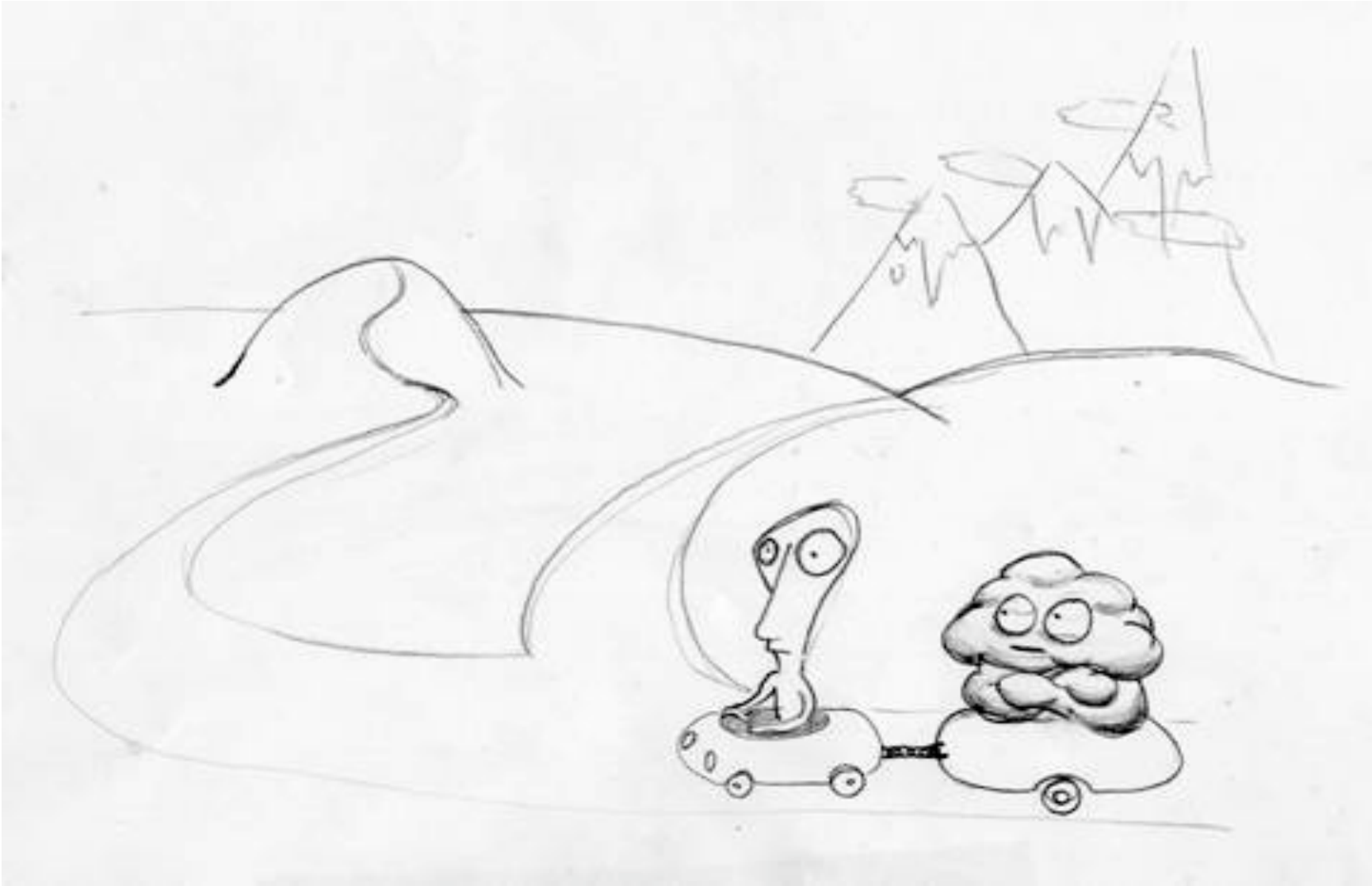

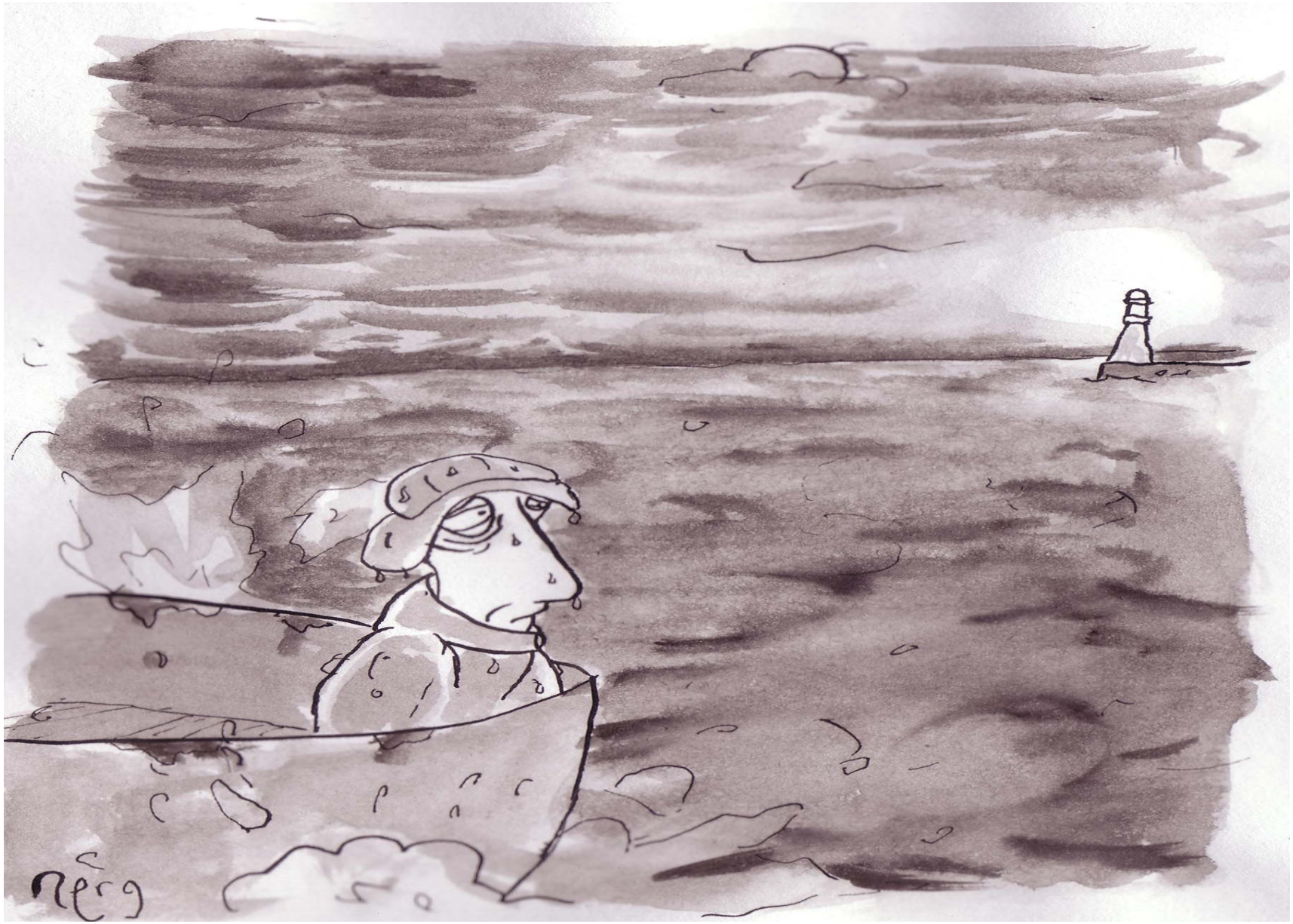

UGLY MEMORIES
SELF DOUBT
ANXIETY
UNCERTAINTY
VALUED DIRECTION