

Spirituality and Wellbeing in the Context of COVID-19

Sahaya G. Selvam



1.1.
What is
Spirituality?



1.2.
What is Wellbeing?



2.
Spirituality & Wellbeing
in the context of COVID-19





1.1.
What is
Spirituality?



Elements of Religion



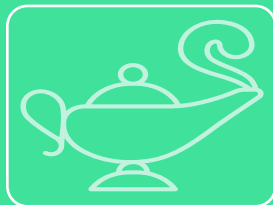
Creed

- A set of beliefs that adherents are expected to assent to, including scriptures and traditions.



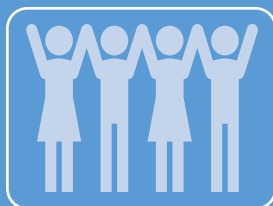
Code

- A set of rules and practices that adherents follow in their moral life.



Cult

- A set of rituals used in worship and life-cycle, used individually and communally



Community

- A set of rituals used in worship and life-cycle, used individually and communally

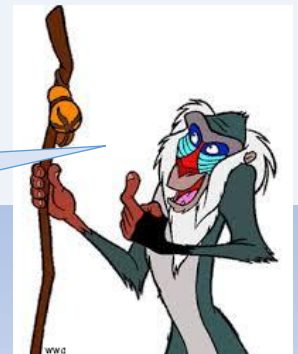


I am Rafiki!

Religiosity

The thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of individuals in response to the creed, code, cult, and community of religion.

See: Allport, G. (1950). *The individual and his religion.*



1. Coherence
Meaning
Purpose

2. Compassionate
Morality

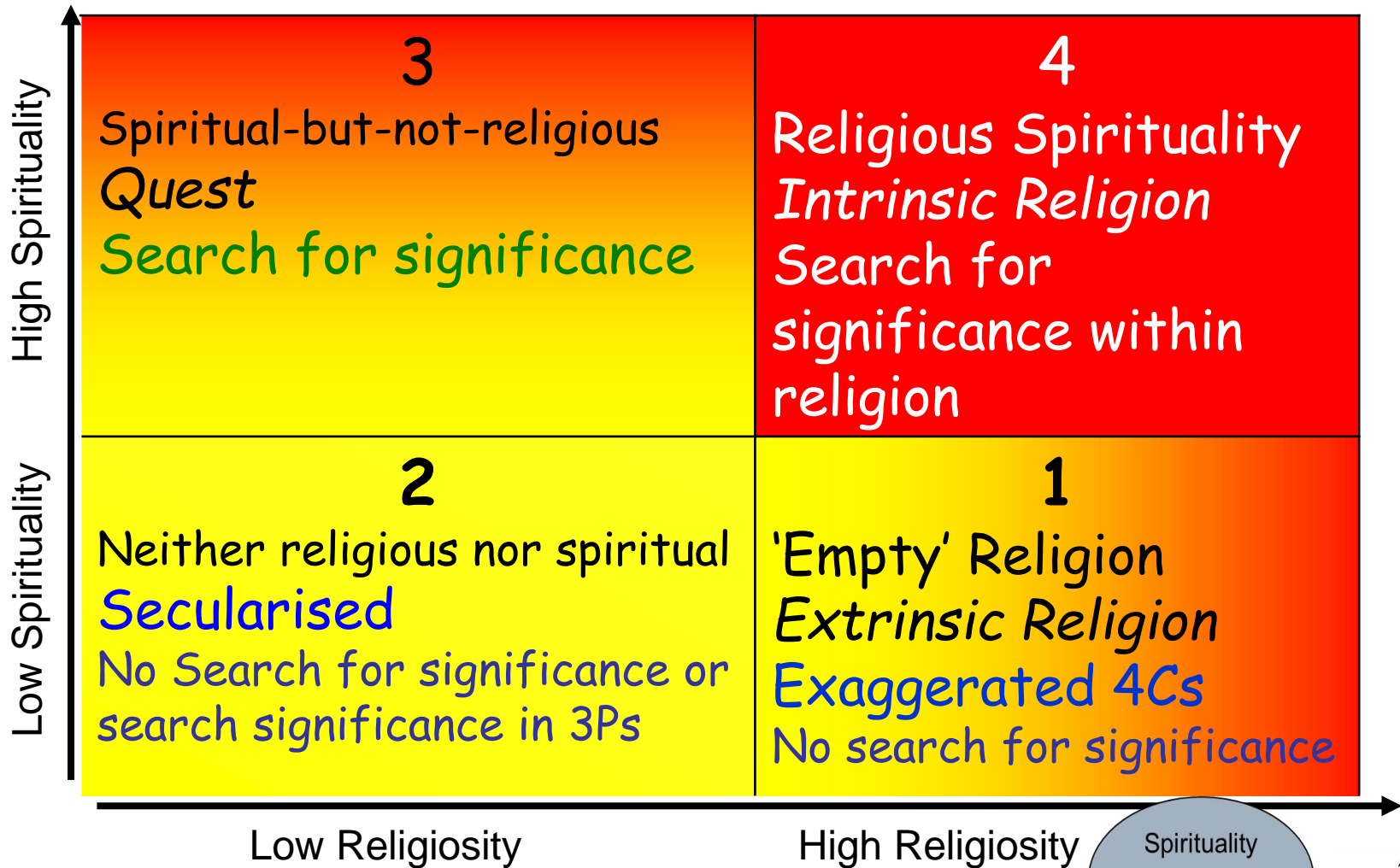
3. Connectedness
with the Divine
and creation

4. Community of
pilgrims

Spirituality



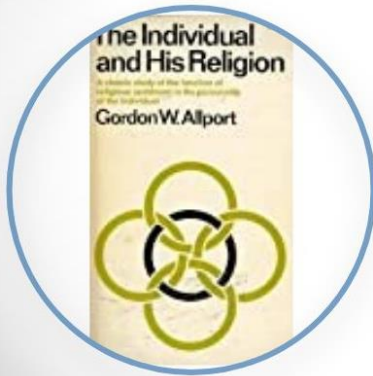
Religion and Spirituality



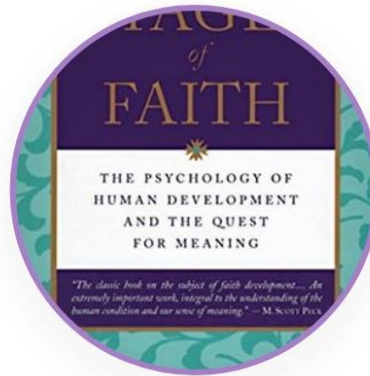
Spirituality may or may not include faith in God



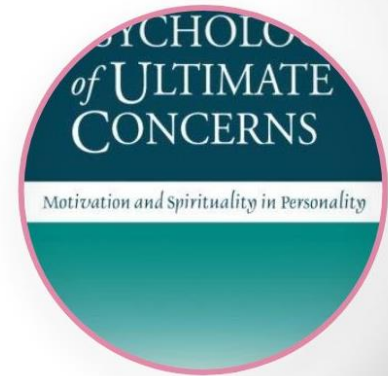
THEORETICAL SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS-SPIRITUALITY



GORDON ALLPORT, 1950
Intrinsic Religiosity



JAMES FOWLER, 1981
Mature Faith



ROBERT EMMONS, 1999
Spiritual Intelligence

RELIGIOUS SPIRITUALITY

- **CREED**

A set of beliefs that the adherents should assent to, including Scriptures and Traditions

- **CODE**

A set of rules and practices that they should practice in their moral/social life

- **CULT**

A set of rituals that the followers practice individually and communally

- **COMMUNITY**

To be part of the a group that adheres to the same Creed, Code, and Cult

- **COHERENCE & MEANING**

Coherence, Significance, Purpose

- **COMPASSION & MORALITY**

Beyond rules to enhancing life

- **CONNECTEDNESS**

With the Divine and rest of Creation

- **COMMUNITY OF PILGRIMS**

All searching for coherence and connectedness in compassions



1.2.
What is Wellbeing?



Health in the River of Life

PROMOTION 

HEALTH EDUCATION 

PREVENTIVE 

PROTECTIVE 

CURATIVE 

Salutogenesis

QUALITY OF LIFE
WELLBEING

Models of Wellbeing

DEATH, DISEASE

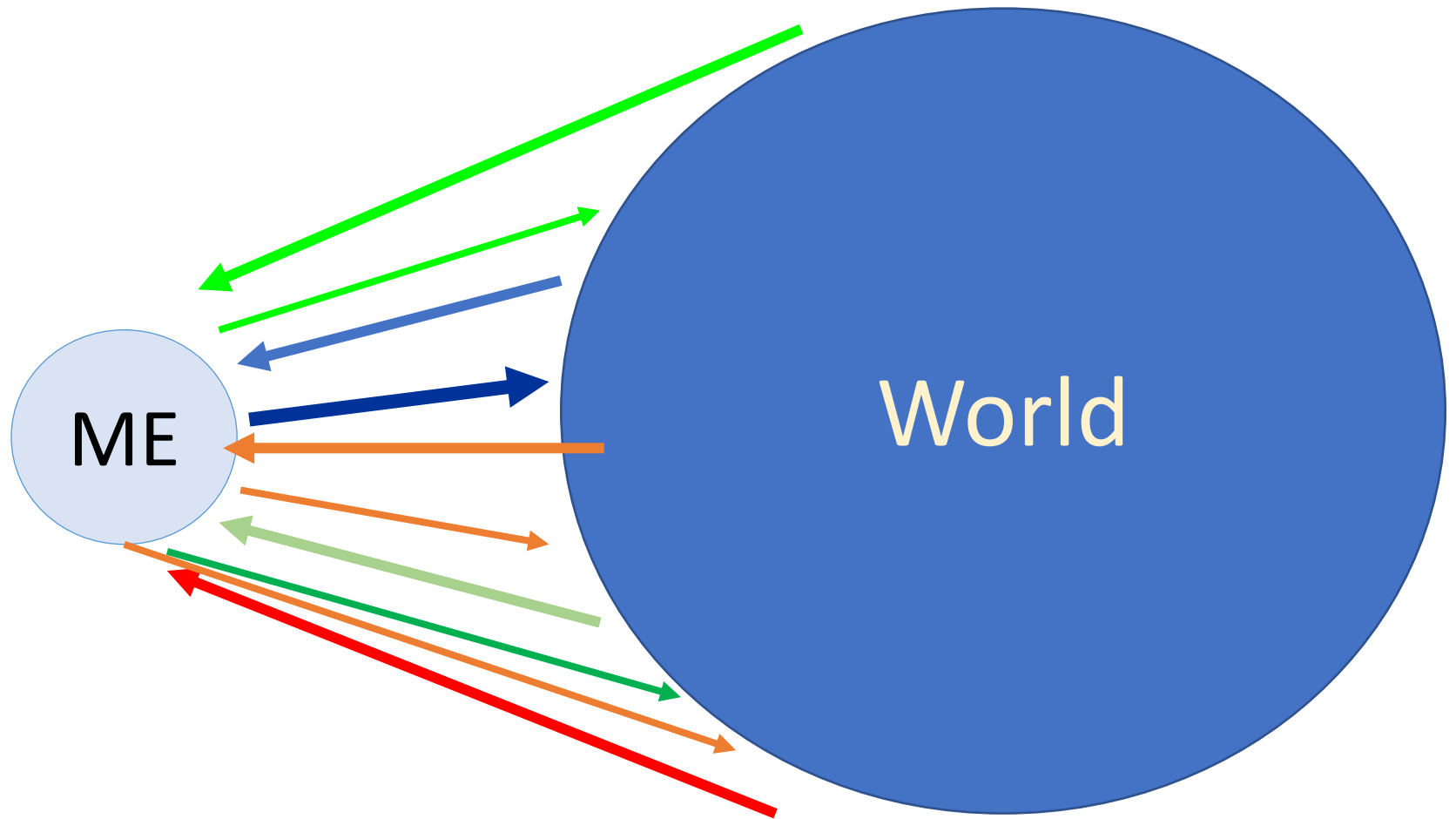
Drawing: Bengt Lindström
Graphic: Jonas Jernström



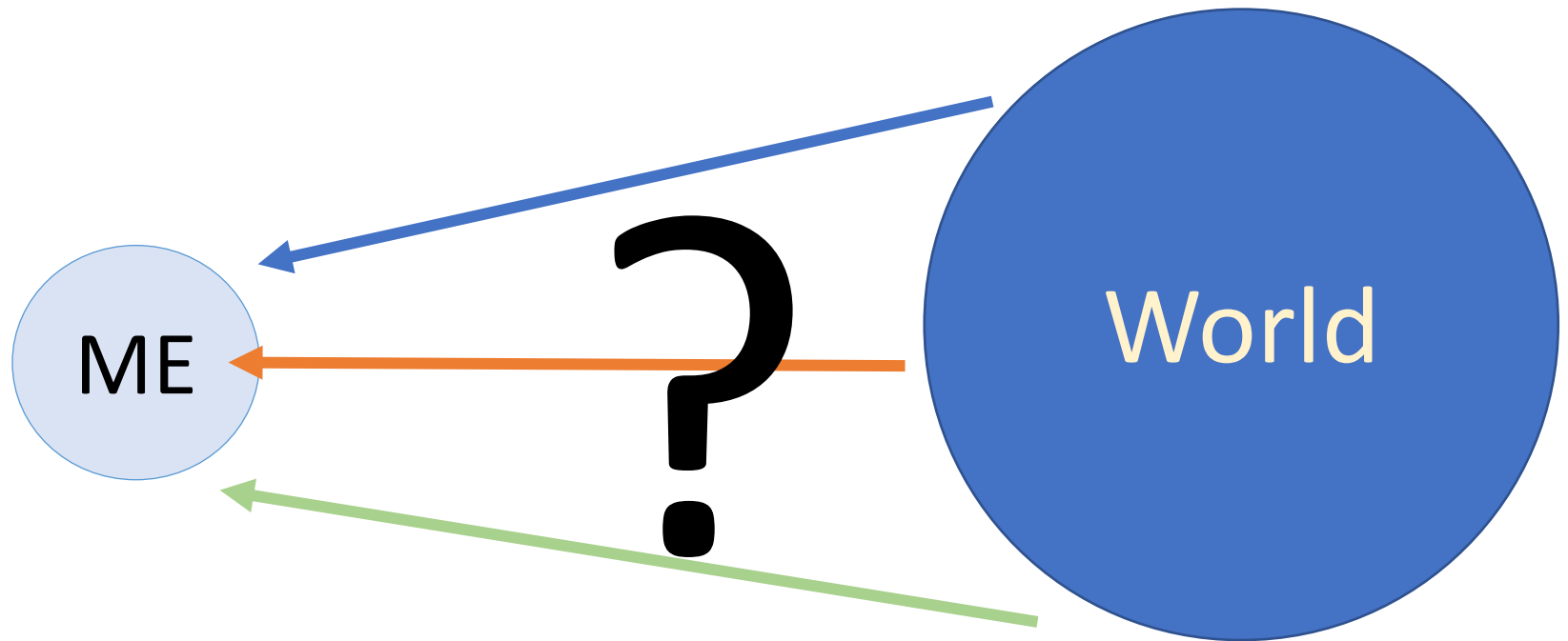
2.
Spirituality & Wellbeing
in the context of COVID-19

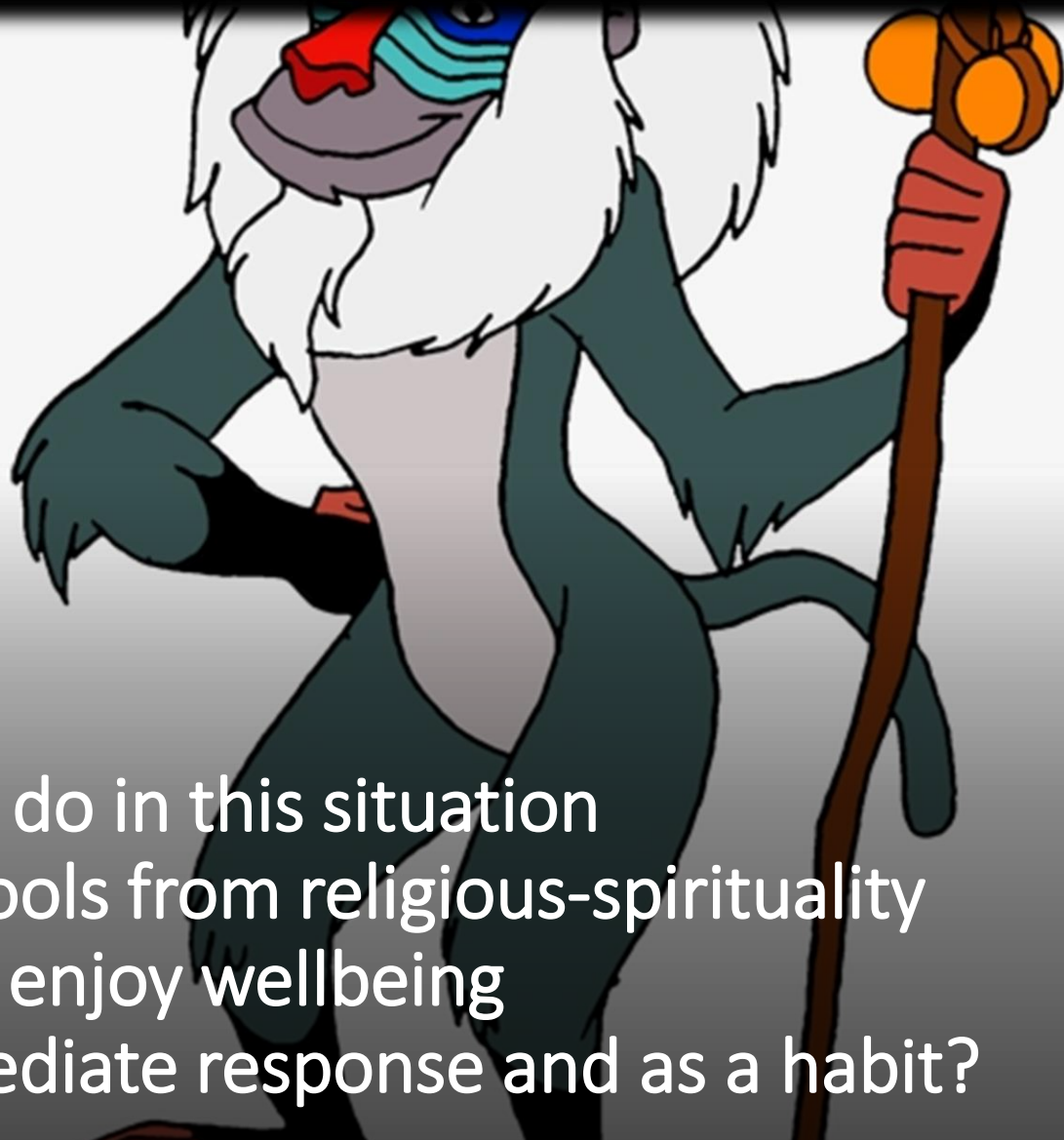


Before COVID-19...



DURING COVID-19...





What can I do in this situation using my tools from religious-spirituality in order to enjoy wellbeing as an immediate response and as a habit?



Tedeschi & Calhoun's Model
of Trauma Growth

Schema



Rumination



No Change of Schema
(Fight the event!)

Assimilation or
Accommodation

Integration of Schema

Post-traumatic
Stress Disorder

Coping & Resilience

Hope
Wisdom

Clarify Your Purpose in Life



People are Happy/Creative/Energetic...
if they have a clear purpose in life,
and if this purpose is focused on others

See: William, D. (2008).
The Path to Purpose.



Purpose

**Is the desire to
achieve something
beyond the self.**



Religious-Spirituality and Purpose



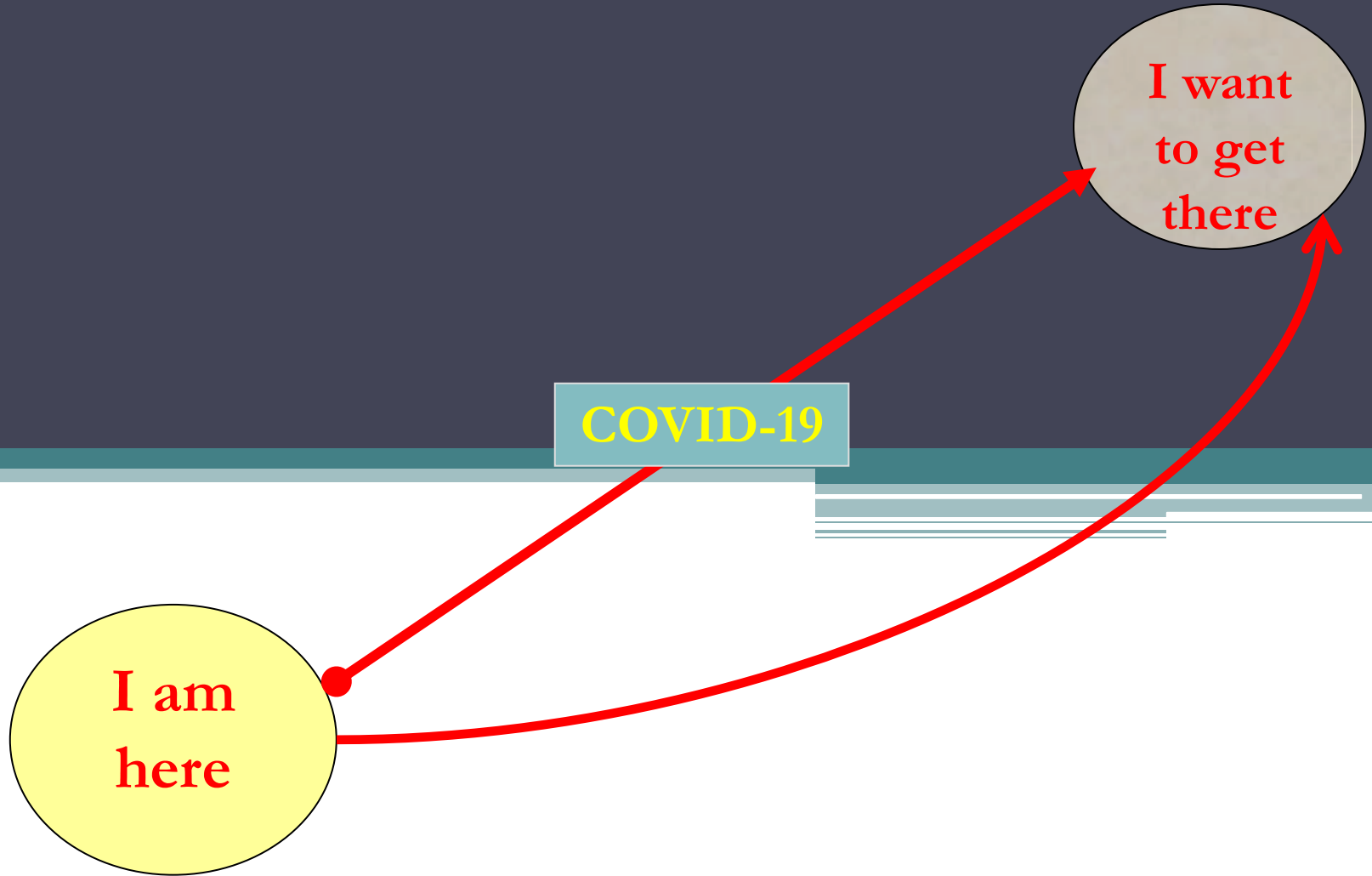
- “Every religious tradition advances the notion that the closer we come to God’s purpose for us, the more satisfied we shall become in our daily lives.”

(Damon, *The Path to Purpose*,
44-45.)



Make a
Personal
Mission
Statement

It is possible to find alternatives...



Contemplative Practice



What is Mindfulness?



“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.”

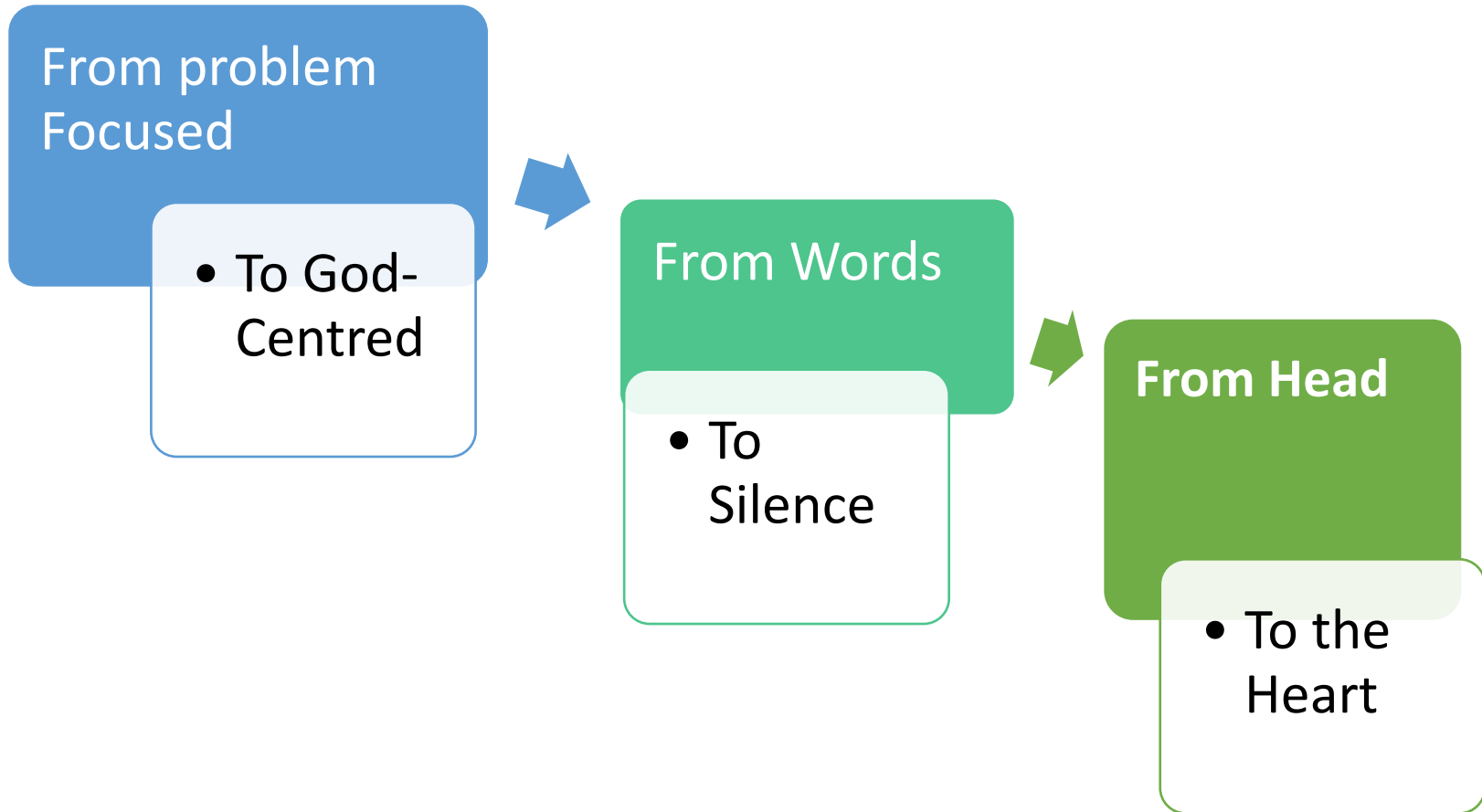
Jon Kabat-Zinn
(1994, p.4)

What is Contemplation?

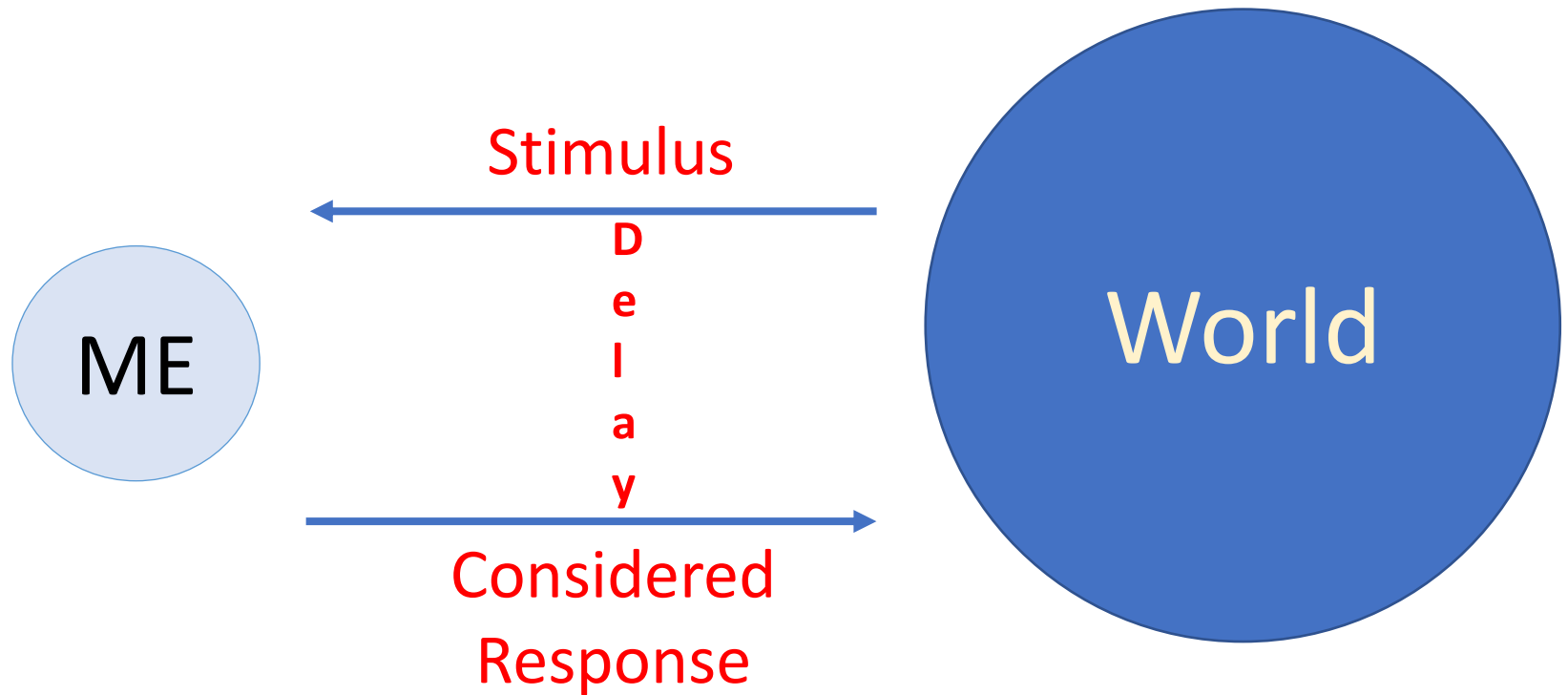


**Just being there
in the presence of
God with your
heart.**

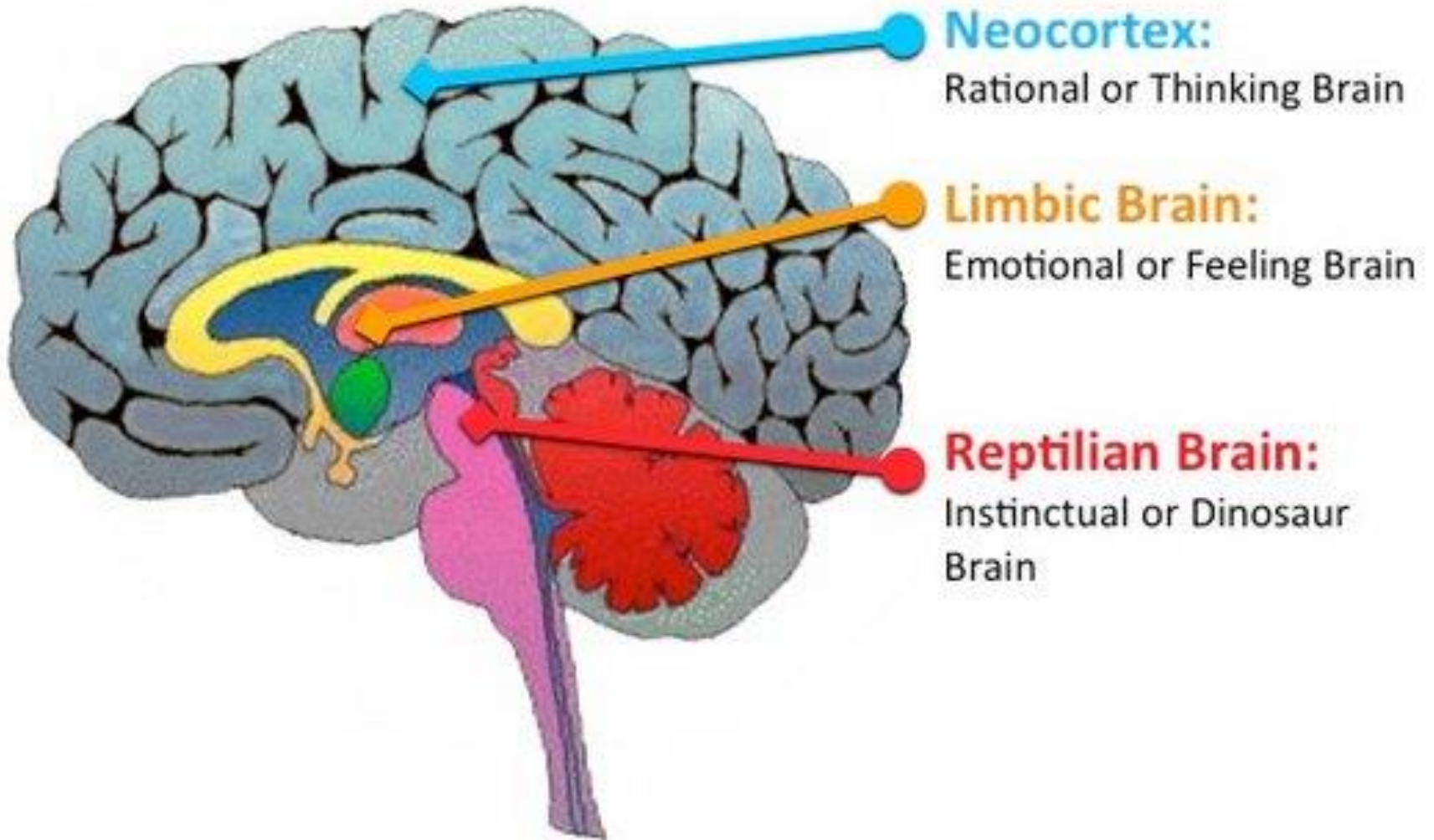
Three Movements in Prayer



What does contemplation achieve?



Human Brain: Three Brains in One



Neocortex:

Rational or Thinking Brain

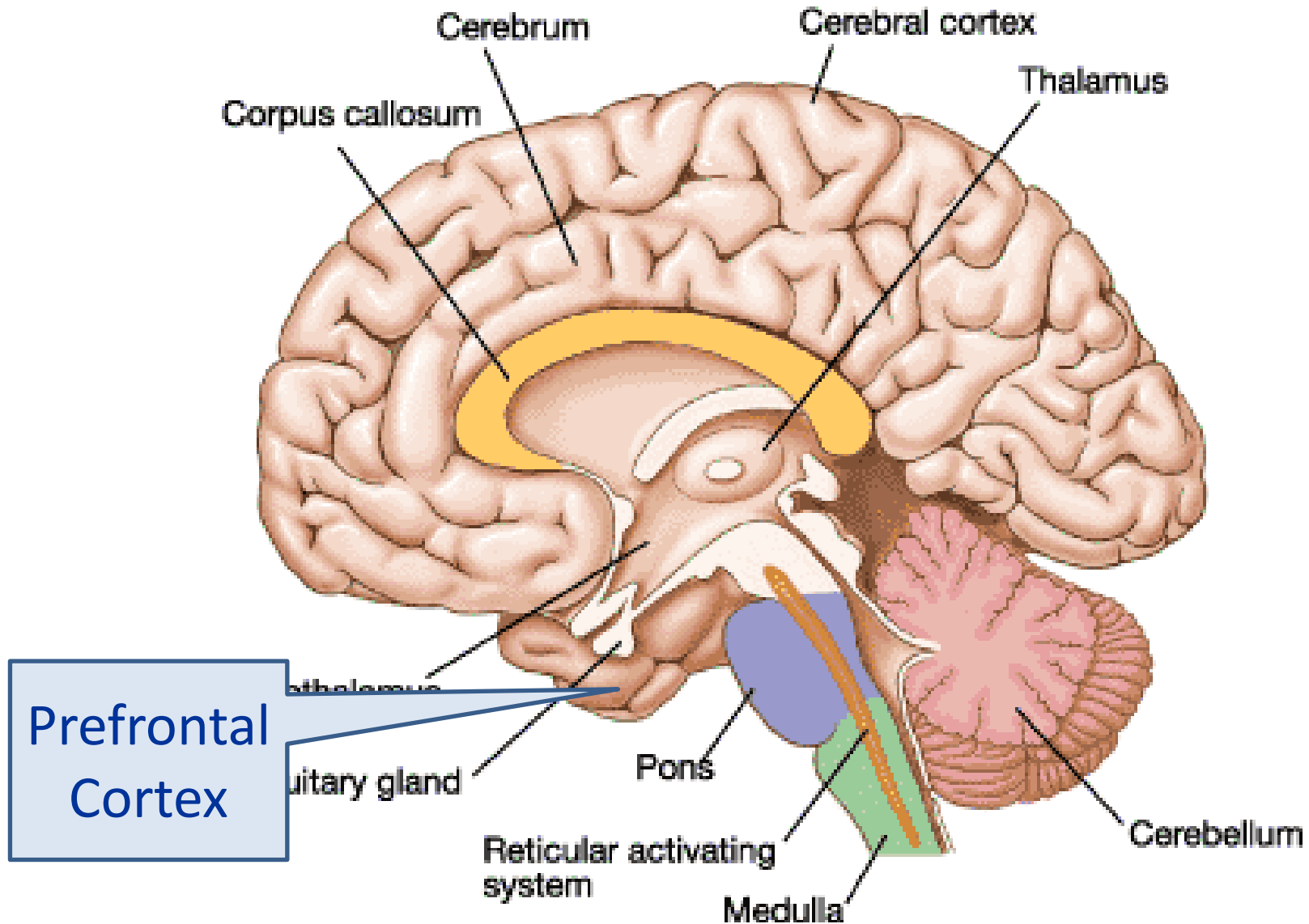
Limbic Brain:

Emotional or Feeling Brain

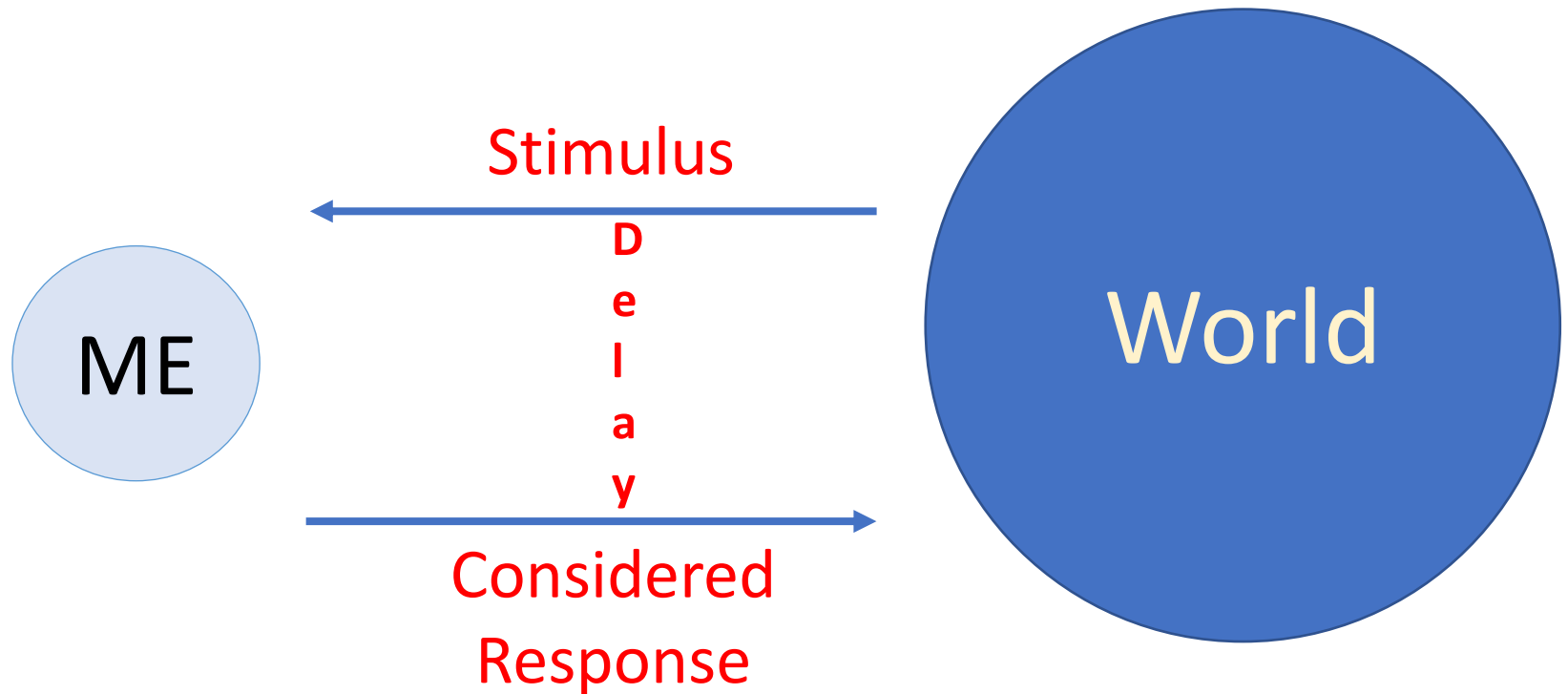
Reptilian Brain:

Instinctual or Dinosaur Brain

Major Parts of the Brain



What does contemplation achieve?



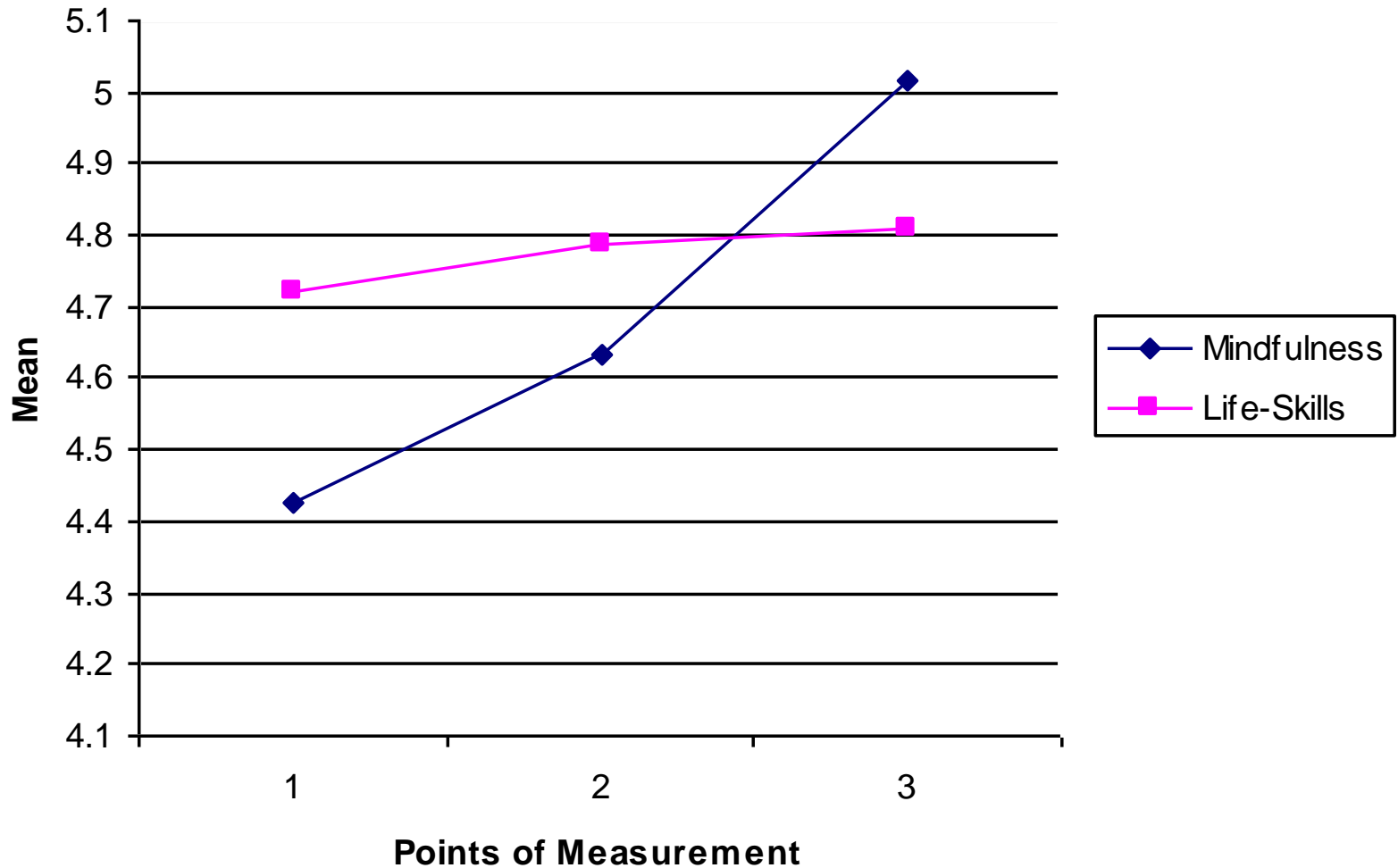
Contemplative practice improves Personal Growth Initiative:

Four sub-dimensions of PGI:

- **Planfulness:** Intentions and actions related to planning for personal change.
- **Readiness for Change:** Aspects of preparedness for making specific changes in one's self.
- **Using Resources:** Obtaining assistance from resources outside one's self.
- **Intentional Behavior:** Intentional action aimed at producing personal growth.



Personal Growth Initiative

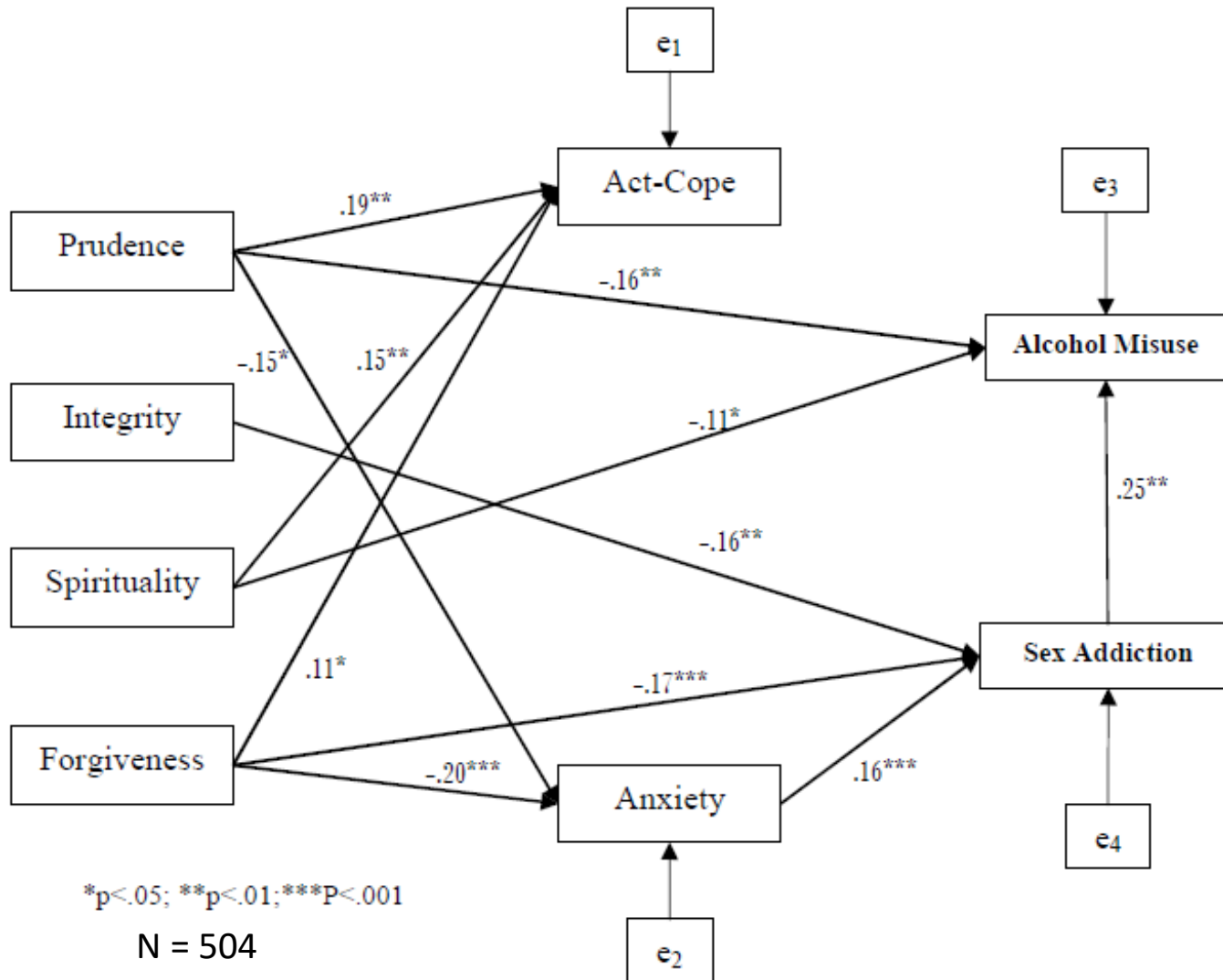


The variation in the scores of PGIS for within subjects was significant, $F(1, 31) = 5.940$, $p = .004$. And the interaction between the two intervention conditions was also significant, $F(2, 31) = 3.451$, $p = .038$.

Cultivate virtues – even in Isolation



Lack of Character Strengths Predict Addiction



Contemplative Prayer Facilitates Forgiveness

From my research:



“When you are meditating ... forgiveness is the first thing that can come into my mind. ... And when I see somebody wants to hurt me in another way,... And if I have done wrong to him, I ask him to forgive me. And if himself has done wrong to me, himself also has to ask for forgiveness to me” (Male, 24 yr old, recovering addict).

Often this forgiveness is expressed in reconciliation:

“Like now there are several people who have wronged me in the past and I still talk to them, and I don’t feel anything” (Female, 21 year old).



Forgiveness Litany

Step 1. Choose a person whose thoughts in you brings about anger, frustration, or wanting revenge.

Step 2. Sit quietly, in a contemplative way, with a willingness to forgive. Read your scriptures if you wish.

Step 3. WRITE...

- a. When you said/didto me...
- b. I felt ...
- c. I forgive you for this

Repeat step 3a, b, c...

until you feel you have exhausted the anger!



Gratitude Intervention:

Gratitude Journal:

- Jot down three things that you are grateful for daily during this “lockdown”;

Gratitude Letter:

- To someone that you have never thanked them for, weekly.



I AM GRATEFUL FOR

RELATION CONNECTIONS, HEA
ART MUSIC JOE, LOVE, PATIENCE
PASSION WISDOM, LIFE EXPERIEN
CREATIVITY MY VISION, COMMUNICATION, LAN
MOTHER EARTH BIRTHING, SOIL, WATER, STRENGTH, RENEWAL
CLEAN AIR MIND, RAIN, MEDITATION, YOGA
FAMILY, FRIENDS HUGS, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
HEALTH, SUN BICYCLES, WALKS, HIKING, SWIMMING
KIRA, SISTERS A ROOF OVER OUR HEAD, CLOTHING, BED
AWESOME PARENTS VALDES, MORALS, ACCEPTANCE
WORK REST KNOWLEDGE, HUMOR
CLEAN FOOD ME SEEDS, FARM
TEACH HAVING GREAT
SCHOOLS FISH, W
MEMO ANCEST
THIS MO POSITIVE THIN
SUNRISE, SUN RIVERS, MOUNTAINS, LAKES
BUTTERFLIES, BIRDS FORESTS, FIELDS, STONES, DESERT
HEALING PLANTS, VEGETABLES, FRUIT
HONEY, HERBS KINDNESS, CHARITY, GENEROSITY
FLOWERS TREES, WOOD, FIRE, MAGIC
BEES KINDRED SPIRITS SONGS, MY VOICE, MY DAUGHTER'S SPIRIT
MY MIND, MY BO MY SOUL ENERGY, TRAVEL, JOY
MY CHILDHOOD, MY GYPSY SPIRIT

Gratitude and Wellbeing

- Trait gratitude measures are strongly correlated with various measures of subjective well-being.
- Gratitude exercises may actually enhance immediate mood state
- Longitudinal studies have found that gratitude predicts increased well-being over time.
- Reduces Hospital visits.



encourage someone
thank the custodian
start a kindness campaign
hold a foodbank drive
take time to really listen to a friend
be more positive
post inspiring quotes around the school
hold the door open
speak kindly
write a thankyou note
Random Acts of Kindness
send a gratitude email
give a genuine compliment
write a positive note on a sticky and post it
be grateful
surprise another class with a treat
volunteer
do something kind for the environment
bake cookies for someone
write a letter
do a chore without being asked
thank a parent
befriend someone new
smile at someone new
pick up litter
call a grandparent
forgive someone
start a kindness club
hold a fundraiser



Compassion Intervention

Call someone you haven't called for long

Call someone you haven't called for long

Compassion Intervention

Write an encouraging email

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Compassion Intervention

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Ask forgiveness from someone

Be creative to invent yours

Call someone you haven't called for long

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Compassion Intervention

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Call someone you haven't called for long

Call someone you haven't called for long

Compassion Intervention

Write an encouraging email

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Compassion Intervention

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Ask forgiveness from someone

Be creative to invent yours

Call someone you haven't called for long

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Surprise someone with a MPesa gift

Write an encouraging email

Share something you cook with your neighbour

Compassion & Wellbeing

People who are altruistic, sociable and display empathy are consistently happier than others. People suffering from depression are generally self-absorbed, distrustful and focus defensively on their own needs (Seligman, 2002).





Thank you

www.positivepsychologykenya.org

