



Interpersonal Neurobiology

Session Four

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Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

Portia Nelson

Chapter 1

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter 2

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter 3

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter 4

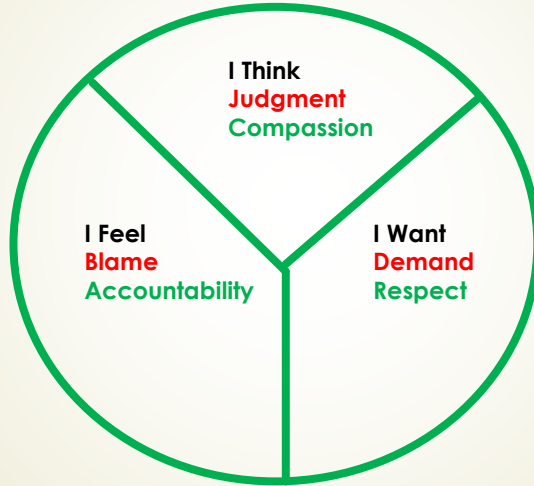
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter 5

I walk down another street.

2

Awareness Wheel



3

Patterns of Intention

Avoid pain

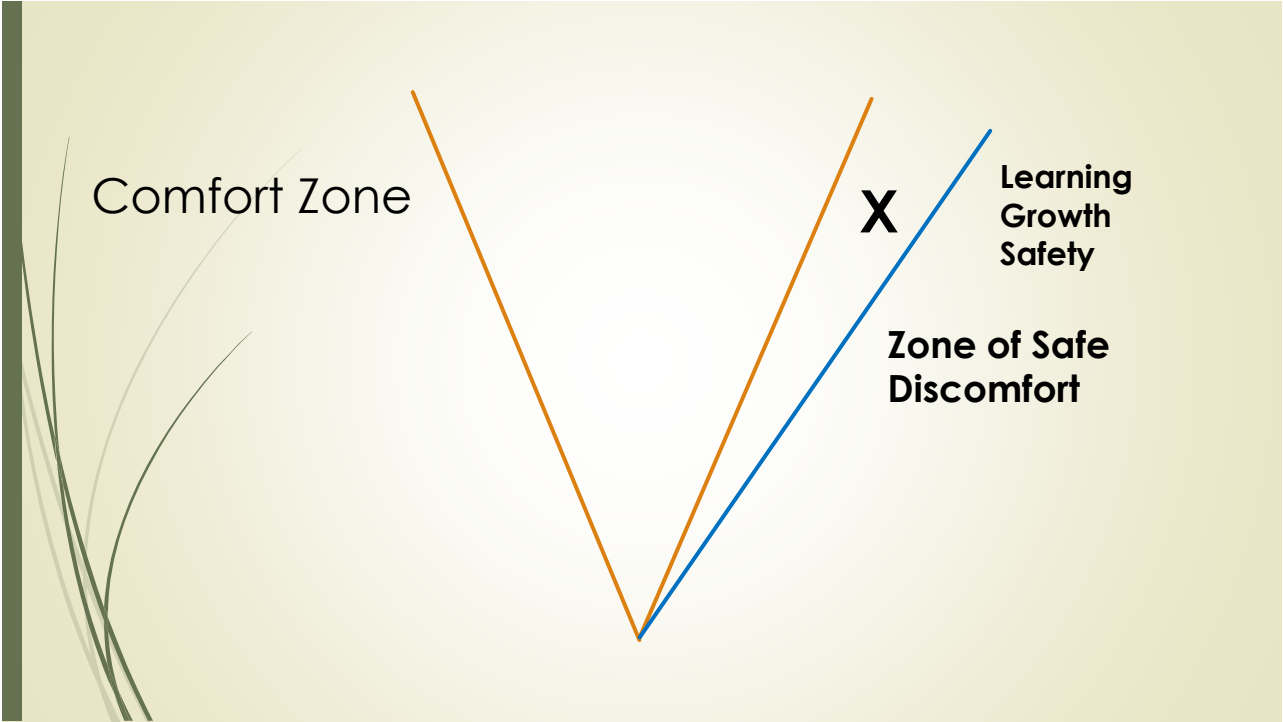
Learn and Grow

X CHOICE

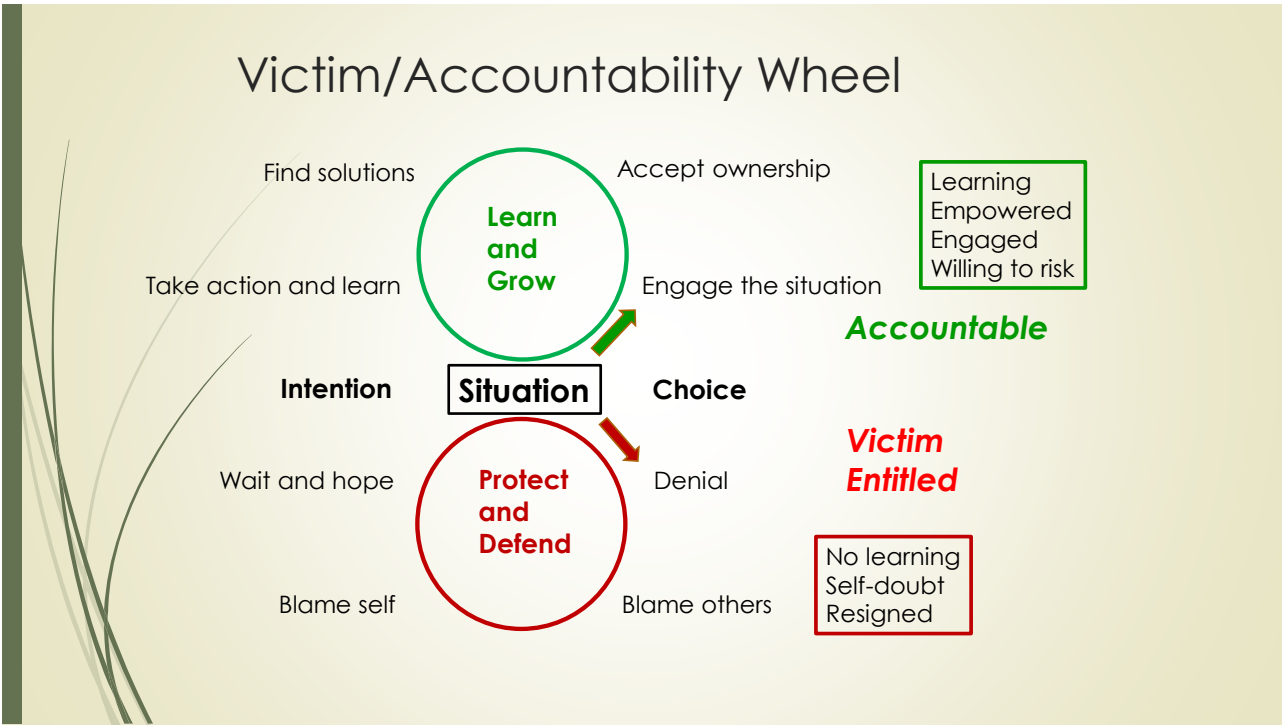
Seek pleasure

Protect and Defend

4



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Accountability/Empowerment

The ability, willingness, and courage to renew attitudes and behaviors in order to achieve desired outcomes

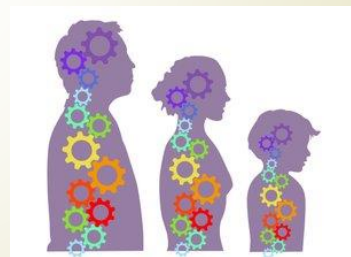
Knowing that I have the resilience for any situation in which I find myself



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Definition: Mind

The mind is an embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information within itself and between minds.



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Startling Conclusion

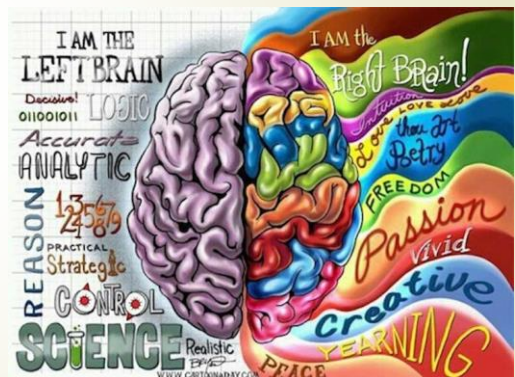
- ▶ We are biologically hard wired to be in relationship. Relationship is essential for survival, learning and sanity.
- ▶ Without relationship we lose our humanity.
- ▶ Because we need it so much, the loss or threatened loss of it is devastating. Being disconnected hurts.



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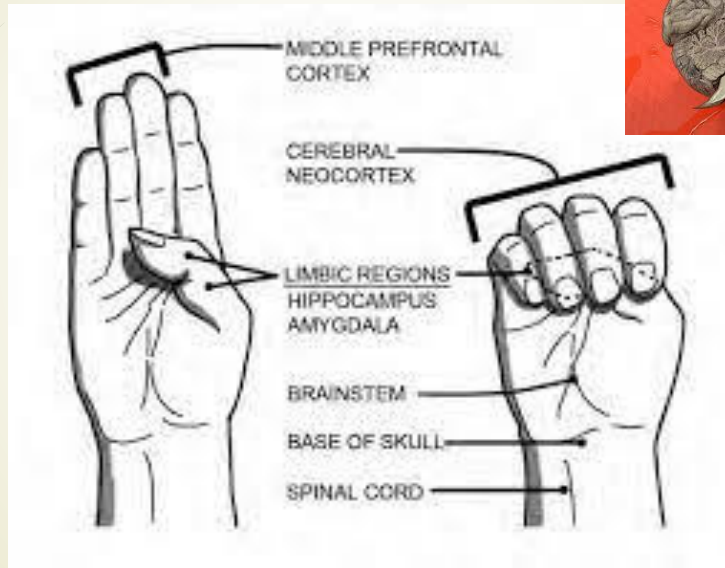
Anatomy

- ▶ All three evolutionary levels interconnected at pre-frontal cortex
- ▶ “Seat of the Soul”—pre-frontal cortex
- ▶ Mirror neurons, emotional attunement
- ▶ Flipping our lid
 - ▶ Amygdala hijack
- ▶ Cortical layers
 - ▶ Top down and bottom up



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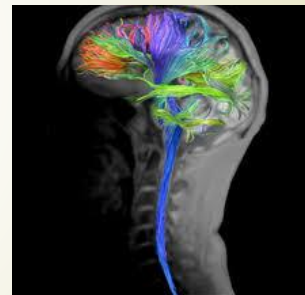
Hand Model of the Brain



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Neuroplasticity

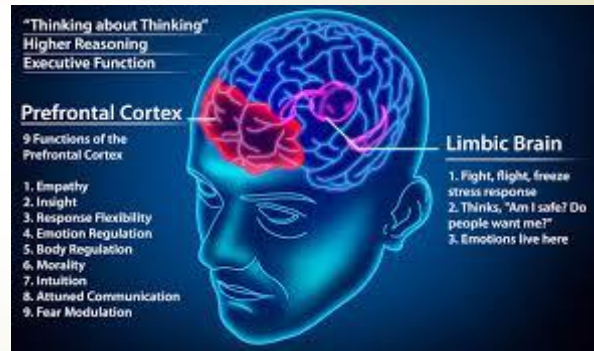
- ▶ That which fires together wires together
- ▶ Explains cow trails, ruts, habit
- ▶ Everything is changeable



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Pre Frontal Cortex—"Seat of the Soul"

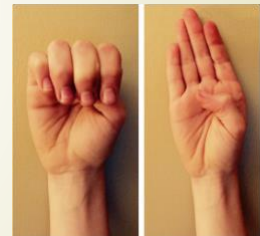
- Bodily regulation
- Attuned communication
- Emotional balance
- Response flexibility
- Fear modulation
- Empathy
- Insight
- Moral awareness
- Intuition



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Flipping Our Lid

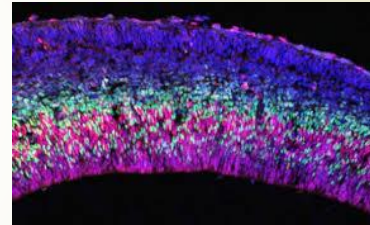
- "Crepes of Wrath"
- Amygdala takes over—fear (often hurt, sad, anger first)
- Emotions, cow trail, rutted pathways
- Fight, flight, freeze
- Higher functions not engaged



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Curiosity (Beginner's mind) vs Knowing

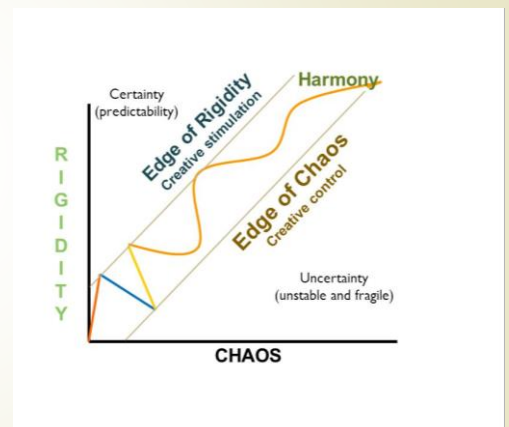
- ▶ Anatomically--Top down vs bottom up
- ▶ Top down is based upon labels, past experience, assumption
- ▶ Bottom up based upon sensory information in the moment



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Walking the Fine Line

- ▶ Chaos and rigidity
- ▶ All of life lives on this balance point
- ▶ All human physiology
 - ▶ Cardiac function
 - ▶ Arrhythmia vs fixed rate
- ▶ Personality vs psychosis
- ▶ Top down vs bottom up
- ▶ Comfort zone vs punishment zone



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Three “R’s”

- Reflection
- Resilience
- Relationship



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Reflection

- Mindfulness practice
- Awareness wheel
- SIFT—sensations, feeling, images, and thoughts
- Integration—adding together diverse differentiated parts of the system
 - Members of the committee
 - FACES—Flexible, adaptive, coherent, energized, and stable



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Mindfulness Practices

- ▶ Awareness Wheel
- ▶ Following the Breath
- ▶ Neff “Compassion”
- ▶ Miranda “Mountain of Presence”
- ▶ Dan Siegel “Wheel”
- ▶ Anamcara “Four Elements”
- ▶ Spiritual Inquiry
 - ▶ Question sets
 - ▶ What’s here and Who’s here



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Relationship

- ▶ Fundamental component of the definition of mind
- ▶ We are defined by our relationships
- ▶ We are always in relationship with other minds
 - ▶ To be out of relationship destroys the mind
- ▶ OATS system—others and the self
 - ▶ Primitive level means we are separate
 - ▶ Reality is that it simply discerns what’s mine and what’s others in the interdependent system



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Resilience

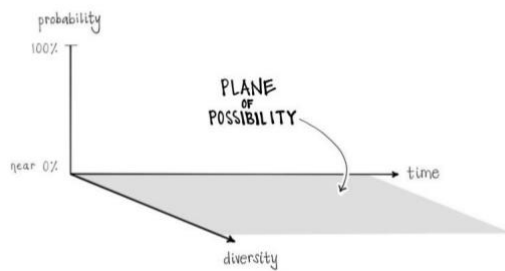
- The ability to bounce back, face into
- Essentially a courageous question relating to hope
- At it's most basic "Can I trust stepping into the new room?", "Can I create what I want?"
- Derives from rigidity of personality into the expanding possibility of opening



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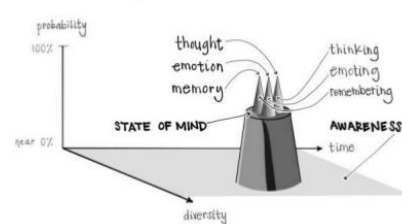
Freeing the Mind, Accessing the Plane

3P Diagram



Mental Processes from a 3P Perspective

3P Diagram with State of Mind



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Inquiry

- ▶ Total time 60 minutes
- ▶ Take a break—5 minutes
- ▶ Partner A asks all of the top three questions, one at a time.
- ▶ Listen, “Thank you”, move to next question.
- ▶ Cycle through all three questions over and over for 15 minutes.
- ▶ Partner B then asks questions.
- ▶ Then ask one another the looping question back and forth for 15 minutes.
- ▶ Discuss what you noticed with your partner for 10 minutes

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Inquiry

- ▶ Tell me a way that you get reactive.
- ▶ Underneath this reaction, what is difficult to accept?
- ▶ How does this story keep you separate?
- ▶ What happens, right now, if you let everything be exactly as it is?



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Gathering Together to Tell Our Stories

- ▶ What did you notice?
- ▶ What surprised you?
- ▶ Were you able to shift in perspective – find a bigger story?
- ▶ When you share, we each hear our own story and it's such a gift.
- ▶ Sharing takes courage, connection and willingness to be vulnerable – or whole hearted.
- ▶ Whatever you say is perfect – for you – for this moment.



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Post Meeting Assignment

- ▶ Write a list of intentions for 2020 incorporating your deepest values and wants. Use the New Year's Process on the website.
- ▶ What happens when you begin to notice that your mind (maybe how you have always identified yourself) is so interdependent and absolutely dependent on that interdependence.
- ▶ Write a reflection paper about what you have noticed when adding the concepts of interpersonal neurobiology to the awareness wheel, comfort zone, accountability, and power of intention. How do you think the development of an Enneatype relates to neurobiology?
- ▶ Have a healing holiday and a more conscious, loving, gratifying new year!

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Everything is Waiting for You

Your great mistake is to act the drama
as if you were alone. As if life
were a progressive and cunning crime
with no witness to the tiny hidden
transgressions. To feel abandoned is to
deny the intimacy of your surroundings.
Surely, even you, at times, have felt the
grand array; the swelling presence, and
the chorus, crowding out your solo voice
You must note the way the soap dish
enables you, or the window latch grants
you freedom.

Alertness is the hidden discipline of
familiarity.
The stairs are your mentor of things
to come, the doors have always been
there
to frighten you and invite you,
and the tiny speaker in the phone
is your dream-ladder to divinity.



Put down the weight of your aloneness
and ease into the conversation.
The kettle is singing even as it pours you
a drink, the cooking pots
have left their arrogant aloofness and
seen the good in you at last. All the birds
and creatures of the world are
unutterably
themselves. Everything is waiting for you.
— David Whyte