

Compassion and Resilience

Prof Paul Gilbert PhD FBPSS, OBE

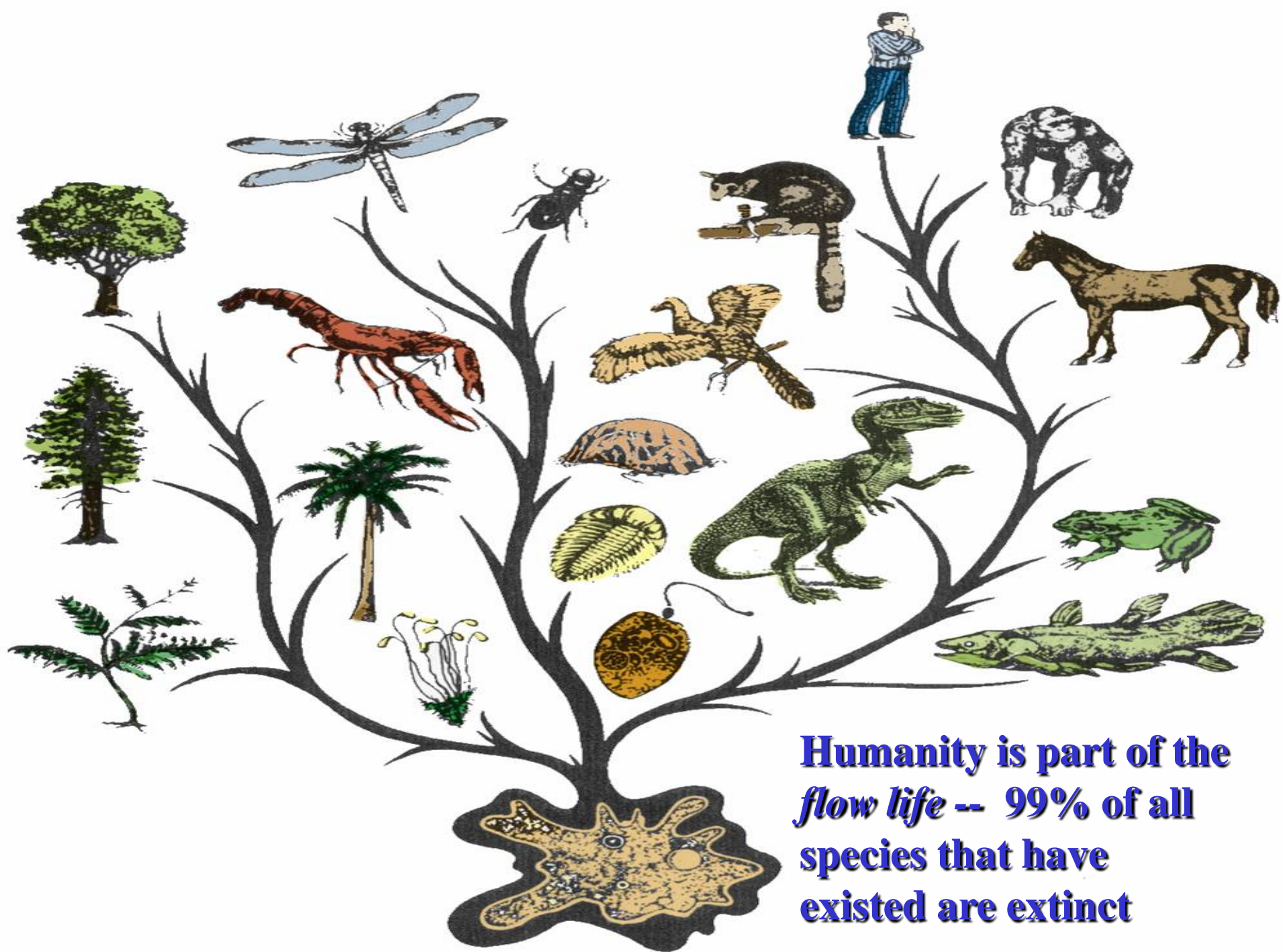
www.compassionatemind.co.uk
www.compassionatewelbeing.co.uk



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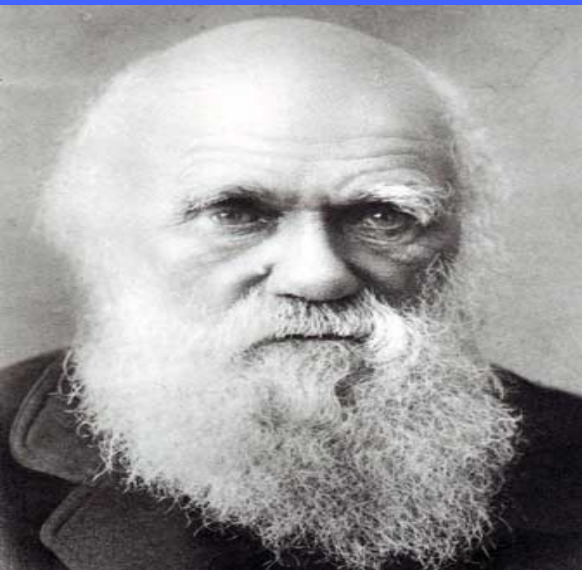


**Humanity is part of the
flow life -- 99% of all
species that have
existed are extinct**



Charles Robert Darwin,

12 February 1809 – 19 April 1882



**The process of change via
natural selection from the
challenges of survival and
reproduction**

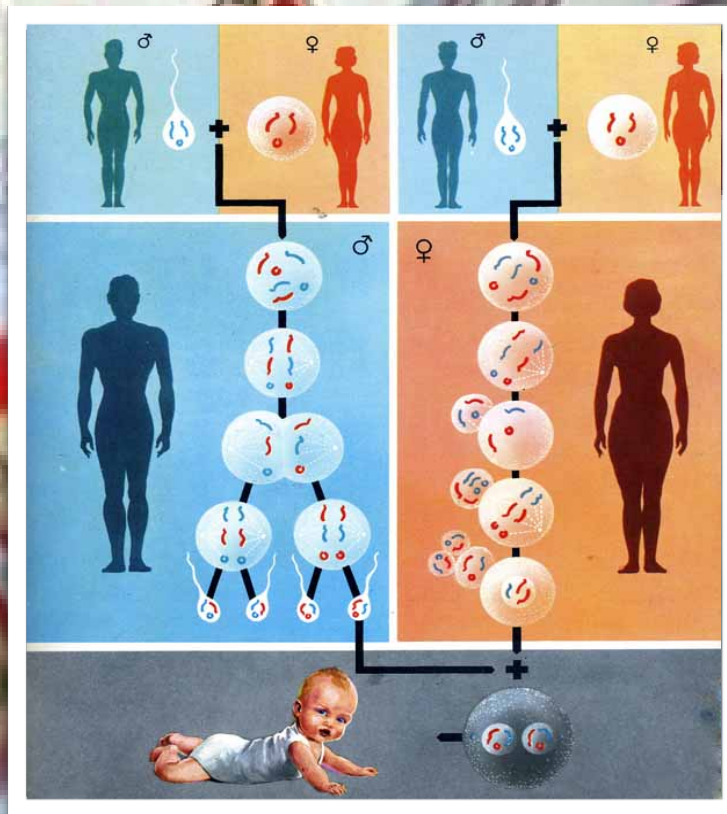
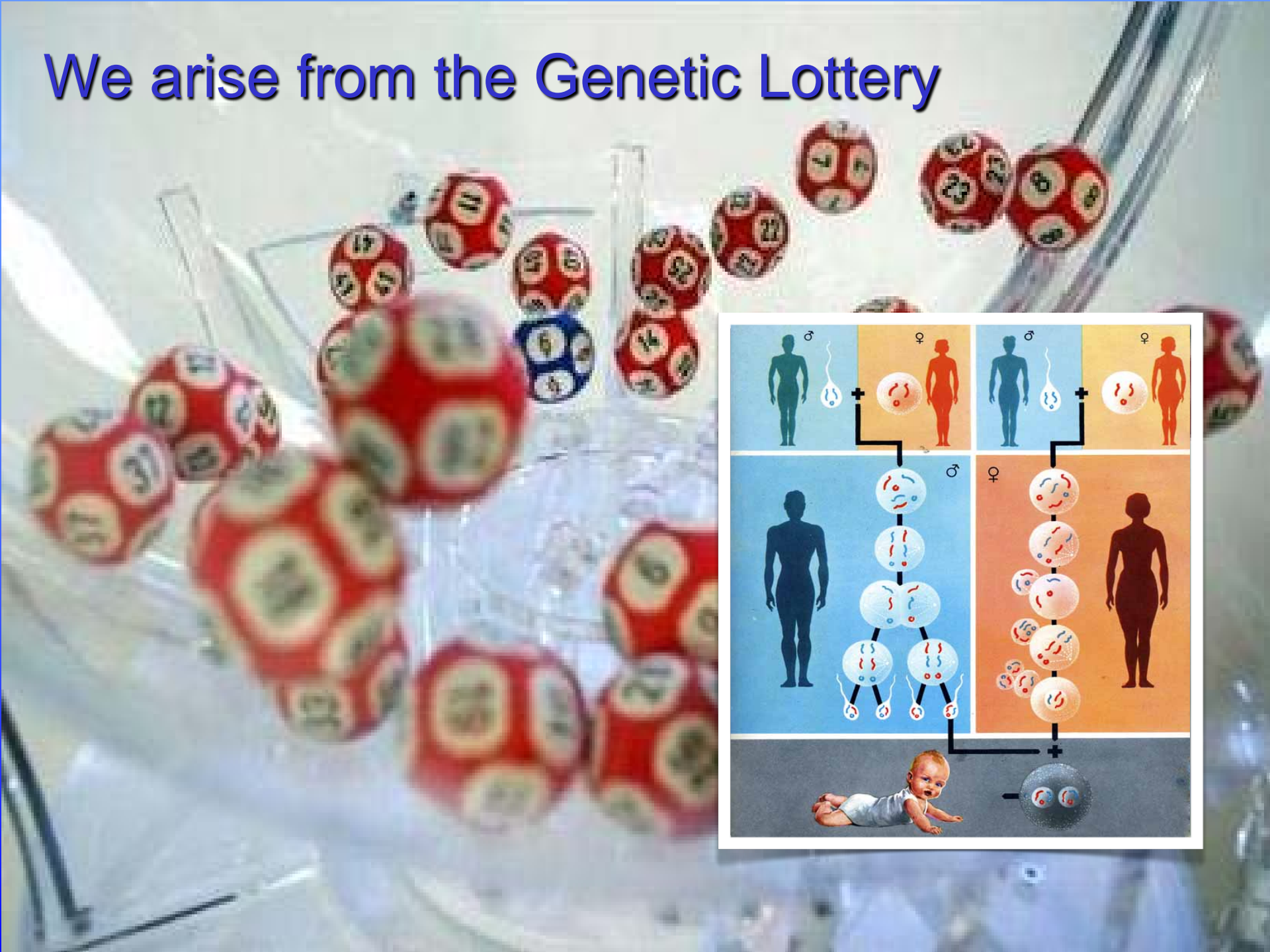
Compassion begins with a reality check

Insight builds wisdom

- **We are gene-built - with evolved brains designed to struggle to survive, to want, grasp and avoid pain**

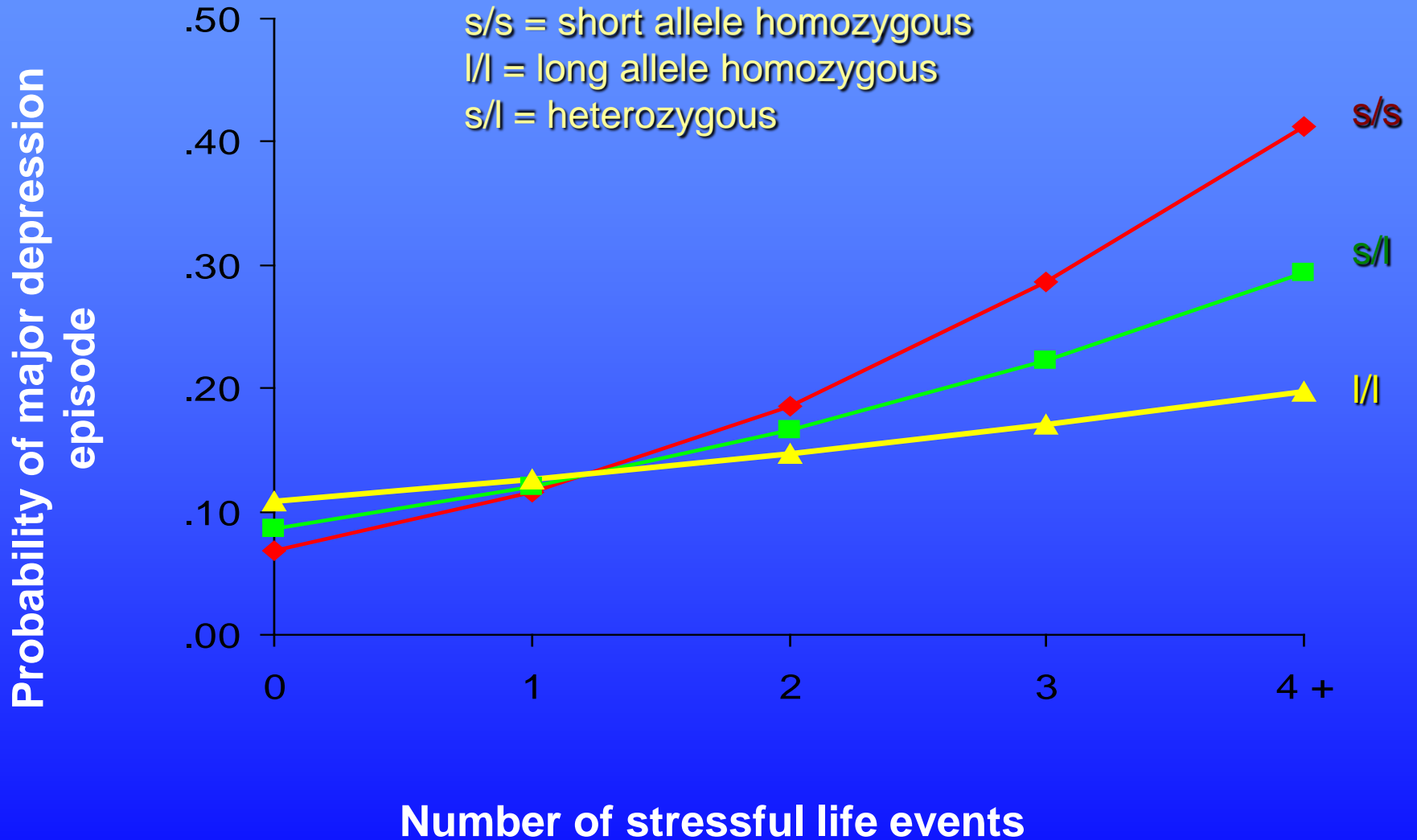


We arise from the Genetic Lottery

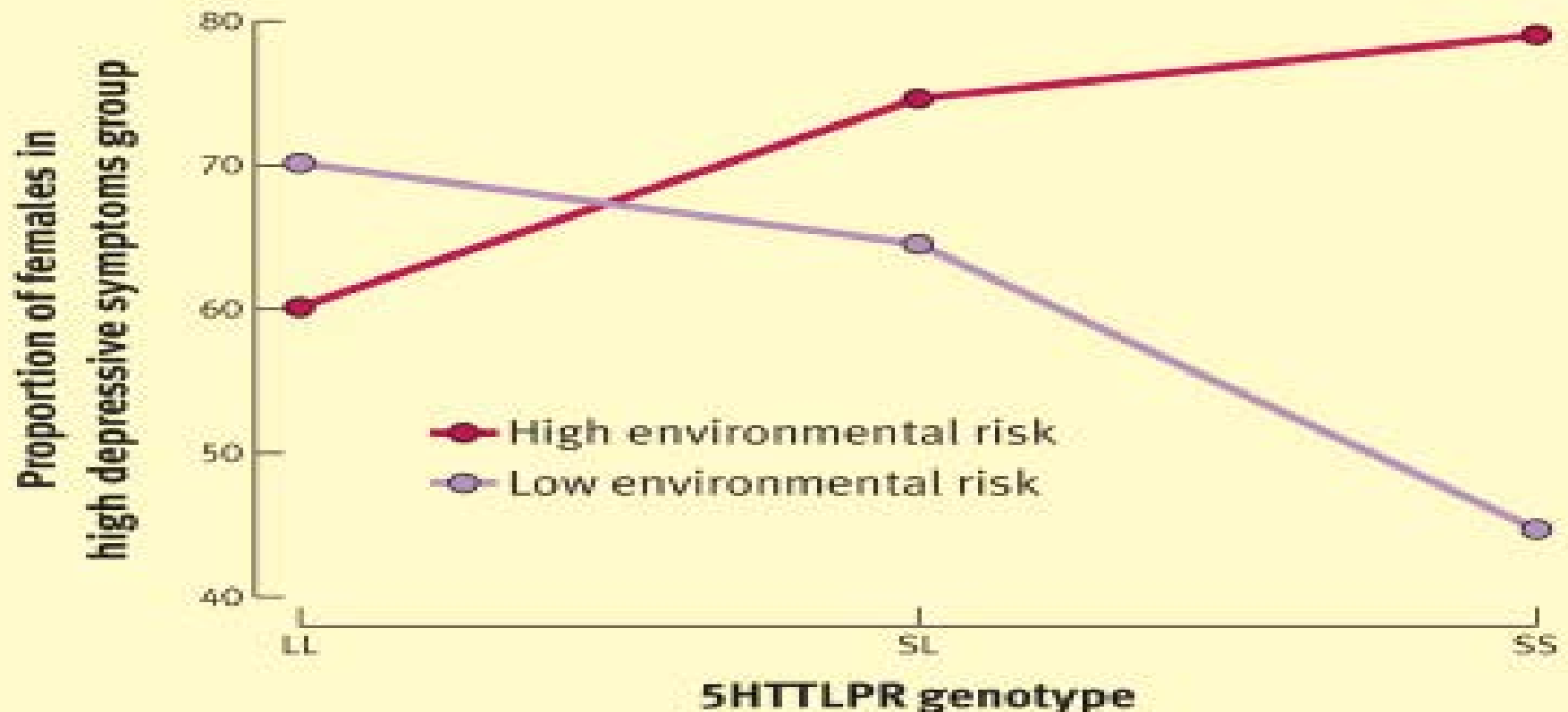


Gene and Life Stress Interaction

(from Caspi et al., 2003)



Interaction between serotonin transporter promoter genotype and environmental risk on depressive symptoms in adolescent girls



Reproduced with permission from Macmillan Publishers Ltd: *Molecular Psychiatry*, Eley T, Sugden K, Corsico A, et al. Gene–environment interaction analysis of serotonin markers with adolescent depression, © 2004.

Compassion begins with a reality check

Insight builds wisdom

- **We are gene-built - with evolved brains designed to struggle to survive, to want, grasp and avoid pain**
- **We are all born, grow, decay and die - and are susceptible to many diseases and injuries – life with tragedy – pain and suffering – more than impermanence**
- **We are socially shaped – from our gene expressions, to our sense of self and values – baby kidnap**



Male Life Expectancy – Different Versions of You

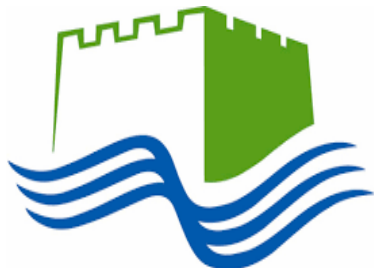


THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA



0 Miles

84 years



TOWER HAMLETS



7 Miles

77 years



Glasgow

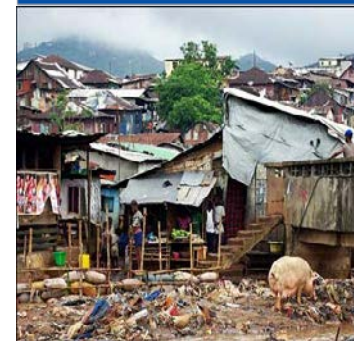


345 Miles

54 years



Sierra-Leone

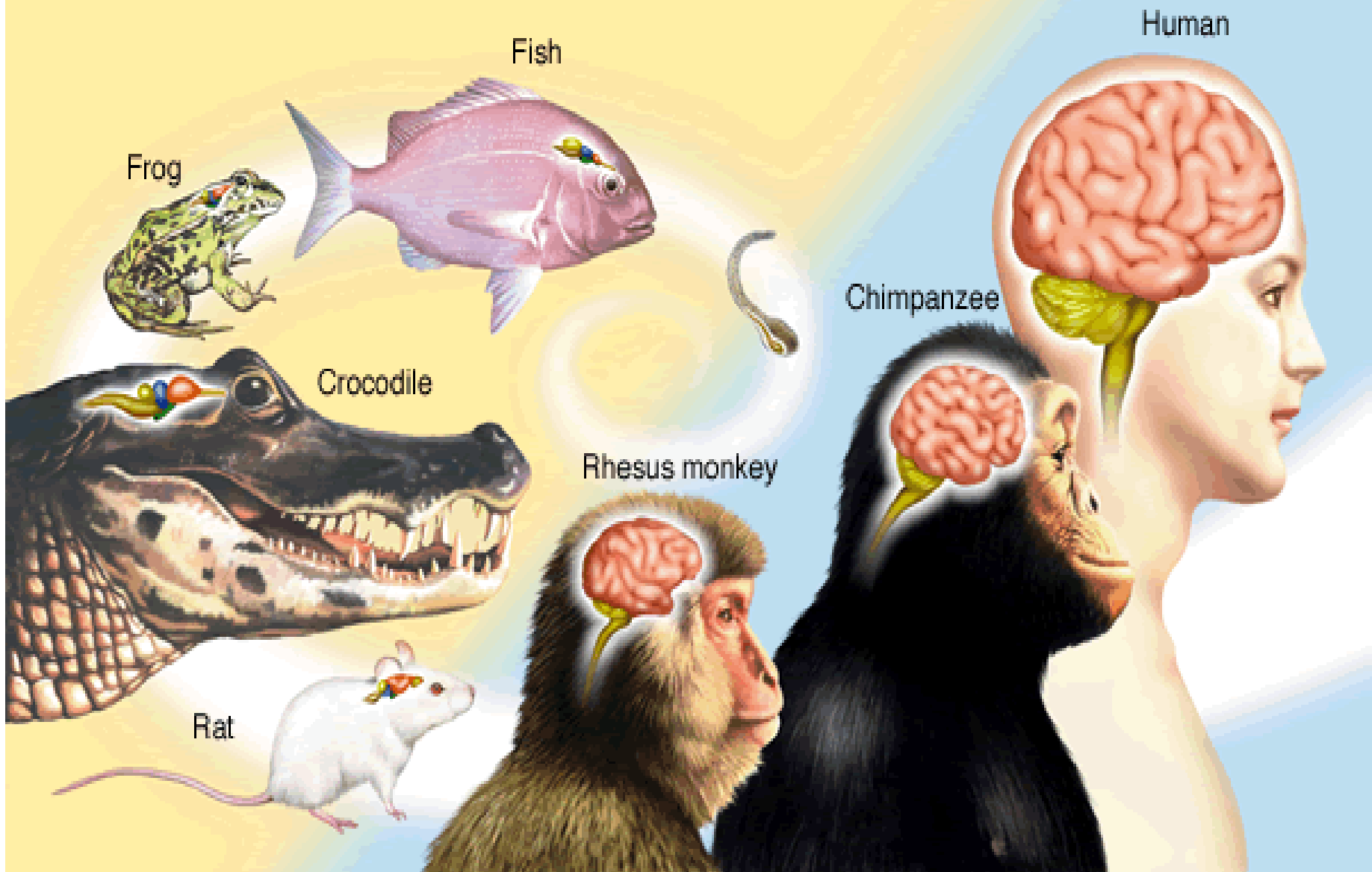


3000 Miles

45 years

*The brain itself is
our biggest
challenge!!!*

The human brain is the product of many millions of years of evolution – a process of conserving, modifying and adapting



Tricky Brain -- full of trade offs and compromises!

Old Brain Functions

Motives harm-avoidance, food, sex, caring, status

Emotions anger, anxiety, sadness, joy

Behaviours fight, flight, shut down, courting, caring

'New' 2 million year old Brain Troubles

Language/symbols

Self-monitoring

Self-criticism

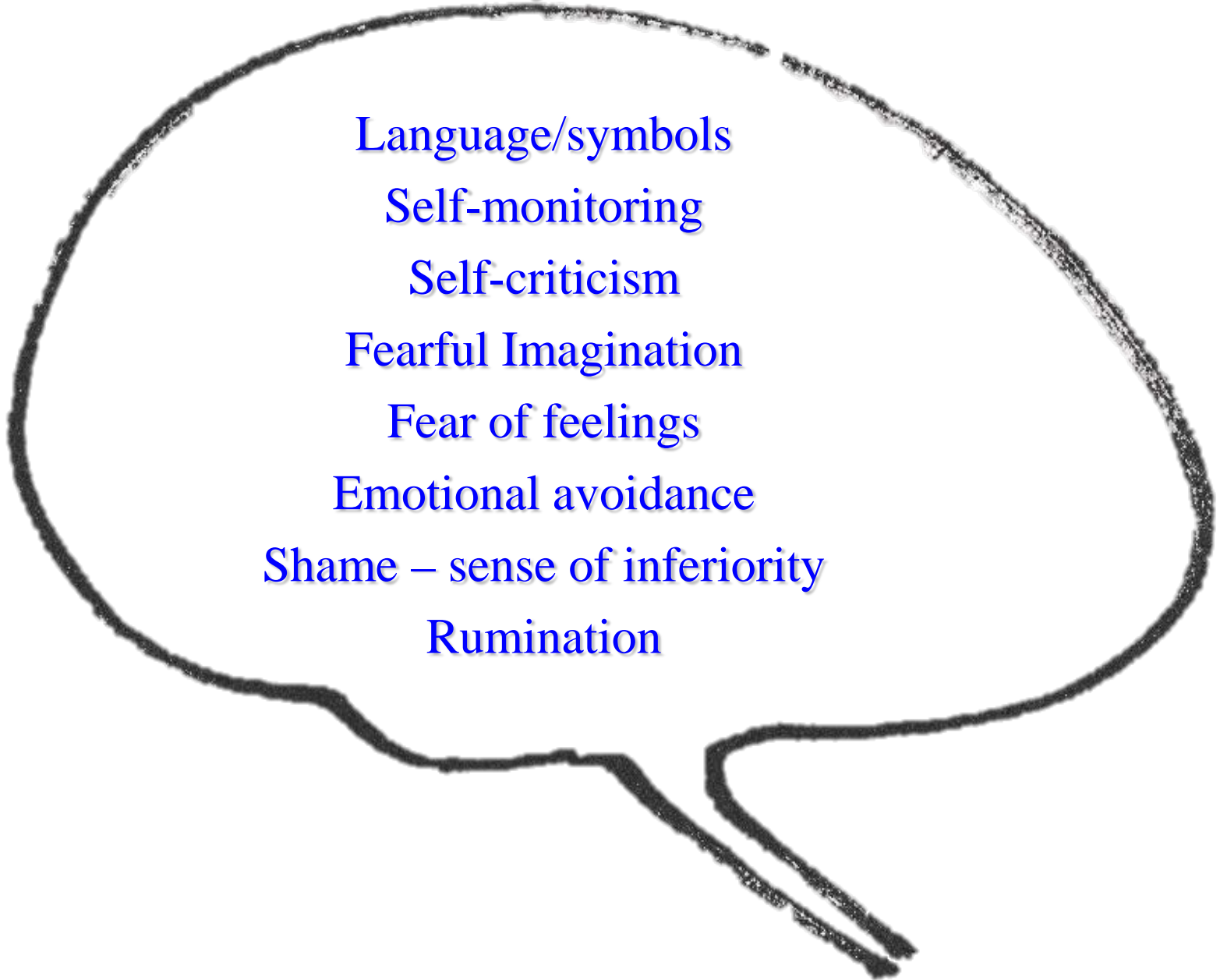
Fearful Imagination

Fear of feelings

Emotional avoidance

Shame – sense of inferiority

Rumination



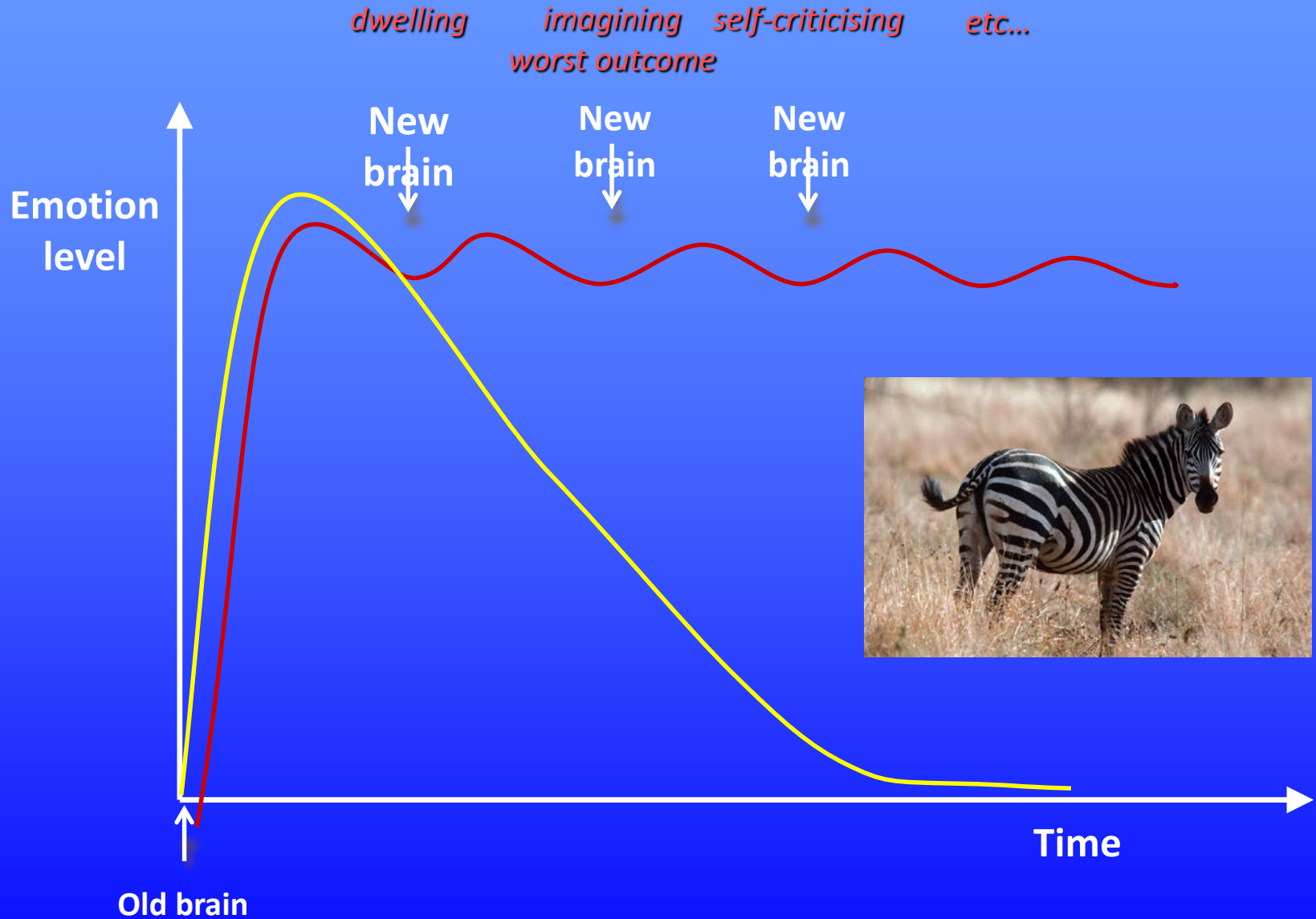


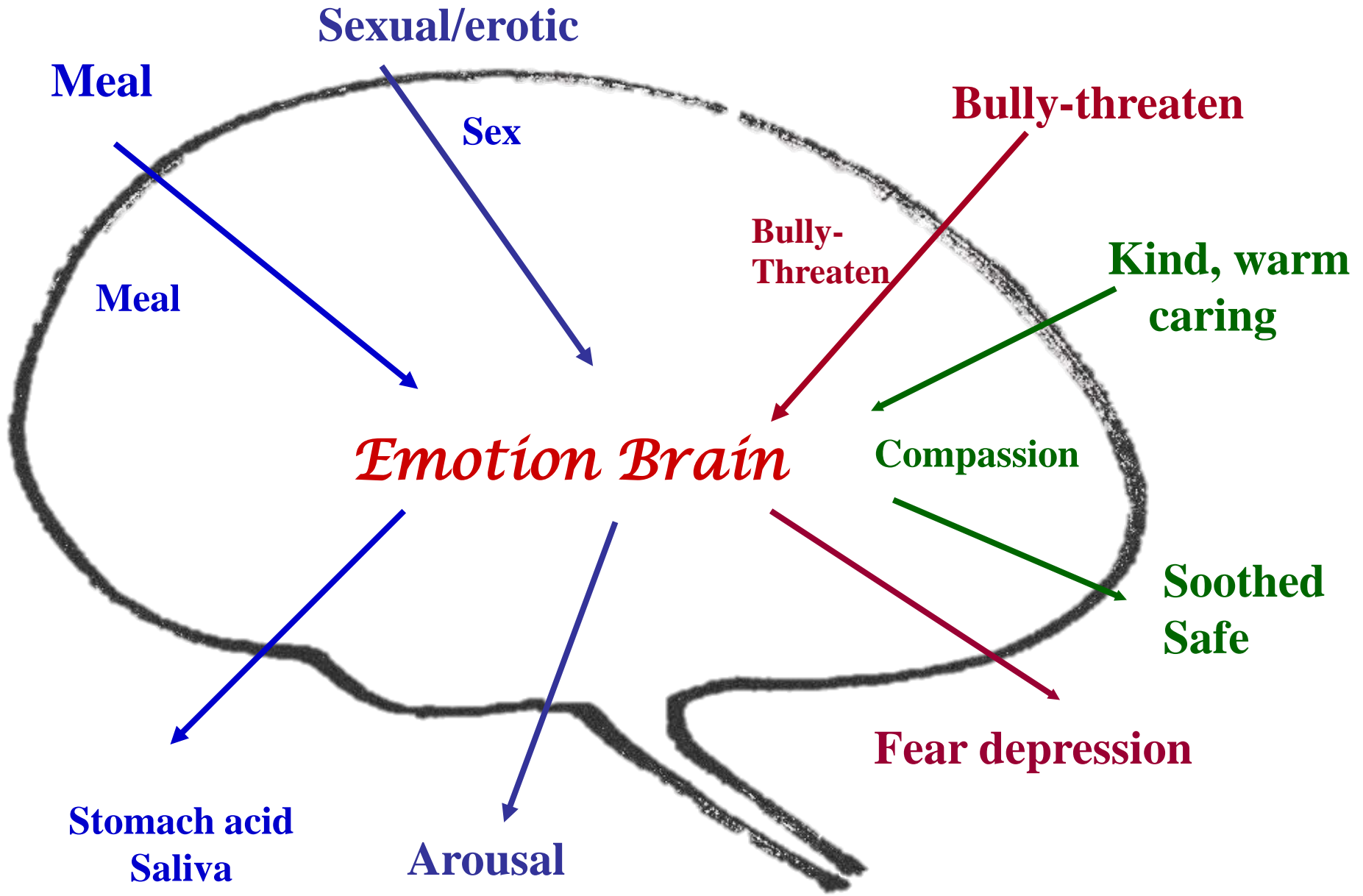
*New Brain: Imagination,
Planning, Rumination, Integration*

*Old Brain: Emotions, Motives,
Relationship Seeking-Creating*

Easy for us to form loops to drive us all crazy!

Sometimes unhelpful





Brain-body responds to it own internal creations

CULTURE

*New Brain: Imagination,
Planning, Rumination, Integration*



*Old Brain: Emotions, Motives,
Relationship Seeking-Creating*



Easy for us to form loops to drive us all crazy!

Biopsychosocial Approaches and Evolutionary Theory as Aids to Integration in Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy

Paul Gilbert¹

Kingsway Hospital, Derby, UK

This paper explores the problem of fragmentation in clinical psychology. It is suggested that this is due to the nature of clinical psychology with its multitude of different concerns, ranging from the cultural to the physiological. To help us become more integrative we could more formally adopt the biopsychosocial approach which explicitly asks the clinician and theorist to focus on the interactions *between* various levels. This paper also argues that the biopsychosocial approach could be informed by evolutionary theory because this theory provides possible explanations of why certain developmental and social contexts can so powerfully impact on physiology. An evolutionary psychology relevant to clinical psychology can focus on the archetypal nature of human experience, be helpful in exploring therapeutic issues, and avoid some of the reductionist aspects of sociobiology.

*Our Tragic
Realities*

**A mind that does not
know itself**

*Dangerous, Cruel
and Crazy Mind?*

Built in Biases

Compassion insights

Biases can be implicit (non-conscious) or explicit (Conscious)

Self-focused

Kin preferences – (nepotism)

In-group preferences – (tribalism)

Cruelty and Callousness

The deliberate causing of harm/suffering to another either for pleasure, personal benefit or social conformity

- **Torture**
- **Slavery**
- **Women as property – subservient**
- **Chinese foot binding, FGM,**
- **Domestic violence, rape.**

50%+ of children from some inner cities show high rates of PTSD symptoms with a range of health and learning effects (Horowitz, McKay & Marshall, 2005)

Lets be Clear
Poverty, loneliness and Violence
Exposure affects brains

**Humans have lived much of their
recent history in traumatic
conditions and seriously harming
each other's brains**

PHILIP ZIMBARDO



THE LUCIFER EFFECT

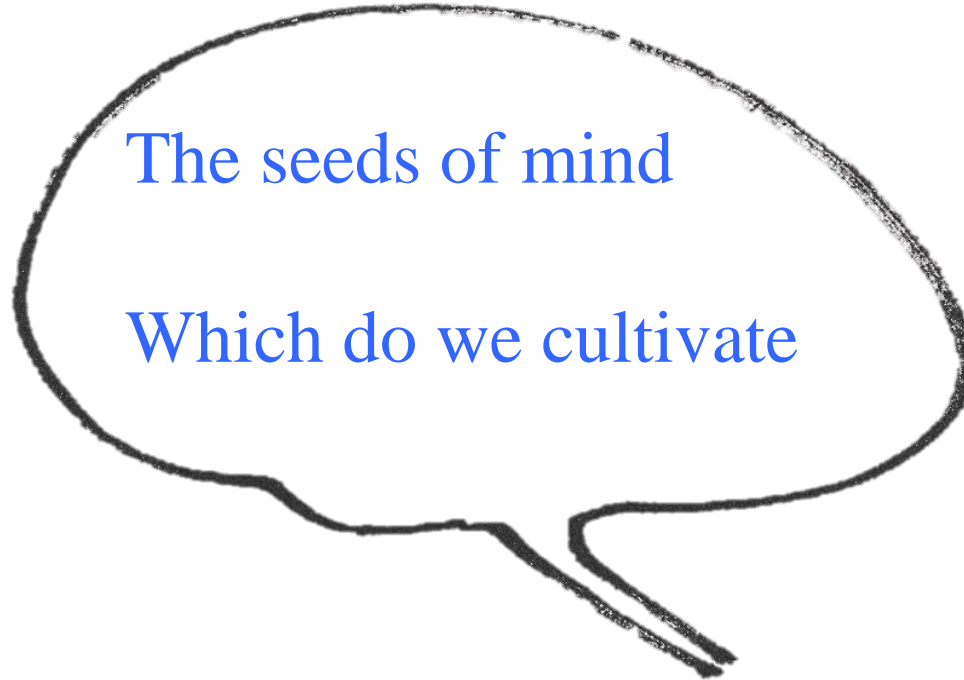
HOW GOOD
PEOPLE TURN EVIL

Compassion:

Can we recognise that
through our own
actions or inactions
we can be
contributors to our
own and other
people's suffering?

Mind as a multi-self

War
Tribalism
Greed
Abuse
Wound
Slavery
Torture
Sadism
Hatred



Peace
Equanimity
Fairness
Care
Heal
Liberate
Nurture
Protect
Forgive

Mixed priorities and many conflicts -- both conscious and non-conscious

Clues to our problems may lie in the
evolved motivational systems that
organise emotions, cognitions and
behaviour

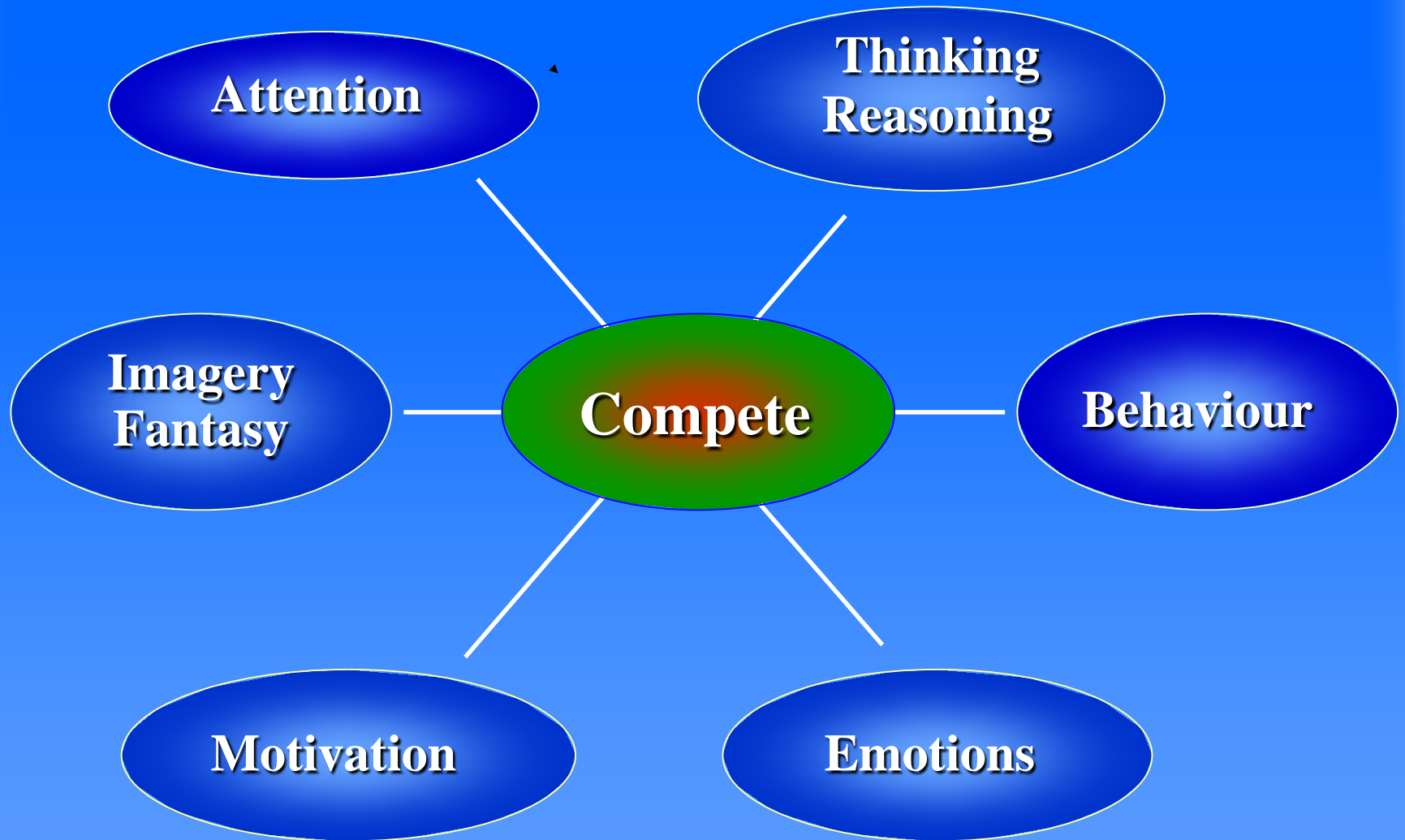
and

Create contexts to support them

Strategic Motive Systems

- Innate strategies build motives and stimulus detection and action potentials
- **Competing for resources** build motives linked to high self-monitoring, social comparison, drives to do better than others, need for achievement, complex regulation of the dopamine system vulnerability to shame, self-criticism, social anxiety and depression

Competitive mind can block Compassion



Research Article

Power, Distress, and Compassion

Turning a Blind Eye to the Suffering of Others

Gerben A. van Kleef,¹ Christopher Oveis,² Ilmo van der Löwe,² Aleksandr LuoKogan,² Jennifer Goetz,²
and Dacher Keltner²

¹University of Amsterdam and ²University of California, Berkeley

ABSTRACT Responses to individuals who suffer are a function of power, concerning how power moderates these two processes so vital to

Leaders

Social and Personality Psychology Compass 7/3 (2013): 199–216, 10.1111/spc3.12018



The Dark Triad of Personality: A 10 Year Review

Adrian Furnham¹, Steven C. Richards¹, and Delroy L. Paulhus^{2*}

¹ *University College London*

² *University of British Columbia*

Abstract

Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy:

Dimension of Callousness



THE CHILDREN WE MEAN TO RAISE: The Real Messages Adults Are Sending About Values

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our youth's values appear to be awry, and the messages that adults are sending may be at the heart of the problem.

According to our recent national survey, a large majority of youth across a wide spectrum of races, cultures, and classes appear to value aspects of personal success—achievement and happiness—over concern for others.¹

THE CHILDREN WE MEAN TO RAISE: The Real Messages Adults Are Sending About Values

We asked youth to rank what was most important to them: achieving at a high level, happiness (feeling good most of the time), or caring for others. Almost 80% of youth picked high achievement or happiness as their top choice, while roughly 20% selected caring for others. Youth also ranked fairness low in relation to several other values. For example, they were far more likely to rank “hard work” above fairness. Some youth made it quite clear to us that their self-interest is paramount: “If you are not happy, life is nothing. After that, you want to do well. And after that, expend any excess energy on others.”

THE CHILDREN WE MEAN TO RAISE: The Real Messages Adults Are Sending About Values

But according to our data, youth aren't buying it. About 80% of the youth in our survey report that their parents are more concerned about achievement or happiness than caring for others. A similar percentage of youth perceive teachers as prioritizing students' achievements over their caring. Youth were also 3 times more likely to agree than disagree with this statement: "My parents are prouder if I get good grades in my classes than if I'm a caring community member in class and school." Our conversations with and observations of parents also suggest that the power and frequency of parents' daily messages about achievement and happiness are drowning out their messages about concern for others.

Output versus input (Lean) focus

Outputs-Results

Targets -achievement

**Treat more , faster but
with less resources—cut
non-clinical time**

Punitive consequences

**Results emerge from
threats**

Inputs

**What is necessary to
produce what you want**

**Identify blocks and
innovate to resolve
them**

**Results emerge from
facilitative conditions**

Competing to avoid inferiority but not seek superiority

Insecure/striving competition

To be valued I have to strive to succeed

Life is a competition

People compare me to others to see if I match up

Secure/non-striving competition

Others will accept me if I fail

I don't feel under pressure to prove myself

You are loved for what you are not what you achieve

Striving to Avoid Inferiority

Students (N =207) Patients (N =62)

Lose out	passive reject	active reject
.64	.67	.54
.73	.71	.75

Gilbert et al., (2007) British Journal of Social Psychology, 46, 633-648.

Gilbert et al (2009) Psychology and Psychotherapu, 82, 123-136

Data for Striving to Avoid Inferiority

Patients N=62

	Soc Com	Sub Beh	Ex shame
Secure	.49	-.32	-.53
Insecure	-.51	.52	.70

	Stress	Anxiety	Depression
Secure	-.59	-.36	-.39
Insecure	.71	.52	.52

The Role of Defeat and Entrapment in Depression, Anxiety, and Suicide

Peter James Taylor, Patricia Gooding, Alex M. Wood, and Nicholas Tarrier
University of Manchester

Defeat and entrapment are psychological constructs that have played a central role in evolutionary accounts of depression. These concepts have since been implicated in theoretical accounts of anxiety disorders and suicidality. The current article reports on a systematic review of the existing research investigating the links among defeat, entrapment, and psychopathology in the domains of depression, suicidality, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other anxiety syndromes. Fifty-one original research articles were identified and critically reviewed. There was strong convergent evidence for a link with depressive symptoms, across a variety of clinical and nonclinical samples. Preliminary support for an association with suicidality was also observed, with effects not readily explainable in terms of comorbid depression. There was strong evidence for an association between defeat and PTSD, although this may have been partly accounted for by comorbid depression. The findings for other anxiety disorders were less consistent. There was, however, evidence that social anxiety in individuals with psychosis may

Some data

Evidence for heightened defeat and arrested flight in depression/anhedonia (N=90)

Entrapment

BDI (r = .54)

HP (r = .61)

ANH (r = .63)

Defeat

BDI (r = .77)

HP (r = .65)

ANH (r = .79)

**BDI = Beck Depression Inventory; HP= Hopelessness,
ANH = Anhedonia**

Source: Gilbert & Allan (1998), Psychol. Medicine,
Gilbert et al (2002), J. Aff. Dis.

Data for Anhedonia

Students (N =193)

Soc Com

- .44

Sub Beh

.44

Ex shame

.56

Patients (N =81)

Soc Com

- .72

Sub Beh

.55

Ex shame

.53

Shame, Guilt, and Depressive Symptoms: A Meta-Analytic Review

Sangmoon Kim
Syracuse University

Ryan Thibodeau
St. John Fisher College

Randall S. Jorgensen
Syracuse University

Recent theoretical and empirical work has facilitated the drawing of sharp conceptual distinctions between shame and guilt. A clear view of these distinctions has permitted development of a research literature aimed at evaluating the differential associations of shame and guilt with depressive symptoms. This study quantitatively summarized the magnitude of associations of shame and guilt with depressive symptoms. Two hundred forty-two effect sizes were obtained from 108 studies employing 22,411 participants. Shame showed significantly stronger associations with depressive symptoms ($r = .43$) than guilt ($r = .28$). However, the association of shame and depressive symptoms was statistically indistin-

So what to do?

Turn to science!!!!

Two Strategic Motive Systems

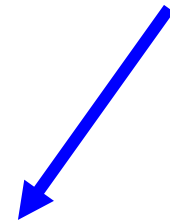
- **Innate strategies build motives and stimulus detection and action potentials**

Competing for resources build motives linked to high self-monitoring, social comparison, social anxiety and depression

Supporting survival of others build motives linked to attention focused on others, empathic engagement, desires to be helpful, avoid causing harm, happiness in sharing and helping

Challenges: Survival of kin and Friends

- **Recent scientific focus has been on how forms of caring and altruism could evolve and operate**
- **Parental investment and cooperation – are evolved motives and strategies –with physiological adaptations to support them**



Psychology of Caring-Nurturance

Fogel, Melson and Mistry (1986) suggested that care-nurturance involves:

- *Awareness* of the need to be nurturing,
- *Motivation* to nurture,
- *Understanding* what is needed to be nurturing
- *Expression* of nurturing feelings, with an ability to match nurturing with the
- *Feedback* from the impact on the other

Core to Compassion Focused Therapy

- **From Caring to Compassion**

The Mammalian Importance of Caring Minds



Caring as “looking after”. Seeking closeness rather than dispersion. Individuals obtain protection, food, and care when ill. Key also is **soothing-calming** and physiological regulation. Few offspring but high survival rate in comparison to species without attachment, affection and kindness

Promotes courage and engagement



Co-operative and mutual support stimulates affiliative systems and helps regulate threat

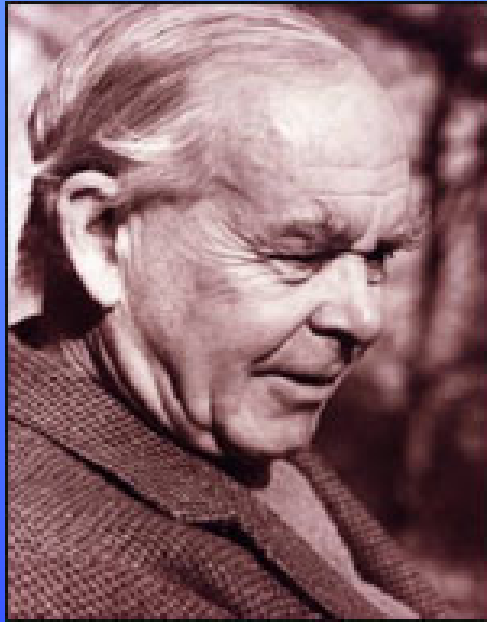
Types of Affect Regulator Systems

Drive, excite, vitality

Content, safe, connected



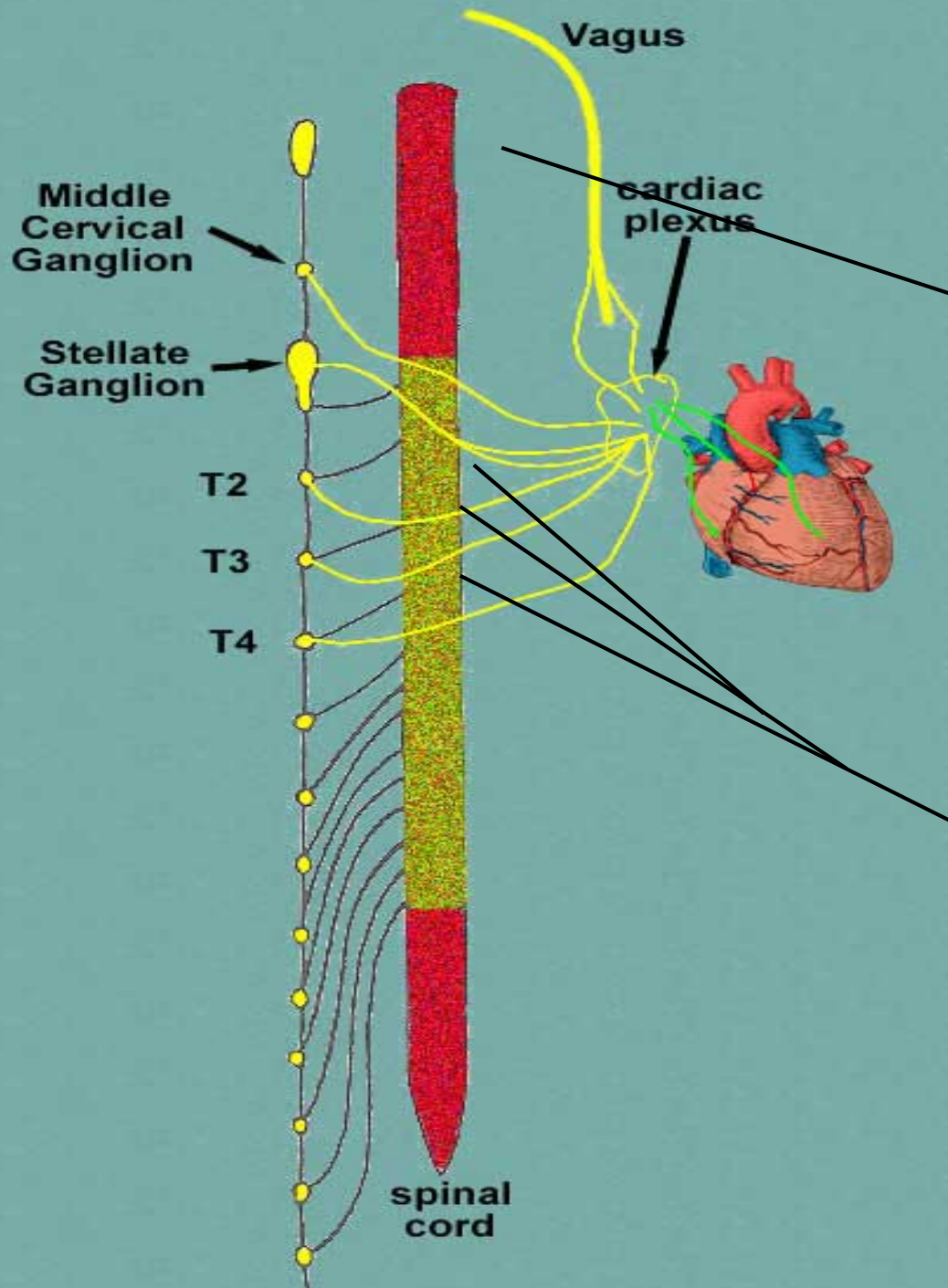
J. Bowlby – Making safe



1907-1990

One of the most influential psychiatrists of the modern age

- *Proximity seeking* –desire closeness, to be with
- *Secure base* –source of security and guidance to go out, explore and develop confidence
- *Safe haven* –source of comfort and emotion regulation
- Social signals are the drivers (social mentality)
- Lack of these in early life can seriously disrupt motivation, emotion and self regulation systems



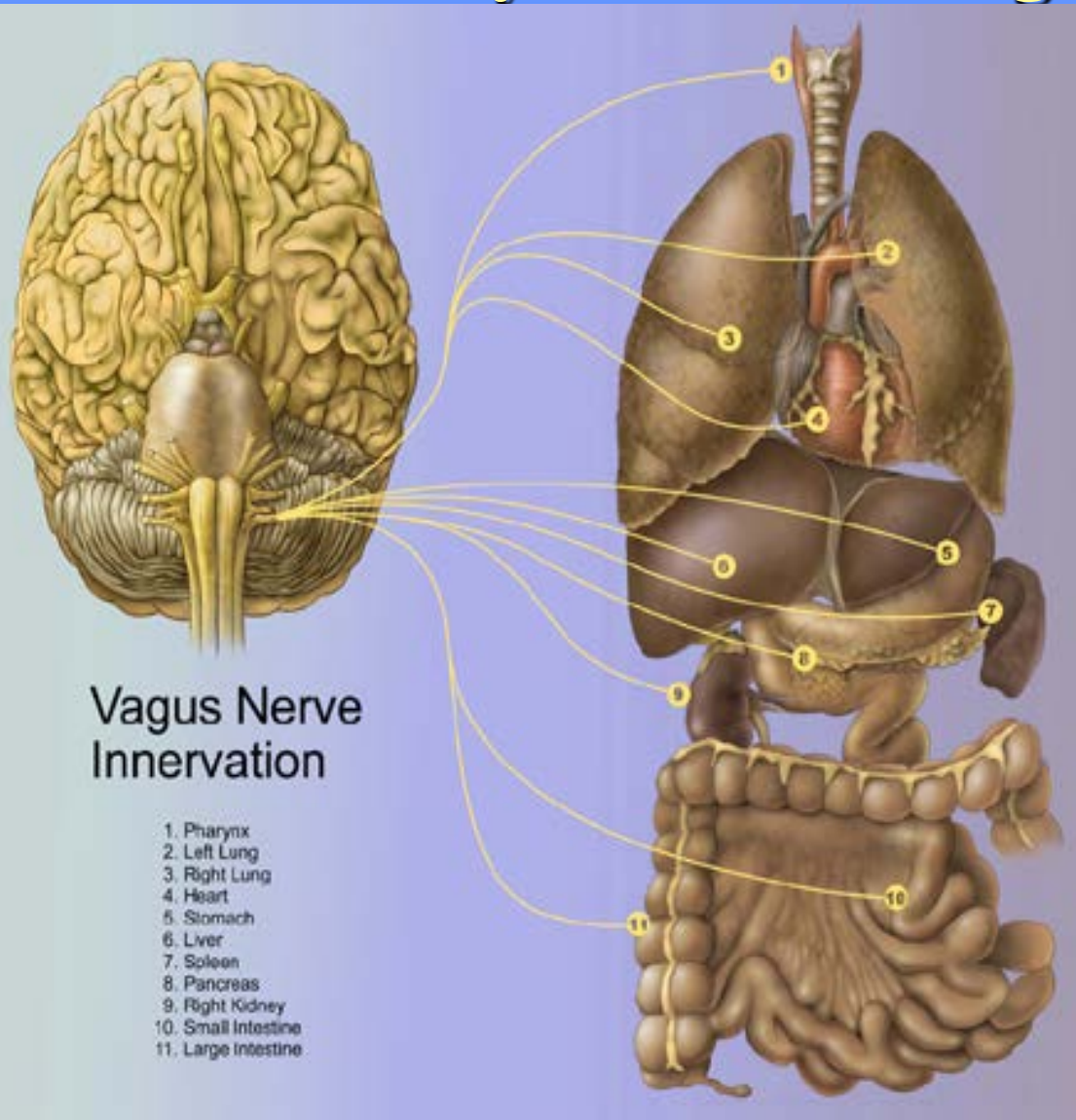
Parasympathetic
nerves to heart

Slows HR

Sympathetic nerves
to heart

Increases HR

Safeness -connecting and the parasympathetic system: The Vagus Nerve



- PNS influence on heart rate – slows beat down during outbreak
- Associated with affiliation, tend & befriend, general positive emotional tone
- Sensitive to safeness

Feeling Safe

- **Not just the absence of threat**
- **Specific brain systems for detecting safeness cues**
- **Specific systems for organising the brain in the presence of safeness cues**

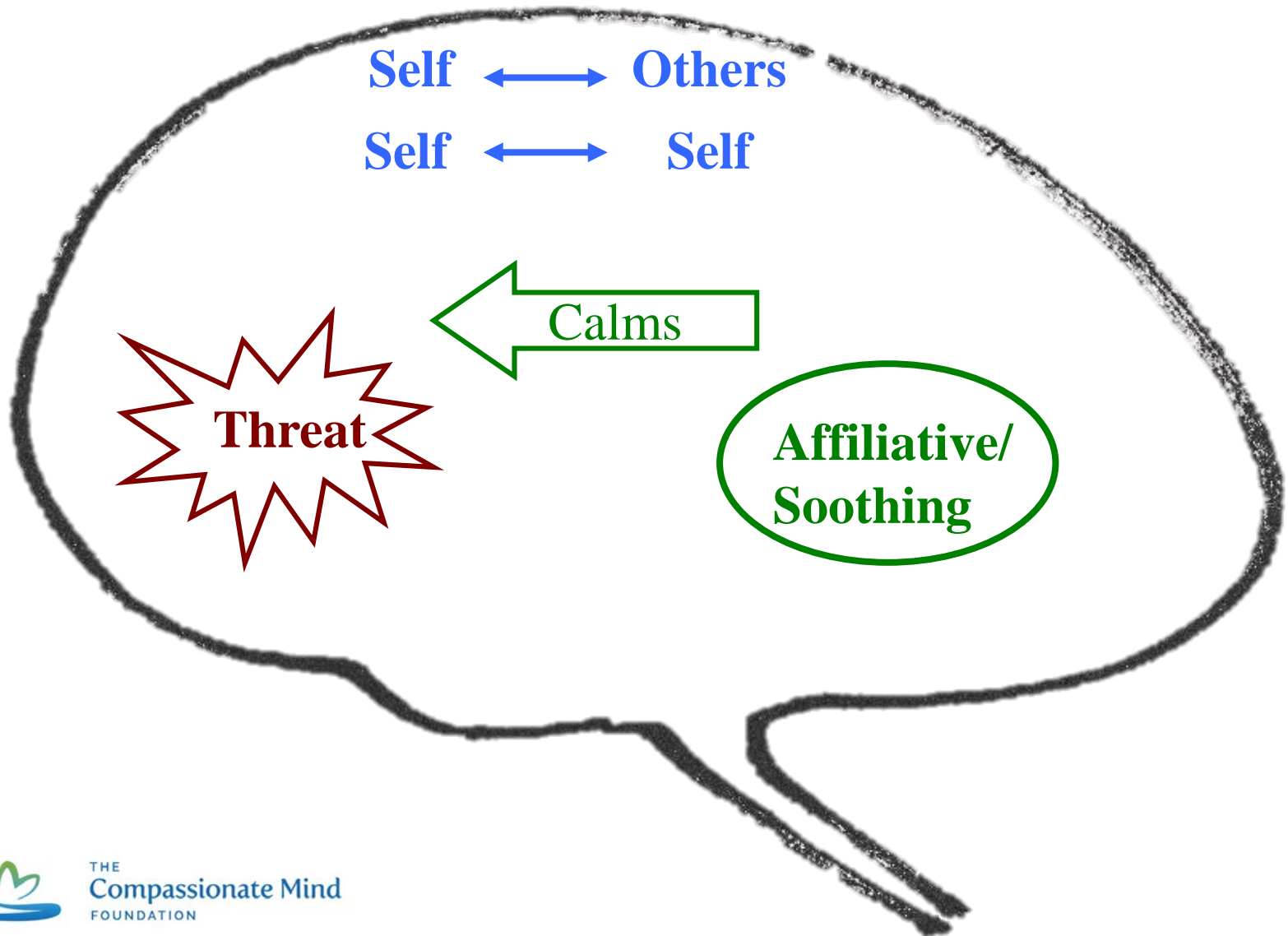
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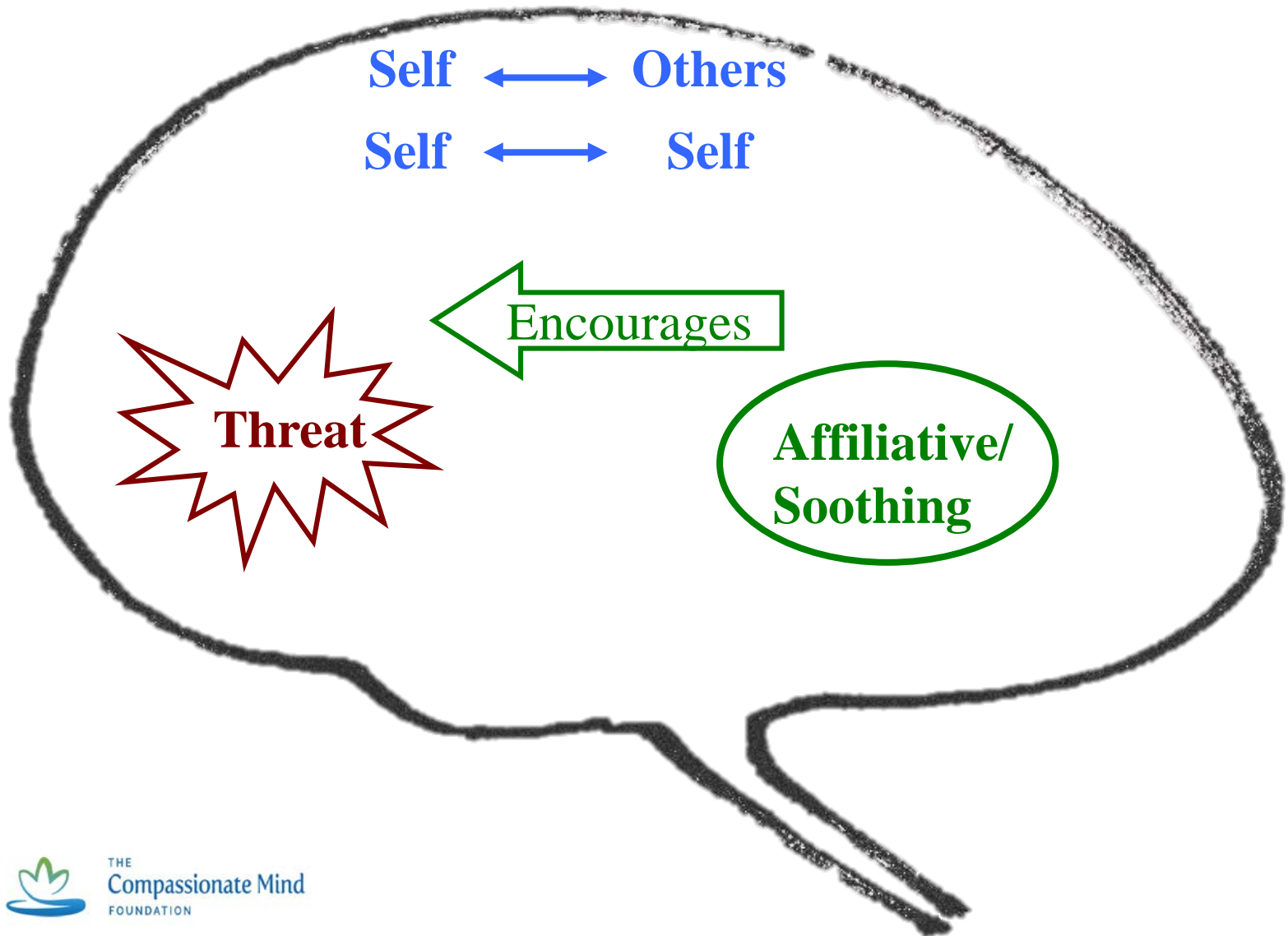
Content, safe, connected



Power of Affiliative processing



Power of Affiliative processing



PERSONALITY PROCESSES AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Vagal Activity Is Quadratically Related to Prosocial Traits, Prosocial Emotions, and Observer Perceptions of Prosociality

Aleksandr Kogan
University of Cambridge

Christopher Oveis and Evan W. Carr
University of California, San Diego

June Gruber
Yale University

Iris B. Mauss
University of California, Berkeley

Amanda Shallcross
New York University School of Medicine

Emily A. Impett
University of Toronto Mississauga

Ilmo van der Lowe and Bryant Hui
University of Cambridge

Cecilia Cheng
The University of Hong Kong

Dacher Keltner
University of California, Berkeley

***Being cared for* and Physiology**

The evolution of caring brings major changes in physiological regulation –

Relationships are physiological regulators

Gene expression

Stress reactivity

Immune system function

Frontal cortex

Illness and recovery

Core values

Self-identities

Compassion and empathy

The Two Psychologies of Compassion

Compassion can be defined in many ways but focuses on two key psychologies:

As a **sensitivity** to the suffering/distress of self and others with a deep **commitment** to try to relieve and prevent it

Two different Psychologies

- To approach, understand and (how to) engage with suffering/distress - looking into its causes - **COURAGE**
- To work to alleviate and prevent suffering/distress – work to acquire wisdom and skills - **DEDICATION**

Each more complex than might at first seem

Dimensions of Facilitators and Inhibitors

Liking

Competence

Deservedness

Empathic – Mentalising

Self-focused competitiveness

Dissociation - denial

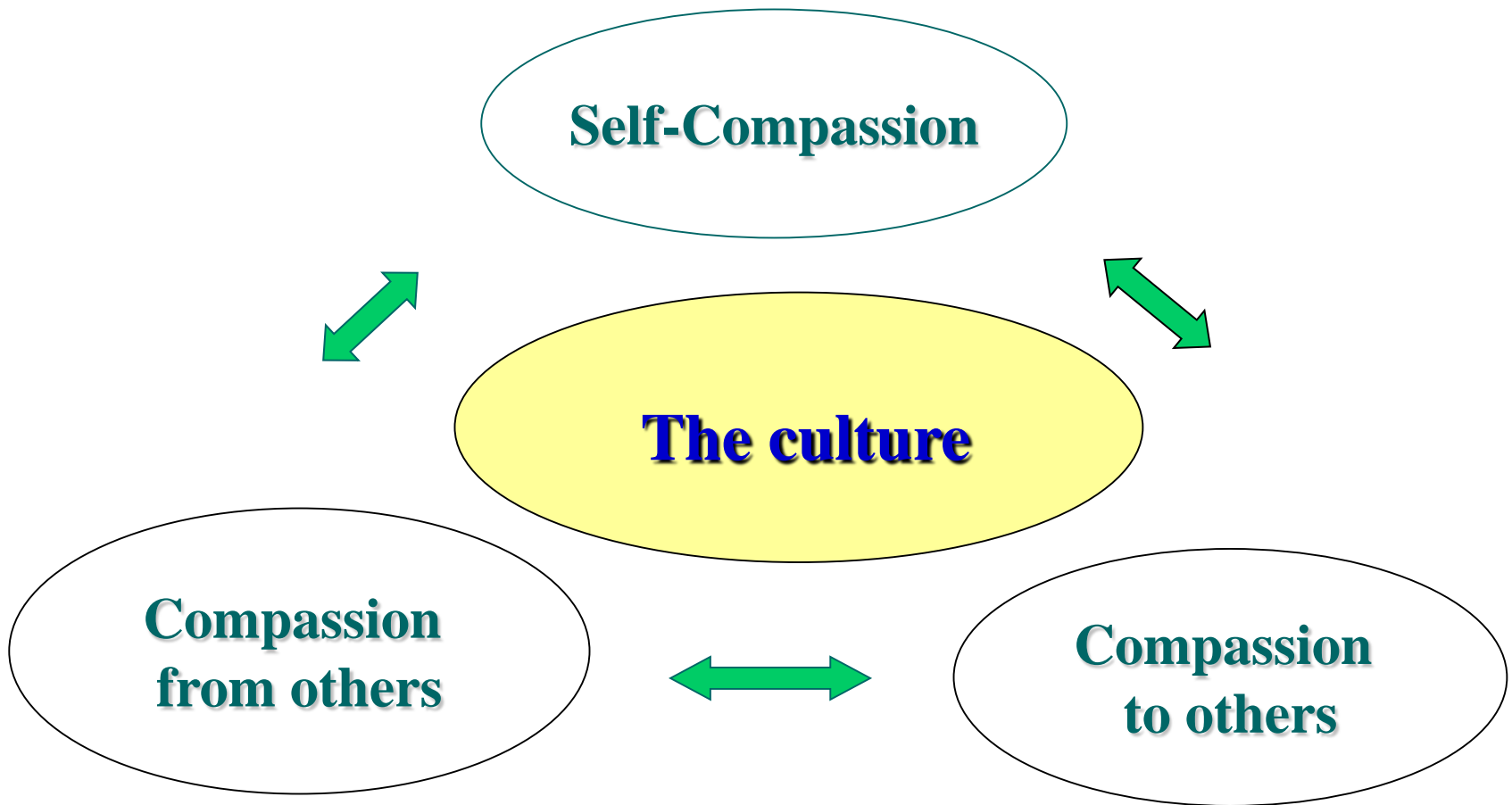
Anxiety depression

Distress tolerance

Overwhelmed

Inhibitors can be in the social structure and system

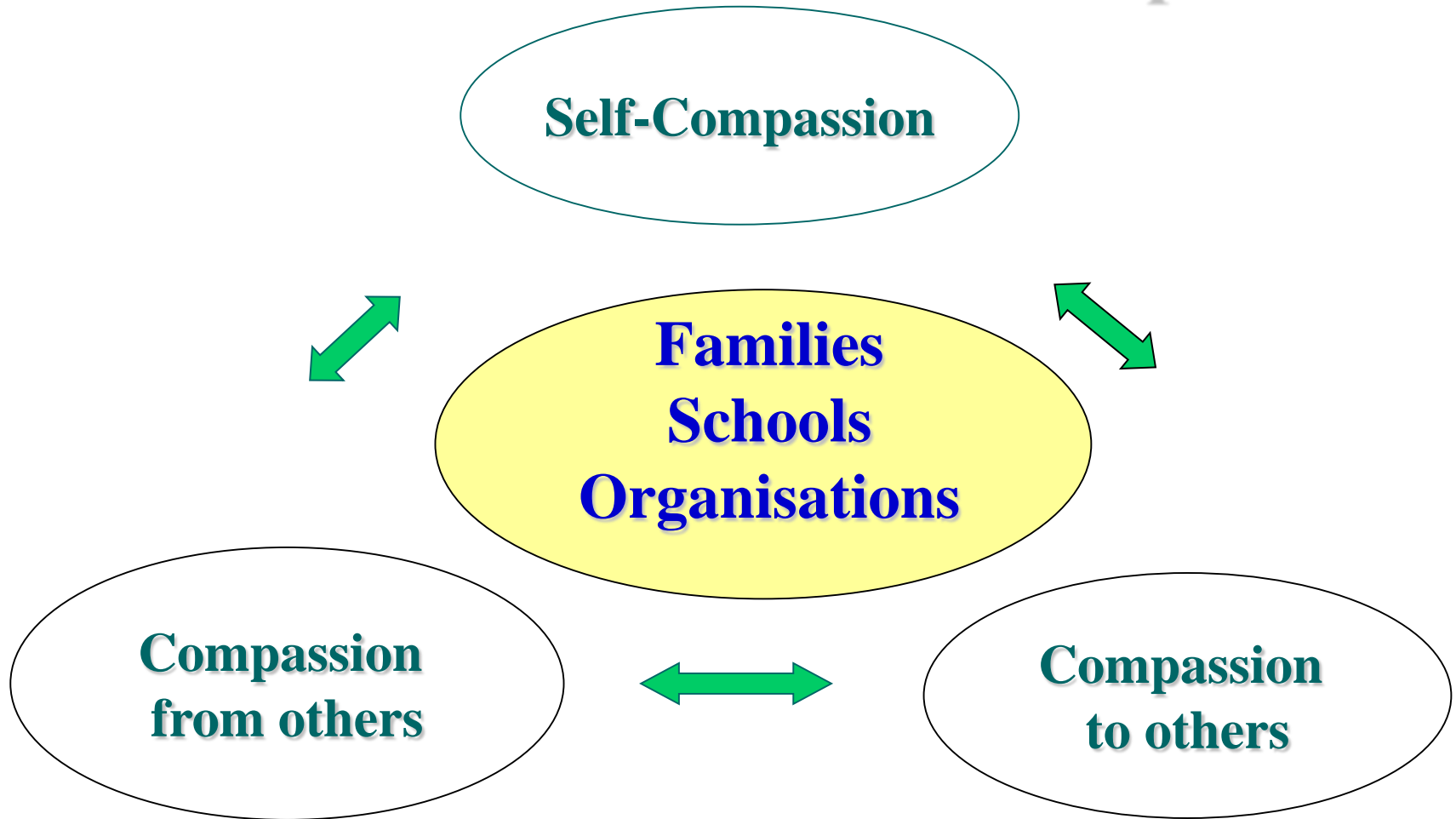
The interactive flow of compassion



Each has its own facilitators and inhibitors



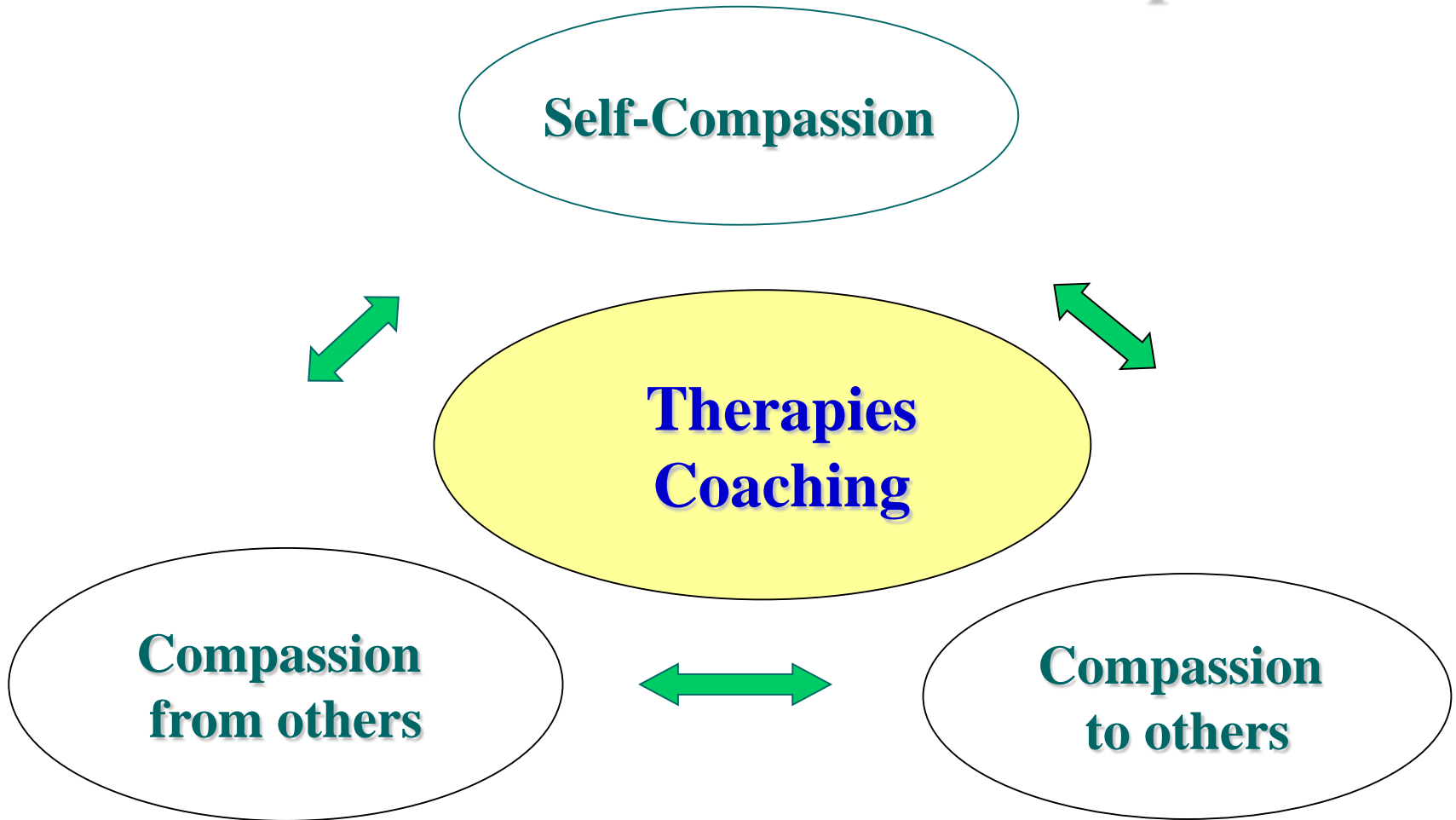
The interactive flow of compassion



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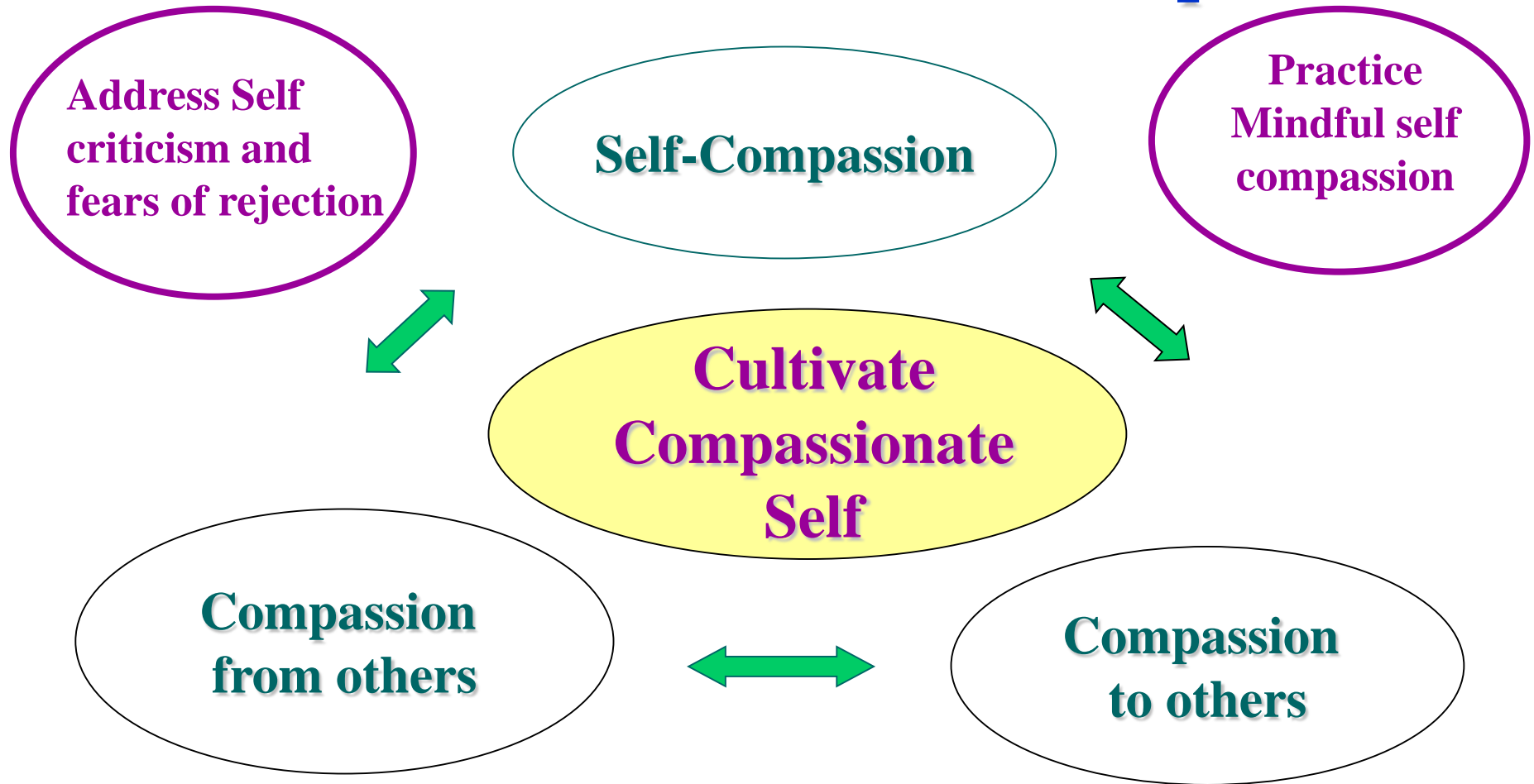
The interactive flow of compassion



Fears, Blocks and Resistances to prosocial motives and emotions are the focus of CFT



The interactive flow of compassion



Distress Tolerance and Empathy training etc



Compassionate and self-image goals were assessed with 13 items. All items began with the phrase, “In the past week, in the area of friendships, how much did you want to or try to,” and items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*always*)

Seven items assessed compassionate goals, namely, “be supportive of others”, “have compassion for others’ mistakes and weaknesses”, “avoid doing anything that would be harmful to others”, “make a positive difference in someone else’s life”, “be constructive in your comments to others”, “avoid being selfish or self-centered”, and “avoid doing things that aren’t helpful to me or others”

Six items assessed self-image goals, namely, “get others to recognize or acknowledge your positive qualities”, “convince others that you are right”, “avoid showing your weaknesses”, “avoid the possibility of being wrong”, “avoid being rejected by others”, and “avoid taking risks or making mistakes”

Crocker, J. & Canevello, A. (2008). Creating and undermining social support in communal relationships: The role of compassionate and self-image goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 95(3), Sept. 555-575

Findings (N 199)

Average compassionate goals predicted closeness, clear and connected feelings, and increased social support and trust over the semester; self-image goals attenuated these effects

Average self-image goals predicted conflict, loneliness, and afraid and confused feelings; compassionate goals attenuated these effects

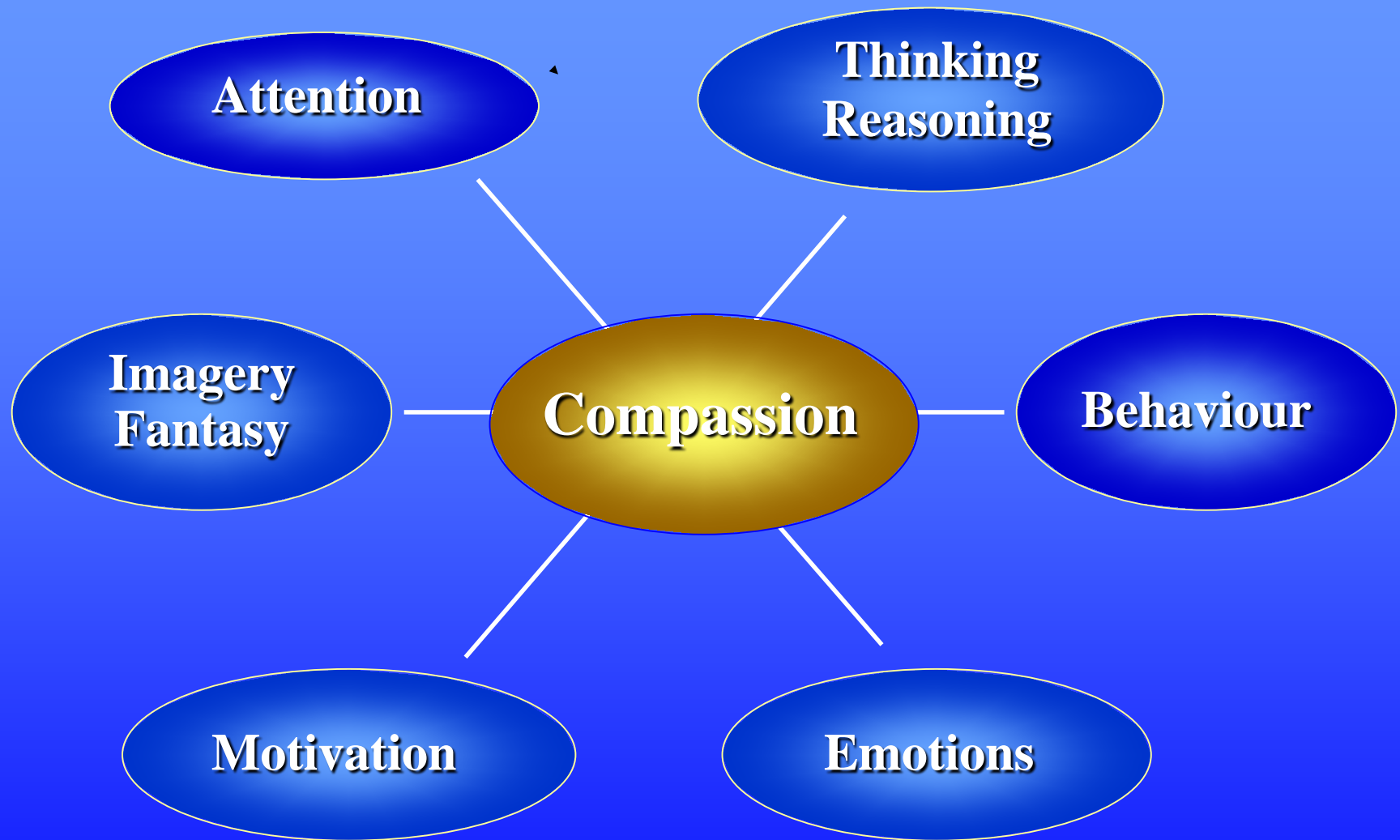
People with compassionate goals create a supportive environment for themselves and others, but only if they do not have high self-image goals

Crocker, J. & Canevello, A. (2008). *Creating and undermining social support in communal relationships: The role of compassionate and self-image goals.* *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 95(3), Sept. 555-575

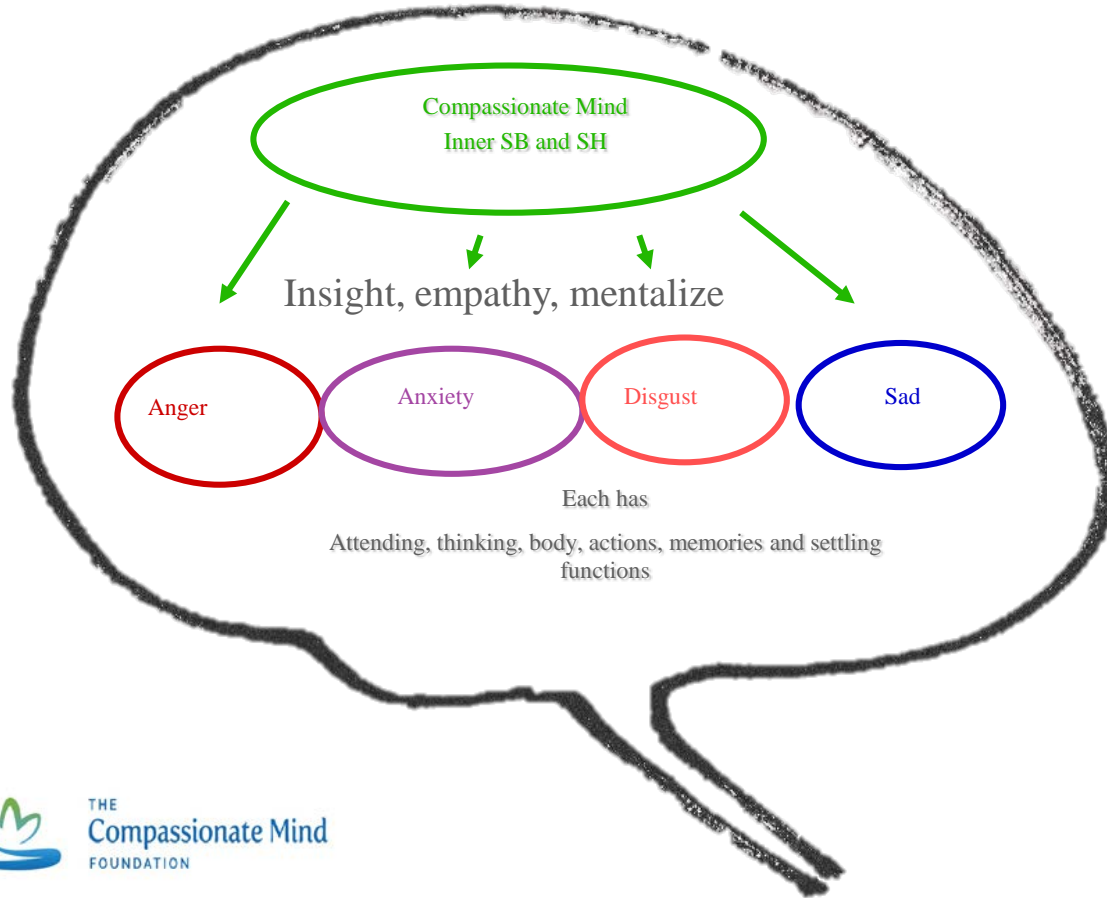
Data

- Practice of imagining compassion for others produces changes in frontal cortex and immune system (Lutz et al., 2009)
- Loving kindness meditation (compassion directed to self, then others, then strangers) increases positive emotions, mindfulness, feelings of purpose in life and social support and decreases illness symptoms (Frederickson et al., 2008, JPSP)
- Compassion meditation (6 weeks) improves immune function, and neuroendocrine and behavioural responses to stress (Pace, 2008, PNE)
- Helping others predicts reduced mortality specifically by buffering the association between stress and mortality. (Poulin et al, 2013 Am J Public Health;103:1649–1655)

Compassionate mind/mentality



'Differentiated and integrated



SO

Humans function best (frontal cortex, stress hormones, immune systems and cardiovascular) when they are

- **loving affiliative and caring (rather than hating)**
- **Feel loved and valued (rather than unloved and de-valued)**

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but no morals. ... We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.

Martin Luther King Jr., speech at Morehouse College, 1948

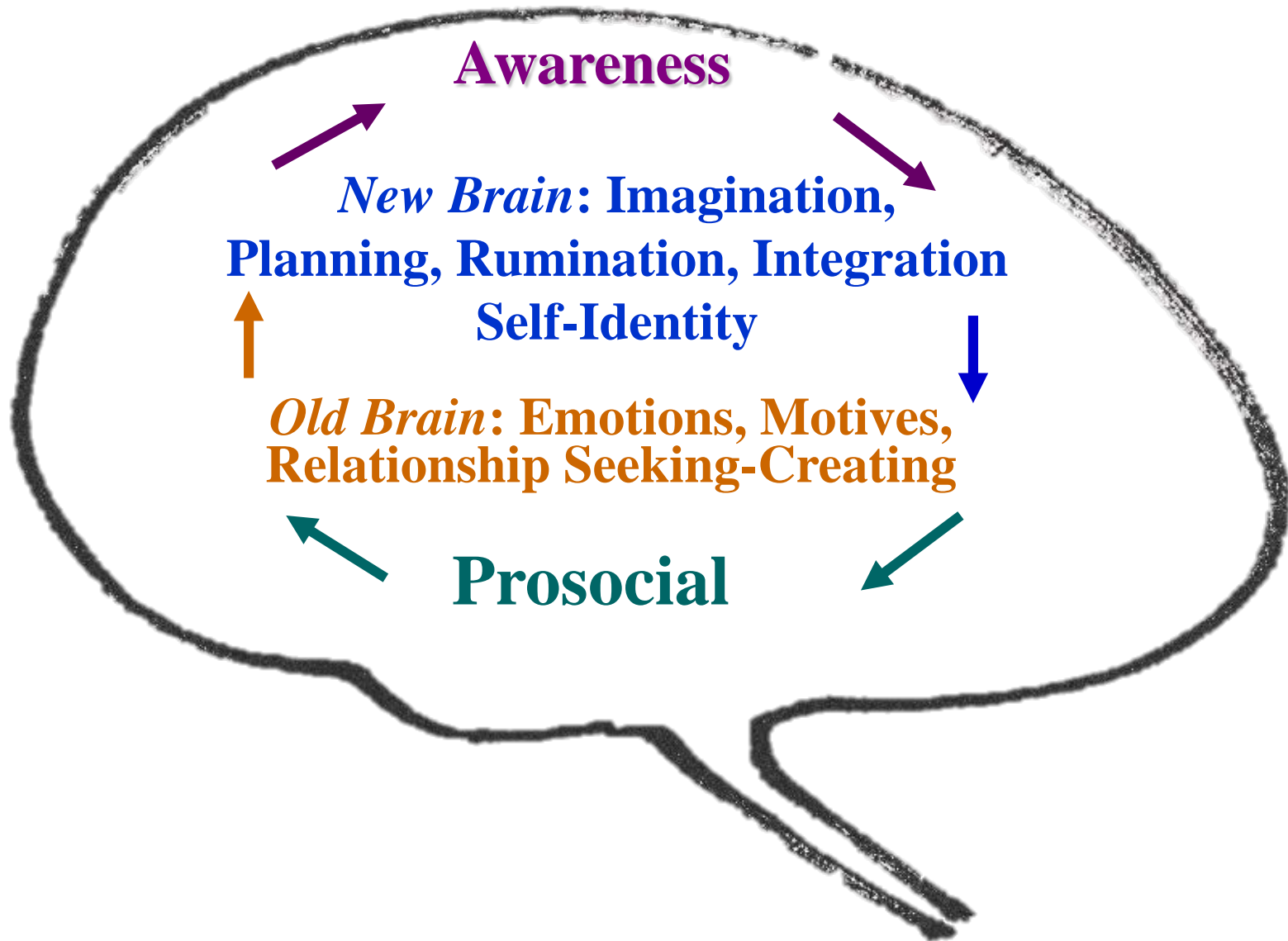
Schools and Universities need to address the harm causing behaviour – that it is the educated who:

- **Run our banks in corrupt financial systems**
- **Run religions that inspire violence and tribalism**
- **Run our industries that are polluting the world**
- **Run our politics of privilege that have lost sight of helping the poor and creating a more moral, just and fair world**
- **Run our media that seek to shame and humiliate**
- **Run our entertainments that use more and more violence and sadism to amuse and distract us**

**Schools and Universities can build compassionate motives
because it is the educated who will heal the world :**

- **Be the clinicians seeking cures for diseases**
- **Be scientists trying to solve ecological problems**
- **Be the lawyers trying to instigate a moral, just and fair world**
- **Be the politicians dedicated to helping the poor and creating opportunities for all**
- **Run our media that seek to inform and empower**
- **Run our entertainments that inspire and uplifted us.**
- **Be the teachers for a new moral order**

Compassion and the Brain



Take Home Message Don't be Naive!

Humanity has a **very serious** problem with how and why the human brain has evolved – we must teach people about their brains!

Our minds are like gardens and they will grow according to what influences fall upon them but we may not like the outcome unless we start to take responsibility for the contexts in which minds grow

We have allowed the me-first competitive dynamics of life to consume and shape us – our challenge is to find ways to cultivate mindful compassion as a way to run our minds, schools, organisations, politics and social relationships

The Business of the NHS is SUFFERING –So we should be at the forefront of understanding it!!!

Children and youth need opportunities to practice caring and helping behaviours often with guidance

Should be able to zoom in their attention with active listening and interest in their friends but also zoom out and think about wider issues such as those who may have different languages and cultures and consider issues of fairness and justice

Provision of strong moral role models that also challenge and facilitate children's moral development

Insight and training into difficult and potentially hurtful and destructive feelings and how to manage them

Putting the Prosocial at the heart of human endeavour – The Science is clear

The human brain is *tricky* and not ‘well-designed’

Our minds and cultures are like gardens and without thought or wise cultivation they can grow for good or bad.

As we better understand how nature has built us we can take responsibility for creating and cultivating the conditions for each human being to flourish **Put our new brain to good uses**

Families schools and businesses could *and should* be at the forefront of this science and endeavour by putting prosocial behaviour to self and others at their heart

Resilience is as much a social as it is personal process