

SELF-CARE

Daniel Lancaster, PhD LCSW

Mitigation Specialist, Forensic Social Worker

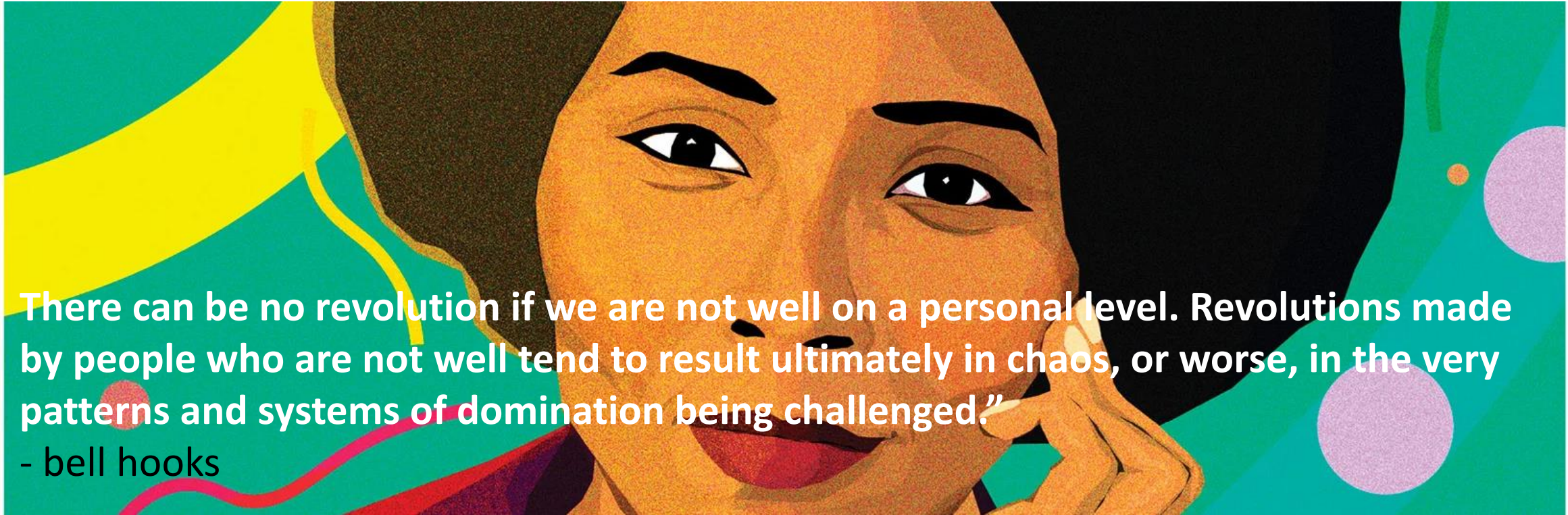
WHY

“You can't pour from an empty cup”

- Mystical wisdom from a random meme

“What is to give light must endure burning”

- Anton Wildgans



There can be no revolution if we are not well on a personal level. Revolutions made by people who are not well tend to result ultimately in chaos, or worse, in the very patterns and systems of domination being challenged.”

- bell hooks

- Work demands
- Intimate partner demands
- Parenting demands
- Crisis demands
- Medical demands
- Aging family demands
- Financial demands
- Basic self-care demands
-
-
-
- Addressing existential despair and figuring out why we even exist

ONE WELL
TO DRAW FROM



CAPACITY IMPEDIMENTS

“We are stewards not just of those who allow us into their lives but of our own *capacity* to be helpful.”

- Jon Conte

“Hallmark reaction to moral injury is an inability to self-forgive, and consequently engage in self-sabotaging behaviors.”

- USVA

BURNOUT

Chronic demands vs. resources

- Exhaustion
 - Mental, emotional, physical
- Cynicism
 - Clients and colleagues
- Professional inadequacy

MORAL INJURY

Betrayed, complicit in betrayal

- Power differential, futile advocacy, role conflict
- Guilt & shame
- Disgust & rage
- Secondary symptoms
 - Depression, relationship conflict, self-harm, addiction, etc.

VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Transformation of our inner experience

- Frame of reference
- Self-capacities
 - Emotional regulation & inner connection
- Ego resources
 - Growth and self-preservation
- Psychological needs
 - Safety, trust, esteem, intimacy, control
- Memory systems

COMPASSION FATIGUE

PTSD symptomology

- Intrusive re-experiencing
- Avoidance
- Negative thoughts/feelings
- Hyperarousal

CAPACITY IMPEDIMENTS

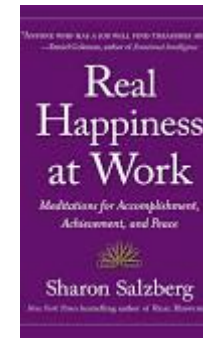
“We are stewards not just of those who allow us into their lives but of our own *capacity* to be helpful.”

- Jon Conte

BURNOUT

Chronic demands vs. resources

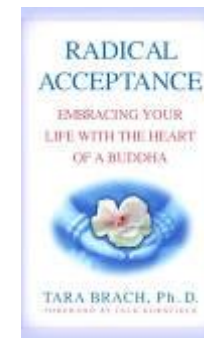
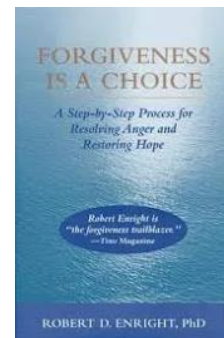
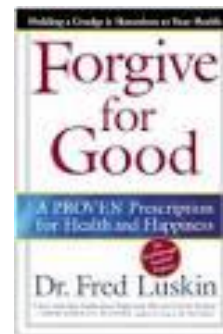
- Clinical target: solution focused, mindfulness, interpersonal psychotherapy



MORAL INJURY

Betrayed, complicit in betrayal

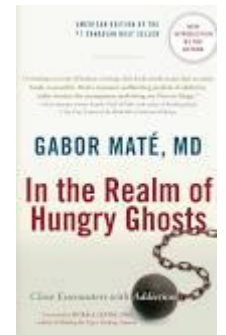
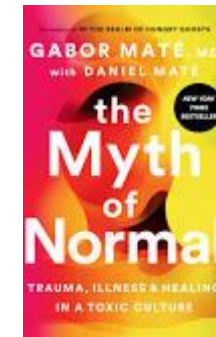
- Clinical target: grief work, forgiveness work, Compassionate Inquiry



VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Transformation of our inner experience

- Clinical target: grief work, post traumatic growth, narrative therapy, Compassionate Inquiry



COMPASSION FATIGUE

PTSD symptomology

- Clinical target: trauma work, including EMDR, symptom management

THE WENDIGO & SMALL WORLD SYNDROME



ESCAPING THE SMALL WORLD

- 1) CONTAIN PATHOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS/ EXPECTATIONS
- 2) FOSTER CONNECTION TO MEANING IN WORK

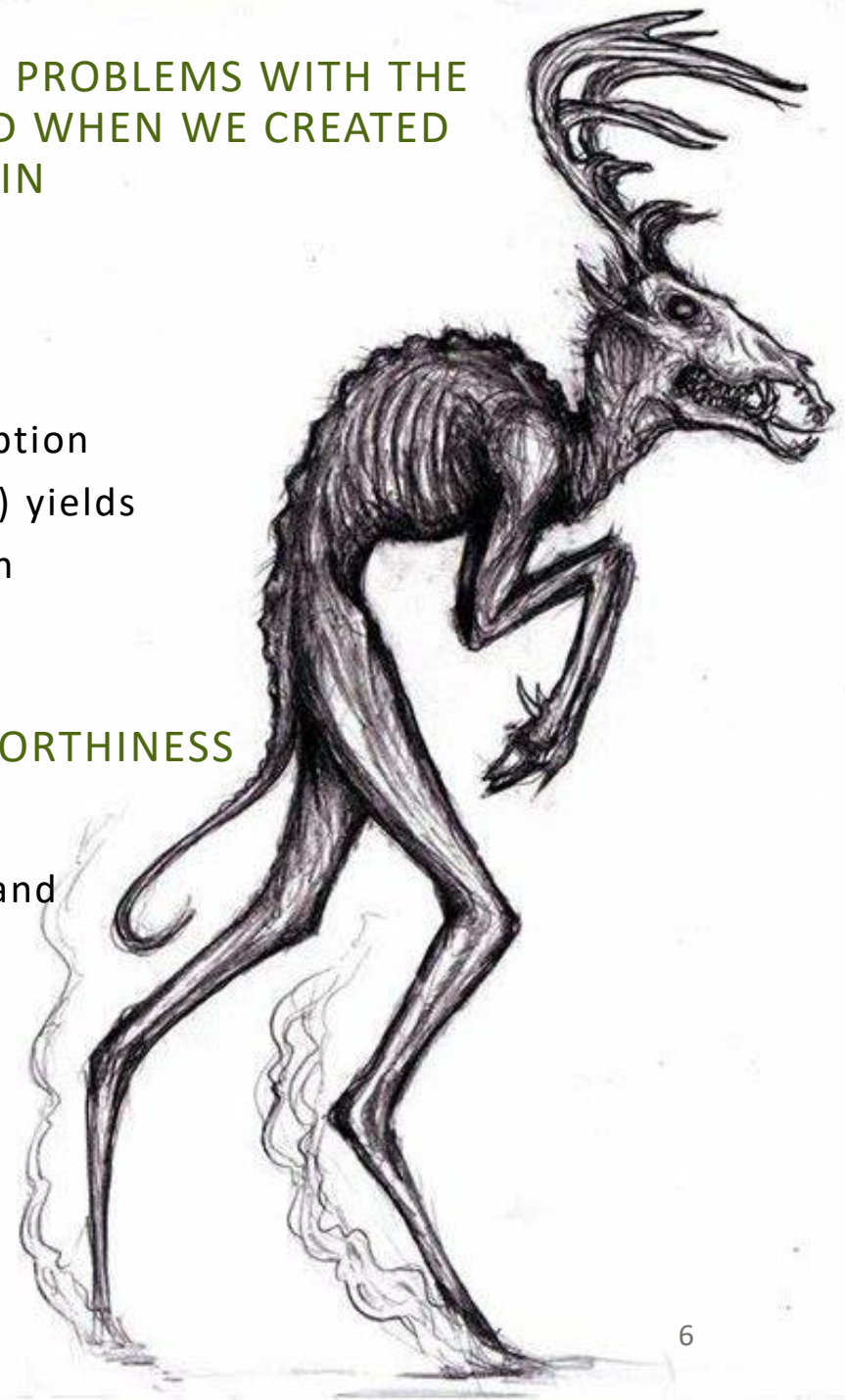
“WE CANNOT SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITH THE SAME THINKING WE USED WHEN WE CREATED THEM” - ALBERT EINSTEIN

FIRST NATION FOLKLORE

- Insatiable hunger; growth proportionate to consumption
- Greed (yearning for more) yields destruction & exploitation

HUNGER, AMBITION, & WORTHINESS

- “All in”
- Constriction of interests and relationships
- Self-reinforcing sabotage
- Transactional connection



THE URGENCY TRAP & THE EISENHOWER SQUARE

IMPORTANCE

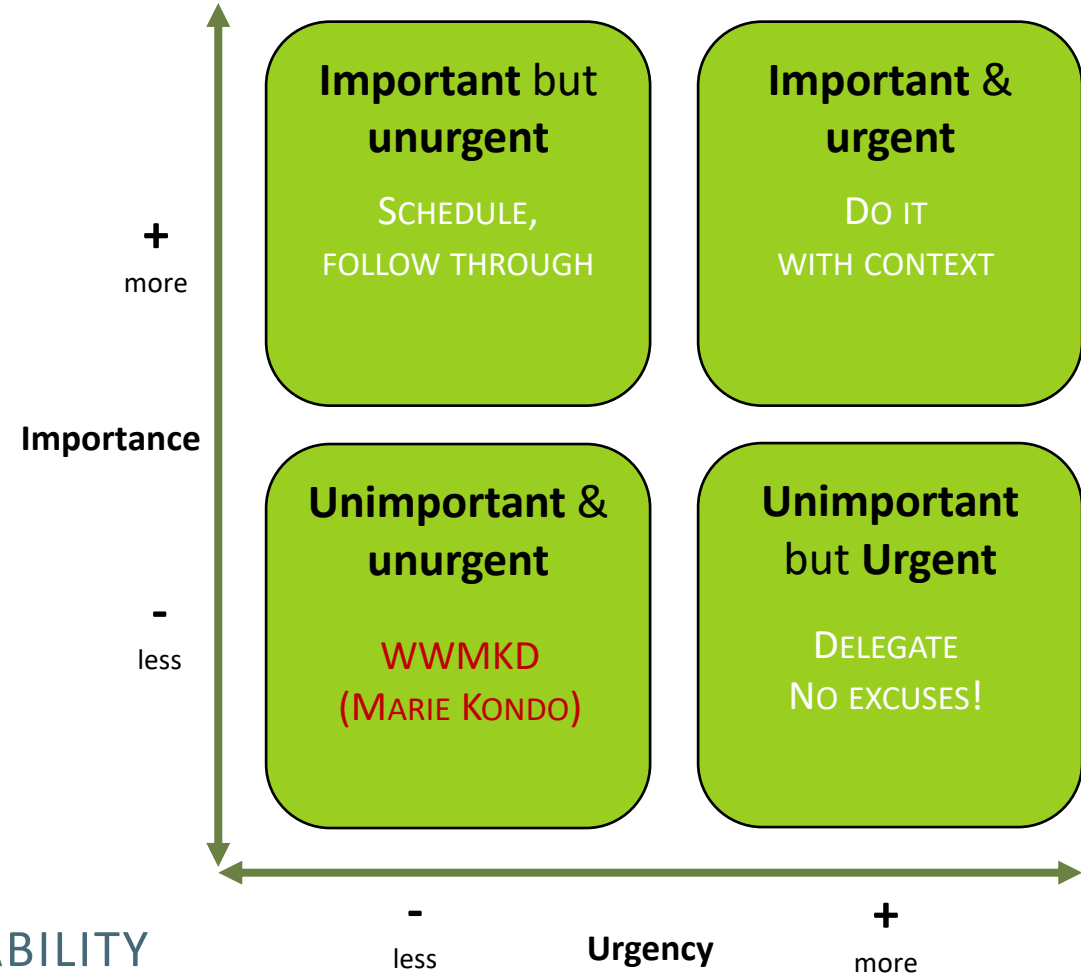
- Substantive outcome effort
- Probably not a meeting...
- Skillset

URGENCY

- Deadlines & external constraints
- Credible, valid, relevant

CONTEXT

- Scope of practice
- Ego-intoxication is not urgency or importance

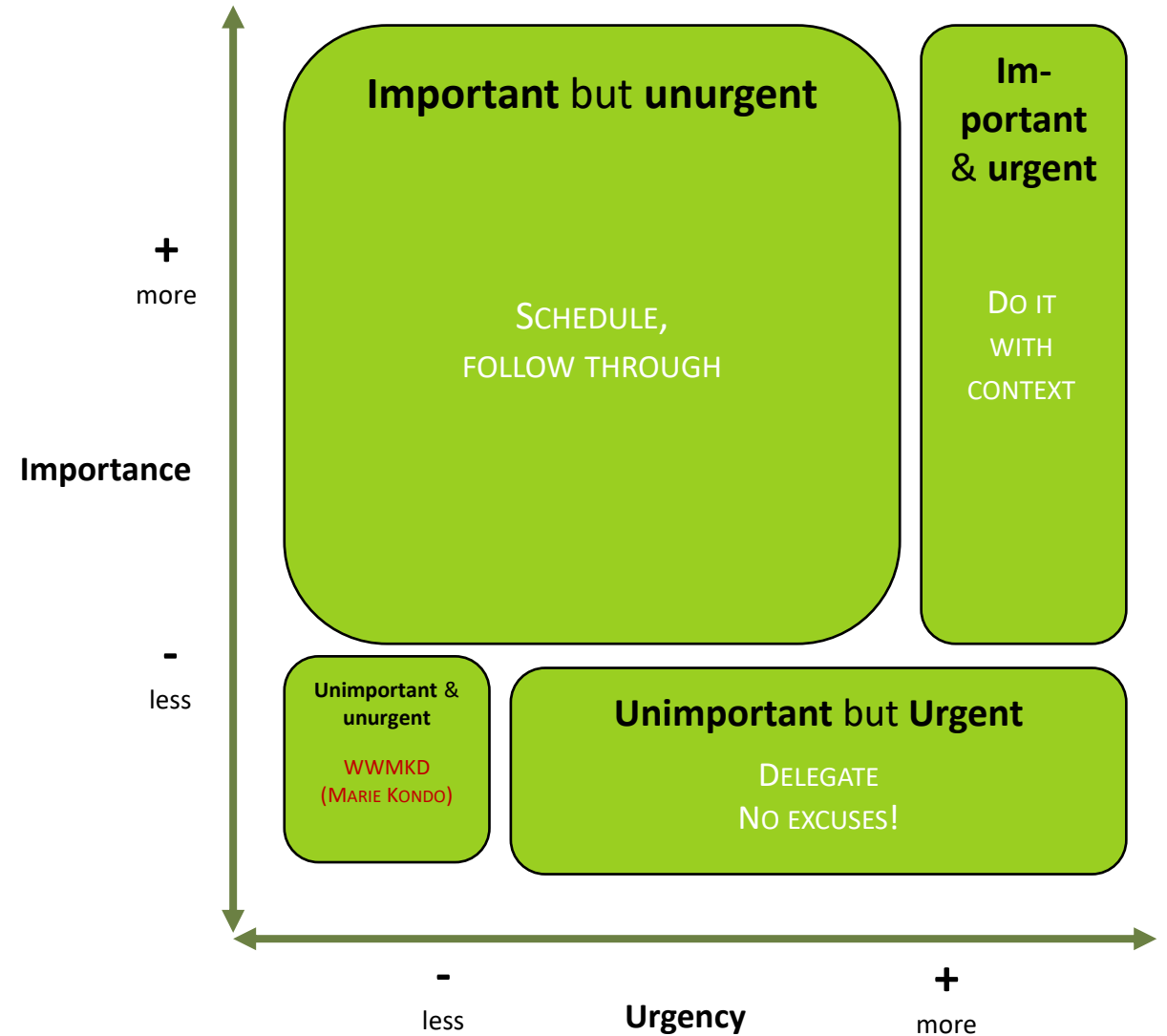


“MARTYRDOM AND OVERAVAILABILITY DO NOT MAKE FOR A HAPPY WORK LIFE.”

– SHARON SALZBERG

WORKING WITH INTENTIONALITY

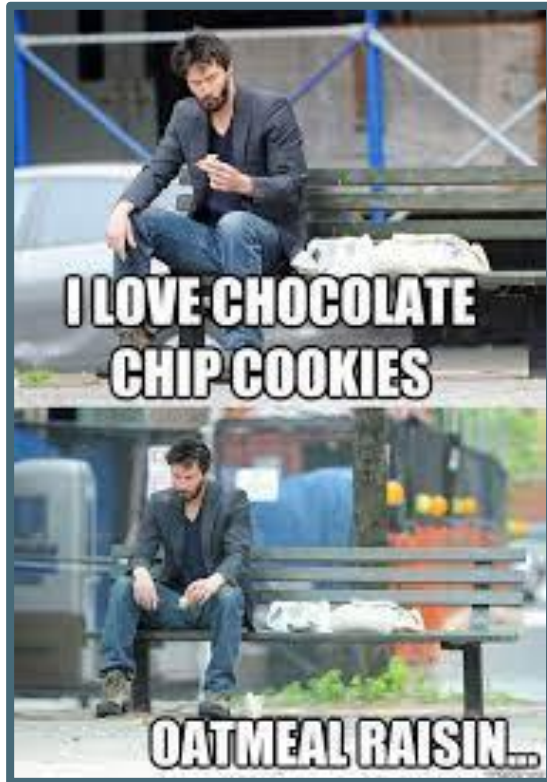
- Minimize daily reactivity (emotional cost savings)
- Maximize productivity (fiscal cost savings)
- Minimize malpractice risk
- Foster connection to meaning in work, values-driven effort



ENLIGHTENED FRAME OF REFERENCE

“LIFE IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO GIVE US WHAT WE EXPECT.”

– MARGARET MITCHELL



REALISTIC (SKILLFUL) GOALS

- Triage
- Acknowledge limitations (self, case, client, politics, etc.)

PROCESS FOCUS

- Sphere of control
- Skillful execution

HIGHLIGHT SUCCESSES

- Purposeful effort (confronting discomfort)
- Celebration and community
- Growth as success

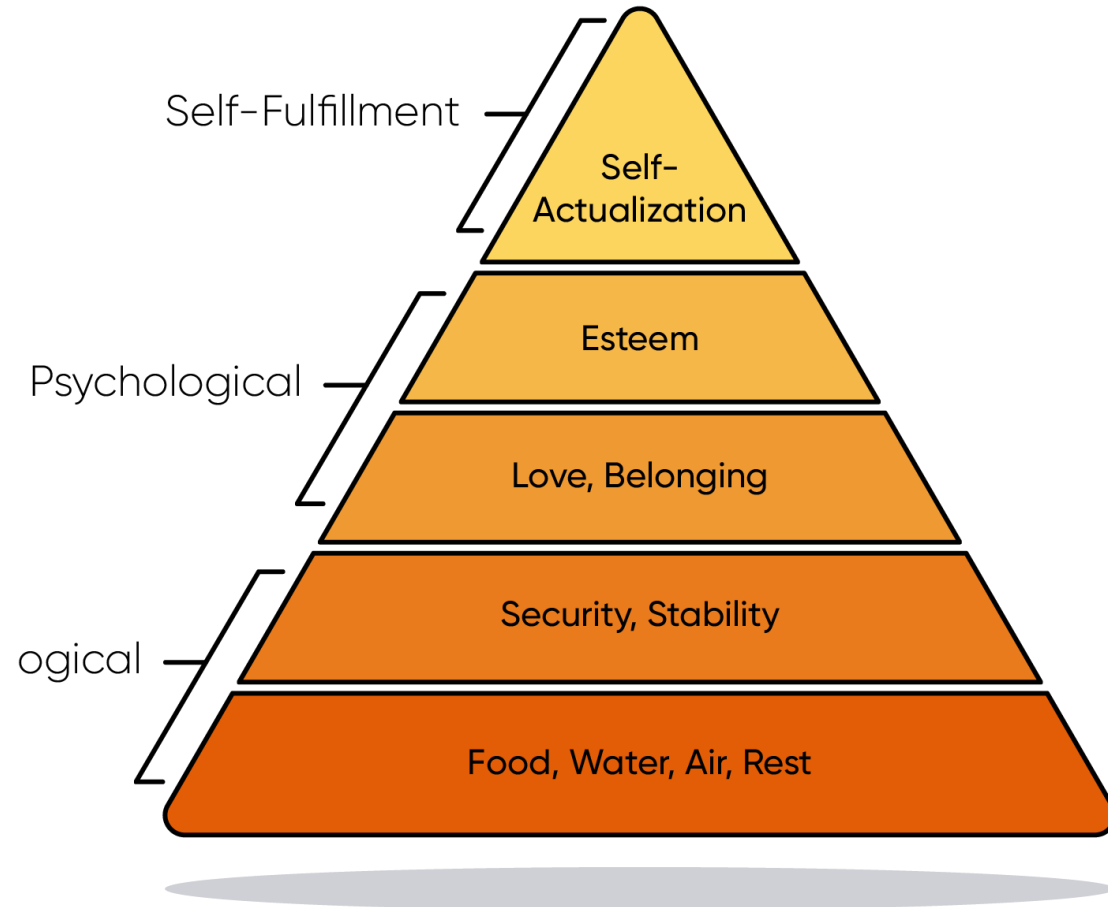
ARC OF TIME

- A moment is not a life, no matter how weighty

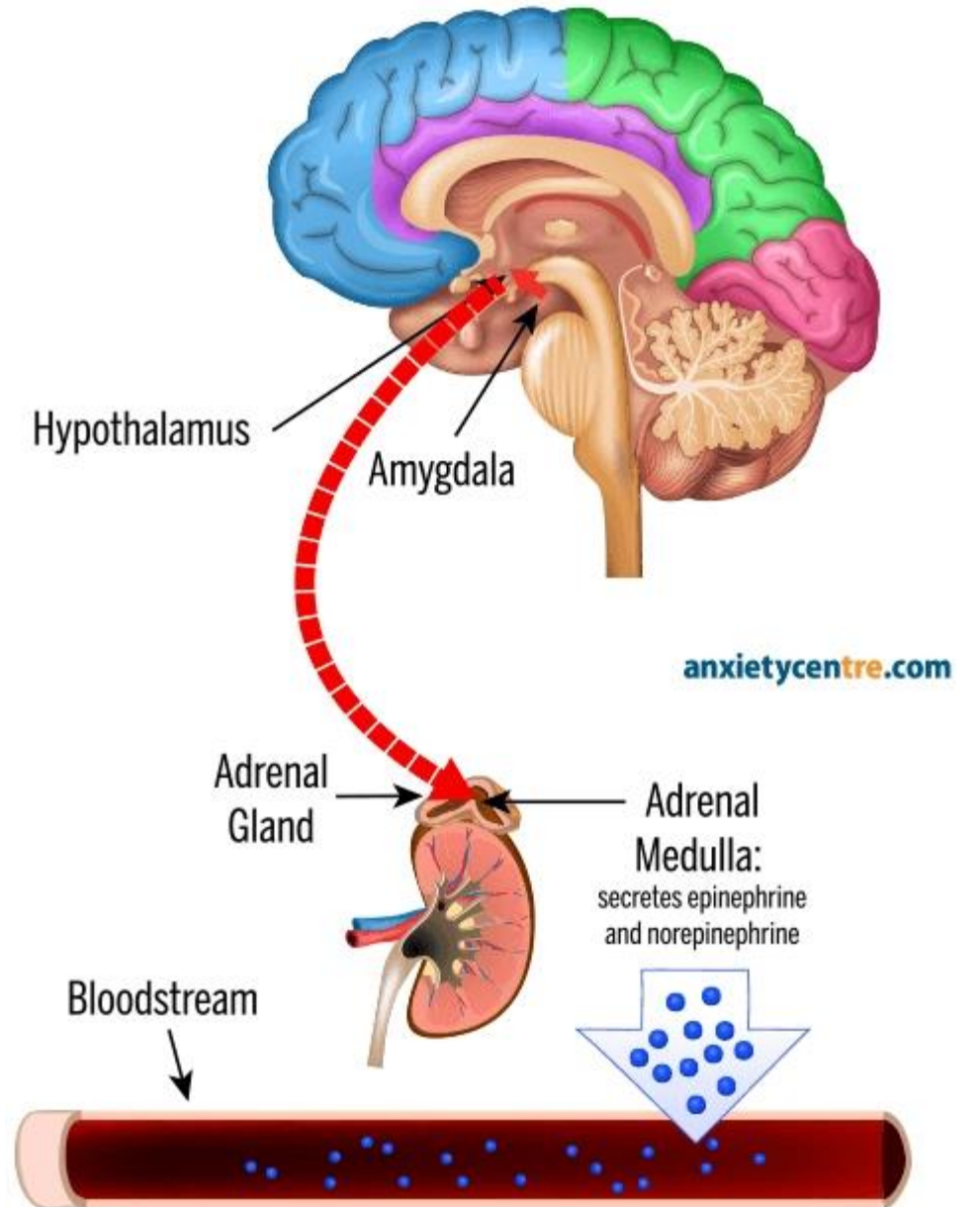
NON-SELF-REFERENTIAL INTERPRETATION

- It's not about us
- **Acknowledging** our successes, process, and contribution while **letting go** of ego/hero hunger

NORMATIVE STRESS RESPONSE



Sympathetic Adrenomedullar System (SAM)



INTERRUPTING ACCRETIVE STRESS: DOWNREGULATING PHYSIOLOGY



DISCONNECT

20 MINUTES, 2X DAY

- Set alarms
- Take friends with you
- Talk or not (but don't talk about stressors)

BREATHE AND MOVE

- Moderate, brisk, or vigorous
- Laughter (yelling works too)
- Breathing exercises & PMR

CONNECT TO MORE

HERE-AND-NOW FOCUS

- Use all five senses
- Food
- Nature
- Music

RAIN

A SELF-REGULATION STRATEGY

“BETWEEN STIMULUS AND RESPONSE THERE IS A SPACE. IN THAT SPACE IS OUR POWER TO CHOOSE OUR RESPONSE. IN OUR RESPONSE LIES OUR GROWTH AND OUR FREEDOM.”

– VIKTOR FRANKL

“BALANCE DEPENDS ON THE ABILITY TO WORK WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS WHEN THEY ARISE.”

– SHARON SALZBERG

RECOGNIZE

“Consciously acknowledging... the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors affecting you”

- Simple naming (“I am angry and feel betrayed”)

ALLOW

“Allowing creates a pause that makes it possible to deepen attention.”

- Pause and be, so as to not reinforce
- Keep breathing

INVESTIGATE

“Call on your natural curiosity [and keep] attention to the felt-sense in the body.”

- Non-judgement in asking (“what am I believing?”)

NON-IDENTIFICATION

Resting in the experience that we are more than our experience

- Observing our experience from a place of kindness

Q & A

Daniel Lancaster, PhD LCSW
daniellancaster@gmail.com

