

AABCAP



## Mindfulness and its Four Foundations in Therapy

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Buddhism and Psychotherapy Professional Training Course 6 Module 3

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Day 1

# Mindfulness (1)

- “Mindfulness” (*sati*) literally means “memory,” but of the (extended) present, rather than the past.
- Mindfulness is the act of remembering the present; keeping the present in mind.
- Its opposite is forgetfulness, and the oblivion that characterises forgetfulness



# Mindfulness (2)

- *“retrospective memory of things in the past, prospectively remembering to do something in the future, and present-centred recollection in the sense of maintaining unwavering attention to a present reality”* (Wallace 2008, p. 60)
- Calling back to mind or bearing in mind (Narada, 1956).
- Presence of mind (Bodhi, 2000).



# A traditional description

“to remember to pay attention to what is occurring in one’s immediate experience with care and discernment”

Bhikkhu Bodhi (according to Shapiro, 2009, p.556)

note: “remembering”, “care” and “discernment”, indicating context.

Malcolm Huxter 2019



# Mindfulness-satipatthana

According to Anālayo

- soft awake presence

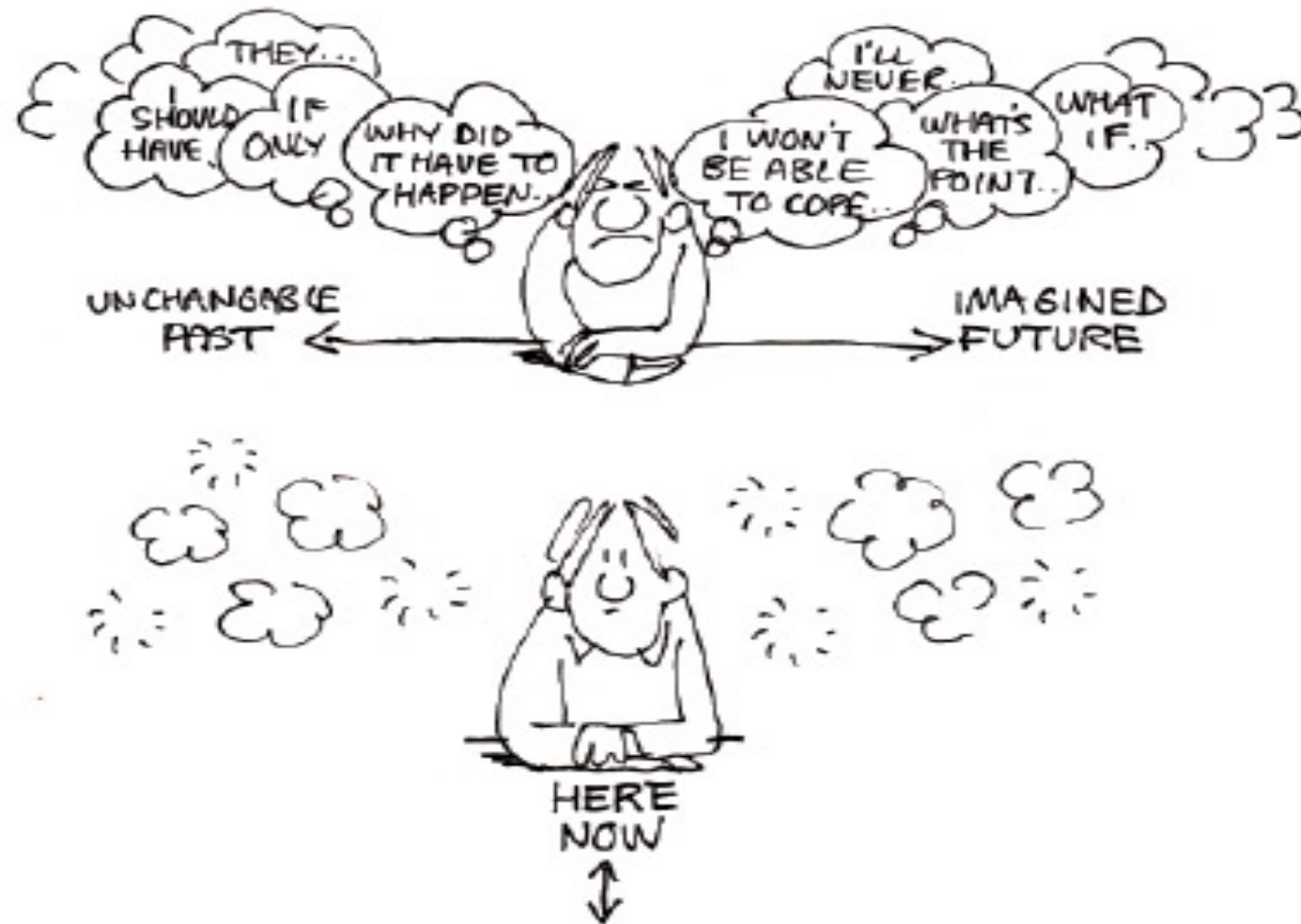
PEARL

- P=protective
- E=embodied
- A=attentive
- R=receptive and
- L=liberating

## Three levels of mindfulness

- Mechanistic---simply being present, here now with minimal elaboration.
- Informed---doing what one does with clear comprehension of suitability, timeliness and purpose.
- Holistic---being aware of the characteristic of life-such as impermanence, interdependence and unreliability. Also being aware of cause effect relationships.

# The power of mechanistic mindfulness



# Neural benefits of meditation-1

Increased grey matter in

- Insula-interoception, self awareness, empathy for emotions.
- Hippocampus-visual-spacial memory, establishing context, inhibiting amygdala and cortisol.
- Prefrontal cortex (PFC)- executive function, attentional control



Adapted from Rick Hanson, 2014



# Neural benefits of meditation-2

- Reduced cortical thinning with aging in insula and PFC
- Increased activation of left frontal regions, lifting mood
- Increased gamma range frequencies – unitary awareness
- Preserved telomere length



Adapted from Rick Hanson, 2014

# Neural benefits of meditation-3

- De-activates Default Mode Networking-(i.e. less self referencing, rumination, worrying and mindwandering)



Adapted from Rick Hanson, 2014

# *Satipatthana*

- *Patthana* = keeping present and foundation or source.
- *Upattana* = establishing near or setting up near or station (an object is kept closely in mind).
- *Satipatthana* = foundations of mindfulness and refers to remembering to deliberately place close attention to what is happening.



# *Satipatthana Vipassana*

- *vipassana* means insight (literally seeing clearly or distinctly)
- *satipatthana vipassana* literally refers to practicing the foundations of mindfulness for the development of insight.



# The four foundations of mindfulness

- Body: bodily sensory and tangible experience
- Feelings: qualities of pleasantness, unpleasantness and/or neither- that which moves us
- Heart mind: states and our inner centre of subjectivity
- Phenomena: objects of mind, interaction of mental-emotional processes and phenomena in general. The events of our lives seen in the context of whether they move us towards suffering or freedom



# Also called four contemplations

- Contemplation is a translation of the word *anupassati*, which also means “*to repeatedly look at*” (Analayo, 2003, p.32) or “*seeing along with*” or “*to track*” (Kearney, 2007).
- When we closely observe and track experience we begin to understand it.



# Contemplation of body- *kayanupassana satipatthana*

- Mindfulness of breathing (but questioned).
- Mindfulness of physical postures.
- Clear comprehension of actions (physical).
- Mindfulness centred on the components of the body.
- Contemplation on the natural qualities or elements of body.
- Mindfulness on the nine cemetery meditations.



# Contemplating Feelings— *vedananupassana satipatthana*

- *Vedana* is usually translated as feelings and it refers to the emotional flavour or the affective tones of pleasantness, unpleasantness or neither.
- *Vedana* is what moves us.
- With this contemplation we notice pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant or unpleasant quality of experiences and track them.





# Contemplation of *citta* or Heart-Mind— *cittanupassana satipatthana*

- Tracking our inner state; how we are, now. This is very close to what we call “mood,” and includes, but is not restricted to, what we call “emotion.”
- In particular, becoming clear about the heart/mind as conditioned by desire, aversion and delusion - or their opposites.

(slide text credit to Patrick Kearney 2011)



# Contemplating Phenomena— *dhammanupassana satipatthana*

1. Contemplation of the five hindrances or obstacles to meditation and living a valued life.
2. Contemplation of the five aggregates of experience that together we call a self.
3. Contemplation of the six sense bases.
4. Contemplation of seven factors of awakening.
5. Contemplation of the four noble truths.



# The practice

- "Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending (it) and mindful (of it), having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating the feelings in the feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending (them) and mindful (of them), having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness, ardent, clearly comprehending (it) and mindful (of it), having overcome in this world covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects, ardent, clearly comprehending (them) and mindful (of them), having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief."

From Bhikkhu Bodhi

<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wayof.html#discourse>



# The refrain-for body

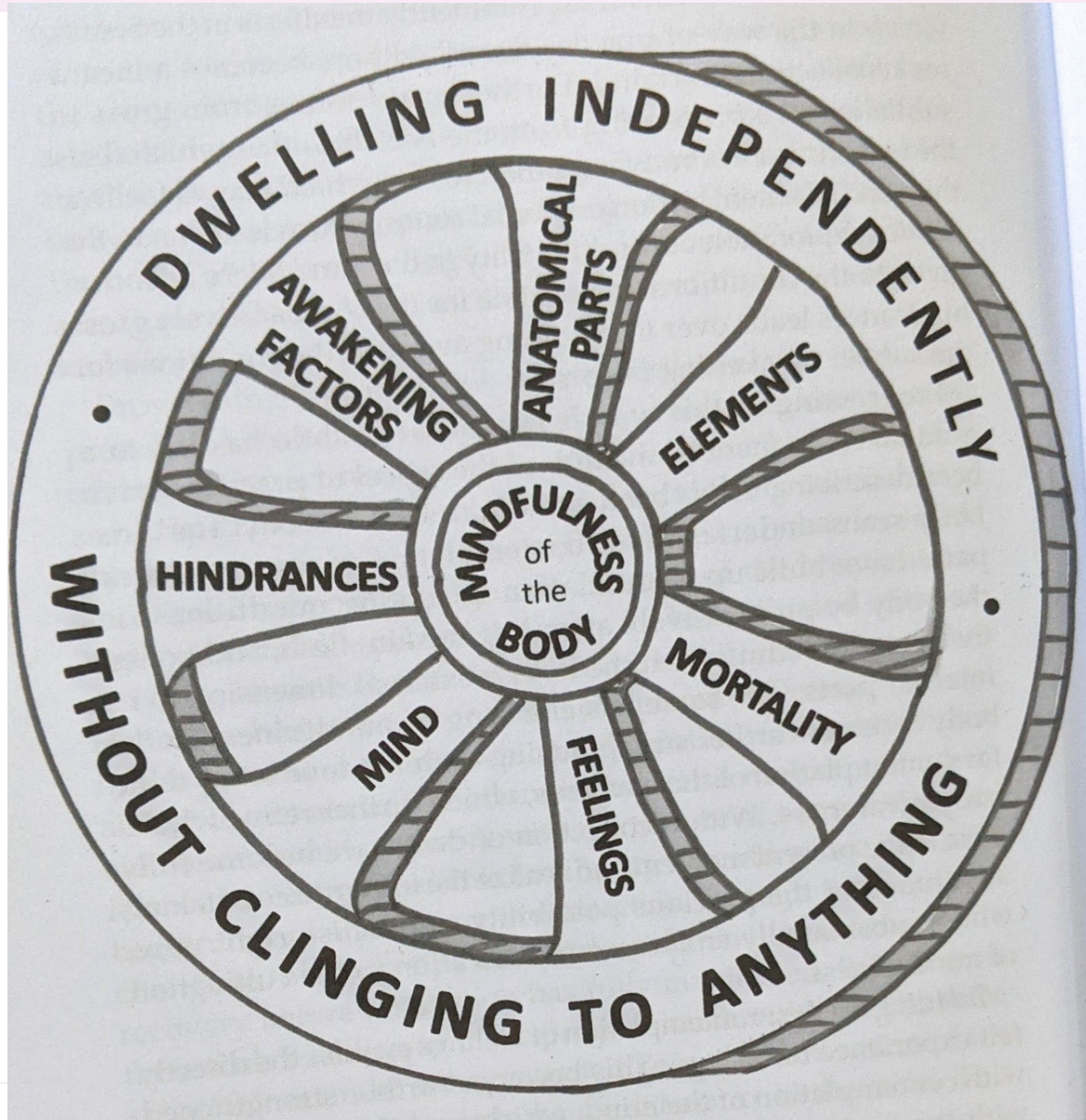
- "Thus [he/she/they] lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-things in the body, or he lives contemplating dissolution-things in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in the body. Or indeed his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'The body exists,' to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent and clings to naught in the world. Thus, also, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the body in the body."

From Bhikkhu Bodhi

<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wayof.html#discourse>



# Anālayo's Wheel of Satipatthana



From p.204 Anālayo (2018) Satipatthana Meditation. A practice guide. Windhorse publications.



# Reflection and sharing

Invitation to reflect and share with a partner.

- How do you utilise mindfulness in therapy
- Do you have a framework?
- If so, what is it?

10 minutes reflection and sharing





# The framework: Four truths (realities)

1. there is *dukkha* or suffering,
2. suffering has a cause,
3. there is freedom from suffering,
4. there is a way or a path to freedom from suffering.



# The “four truths” from a CBT perspective

1. There are presenting problems or disorders
2. There are causative factors for how and why the problems may have developed, and maintaining processes that keep the problems arising.
3. It is possible to be free from the problems or at least reduce the severity of the symptoms.
4. There are treatments that use the therapeutic relationship and cognitive, behavioural and affective strategies to address the causative factors and maintaining processes.





# Internal factors: Root causes of dukkha

1. Greed: addiction to pleasant feelings, or craving, grasping and clinging;
2. Ignorance: Delusion about and ignoring the way things are. Misperceiving and Misapprehending.
3. Hatred: rejection, fear, avoidance, struggle with and condemnation of unpleasant feelings, or aversion.



# Dependent arising

When this is, that is;  
because this arises, that arises.  
When this is not, that is not;  
because this ceases, that ceases. (The Buddha)

Every situation has *specific* causes. Find this cause & intervene, & the situation transforms.

Slide by Patrick Kearney



# Causes of dukkha and ways to be free

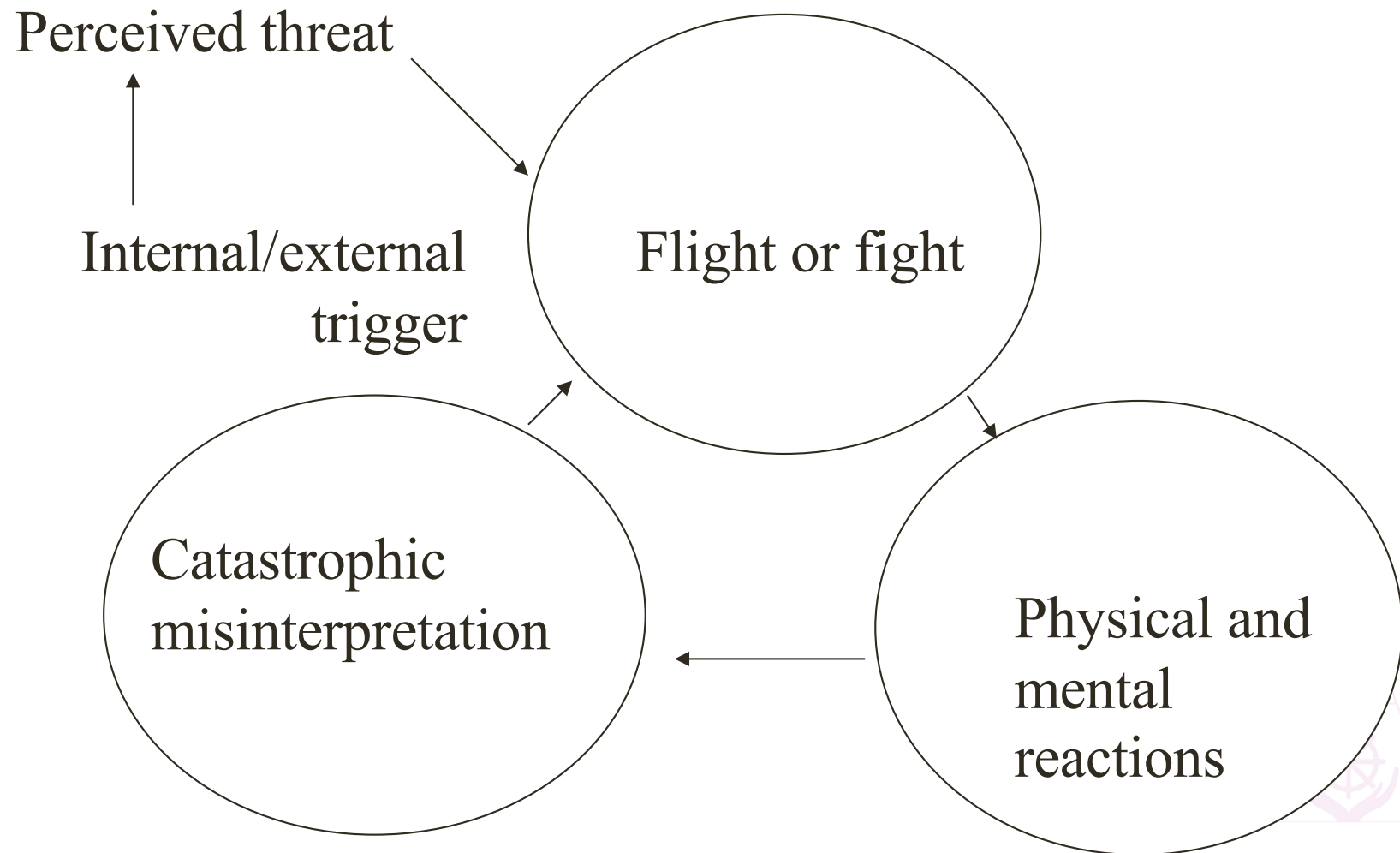
## Internal root causes of dukkha

- Greed
- Ignorance
- Hatred

## Causes of freedom from dukkha

- Letting go, cultivating generosity.
- Insight, cultivating wisdom, acceptance and peace with the reality of things.
- Good will, cultivating loving kindness, compassion, appreciation /gratitude.

# Panic

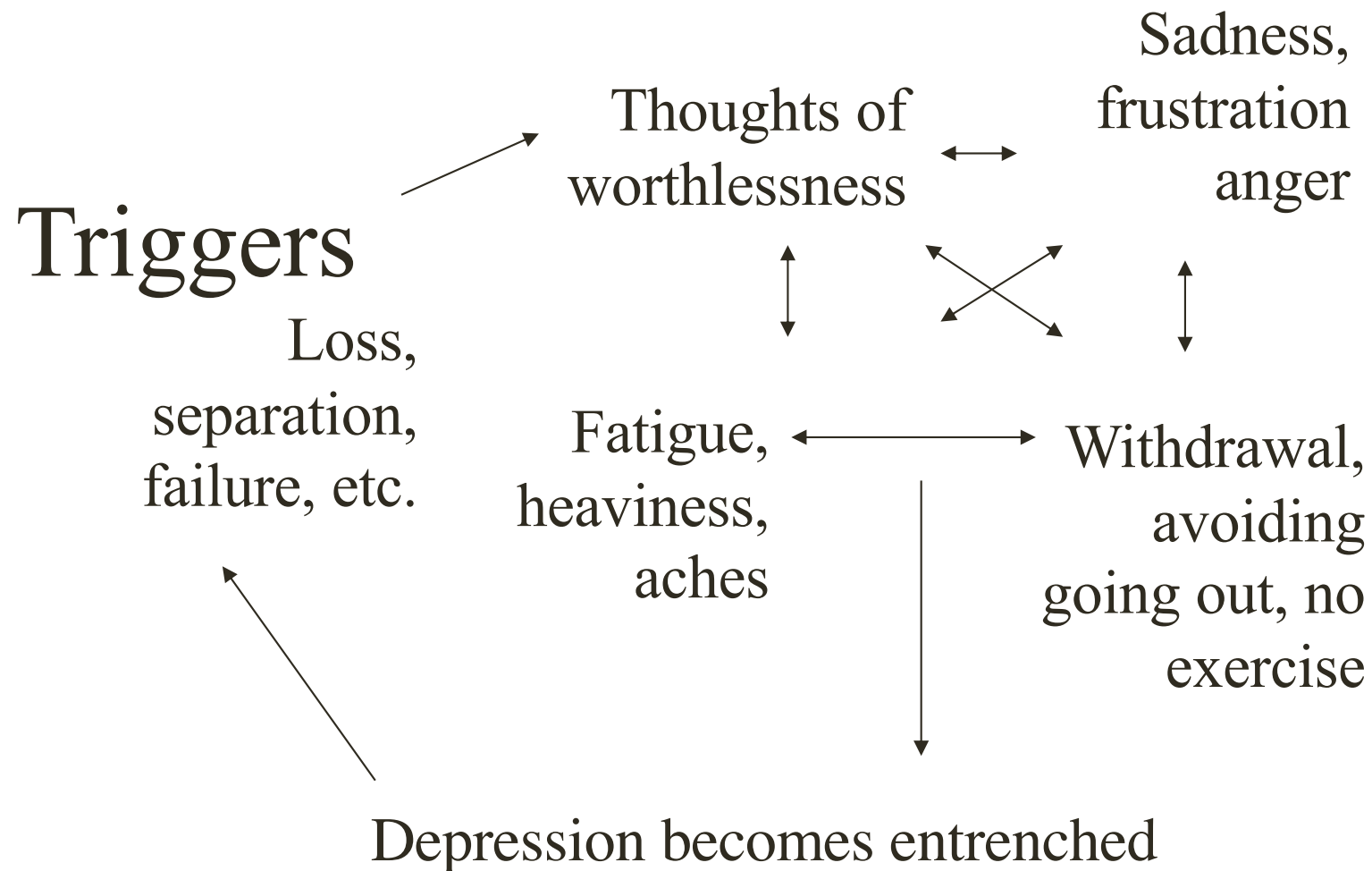


# Panic reduces

When one no-longer believes catastrophising thoughts then the panic cycle either slows down or short circuits.

The severity of severity of symptoms is reduced or panic does not arise at all.

# Depression

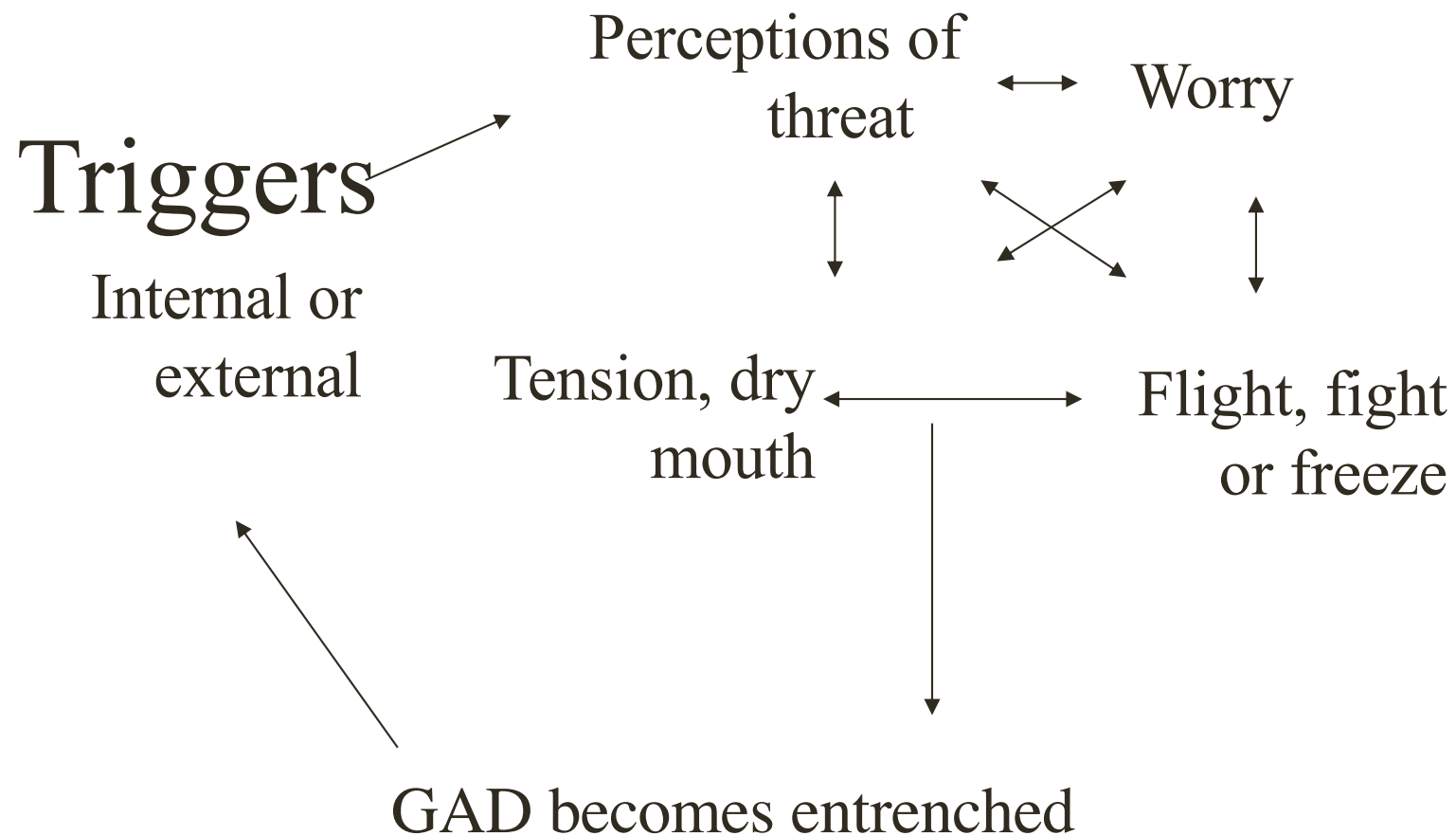


# Depressive loops are exited

- When rumination is no longer fuelled then the tendency to relapse with depression is reduced or ceases.
- When ruminative thoughts are no longer believed as facts then one is freed from the cycles of depression.



# GAD



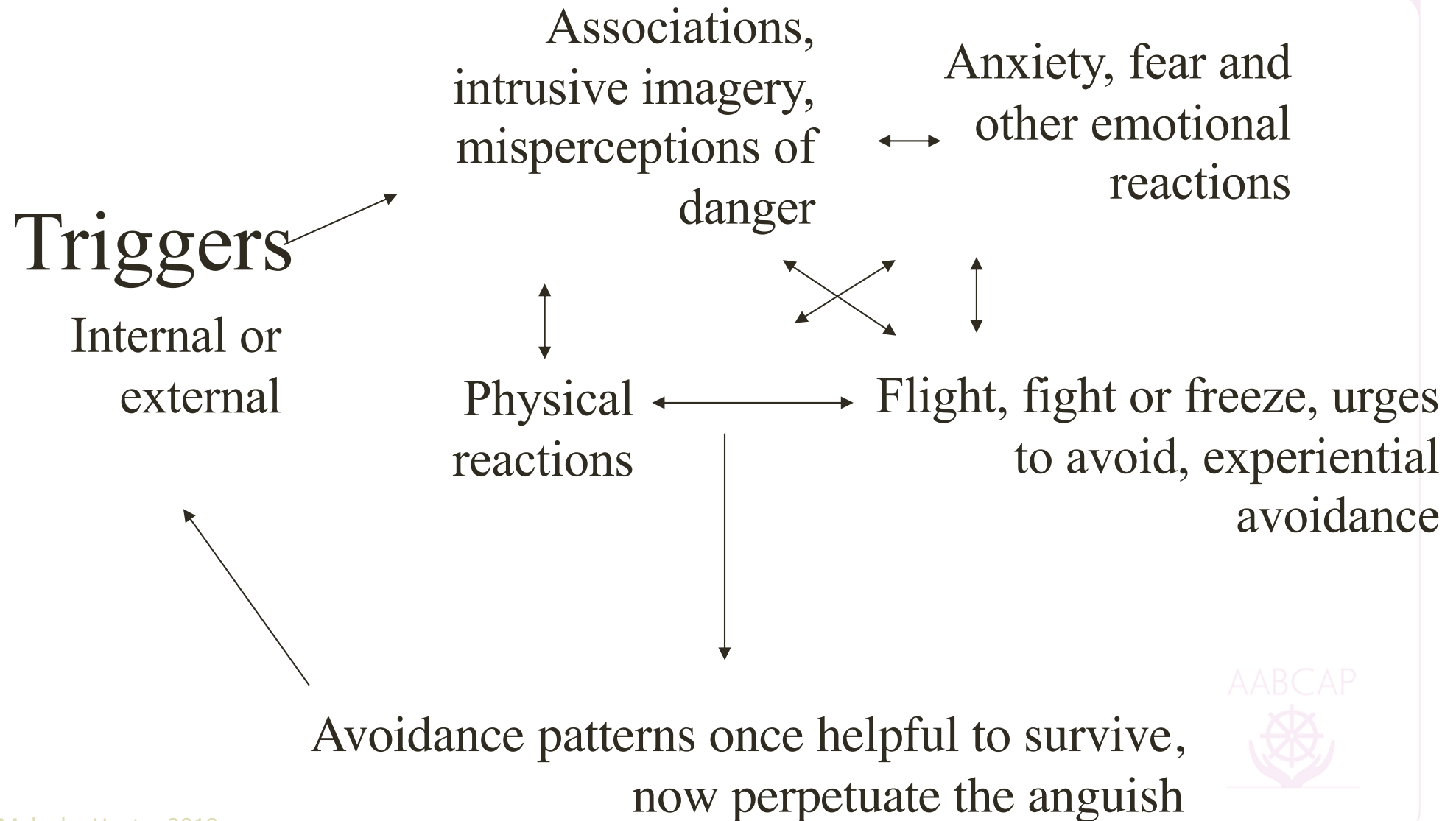


# GAD is short circuited

- When one is able to put worry aside and not buy into it then the entanglement and anguish of this tendency is reduced or abandoned.
- One no longer worries about worry.



# PTSD



# PTSD heals

- By no longer reacting to experience, reactivity is allowed to extinguish and one can exit the reactive cycles.
- By bringing kindness and care to oneself, with courageous energy and support one can heal the psychological wounds



# An eight fold ennobling therapeutic path

## Wisdom

Understanding and good intentions



## Meditation

Energy, mindfulness and concentration

## Lifestyle/Ethics

Wise speech, actions and livelihood



# ***Bhāvanā=cultivation***

**Buddhist meditation** is the cultivation of serenity and insight using energy, mindfulness and concentration.

**Serenity** involves relaxation, stability of attention absorption and clarity. Focused attention is emphasised with the cultivation of serenity.

**Insight** involves seeing cause effect relationships and three characteristics of existence-change, unreliability/un-satisfactoriness, and interdependence/emptiness. Enquiry is emphasised with the cultivation of insight.

# Serenity and insight

- Serenity and insight support each other.
- Serenity allows for deep rest, rejuvenation and physical healing.
- Serenity provides the power to penetrate phenomena.
- Insight enables understanding of life in terms of cause-effect relationships, and so the opportunity to change one's direction.

# Not just “techniques” ...

Serenity and insight are *inner qualities* rather than “techniques.” The meditation techniques that are based on them can be plotted along a continuum, from pure insight at one end to pure serenity at the other. In practice, any given technique would be somewhere in between.



# Mindfulness in meditation

- With Insight meditation, mindfulness is used to develop insight as with *Satipatthana*.
- With serenity meditation, mindfulness ensures that attention stays focused on its object. Thus maintaining samadhi or concentration.



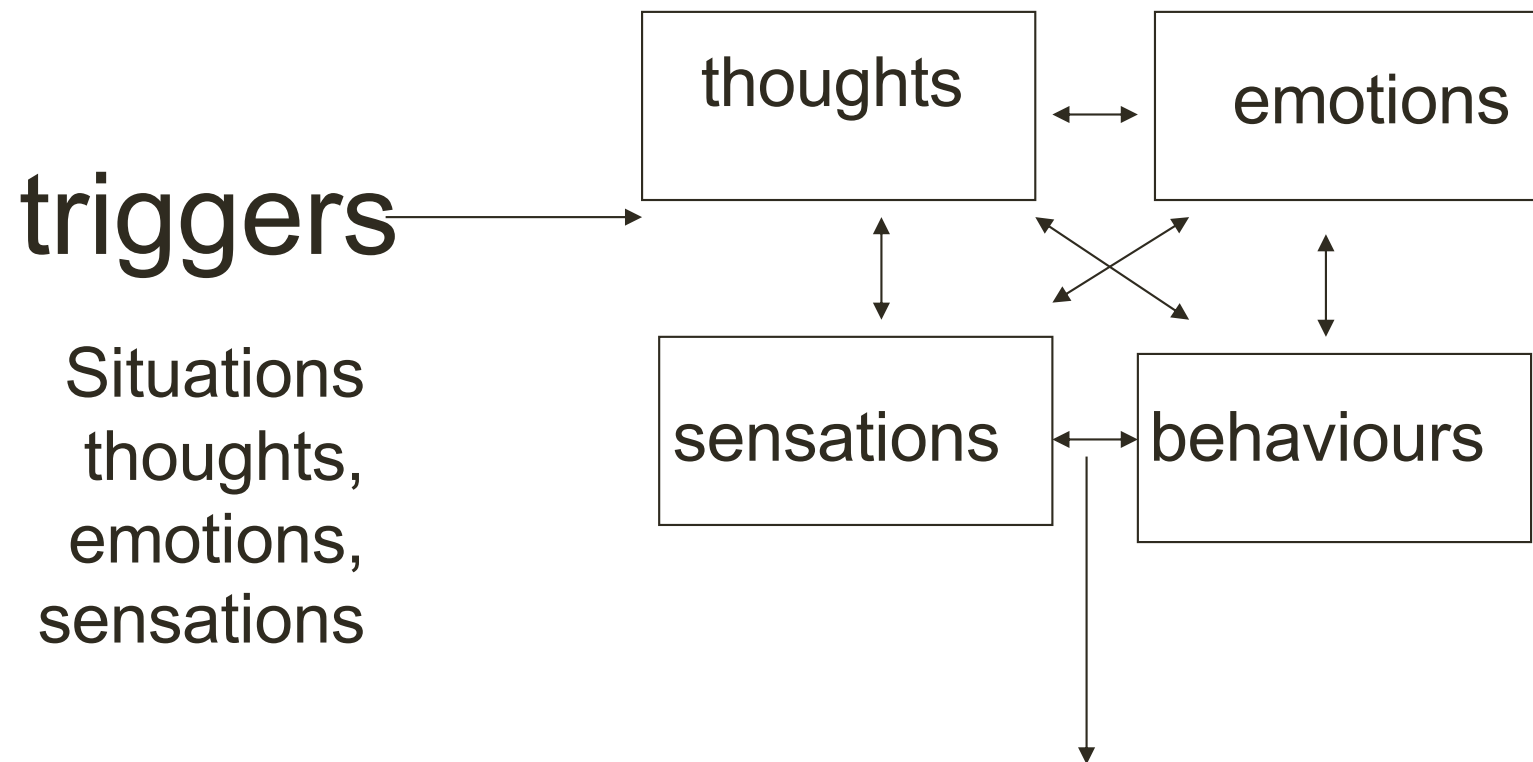


# Approaches to meditation

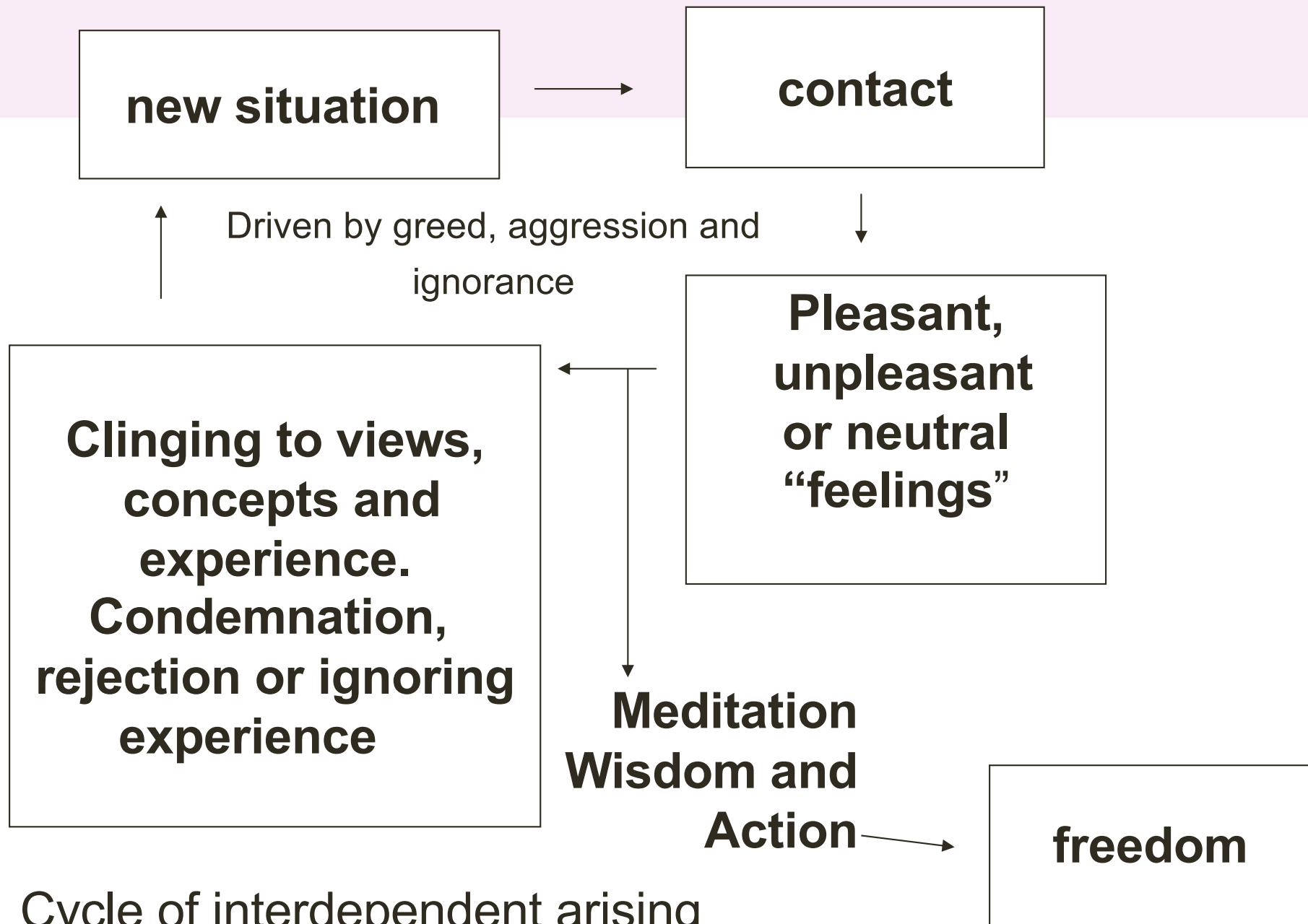
<b>Serenity</b>	<b>Insight</b>
Integrates/stabilizes.	Dismantles/deconstructs.
Sustained attention & focus on a single object.	Mindfulness & penetrative enquiry into characteristics of immediate experience.
Stills the heart.	Understands phenomena.
Restores and rejuvenates.	Develops understanding.



# Cycles



# Situations, thoughts, emotions, sensations



Cycle of interdependent arising

# Feelings

- Feelings refer to the hedonic tones of experience as pleasant, unpleasant or neither. These feelings arise when the mind comes into contact with an object.
- Feelings move us. We often seek out the pleasant, avoid the unpleasant and may become ambivalent, stuck or procrastinate about that which is neither.



# Mindfulness of feelings

- Being attentive to the domain of feelings
- Allowing and being open to unpleasant feelings without unnecessary over reaction
- Allowing pleasant feelings to come and go without unhelpful addiction and delusions about the pleasant lasting forever.
- Being mindful of feelings can help to short circuit reactive cycles.



# Urge surfing

- Refers to not acting on urges or impulses that perpetuate reactive cycles.
- Maintaining awareness and balance while experiencing the wave of desire to pull something towards oneself.
- Maintaining emotional balance with a wave of aversion, manifesting as an impulse to push something away or avoid.
- Staying balanced with poise and either riding an urge wave, or moving through it gracefully in some way or other.
- Not being dumped and drowned by the wave's force.



# Tendencies with depression and anxiety

- Rumination, worry and catastrophising
- Negative and inaccurate views of self, world and future.
- Inaccurate evaluation/interpretation and prediction.
- Self is perceived as disconnected, hopeless, helpless, worthless, unsafe, insecure.
- Thoughts are believed as accurate representations of reality.



# Worry and rumination

- Worry = thinking excessively about solutions to a problem where there may be a number of negative outcomes. Different from calm and purposeful problem solving.
- Rumination = one “chews over” an issue but does not think of any solutions. No resolution. One focuses repeatedly upon one’s distress and its circumstances. Different from pondering, reflecting, or “processing” in that there is less control and more unhelpful outcomes.





# Proliferation (papañca)

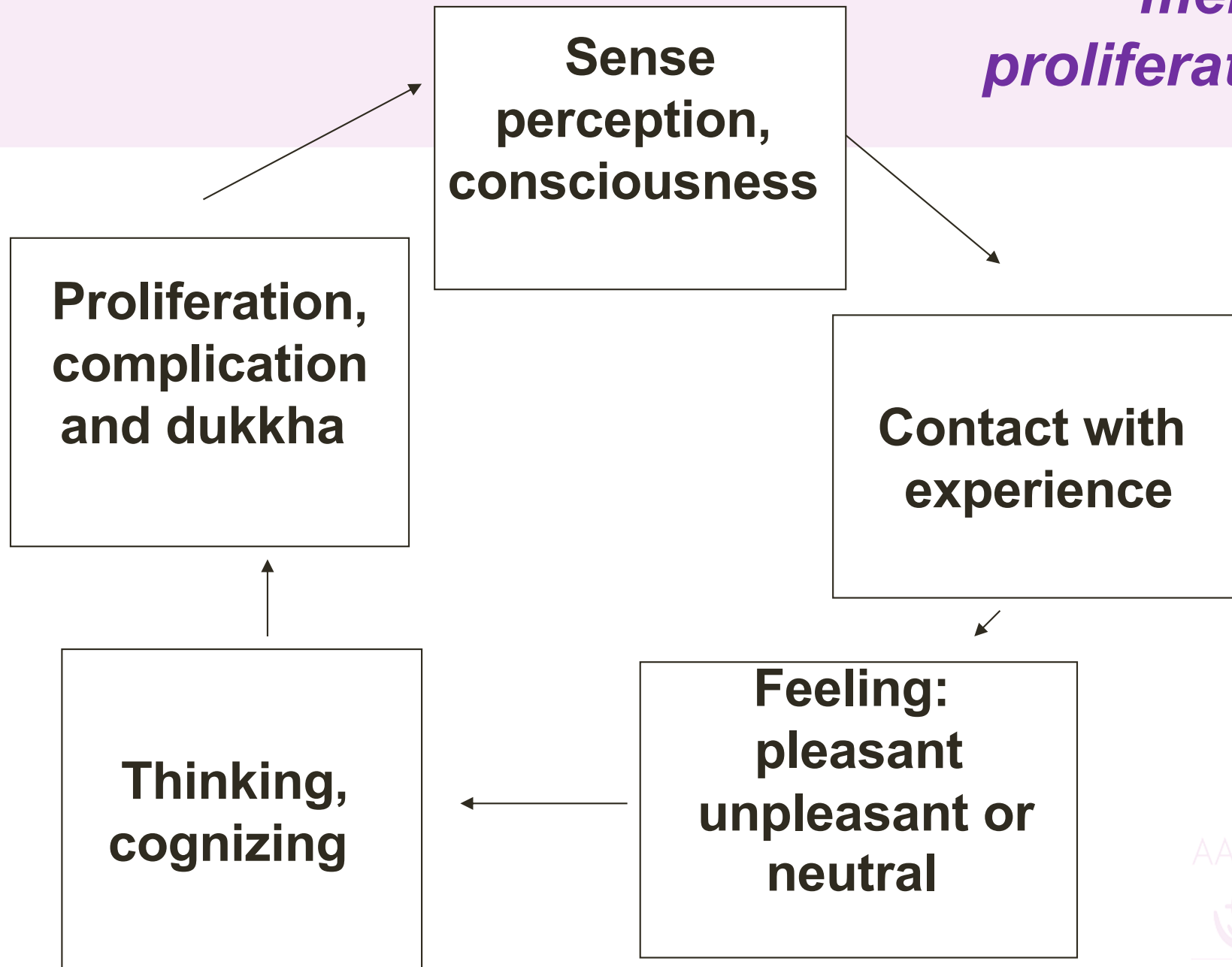
*Depending on eye & forms, eye-consciousness arises.  
The meeting of the three is contact. Contact conditions  
feeling.*

*What we feel, we perceive. What we perceive, we think  
about. What we think about, we proliferate.*

*Because of what we have proliferated we are oppressed  
by concepts of perceptions, coloured by proliferation,  
regarding past, future & present.*

Mahā Kaccāna, MN 18, Nanamoli and Bodhi 1995 pp. 201-206

***mental  
proliferation***



# Aims of a group session about working with thoughts

- Provide an understanding about the nature of “thought”
- Provide the basics on how to cultivate meta-cognitive insight
- Provide more understanding and choice about working with destructive thought patterns.



# Mindfulness of thoughts

- Prevents relapse of depression because breaks automatic thinking habits
- Can cut short proliferation and losing contact with the reality of a situation.
- Changes content of negative thoughts by changing relationship to thoughts
- Relationship to thought changes by bringing attention to the nature of thoughts-impermanent, dukkha and not-self. Thought are not facts.

