

Thriving inside the
Dynamics of a
Contextual Behavioral
Science: RFT, Clinical and
Non-Clinical Foundations



Nanni Presti
Kore University, Enna (Italy)

Mandatory disclosures

No part of this speech
has been reviewed

by an English mother
tongue speaker

but Robyn Walsler
contributed to the title
and I still owe
a carbonara to her

and

my one time only last
announcement
for ever

The **CONTEXT PRESS** Mastering ACT Series

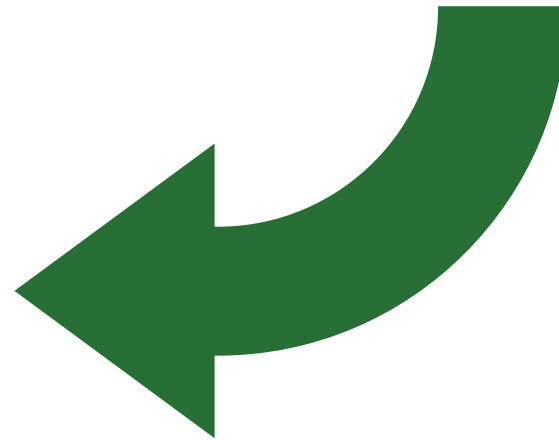
Committed Action IN PRACTICE



A CLINICIAN'S GUIDE TO
**ASSESSING, PLANNING &
SUPPORTING CHANGE
IN YOUR CLIENT**

**DANIEL J. MORAN, PhD
PATRICIA A. BACH, PhD
SONJA V. BATTEN, PhD**

I endorsed
this book



I was born in Sicily

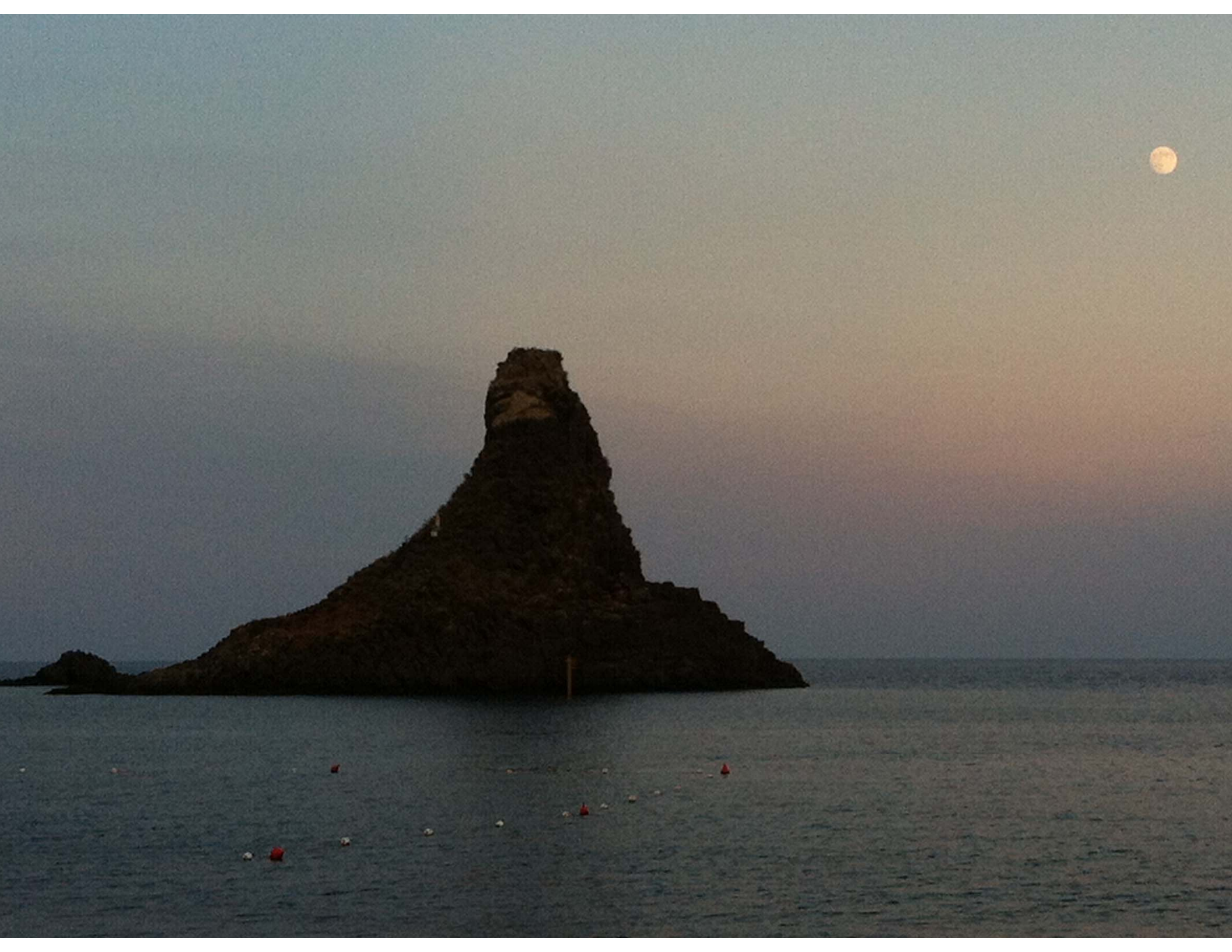
A satellite-style topographic map of Sicily, Italy, showing the island's terrain in shades of green and brown. The island is oriented vertically. Two white arrows point to specific locations on the eastern coast. The background is a dark blue ocean with white cloud patterns.

Acireale

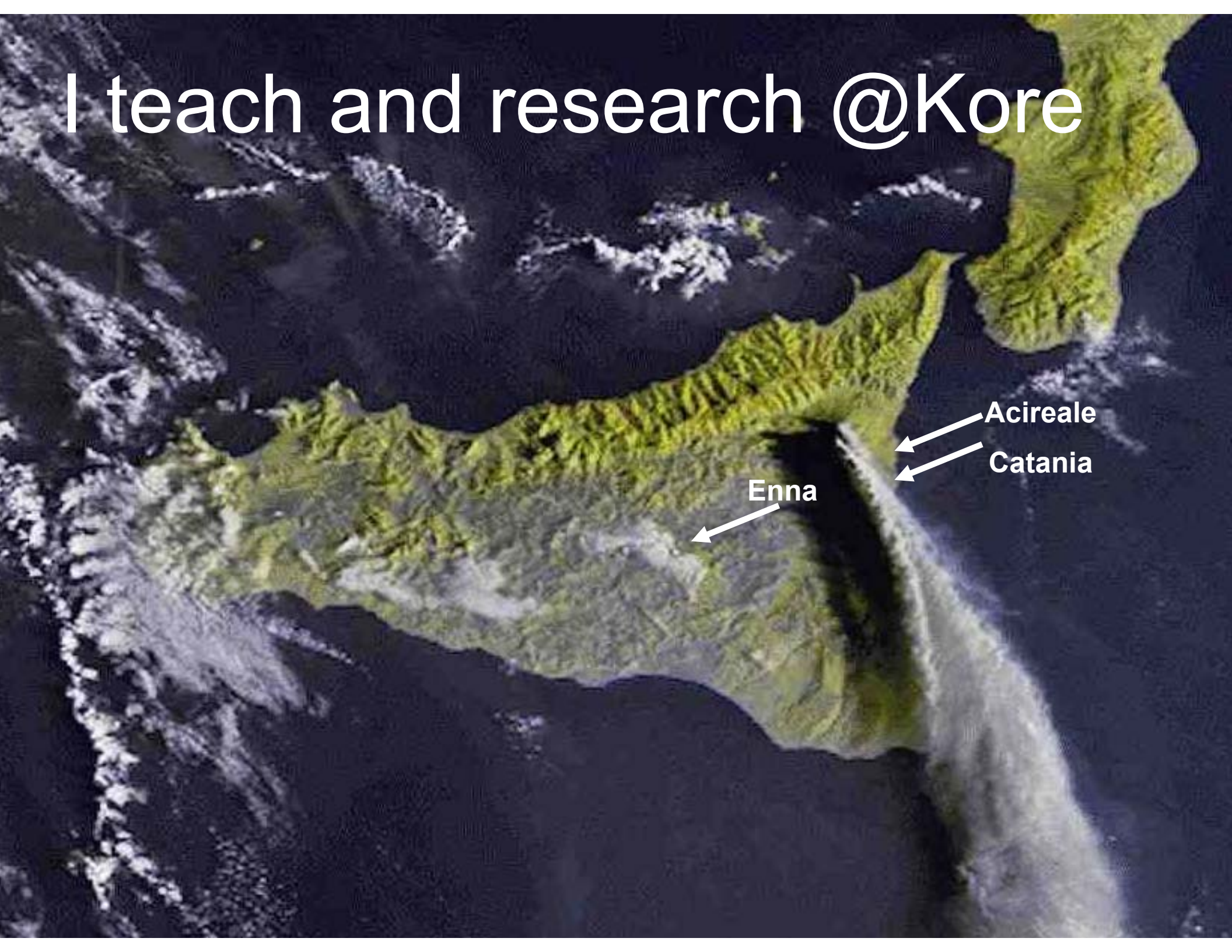
Catania







I teach and research @Kore



Enna
Acireale
Catania





LIBERA UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ENNA

BIBLIOTECA
DI ATENEO
University Library





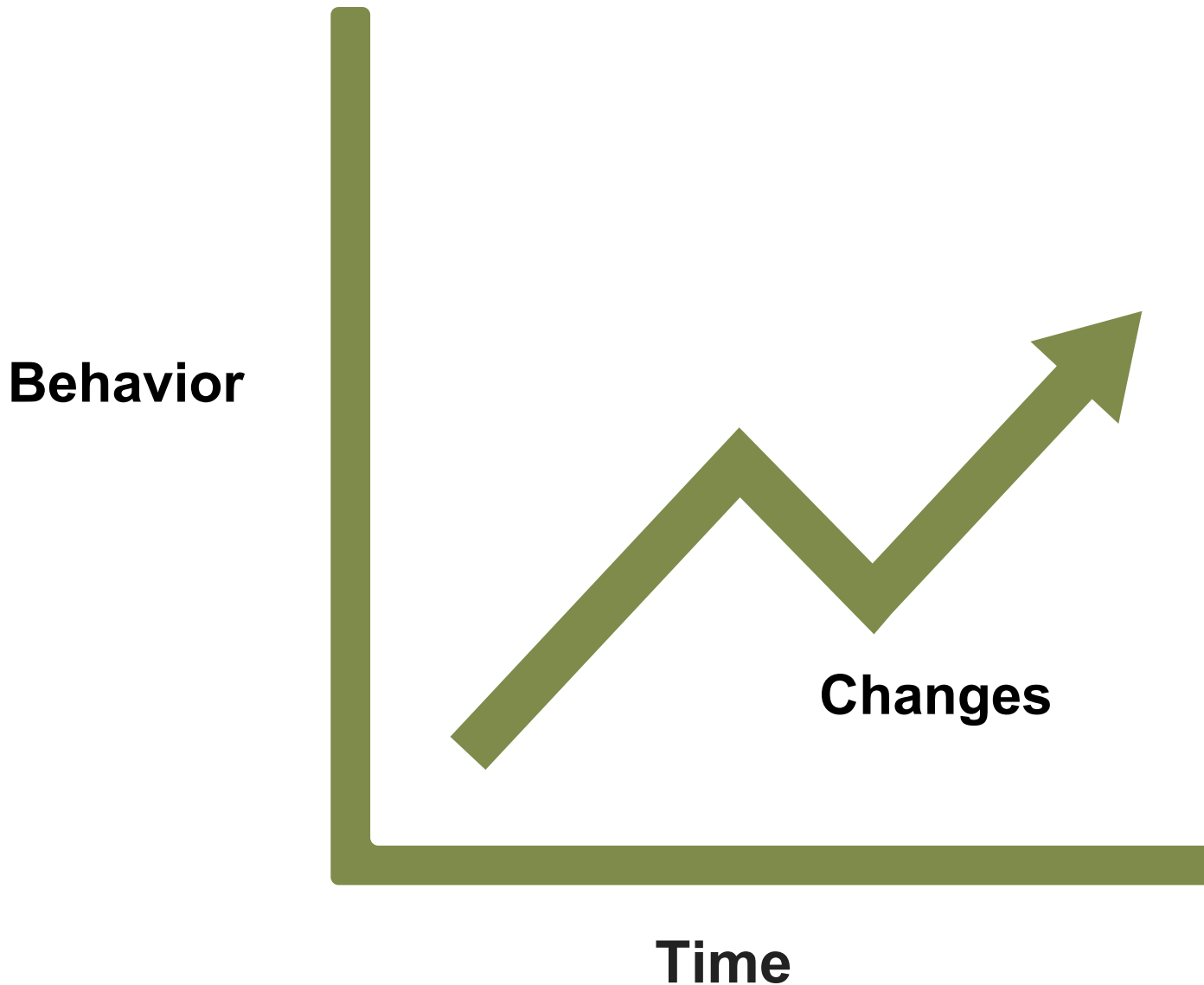
Thriving

Thriving is about

- Growing and developing.
- Participation in growth
- Transitioning.
- Historical roots
- Individuals
- Blossoms
- Evolution
- Learning
- A live body, a live Community and a live Science



Thriving is a metaphor







THE ORDER OF TIME

CARLO
ROVELLI

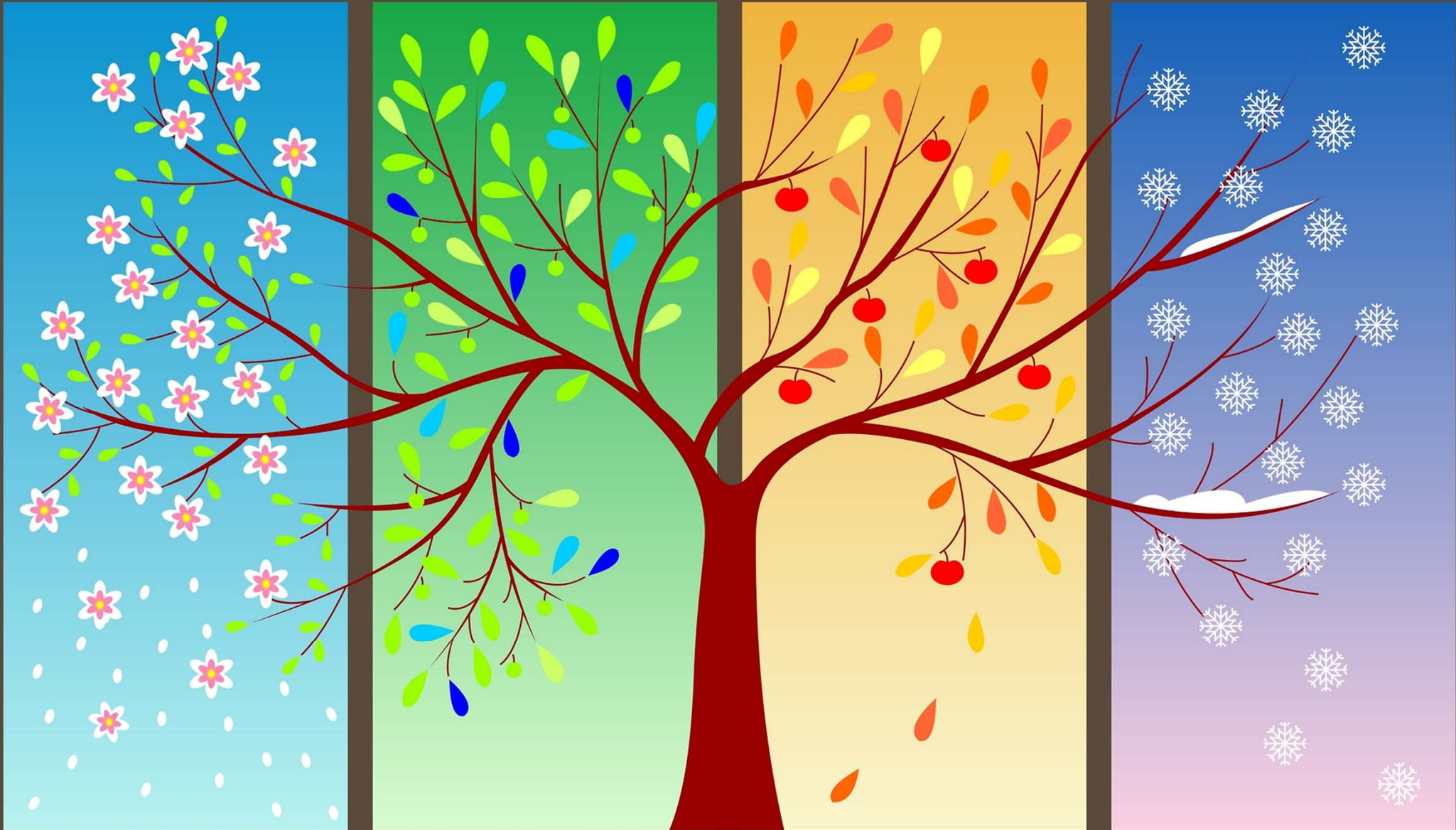
New York Times-bestselling author of
Seven Brief Lessons on Physics

- There is no time variable in the fundamental equations that describe the world
- Time is a relational response

The order of time

We are stories... lines drawn by traces left by the (re) mingling together of things in the world, and orientated towards predicting events in the future, towards the direction of increasing entropy, in a rather particular corner of this immense, chaotic universe.... **our introspection is easily capable of imagining itself without there being space or matter, but can it imagine itself not existing in time?** It is with respect to that physical system to which we belong, due to the peculiar way in which it interacts with the rest of the world, thanks to the fact that it allows traces and because we, as physical entities, consist of memory and anticipation, that the perspective of time opens up for us, like our small, lit clearing. Time opens up our limited access to the world. **Time, then, is the form in which we beings whose brains are made up essentially of memory and foresight interact with the world: it is the source of our identity. And of our suffering as well...**

*Rovelli, Carlo. The Order of Time (p.iv).
Penguin Books Ltd.*



We relate to astronomic events in relation to space



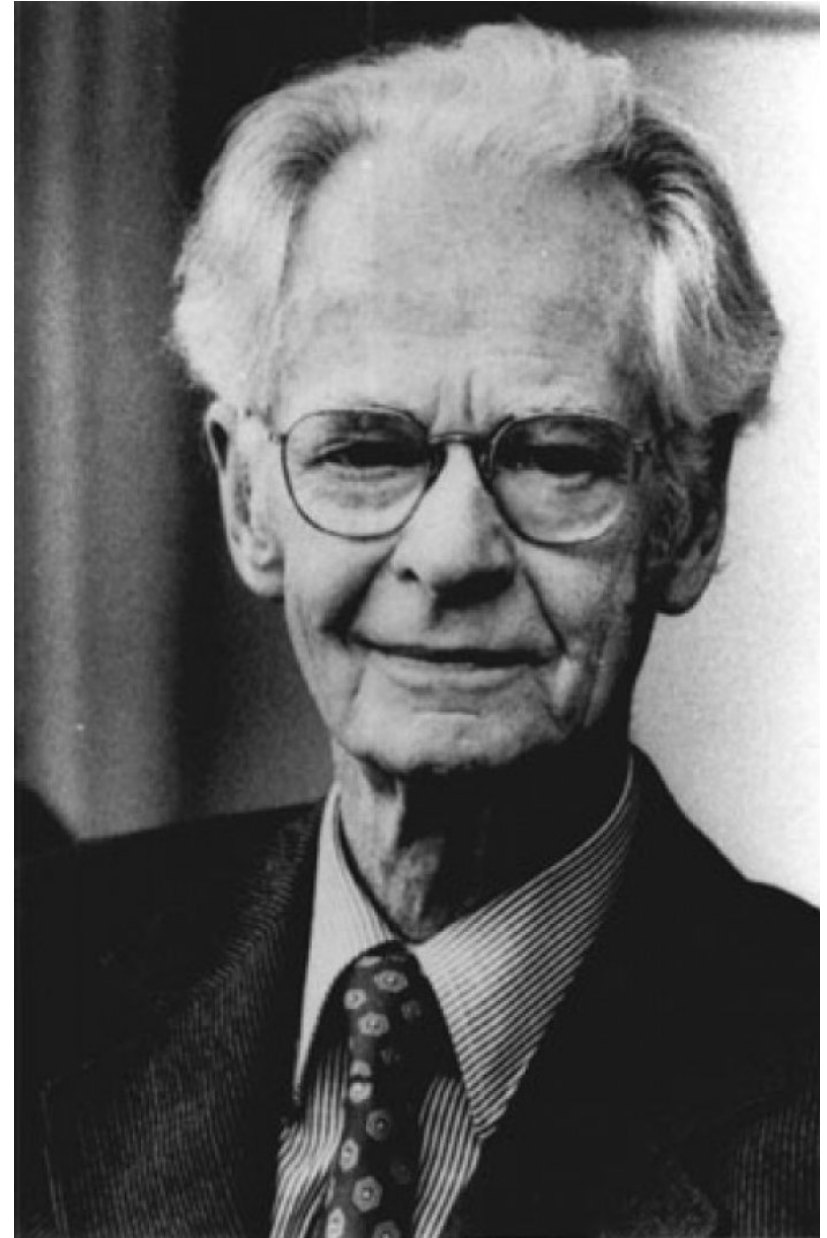
The Antikythera mechanism



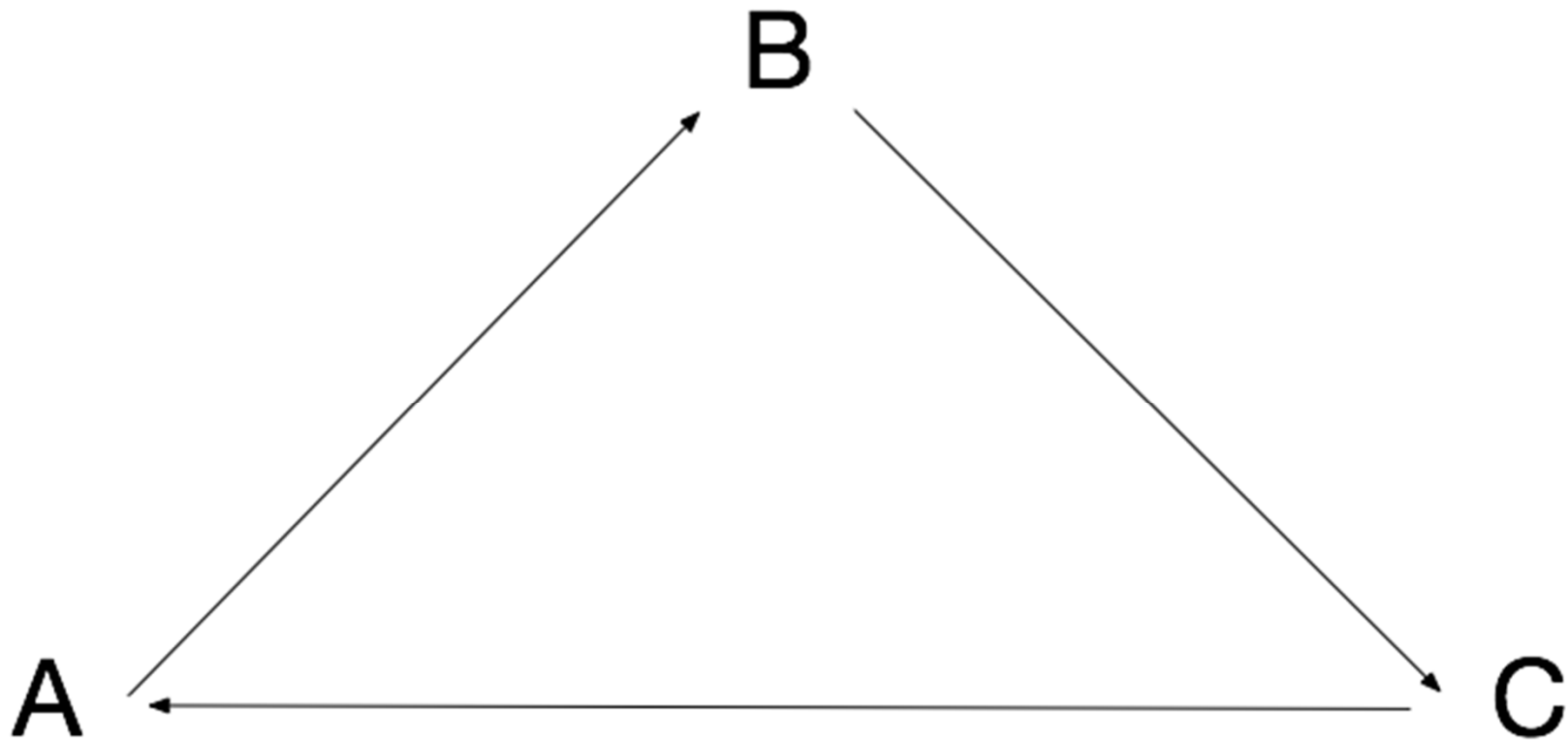
Lawfulness

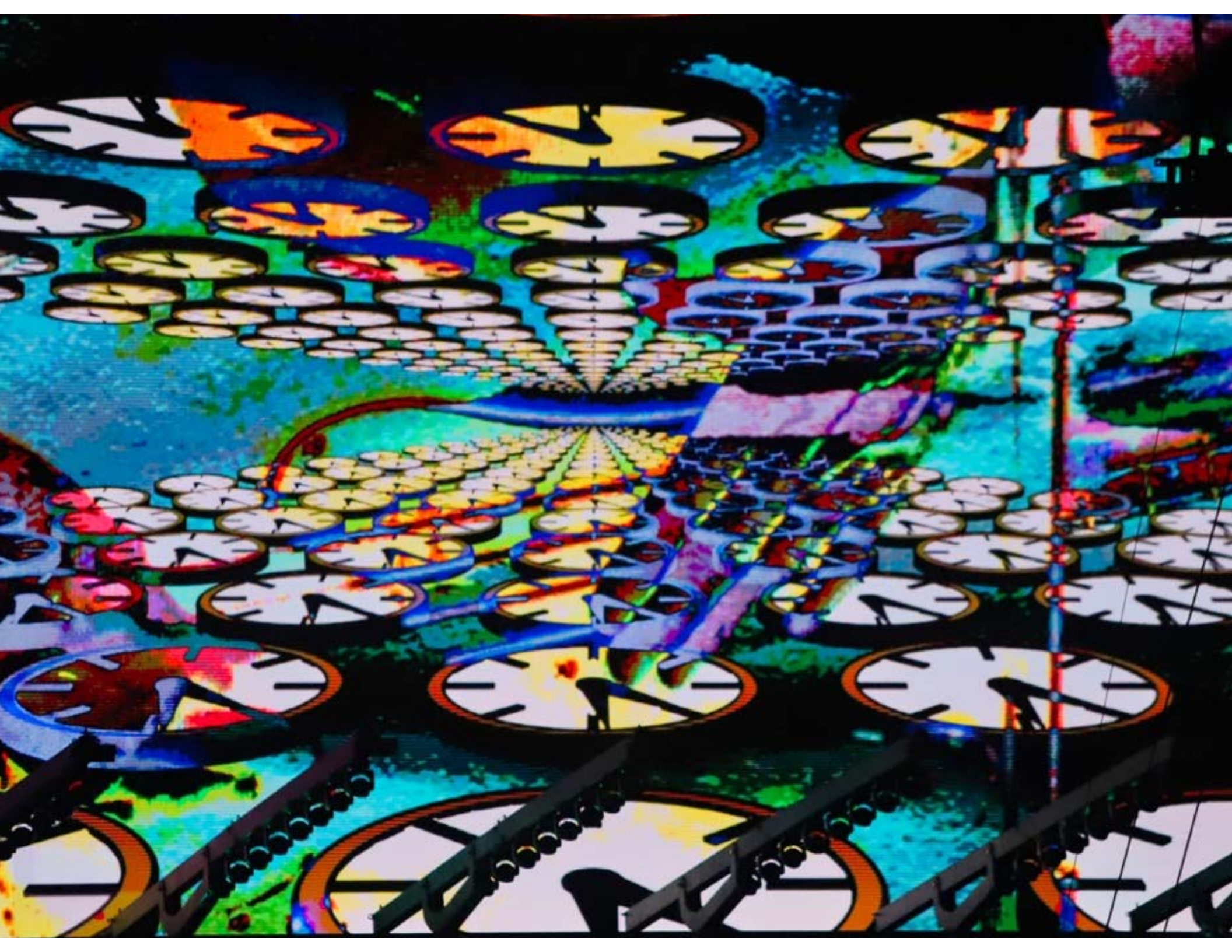
Behavior is a difficult subject matter, not because it is inaccessible, but because it is extremely complex. Since it is a process, rather than a thing, it cannot be held still for observation. **It is changing, fluid, evanescent, and for this reason it makes great technical demands upon the ingenuity and energy of the scientist.** But there is nothing essentially insoluble about the problems which arise from this fact.” (Skinner, 1953, p. 15)

[Science] ...is an attempt to discover order, to show that certain events stand in lawful relation to other events. . . . If we are to use the methods of science in the field of human affairs, **we must assume that behavior is lawful and determined.** We must expect to discover that what a man does is the result of specifiable conditions and that once these conditions have been discovered, we can anticipate and to some extent determine his actions (Skinner, 1953, p. 6)



Conceptualizing interactions: The operant





2017 NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE

to:





La formula di Kantor

$$PE = C(k, sf, rf, hi, st, md)$$



Three languages?

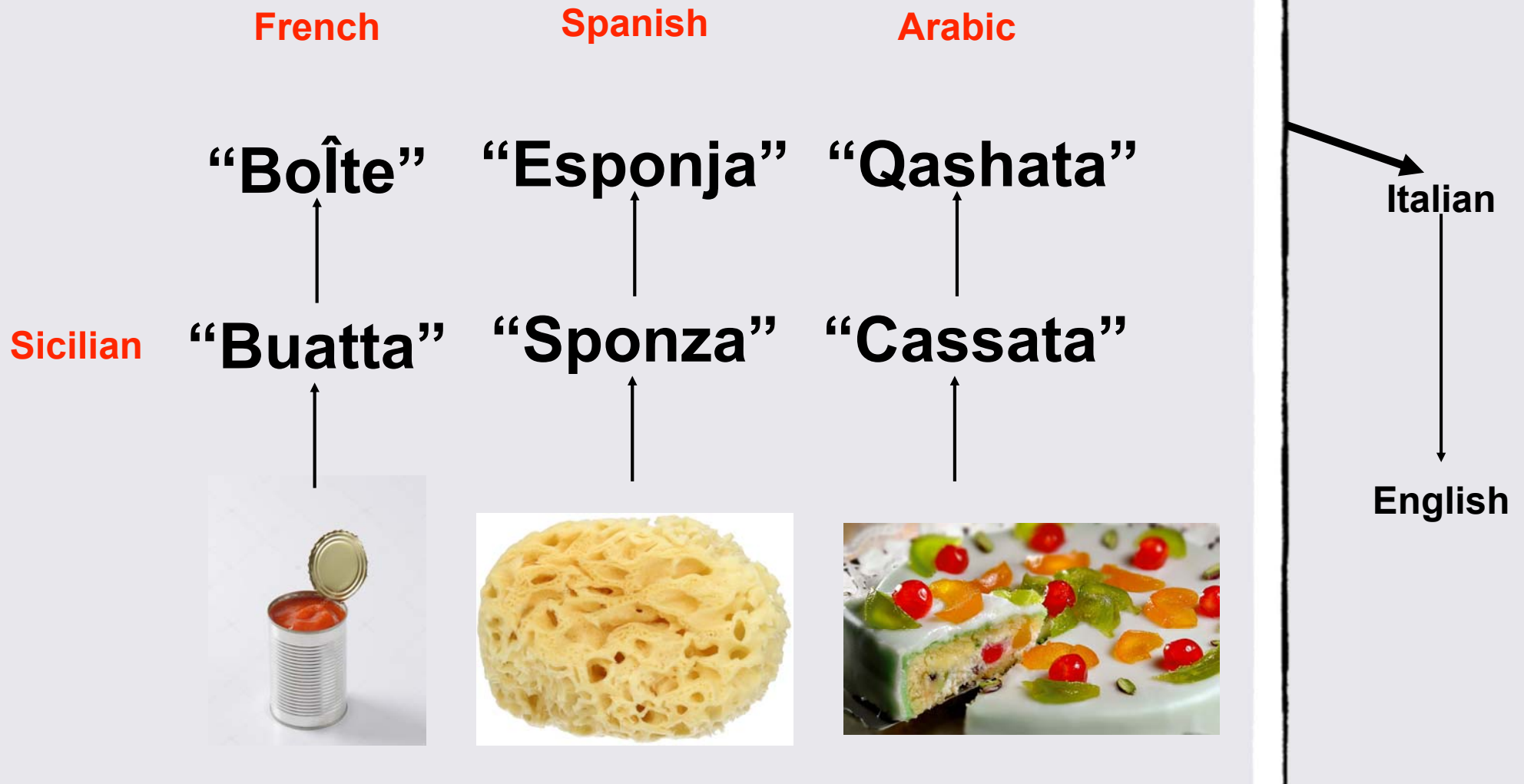
“Buatta”

“Tin”

“Latta”



Later I learnt that...



*CONDITIONAL DISCRIMINATION VS. MATCHING
TO SAMPLE: AN EXPANSION OF
THE TESTING PARADIGM*

MURRAY SIDMAN AND WILLIAM TAILBY

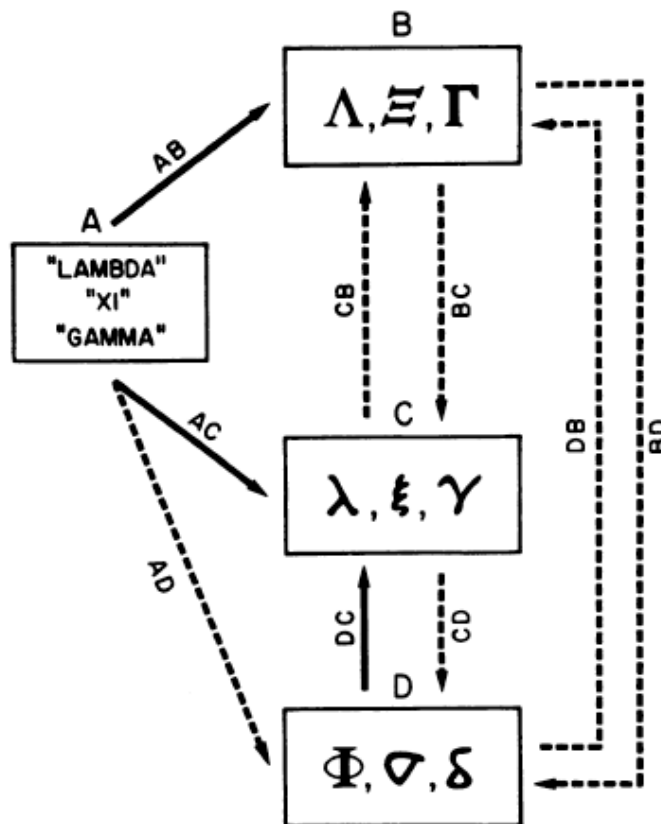


Fig. 2. The equivalence paradigm in the present experiment. The stimuli are a set of dictated Greek letter names (Set A) and three sets of printed Greek letters (Sets B, C, and D), three letters in each set. Arrows point from sample stimuli (only one presented at a time) to comparison stimuli. The solid arrows AB, AC, and DC represent conditional relations that are explicitly taught to the subjects. The broken arrows CB, BC, AD, CD, BD, and DB represent conditional relations that are tested after others have been explicitly taught.

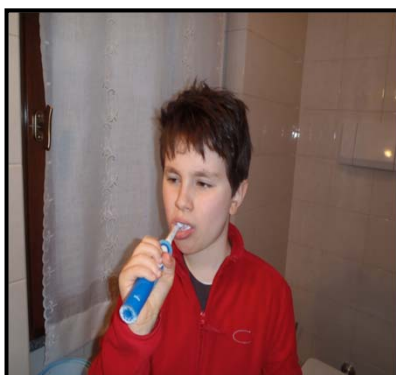
Q r z



Ehiruh



D i w u

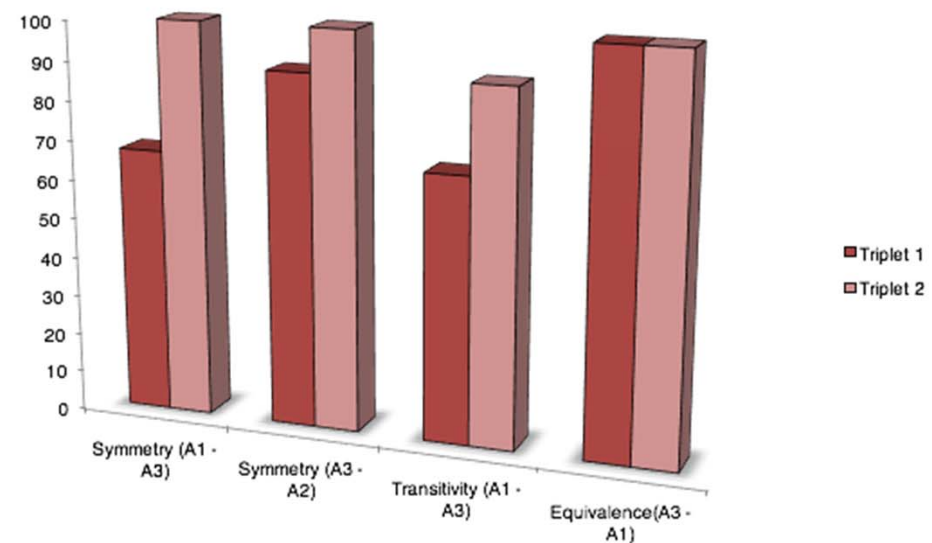
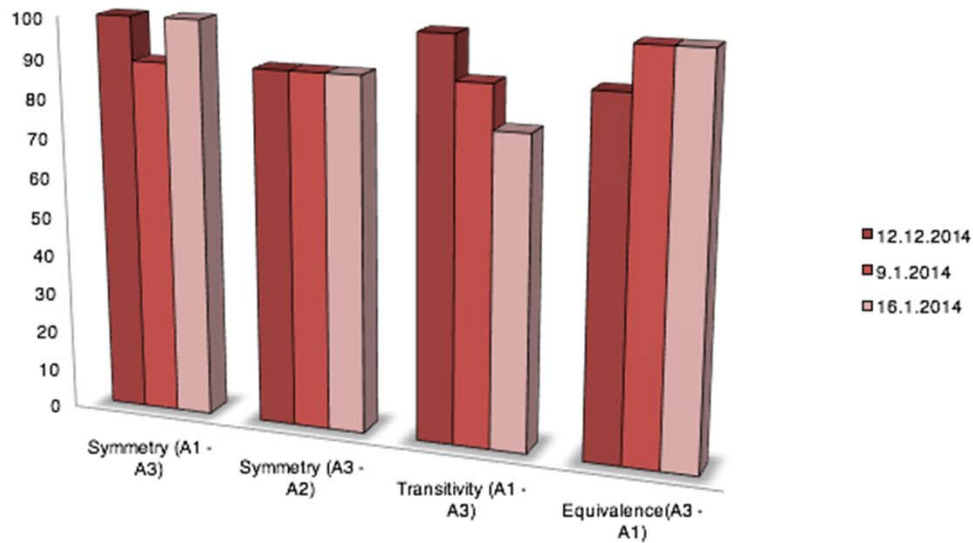


SAMPLE	N° TRIAL	CONTEXTUAL	COMPARISONS		
		CUE			
A2	1	NOW	A2	A1	A3
	2	BEFORE	A2	A1	A3
	3	AFTER	A2	A1	A3
B2	4	NOW	B3	B2	B1
	5	BEFORE	B3	B2	B1
	6	AFTER	B3	B2	B1
C2	7	NOW	C1	C3	C2
	8	BEFORE	C1	C3	C2
	9	AFTER	C1	C3	C2
B2	10	NOW	B2	B1	B3
	11	BEFORE	B2	B1	B3
	12	AFTER	B2	B1	B3
	13	NOW	C3	C2	C1



Trained sequence

Non-trained sequences





Talking in the perspective of time is contextually controlled

	Past -> DE-			
	To brush teeth -> SAR	To sleep -> DIF	To phone -> TUN	To paint -> PET
Child -> GEN	GEN DESAR	GEN DEDIF	GEN DETUN	GEN DEPET
Girl -> MUR	MUR DESAR	MUR DEDIF	MUR DETUN	MUR DEPET
Man -> VIG	VIG DESAR	VIG DEDIF	VIG DETUN	VIG DEPET
Woman -> FOS	FOS DESAR	FOS DEDIF	FOS DETUN	FOS DEPET
	Present			
	To brush teeth -> SAR	To sleep -> DIF	To phone -> TUN	To paint -> PET
Child -> GEN	GEN SAR	GEN DIF	GEN TUN	GEN PET
Girl -> MUR	MUR SAR	MUR DIF	MUR TUN	MUR PET
Man -> VIG	VIG SAR	VIG DIF	VIG TUN	VIG PET
Woman -> FOS	FOS SAR	FOS DIF	FOS TUN	FOS PET
	Future -> WILL			
	To brush teeth -> SAR	To sleep -> DIF	To phone -> TUN	To paint -> PET
Child -> GEN	GEN SARWILL	GEN DIFWILL	GEN TUNWILL	GEN PETWILL
Girl -> MUR	MUR SARWILL	MUR DIFWILL	MUR TUNWILL	MUR PETWILL
Man -> VIG	VIG SARWILL	VIG DIFWILL	VIG TUNWILL	VIG PETWILL
Woman -> FOS	FOS SARWILL	FOS DIFWILL	FOS TUNWILL	FOS PETWILL



Self discrimination and self-awareness

EQUIVALENCE TRAIN (EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS ONLY):

A1 / \ B1 B2 B3	A2 B1 B2 B3	A3 \ / B1 B2 B3
A1 / \ C1 C2 C3	A2 C1 C2 C3	A3 \ / C1 C2 C3

EQUIVALENCE TEST (EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS ONLY):

B1 / \ C1 C2 C3	B2 C1 C2 C3	B3 \ / C1 C2 C3
-----------------------	---------------------	-----------------------

SELF DISCRIMINATION TRAINING (ALL SUBJECTS):

SELF DISCRIMINATION TRAINING (STAGE 1):

TASK 1: NO RESPONSE = B1
RESPONSE = B2

TASK 2:

B1 / \ B1 B2	B2 \ / B1 B2
--------------------	--------------------

SELF DISCRIMINATION TRAINING (STAGE 2):

TASK 1: NO RESPONSE = B1
RESPONSE = B2

TASK 2:

NO SAMPLE B1 B2	NO SAMPLE B1 B2
--------------------	--------------------

SELF DISCRIMINATION TRAINING (STAGE 3):

TASK 1: NO RESPONSE = NO STIMULI
RESPONSE =

TASK 2:

NO SAMPLE B1 B2	NO SAMPLE B1 B2
--------------------	--------------------

SELF DISCRIMINATION TRANSFER TEST 1:

TASK 1: NO RESPONSE = NO STIMULI
RESPONSE =

TASK 2:

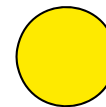
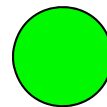
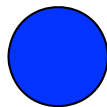
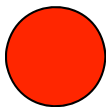
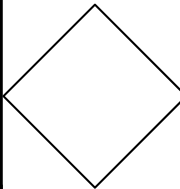
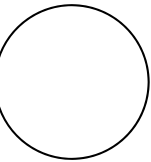
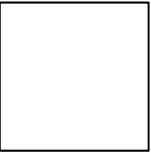
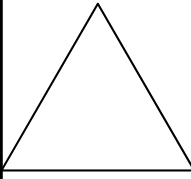
NO SAMPLE C1 C2	NO SAMPLE C1 C2
--------------------	--------------------

SELF DISCRIMINATION TRANSFER TEST 2:
(SUBJECT REPORTS ON FUTURE BEHAVIOUR)

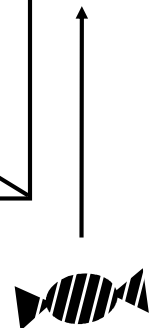
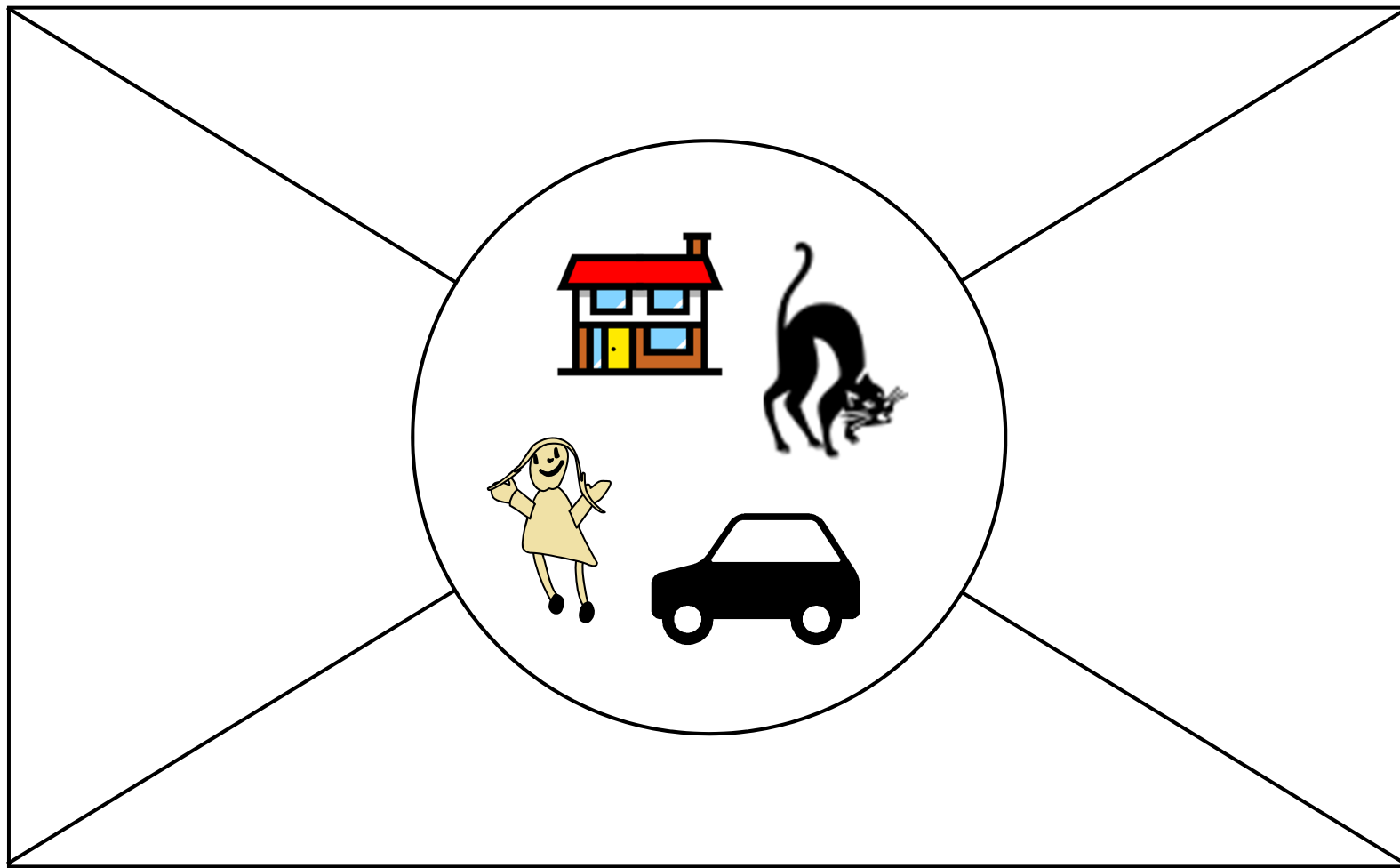
TASKS 1 AND 2 PRESENTED IN REVERSE ORDER

How does it work

	TOP	BOTTOM	RIGHT	LEFT
CAR	R Triangle Car top	B Triangle Car bottom	G Triangle Car right	Y Triangle Car left
DOLL	R Square Doll top	B Square Doll bottom	G Square Doll right	Y Square Doll left
CAT	R circle Cat top	B circle Cat bottom	G circle Cat right	Y circle Cat left
HOUSE	R diamond House top	B diamond House bottom	G diamond House right	Y diamond House left



We can discriminate uncertainty and respond to it



10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

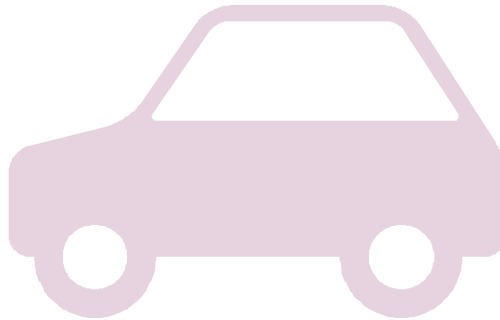
What happens when stimulus control is “weaker”?

This a **red** car



This a *sort of*
a **red** car

This a *sort of*
a **red** car



This a *sort of*
a **blue** car

This a *sort of*
a **blue** car



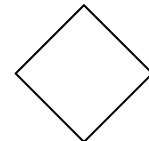
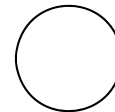
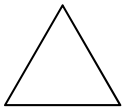
This a **blue** car

Transition training and test

Trained

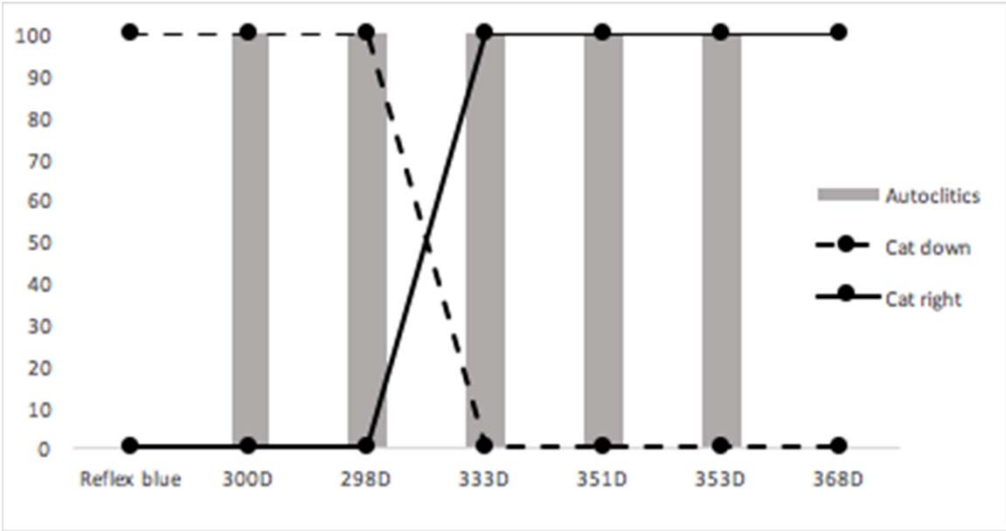
OO (R → B)	ON (B → R)	OO (Y → G)	OO (Y → R)
ON (R → G)	NN (R → Y)	ON (G → R)	NO (B → Y)
NN (G → Y)	NO (Y → B)	NO (B → G)	NN (G → B)

Tested

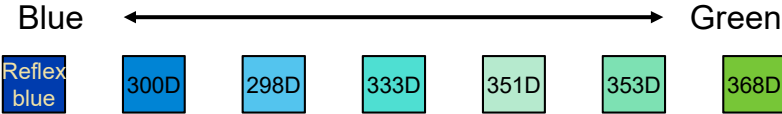


Triangle		Square		Circle		Diamond	
R → B	B → R	R → B	B → R	R → B	B → R	R → B	B → R
R → G	G → R	R → G	G → R	R → G	G → R	R → G	G → R
R → Y	Y → R	R → Y	Y → R	R → Y	Y → R	R → Y	Y → R
B → G	G → B	B → G	G → B	B → G	G → B	B → G	G → B
B → Y	Y → B	B → Y	Y → B	B → Y	Y → B	B → Y	Y → B
G → Y	Y → G	G → Y	Y → G	G → Y	Y → G	G → Y	Y → G

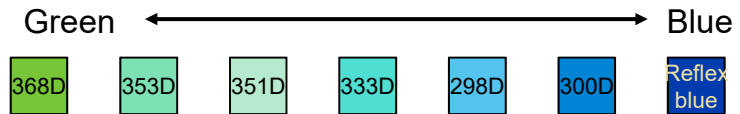
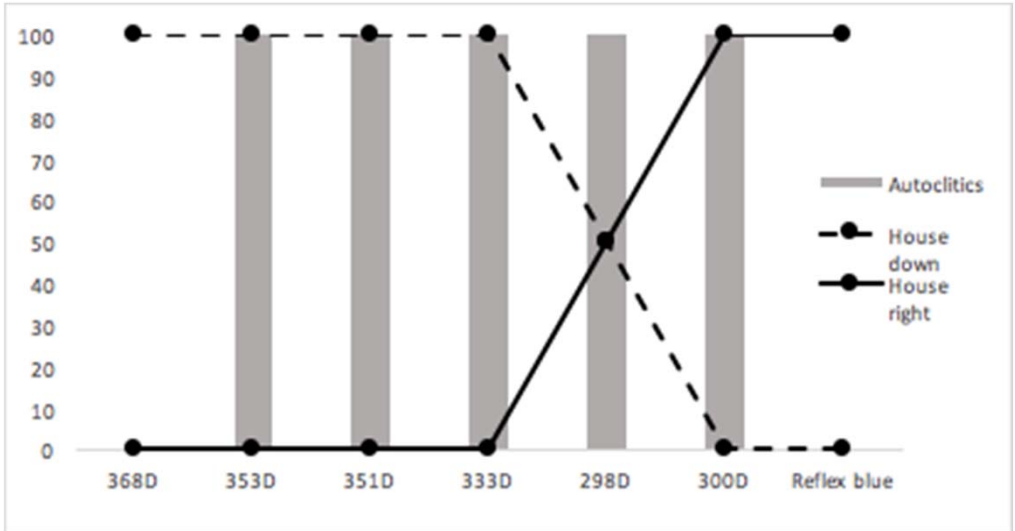
NN - (Paolo)



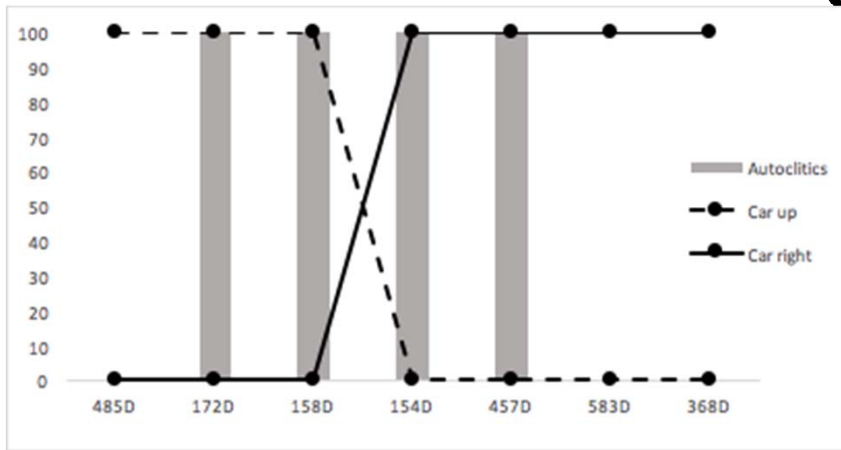
Simply tested
bC (cat down) vs gC (cat right)



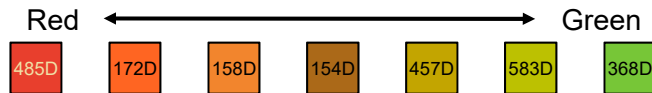
Simply tested
rS (doll up) vs yS (doll left)



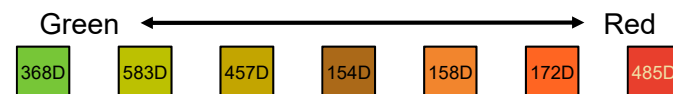
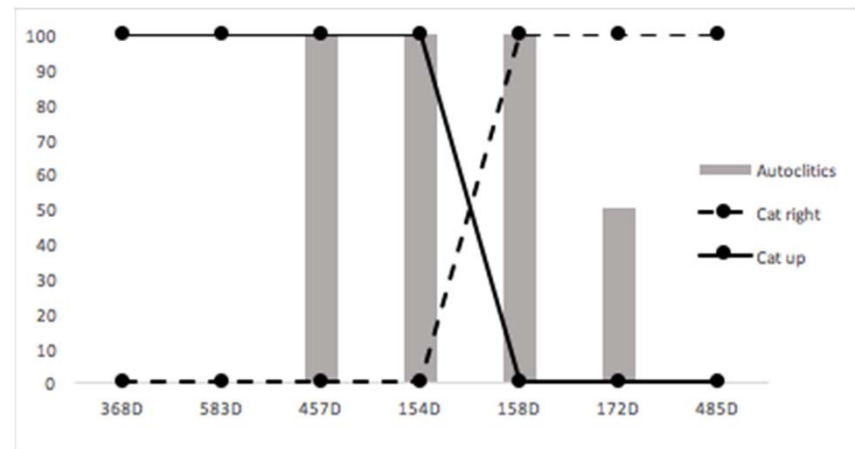
ON - (paolo)



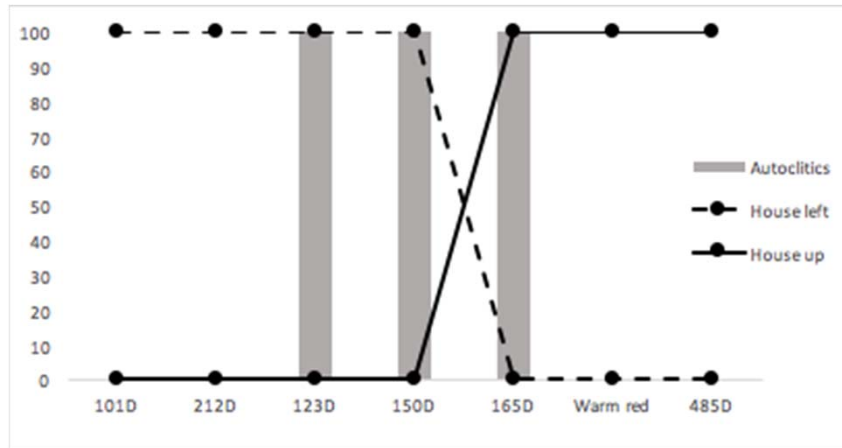
Simply tested
rT (car up) vs gT (car right)



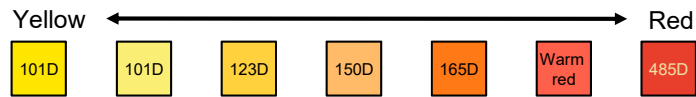
Simply tested
gC (cat right) vs rC (cat up)



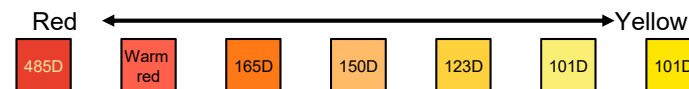
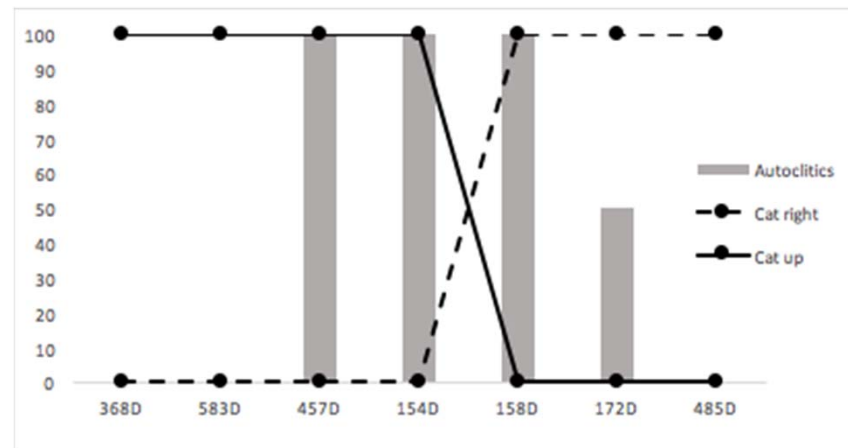
OO - (massimo)



Trained
yD (house left) vs rD (house up)

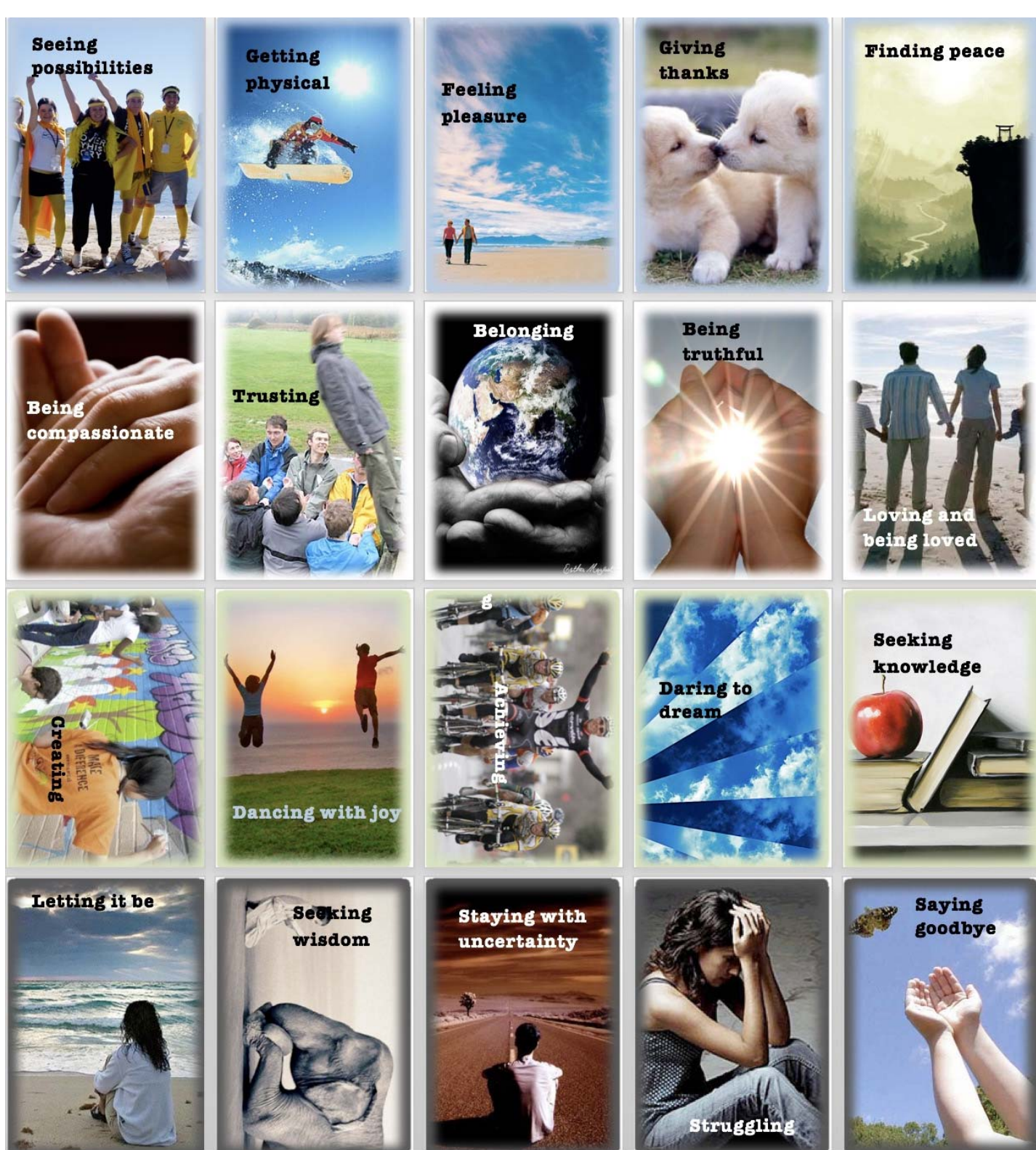


Simply tested
rS (doll up) vs yS (doll left)









In ACT, values are **freely chosen, verbally constructed consequences of ongoing, dynamic, evolving patterns of activity**, which establish predominant reinforcers for that activity that are intrinsic in engagement in the valued behavioral pattern itself.

(Wilson & DuFrene, 2009, p. 66)

RFT is an evolving model

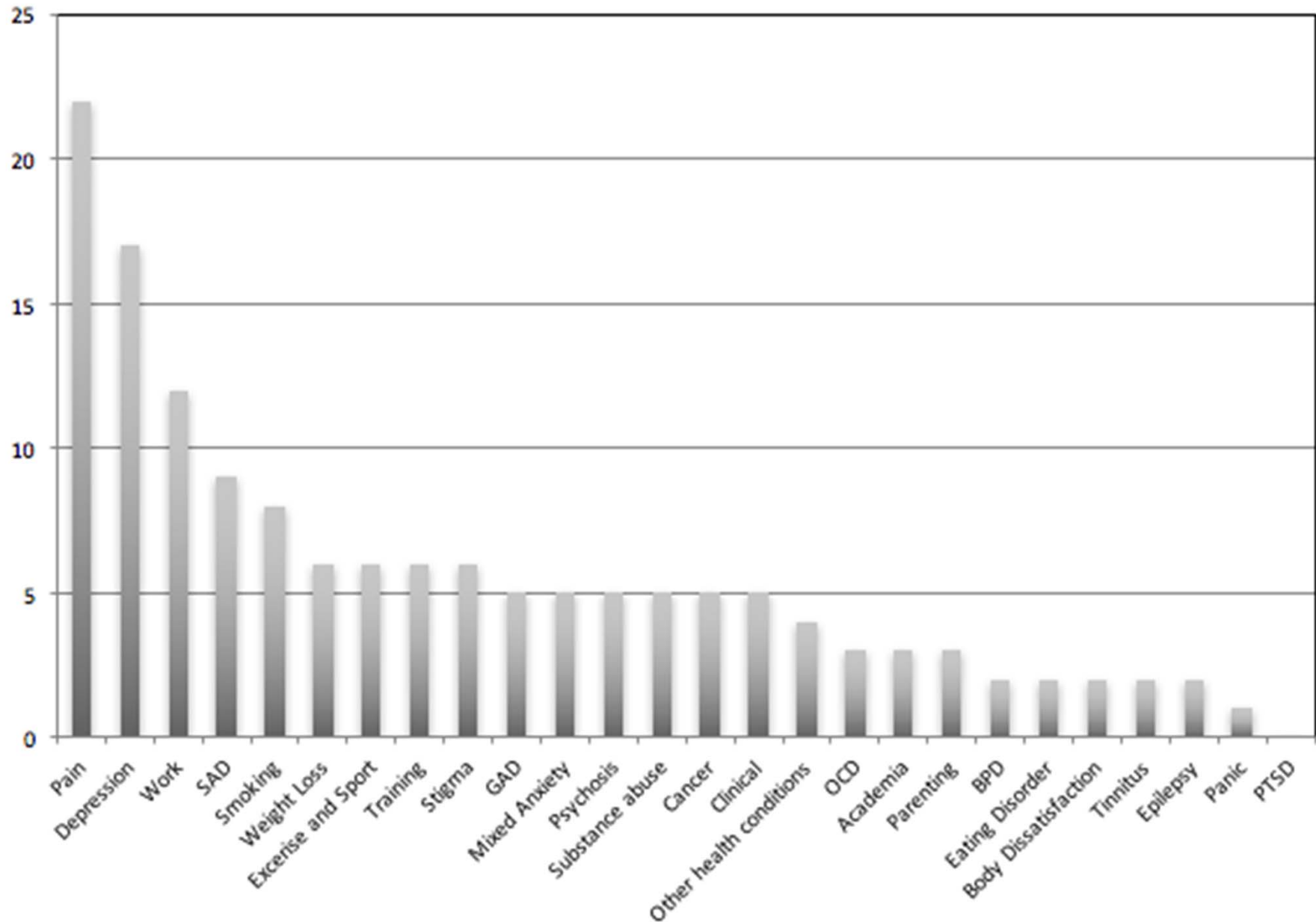
LEVELS	DIMENSIONS			
	Coherence	Complexity	Derivation	Flexibility
Mutually Entailing	Coh/Mut-Ent	Cpx/Mut-Ent	Dev/Mut-Ent	Flx/Mut-Ent
Relational Framing	Coh/Frame	Cpx/Frame	Dev/Frame	Flx/Frame
Relational Networking	Coh/Net	Cpx/Net	Dev/Net	Flx/Net
Relating Relations	Coh/Rel-Rel	Cpx/Rel-Rel	Dev/Rel-Rel	Flx/Rel-Rel
Relating Relational Networks	Coh/Rel-Net	Cpx/Rel-Net	Dev/Rel-Net	Flx/Rel-Net



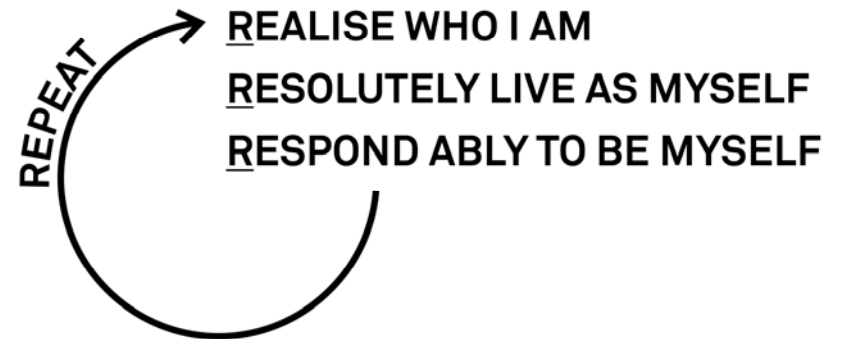
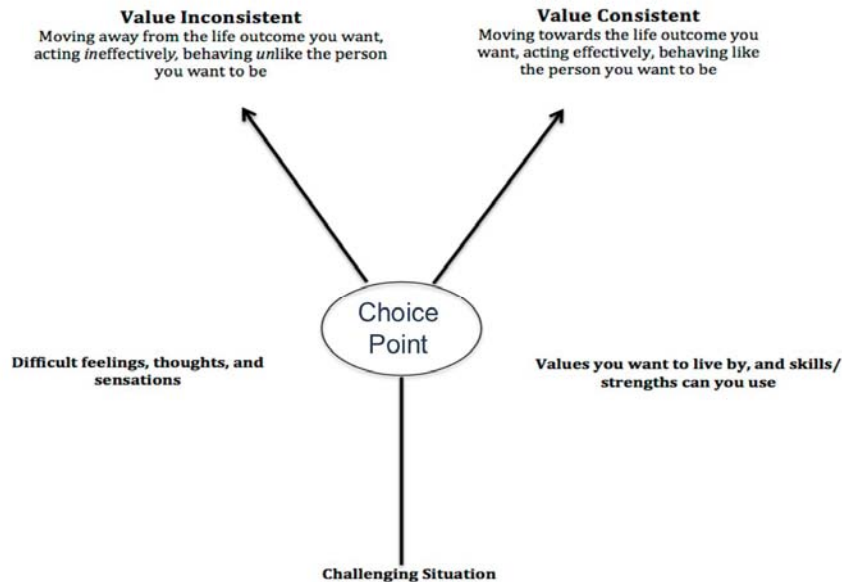
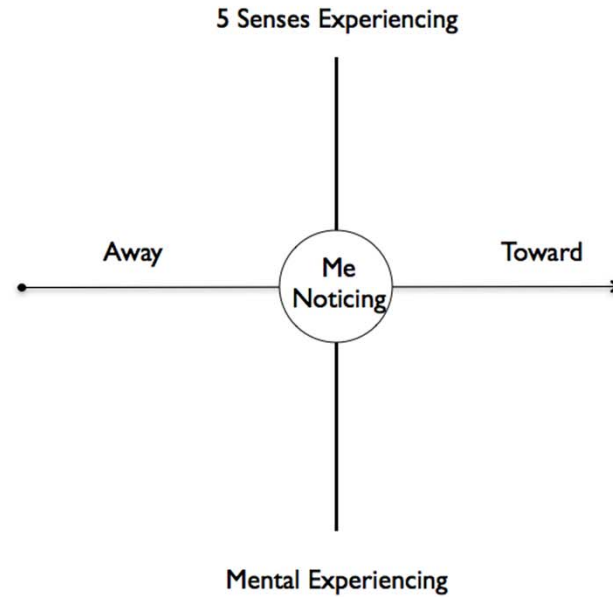
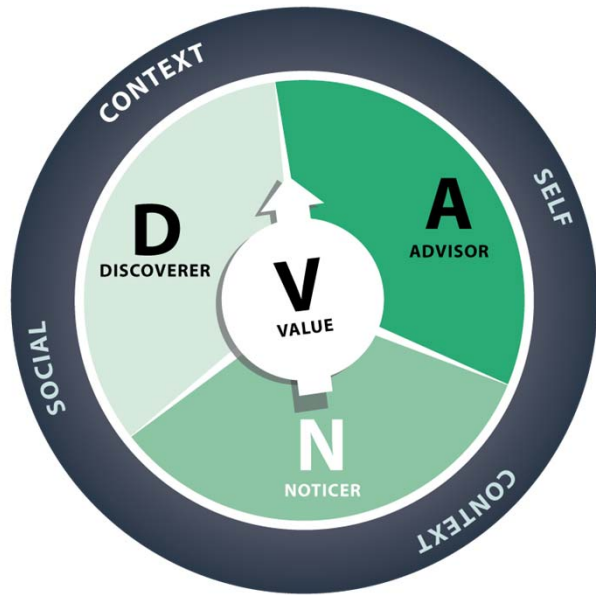
SICUT INCITATI EQUI
FUGIT IRREPARABILE TEMPUS



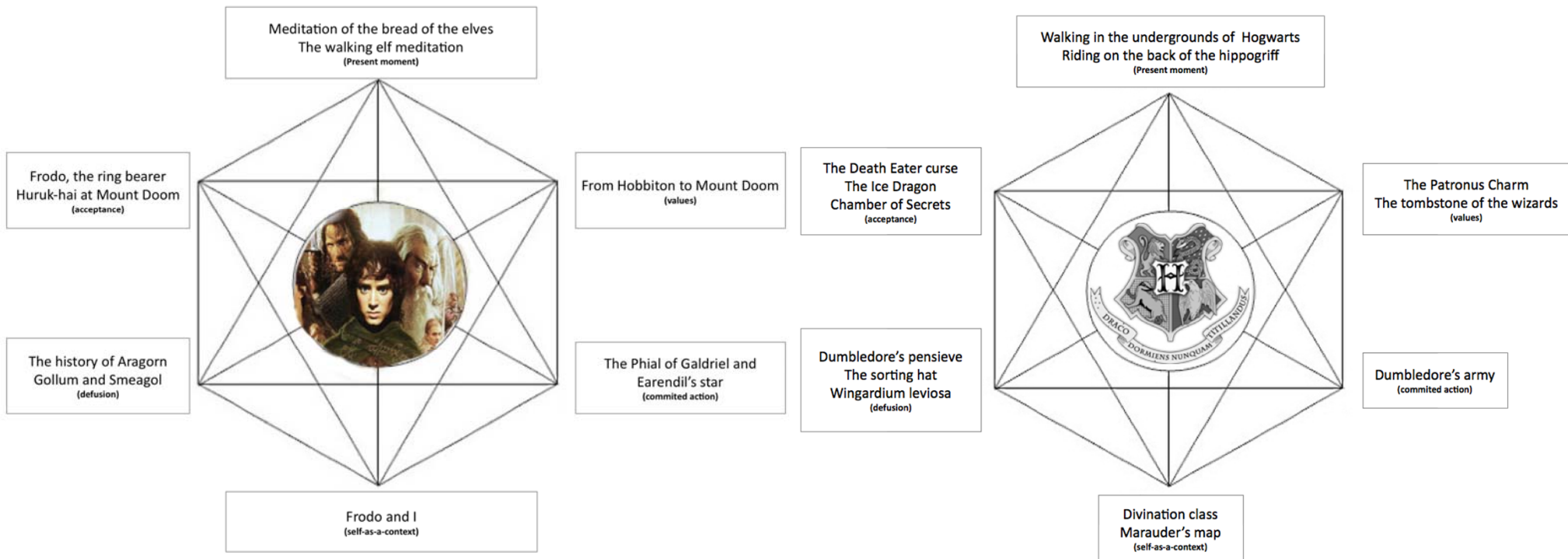
Occasions to thrive



We can also functionally flex the hexaflex



Flexing the hexaflex for kids







Papa!!!

Zzz

By June

Zzz

#Inktober



#Found

TAK THE RISK



We are perennials

- ▶ **Ever-blooming**
- ▶ Relevant people of all ages
- ▶ Living in the present time
- ▶ Knowing what's happening in the world
- ▶ Having friends of all ages
- ▶ Getting involved
- ▶ Staying curious
- ▶ Mentoring others
- ▶ Being passionate, compassionate, creative, confident, collaborative, global-minded risk takers
- ▶ Continuing to push up against our growing edge



**We live in the present moment and we relate
purposely and meaningfully with accounts of
event**

Accept frustration and sorrow

**To act for
what?**



**Flexibly
Thriving**

**to thrive our science,
community and
ourselves**

**We hold stories on our science
lightly and in perspective**

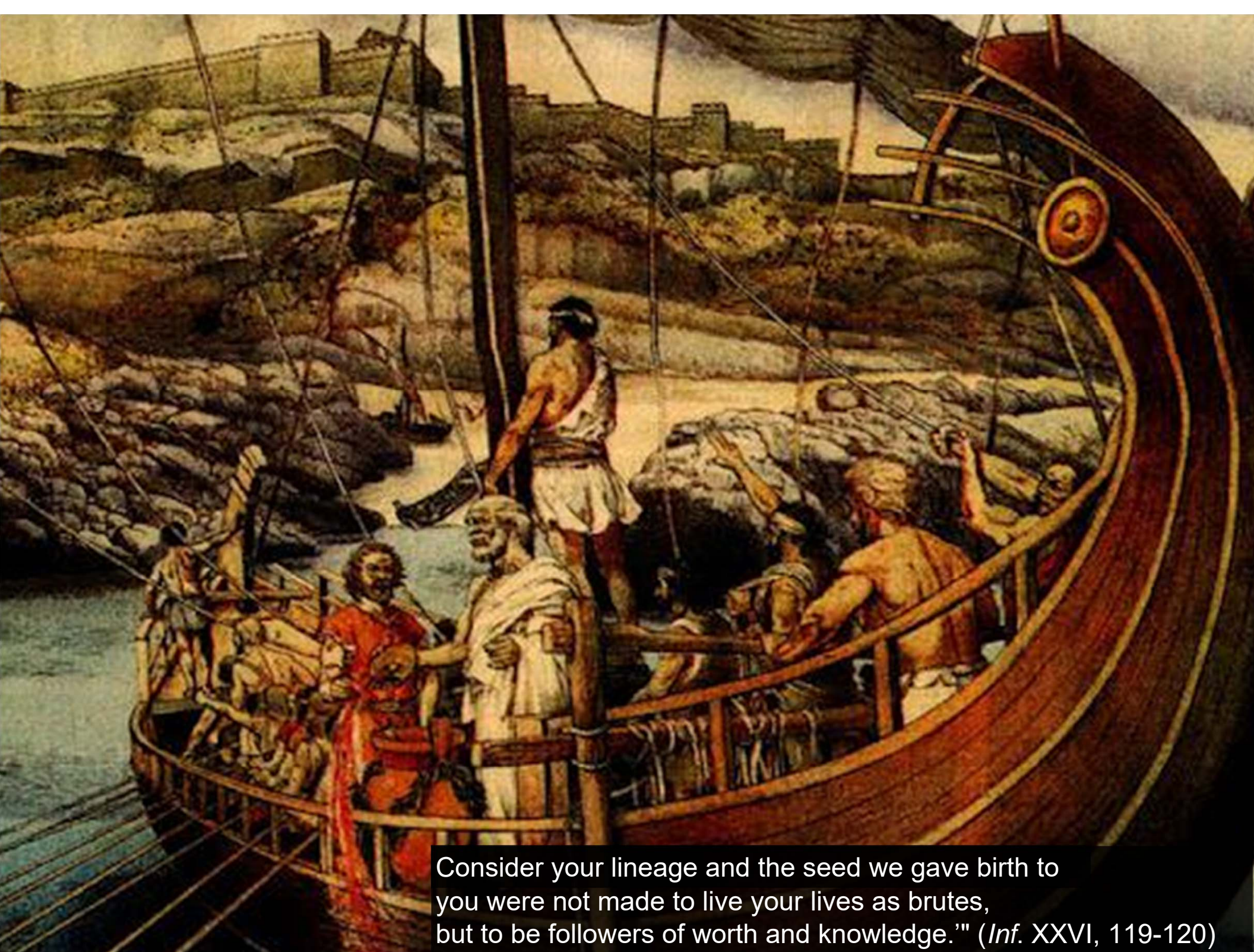
A sense of perennial self

Are we Acting To Save the World?



Have you heard about balsamic vinegar





Consider your lineage and the seed we gave birth to you were not made to live your lives as brutes, but to be followers of worth and knowledge.” (*Inf. XXVI*, 119-120)

Therapy is not about just following rules and adherence measures. It's about awareness, courage, and love. Each time you interact with someone, you have the opportunity to reflect what is special and precious about this person, to heal a wound, to co-create closeness, possibilities, and magic. When you take risks and speak your truth compassionately, you give to your clients that which is only yours to give: your unique thoughts, feelings, and experiences. By so doing, you create relationships that are unforgettable. **When you touch the hearts of your clients, you create a legacy of compassion that can touch generations yet unborn.**

Mavis Tsai

To my students, those I have learnt from and all the people in my heart



Leave this world a little better than you found it
Baden-Powell's Last Message (1941)

Soundtrack

Father & Son - Cat Stevens

Time - Pink Floyd

The times they are a changing - Bob Dylan

Bookends - Simon & Garfunkel

When I'm 64 - The Beatles

Time is on our side - Rolling Stones

Big time - Peter Gabriel

Time after time - Cindy Lauper

Wasted time - Eagles

Tulsa time - Eric Clapton

Comes a time - Neil Young

Where are all the good times gone - Elton John

Time warp - Rocky Horror Picture Show

Rock around the clock - Bill Haley

As Time Goes By - Theme from Casablanca

Where have all the flowers gone - The Kingston trio

My Generation - The Who