

Using Contextual Behavioral Sciences to be a Better Couple Therapist

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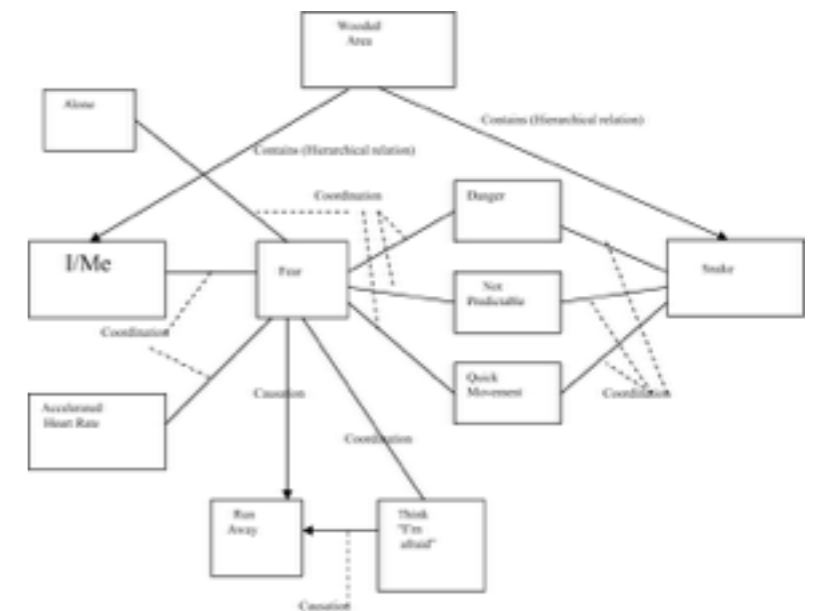
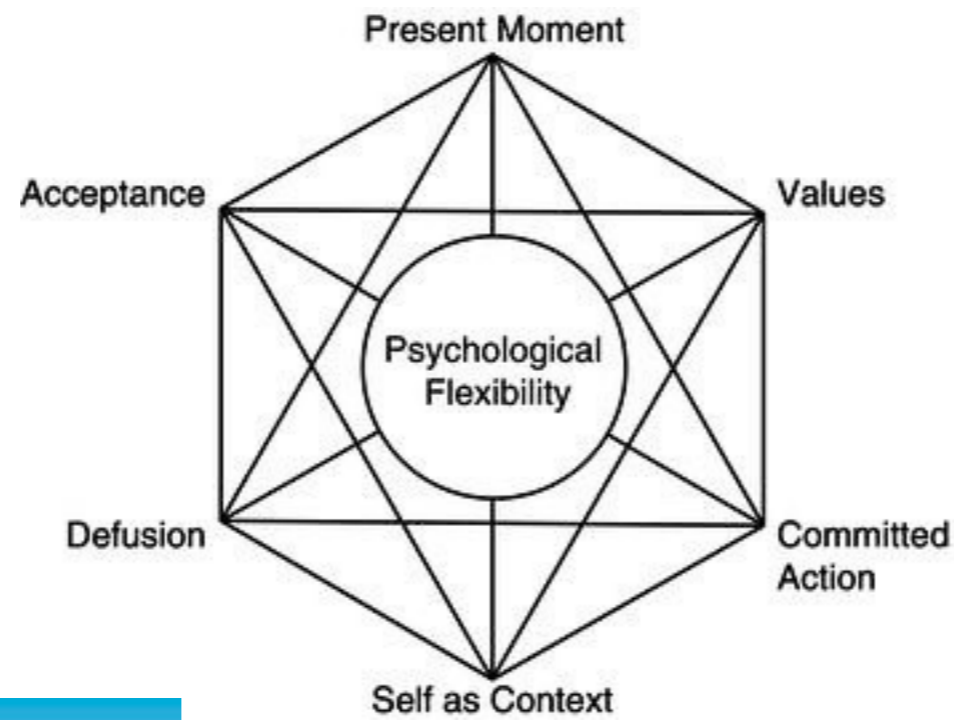
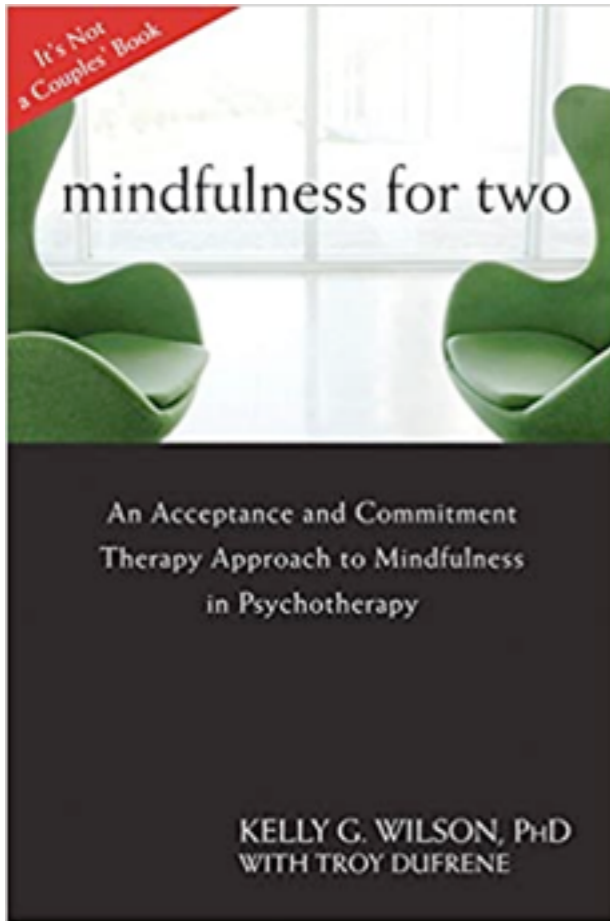


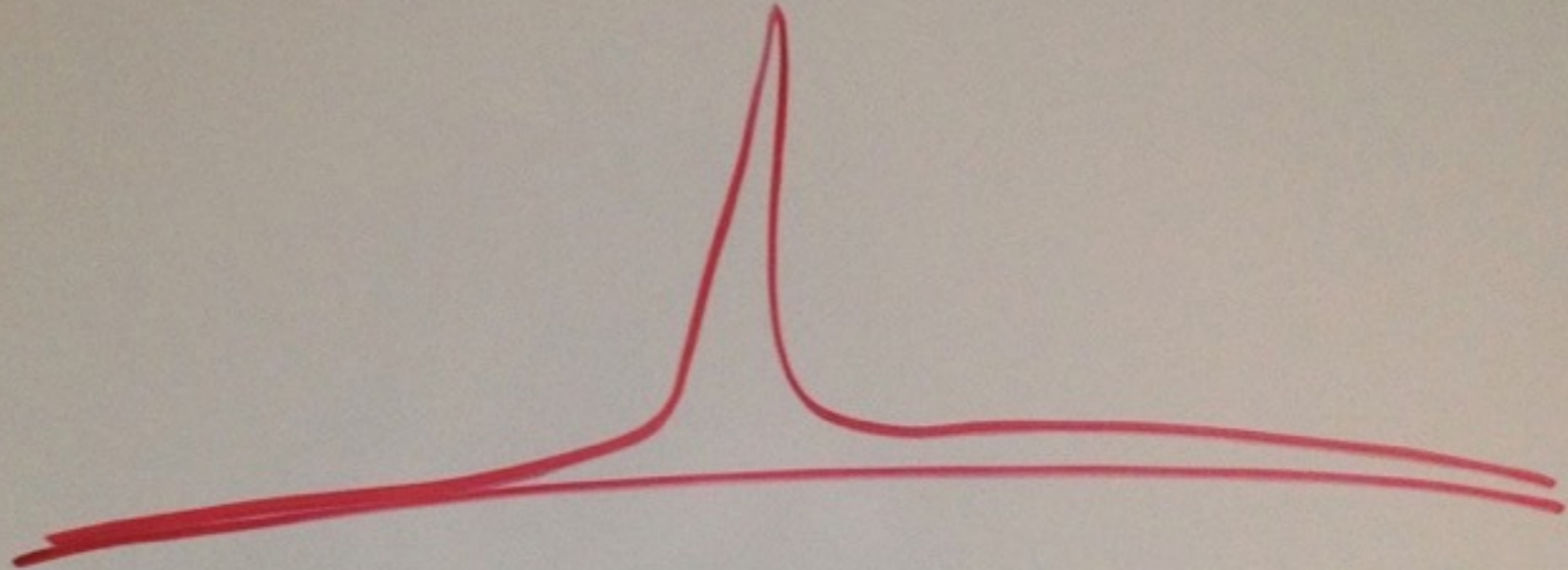
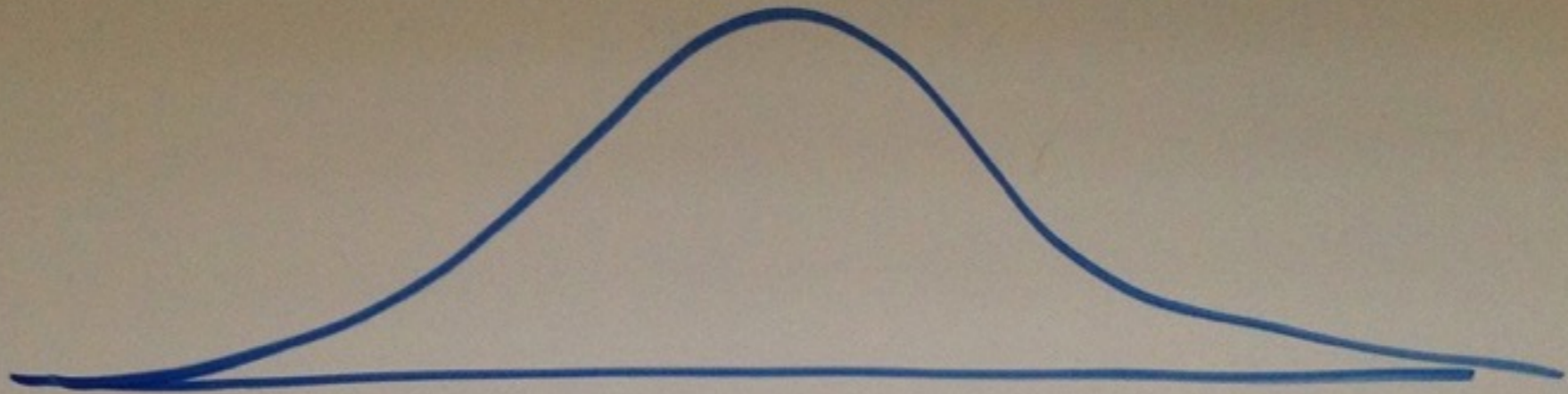
Using Contextual Behavioral Sciences to be a Better Couple Therapist

- Not enough time...
- My journey through couple therapy
- Andrew Christensen: the man, the myth, the legend
- CBS
- Watch video and practice
- Debrief and Q&A











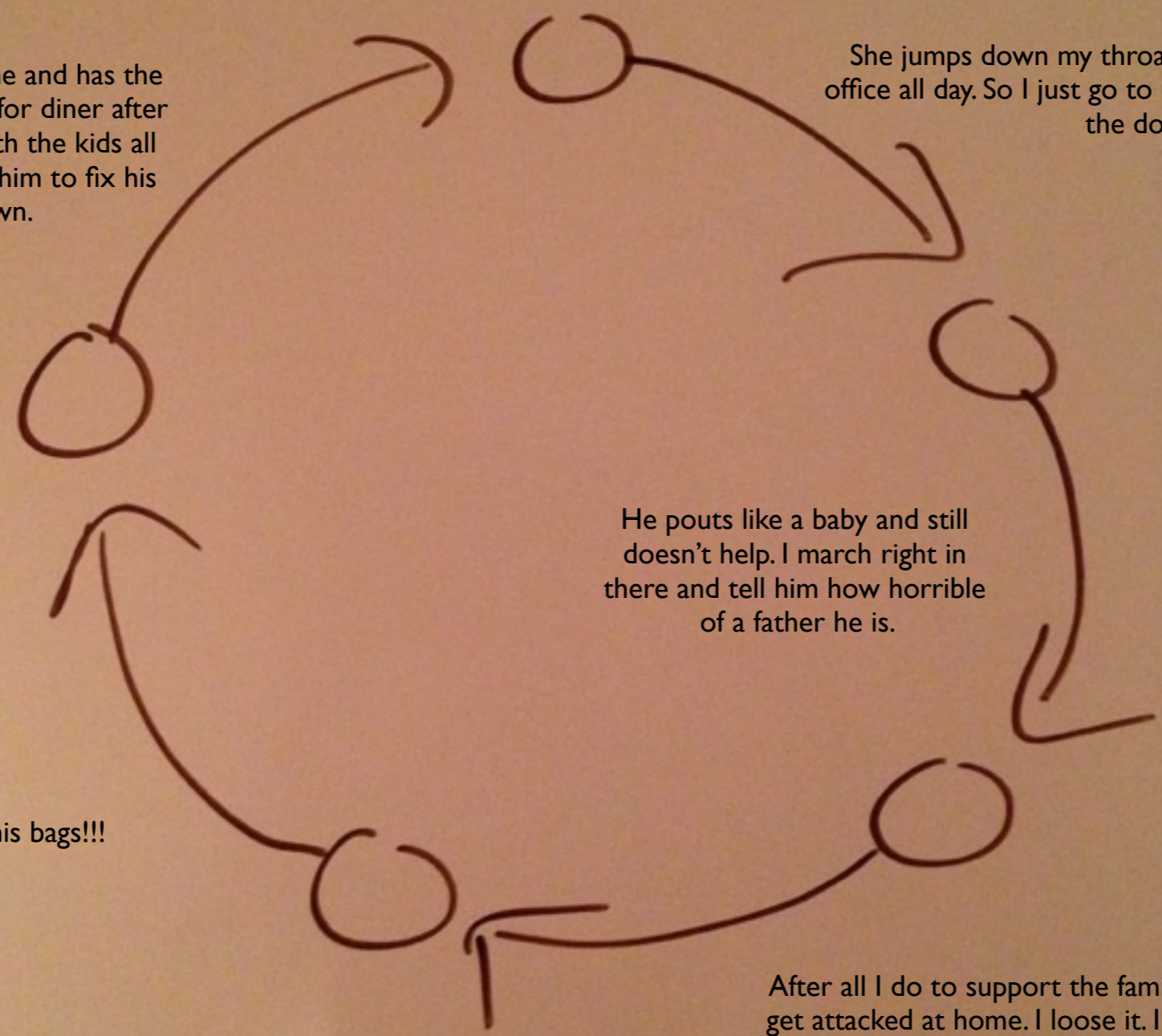
He gets home and has the nerve to ask for diner after I've been with the kids all day. So I tell him to fix his own.

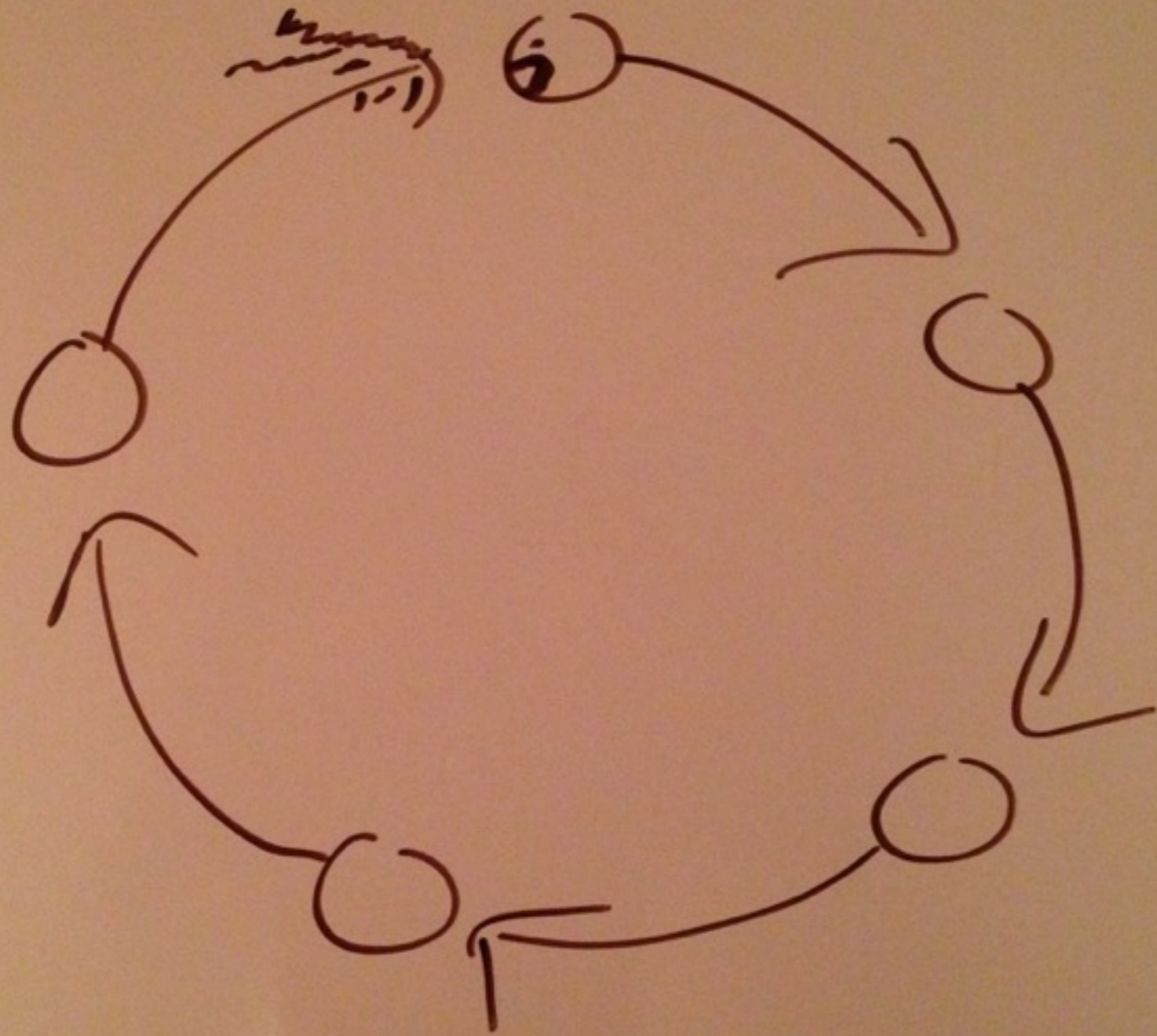
She jumps down my throat after I've been at the office all day. So I just go to my home office and lock the door.

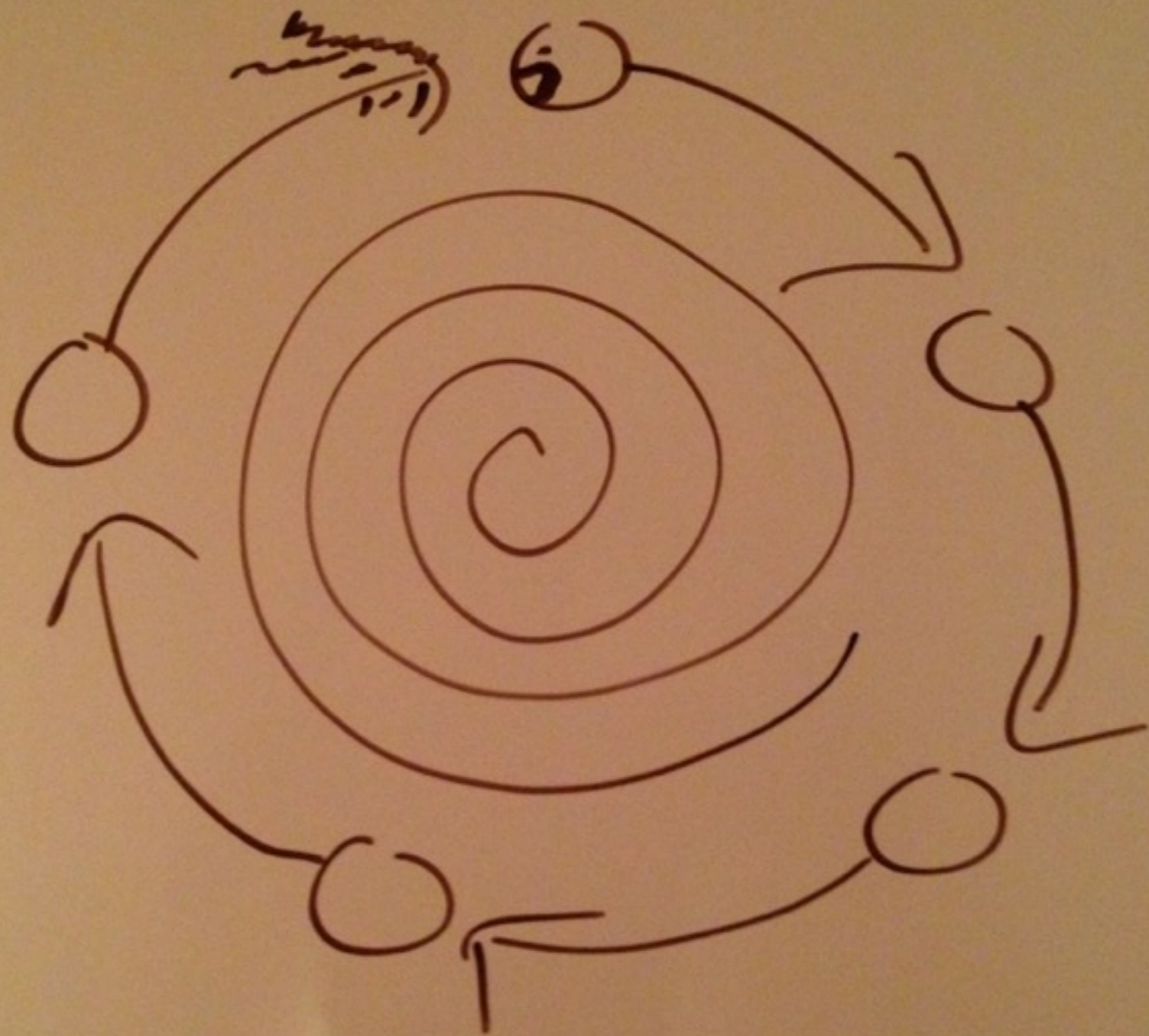
He pouts like a baby and still doesn't help. I march right in there and tell him how horrible of a father he is.

I tell him to pack his bags!!!

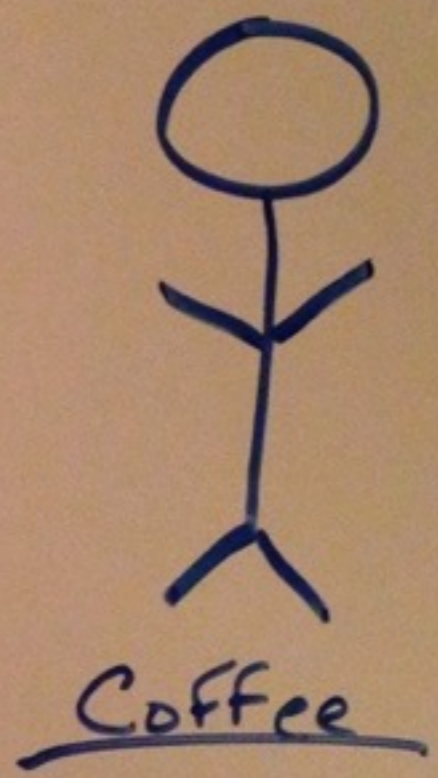
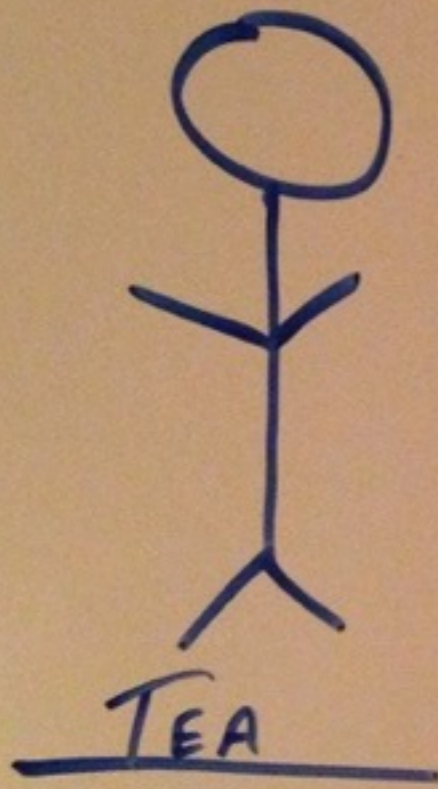
After all I do to support the family I get attacked at home. I loose it. I tell her if she can't get it straight I'm leaving

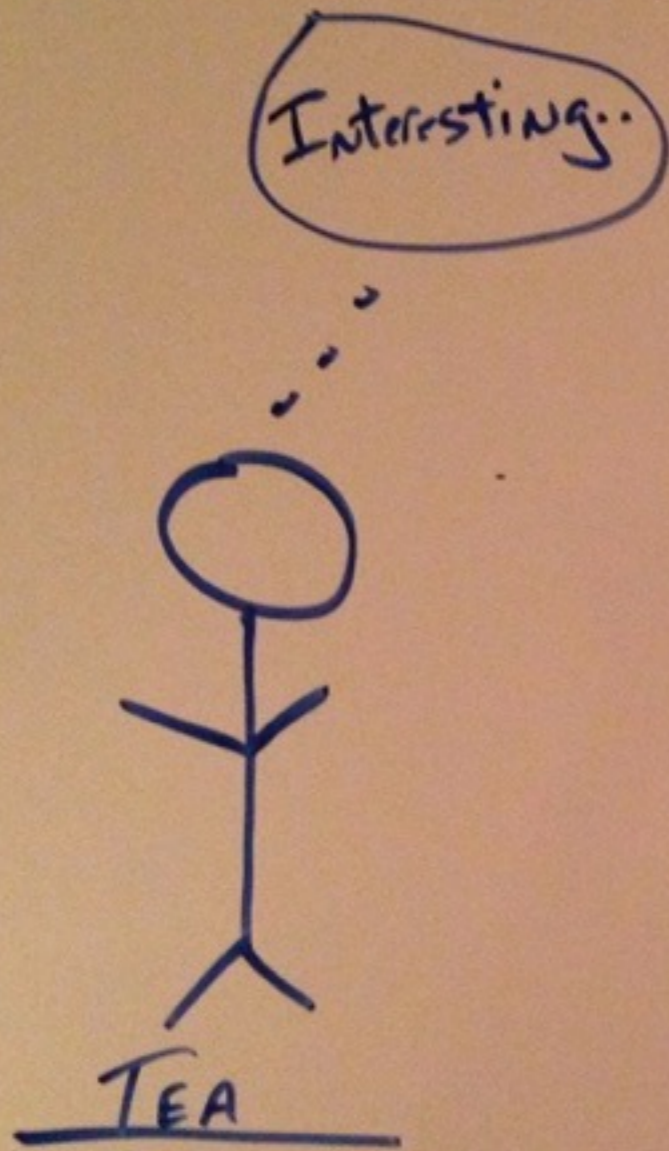












Interesting..



TEA
EASY GOING
Laid back
Spontaneous

FUN!



Coffee
Stable
Gets things DONE
Likes to PLAN

Interesting..



TEA
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Coffee
Stable
Gets things DONE
Likes to PLAN

Doesn't know me
I don't like change



TEA
EASY GOING
Laid back
Spontaneous



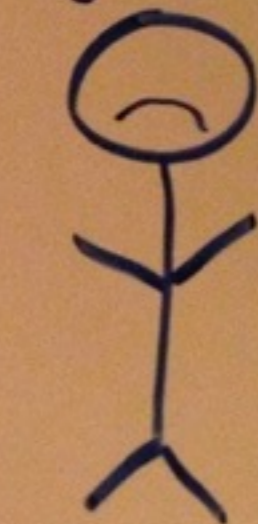
Coffee
Stable
Gets things DONE
Likes to PLAN

She's never happy
I can't do anything right



TEA
EASY GOING
Laid back
Spontaneous

Doesn't know me
I don't like change



Coffee
Stable
Gets things done
Likes to PLAN

She's never happy
I CAN'T do anything right

Doesn't know me
I don't like change



No intimacy

No more gifts

- TEA
- EASY GOING
- Laid back
- Spontaneous

- Coffee
- Stable
- Gets things DONE
- Likes to PLAN

She's never happy
I can't do anything right



TEA
EASY GOING
Laid back
Spontaneous

No more gifts
No gestures
NAME calling

Doesn't know me
I don't like change



Coffee
Stable
Gets things done
Likes to PLAN

No intimacy
Shuts Down
No CMC

She's never happy
I can't do anything right

Doesn't know me
I don't like change



No more gifts
No gestures
NAME CALLING

No intimacy
Shuts Down
No CMCN

TEA
EASY GOING
Laid back
Spontaneous

LAZY
Irresponsible
Unthoughtful

Controlled
Boring
Bitchy

Coffee
Stable
Gets things DONE
Likes to PLAN

She's never happy
I can't do anything right
I'll never be good enough

Doesn't know me
I don't like change
Doesn't love me right
I'm not good enough



No intimacy
Shuts Down
No CMCN



No more gifts
No gestures
Name calling

TEA

Coffee

EASY GOING

LAZY

Contradict

STABLE

Laid back

Irresponsible

Boring

Gets things DONE

Spontaneous

Unthoughtful

Bitchy

Likes to PLAN

She's never happy
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TEA

EASY GOING

Laid back

Spontaneous

No more gifts

No gestures

NAME CALLING

LAZY

Irresponsible

Unthoughtful

No intimacy

Shuts Down

No CMC

Contradict

Boring

Bitchy

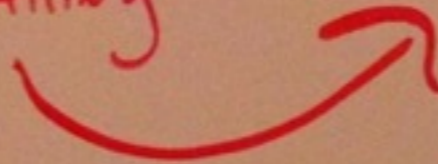
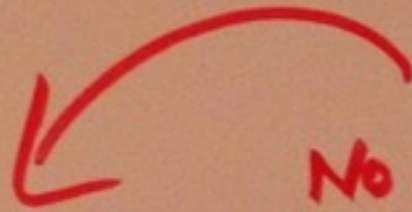


Coffee

Stable

Gets things done

Likes to PLAN



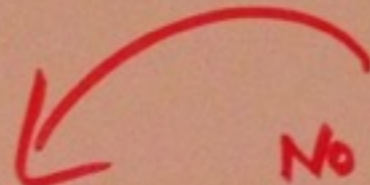
Acceptance

She's never happy
I can't do anything right
I'll never be good enough

Defusion

Doesn't know me
I don't like change
Doesn't love me right
I'm not good enough

Acceptance



No intimacy

Shuts Down

No CMC

No more gifts

No gestures

Name calling

Unkind Action



Coffee

Stable

Gets things done

Likes to plan

Acceptance



TEA

Easy going

Laid back

Spontaneous

Acceptance

Lazy

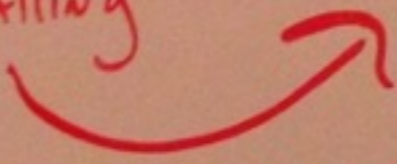
Irresponsible

Unthoughtful

Contradict

Boring

Bitchy



☆ She's never happy
 ☆ I can't do anything right
 I'll never be good enough
 + Values ♡ ♡

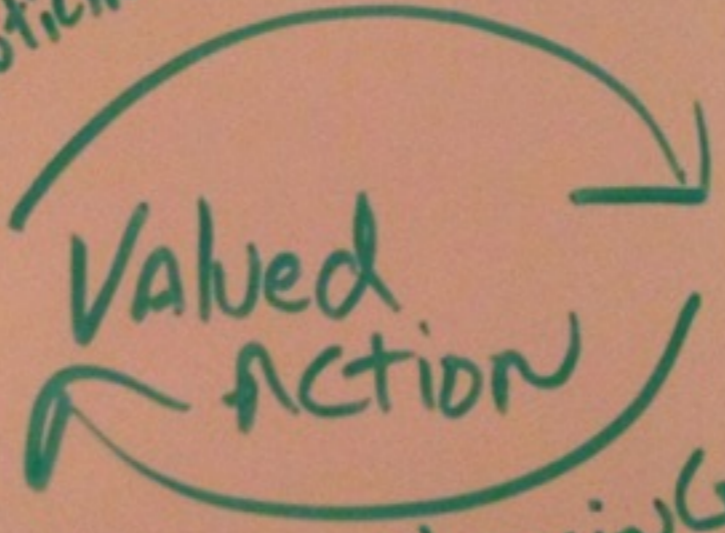
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
 + Doesn't know me
 I don't like change
 Doesn't love me right
 I'm not good enough
 + Values ♡ ☆

Noticing



TEA
EASY GOING
Laid back
Spontaneous

Appreciation



Choosing



Coffee
Stable
Get things DONE
Likes to PLAN

Gratitude

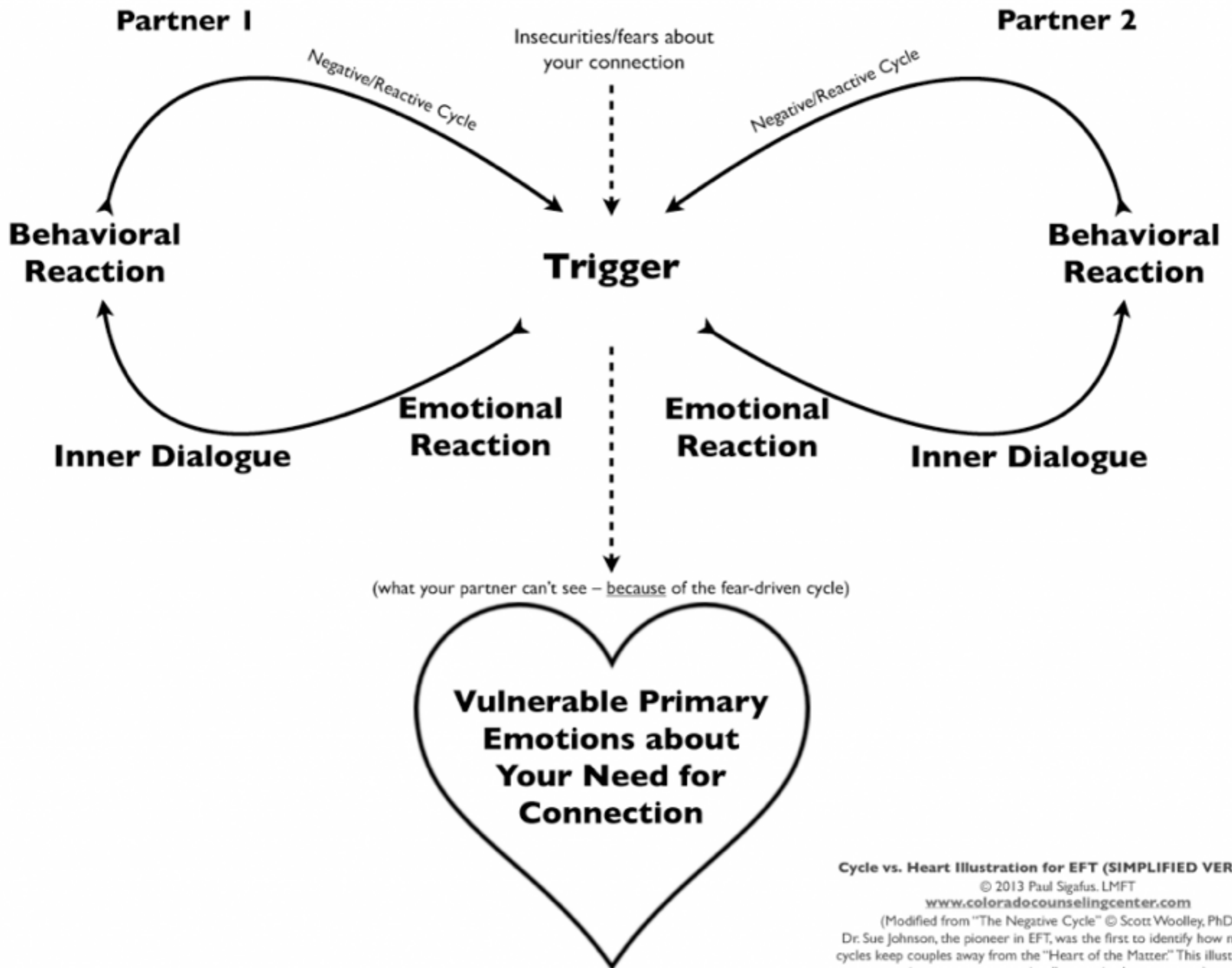




The Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) Tango

5 Essential Moves of the EFT Dance

with Dr. Sue Johnson



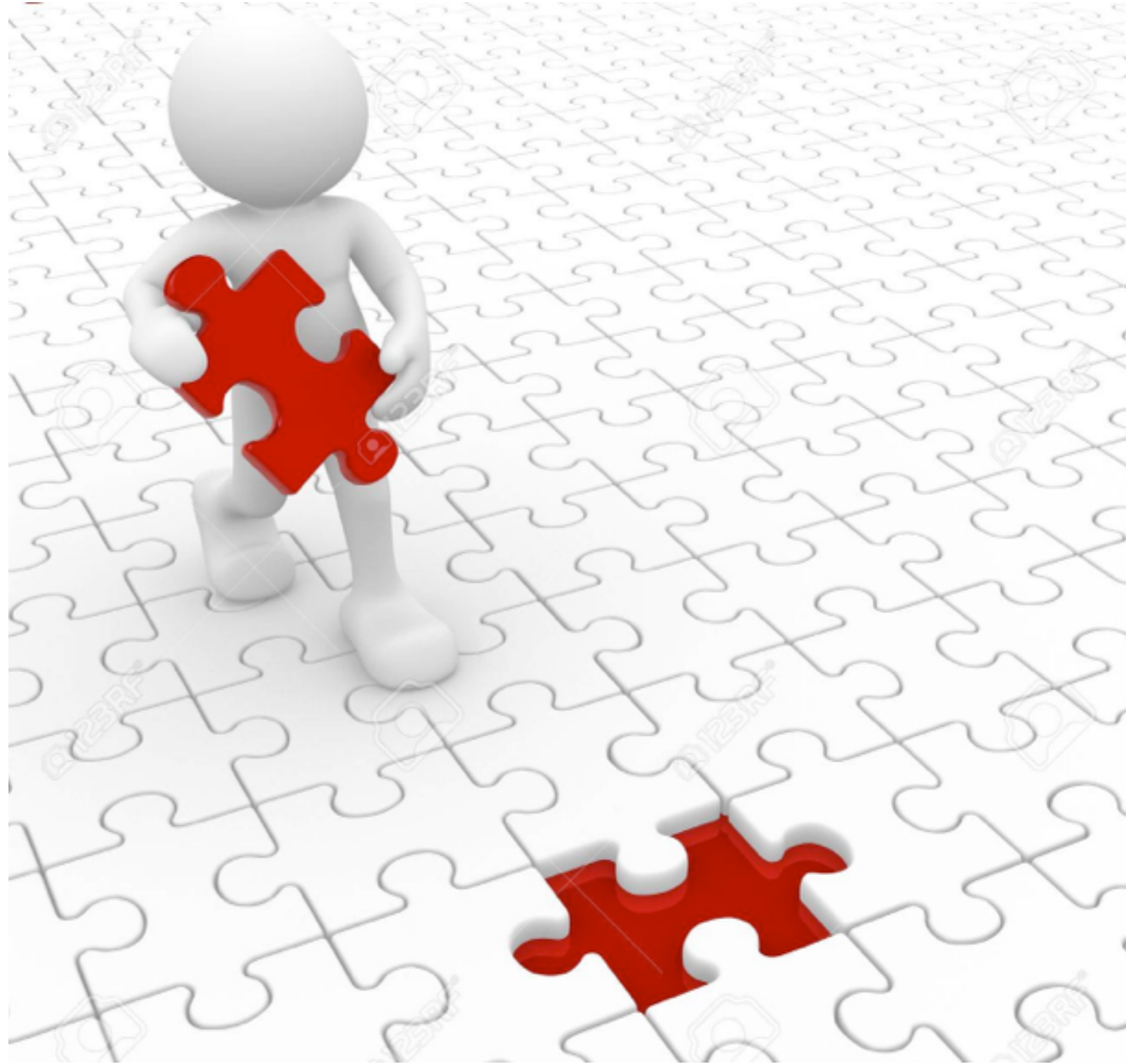
Cycle vs. Heart Illustration for EFT (SIMPLIFIED VERSION)

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www.coloradocounselingcenter.com

(Modified from "The Negative Cycle" © Scott Woolley, PhD.

Dr. Sue Johnson, the pioneer in EFT, was the first to identify how negative cycles keep couples away from the "Heart of the Matter." This illustration is just my attempt to visually organize her concepts.)





Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy

- DEEP Analysis of characteristics each partner brings to the interaction and the context in which that interaction occurs
- Understands how both are caught in a vicious cycle
- Resolved by altering triggering actions or inactions and sensitive reactions
- Empathetic Joining and Unified Detachment
- Contingency based processes vs. rule governed behavior as it occurs in session



A Unified Protocol for Couple Therapy (2010)

- Provide a contextual, dyadic, objective conceptualization of problems
- Modify emotion driven, dysfunctional, and destructive interactional behavior
- Elicit avoided, emotion-based private behavior
- Foster productive communication
- Emphasize strengths and encourage positive behaviors

Provide a contextual, dyadic, objective conceptualization of problems

- Fundamental attribution error
- Removes blame from individual partners to interactional dynamics
- TBCT, CBCT, IBCT do this in feedback session. EFT refers to the “negative interaction cycle”

Modify emotion driven, dysfunctional, and destructive interactional behavior

- Physical abuse, sexual coercion (extreme)
- Verbal abuse, yelling, and interrupting
- TBCT and CBCT use rules
- EFT and IBCT speak directly to therapist
- Time outs, freedom of movement, etc.

Elicit avoided, emotion-based private behavior

- Prevents partners from experiencing shared emotional closeness and taking joint corrective actions
- Vulnerable emotional reaction in themselves and avoid revealing this to their partners and often reveal more accessible emotions (anger, annoyance, irritation, etc.)
- IBCT - empathetic joining, EFT - access unacknowledged emotions underlying each partner's position in the cycle, CBCT uses questions, reflections, and interpretations to draw out primary emotions
- CBS - This is our jam, right?!

Foster productive communication

- Addresses expression and listening skills
- TBCT and CBCT use direct training in communication skills (I-statements, paraphrasing, etc.)
- IBCT shapes better cmcn indirectly as well as directly
- Change the speaker's message into one that is fuller, richer, and more emotionally revealing
- Self-focused vs. communication ABOUT the partner

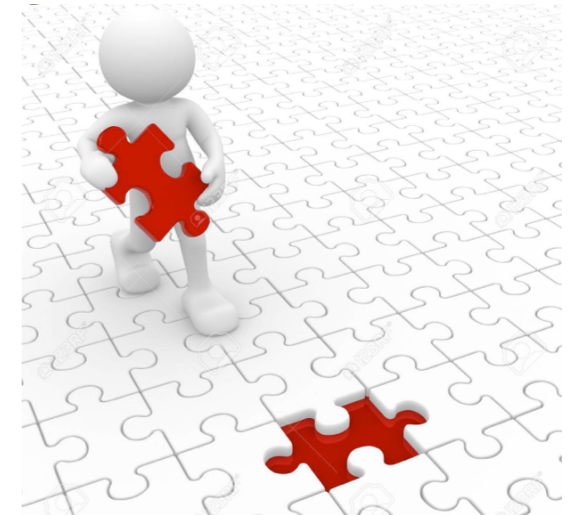
Emphasize strengths and encourage positive behaviors

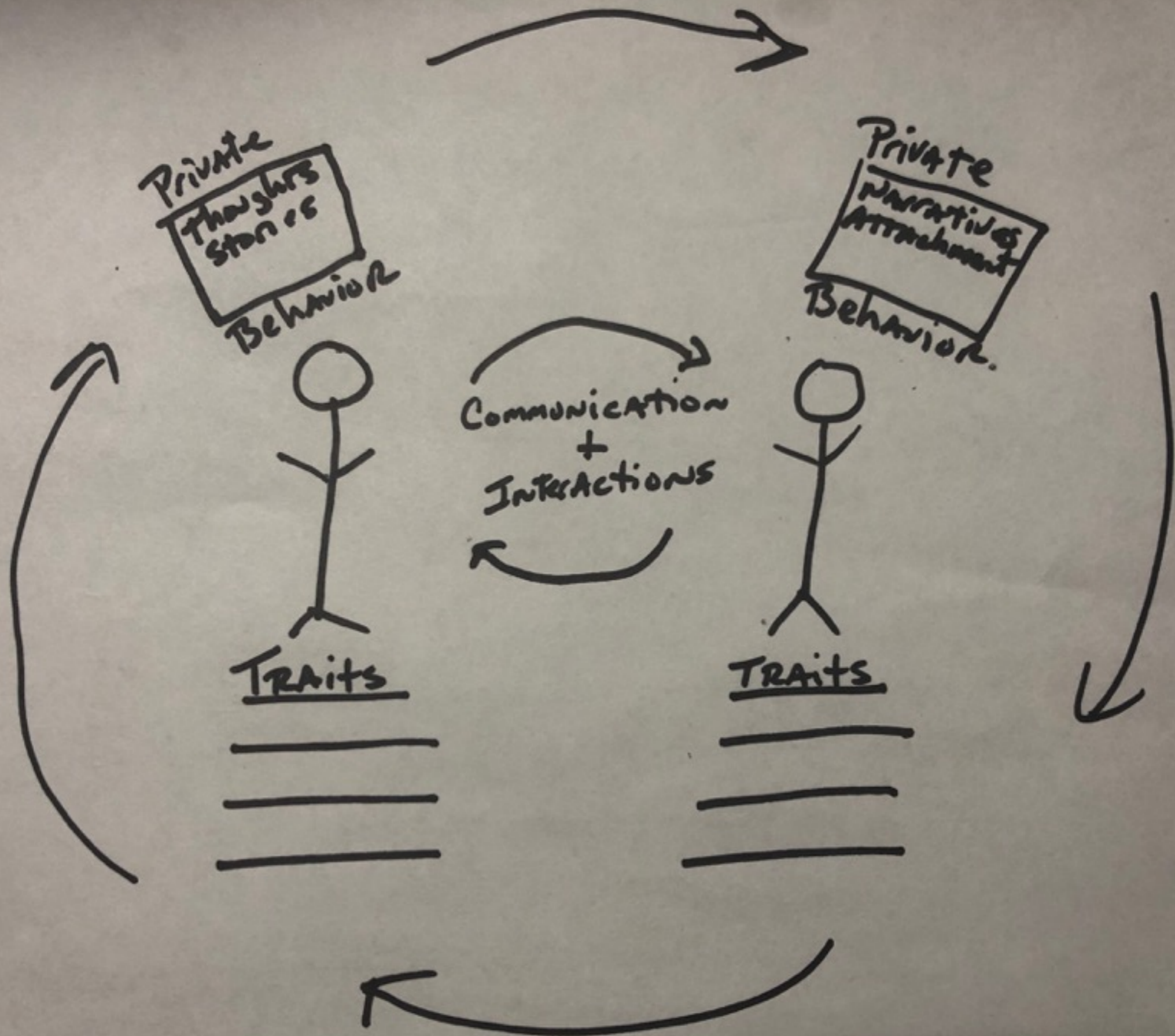
- TBCT, CBCT, IBCT all assess for strengths in initial assessment. EFT asks for historical data such as what first attracted them to each other
- Some make deliberate attempts to prescribe positive behavior
- IBCT encourages positive behavior in less direct ways (i.e., when the couple successfully combats the cycle)
- IBCT and EFT try to create positive experiences of closeness and bonding by eliciting “softer more vulnerable” messages which often lead to a softer response by the other

Contextual Behavioral Sciences

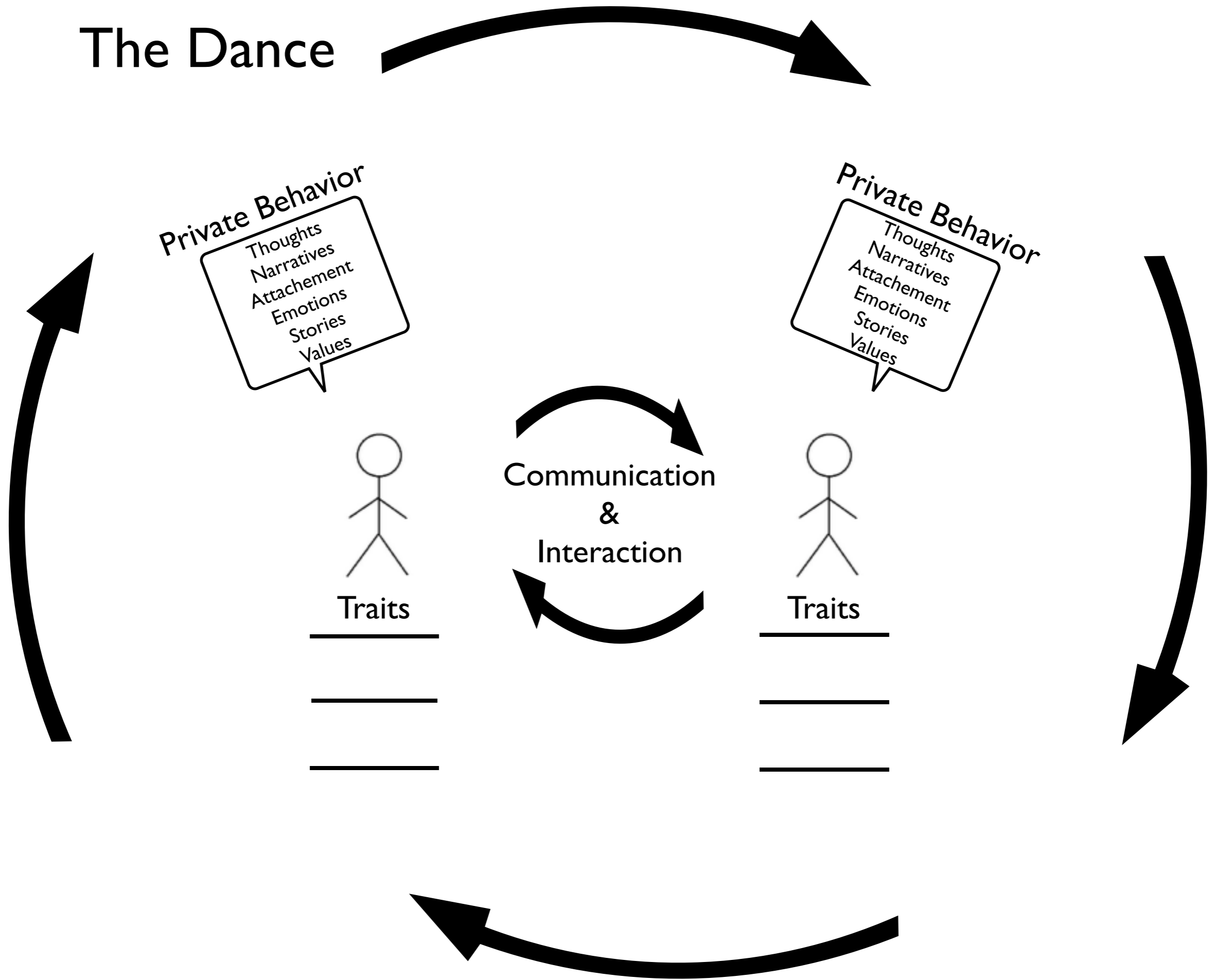


- Functional analysis of behavior
- Language
- Rigid or Flexible responding
- Contingency based processes in the room





The Dance



Private behavior

- bring them in the room, do something different with them
- Expose EACH partner to them (contact what lies under harsher stories / emotions. Share them)
- soften them (Me focused instead of You focused)
- Looks different in couples work (Milk, milk, milk might not be appropriate)

Traits of self and other

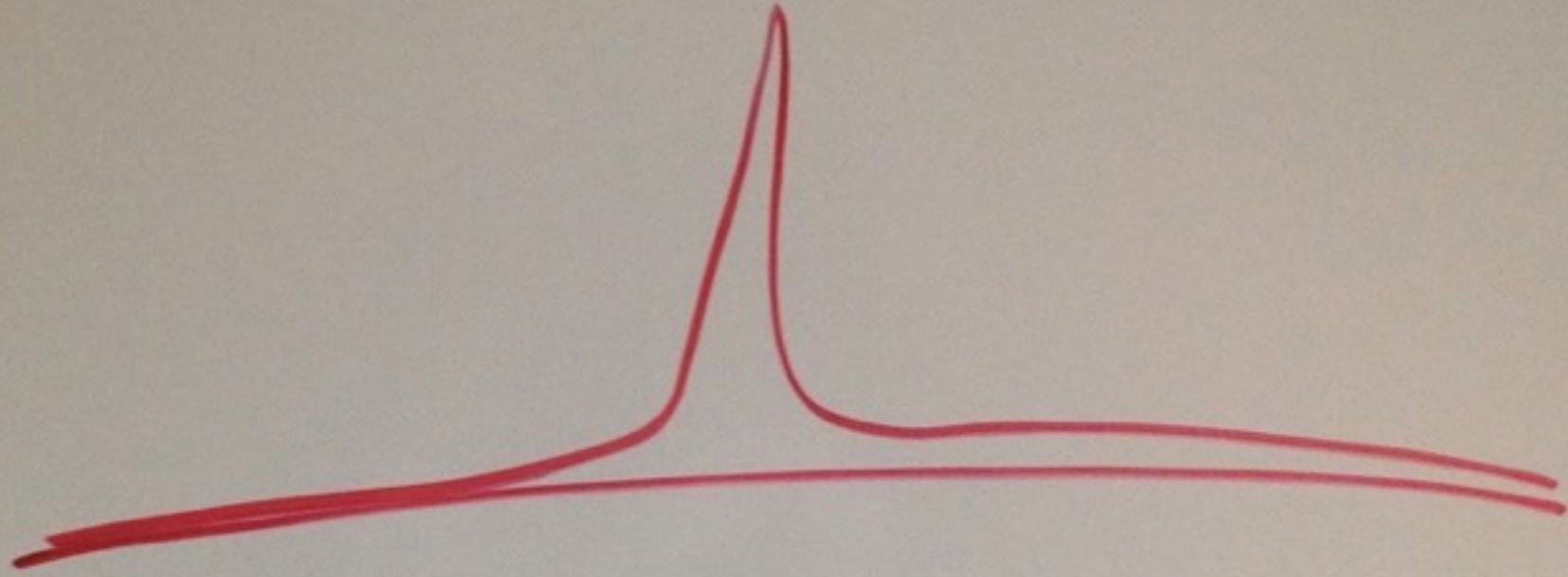
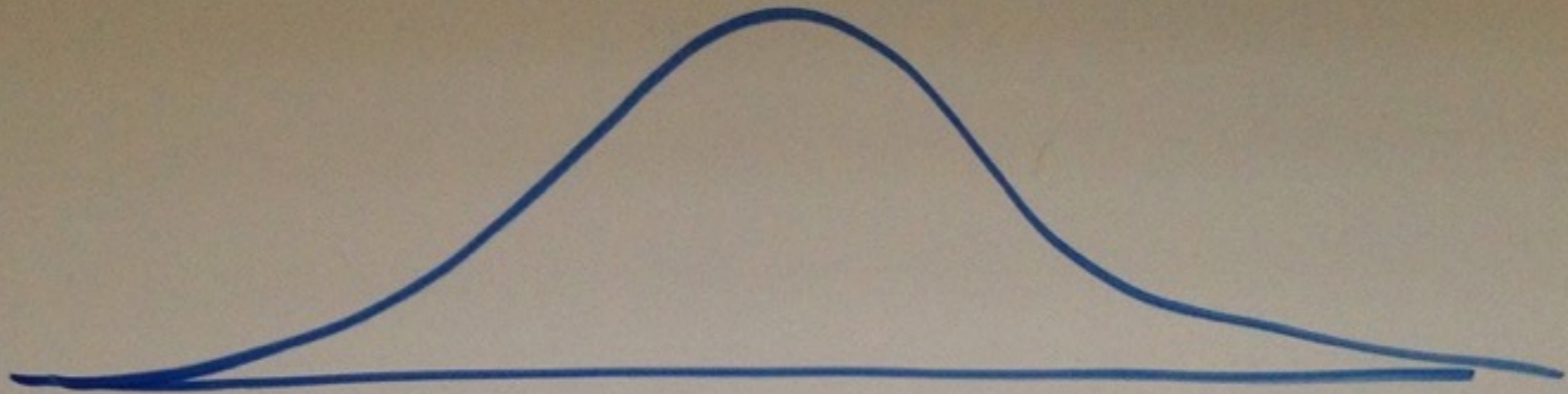
- Bring them into the room and do something different with with them
- Looking for exceptions to aversive reaction (gratitude, remember what attracted you)
- Self / other as context vs. content (through time vs. only against you)
- Predictability vs. Reactivity ($S=E \Delta R$)
- Name tags, etc.

Contextual, dyadic, objective conceptualization of problems (the dance)

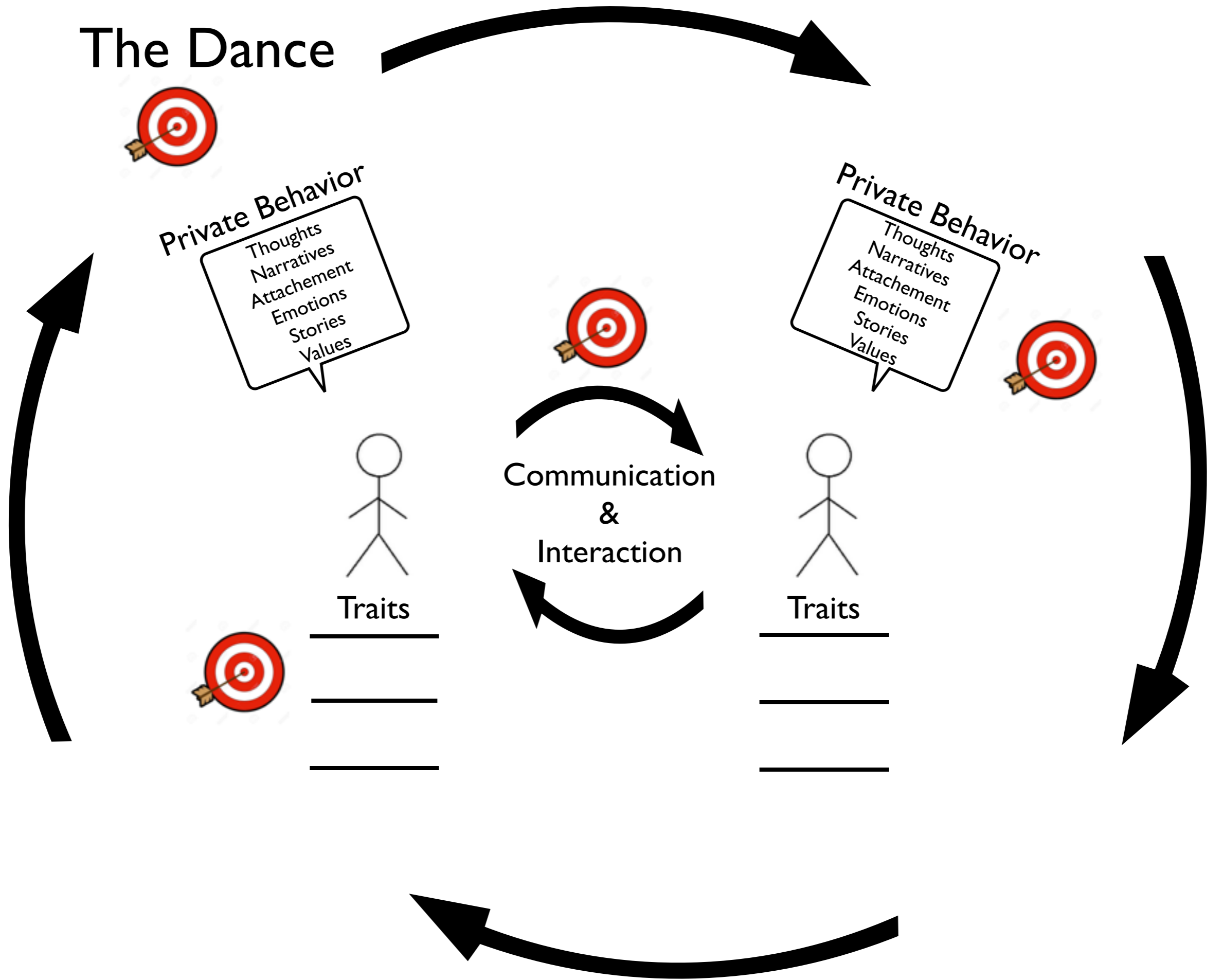
- Bring it into the room and do something different with it
- Get them to notice it, observe it, name it, etc.
- Predict it instead of reacting to it
- Reinforce when they do something different

Communication and interactions

- Bring it in the room and do something different with it
- Analyze it, then stop it, teach them to stop it
- Me vs You (softening)
- Modeling empathy, listening, perspective taking, acceptance, etc. by the therapist

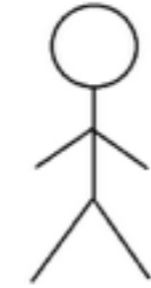


The Dance



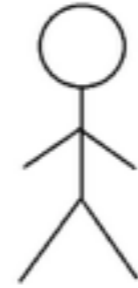
Private Behavior

- Thoughts
- Narratives
- Attachement
- Emotions
- Stories
- Values



Traits

Communication
&
Interaction



Traits

Private Behavior

- Thoughts
- Narratives
- Attachement
- Emotions
- Stories
- Values



When my partner questions something I'm doing

I think he thinks I'm stupid

I feel like a child

I withdraw

When my partner withdraws

I feel abandoned

I call her names

- **When my partner questions something I'm doing**

I ask for clarification / I take a deep breathe / I see myself wanting to do what I always do

my partner no longer ask questions without clarifying that he doesn't mean anything but curiosity before he asks me questions / I just answer him

I think he thinks I'm stupid

I notice I think he thinks I am stupid / I take a deep breathe / I notice what I feel in my body

I feel like a child

I notice what I'm feeling / I recognize this part of the cycle / I share it with my partner in a non confrontational way

I withdraw

I tell my partner I need a time out / I go and wash the dishes / I stay / I answer him

I approach my partner

- **When my partner withdraws**

I give her space / I take a deep breathe / I go and wash the dishes / I go on Facebook to heckle people / I notice my feelings

I feel abandoned

I notice my feelings / I recognize this is part of our cycle / I loudly say that I am having feelings but understand she needs a time out / I give her time / I take a deep breathe / I care for myself / I gently approach her after 20 minutes

I call her names

I breathe / I walk into the kitchen / I ask that we don't let the cycle get us tonight / I do nothing / I ask if she wants to watch our show

Breakout Session

- Watch 5 three minute video clips with minimal therapist intervention
- Break out into groups of 4 to discuss what you saw, how you might intervene (3 minutes. Please come back quickly)
- Return to group to watch the next video
- Break out
- Please make mental notes of anything that stands out as we will all come together at the end to debrief.
- Q&A

Breakout Session

- Were you able to identify targets via this conceptualization (specific examples)
- How would you intervene (specific examples)
- Are there things you do already in your practice which you feel are relevant to this conceptualization?

Resources

- contextualscience.org
- Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy
- coreyporchelpc@gmail.com

