

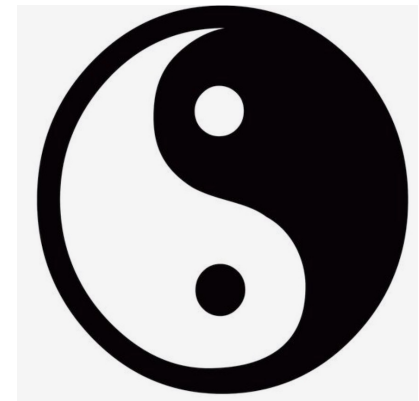


ACBS World Conference  
SAN FRANCISCO  
— June 14-19, 2022 —

LEARNING TO SPEAK RFT

Presented by Phillip Cha, MFT

# LEARNING TO SPEAK RFT



## THE ART & PRACTICE OF RELATIONAL FRAMING FOR CLINICIANS

PRESENTED BY PHILLIP CHA, MFT  
(PRONOUNS: HE/HIM) 2022

# Two Disclosures

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## 1. FINANCIAL

I have not received and will not receive any commercial support related to this presentation or the work presented in this presentation.

## 2. WHEN UNMASKED



Me

# About Phillip Cha, MFT

Born in 한국 (Korea)

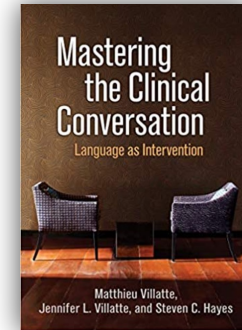


Made in the USA

UCSF University of California, San Francisco

Citywide Case Management

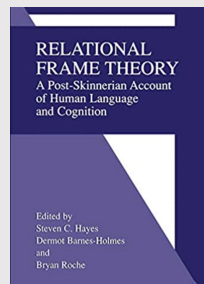
**MCPC** Myanmar  
Clinical  
Psychology  
Consortium





# WHAT IS RFT?

*“Relational framing is relational responding based on arbitrarily applicable relations and arbitrary stimulus functions. The relational responding is subject to mutual entailment, combinatorial mutual entailment and transformation of stimulus functions. The relations and stimulus functions are controlled by contextual cues.”*



What elements might be needed to decipher a symbolic system like the one below?



**KEY ELEMENTS:**

\*context, meaning / function, history, coherence, community, training, reinforcement, symbols, rules, survival, etc.

# Objectives

(1) Be able to identify and understand the nine basic relational frames in a variety of domains in everyday life such as pop culture, politics, and psychology.

(2) Learn how RFT can be utilized to evoke transformation in clinical contexts

(3) Be able to improvise interventions “on the fly” using at least three relationally-framed questions in clinical contexts

(4) Be inspired to dig deeper

# Two Approaches to Learning a Language (including RFT)

STUDY!!!

IMMERSE!!!





# **TAO OF LANGUAGING**

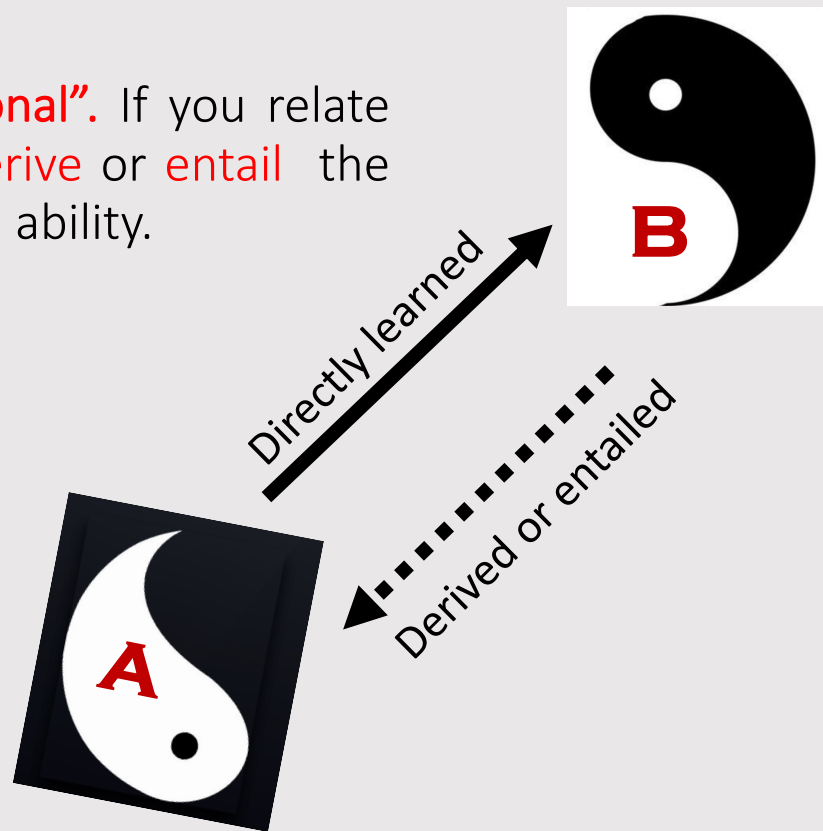
## (3 Properties of RFT)

# 1. Mutual Entailment

If  $A=B$ , then  $B=A$

1. At its basic level human language involves **relating two things** in a particular way

2. Relating is "**bidirectional**". If you relate in one direction, you **derive** or **entail** the other; a uniquely human ability.



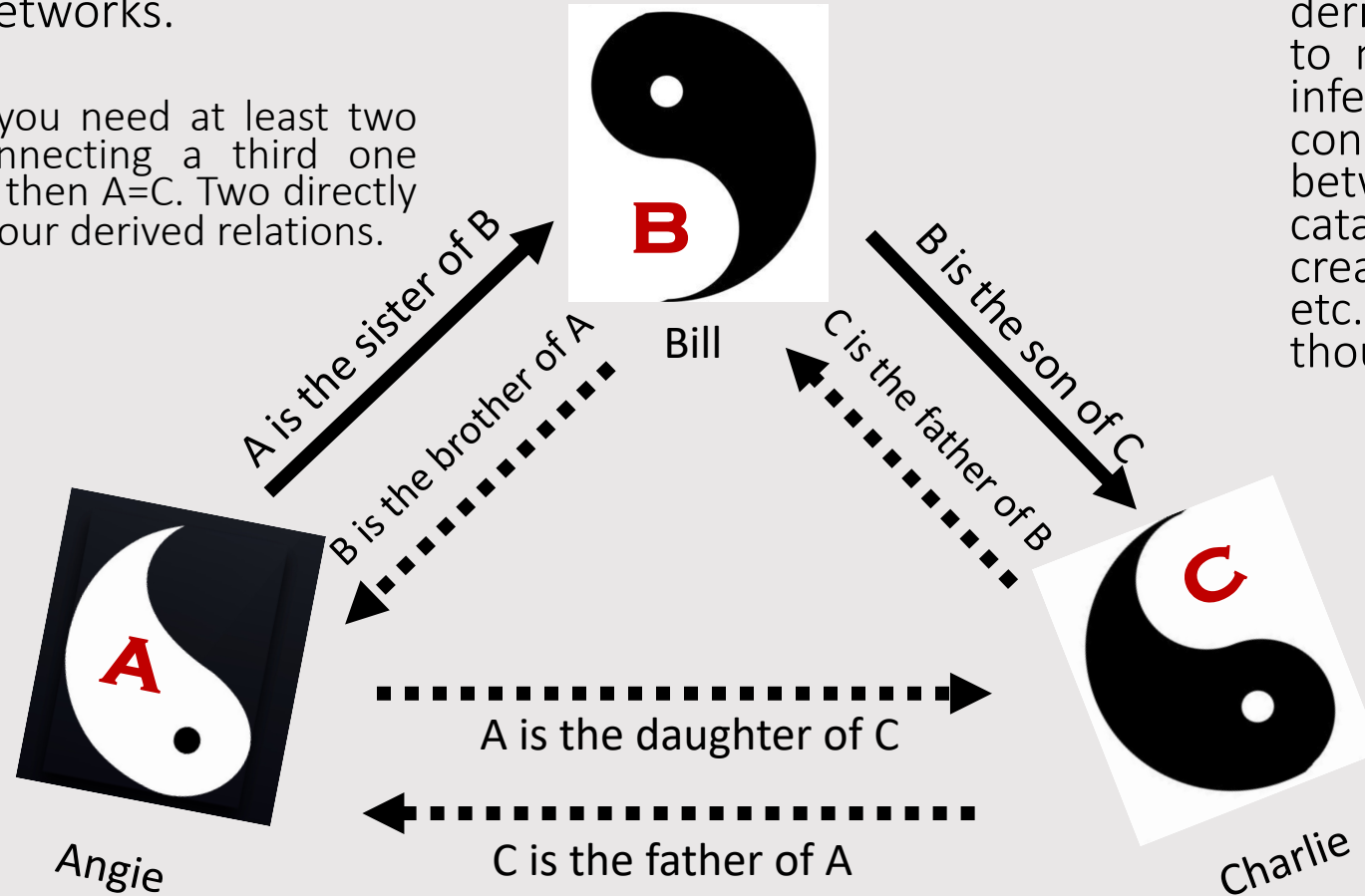
Take Away:  
bidirectionality enables people to learn something they have not directly experienced.

# 2. Combinatorial Mutual Entailment

If  $A=B$  and  $B=C$ , then  $A=C$

1. Combinatorial Ent. means that relations combine into bigger networks.

2. To create a network, you need at least two established relations connecting a third one such that if  $A=B$  and  $B=C$ , then  $A=C$ . Two directly learned relations lead to four derived relations.



**STICKY**  
Take Away: These derivations enable people to make deductions, inferences, jump to conclusions, read between the lines, catastrophize, and make creative assumptions, etc. Thoughts...beget thoughts.

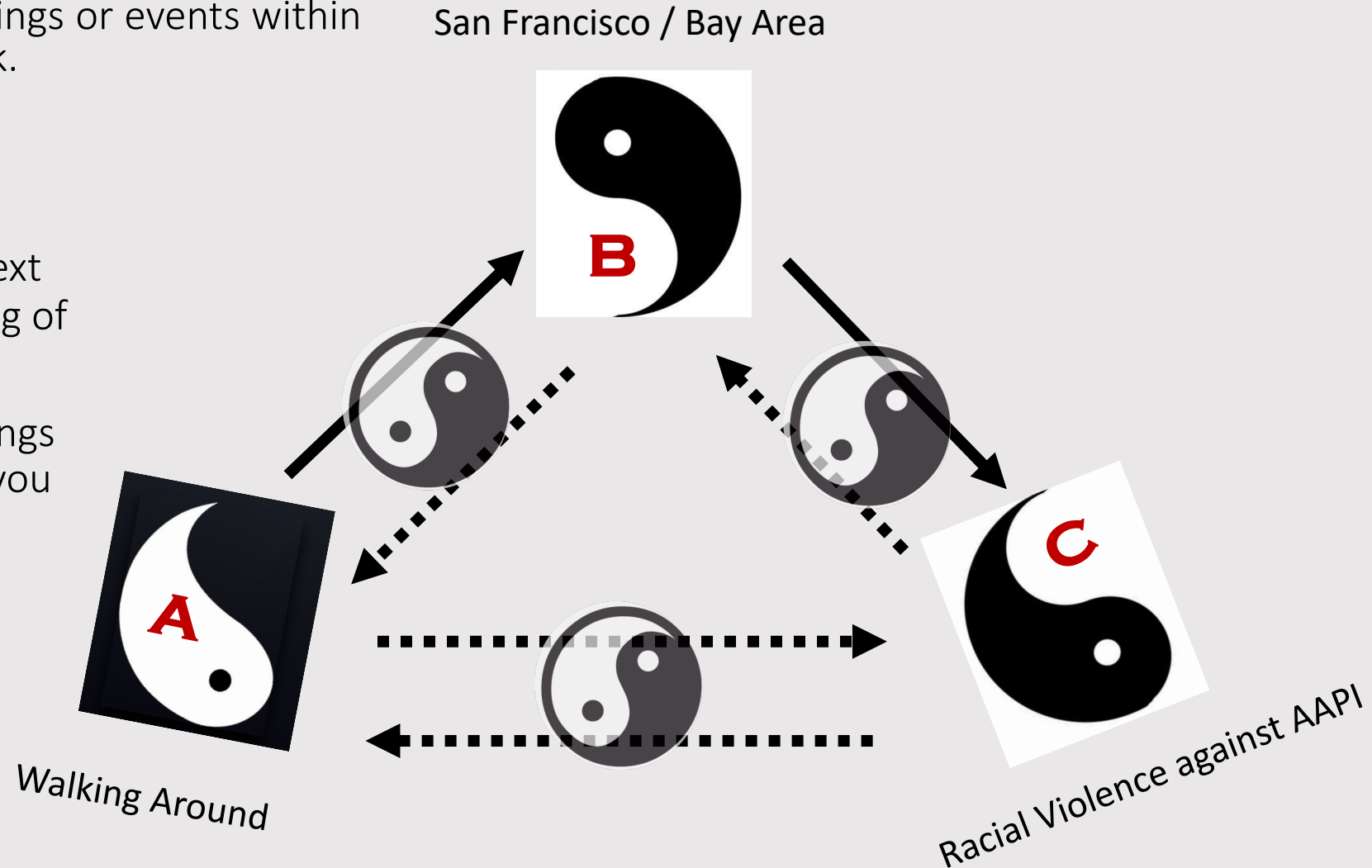
# 3. Transformation of Stimulus Functions (the meanings of A,B,C can change)

1. These relations **transform** the function or meaning of the things or events within the symbolic network.

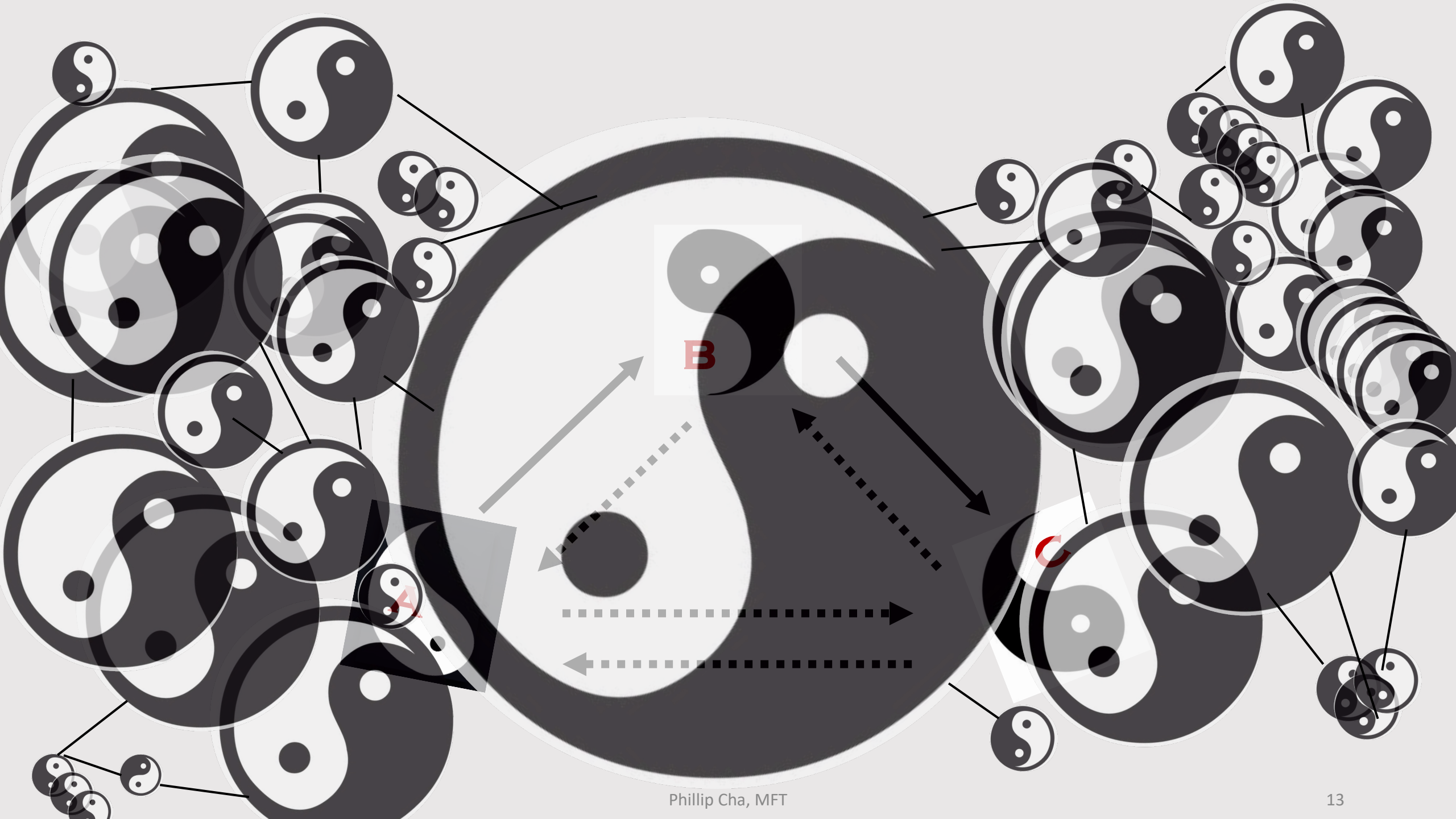
## Take Away:

--changing the context changes the meaning of things or events

--how you frame things can transform how you look at them







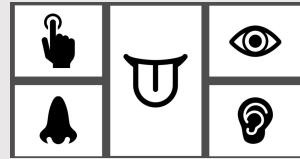
## RFT: Simply Put

Humans have the ability, through language, to **arbitrarily derive meaning** from two or more things or events that are not intrinsically related to each other.

For non-human animals, relational learning is based on physical **associations** whereas humans are capable of building vast **symbolic networks** based on arbitrary links or relations.

# TWO TYPES OF RELATIONAL RESPONDING

**Non-Arbitrary** or Intrinsic Relations

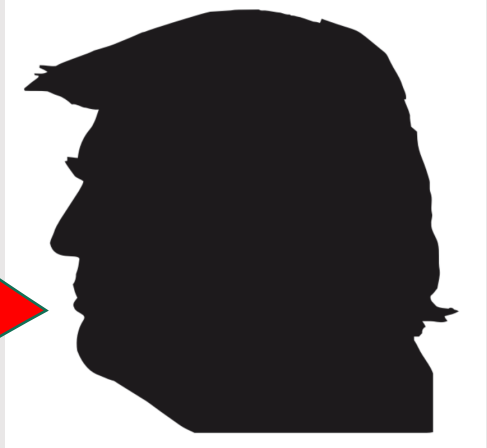
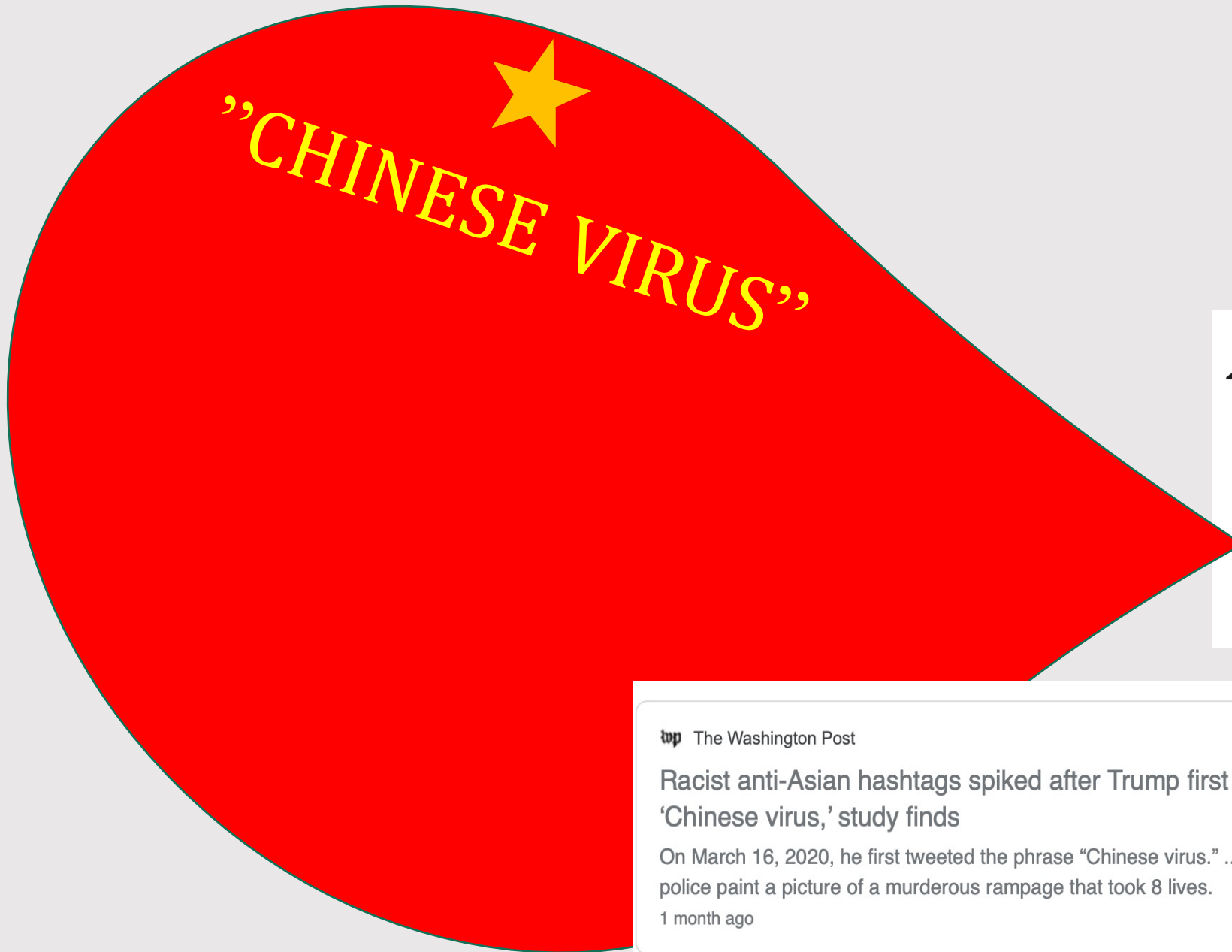


**Arbitrary** or Symbolic Relations



# **AN ILLUSTRATION FROM U.S. POLITICS**






**wp** The Washington Post

**Racist anti-Asian hashtags spiked after Trump first tweeted 'Chinese virus,' study finds**

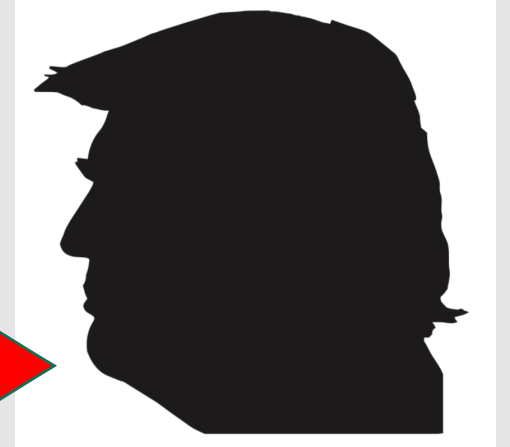
On March 16, 2020, he first tweeted the phrase "Chinese virus." ... Witnesses, police paint a picture of a murderous rampage that took 8 lives.

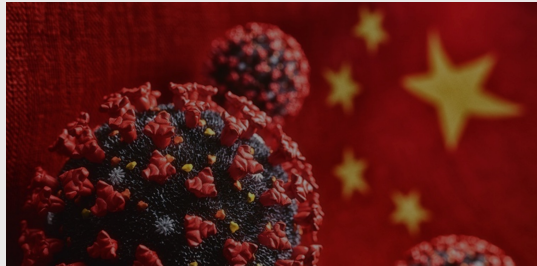
1 month ago



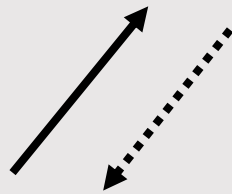
He never **explicitly** said this...

“Asian Americans are solely responsible for spreading COVID19. Those people are like the virus.”

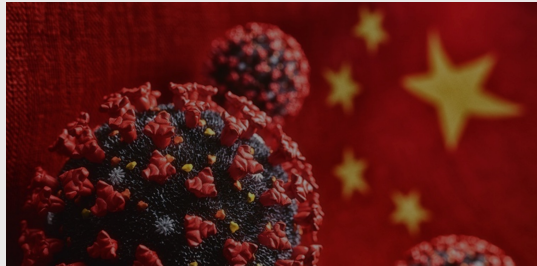




“CHINESE VIRUS”



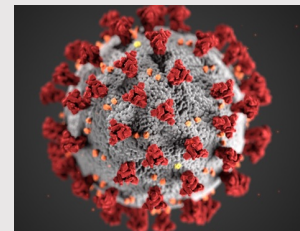
CHINA



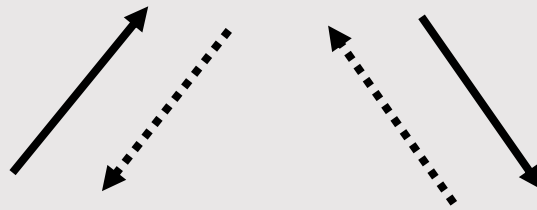
“CHINESE VIRUS”



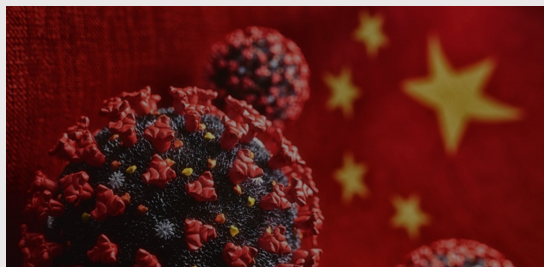
CHINA



COVID 19





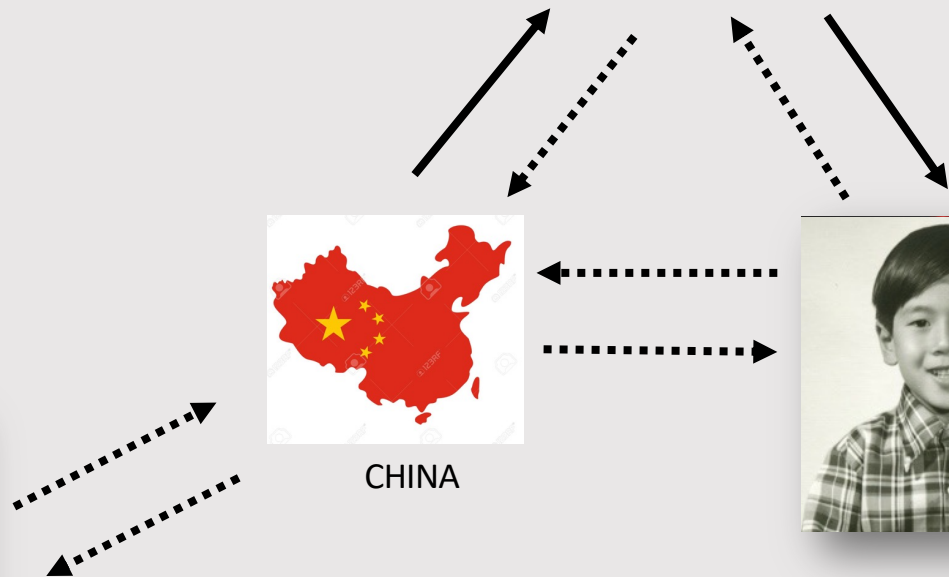


“CHINESE VIRUS”

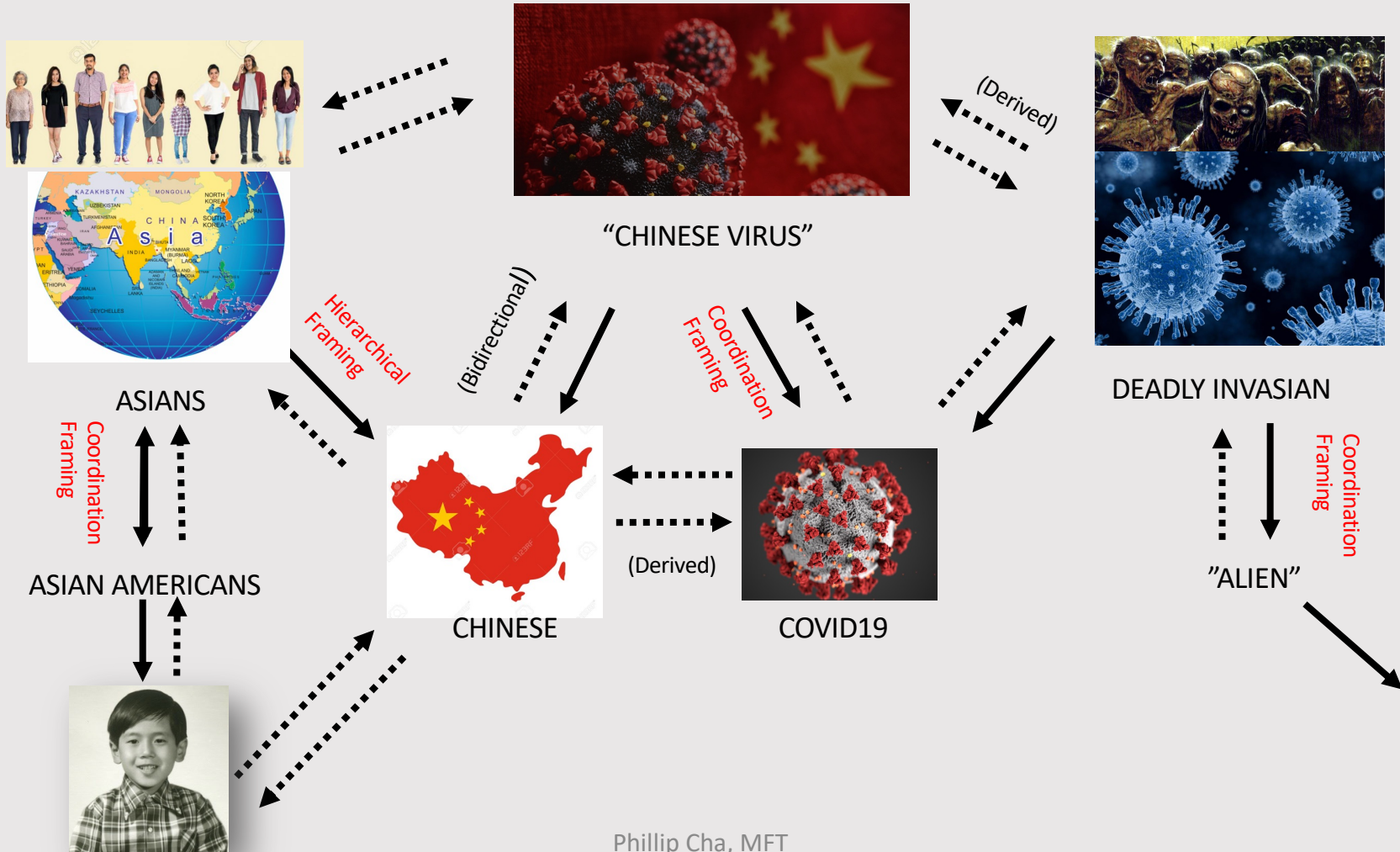
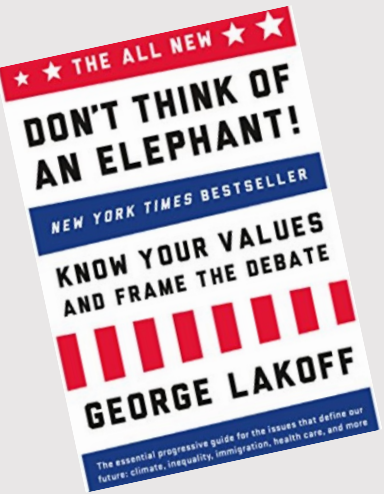
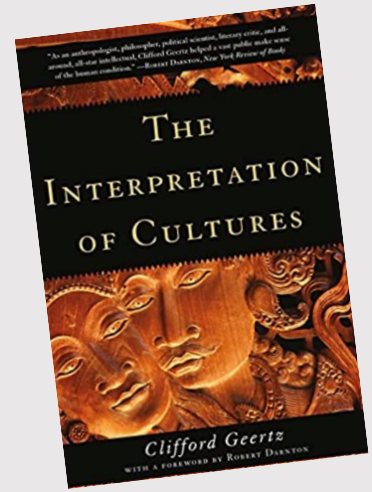
Through derived relations, I've turned into a virus



CHINA



# A Possible (RFT) Mapping of Asian Hate?

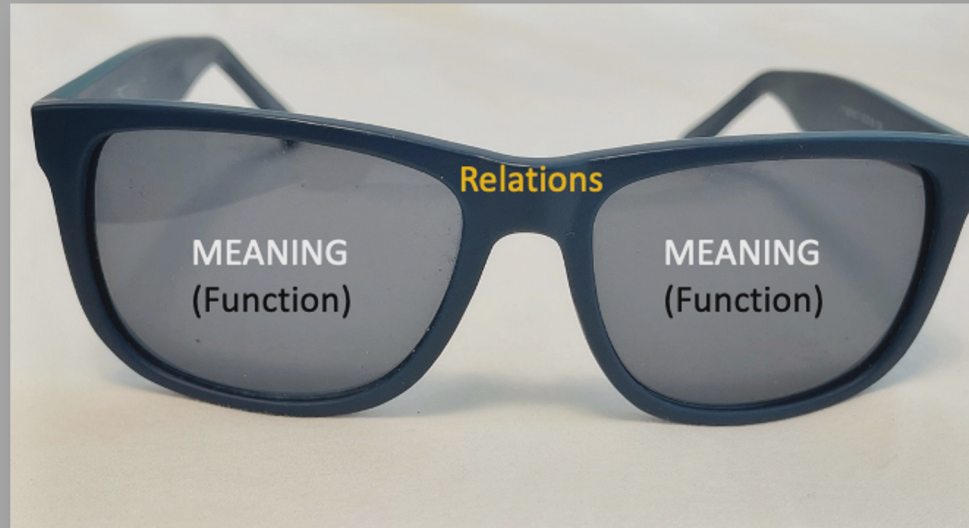


# CLINICAL RFT CHEAT SHEET

	DEFINITION	CONTEXTUAL CUES	EVERYDAY EXAMPLES	KEY CLINICAL FUNCTIONS	CLINICAL QUESTION(S)
<b>COORDINATION Framing</b>	Two or more things or events coming together via equivalence, similarity, or compatibility.	“similar to” “am/is” “like”, and”	“I <b>am</b> a failure”	Observing Describing Tracking ABC’s	“ <b>Describe</b> your feelings”
<b>DISTINCTION Framing</b>	Two or more things or events as different from each other, often along a dimension.	“is not” “different”	“I am <b>not</b> good enough”	Differentiating Clarifying Tracking ABC’s	“When do you <b>not</b> feel this way?”
<b>OPPOSITION Framing</b>	Establishes that two or more events are opposed to each other, often along a dimension	“instead of...” “opposite of”	“Unlike her <b>beautiful</b> dog, my dog is <b>ugly</b> .”	Observing Describing Tracking w/ precision	“What would happen if you did the <b>opposite of</b> what your thoughts are telling you?”
<b>COMPARATIVE Framing</b>	Establishes that an event is higher or lower than another or more events along a given dimension	“higher/lower” “less/more than” “worse/better”	“I am feeling <b>less</b> anxious now <b>compared to</b> yesterday”	Tracking ABC’s Measuring Precision	“Do you feel <b>more or less</b> anxious right now?”
<b>CONDITIONAL Framing</b>	Establishes that an event conditions another or more events	“If...then...” “Given this...”	“ <b>If</b> I give a speech in public, <b>then</b> I will die”	Tracking ABC’s Validation Assess effectiveness	“ <b>If</b> you practice, <b>then</b> you can improve”
<b>TEMPORAL Framing</b>	Establishes a relation of time between things or events	“Past” “Present” “Future” “When”	“ <b>Last night</b> I felt awful”	Tracking ABC’s Exploring across time Short term/long term	“How would smoking benefit you in the <b>short term</b> ? In the <b>long term</b> ?”
<b>SPATIAL Framing</b>	Establishes a relation of space or domain between things or events	“Where” “place”	“My anxiety increases in <b>crowded places</b> ”	Tracking ABC’s Exploring across domains or places	“ <b>Where</b> in your body do you feel the anxiety?”
<b>DEICTIC Framing</b>	Establishes that an event is in a relation of reference or perspective with another or more events in terms of person, time, or place	“Point of view” “Perspective”	“ <b>My professor</b> hates me”	Perspective taking Point of view Tracking ABC’s Interpersonal Skills	“How would <b>your loving daughter</b> feel about your disability?”
<b>HEIRARCHICAL Framing</b>	Establishes that an event is in a relation of hierarchy, inclusion, category, or attribution with another or more events	“a part of...” “I’m having the thought...”	“He belongs to a <b>lower class</b> of people”	Observe/Describe Values & Actions Increase Motivation	“What value is this action a <b>part of</b> ?”

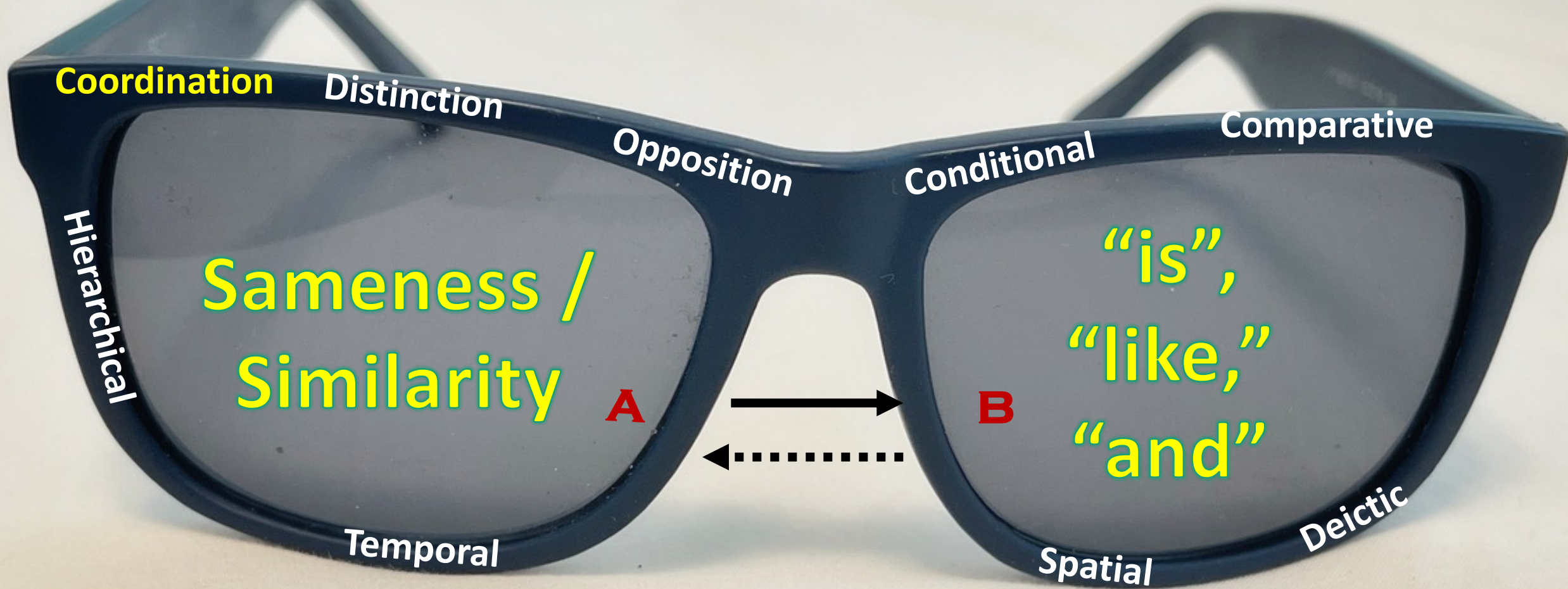
Compiled by Phillip Cha, MFT (2019) revised 1/23/20  
Adapted from [Mastering the Clinical Conversation](#) (Matthieu Villatte, Jennifer Villatte, and Steven Hayes, 2016)

# NINE TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING (Applied to "Talk Therapy")





# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING



Evocative Interventions  
(various therapeutic orientations)

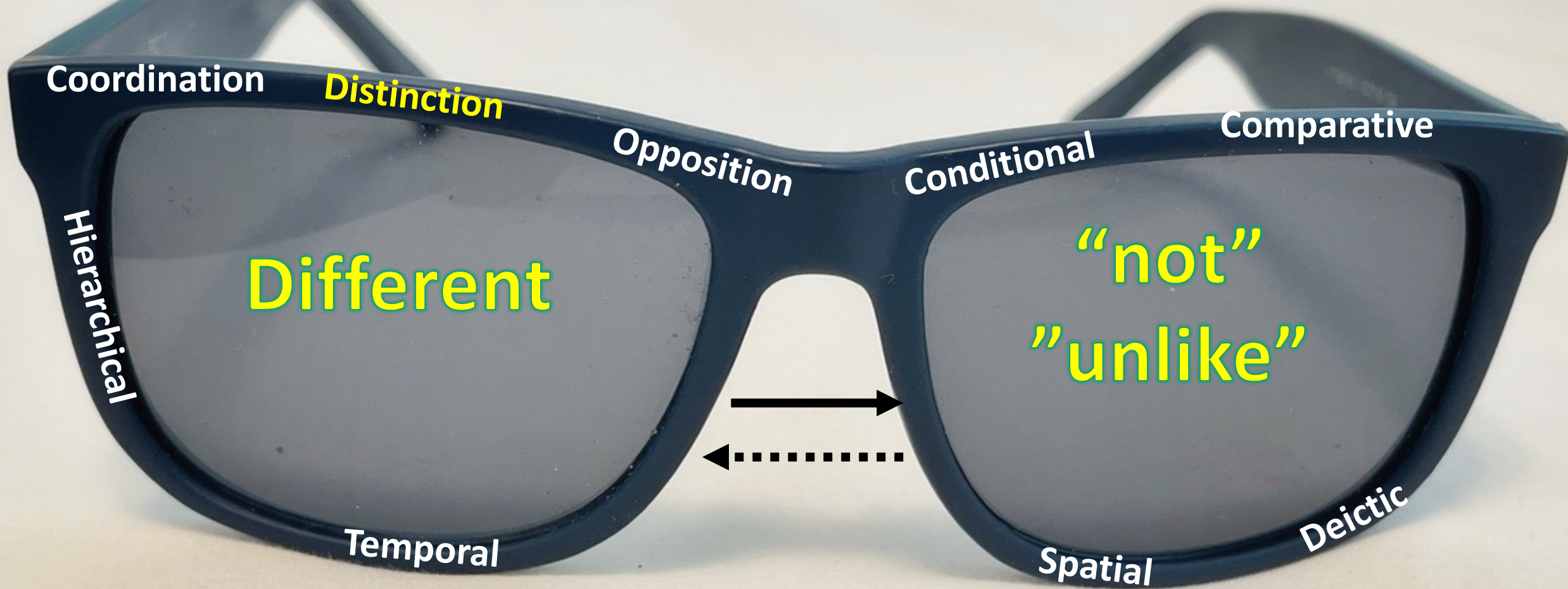


*"Tell me how you **are** feeling"*

*"Can you feel the pain **and** still do what is needed? "*

*"Can you have racist thoughts **and** anti-racist values at the same time?"*

# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING

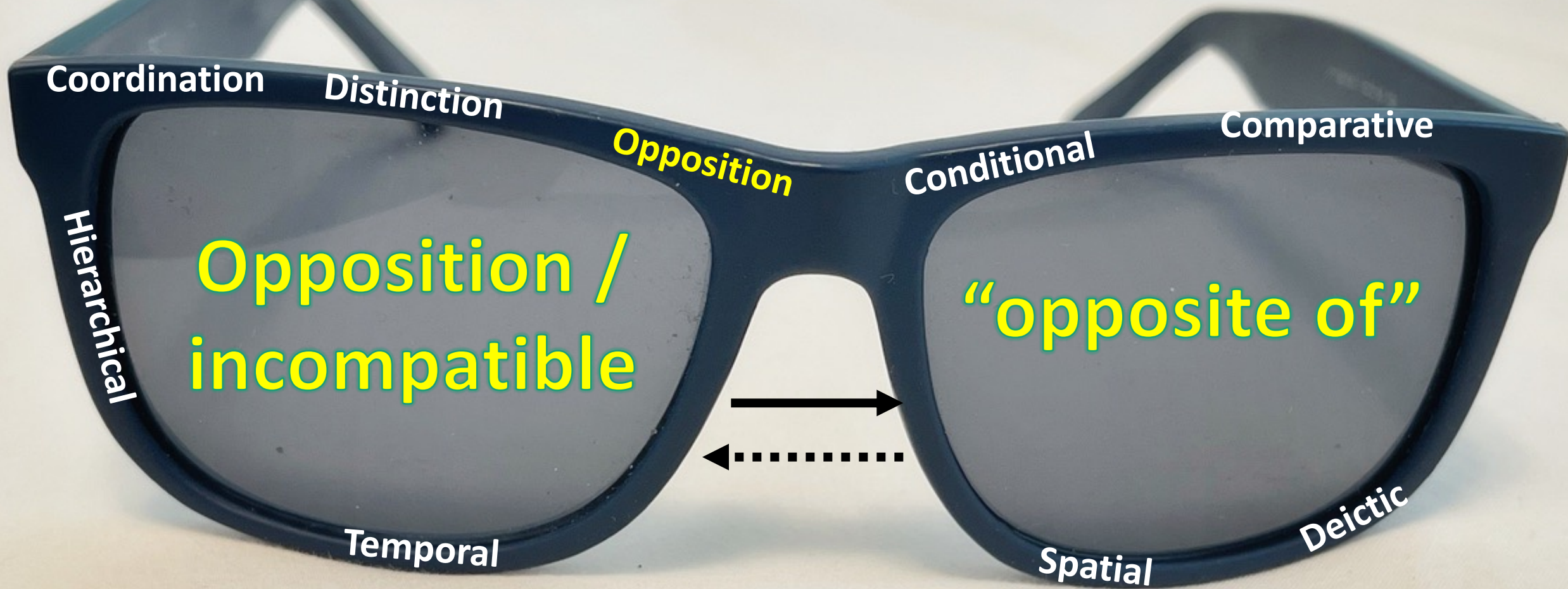


*"When are you **not** feeling depressed?"*

*"You are **not** your thoughts"*



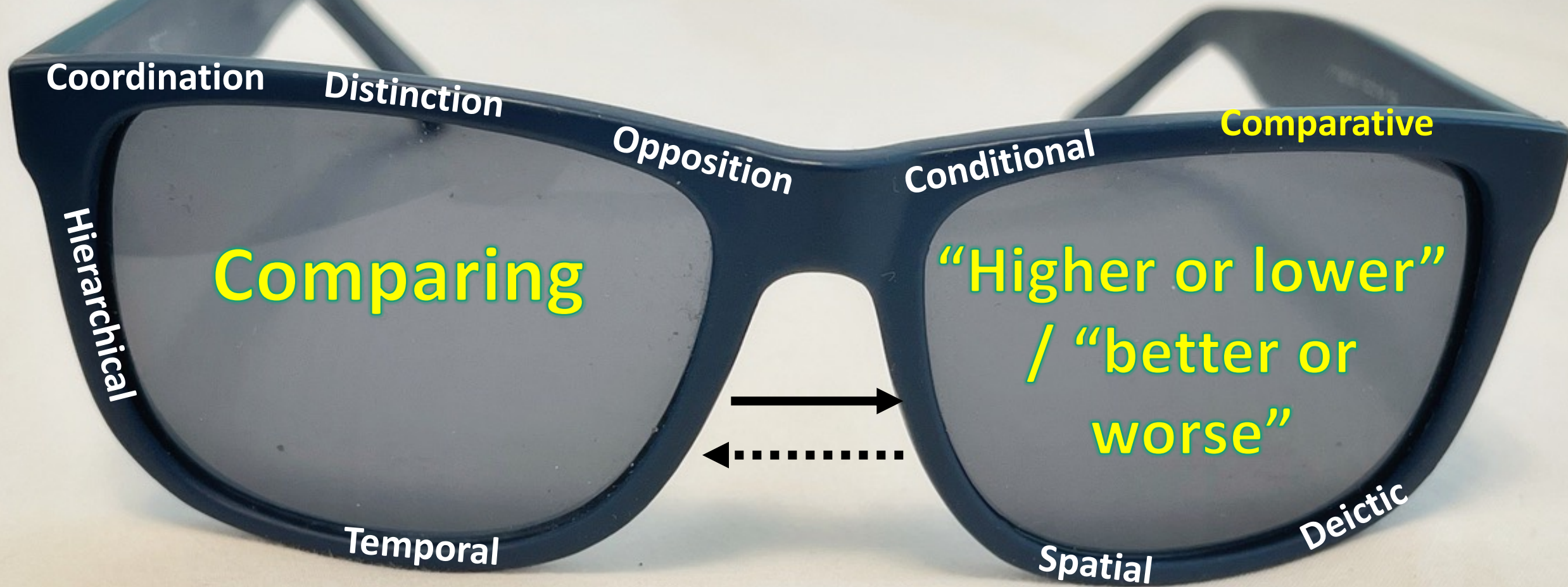
# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING



*"If sadness is on one side of the coin, what would be on the **other side**?"*

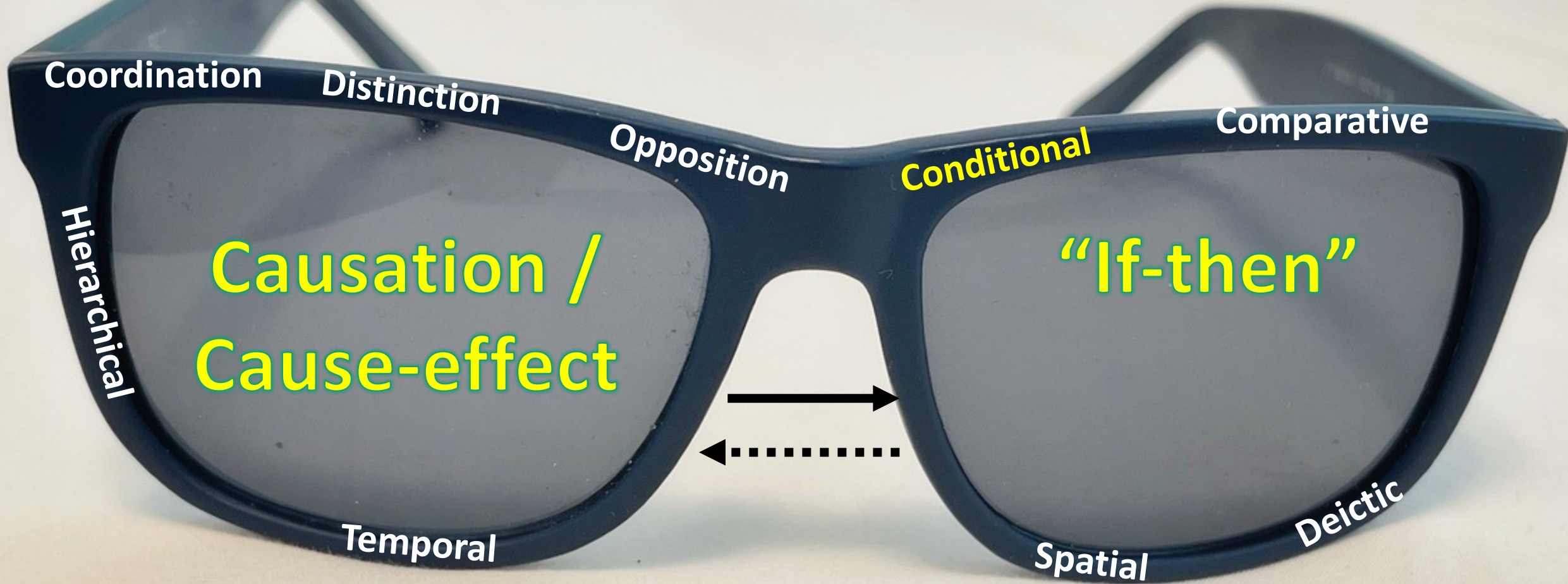


# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING



*“What are the **pros and cons** of showing up to work despite your anxiety?”*  
*“Do you feel that you have to work **harder than** some of your white colleagues?”*

# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING

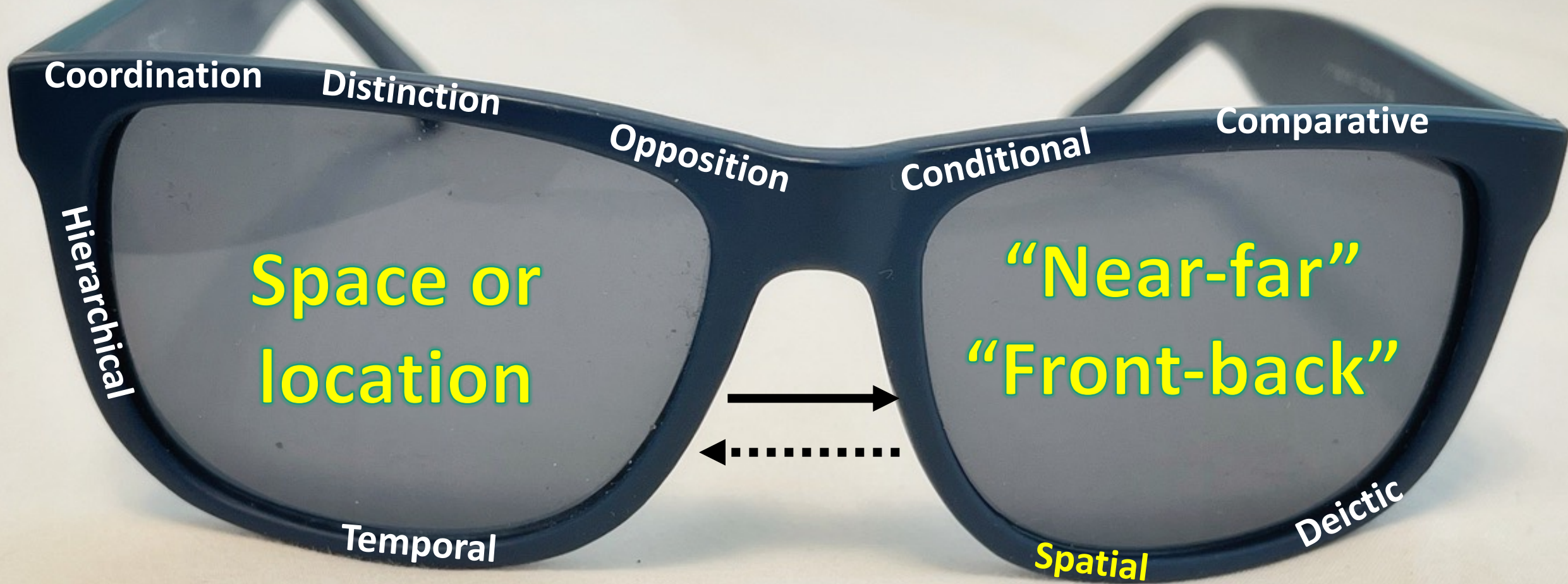


*"If you were to quit smoking, what **would be** some long-term positive **effects** on your health?"*

*"**Given** your childhood experiences, I can see **why** you reacted with such anger"*



# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING



*"Pay attention to your breath as you inhale **through your nose** and exhale **through your mouth**"*

*"In **what locations** throughout the city are you most likely to get tempted to use drugs?"*

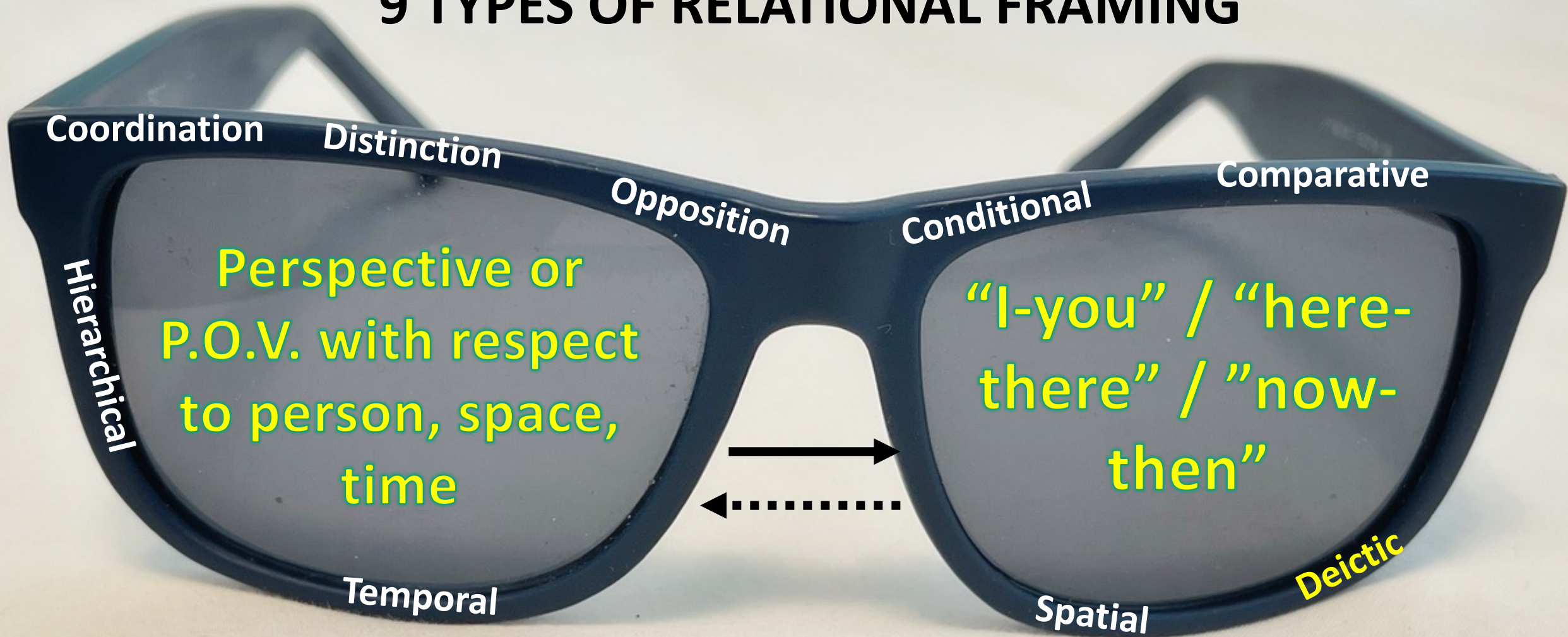
# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING



“What are your *earliest* childhood *memories* of sharing feelings with your father?”  
“What happened *after* that?”

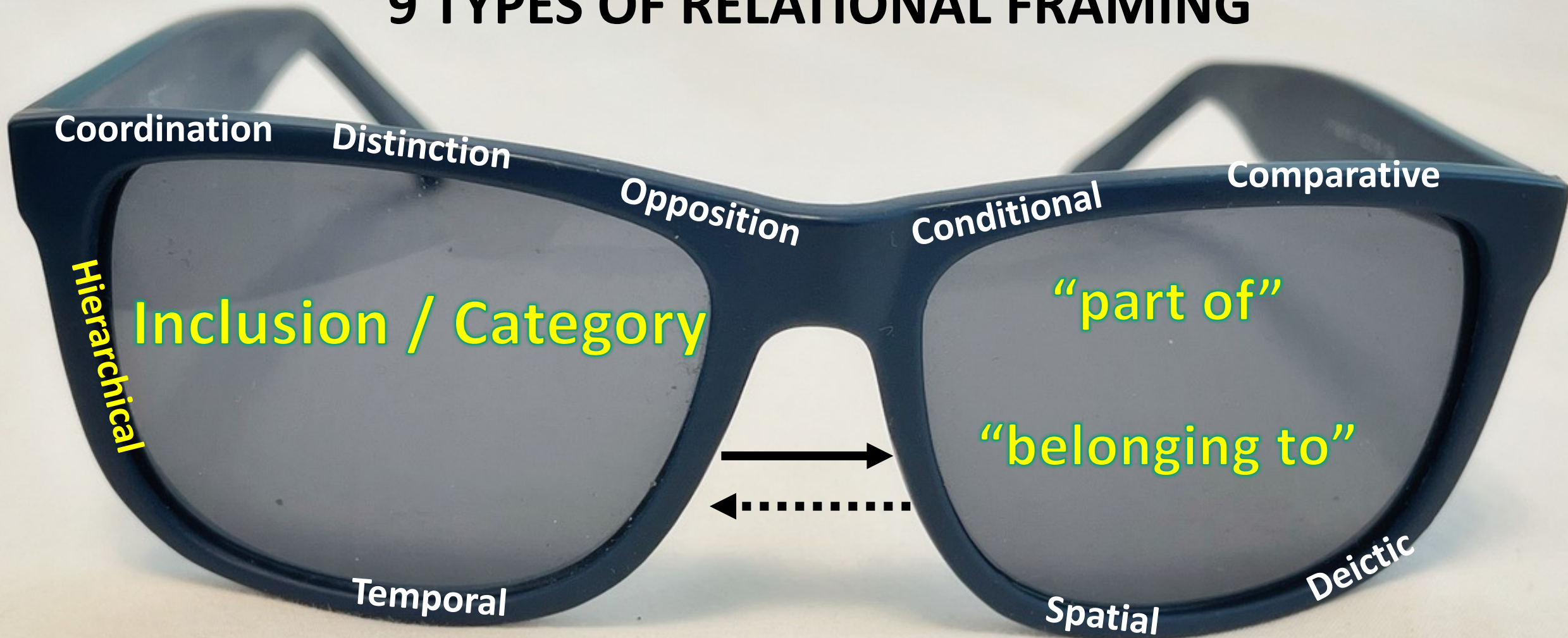


# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING



*“If your **younger self** were sitting on **that** chair, what you would like to say to her?”*  
*“If **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** were alive, **what might he say** about today’s racial inequities?”*

# 9 TYPES OF RELATIONAL FRAMING



“What are *some* of your anti-racist *values*?”

“What are some difficult *thoughts, emotions, and sensations* that you experience?”

“Which *part of* you wants to be destructive?”


# **PRACTICE: SKILLS & DRILLS**

## **(refer to handouts)**



# Self-Talk Exercise #1: How to *increase* your suffering via relational framing

- **Instruction:** Use each relational framing to amplify the unhelpful self-talk, thereby increasing suffering and making your life more miserable

Unhelpful Self-Talk. 	"I feel awful. I don't want to get out of bed."
COORDINATION	
DISTINCTION	
OPPOSITION	
COMPARATIVE	
CONDITIONAL	
SPATIAL	
TEMPORAL	
DEICTIC	
HIERARCHICAL	

# Self-Talk Exercise #2: How to *decrease* your suffering via relational framing

- **Instruction:** Use each relational framing to amplify the unhelpful self-talk in ways that lead to decreased suffering and greater life satisfaction.

Unhelpful Self-Talk	➔	"I feel awful. I don't want to get out of bed."
COORDINATION		
DISTINCTION		
OPPOSITION		
COMPARATIVE		
CONDITIONAL		
SPATIAL		
TEMPORAL		
DEICTIC		
HIERARCHICAL		

## EXAMPLE #1

### ABC ANALYSIS Through **RELATIONALLY FRAMED** Questions to Evoke **CONTEXT SENSITIVITY**

(Problematic Behavior: **"Heavy Drinking"**)

<b>(FRAMINGS)</b>	<b>ANTECEDENT</b> <i>(observe, describe, track)</i>	<b>BEHAVIOR</b> <i>(observe, describe, track)</i>	<b>CONSEQUENCE</b> <i>(observe, describe, track)</i>
<b>COORDINATION</b> ("is", "like" "and")	"Describe what happened prior to your drinking."	"Describe in detail what you did in response to the urge."	"Describe what happened to you after you drank all that alcohol."
<b>DISTINCTION</b> ("not", "unlike")	What feelings/thoughts/sensations were you <b>NOT</b> experiencing just prior to your behavior?	"If you were to make space for your guilt/shame feelings, then what might you do that is <b>different</b> from drinking?" *	"What might <b>NOT</b> have happened to you if you had stopped drinking?"
<b>OPPOSITION</b> ("opposite")	"What would the <b>opposite</b> of panic attack look like?"	"What would happen if you did the <b>opposite</b> of what your thoughts are saying?"	"If you were miraculously sober today, then what would your life look like <b>instead</b> "
<b>COMPARATIVE</b> ("higher/lower" "more/less")	"Which of these factors are <b>more likely</b> to lead you to relapse?"	"What would make you <b>more willing</b> to choose an alternative response to your craving?"	"Would you suffer <b>more or less</b> afterwards?"
<b>CONDITIONAL</b> ("if/then")	" <b>If you had not passed by the liquor store, do you think you still would have been tempted?</b> "	" <b>If</b> you were to make space and allow your guilt/shame feelings to just be there, <b>then</b> what might you do that is different from drinking?" *	" <b>If</b> you were to drink again, <b>then</b> what would result in the short term? Long term?"*
<b>TEMPORAL</b> ("before-after")	" <b>When</b> do you not have those thoughts?"*	"What <b>time of day</b> are you most likely to drink heavily?"	"If you were to drink again, what would result in the <b>short term? Long term?</b> "*
<b>SPATIAL</b> ("near-far")	"In what <b>situations and places</b> do you typically experience the urge to drink?"	" <b>Where</b> are you most likely to drink too much?"	" <b>Where in your body</b> did you most experience the negative impact of alcohol use?"
<b>DEICTIC</b> ("i-you"/"here- there"/"now- then")	"If <b>Mr. Anxiety</b> could talk, what would <b>he say to you?</b> "	"What would <b>your sponsor</b> do in the presence of the triggers?"	"From your <b>daughter's perspective</b> , what might happen to you if you continue to drink heavily?"
<b>HIERARCHICAL</b> ("part of")	"Please describe a thought that you <b>were having</b> that influenced you to drink."	" <b>What else</b> do you do besides drinking when you are triggered?"	"What might be <b>some other benefits</b> that may come with reducing your drinking?"

**-CONTEXT-**

**(TRANSFORMATION?)**

## EXAMPLE #2

### USING RELATIONALLY FRAMED QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS TO TARGET THE SIX PROCESSES OF ACT (Socially Anxious Father & the Recital)

	(1) DEFUSION	(2) ACCEPTANCE	(3) PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS	(4) SELF AS CONTEXT	(5) VALUES	(6) COMMITTED ACTION
<b>COORDINATION</b> ("is", "like" "and")	"Describe the thoughts that come to your mind when you are in social situations?"	"Please <b>tell me</b> more about your anxiety"	" <b>What are you experiencing</b> now as you are telling me about your anxiety?"	"You said you were a hermit. <b>What do you do</b> that makes you think so?"	"You are anxious <b>and</b> you want to attend the recital."	" <b>What would be</b> the first step toward attending her recital?"
<b>DISTINCTION</b> ("not", "unlike")	"When do you <b>not</b> have those thoughts?"*	"Describe what you are experiencing when you are <b>not</b> feeling safe"	"What are you <b>not</b> feeling right now?"	"What <b>difference</b> would it make to your daughter if you went to her recital?"	"What <b>difference</b> would it make to you if you stayed home?"	"Would you be willing to do something <b>different?</b> "
<b>OPPOSITION</b> ("opposite")	"What would happen if you did the <b>opposite</b> of what your thoughts are saying?"	"Let's <b>invite Mr. Anxiety</b> to your daughter's recital" (irreverence)	"If you weren't so busy living in the past or the future, what would your life look like <b>instead?</b> "	"If you can set aside your public persona, what would your <b>shadow side</b> really say?"	"What is the <b>opposite</b> of being lonely for you?"	"What would happen if you were to attend the recital <b>instead of</b> staying home?"
<b>COMPARATIVE</b> ("higher/lower" "more/less")	"What is the <b>worst</b> thought that comes to mind when you are in a crowded place?"	"What would make you <b>more willing</b> to attend your daughter's recital?"	"Are you <b>more or less</b> anxious right now?"	"Which part of you is needing <b>more</b> care right now; the loner or the father?"	"Which is <b>more important</b> to you? Attending your daughter's recital or staying home?"	"Is this action <b>more or less</b> in line with your values?"
<b>CONDITIONAL</b> ("if/then")	"What thoughts do you have <b>when</b> you are around a lot of people?"	" <b>When</b> you make room for anxiety, <b>what impact</b> does this have on your social life?"	"How attentive are you to your daughter's needs <b>when</b> you are triggered?"	"What do you suppose <b>would happen to you if</b> you showed up at your daughter's recital?"	" <b>When</b> anxiety shows up, would you be willing to take a meaningful risk?"	"What <b>would happen if</b> you do not attend the recital?"
<b>TEMPORAL</b> ("before-after")	" <b>When</b> do you not have those thoughts?"*	"How were you feeling <b>last night?</b> "	"Can you pause a moment and notice how you are feeling <b>right now?</b> "	"How might you experience this anxiety if you were looking back at it <b>5 years from now?</b> "	"What would you want your <b>future</b> tombstone to say about who or what was important to you?"	"What three actions can you take toward connecting with your friends <b>next week?</b> "
<b>SPATIAL</b> ("near-far")	"In what <b>situations and places</b> do you have that thought?"	"In what <b>social settings</b> are you able to cope with your anxiety?"	" <b>Where in your body</b> are you feeling the anxiety?"	"How do you feel when you are <b>at work?</b> "	"In <b>what place or situation</b> do you most feel connected to yourself? Daughter?"	"What would be the ideal <b>next step?</b> "
<b>DEICTIC</b> ("I-you"/"here- there"/"now-then")	"What would <b>your daughter</b> think about your thoughts?"	"How <b>do you</b> think I feel about you?"	"I wonder if <b>both of us</b> can sit in silence for a minute together."	"How might <b>your child</b> feel if you were to miss her recital?"	"What <b>do you think</b> is important to <b>your daughter?</b> "	" <b>I just noticed</b> a smile on <b>your face</b> while you were talking."
<b>HIERARCHICAL</b> ("part of")	"Please describe a thought that <b>you are having</b> now."	"If your anxiety <b>had a color</b> , what color would it be?"	"On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest), how would you <b>rate</b> your anxiety now?"	"Which <b>part of you</b> is willing to take a risk?"	" <b>List</b> some <b>qualities</b> as a father that are important to you."	"What <b>concrete steps</b> can you take to improve your health?"

# A CASE-BASED (INFORMAL) REAL PLAY

## A CASE OF ANTI-ASIAN HATE IN SAN FRANCISCO

In 2021, during the height of anti-Asian sentiment and violence toward AAPI people in the United States, P.C. (a middle-aged Asian American cis-gender male) was taking the bus to work in the morning. While on the bus, he witnessed a man harassing an elderly Asian woman. P.C. intervened and asked the man to leave the bus. The man refused to leave and began directing his rage at P.C. by using abusive language and posturing in an aggressive manner. Eventually the man got off the bus after attempting to spit at P.C. Two weeks later, P.C. experienced these sx's:

- difficulty concentrating
- difficulty getting out of bed;
- fatigued; hyper-alert in crowded places and buses
- lack of motivation
- dreaded going to work and avoided walking around the neighborhood

WHAT RFT-INFORMED QUESTIONS WOULD YOU ASK P.C. TO HELP HIM DEVELOP GREATER CONTEXT SENSITIVITY? (use the ABC Analysis Form)

**ABC ANALYSIS** VIA **RELATIONALLY FRAMED** QUESTIONS TO **INCREASE CONTEXT SENSITIVITY**

**-FUNCTION-**

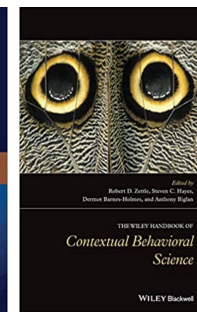
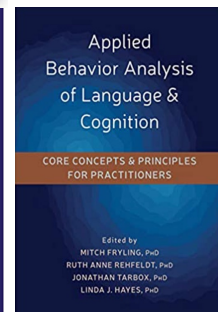
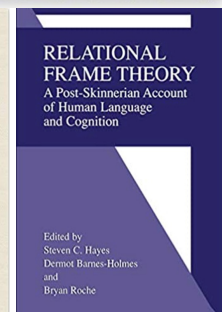
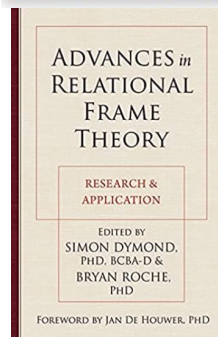
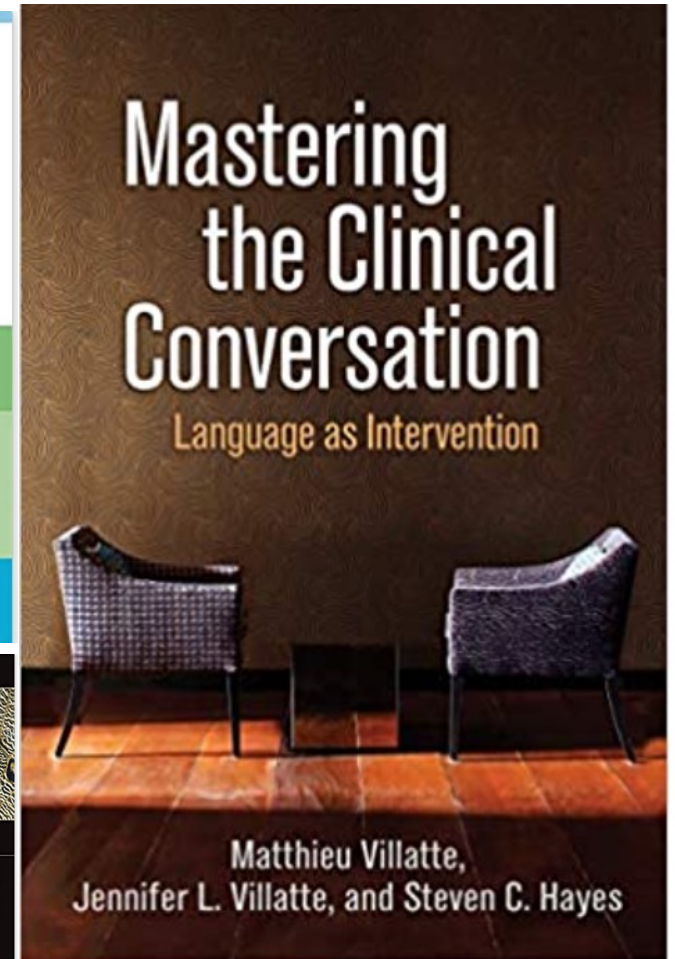
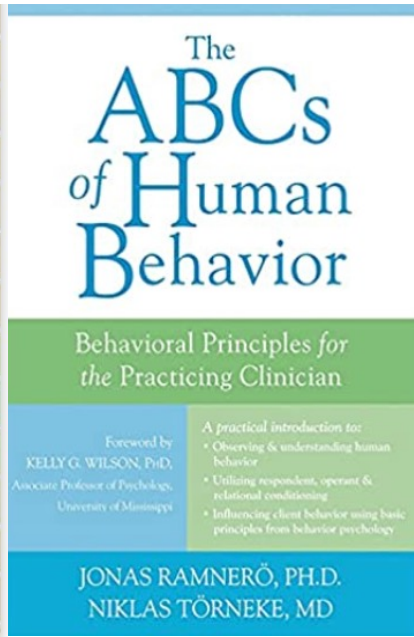
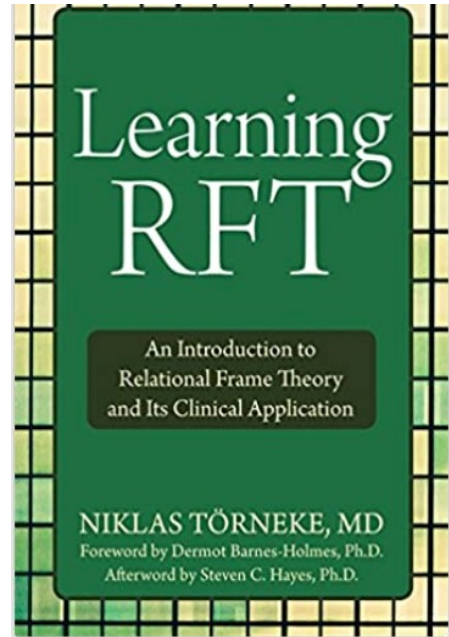
<b>-CONTEXT-</b>	<b>(FRAMINGS)</b>	<b>ANTECEDENT</b> (Observe, Describe, Track)	<b>BEHAVIOR</b> (Observe, Describe, Track)	<b>CONSEQUENCE</b> (Observe, Describe, Track)	<b>(TRANSFORMATION?)</b>	
	<b>COORDINATION</b> ("is", "like" "and)					
	<b>DISTINCTION</b> ("not", "unlike")					
	<b>OPPOSITION</b> ("opposite")					
	<b>COMPARATIVE</b> ("higher/lower" "more/less")					
	<b>CONDITIONAL</b> ("if/then")					
	<b>TEMPORAL</b> ("before-after")					
	<b>SPATIAL</b> ("near-far")					
	<b>DEICTIC</b> ("i-you"/"here- there"/"now- then")					
	<b>HIERARCHICAL</b> ("part of")					

Created by Phillip Cha, MFT (2020)

Inspired by *Mastering the Clinical Conversation* (Matthieu Villatte, Jennifer Villatte, Steven Hayes, 2016)



Books



# Contact & Visit

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pcha.mft@gmail.com

Also check out



@philjcha

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGG\\_7ole178&list=PLNf0NoSQgz4tAuP1dyJ94D4bFcQK6lrfZ&index=12](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGG_7ole178&list=PLNf0NoSQgz4tAuP1dyJ94D4bFcQK6lrfZ&index=12)

# Final Thoughts

Language may be  
**sticky** and **stinky**,  
but it can be **sexy** too!

