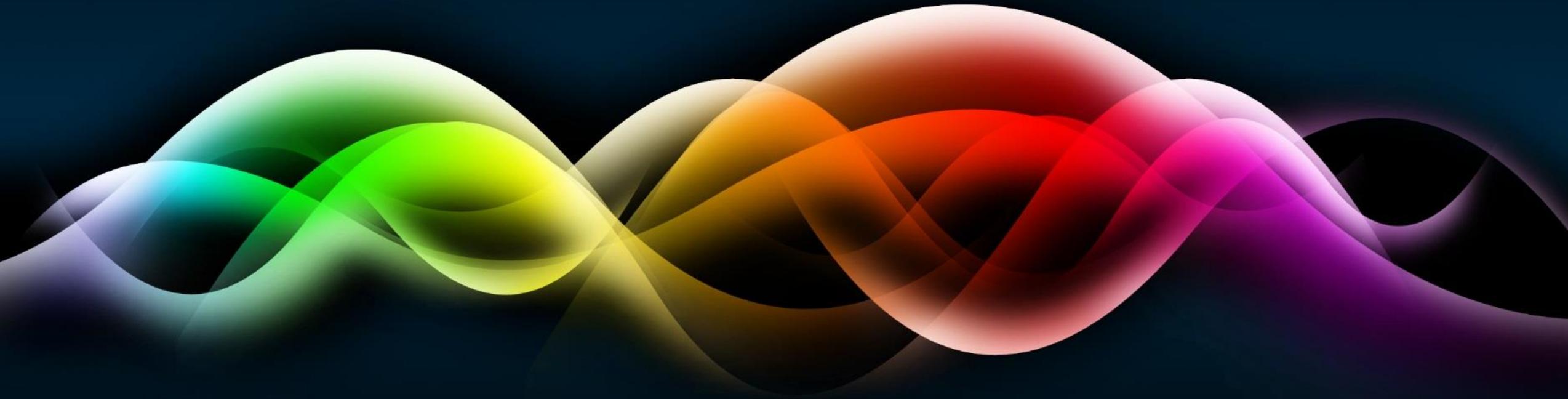


Psych Up:

Strategies for Dealing with Test Anxiety



Tim Gaiser, MS

SWE Conference - August 12, 2015

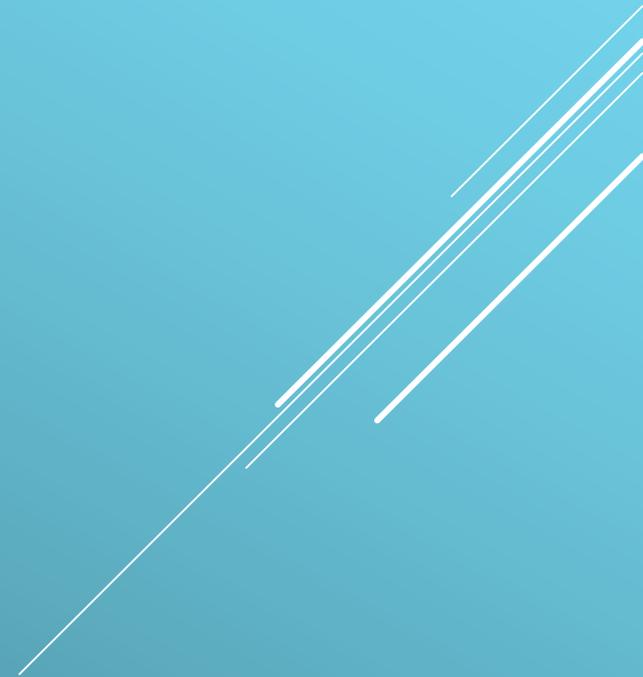
Today's objectives



Strategies to help decrease,
minimalize, and eliminate
test anxiety

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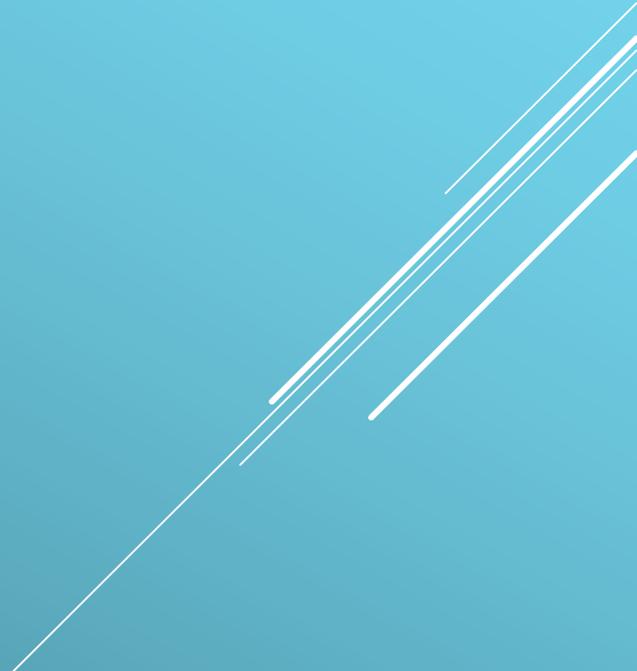
Strategies to help build self-confidence



Strategies that will help bring
your “A Game” on command

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Strategies for your students -
And for you!



Examine how we think -- and
hopefully gain more control of our
thought processes

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Ultimately: to provide
your nervous system
with a choice...

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Avoid this



Do this

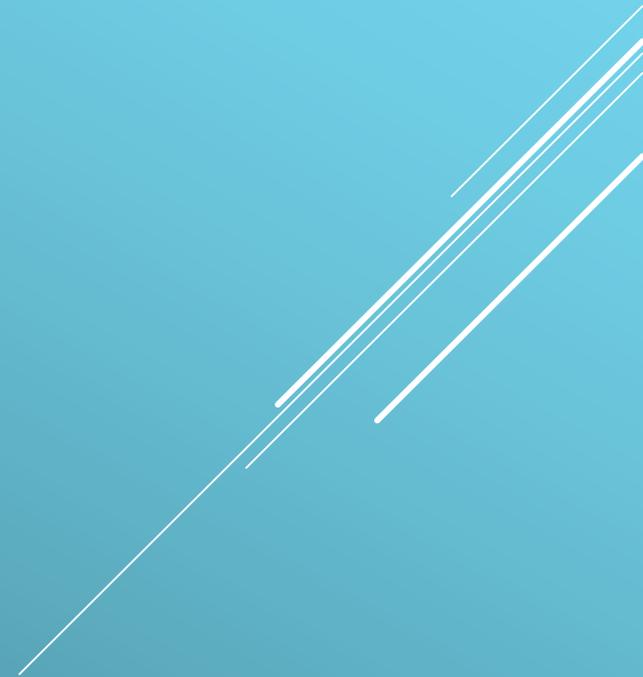


The project:

Working with over two dozen MS
Advanced and Master's
students



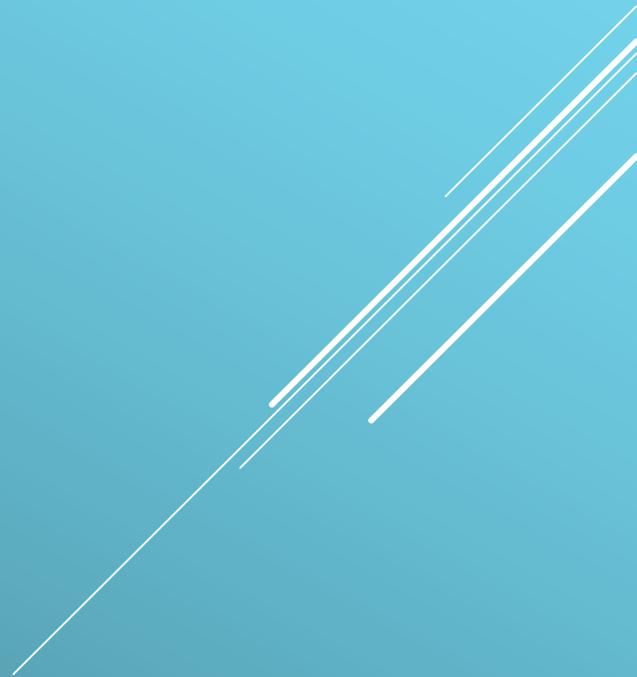
My definition of stress/anxiety



An imbalance of energy in one's system(s) caused by either external or internal stimulus

The image features a solid teal background. In the bottom right corner, there are several white, parallel diagonal lines that create a sense of motion or a modern design element.

The source...

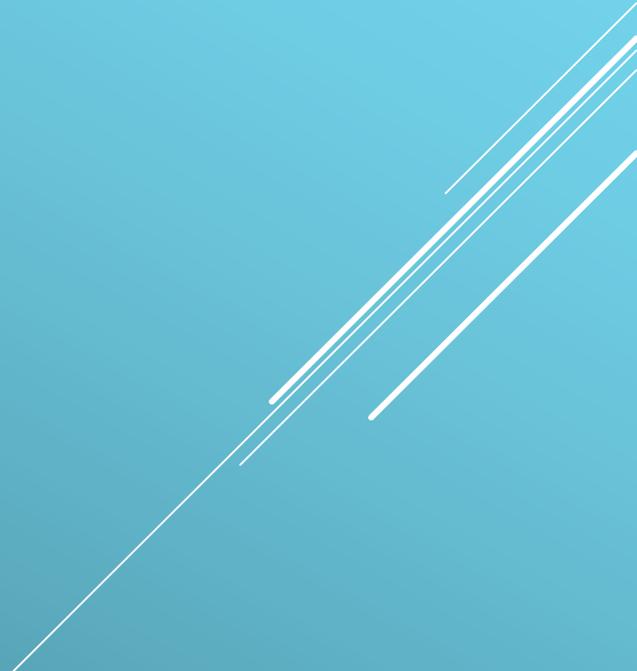


The amygdala: our reptilian brain at work

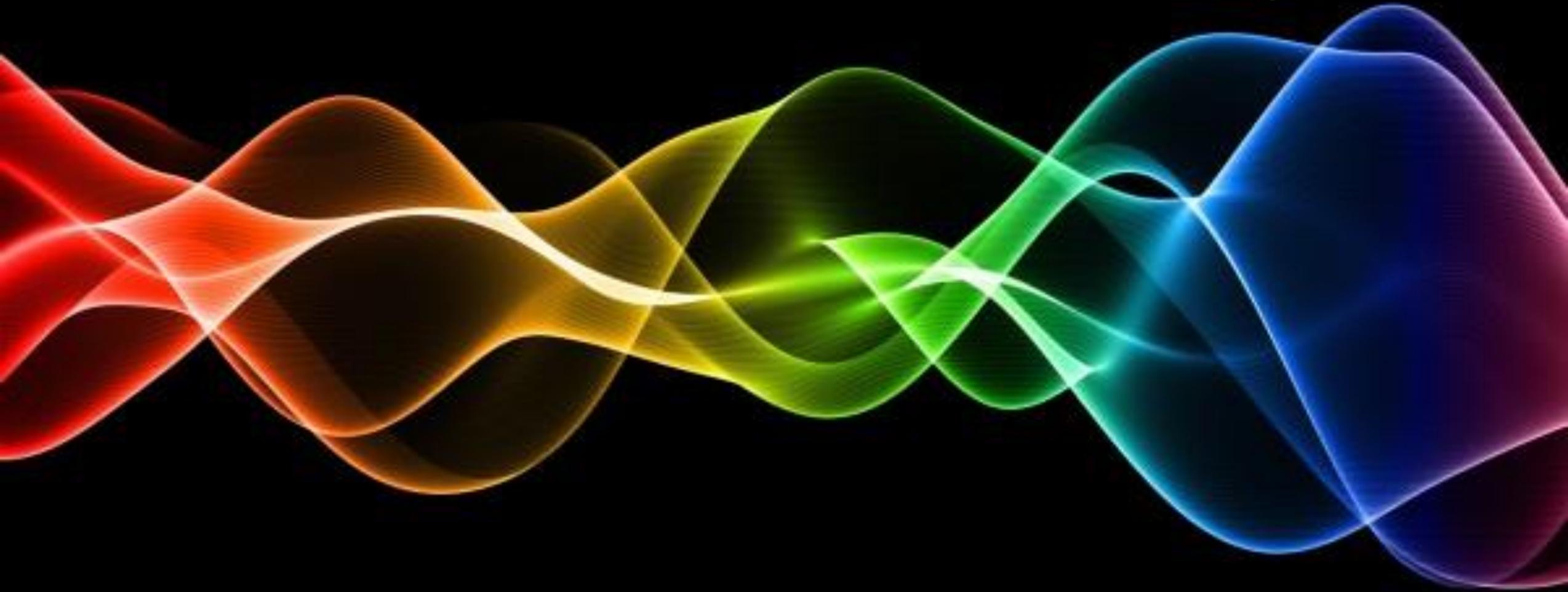
- ▶ Flight, fight, or freeze syndrome
- ▶ *We are naturally wired for fear/anxiety in order to survive*
- ▶ The problem with **generalization...**



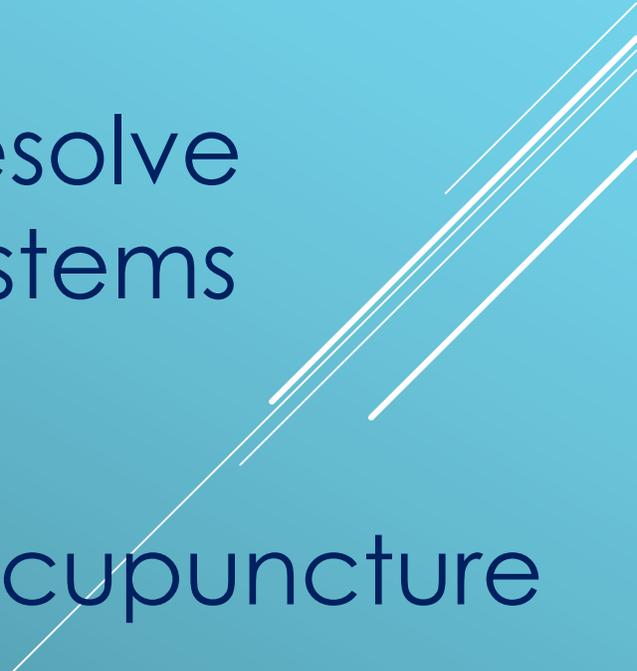
Today's strategies

- ▶ EFT – Emotional Freedom Technique
 - ▶ Spin dynamics
 - ▶ Submodalities: visual & auditory
 - ▶ Circle of Excellence
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a light blue background.

Strategy I: EFT – Emotional Freedom Technique



What is EFT?

- ▶ Emotional Freedom Technique
 - ▶ Tapping on acupressure points to resolve imbalances in the body's energy systems
 - ▶ Based on the Chinese practice of acupuncture
- 
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Who developed EFT?

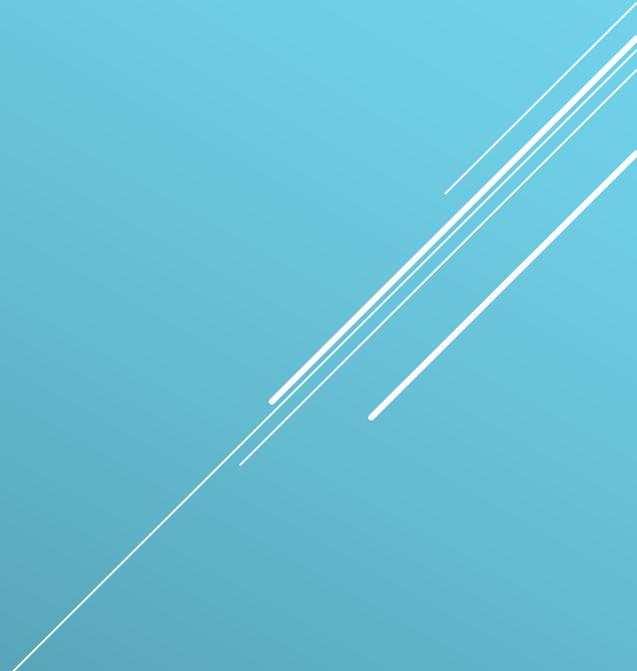
- ▶ First developed by **Dr. Roger Callahan**
- ▶ **Gary Craig** developed a single sequence of tapping called EFT or *Emotional Freedom Techniques*

EFT Today

- ▶ Has reached critical mass
- ▶ **Eric Leskowitz, M.D.** of the Harvard Medical Center
- ▶ Study using EFT to **treat Iraq and Afghanistan vets with PTSD**

How does EFT work?

There are four steps:

1. Calibrate the issue
 2. The set up and set up phrase
 3. Tapping on acupressure points
 4. Recalibrate the issue
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Calibrating the issue: how big is the fish?

- ▶ Get a sense of the anxiety/fear connected to an exam or other challenge
 - ▶ Rate the intensity on a scale of 1-10
 - ▶ It's important to measure the intensity before doing EFT
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Formatting the set up phrase

- ▶ Set up phrase accomplishes two things:
 - ▶ Acknowledges the challenge you want to deal with
 - ▶ Follows with an unconditional affirmation of accepting yourself as a person
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a light blue background.

The set up phrase: examples

- ▶ *“Even though I feel this anxiety, I completely accept myself.”*
- ▶ *“Even though I’m anxious about my tasting exam, I completely accept myself.”*
- ▶ *“Even though I panic when I think about doing the service exam, I deeply and completely accept myself.”*

Formatting your set up phrase

- ▶ The set up phrase is NOT set in stone
 - ▶ Put together a phrase that works for you
 - ▶ You can change it in any number of ways so that it works best for you
- 
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Doing the set up with the phrase

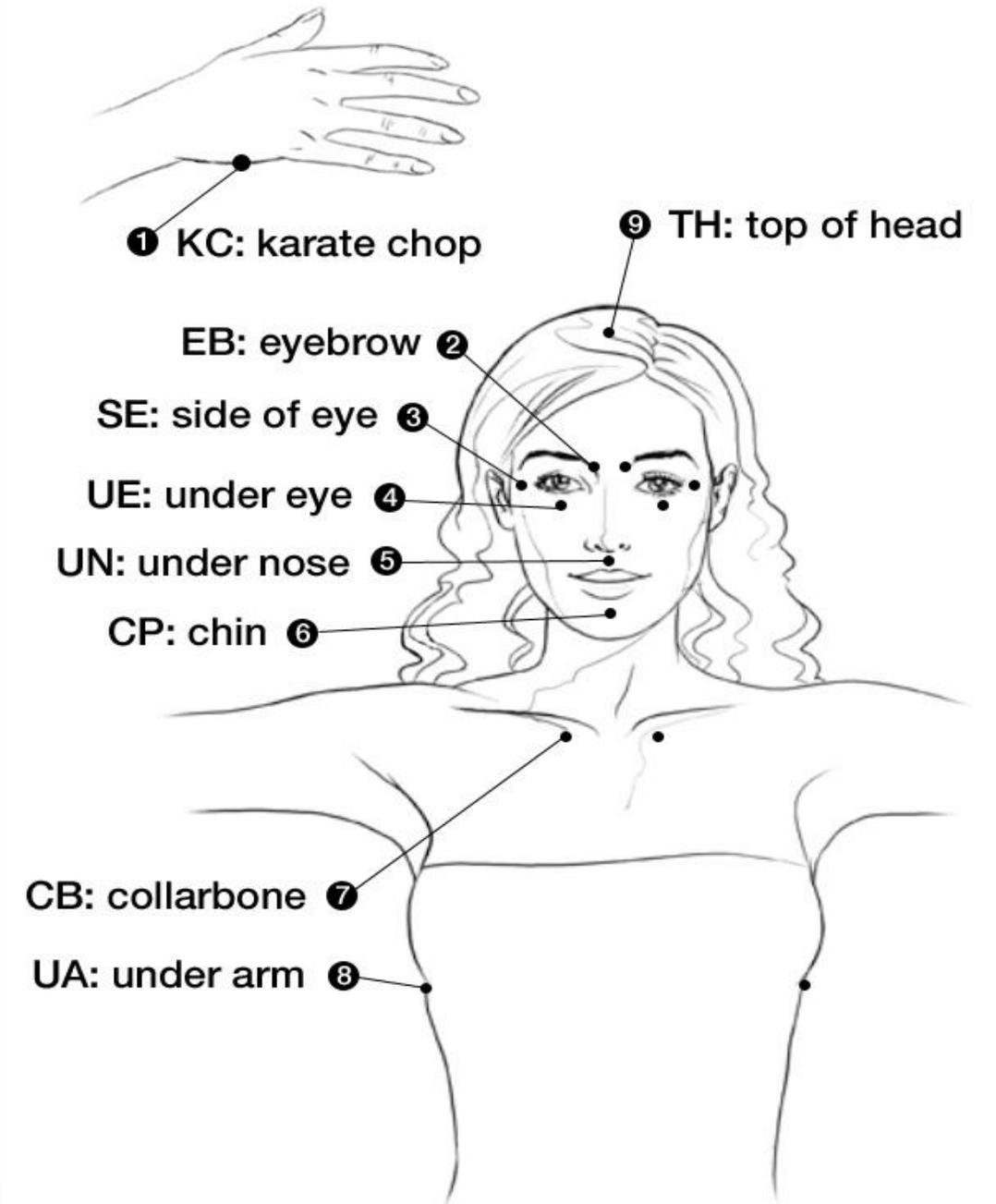
- ▶ With two fingers on one hand tap the Karate Chop point on the other hand
 - ▶ On the outer edge of the hand on the opposite side from the thumb
 - ▶ Repeat the set up statement three times out loud while tapping on the Karate Chop point
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Tapping on the eight acupressure points

- ▶ Tap 7-10 times on each of the eight acupressure points in the sequence
- ▶ Use a firm but gentle pressure when you tap
- ▶ Tap with your fingertips and *not* your fingernails
- ▶ While tapping say a word or phrase connected to the challenge

The Tapping Sequence

1. Karate chop point
2. Eyebrow (EB)
3. Side of eye (SE)
4. Under eye (UE)
5. Under nose (UN)
6. Chin (CP)
7. Collarbone (CB)
8. Underarm (UA)
9. Head (TH)



Recalibrate the issue

- ▶ Take a deep breath
- ▶ Focus on the issue—test anxiety--again
- ▶ How intense is it now compared to before tapping?
- ▶ Give it a numerical rating on the same scale you used in the beginning
- ▶ Note any changes

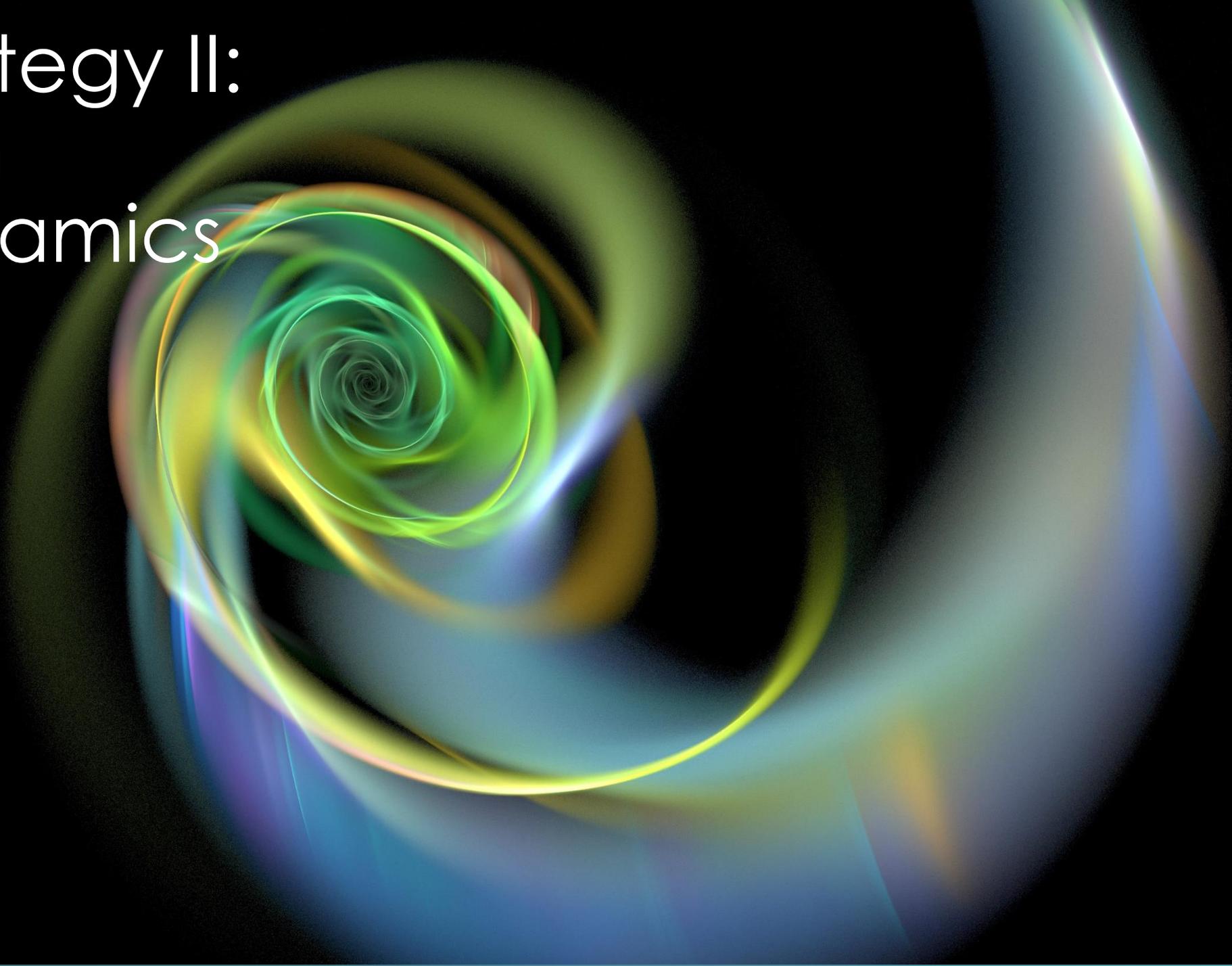
Lather, Rinse, Repeat

- ▶ If your anxiety is higher than 3-4 do another round of tapping—or several
- ▶ Keep tapping until the anxiety is as low as you can get it in the moment
- ▶ You can change your set up statement as needed:
 - ▶ *“Even though I have some remaining anxiety about the exam, I completely accept myself.”*
 - ▶ *“Even though I’m still worried about the tasting exam, I deeply and completely accept myself.”*

To Review:

1. Calibrate the issue
2. Say the set up phrase three times while tapping on the karate chop point
3. Tap on the eight acupressure points 7-10 times each saying a word or phrase connected to the challenge
4. Recalibrate the issue

Strategy II: Spin Dynamics



Presupposition:
Everything in the universe spins



How Fast Are You Moving When You're Standing Still?" by Yvette Cendes

- ▶ The planet earth spins at 1,040 M.P.H. while revolving around the sun at 67,000 m.p.h.
- ▶ The sun moves through a part of a star cluster at 45,000 M.P.H. on the outer spiral arm of the Milky Way which is rotating at another 500,000 m.p.h.
- ▶ That local arm of the galaxy is moving through the universe at an estimated 540,000 m.p.h.

Everything in the universe spins all the way down to sub-atomic particles like quarks and mesons-- and that includes our feelings



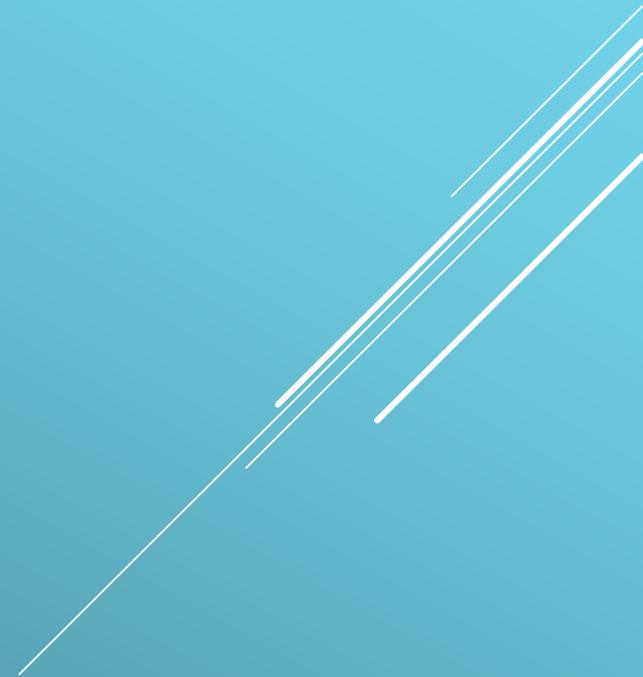
*Feelings are evaluative in that they are a response to something we have seen, heard, felt, tasted or smelled

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Spin dynamics: developed by
Richard Bandler (reverse spin)
and Tim & Kris Hallbom
(dynamic spin release)

Decorative white lines consisting of several parallel diagonal strokes in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Phase I: dealing with a nervous feeling



Needed:
your favorite *nervous*
memory

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Find the starting point

- ▶ Pinpoint exactly **where the feeling starts in your body**
- ▶ Head? Stomach? Chest? Hands?
- ▶ Really focus and **find out exactly where it starts**

Movement

- ▶ Pay attention to **how the feeling moves**
- ▶ Does it move **up** into your head or **down** into your feet?

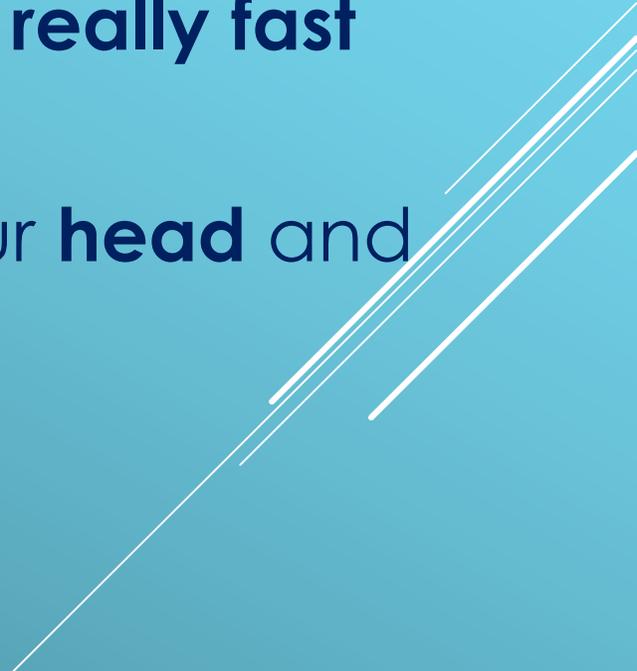
Next...

- ▶ Find out which way it **spins**
- ▶ Only four possibilities: **forward, backward, clockwise, and counterclockwise**
- ▶ Take a free hand and move it in a spinning motion
- ▶ One of the directions is going to make the feeling stronger

Taking control

1. **Spin it faster** in the **SAME** direction
2. **Slow it back down**
3. Spin the feeling in **super slow motion**
4. **Practice:** now speed up and slow down the feeling of being nervous several times until you can do it quickly and easily

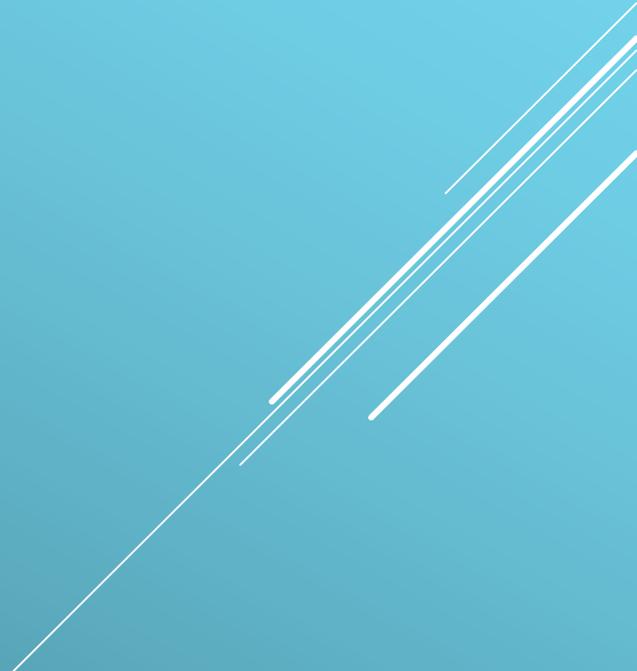
Reverse the spin

1. Now **spin the feeling in the opposite direction**
 2. **Slowly at first** then **speed it up gradually** until it's **really fast**
 3. **Expand** the reverse spin so you can feel it in your **head** and **toes at the same time**
 4. **Dissolve the spin completely**
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Phase II: confidence



Needed: a confident
memory



Once again with feeling ...

1. **Where** the feeling of confidence starts in your body. Stomach? Chest? Head? Hands?
 2. **Which direction** does it move? Up? Down?
 3. **Which way does it spin?**
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a light blue background.

Play!

- ▶ **Crank up** the confidence spin
- ▶ Try to **double the feeling!**
- ▶ Don't be surprised if the feeling of confidence spins in the same **direction** as the nervous feeling
- ▶ Like everything else, **feelings are contextual** and each one has its own specific movement and direction of spin

Review...

- ▶ When you first feel nervous...
 - ▶ Slow the nervous spin down and stop it all together
 - ▶ Spin it backwards and then dissolve it
 - ▶ Change locations – take a step forward/back, etc.
 - ▶ Start confidence spin and go faster
 - ▶ Add triggers!
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against the blue gradient background.

Strategy III: Submodalities



Submodalities:
the structure of thought;
the fabric of experience



Consider the following:

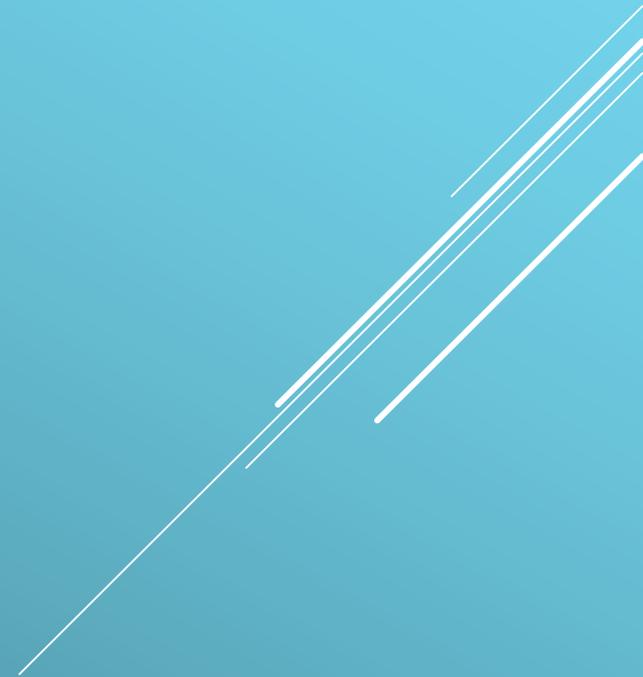
“The future seems dim.”

“I just can’t get any distance from it.”

“He’s blowing it all out of proportion.”

“She has a bright future.”

“My mind went blank.”



Submodalities defined:

The structural qualities of our internal images, sounds, and feelings

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Visual submodalities

- ▶ Black & white or color*
- ▶ Proximity: near or far*
- ▶ Location*
- ▶ Brightness*
- ▶ Size of image*
- ▶ Three dimensional or flat image*

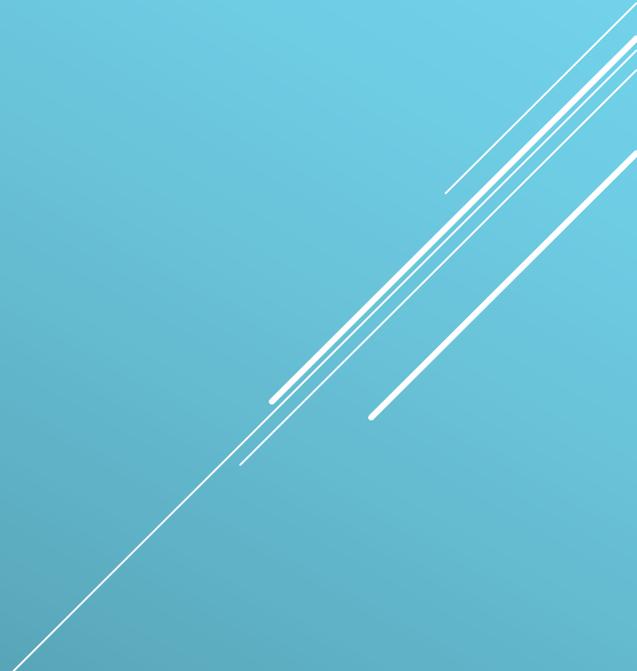
- ▶ Associated / Dissociated
- ▶ Focused or Defocused
- ▶ Framed or Unframed
- ▶ Movie or still image
- ▶ If a Movie-Fast/Normal/Slow

***Driver Submodality**

Auditory submodalities

- ▶ Volume: loud or soft
 - ▶ Distance: near or far
 - ▶ Internal or external
 - ▶ Location
 - ▶ Stereo or mono
 - ▶ Fast or slow
 - ▶ Pitch: high or low
 - ▶ Verbal or tonal
 - ▶ Rhythm
 - ▶ Clarity
 - ▶ Pauses
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Kinesthetic submodalities

- ▶ Intensity: strong or weak
 - ▶ Area: large vs. small
 - ▶ Weight: heavy or light
 - ▶ Location
 - ▶ Texture: smooth, rough, or other
 - ▶ Constant or intermittent
 - ▶ Temperature: hot or cold
 - ▶ Size
 - ▶ Shape
 - ▶ Pressure
 - ▶ Vibration
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths and orientations, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Using visual submodalities for test anxiety



Needed

- ▶ An unpleasant or irritating memory associated with exams
 - ▶ Memory = internal picture or movie
 - ▶ Both will have submodalities to them as described
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Next

- ▶ One you've chosen your memory it's time change **HOW** you experience it
- ▶ We're giving your nervous system a choice in terms of how to respond to the memory:
 - ▶ *To either to freak out to some degree*
 - ▶ *Or respond in another way*
- ▶ The easiest thing to do with submodalities is what I call **"whiteout"**

Whiteout: instructions

1. Bring up the image of the memory
2. As quickly as you can turn up the brightness to bright white so you can't see the image or what's left of the movie
3. **Disassociate** by looking around at the things in the room
4. **Do it again**
5. **Disassociate again**
6. Do it again—at least a dozen times and do it **quickly** every time
7. Test! Try to bring up the memory

Strategy IV:
auditory submodalities-
dealing with a critical inner voice

The background is a solid light blue color. On the right side, there are several white diagonal lines of varying lengths and thicknesses, creating a sense of motion or a graphic element.

*Are the voices in my head
bothering you?*



The voices in my head...

- ▶ It's OK to have voices in your head
 - ▶ It's *part of being conscious and alive*
 - ▶ However, not all sounds--in this case voices--are pleasant
 - ▶ Sometimes inner voices can be critical even to the point of detriment and can cause stress
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Location

- ▶ If the voice is inside you move it outside and play with different locations:
 - ▶ First, **move it at least 20 feet away**
 - ▶ Then **move the voice behind you**
- ▶ The simple act of pulling the voice outside of you often decreases any emotional charge immediately

Pitch

- ▶ Take the **pitch** of the voice and make it **completely opposite**
- ▶ If it's a high-pitched voice make it a basso—extremely low
- ▶ If it's a low-pitched voice make it as high as possible—as in chipmunk-like
- ▶ Use extremes!

Tonality & inflection

- ▶ Tonality: if it's an obnoxious nasal voice make it smooth and warm like a FM jazz DJ's voice
 - ▶ Inflection: make the voice a monotone and robotic
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Volume & tempo

- ▶ Volume: turn the voice down until you can barely hear it
 - ▶ Tempo: slow the voice down to a crawl until you can barely understand it – make it garbled
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Change the Identity

- ▶ This is too good to pass up
- ▶ Make the voice that of a cartoon character—Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck come to mind--or Spongebob
- ▶ Something completely ridiculous
- ▶ Or—go in the completely opposite direction by making the voice Barry White

Strategy IV: the Circle of Excellence



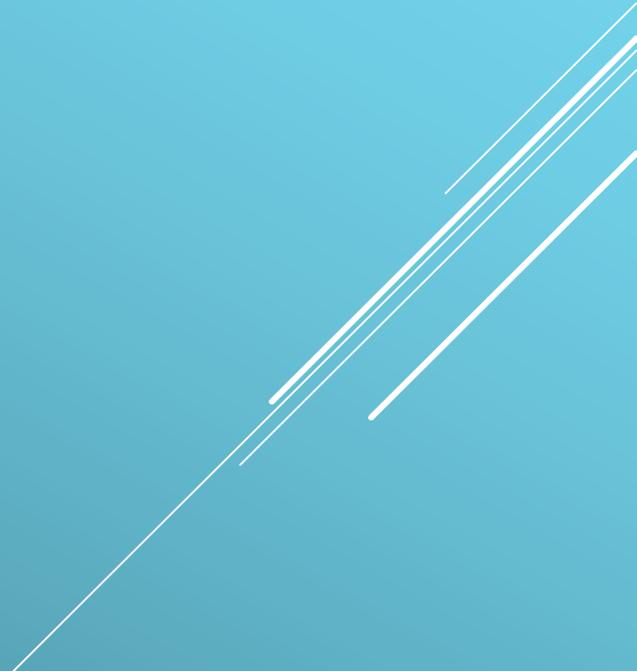
Question:

How can we tap into our most powerful resource states when we need them?

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Enter: the Circle of Excellence

Powerful resource states

- ▶ **Confidence**
 - ▶ Focus
 - ▶ Trust
 - ▶ Creativity
 - ▶ Clarity
 - ▶ Flexibility
 - ▶ Memory
 - ▶ Gratitude
 - ▶ Compassion
 - ▶ Patience
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

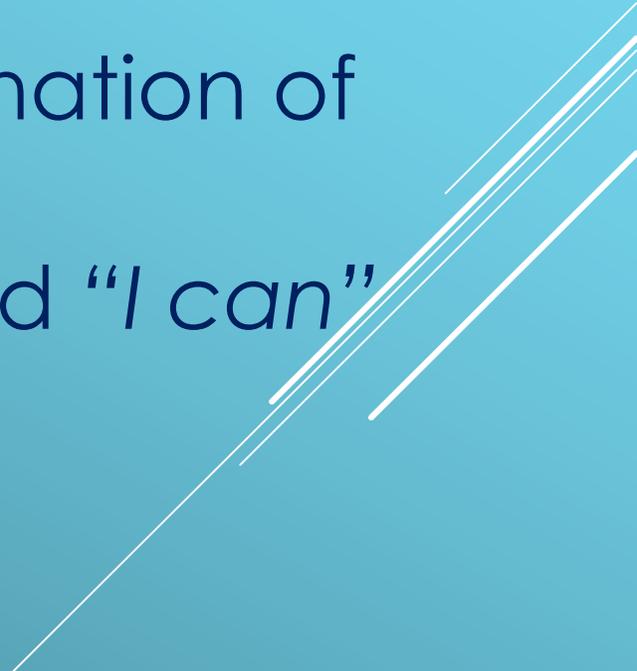
Needed:
a really confident
memory

The image features a solid teal background. In the center, the text "Needed: a really confident memory" is displayed in a dark blue, sans-serif font. On the right side, there are several white, parallel diagonal lines that create a sense of motion or a graphic element.

Creating your Circle of Excellence

- ▶ **Standing** comfortably with **your hands free**
- ▶ Imagine a circle on the floor in front of you large enough to stand in
- ▶ Make your circle unique in terms of its color and design
- ▶ My own personal circle...

Next...

- ▶ What resource do you need? Confidence
 - ▶ My definition of confidence is a combination of the feelings of *“I know what I know”* and *“I can”*
 - ▶ Get into your confident memory
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Then...

- ▶ Step into the confident memory as completely as you can
- ▶ Really feel that sense of confidence throughout your mind and entire body—head to toe
- ▶ Amp it up! – **EYES!**

Step into your circle

- ▶ As step into your Circle associate those confident feelings with being inside it
 - ▶ While inside your Circle really amp up the feelings of confidence
 - ▶ Stay there for 10-15 seconds
 - ▶ When the feeling starts to get less step out!
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- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

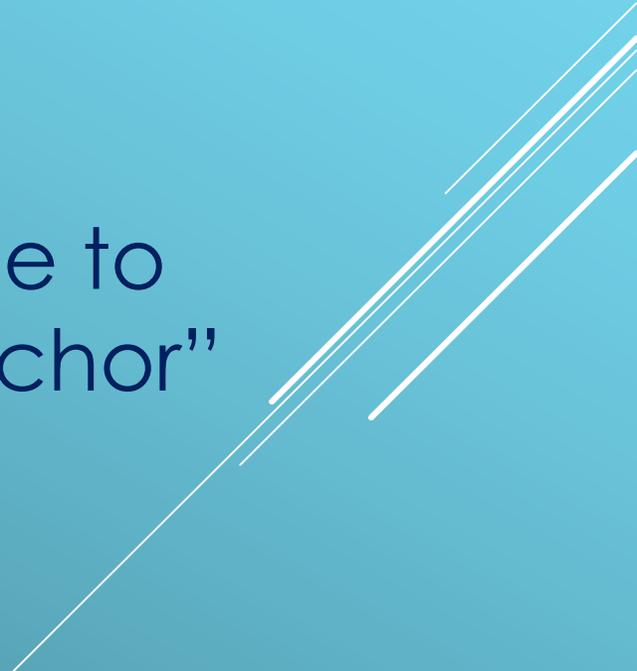
Repeat

- ▶ Go back into the confident memory and amp it up even more and when you're at the peak of the confident feeling step back into your circle
 - ▶ When you feel the confidence starting to wane step back out
 - ▶ Repeat this sequence 3-4 more times
 - ▶ Double the feeling of confidence every time!
 - ▶ **Don't mess around!!!**
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

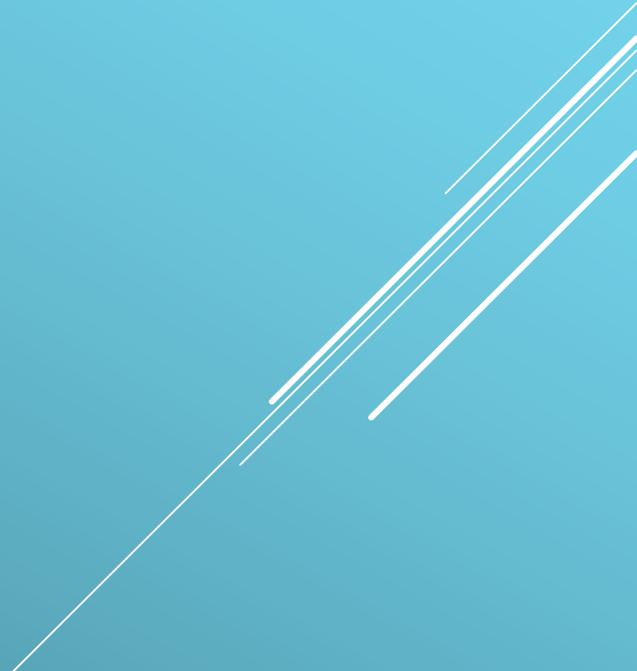
Test!

- ▶ Completely disassociate!
- ▶ Look around at everything - think about what you had for breakfast - think about how you got to the class
- ▶ Now step into your circle again
- ▶ The confident feelings should be there immediately
- ▶ If not—more repetition! This is completely **Pavlovian!**

Adding more resources to your circle

- ▶ Choose another powerful resource such as clarity, focus or compassion
 - ▶ Repeat previous steps and use your Circle to create a powerful connection or an “anchor” for each resource
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Other potential resources

- ▶ Confidence
 - ▶ Focus
 - ▶ Trust
 - ▶ Creativity
 - ▶ Clarity
 - ▶ Flexibility
 - ▶ Memory
 - ▶ Gratitude
 - ▶ Compassion
 - ▶ Patience
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Create a trigger

- ▶ As you stand *outside* your Circle, think about something that **could remind you of your Circle**
- ▶ Something **that could trigger** you to **step into your Circle**
- ▶ Could be a **phrase**, a **situation**, a **time of day** —anything that will automatically cause you to “step” into your Circle
- ▶ Simplest trigger: clench one of your hands into a fist

Make your circle portable

- ▶ Look at your circle
 - ▶ “Pick” it up and put it into your “pocket”
 - ▶ Practice putting it on the floor in front of you
 - ▶ Put it on a chair before you sit down
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a light blue background.

Thank you!

