

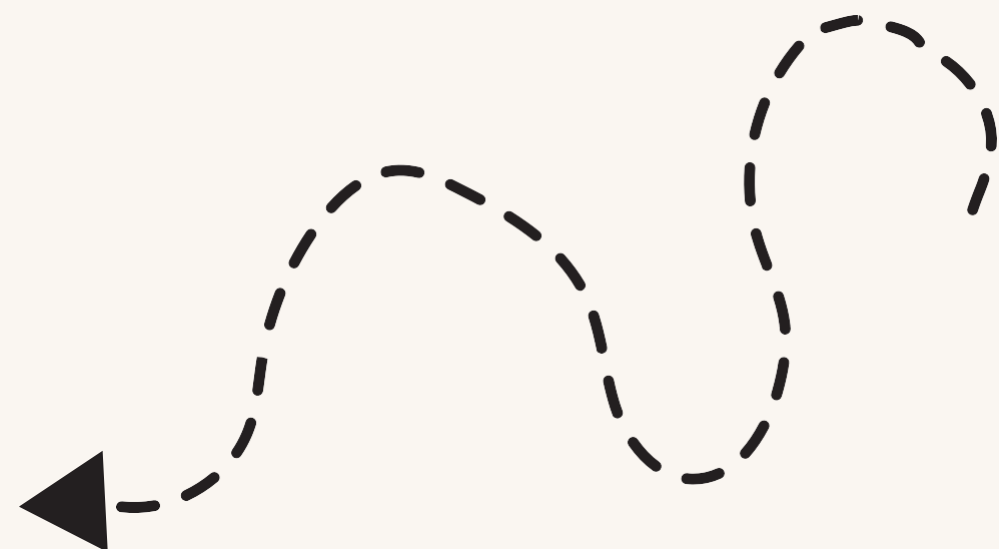
The Power of a Pause



For Christian Couples



Our
Narrative
Matters



A close-up, profile view of an older man with grey hair, looking down and to the left. He is wearing a blue button-down shirt. His right hand is resting on a dark vertical metal bar. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or glass partition. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the texture of his hair and the contours of his face.

Our Challenges

... are real. Many things are out of our control. Things go wrong, we make mistakes.



As we encounter challenges much of our anxiety can be related to questions like:

Will it work out?



What's next?



Will I have enough?



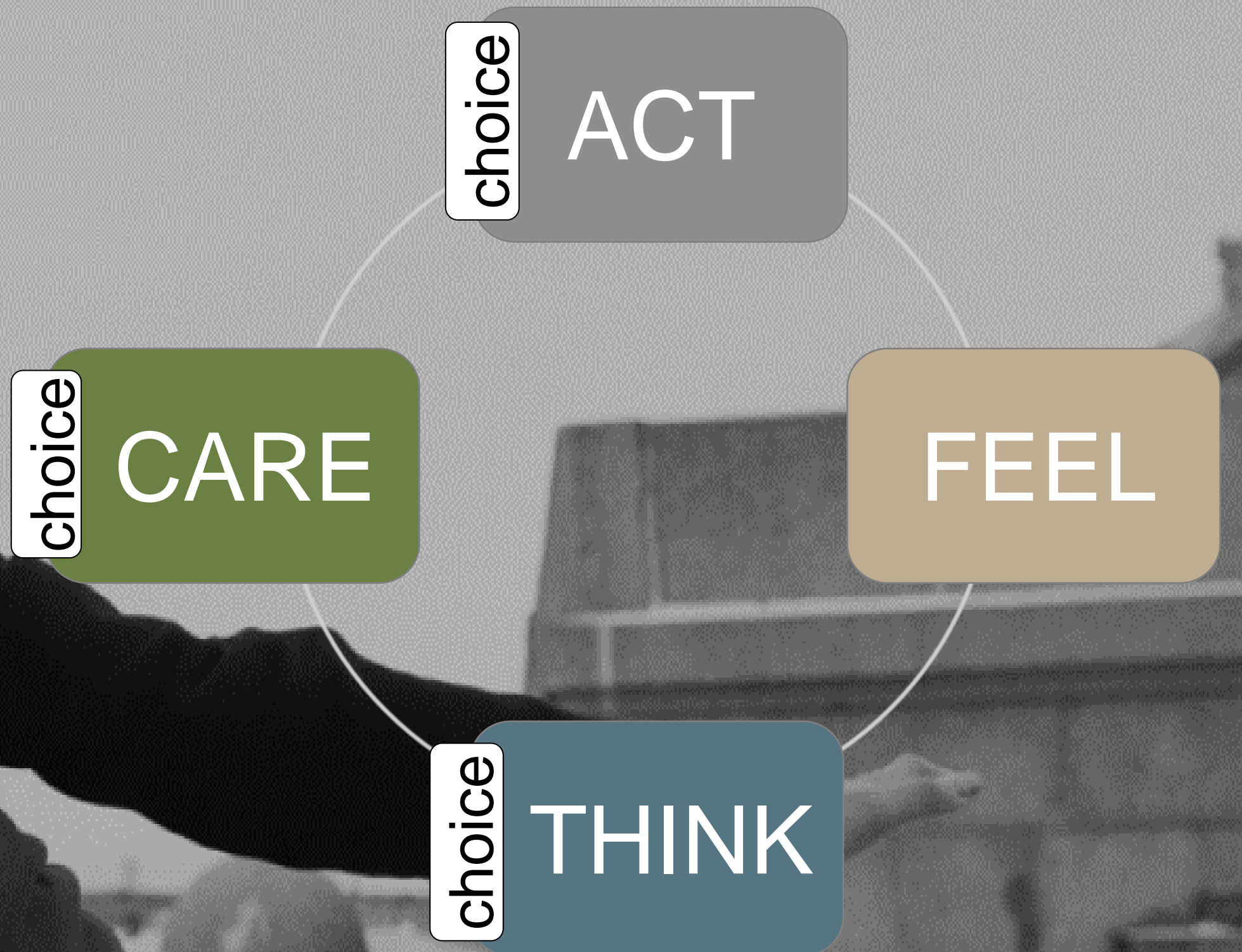
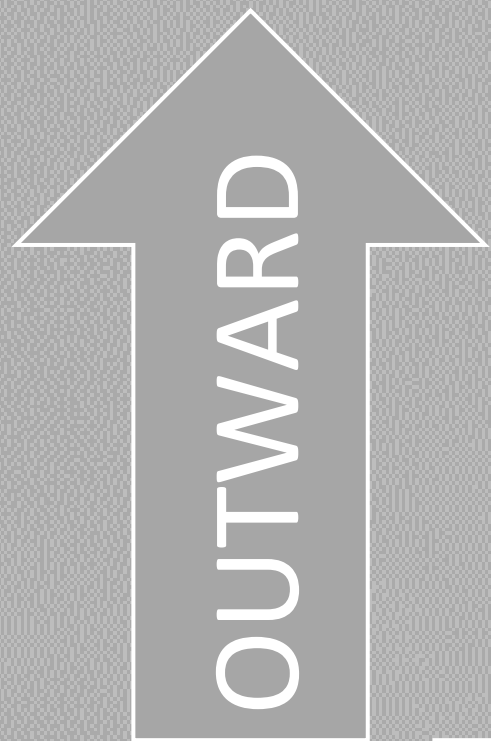
Am I enough?

Sometimes, we have the courage to work through differences and overcome obstacles to achieve our goals.



Sometimes, we can feel like giving up.

Our OUTWARD actions & attitudes reflect our INWARD beliefs



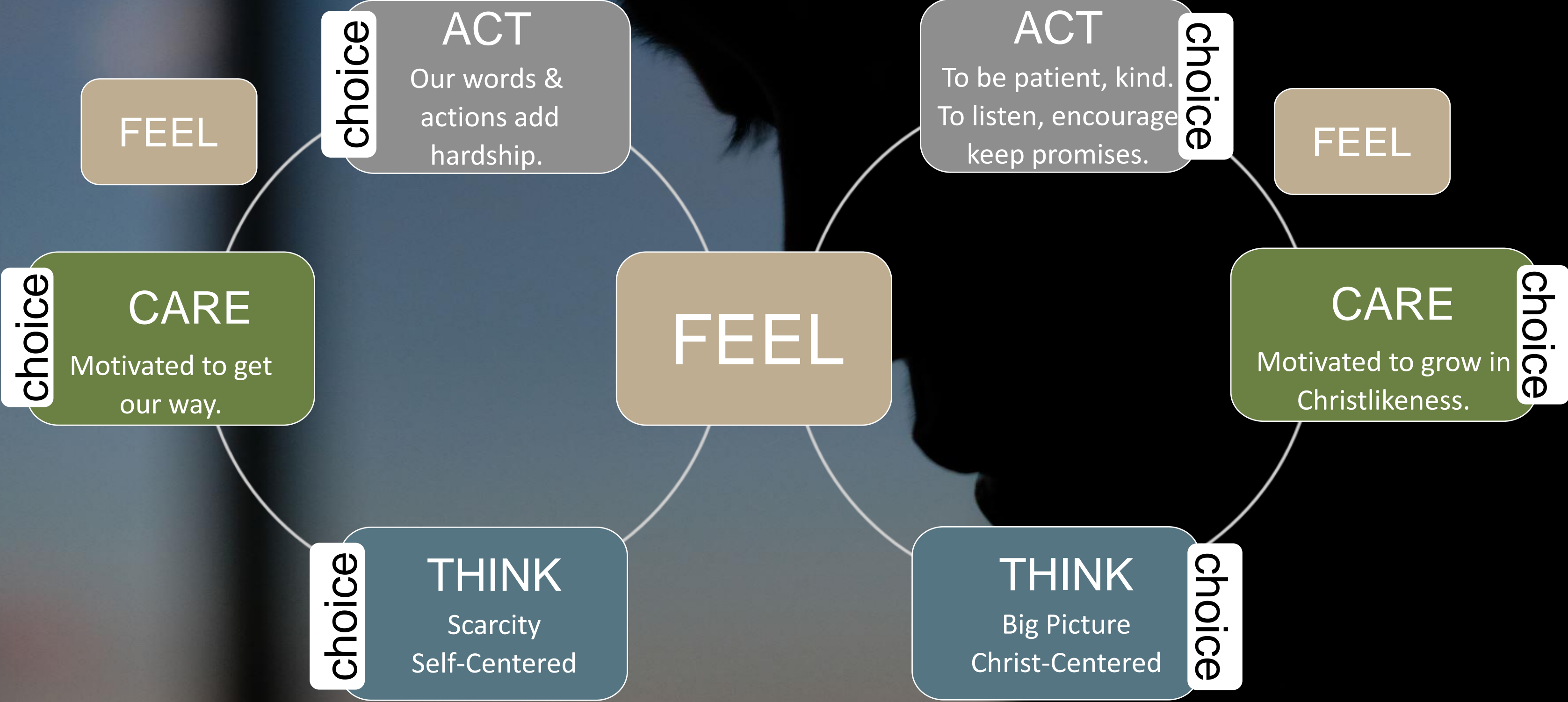
How we THINK CARE ACT & FEEL are always shaping our story.

Something extraordinary about being human is our ability to:

- Pay attention to feelings.
- Realign how we choose to THINK CARE and ACT.



Our Mixed Narrative

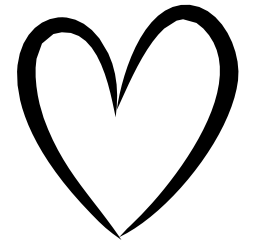
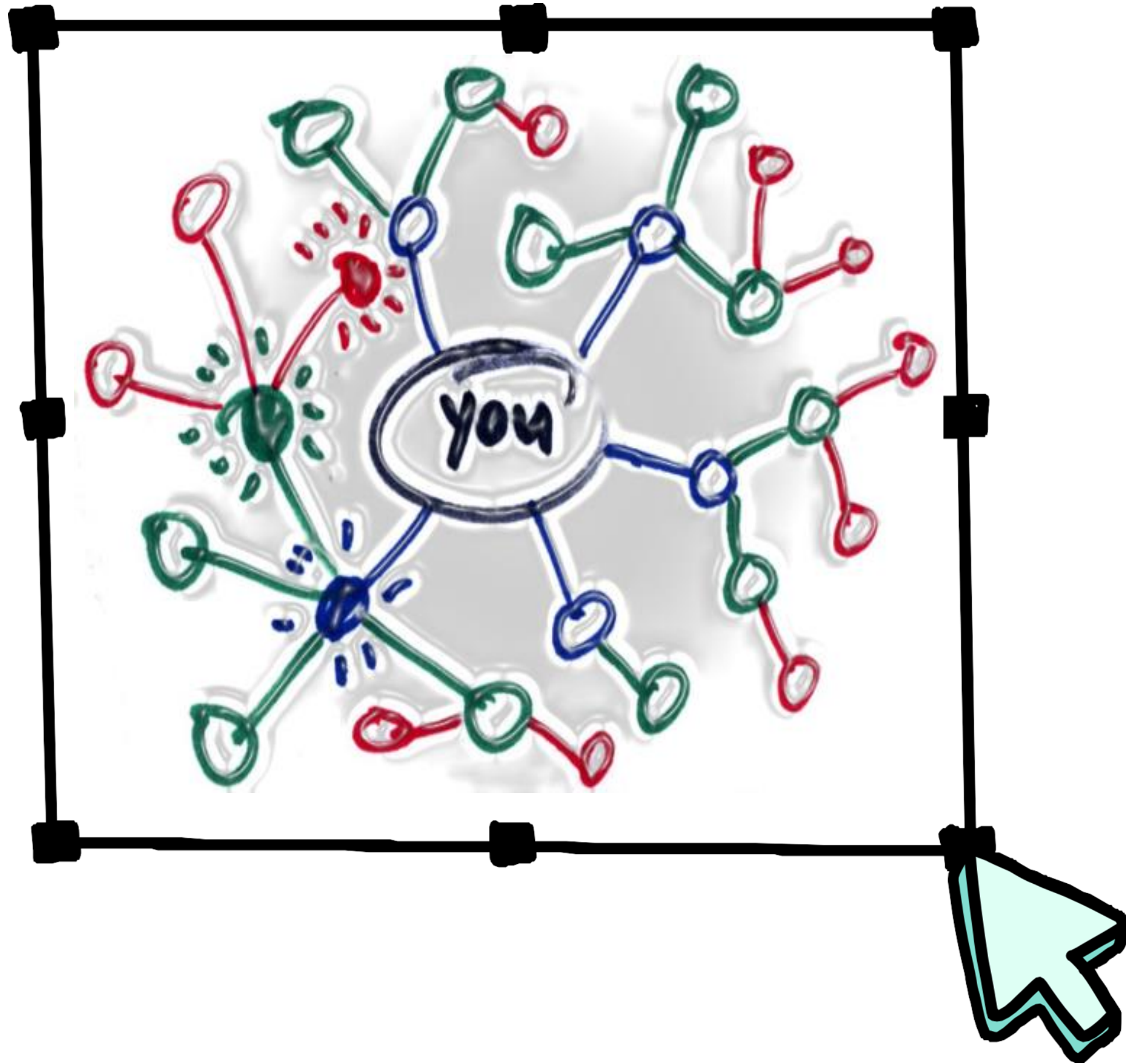


Distracted Cycle

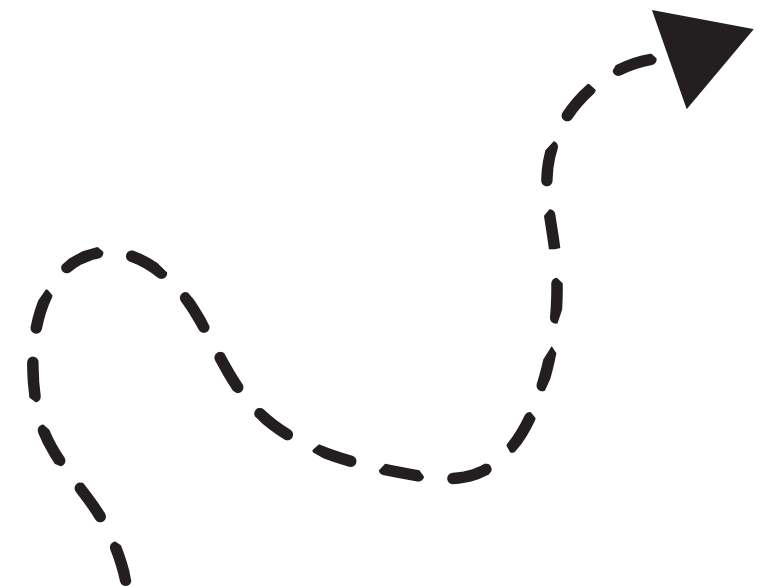
Thriving Cycle



In this session, we are going to explore how a Big Picture Narrative helps us develop the love and confidence needed to keep moving forward even when it's hard.



Whether we are aware of it or not, we are linking the events of our day and the impact of our choices together.



Our Narrative

is the framework that weaves

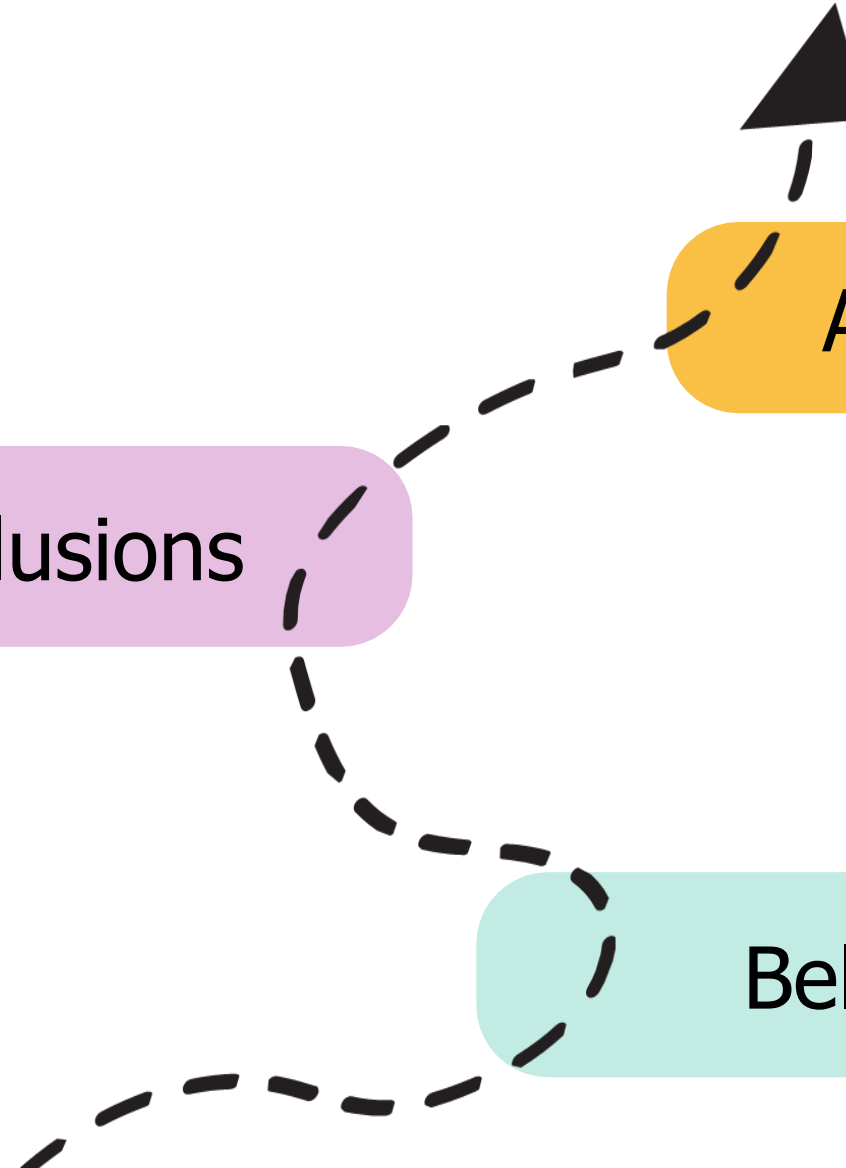
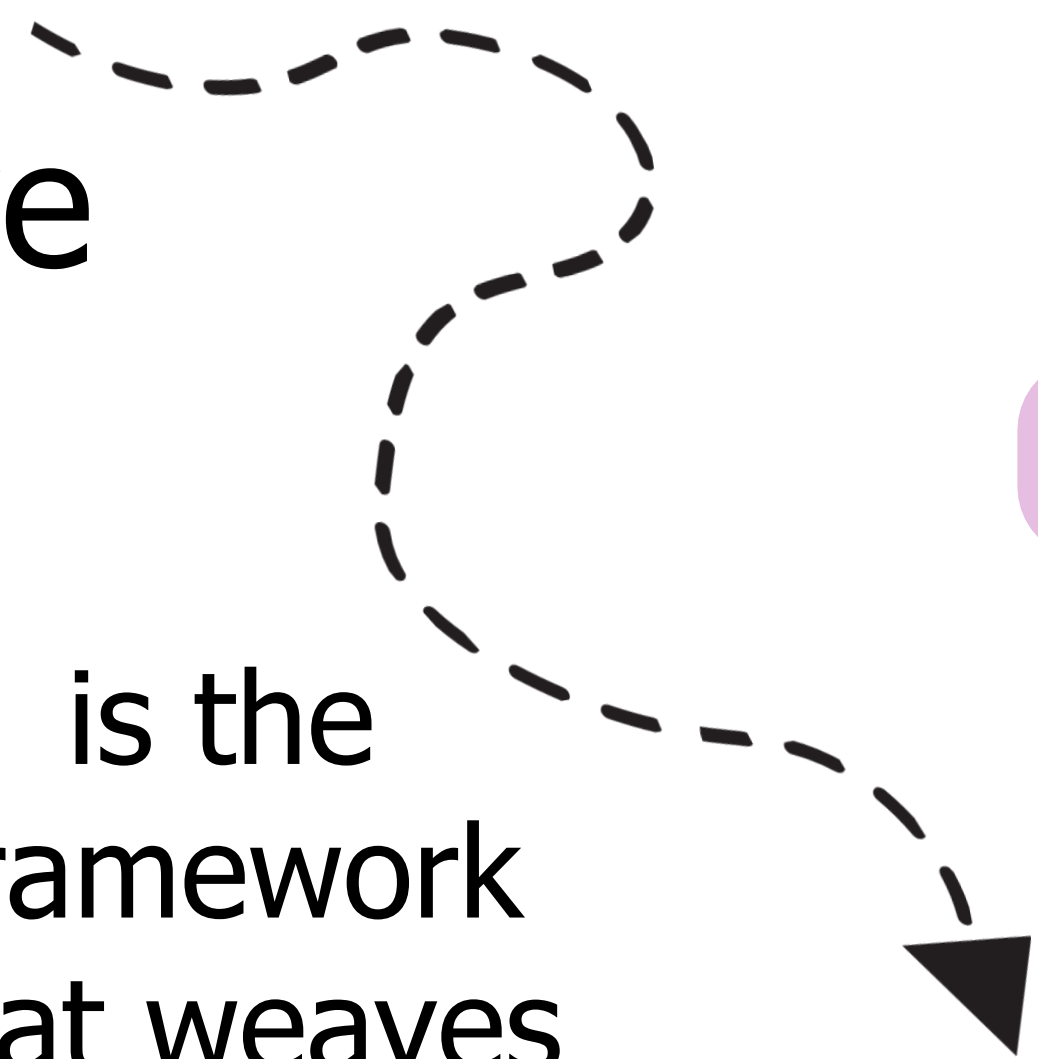
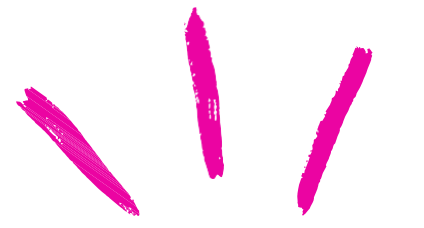
Facts

Conclusions

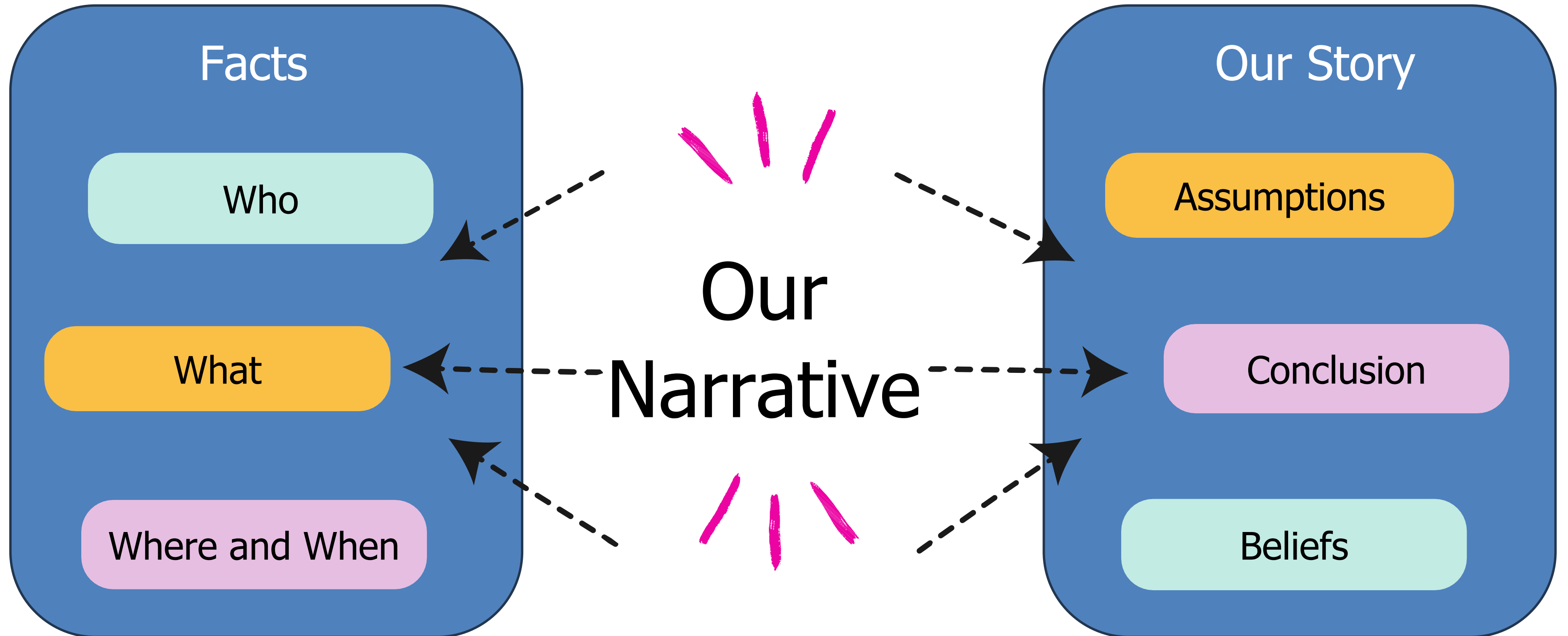
Beliefs

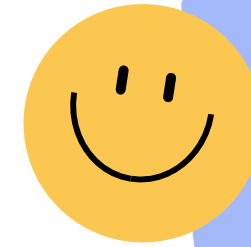
Assumptions

... together into a story.



Separating the Facts from Our Story Provides Clarity.



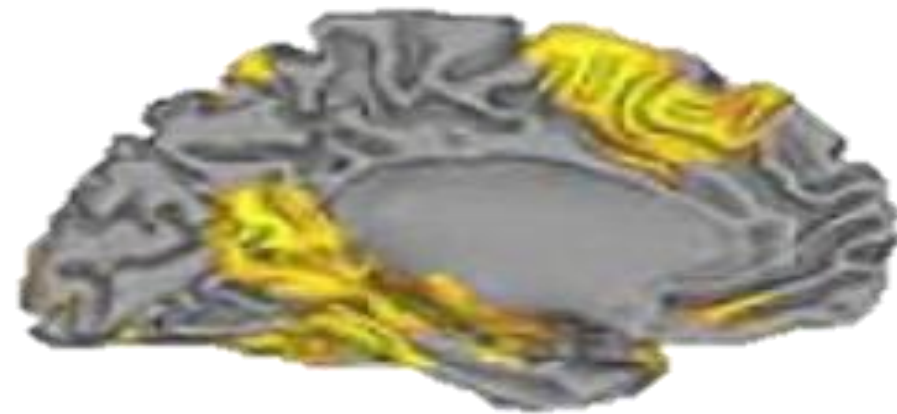


Research

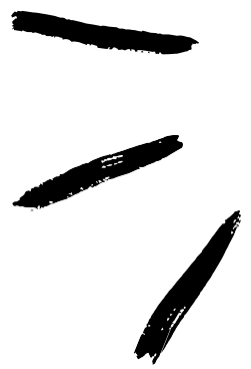
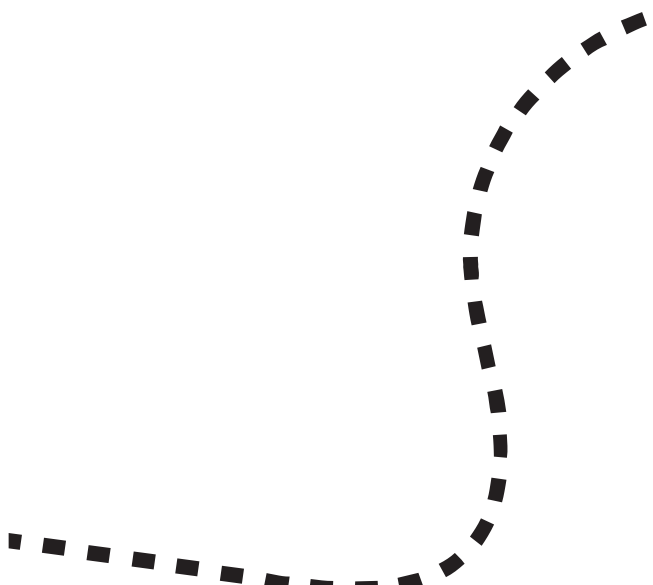
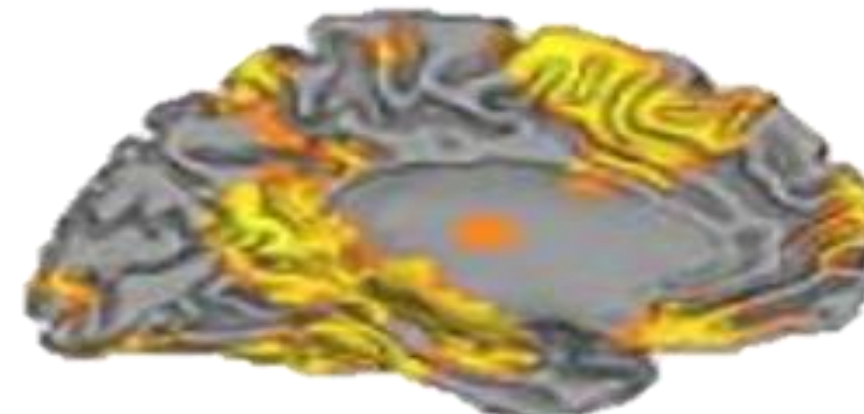
The Story We Tell Ourselves Matters

Scientists at Washington University in St. Louis discovered...

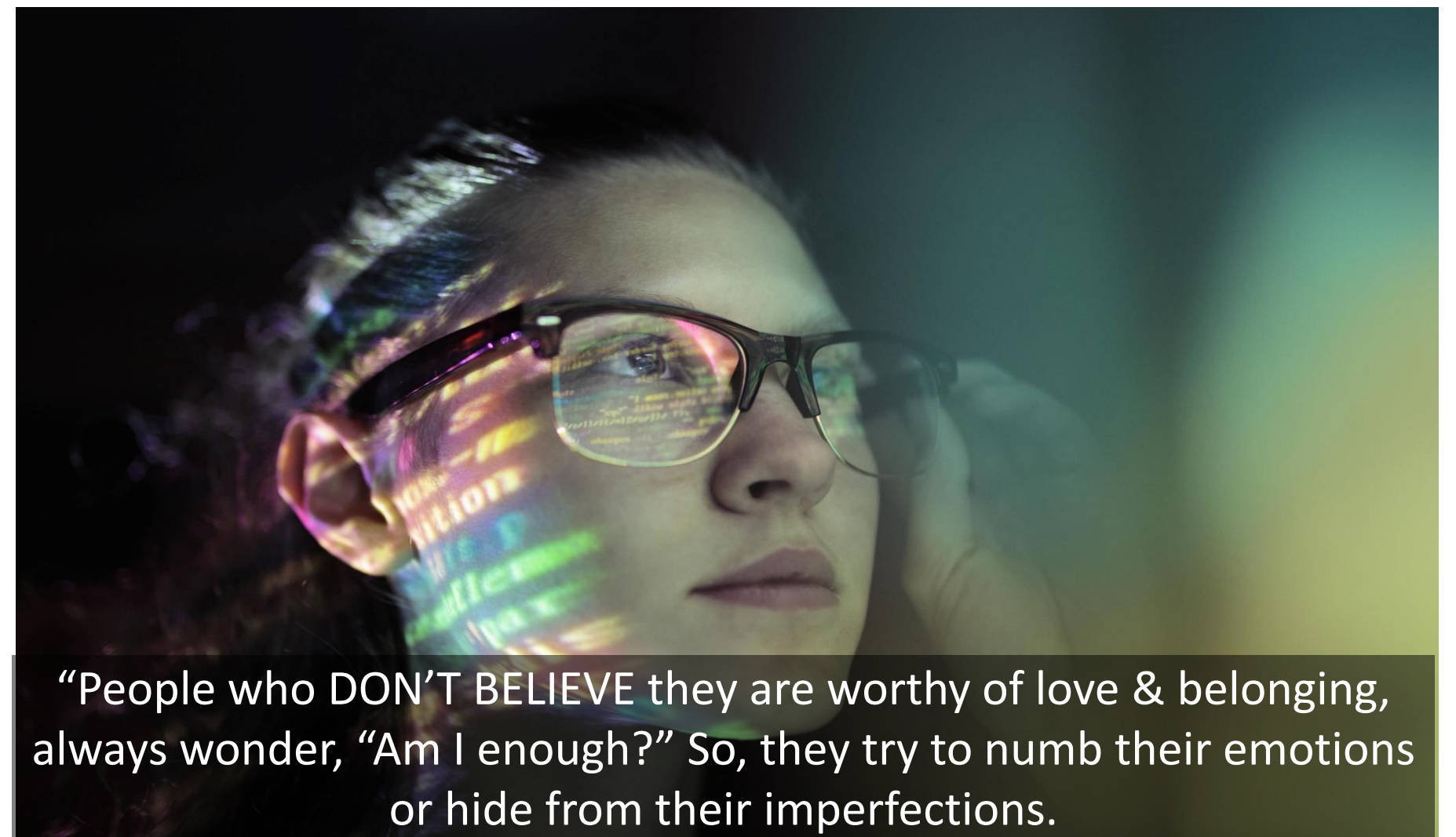
...the same regions of our brain we use to recall our past,



...are the same regions we use to look forward into the future.



Research conducted by Dr Brene Brown shows:



“People who DON’T BELIEVE they are worthy of love & belonging, always wonder, “Am I enough?” So, they try to numb their emotions or hide from their imperfections.



However, people who BELIEVE they are worthy of love & belonging have the courage to be imperfect & build authentic relationships & the compassion to be kind to themselves and others.”



Dr. Lisa Miller, professor of psychology at Columbia looked through the MRI at people with a sustained spiritual life over eight years.

People with a sustained spiritual life

Had a thicker cortex in the regions of perception, reflection, and orientation. Result: greater processing power.

That means our story doesn't just say what happened ...

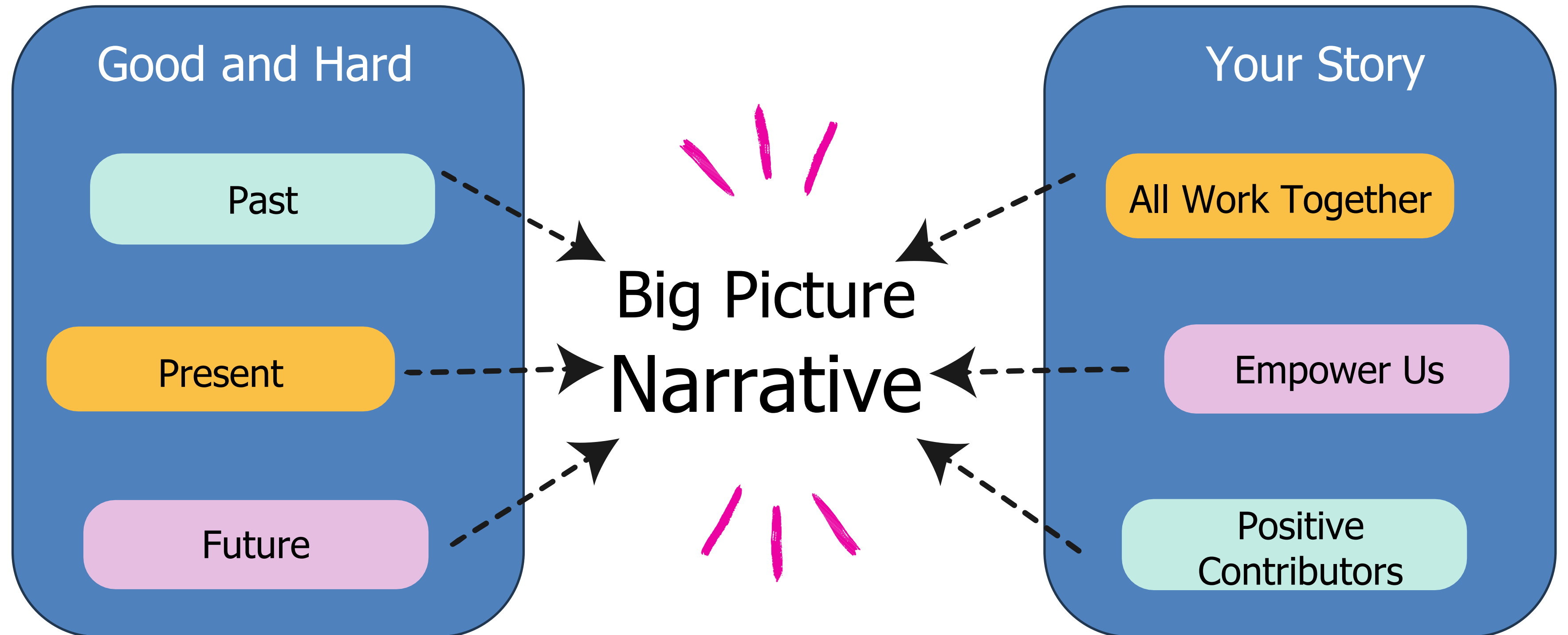


How we perceive the **PAST** events of our story affects...

... how we see ourselves in the **PRESENT**...

... as well as our dreams about what we can and want to become in the **FUTURE.**

Those who intentionally position themselves to see how their whole story; the good and the hard parts of their past, present, and future can work together to empower them to be positive contributors have what we call a "Big Picture Narrative."





A Big Picture Narrative is built on the belief that:

We all play an important role.
Our choices matter.

Our stories are unique!
Our circumstances do not define us, but they do position us.

Therefore, we are all unconditionally significant and uniquely positioned to make a positive impact.

A Big Picture Narrative enables you to:

acknowledge the struggle without becoming overwhelmed by it.

see yourself as an important part of a bigger narrative

recognize you have personal agency; your choices carry weight.

see how successes and hardships can turn into opportunities

see the value in diversity.

see you are not a victim and focus on the things you can change.

THINK

So, you feel

hopeful, grounded, and grateful.

the love, confidence to keep growing, even when things go array.

FEEL

When challenged, we:

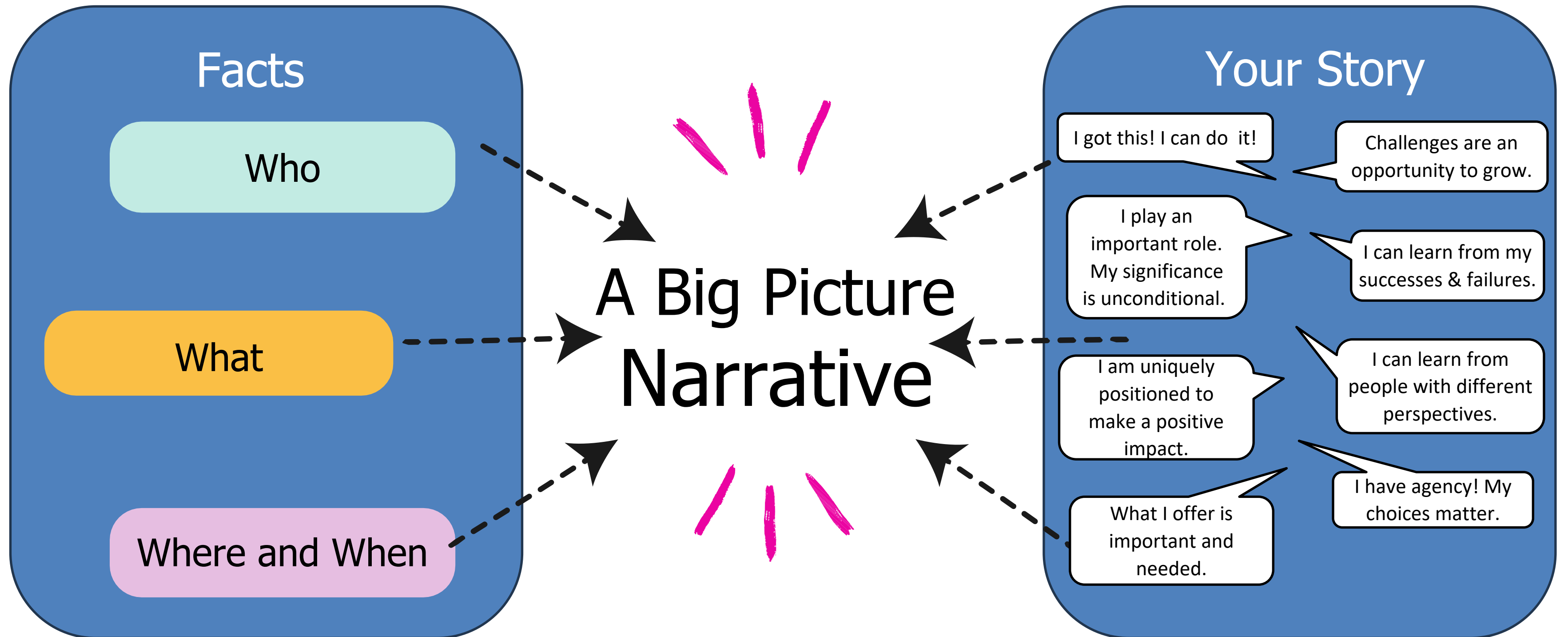
do the hard work it takes to move your dreams forward, while supporting others.

listen, ask questions, and receive feedback.

be kind and respectful to those around you, even if they express differing opinions.

ACT

A Big Picture Narrative Sounds like this:



On the contrary, a Scarcity Narrative is built on the false belief that:

$$\text{Our Value} = \text{What we have and Do} + \text{What Others Think of Us}$$

When we have a Scarcity Narrative, we:

can struggle to see how our circumstances can work together.

can focus on our needs & wants, disregarding the needs of others.

can focus on things that are out of our control, not the things we can change.

can focus on the hard parts of our story; the things we do not have or do not like.

are searching for our significance. So, our view of ourselves waivers up & down w/our circumstances.

can limit our view of what we think we can accomplish or become.

THINK

So, we can feel

overwhelmed, frustrated, fearful, insecure or helpless; making space for burn-out to take root.

arrogant, proud, or entitled to get our way at any cost.

FEEL

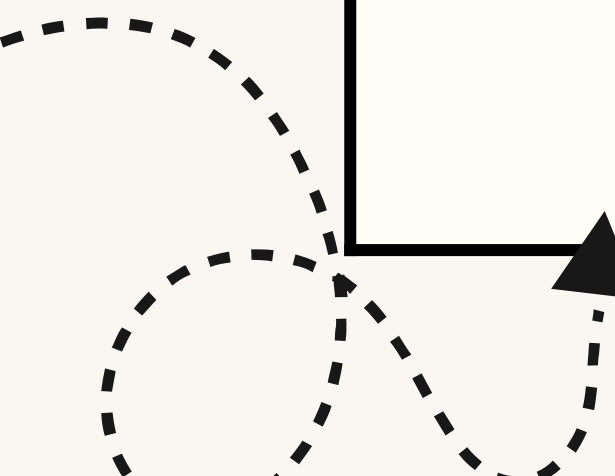
When challenged, we can:

give up or compromise our integrity when things get hard others.

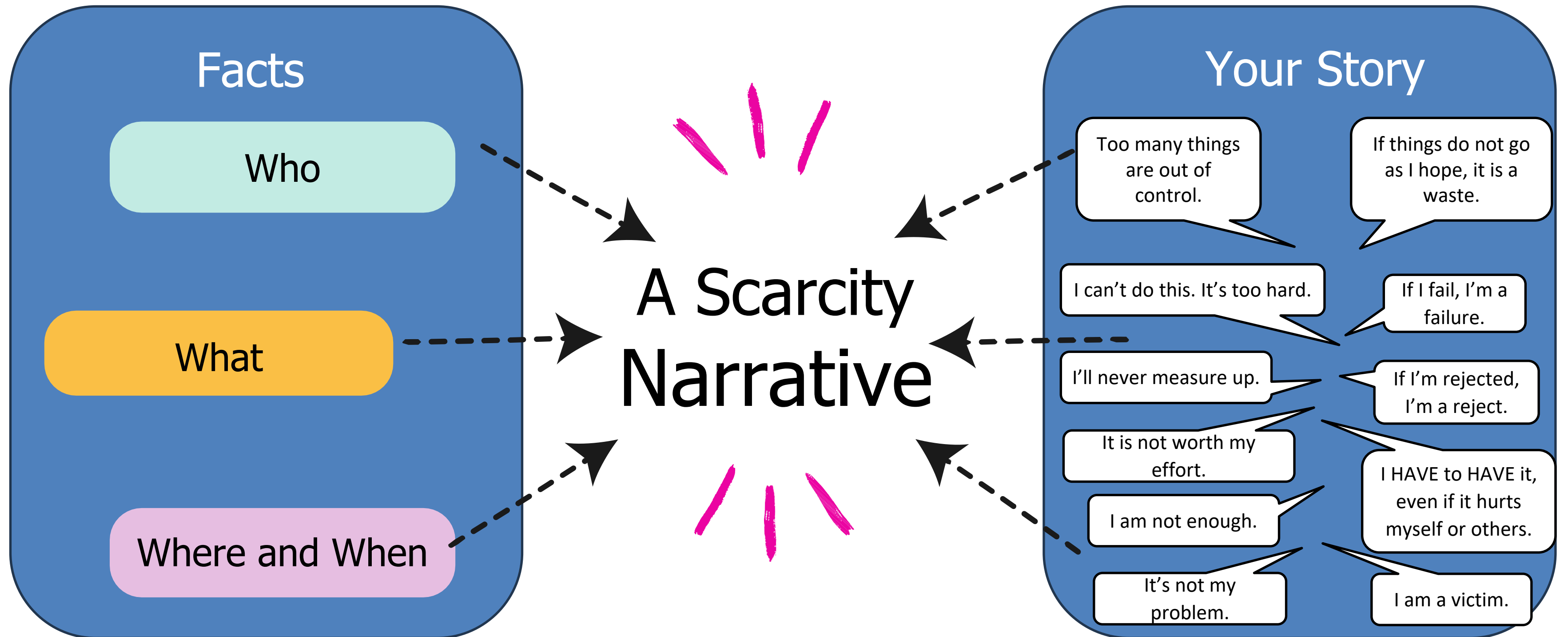
get mad, slander, or blame others when things do not go your way.

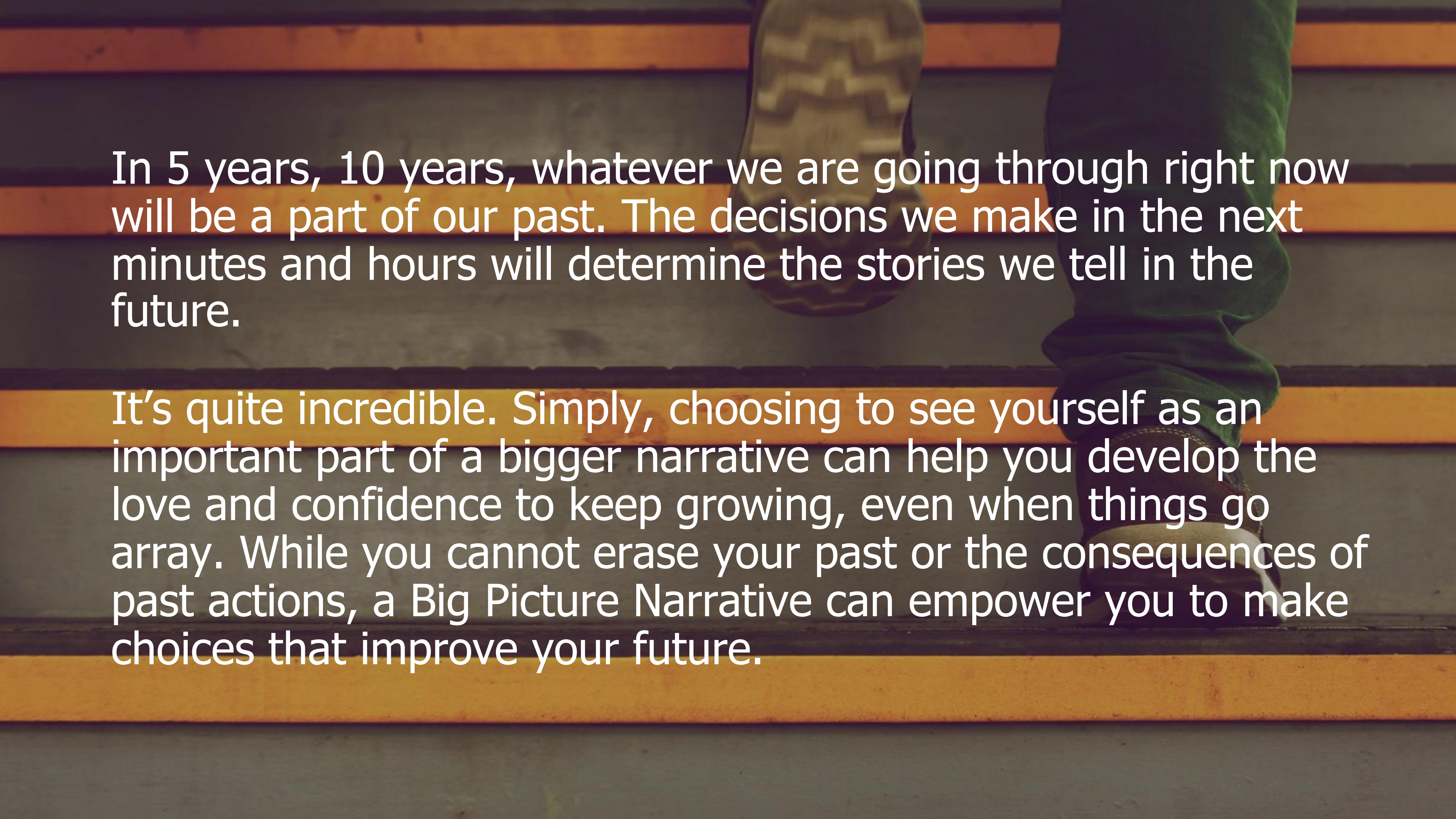
be disrespectful, argue or interrupt others when they express differing opinions.

ACT



A Scarcity Narrative Sounds Like This:



A person's legs and feet are visible, wearing green pants and brown shoes, walking on a wooden plank surface. The text is overlaid on the image.

In 5 years, 10 years, whatever we are going through right now will be a part of our past. The decisions we make in the next minutes and hours will determine the stories we tell in the future.

It's quite incredible. Simply, choosing to see yourself as an important part of a bigger narrative can help you develop the love and confidence to keep growing, even when things go array. While you cannot erase your past or the consequences of past actions, a Big Picture Narrative can empower you to make choices that improve your future.

The **My Narrative Matters Exercise** looks at the connection between your narrative and your emotions. After reviewing the facts of a challenging situation, consider how your Narrative impacts your emotions. Keep in mind, it is normal to have a mixed narrative and emotions.

Paper Activity

My Narrative Matters Exercise

Directions: Write down the a few facts about a current challenge you are facing.

The Facts	
Who	What
Where	<u>When</u>

Next, use the check boxes to explore how your narrative can impact how you feel about the facts.

If I choose a Big Picture Narrative	I will likely feel more ...																																		
<p>The struggle is real. Many things are out of my control. Things will go wrong. I will make mistakes.</p> <p>My whole story; the good and the hard parts of my past, present, and future can work together to empower me to be positive contributor.</p> <p>What I offer is important and needed.</p> <p>Challenges are an opportunity to grow.</p> <p>I play an important role. My significance is unconditional.</p> <p>I can learn from my successes & failures.</p> <p>I got this! I can it!</p> <p>I can learn from people with different perspectives.</p> <p>I have agency!</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <th>Positive emotions</th> <th>Negative emotions</th> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> at ease</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> anger</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> connected</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> fear</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> courageous</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> overwhelmed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> confident</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> stressed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> curious</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> bored</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> excited</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> worn-out</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> grateful</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> worried</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> joyful</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> scared</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> loved, <u>loving</u></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> irritated</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> positive</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> sad</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> proud</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> embarrassed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> remorseful</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> disconnected</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> supported</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> uncertain</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> excited</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> powerless</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> indifferent</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> other _____</td> </tr> </table>	Positive emotions	Negative emotions	<input type="checkbox"/> at ease	<input type="checkbox"/> anger	<input type="checkbox"/> connected	<input type="checkbox"/> fear	<input type="checkbox"/> courageous	<input type="checkbox"/> overwhelmed	<input type="checkbox"/> confident	<input type="checkbox"/> stressed	<input type="checkbox"/> curious	<input type="checkbox"/> bored	<input type="checkbox"/> excited	<input type="checkbox"/> worn-out	<input type="checkbox"/> grateful	<input type="checkbox"/> worried	<input type="checkbox"/> joyful	<input type="checkbox"/> scared	<input type="checkbox"/> loved, <u>loving</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> irritated	<input type="checkbox"/> positive	<input type="checkbox"/> sad	<input type="checkbox"/> proud	<input type="checkbox"/> embarrassed	<input type="checkbox"/> remorseful	<input type="checkbox"/> disconnected	<input type="checkbox"/> supported	<input type="checkbox"/> uncertain	<input type="checkbox"/> excited	<input type="checkbox"/> powerless		<input type="checkbox"/> indifferent		<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
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<p>Too many things are out of control.</p> <p>If things do not go as I hope, it is a waste.</p> <p>I can't do this. It's too hard.</p> <p>If I fail, I'm a failure.</p> <p>I'll never measure up.</p> <p>If I'm rejected, I'm a reject.</p> <p>It is not worth my effort.</p> <p>I HAVE to HAVE it, even if it hurts myself or others.</p> <p>I am not enough.</p> <p>I am a victim.</p> <p>It's not my problem.</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <th>Positive emotions</th> <th>Negative emotions</th> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> at ease</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> anger</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> connected</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> fear</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> courageous</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> overwhelmed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> confident</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> stressed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> curious</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> bored</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> excited</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> worn-out</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> grateful</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> worried</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> joyful</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> scared</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> loved, <u>loving</u></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> irritated</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> positive</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> sad</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> proud</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> embarrassed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> remorseful</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> disconnected</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> supported</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> uncertain</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> excited</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> powerless</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> indifferent</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> other _____</td> </tr> </table>	Positive emotions	Negative emotions	<input type="checkbox"/> at ease	<input type="checkbox"/> anger	<input type="checkbox"/> connected	<input type="checkbox"/> fear	<input type="checkbox"/> courageous	<input type="checkbox"/> overwhelmed	<input type="checkbox"/> confident	<input type="checkbox"/> stressed	<input type="checkbox"/> curious	<input type="checkbox"/> bored	<input type="checkbox"/> excited	<input type="checkbox"/> worn-out	<input type="checkbox"/> grateful	<input type="checkbox"/> worried	<input type="checkbox"/> joyful	<input type="checkbox"/> scared	<input type="checkbox"/> loved, <u>loving</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> irritated	<input type="checkbox"/> positive	<input type="checkbox"/> sad	<input type="checkbox"/> proud	<input type="checkbox"/> embarrassed	<input type="checkbox"/> remorseful	<input type="checkbox"/> disconnected	<input type="checkbox"/> supported	<input type="checkbox"/> uncertain	<input type="checkbox"/> excited	<input type="checkbox"/> powerless		<input type="checkbox"/> indifferent		<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
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Talk About It

What did you notice about the connection between your narrative and emotions?