



Love, Attachment, and Freeing the Relational Self

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Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science
An Online Class with Jewel Heart International
May 10, 2025



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- **Buddhist Psych: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Development**
- Western Psych: Attachment vs. Attachment Trauma
- Self-Analysis and Self-Healing East and West
- Practicum: Turning The Four Keys of Self-Analysis

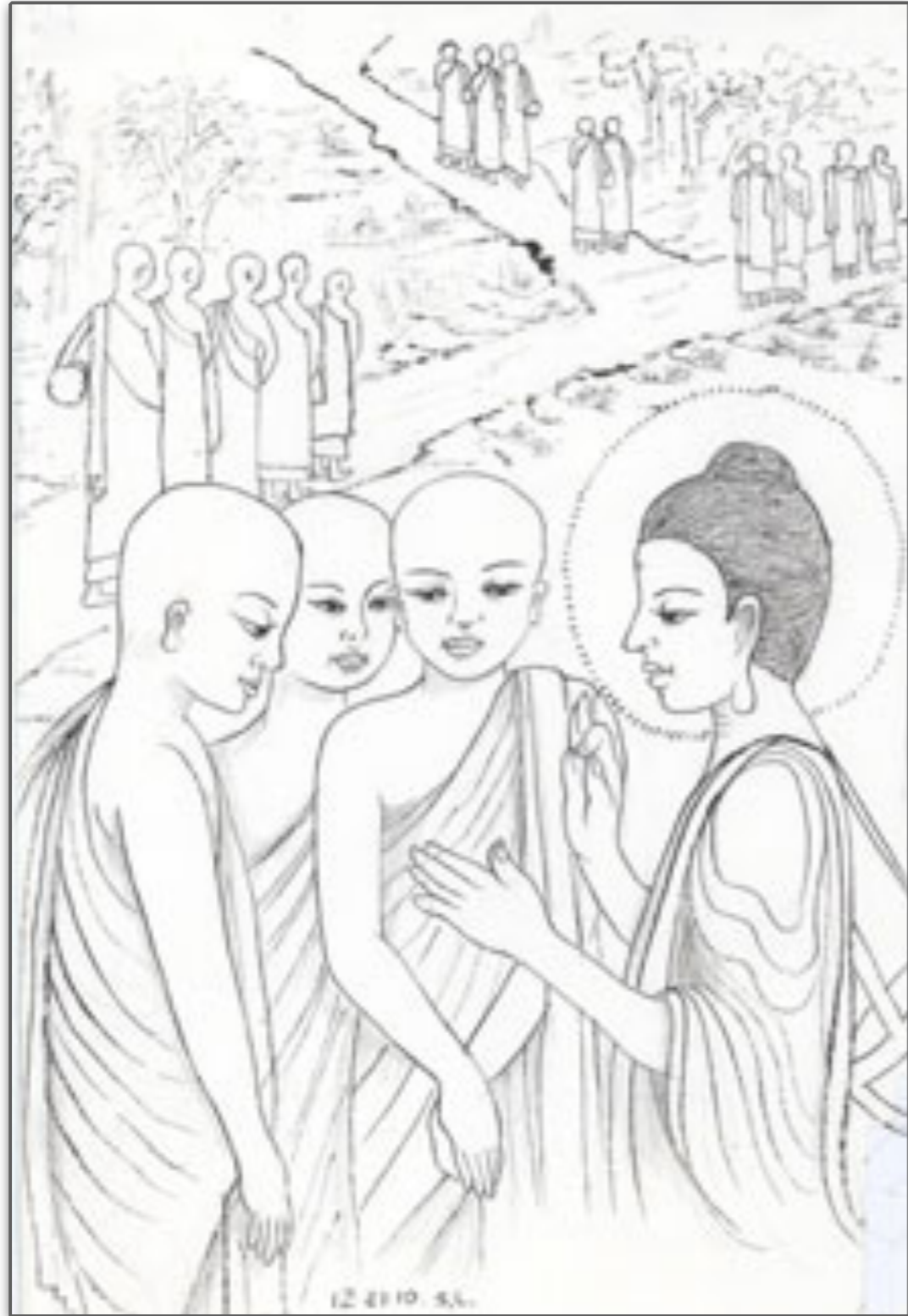


Buddha and Ananda: The Power of Loving Relationship



At one time, Ananda said to the Buddha, “Lord, loving friendship, wholesome companionship, beloved company, these are half of the noble life.” To his surprise, the Buddha replied, “Not so Ananda, not so. Ananda, loving friendship, wholesome companionship, beloved company; these are the whole noble life.”

—*The Arising Scripture, Samyutta Nikaya, 45.2*



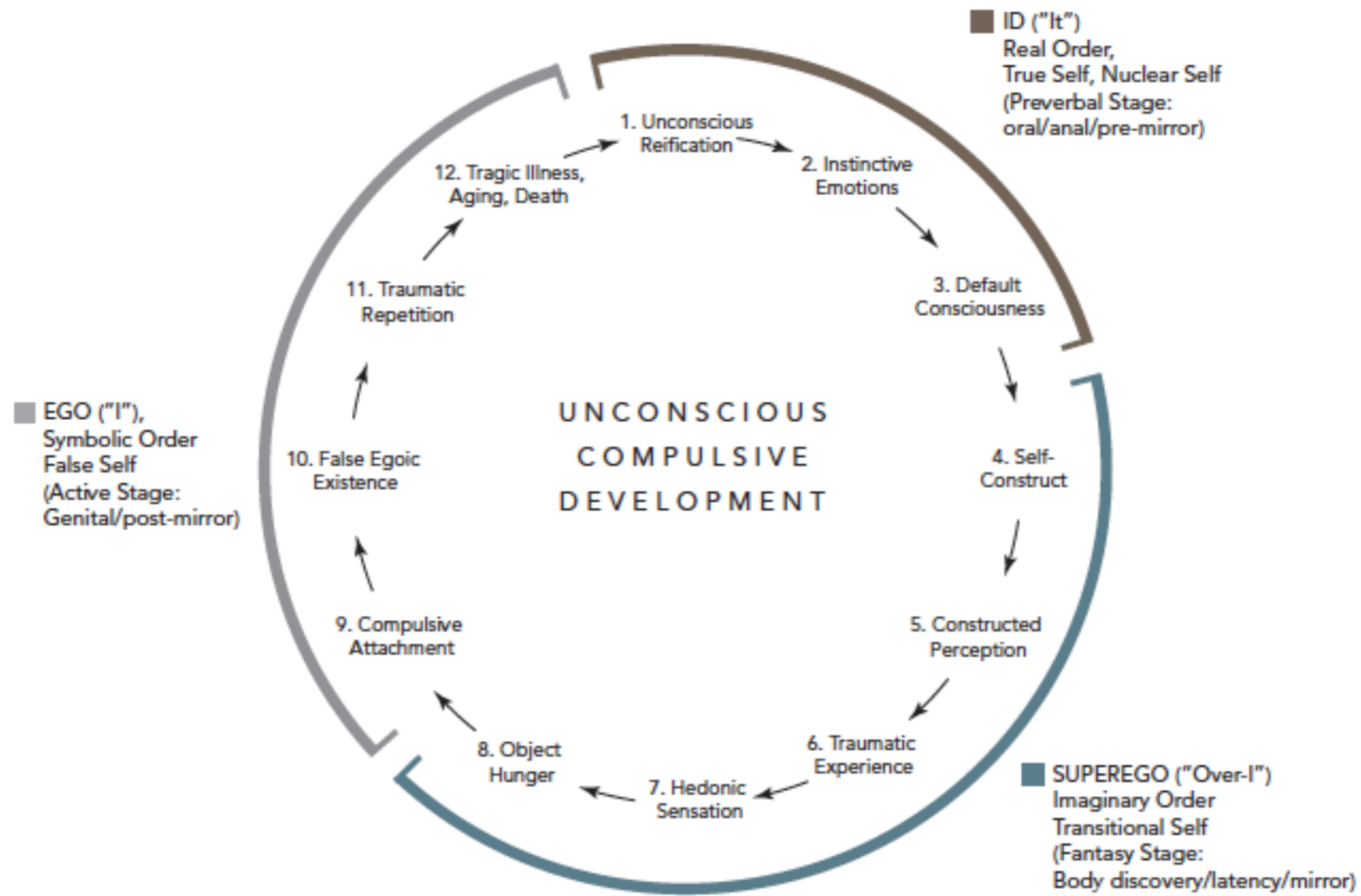
How did Buddha's teaching come to be known as "the philosophy of selflessness?" (*anatma-vada*).



His wisdom was based on his discovery that the suffering of the human condition stems from our being locked in an evolutionary struggle for survival...



His Claim to Fame Was Defining the Causes of That Inherited Struggle: How We Are Driven by a Cycle of Stress and Trauma





The wisdom of selflessness is the cure he prescribed because he saw the root cause of our bondage to stress and trauma—delusion (*avidya*)—as the instinctive habit of self-protection, the “self-habit” (*atma-graha*), a.k.a. Mara, the ingrained psychic demon haunting our minds...





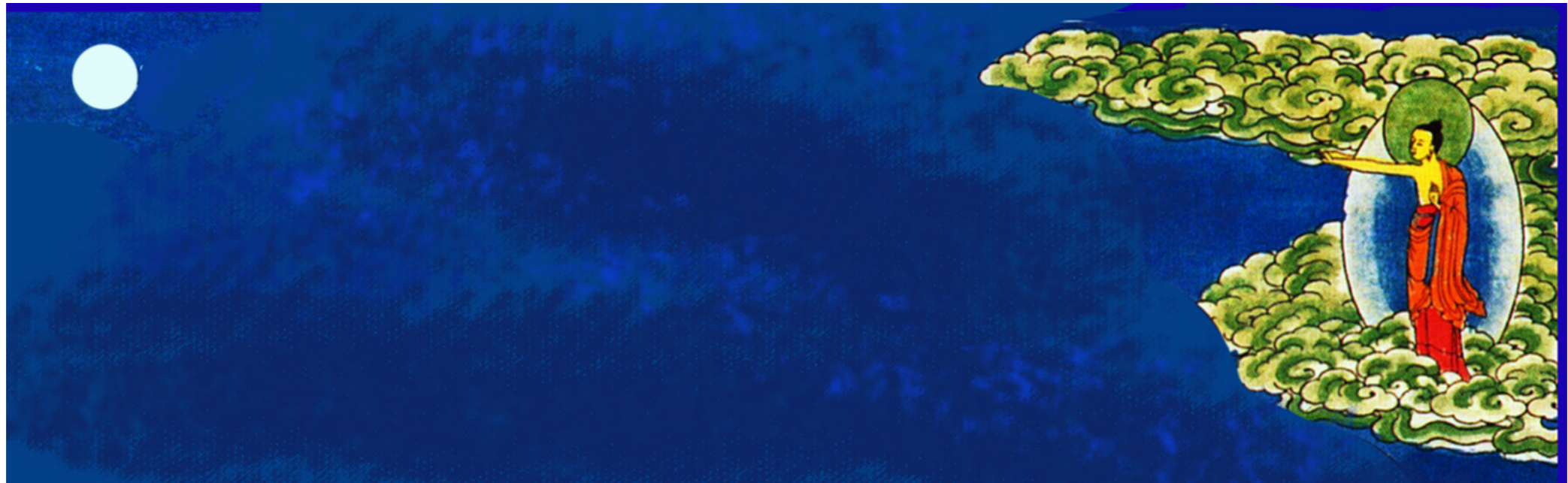
This Self-Protective Overdrive Locks Us in a Sense of Threatened Self, Triggering Traumatic Emotions & Habits

- Addictive attachment and aversion (link 2)
- Clinging to traumatic mindset and identity habits (3-4)
- Obsession with worst-case traumatic worldviews (5-6)
- Lives of reactivity, craving and compulsive habit (7-9)



So all this begins to sound like we need to dismantle or annihilate our “selves” to be free, on top of which emotions like love, desire and attachment, and the longing for connection underlying them must be renounced as the dirty fuel that powers the struggle for survival, the intergenerational cycle of trauma Buddha called the wheel of existence or samsara.

Do We all Need To Become Lay Monks and Nuns?





Let's Back Up to What the Buddha Said to Ananda...

- Where attachment or desire (*raga*) is toxic
- Like clinging (*grahana*) and craving (*tanha*)
- Just as addictive (*klishta*) as anger or aversion (*dvesa*)
- Love, friendship, kindness (*maitri=metta*) is medicine
- Along with compassion, joy and equanimity



And While "Self" Is the Root of all Ills, There Must Be a Nexus/Agent for Loving, Caring and Joyful Relationships

Buddhas mention "self," and also teach "selflessness," as well as teaching that there are no such things as self and selflessness. The Buddha's teaching is that all is reality, unreality, both reality and unreality, and neither reality nor unreality. "All is empty" should not be asserted, nor should "all is not empty," "all are both," nor "all are neither." Each is maintained [only] in the context of conventional reality. The Buddha never taught any (fixed) doctrine to anyone at any time.

—Nagarjuna, *Central Way Verses*, XVIII, 6, 8; XXII, 11



Nagarjuna,
Master of
Profound
Healing
Wisdom





So Exactly Which Habit of Self Binds Us, and What Is the Healthy Self We Need To Break Free?

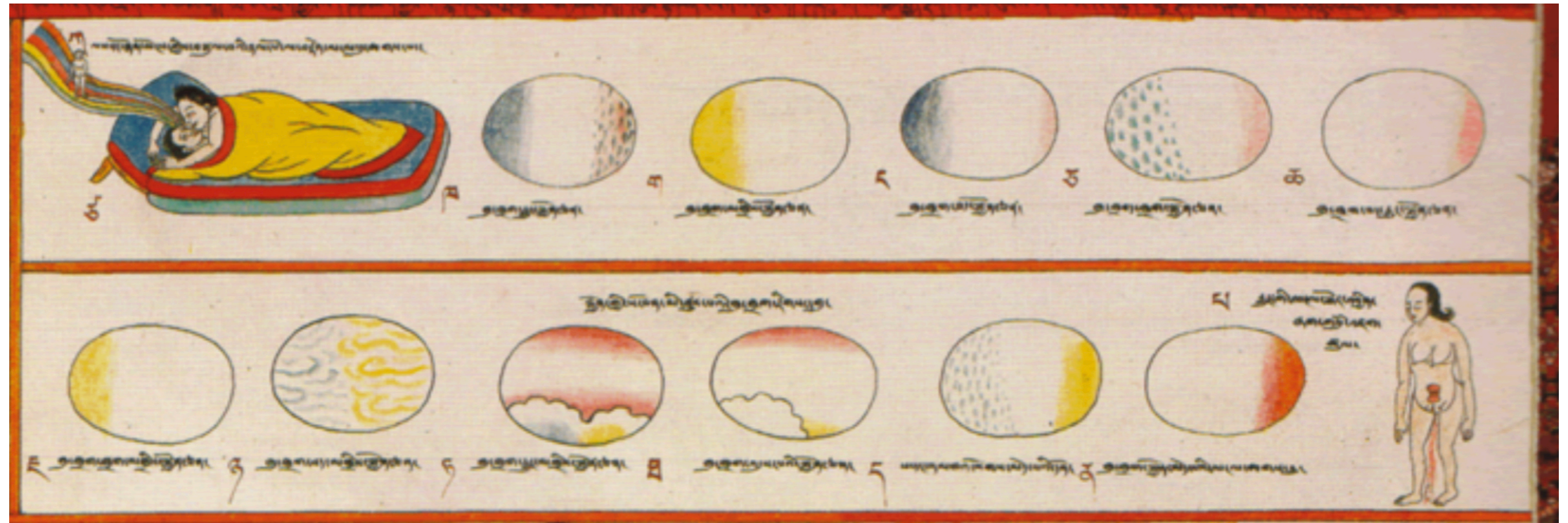
- The Buddha's positive theory of self is *karma* theory
- That is the theory of active development (*karma-vipaka*)
- He taught that, "Of all things, mind is the creator."
- Our life-cycle starts, grows and changes with acts of mind



Vasubandhu,
Master of
Depth
Psychology



Unconscious Conception: Threefold Convergence





Conception, Development, Life Powered by Mind

- Body: Two Genetic Factors, Egg and Sperm
- Place: the Mother's Womb During Intimacy
- Time: Moment of Fertilization and Creation of Embryo
- Mind: Transition State Stream of Consciousness
- Cognition: Self-Reifying Delusion and Objectification
- **Motivation: Desire for One Parent, Identification w/ Other**
- Compulsion: Self-Reifying Appropriation of Egg & Sperm

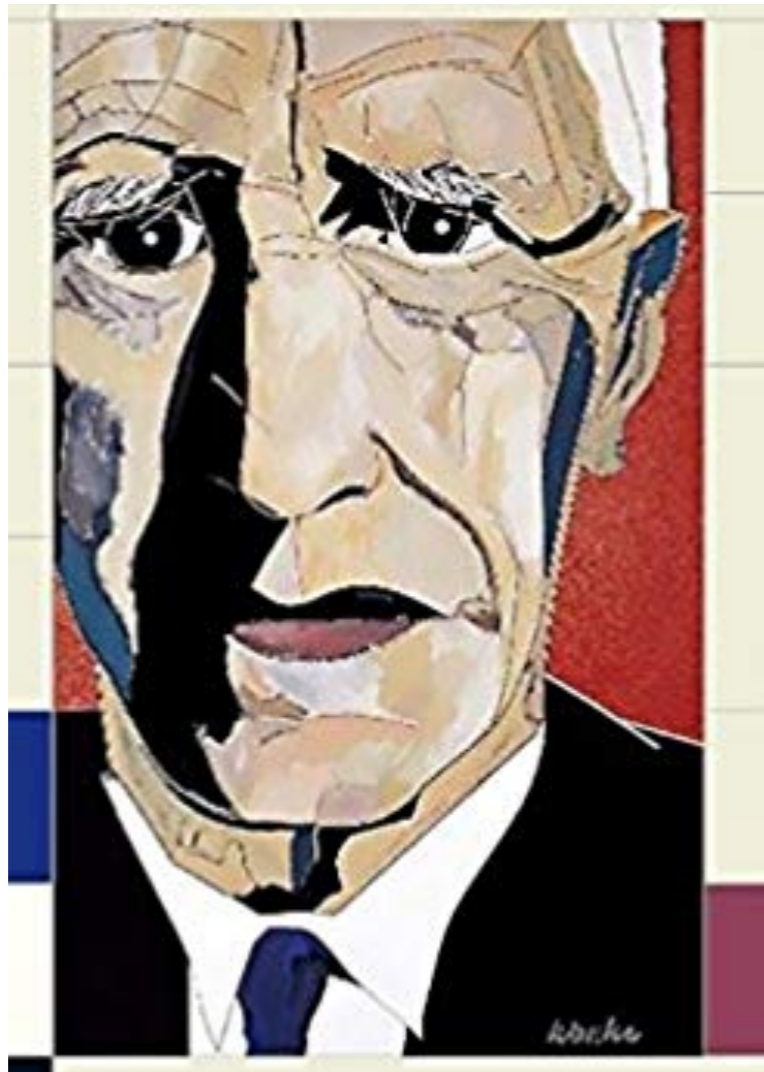


Given the karmic view of development as driven by the infant's desire/longing for love and connection, Buddha anticipated both Freud's Oedipal theory and the later attachment theory of Anna Freud and others





The Buddha's emphasis on the healing power of loving relationships even anticipated the newest relational schools of therapy like Winnicott's and Klein's as well as the positive psychology of today





Chandrakirti,
Master of
Therapeutic
Philosophy



Selflessness, Whether of Persons or Things, Means: No Selves Are Non-Relative as They Seem

As for "self," it is something that does not relate to anything else. Since it does not exist, there is selflessness. This is twofold because of the division between persons and things, namely: personal selflessness, and phenomenal selflessness (=emptiness).

—Chandrakirti, *Four Hundred Commentary XII,13*



So Both Buddhist and Western Psychology See Human Development and Life as Wholly Relational





So If Buddhist psychology and modern therapy both see the healthy self as wholly relational why do they both push us to analyze the self? And if they both center the role of loving relationships, why do they also both emphasize the harm done in early development and later life by fear and/or shame-based attachment?



Conception, Development, Life Powered by Mind

- Body: Two Genetic Factors, Egg and Sperm
- Place: the Mother's Womb During Intimacy
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- Motivation: Desire for One Parent, Identification w/ Other
- **Compulsion: Developing a Life of Trauma and Repeation**



If No Selves Are Non-Relational, How Do We Make the Illusion of Them? Psycholinguistic Construction

Honoring love which alone serves as the seed
For the bountiful harvest of victors,
As the water that nurtures it, and as
The endurance which brings the crop to fruition,
First of all gratefully I bow to compassion.
I honor those who develop compassion for beings
That revolve helpless as buckets in a waterwheel,
Coming to insist on a self, once they say, "I,"
Growing addicted to things, saying, "This is mine."

—Chandrakirti, *Introduction 1, 2-3*



The Psycholinguistics of Bondage and Liberation: Delusion = Reification (*Samaropa*)

Those who insist on a non-relative
"Self" or "world" --- Alas!
They are deprived by views,
Such as absolutism and nihilism.
Once they commit to (reifying) things,
They are trapped in painful, malignant views,
Which produce attachment and aversion
And the conflicts that spring from them.
That (reifying habit) is the cause of all views;
Without it compulsions do not develop.
So when its (falsity) is fully understood,
Views and compulsions are fully cured.

—Nagarjuna, *Reason Sixty*, 43-47



The Dialogical Centrist Theory of Selflessness: Self is a Mere Consensual/Contextual Designation

While that self will never be established [analytically], either in the ultimate or in the world, in any one of seven [logical] modes, nonetheless, it is designated in dependence on its constituents on the strength of unexamined social consensus.

—Candrakirti, *Introduction VI*, 158



So Exactly Which Habit of Self Binds Us, and How Does It Block our Capacity for Healthy Relationship/Flourishing?

- It is the habit of reifying and identifying with our worst case fears/feelings of abandonment/rejection as "I, me, mine"
- This locks us into a "traumatic" sense of self that appears separate and fixed and feels "alone" and "bad"
- Locked into this self-protective self, we contract and close around it, disconnecting from our relational capacities/self
- This self-enclosed, traumatic way of being blocks our capacity for healthy relationship, growth and flourishing
- So our worst case fears become self-fulfilling prophecies, leading to traumatic reactivities and reenactments



The Four Maras: Four Types of Delusional Self



- The Demon of Identifying with Our Addictions
- The Demon of Identifying with Our Mind/Body Process
- The Demon of Identifying with Self-Protective Survival Instincts
- The Demon of Identifying with Our Traumatized Inner Child

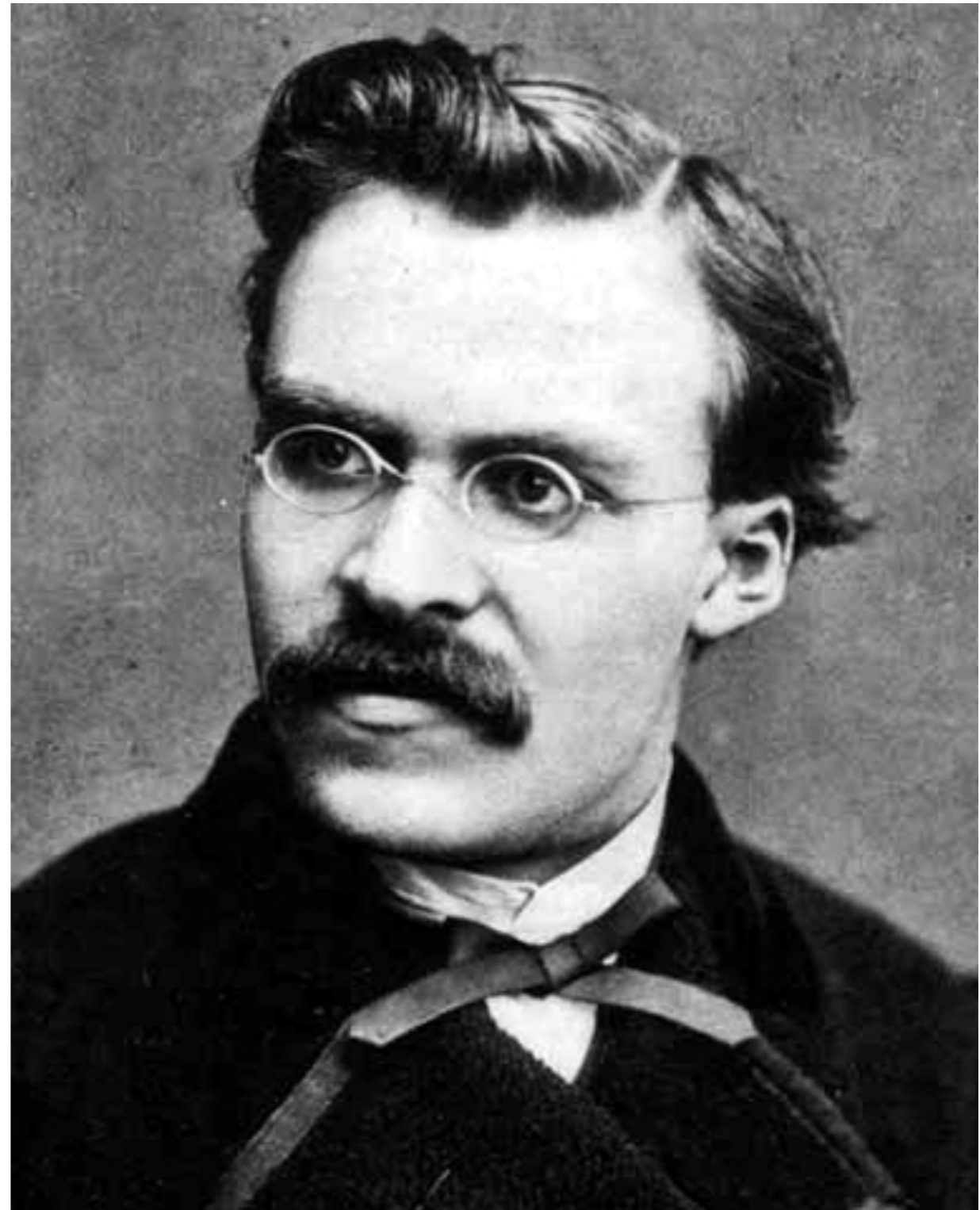


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Frederich Nietzsche,
Founder of Modern
Existentialism and
Psycholinguistics

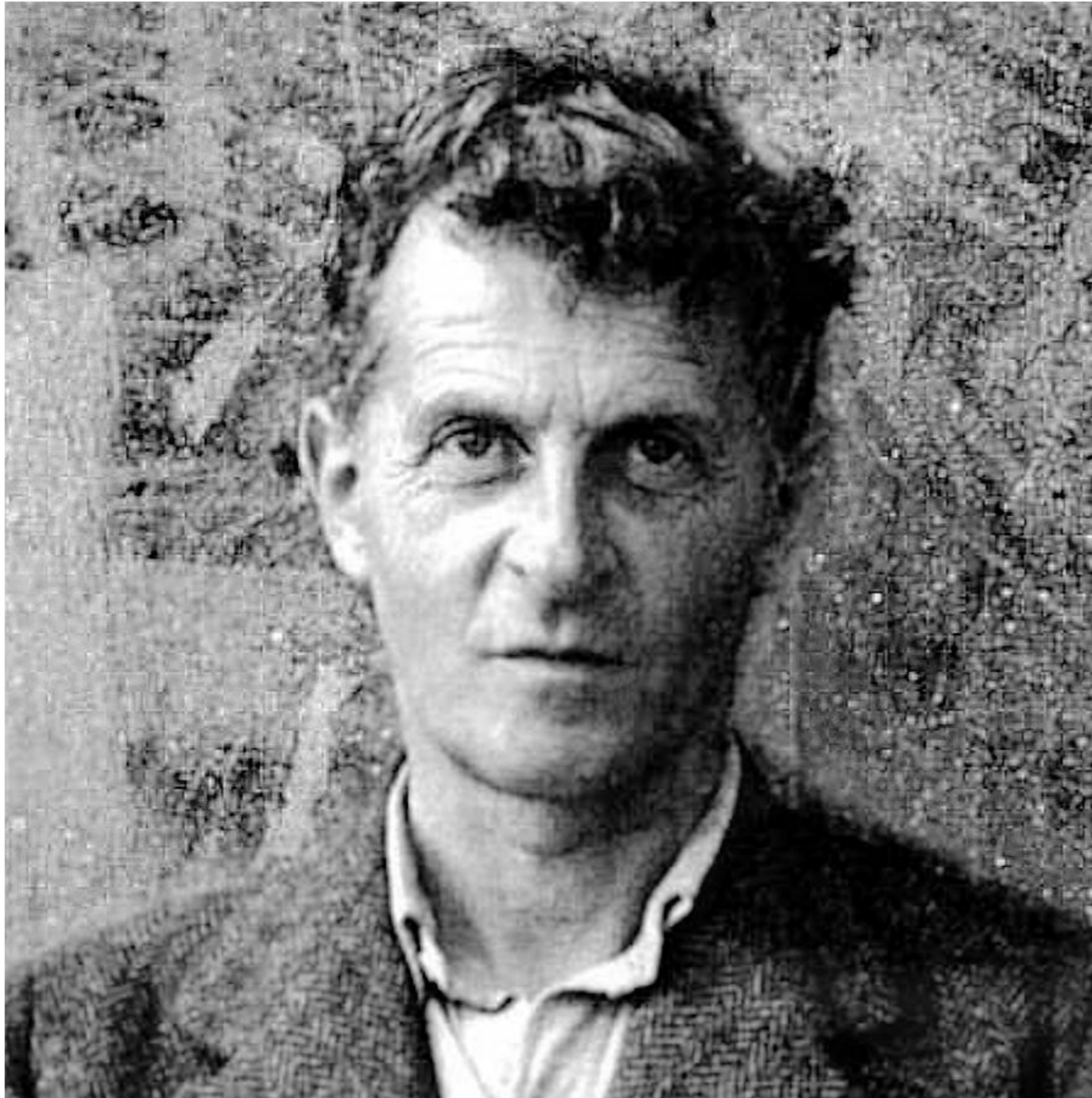




Nietzsche's Critique of Ideology based on the Psycholinguistics of Reification

A philosophical mythology lies hidden in language. It is language which sees everywhere deed and doer; this which believes in the 'ego' as being, in the "ego" as substance, and which projects its belief in ego substance on to all things. Only thus does it create the concept "thing." Today we know it is merely a word.

—Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 37.



Ludwig
Wittgenstein,
Founder of
Modern Linguistic
Philosophy



Wittgenstein's Critique of Philosophy based on the Psycholinguistics of Reification

We are up against one of the great sources of philosophical bewilderment: a substantive makes us look for a thing that corresponds to it.

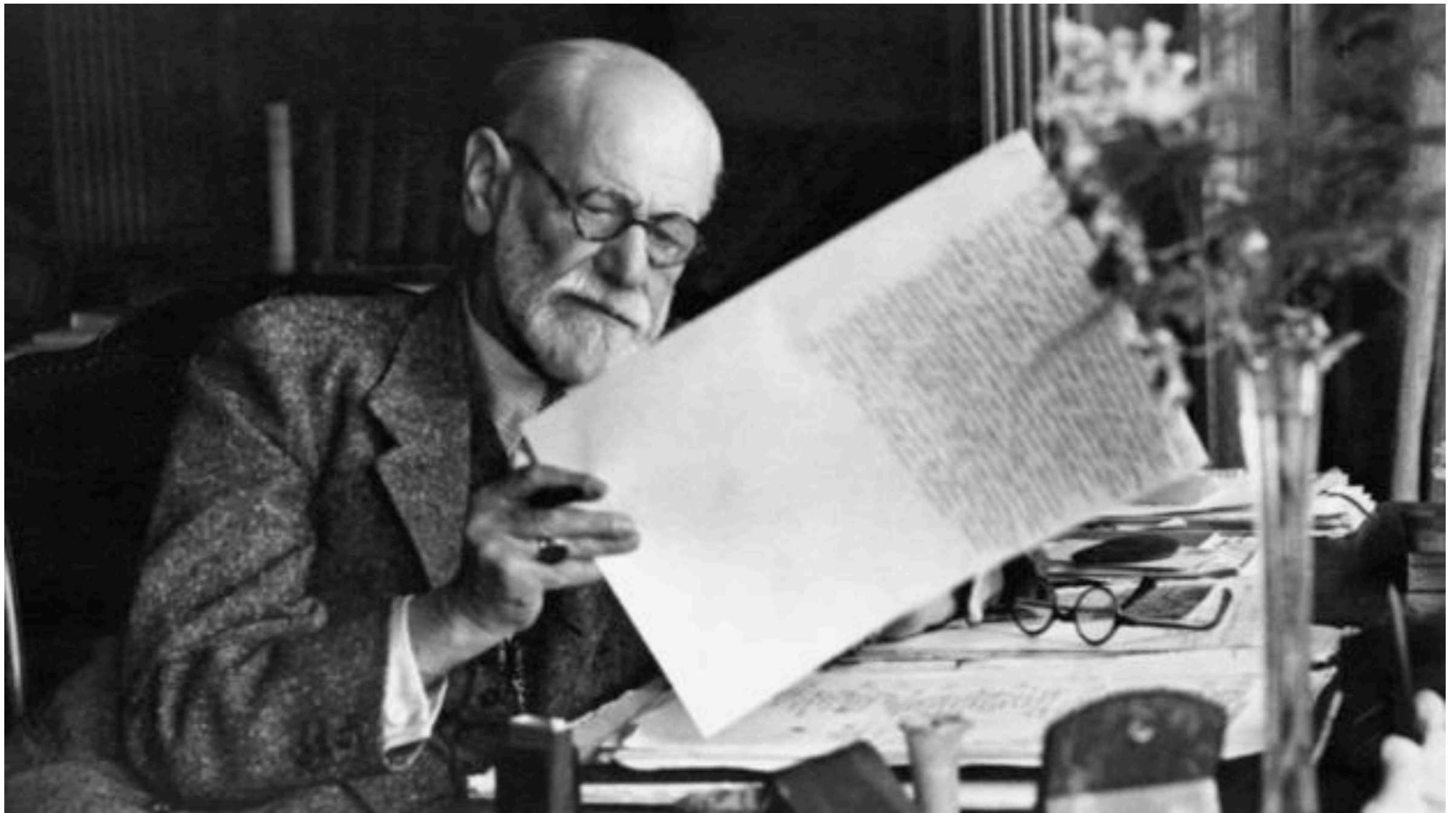
—Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books*, 1

Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.

—Wittgenstein, *Investigations*, 109

At the foundation of well founded belief lies belief that is not founded.

—Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 253



Sigmund Freud, Founder of Modern Psychotherapy



Freud's Critique of the Reified "I" or Self based on the Insights of Psychoanalysis

Normally there is nothing we are more certain of than the feeling of our self, our own ego. It seems to be an independent and unitary thing, apart from everything else. That this is a deceptive appearance, that on the contrary, the ego...serves as a kind of facade...was first discovered by psychoanalysis. The universal narcissism of men...has suffered three blows from science...and this (after Copernicus' and Darwin's) was probably the most wounding.

—Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 1.12-13



Bromberg: Intersubjective Psychoanalysis and the Theory of Relational Self-States

Self–states are highly individualized modules of being, each configured by its own organization of cognitions, beliefs, dominant affect and mood, access to memory, skills, behaviors, values, actions, and regulatory physiology.

When all has gone well developmentally, each self – state is compatible enough with the modes of being that are held by other self – states, to allow overarching coherence across self – states, which in turn creates the capacity for sustaining the experience of internal conflict.

—Phillip Bromberg, *Standing in the Spaces*



Jessica Benjamin: Intersubjective Psychoanalysis and the Theory of “the Third”

The psychoanalytic process should be understood as occurring between subjects rather than within the individual. Although this perspective has transformed both our theory and our practice in important ways, such transformations create new problems. A theory in which the individual subject no longer reigns absolute must confront the difficulty each subject has in recognizing the other as an equivalent center of experience...

— Jessica Benjamin, *Bonds of Love*





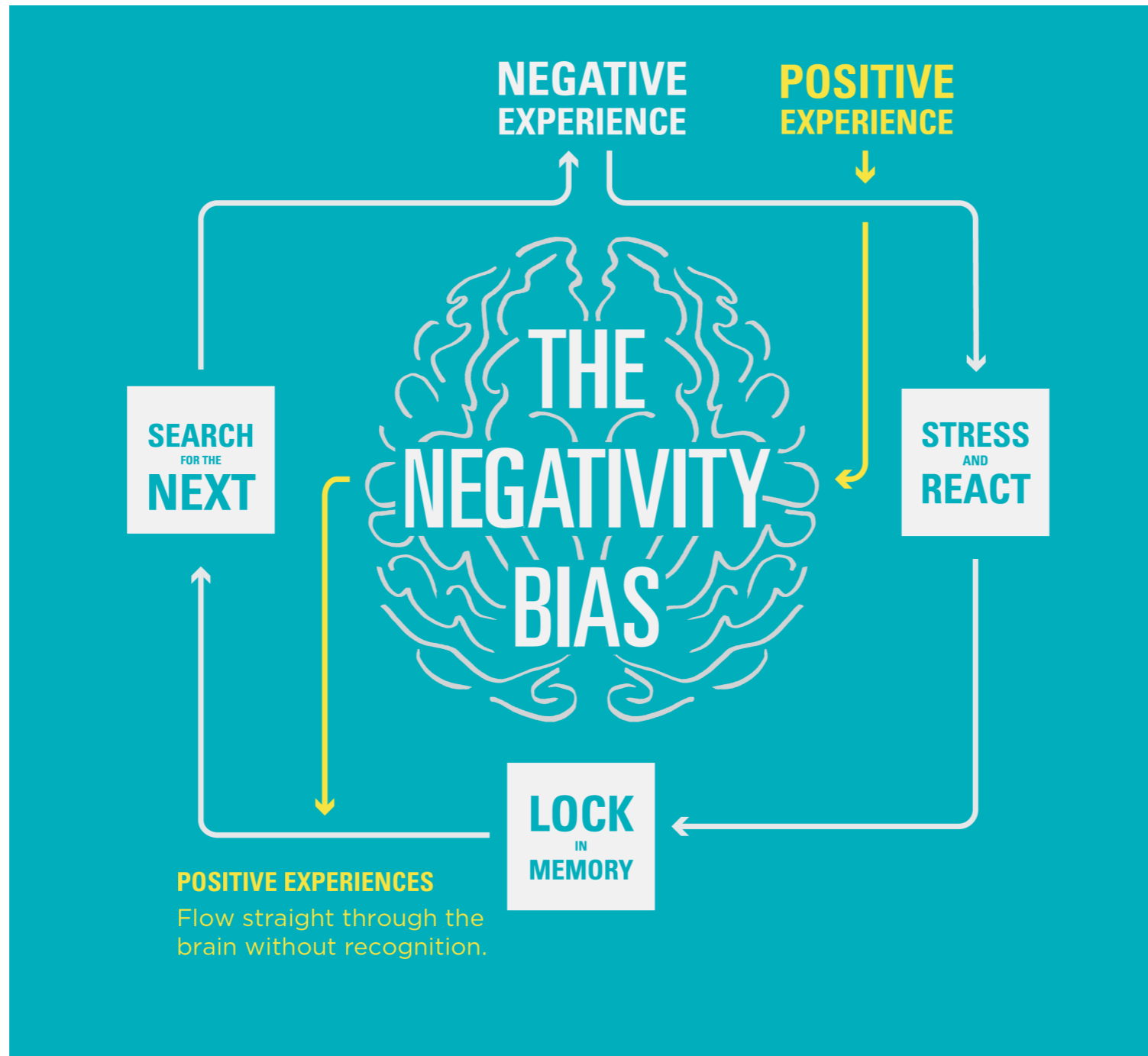
Attachment Theory: The Social Face of Stress and Trauma



- Human connection is our primary drive, our mind-brain grows and runs on social emotions
- Social stress and trauma hijack our mind-brain, eroding self-regulation and empathy networks
- Mammalian autonomic and neuropeptide regulation supports social engagement and intimacy



We're Velcro for Trauma, Teflon for Well-Being



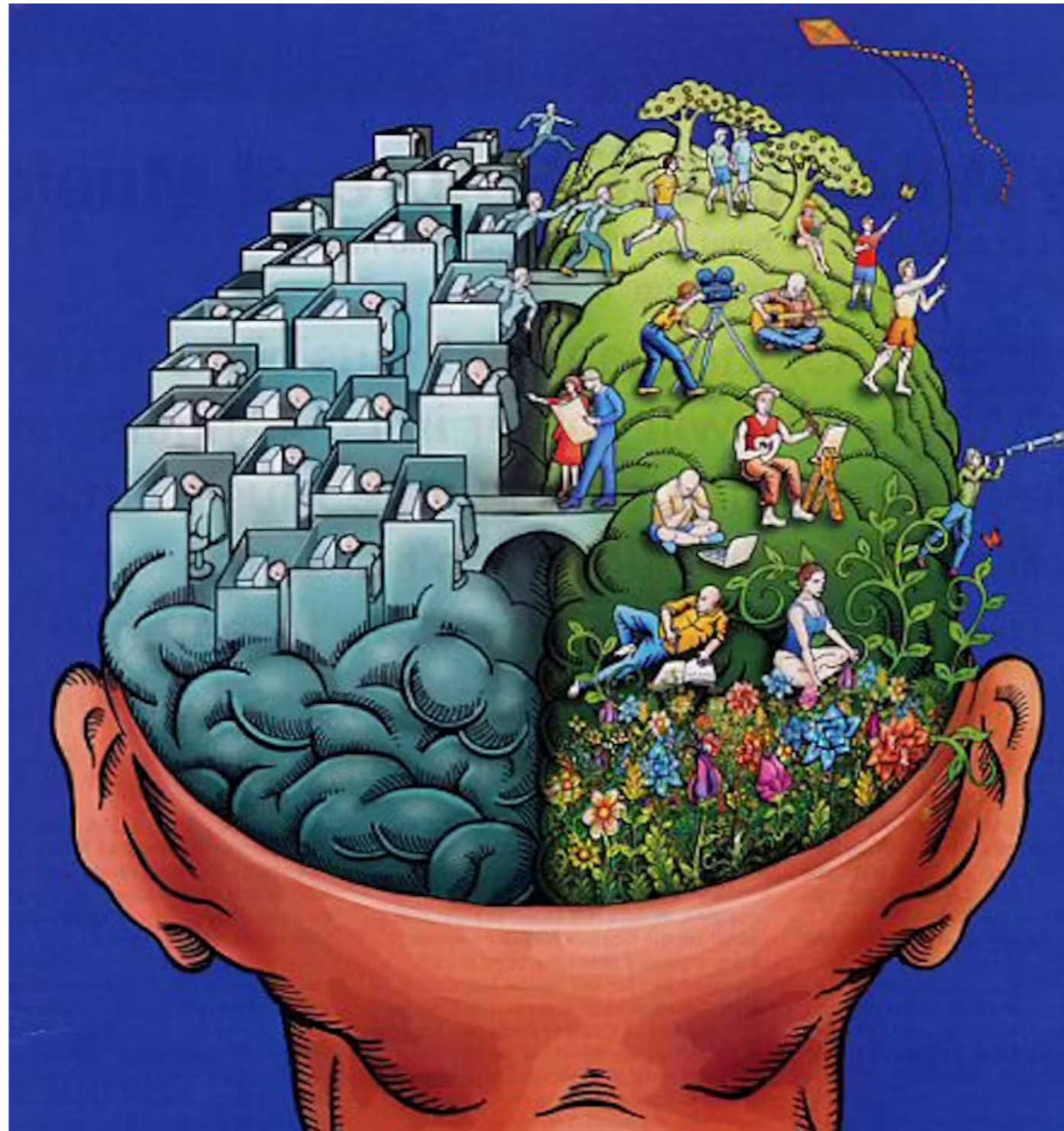


The Archeology of Post-Traumatic Attachment Reactivity: Shame-Based Moods & Reflex Modes

<p><i>Secure</i></p> <p>Accepting Shame from Empathic Blocks with Humility, Resilience & Repair Smart Vagal "Chill"</p>	<p><i>Anxious</i></p> <p>Fleeing Shame from Empathic Blocks with Self-Attack, Fearful Clinging Sympathetic "Flight"</p>
<p><i>Avoidant</i></p> <p>Avoiding Shame from Empathic Blocks with Defensive Pride Rigidity & Denial Old Vagal "Freeze"</p>	<p><i>Disorganized</i></p> <p>Fighting Shame from Empathic Blocks with Shame-Blame Violence & Rage Sympathetic "Fight"</p>



Trauma and Fragmentation: Western Models of Traumatic Self-States and Narratives





Each part contributes a conflicting defensive strategy

“I can’t **afford** to feel these feelings. I have to function!”

“Going on with Normal Life” Part

Traumatized Part of the Personality

Fight:
Protector

Fight protects with anger, hypervigilance, mistrust, resistance, self-harm and suicidality

Flight:
Distancer

Flight distances by using addictive behavior to get quick relief, to ‘turn off’ the body

Fear:
Terrified

The terrified Fear part triggers other parts to respond with alarm

Submit:
Ashamed

Shame, self-loathing, and passivity of Submit feeds helplessness, hopelessness

Attach:
Needy

The Attach part uses vulnerability and desperate help-seeking to elicit protection



Trauma and Fragmentation: Internal Family Systems—Exiles, Managers, Firefighters





Transforming Trauma: Shifting Core Self-States from Shame-Based Reactivity to Prosocial Resilience

- Shame refers to a range of let-down distress affects that signal threats of interpersonal rejection or group exclusion
- In the emotional memory of even secure individuals shame has a conditioned association with psychosocial death
- Given our negativity bias to cling to worst-case fears, we tacitly gasp onto core shame self-states as our real identity
- Such traumatic self-states block positive affects and repel caring interpersonal or group experience
- Only when we deconstruct our core shame identity are we open to give and take empathy, love, compassion & intimacy



Bruce Ecker: Memory Reconsolidation Research and Application to Transformational Therapies

- The brain's built-in process for updating what was learned
- When implicit memory is made explicit and reactivated
- Then juxtaposed w/ contradictory memory or experience
- The dissonance/prediction error briefly destabilizes memory
- Timely repeated juxtaposition "erases" target memory
- Clear neural model for transformational learning and change



East-West Comparison: Love, Attachment, Traumatic Self, and Relational Self

- Western Psych sees attachment as mixed love and fear
- Buddhist Psych contrasts them to free love from fear
- Western Psych help us grow more secure attachment
- Both see unconscious self as defensive and fragmenting
- Both try to analyze traumatic self and grow relational self



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De-Reifying Wisdom: The Power of Self-Analysis

When “this” or “that” appears a fact,
Yet when analyzed is not perceived,
What wise person would advocate with arguments
That “this” or “that” is really true?

—Nagarjuna, *Reason Sixty*, 42



The Four Keys: The Logic of Buddhist Self-Analysis

- Identifying What is to be Negated = The Reified Self-Protective/Traumatic Sense of Self
- Committing to a Binding Method of Analysis = To the Findings of Thorough, Introspective Analysis
- Realizing We Are Not Identical to Our Parts = No Part of Our Mind-Body Process is Irreducible or Fixed
- Realizing We Are Not Separable from Our Parts = All Our Identities Relate to Our Mind/Body Process



The Two Intuitive Wisdoms: Ultimate Spacious Equipoise Wisdom

When one discerns with precise intuition
What occurs conditioned by misknowledge,
One does not experience anything,
Whether created or ceased.
That is immediate nirvana,
And that very thing is "attaining the goal."
If, after that insight into the truth,
One discovers any particular here,
Imagining any sort of creation,
In anything, however subtle,
Such an unwise individual
Does not see the meaning of "conditioned arisal."

—Nagarjuna, *Reason Sixty*, 10-12



The Two Intuitive Wisdoms: Relative Illusory Aftermath Wisdom

Seeing things to be like mirror images
With their eye of intuitive wisdom,
Great souls do not get stuck
In the quicksand of "objects."
Those who cherish beauty become attached;
Those who turn away from it become detached.
But those who see it as empty,
Like an illusory person, reach nirvana.

—Nagarjuna, *Reason Sixty*, 54, 56



The Fruits of Healing Self-Analysis: Freedom from Self-Enclosure and Relational Flourishing

- Spacious Equipoise Breaks the Grip of the Traumatic Self
- Yields Freedom from Self-Enclosure Opens Us to All Reality
- Illusory Aftermath Liberates the Loving Relational Self
- Helps Embody Our Capacity for Social-Emotional Flourishing



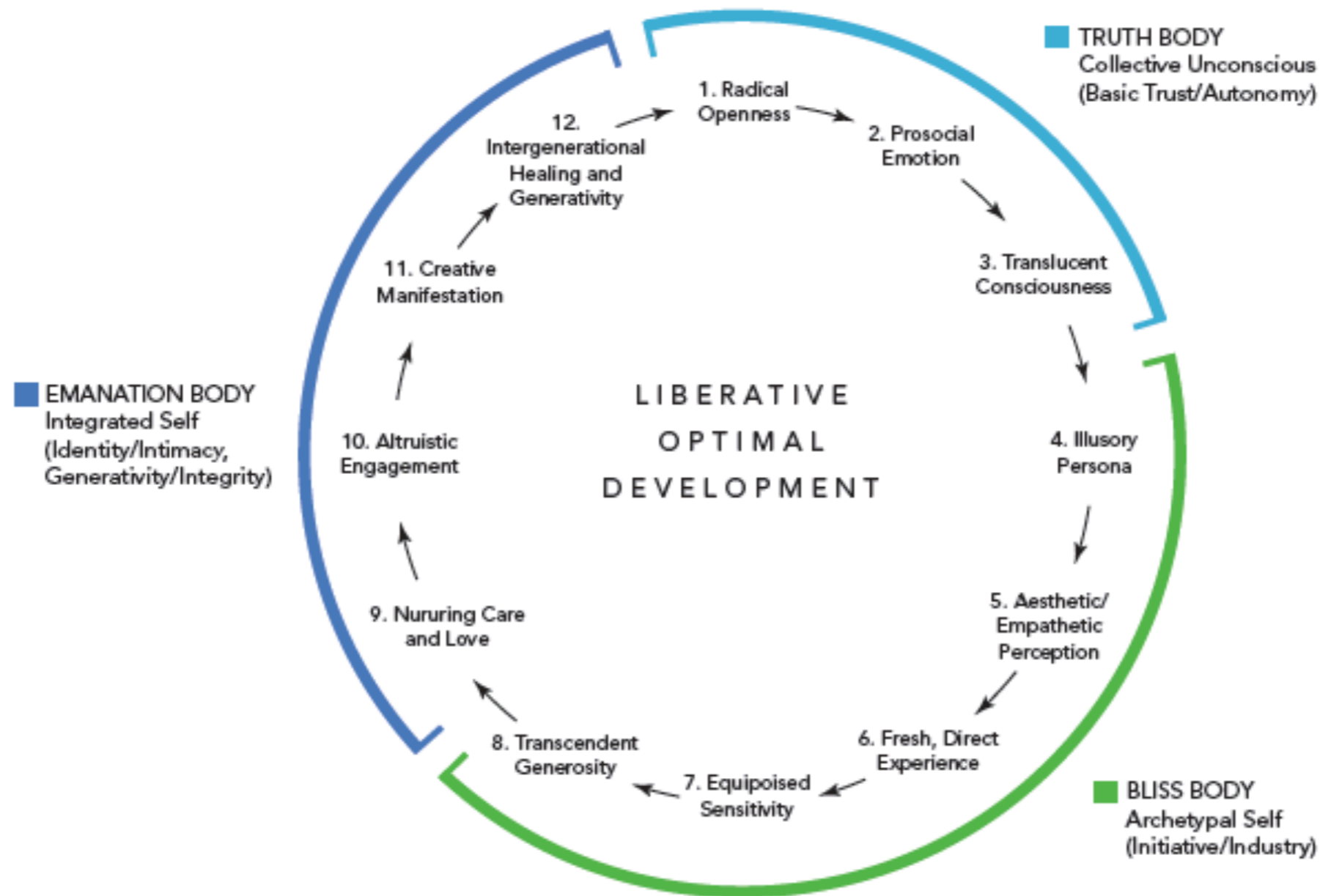
Those who love with wisdom completely cut through self-enclosure. Because they cherish living beings with love, they do not aim for solitary peace. Relying on the (twin) means of enlightenment—wisdom and compassion—such realized ones dwell neither in the world nor beyond.

—Asanga, *Sublime Continuum*, 38





The Fourth Noble Truth of the Path: The Circle of Optimal Human Development



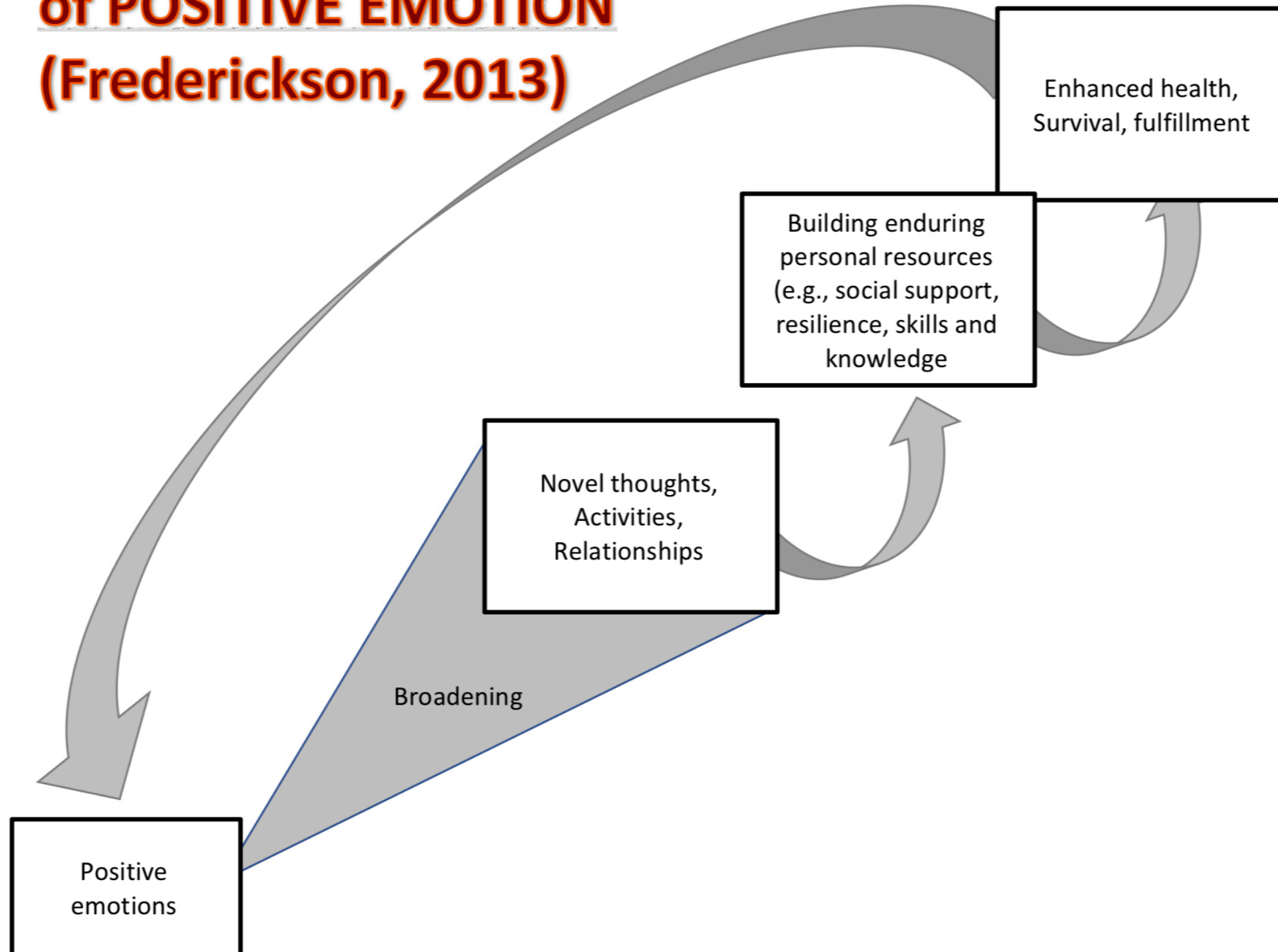


Jung's View of Psychotherapy as a Journey Beyond the Ego Towards an Open, Evolving Wholeness

A practising analyst may be supposed to believe in the significance and value of the widening of consciousness...My aim is to bring about a psychic state in which my patient begins to experiment with his own nature—a state of fluidity, change and growth, in which there is no longer anything eternally fixed and hopelessly petrified...The psychotherapist must not allow his vision to be coloured by the glasses of pathology; he must...even be able to admit that the ego is ill for the very reason that it is cut off from the whole, and has lost its connection with mankind as well as with the spirit.

—C.G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*

The BROADEN and BUILD THEORY of POSITIVE EMOTION (Frederickson, 2013)





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The First Key: Identifying What We Need to Analyze

- Think of a time when you were falsely attacked, rejected or misunderstood, a time that made you feel traumatized: alone, separate, unrelated, fixed and unchanging.
- Turn your attention away from the person or group who hurt you towards the intense sense of self that arose, and examine your narrative, emotions, bodily sensations.
- Try to get a clear view of the self-protective, self-enclosing self-state you're in—how real, right, dense and fixed it feels, how old it is, what memories it evokes



The Second Key: Commit to a Binding Analysis

- Try to become curious about how intrinsically true, real or “you” that traumatized sense of self is and set an intention to get to the bottom of it
- Commit to rigorously feeling into and fearlessly examining that self-sense until you are totally clear about its nature and status—reality or nightmare?
- Commit to an exhaustive, systematic search of your mind/body process that will allow you to either find that self’s basis in reality or expose it as a nightmare



The Third Key: Realizing We Are Not Our Parts

- Search through the five mind/body systems for a basis in reality which matches your sense of yourself as objectively alone, separate, unrelated, fixed and unchanging.
- Analyze your body for any part, organ, tissue, cell or molecule that is truly alone, separate, unrelated, fixed and unchanging.
- Analyze your narrative, emotions, perceptions and sensations in the same way.
- When you fail to find any part that matches your traumatic self-sense, notice any shift in your relation to that sense



The Fourth Key: Realize We Are Not Separate

- Imagine taking all the mundane components of your mind/body process—thoughts and images, consciousness, emotions, sensations and body—and setting them aside
- Start looking in what remains for the true essence, spirit, soul or psyche that matches your self-sense that you are objectively alone, separate, unrelated, fixed, unchanging,
- When you fail to find any such essence, spirit, soul or psyche separate from any of the components that make up your mind/body process that matches your traumatic self-sense, notice any shift in your relation to that sense



Spacious Wisdom: The Taste of Freedom from Self

- Having turned the four keys, have you come to a sense that thoroughly searched and failed to find any basis in reality on which you can hang your traumatic self-sense?
- If so, does it feel any more accessible to let go of the felt sense of being identical with/stuck on the worst-case sense of self you had in the experience you recalled?
- Is there any way you feel lighter? Disoriented? Adrift? Afloat? Lost in space? Ungrounded? Uncanny? Anxious?
- If so, can you try to embrace that as a door to reality, a taste of freedom? A glimpse of your true boundless, awakened self, ready and open to connect and relate?



Dreamy Wisdom: Tasting the Freedom to Relate

- Having opened the door to liberation by unlocking the the traumatic self-sense and having stepped into the expansive realm of the spacious equipoise, what's next?
- As your ordinary self and world reboots, does it look and feel any different? Can you see through their apparent solidity, fixity, unrelatedness, separateness?
- Is there any way you feel more open to connecting, appreciating, accepting, loving or caring for yourself, others and the world around you?
- If so, can you try to embrace that as a door to your real boundless, relational self, open to connecting with others and world? A taste of flourishing?



The Mature Fruits of Self-Analysis: Integrating the Two Wisdoms for Freedom and Flourishing

- Spacious Equipoise Helps Let Fear Go and Unlock Love
- Its Freedom from Self-Enclosure Opens Us to Others/Reality
- Dreamy Aftermath Helps Develop/Embody the Loving Self
- It Cultivates Our Capacity for Social-Emotional Flourishing



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