

Live Whole Health.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Coach Session Longevity: Spirituality, Mindfulness, Purpose

Whole Health Coach

OBJECTIVES

- Spirituality
- Life Purpose
- Relationships

For each, we will be discussing

- What each mean to us
- How they shape and form us
- The interconnectedness of them
- Smart goals and barriers

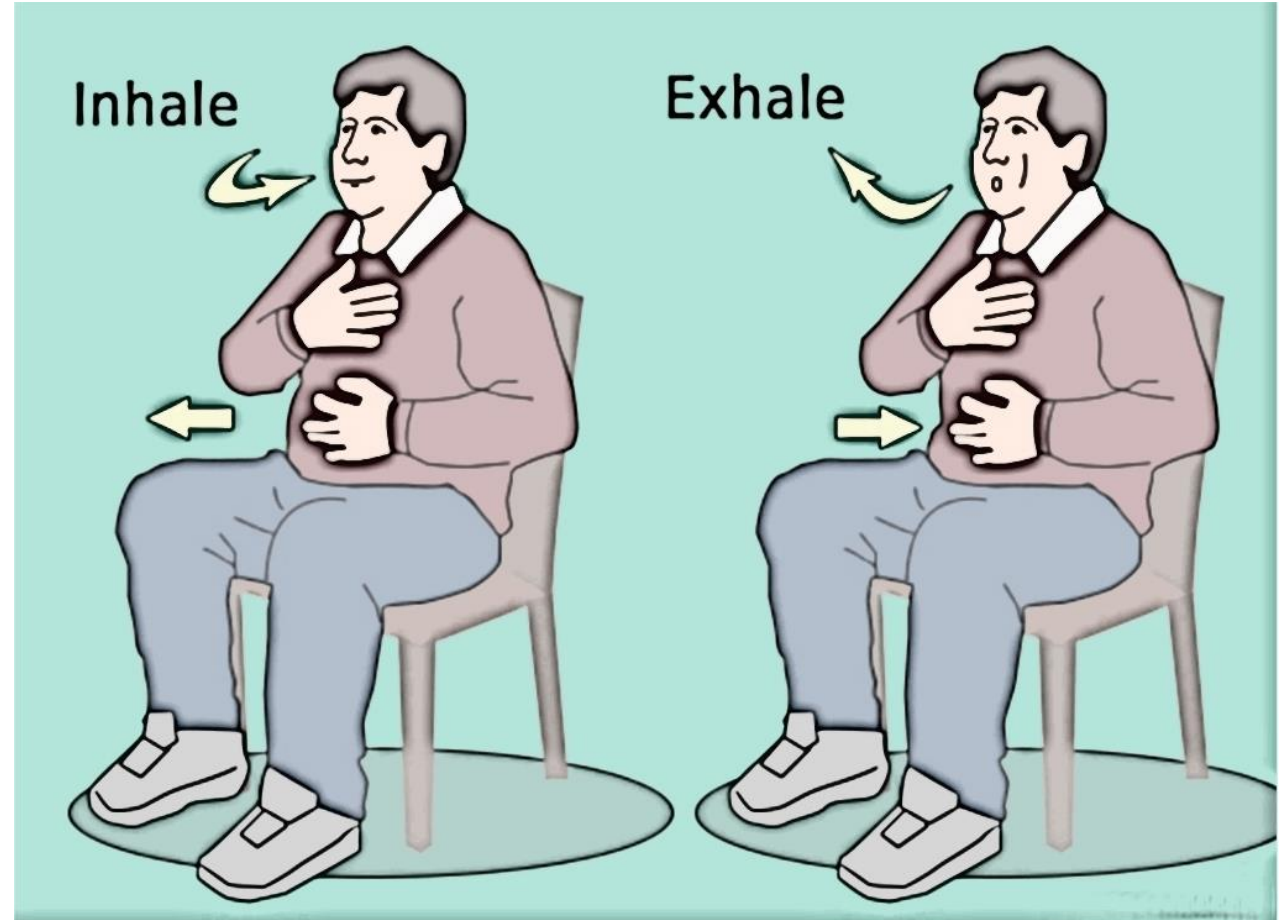


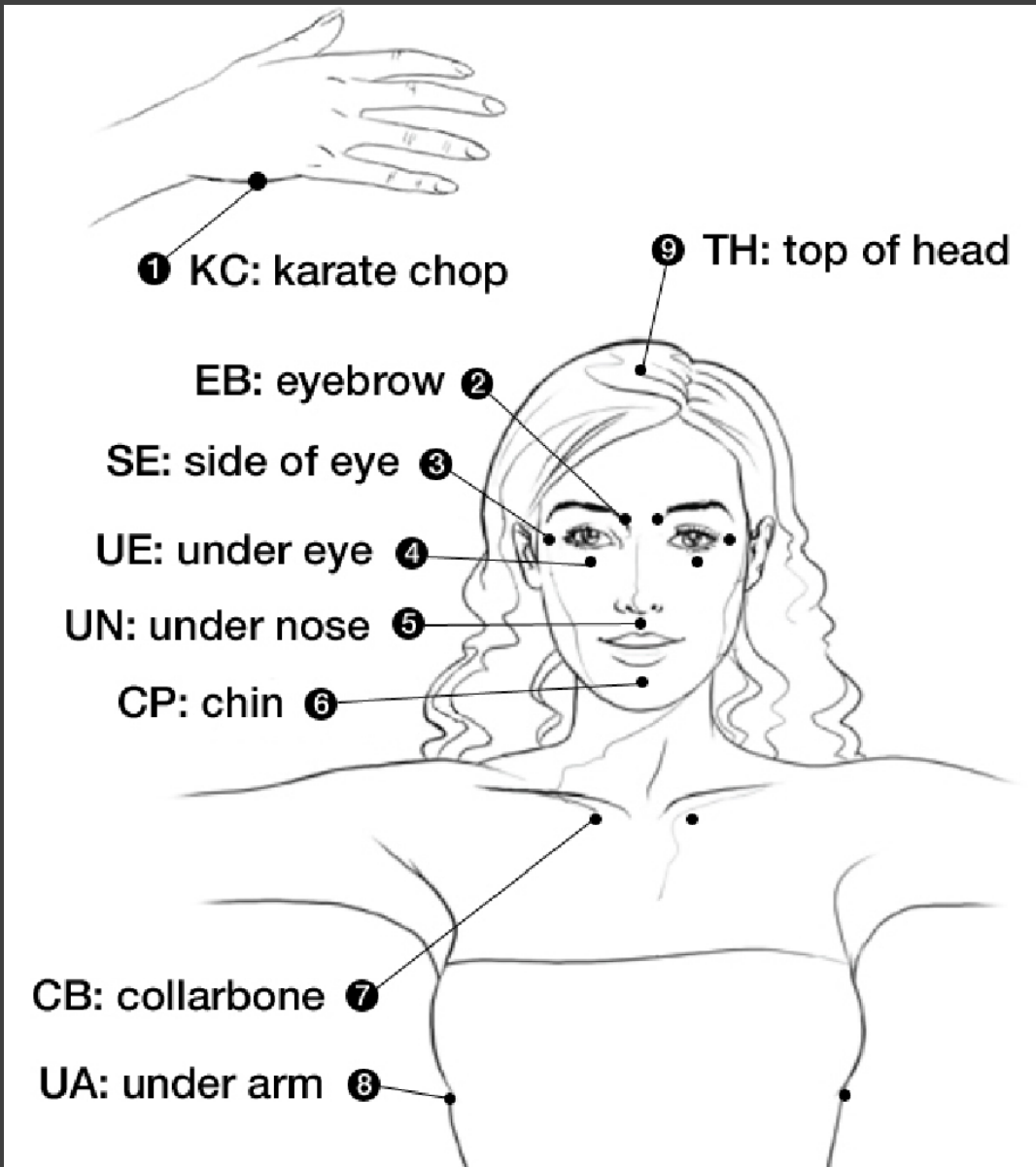
Breathe

WHAT HAPPENS IN VAGUS...

Instructions for Learning Abdominal Breathing

1. Place one hand, palm side down, on your chest. Place the other hand, palm side down on your stomach
2. Breathe in through your nose to a slow count of 4 (one...two...three...four...). Notice the motion of each hand. When you breathe in, does the hand on your chest move? Does the hand on your stomach move?
3. Now exhale through your nose, again to a slow count of 4. Notice again how each of your hands moves.





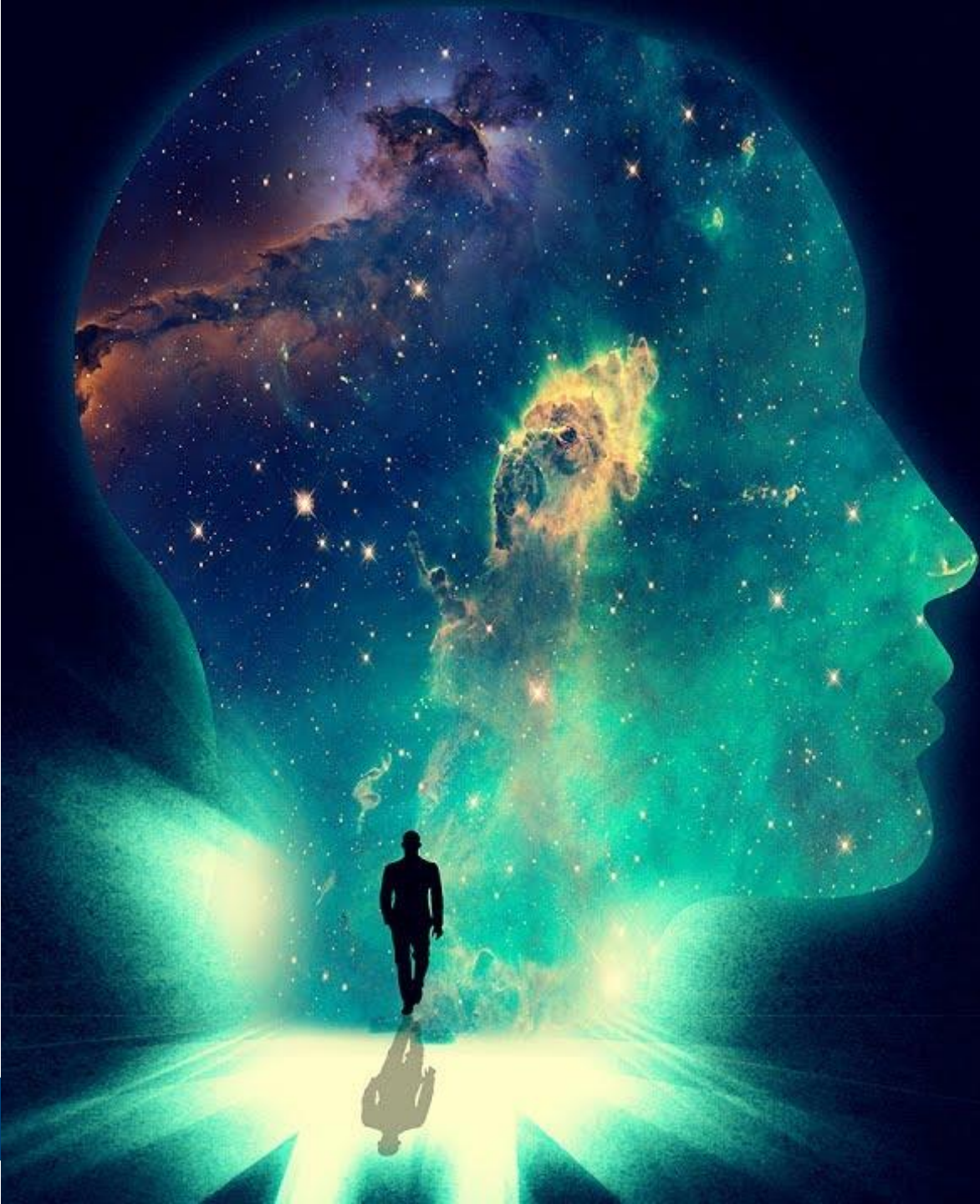
Emotional Freedom Technique: Tapping

“Even though I have this _____, I deeply love and accept myself.”

Tapping (EFT)

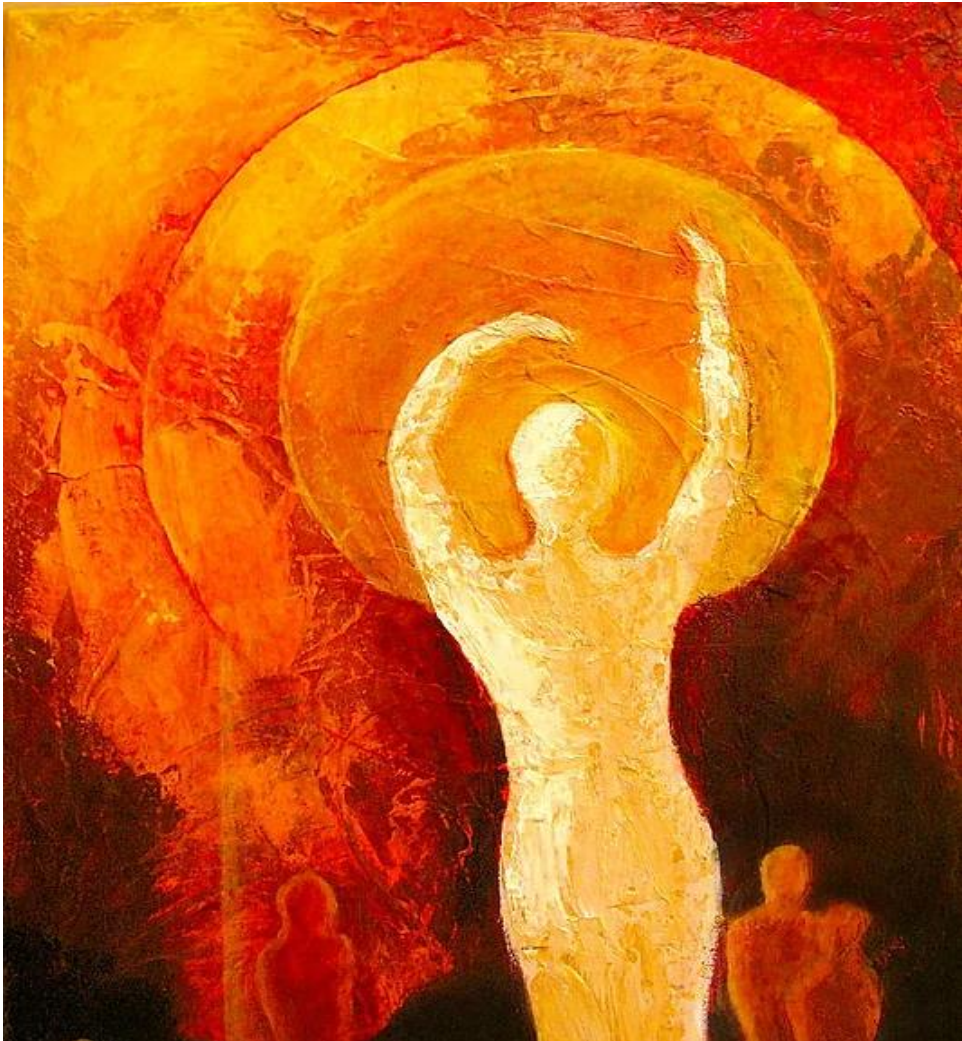
- 59 vets suffering from PTSD
- 30 randomized to six one-hour weekly Tapping instruction sessions
- 29 randomized to wait list and standard care
- EFT subjects had significantly reduced psychological distress ($p < 0.0012$) and PTSD symptom levels ($p < 0.0001$)
- Upon completion: 90% did not meet criteria for PTSD
- 3 months later: 86% did not meet criteria
- 6 months later 80%





WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

CONTACT WITH THE DIVINE



Spirituality means any experience that is thought to bring the experiencer into contact with the divine (in other words, not just any experience that feels meaningful).

- Beaugard & O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain*

HARMONY WITH THE UNIVERSE



The spiritual dimension tries to be in harmony with the universe, and strives for answers about the infinite, and comes into focus when the person faces emotional stress, physical illness, or death.

- Murray & Zenter, *Nursing Practice*



Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred.

- Christina Puchalski, MD, Director of the George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health



6 TYPES OF SPIRITUALITY

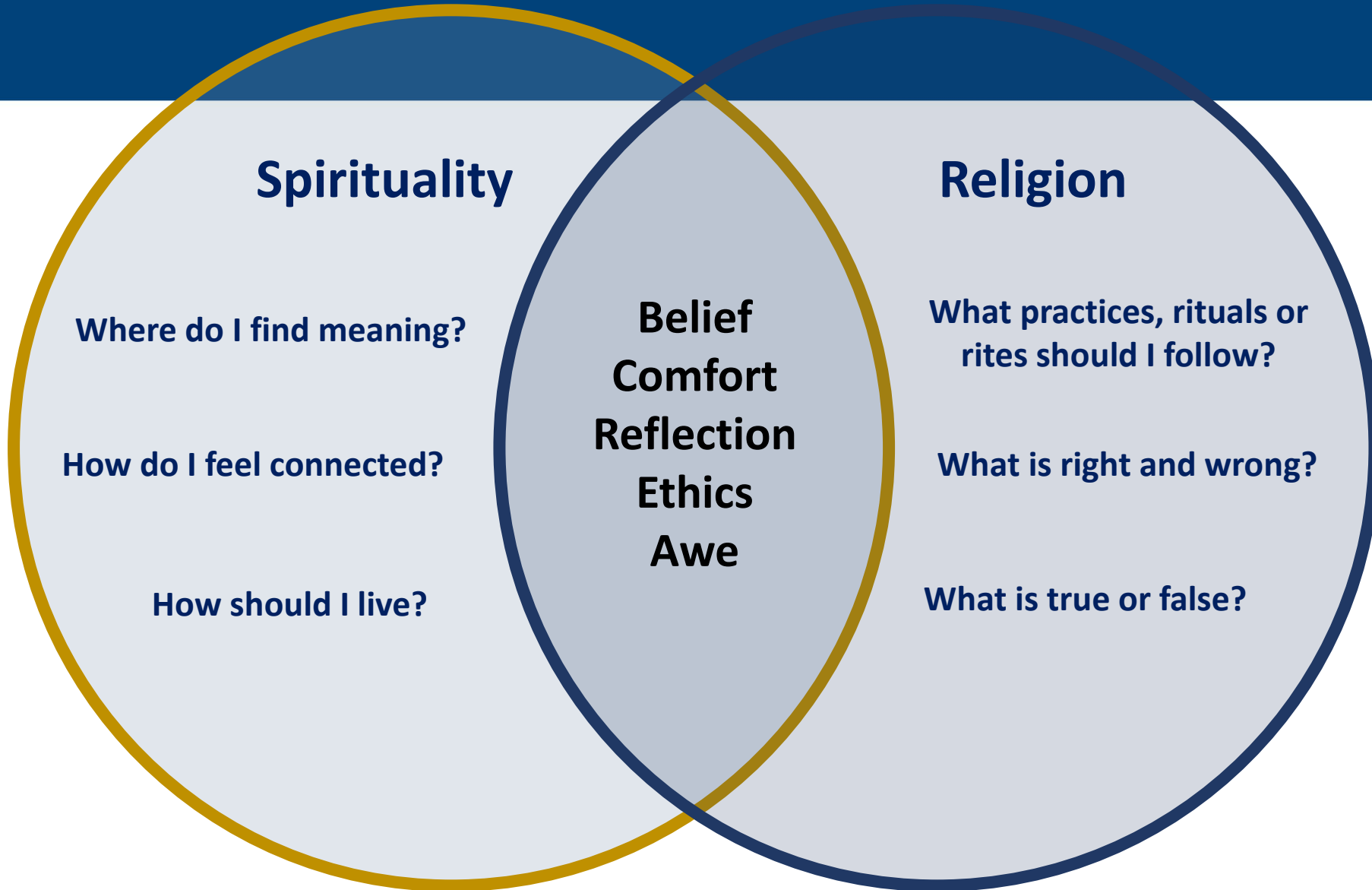


- **Religious Spirituality** – closeness and connection to the sacred as described by a specific religion. It fosters a sense of closeness to a particular Higher Power.
- **Humanistic Spirituality** – closeness and connection to humankind. It may involve feelings of love, reflection, service and altruism.
- **Nature Spirituality** – closeness and connection to nature or the environment, such as the wonder one feels when walking in the woods or watching a sunrise. This is an important focus for many traditional healing approaches.

6 TYPES OF SPIRITUALITY CONT.

- **Cosmos Spirituality** – closeness and connection to the whole of creation. It can arise when one contemplates the magnificence of creation or the vastness of the universe (e.g., while looking skyward on a starry night).
- **Spirituality of the Mysterious** – there is much that we simply cannot know or understand; it is not possible to fully grasp or know all the answers, and it is necessary to allow space for the unknowable.
- **Experiential Spirituality** – shaped by personal life events, it is influenced by our individual stories.





Spirituality

Where do I find meaning?

How do I feel connected?

How should I live?

Religion

What practices, rituals or rites should I follow?

What is right and wrong?

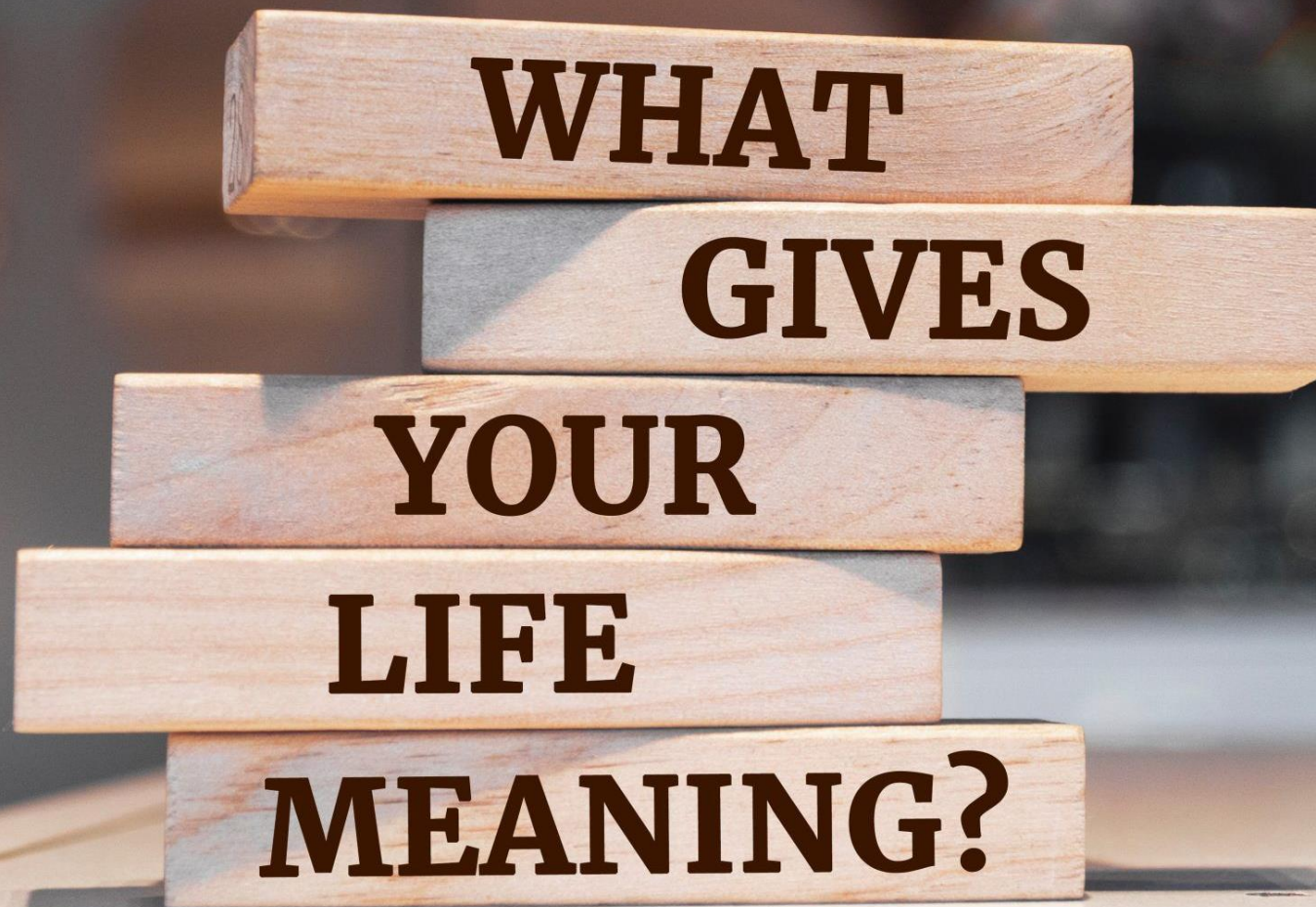
What is true or false?

Belief
Comfort
Reflection
Ethics
Awe

WHAT DO WE SEE IN THE BLUE ZONES?

1. Barbagia region of Sardinia in Italy
 - Religious catholic and do some older traditions (like paganism)
2. Okinawa in Japan
 - Spirits are called “kami,” or God, and worship is done in the form of many ritual practices
3. Community of Loma Linda in California
 - Strong community of Seventh-Day Adventist
4. Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica
 - They embrace their indigenous traditions
5. Greek Island of Ikaria
 - Elderly teach spirituality to children
 - Religious fierce Greek Orthodox Christians
 - They fast as a spiritual practice

LIFE PURPOSE



WHAT
GIVES
YOUR
LIFE
MEANING?

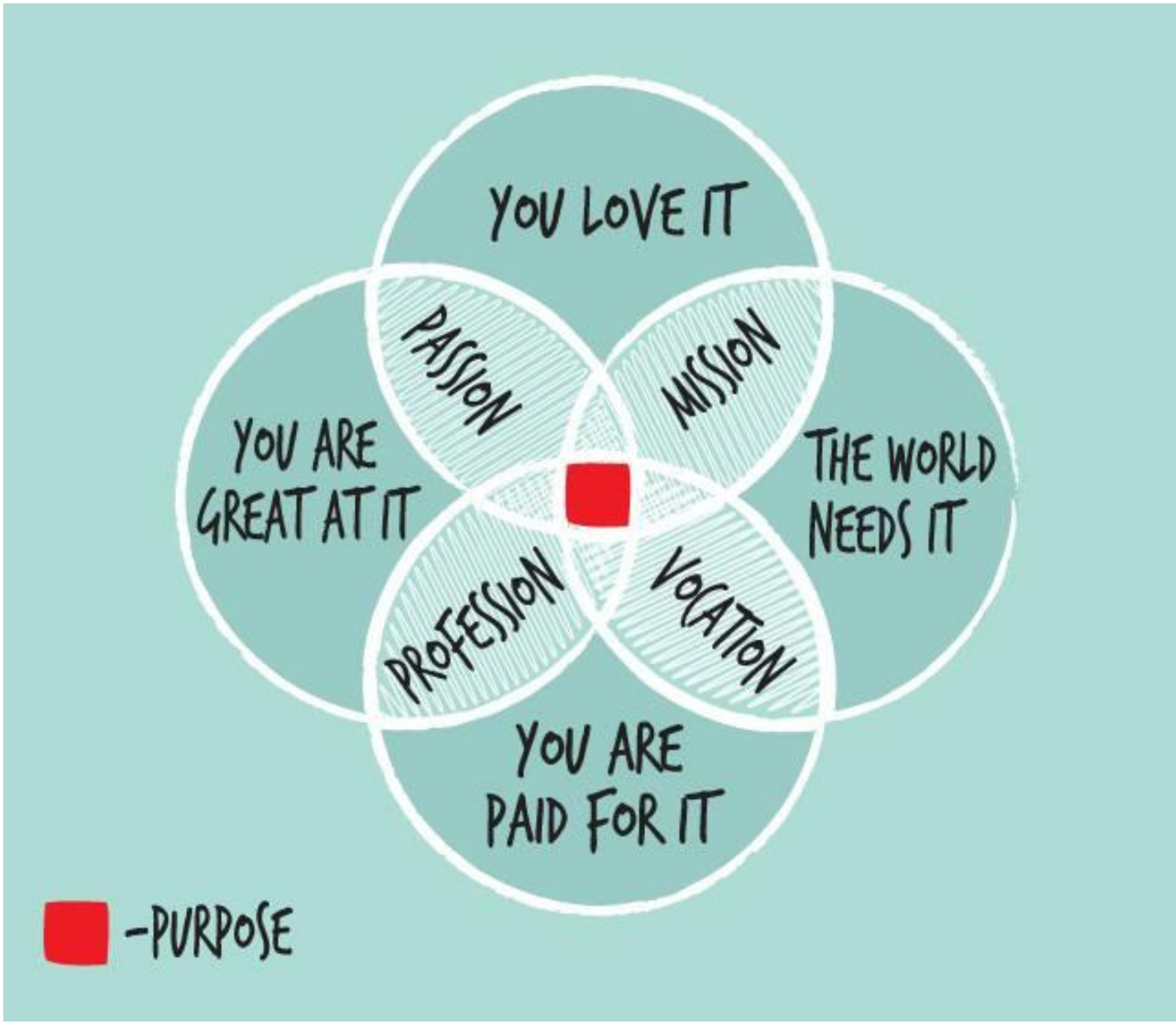
To give life a meaning, one must
have a purpose larger than self.

Will Durant

quote fancy

AWE, GRATITUDE, & ALTRUISM

- “Several studies conducted by the Greater Good Science Center’s Dacher Keltner have shown that the experience of awe makes us feel connected to something larger than ourselves—and so can provide the emotional foundation for a sense of purpose.” (Greater Good, 2018)
- “...awe all by itself won’t give you a purpose in life. It’s not enough to just feel like you’re a small part of something big; you also need to feel driven to make a positive impact on the world. That’s where gratitude and generosity come into play.” (Greater Good, 2018)
- “...gratitude and altruism seem to work together to generate meaning and purpose. In a second experiment, the researchers randomly assigned some participants to write letters of gratitude—and those people later reported a stronger sense of purpose. More recent work by Christina Karns and colleagues found that altruism and gratitude are neurologically linked, activating the same reward circuits in the brain.” (Greater Good, 2018)
- https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_find_your_purpose_in_life



WHAT DO WE SEE IN THE BLUE ZONES?

1. Barbagia region of Sardinia in Italy
 - “Strong ties within the community, respect for elders, and a culture of caring for the elderly at home may lead to a sense of purpose.” (America. Domani, 2023)
2. Okinawa in Japan
 - Embrace an “ikigai”
 - “Older Okinawans can readily articulate the reason they get up in the morning. Their purpose imbued live gives them clear roles of responsibility and feelings of being needed well into their 100s.” (Blue Zone, 2008)
3. Community of Loma Linda in California
 - Meaning and purpose are found through faith.
4. Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica
 - They have a plan de vida (lifelong sense of purpose); they don’t believe in retirement
5. Greek Island of Ikaria
 - Purpose imbues their entire adult lives

<https://americadomani.com/sardinia-italys-blue-zone/>

<https://www.bluezones.com/explorations/okinawa-japan/>



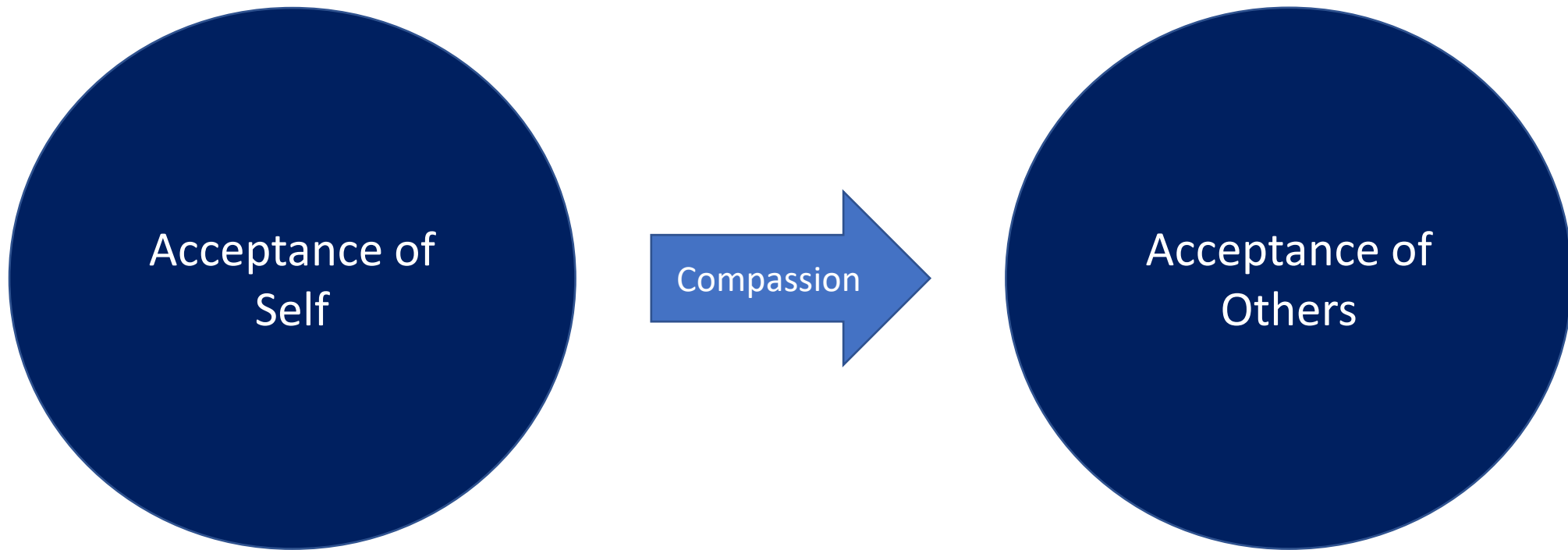
Live Whole Health.



Relationships



Love for Self: The Foundation of Healthy Relationships



COMPASSION IS THE ENERGY THAT
HEALS SUFFERING.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THE SOURCE
OF THAT COMPASSION IS ONESELF
OR ANOTHER PERSON.

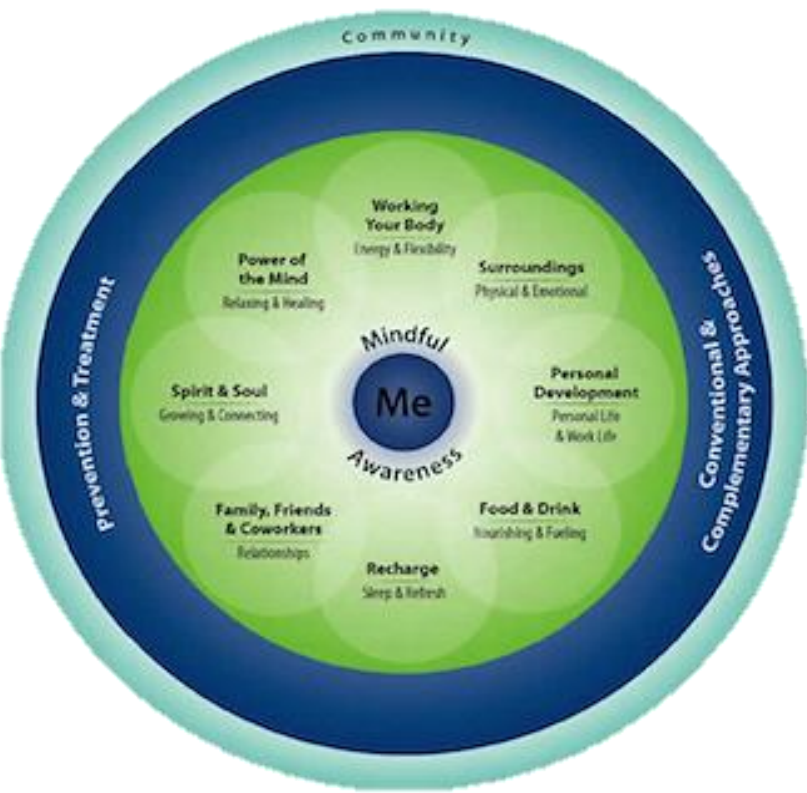
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT SOMEHOW
COMPASSION MAKES DIRECT
CONTACT WITH OUR PAIN



What do we see in the Blue Zone?

1. Barbagia region of Sardinia in Italy
 - Put family first; every member of the family is cared for, and families are healthy.
 - Celebrate elders; grandparents provide love, childcare, financial help, wisdom, and motivation.
2. Okinawa in Japan
 - Strong dedication to family and friends
 - “Tradition of forming “moai” provides secure social networks. These social networks provide safety nets and lend financial and emotional support.” (Blue Zone, 2008)
3. Community of Loma Linda in California
 - “Adventists tend to spend time with lots of other Adventists. They find well-being by sharing each other’s values and supporting each other’s habits.” (Blue Zone, 2008)
4. Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica
 - Keep the focus on family; the elderly live with their families, maintain social networks, and do heavy physical work.
5. Greek Island of Ikaria
 - Family and friends fostering connections with humans: headstrong cultural attitude where older people are engaged in community

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Timely
What specifically do you want to do?	How will you know when you've accomplished it?	Is it in your power to accomplish it?	Can you realistically achieve it?	When exactly do you want to accomplish it?



Focus Area: SMART Goal #1



Questions?