



KETS DE VRIES
INSTITUTE

Leadership Mystique

Introduction to Module I

19 – 22 March 2026

Meet the faculty



Dr. Liz Florent
Senior Faculty



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Senior Faculty



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de Vries**
CEO of KDVI



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de Vries**
Guest Speaker

Module I Overview

MODULE I							
DAY 1		DAY 2		DAY 3		DAY 4	
Thursday 19th March 9:00-21:00 CET		Friday 20th March 9:00-21:00 CET		Saturday 21st March 9:00-21:00 CET		Sunday 22nd March 9:00-12:30 CET	
9:00	Welcome and introductions	9:00	Check-in	9:00	Check-in	9:00	Check-in
	Break		Lecturette		Lecturette		Lecturette
	Lecturette		Exercise		Q&A		Break
	Q&A		Break		Break		Homework assignment
	Self portraits		Case presentation 1		Case presentation 3	12:30	Close
13:00 – 15:00	Lunch	13:00 – 15:00	Lunch	13:00 – 15:00	Lunch		
	Case presentation 1		Case presentation 2		Case presentation 4		
	Break		Break		Break		
	Small group case		Small group case		Small group case		
19:00 – 21:00	Dinner	19:30 – 21:00	Dinner	19:30 – 21:00	Dinner		

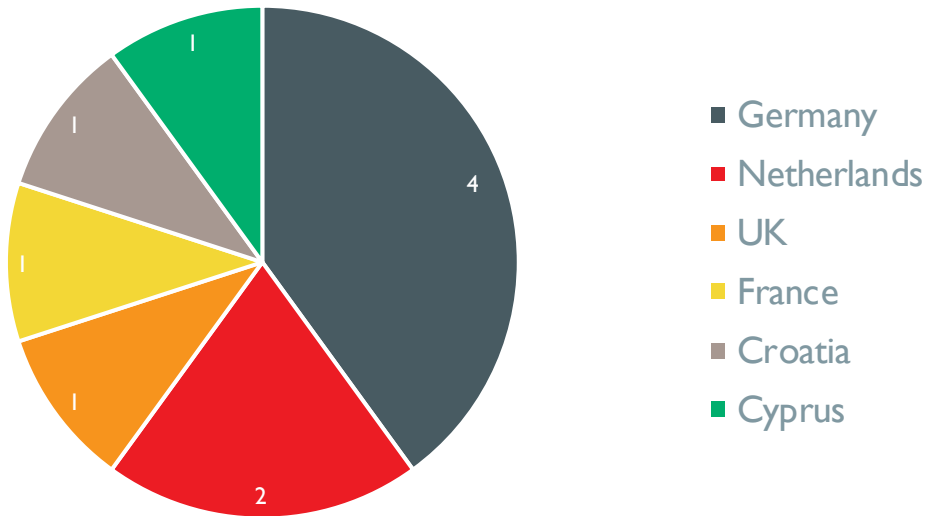
Cohort Snapshot

Participants: 10 senior leaders

Regions: 6 countries

Industries: 8 sectors

Geographical Distribution



Industry Mix

Sector	Representation
Healthcare	20%
Finance / Banking	20%
Nonprofit / Foundations	20%
Technology	10%
Energy	10%
Media	10%
Consulting	10%

Seniority

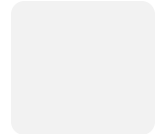
Level	%
C-Suite / Founder	50%
Executive Leadership (VP / MD / Partner)	30%
Board-level roles	20%



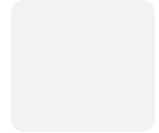
Objectives



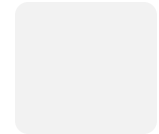
Open a space for personal reflection on your life experiences.



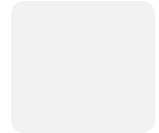
Decipher undercurrents of individual and team dynamics, traps and opportunities.



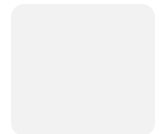
Create a peer advisory board among your diverse participant group.



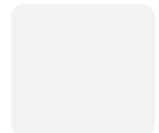
Experiment during and between modules.



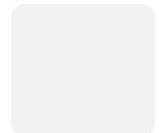
Reconsider perspectives on organisational challenges.



Identify and reassess your own personal and professional behaviour patterns.



Share openly what you need to talk about, without pressure to act, without judgement.



Group etiquette

1. **CONFIDENTIAL !!!**
2. **Non-judgmental.** Think about your own reactions. Is it you or is it ME?
3. **Constructive.** What purpose will my comments serve?
4. **No laptops or tablets.** Write your notes to anchor insights and learning.
5. **No cell phones.** "It" can wait. But you will never recover lost time for yourself.
6. **Respect time and scheduling.** The group is affected by your absence.
7. **Anything else we should add?**

Do we all agree?



Creating our bubble



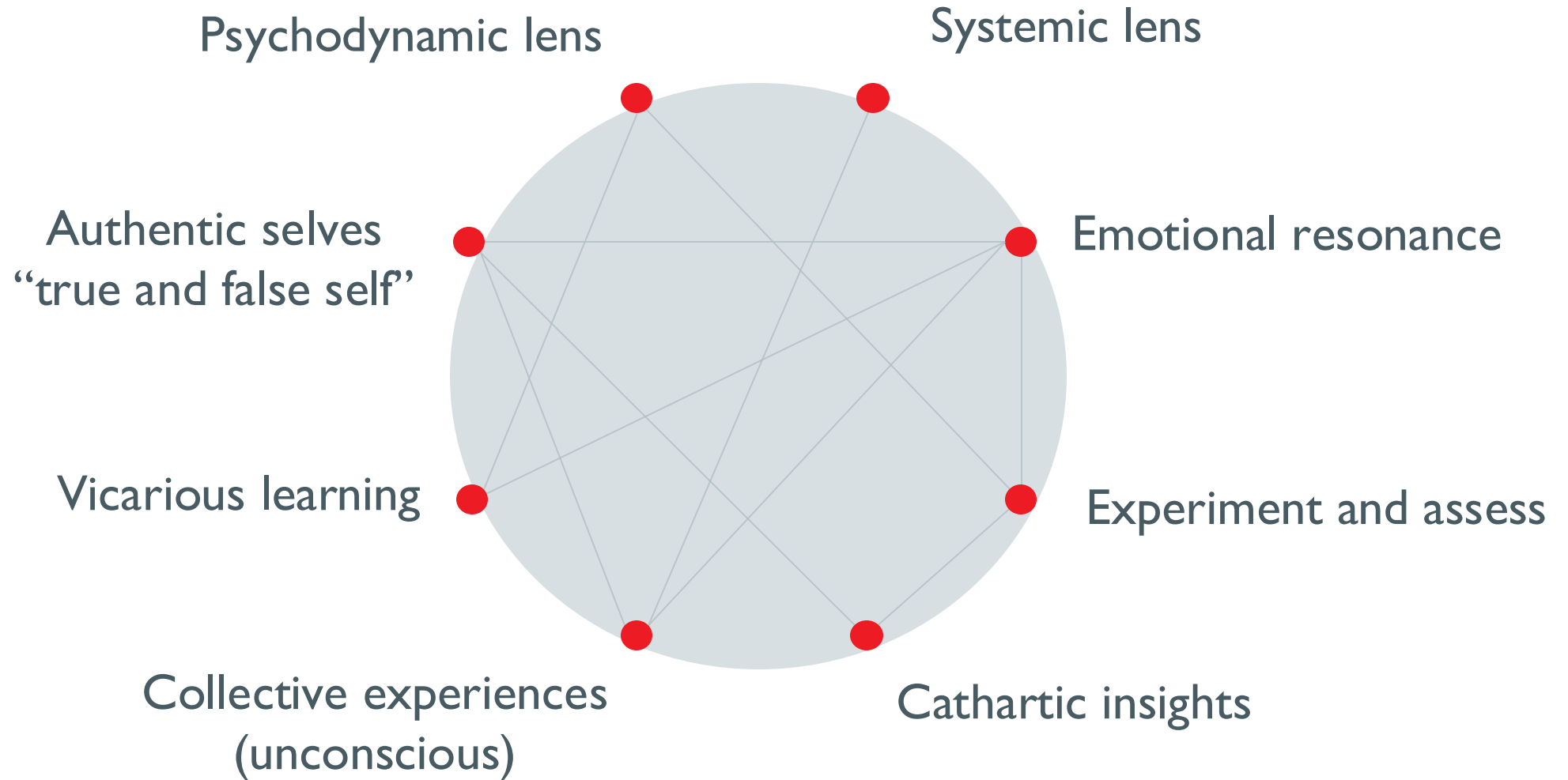
Psychological safety

- 1. Suspension of daily life:** attentive listening
- 2. Boundaries:** time, physical space
- 3. Approval:** Key people approve of the process
- 4. Tolerance:** accepting all thoughts and feelings, “deviations from the norm”





Co-creating learning experiences



Our stories contain our past and future

Humans are not ideally set up to understand logic; they are set up to understand stories.

Roger Schank, Cognitive Scientist

A story activates the brain so that a listener turns the story into their own idea and experience.

Uri Hasson, Princeton Neuroscientist



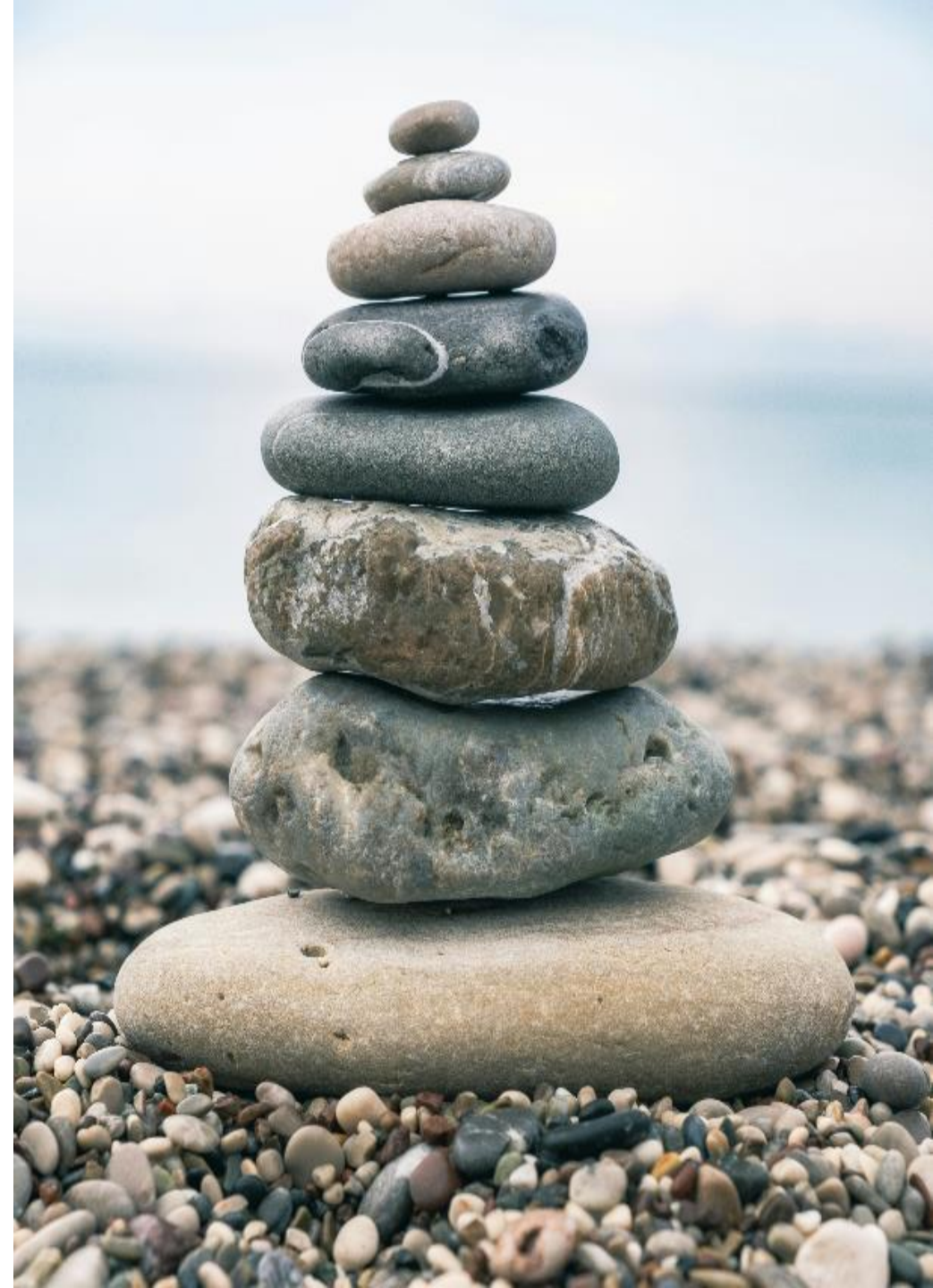
“Tales allow people to return to the core of themselves and find profound messages coded in symbols.”

Joseph Campbell, Professor of Mythology

Introductions

Why are you here?

What expectations and crazy phantasies do you bring to the programme?





Your self portrait

Drawing exercise (no words allowed)

Head

Heart

Gut

Nest (past)

Dreams (future)

Leisure (fun)





Leadership Mystique

Module I

Systems-Psychodynamic Foundations:

A Few Key Concepts

19 – 22 March 2026

A person with long hair, wearing a white t-shirt and colorful patterned pants, stands with their back to the camera in a dense, mossy jungle. Their arms are raised in a 'V' shape, and they are standing on a mossy rock. The background is filled with vibrant green foliage and trees.

Welcome to
your inner jungle

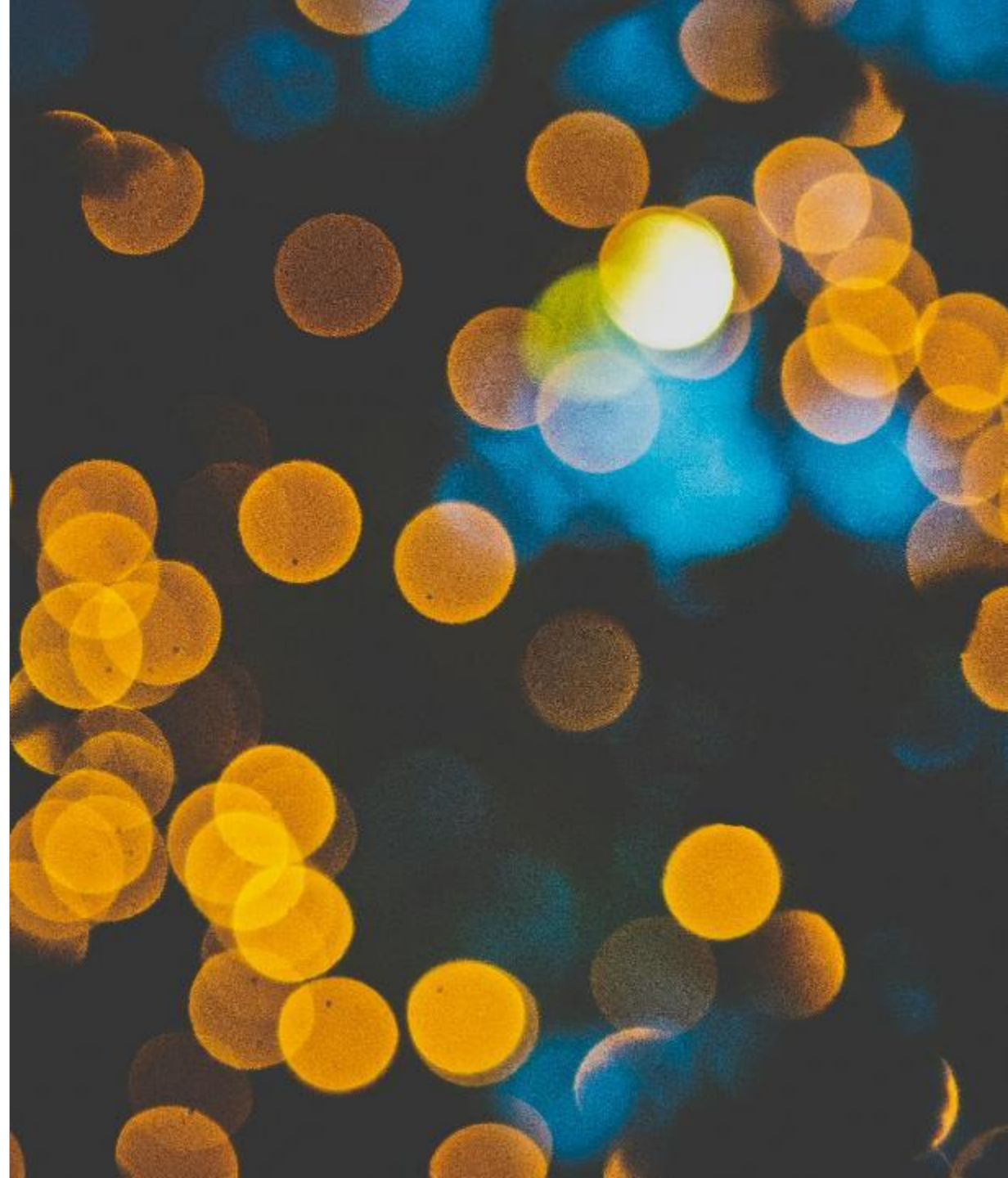
**The unconscious has no
sense of time or place.**

**The “There and Then” is as
real within the unconscious
as the “Here and Now.”**

**Boundaries between the
conscious and unconscious
are permeable. Dreams,
emotions, physical
sensations ...**

The Unconscious

Each of us has emotions, desires,
“unthought known”
that cannot be brought to awareness
by an ordinary effort of will,
and yet
they serve as major sources of
motivation and determinants of
behaviour.



The KDVI Clinical Paradigm

There is a a logical explanation behind every action, even those that seem irrational.

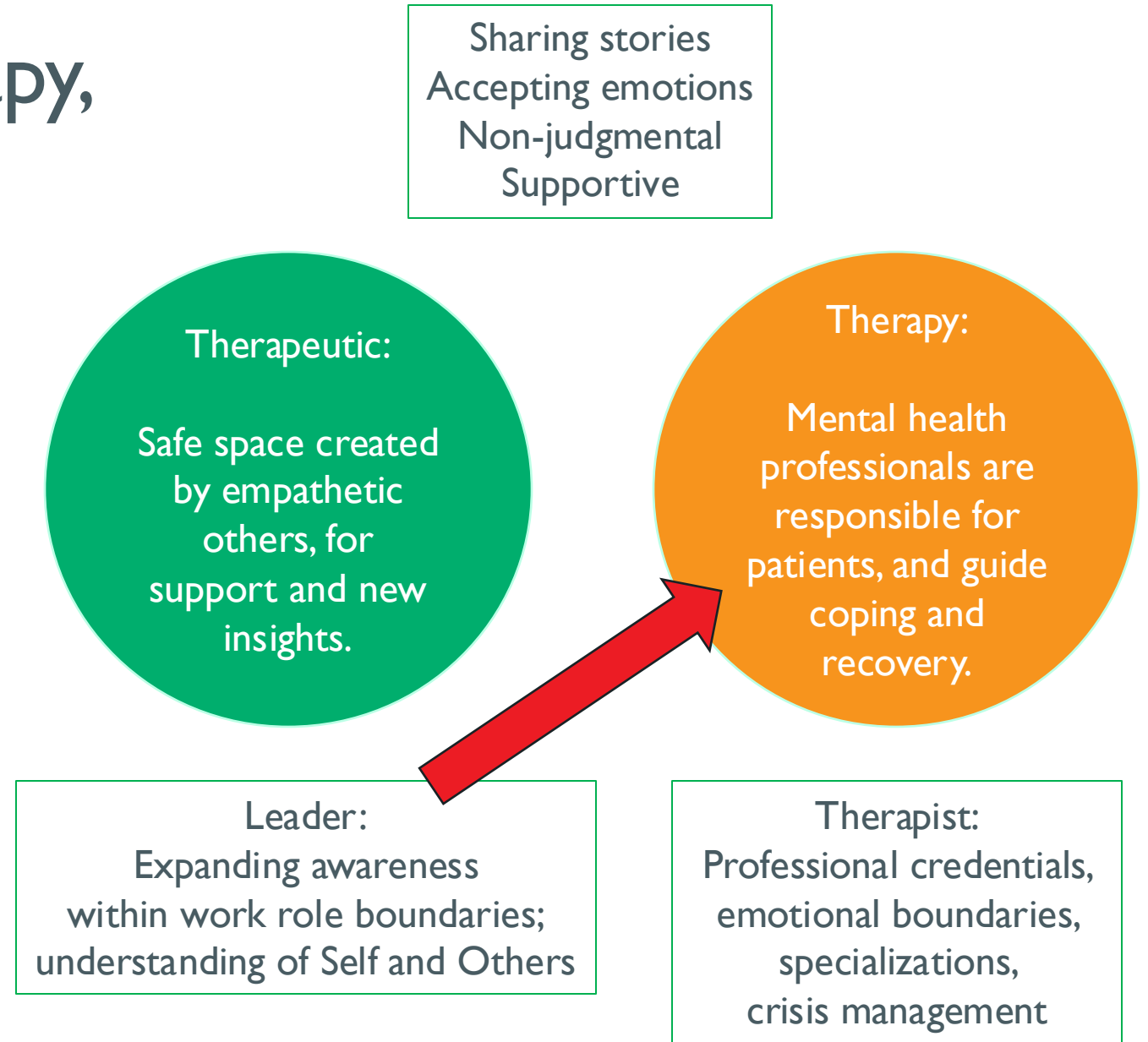
1. Human development is an intra- and inter-personal process.
2. Though hidden from rational thought, the human unconscious affects conscious reality.
3. Nothing is more central to who a person is than the way they regulate and express emotions.
4. Personality is formed early in life but can be nudged later.
5. Groups are subject to dynamics that arise from a collective unconscious response to needs and motivators.
6. Human behavior is a symptom, as well as a cause, of system dynamics.
7. Systems seek homeostasis. Change is unpredictable, therefore a threat to stability.
8. Change is not linear. It is endemic: recursive, emergent, and cannot be prevented nor imposed.

Related theories

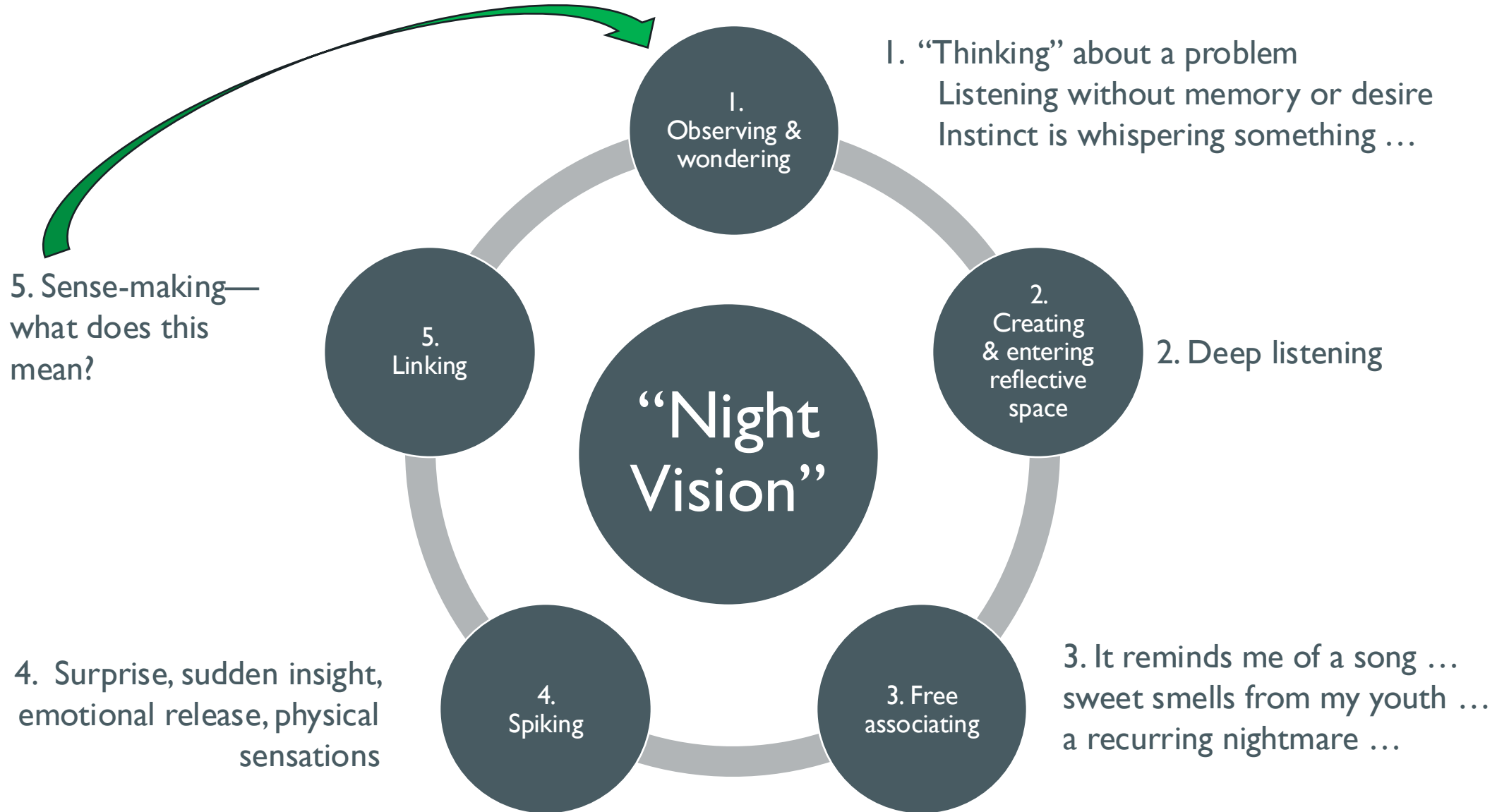
1. Inner theatre, family script, attachment, transference & counter-transference, leader-follower dynamics
2. Blind spots, “unthought known,” repression, Gestalt
3. Repression, regression, transference & counter-transference
4. Big Five personality traits
5. Dependency, fight-flight, pairing, “singleton”, on-task, anti-task, primary task, primary risk, leader-follower dynamics, attachment
6. Archetypes, valences, conflict, collusion, Jung
7. Homeostasis, social defenses, resistance
8. Complexity, paradox, negative capability, motivational interviewing, paradoxical intervention

Leader role: not therapy, but therapeutic ...

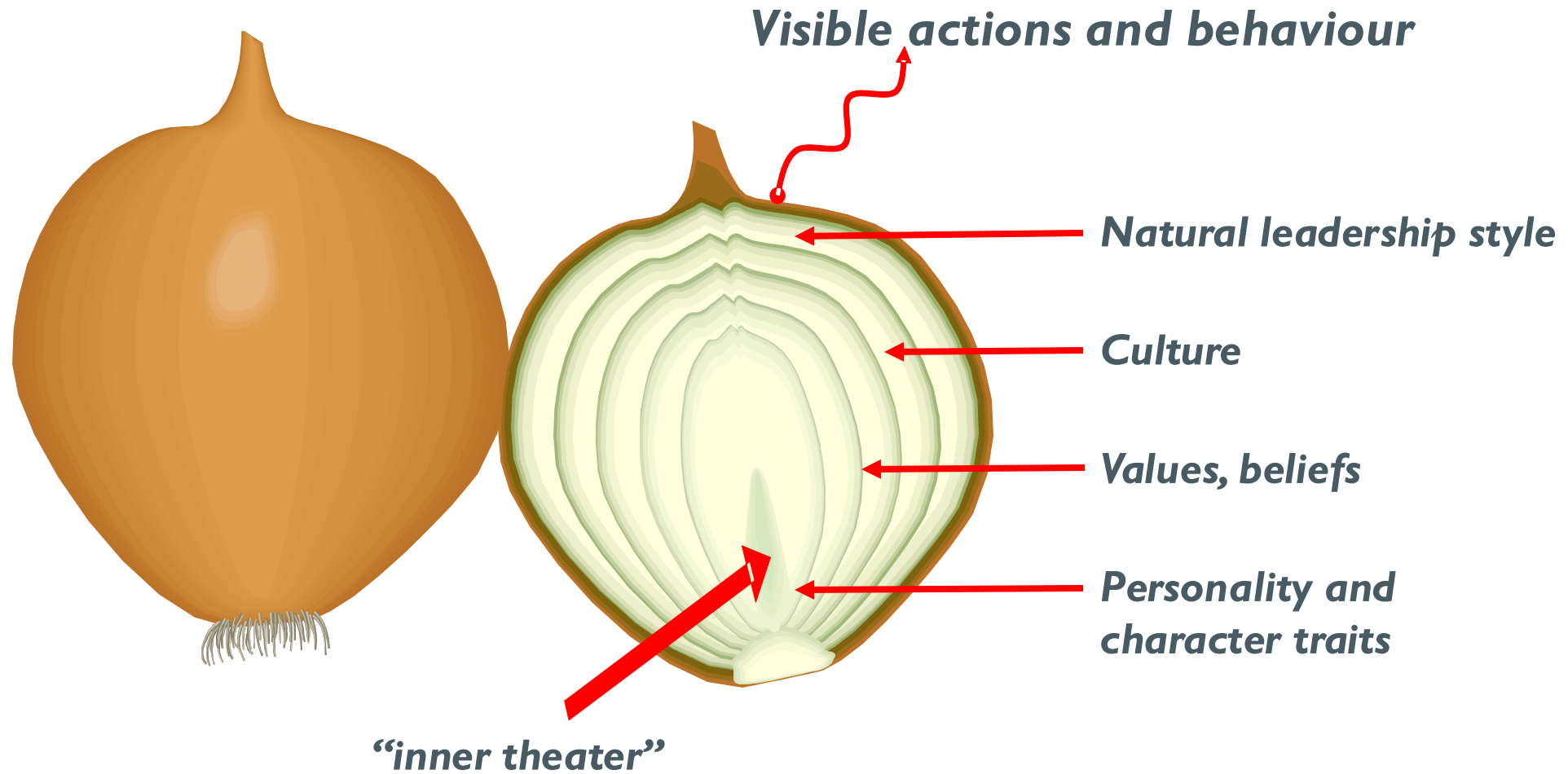
- To lead authentically, we bring our whole self to work.
- We seek awareness of what might be happening under the surface.
- We link this to what is relevant in our work lives.



Expanding awareness – opening the system to itself



The Leadership Onion: a useful metaphor





Inner Theatre (I)

Family Script

We are all influenced by early childhood experiences.

These write the script that motivates our behavior,
even as adults.



A starting point: visible behavior



How we react (or shut down) ...

... when external or internal stimuli

... provokes behavior

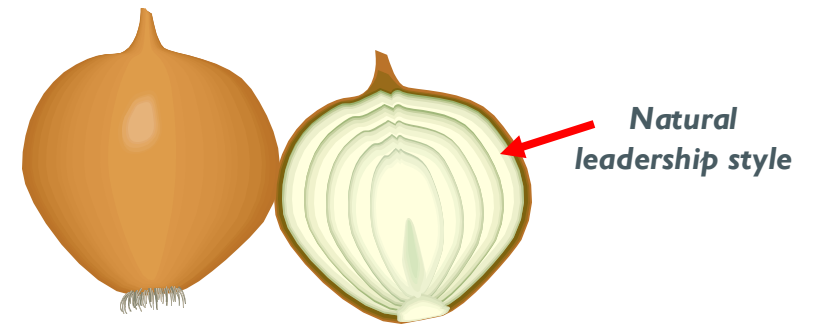
... that takes us by surprise ...

That's not me! Or is it !?!





Your natural reactions



... when someone:

- Ignores you?
- Praises you?
- Disagrees with you?
- Patronizes you?
- Is angry with you?

What if ...

- You really like the person?
- You think the other person does not respect you?
- When you're under pressure?
- When you're feeling anxious or uncertain?
- If it's your boss / peer / employee?

Inner theatre (2)

Transference

Displacement of *your* patterns of feelings, thoughts and behaviour originally experienced in relation to significant figures during childhood, **onto a person involved in a current interpersonal relationship.**

As a leader, do you notice ...

- patterns of intense positive or negative reactions towards others that don't seem logical?



Inner Theatre (3)

Projective identification:

I project my emotions and needs into you.

Counter-transference:

A related feeling arises in me.

I may act in a way that aligns with your projection, or I may resist.

As a leader ...

- Do you notice a pattern of emotional “contagion” in yourself when you interact with a specific person?
- Reality check: What’s going on here? Am I reacting in a way that is true to myself?

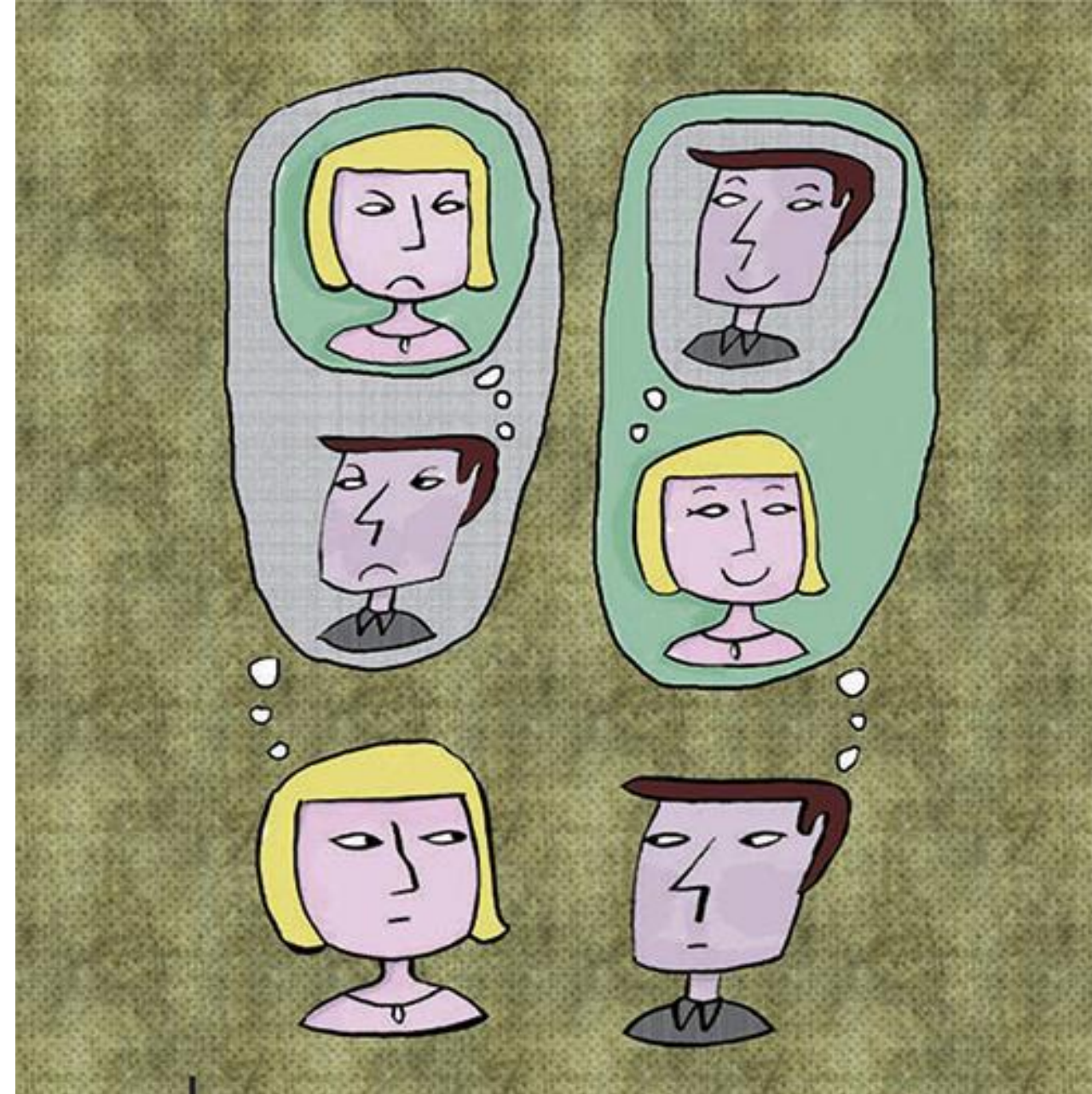


Image from book cover:

Fee van Delft

Transference and Countertransference

A therapeutic method for application in everyday psychosocial counselling

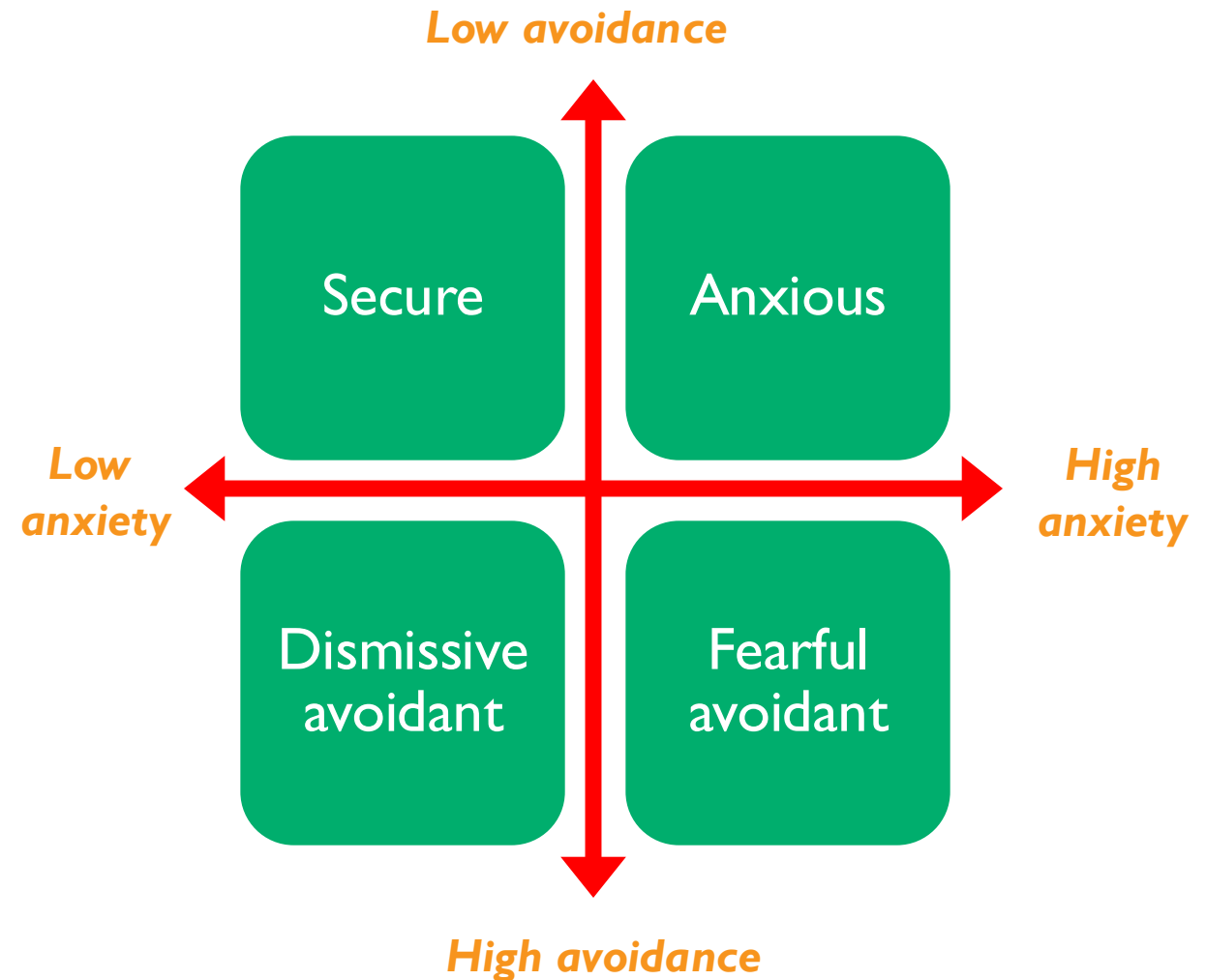
Inner Theatre (4)

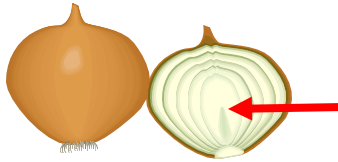
Attachment

”Good enough” parenting (an emotional sense of security) from a secure base.

As a leader

- Two (anxious) micro-managers will get along well
- Two avoidant (lone wolf) peers will get along well
- What about anxious + dismissive avoidant?
- A leader with awareness of their own pattern can consciously adapt to followers’ needs, and help them to feel safe.





Personality traits

Introvert:

- renews energy through solitude
- thinks things through before speaking.

Extrovert:

- renews energy through interactions with others
- discovers their thoughts as they are spoken

As a leader:

- Give introverts time to recover. Encourage them to speak *before* they feel “ready.”
- Channel extroverts’ need for connection. Encourage listening and observation.
- Pseudo-extroversion: introvert’s observation and listening plus management of social interactions and energy

Introvert: contact drains the battery



Extrovert: contact charges the battery





As a leader

- Are you an introvert, extrovert, pseudo ... ?
- Do you feel you manage your energy and social interactions
- in a way that works for you?
- How might this affect your natural leadership style, and the way people see your behavior?

Defense mechanisms

Defenses are there for a reason! They protect you from real traumatic experiences, or from difficult emotions in your inner theatre.

But it might be helpful to explore what purpose they serve, and whether they are still needed.

Follow the pain points ... with self compassion.



Defensive Behaviours

Defense Mechanisms

A general term describing the ego's active struggle to protect against dangers (e.g. anxiety, guilt, shame) through the use of ingenious and unconscious strategies.

Attempts to relieve anxiety through:

Fight
Flight
Freeze
Fawn





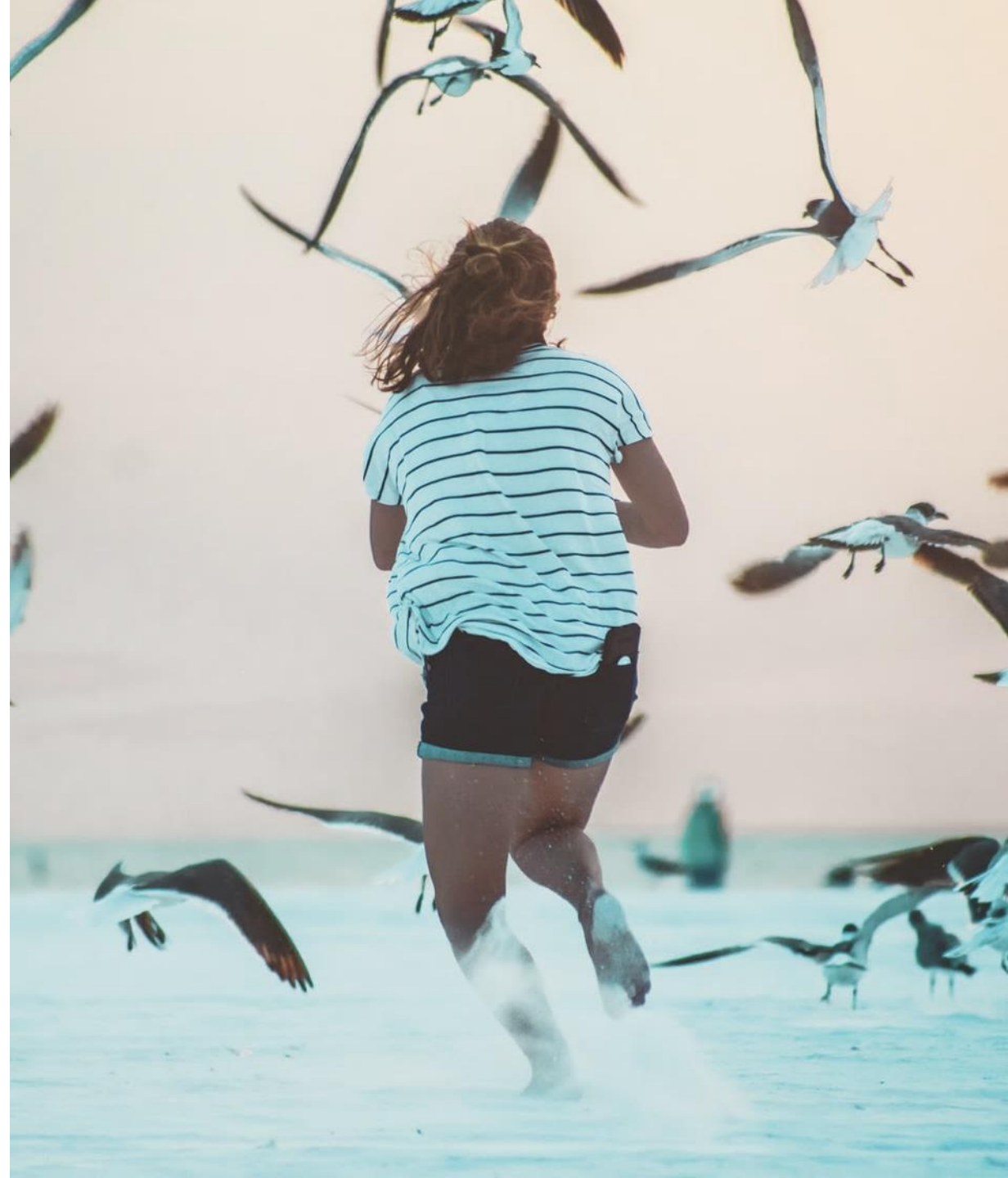
Fight (power)

- Hostility, aggression and challenge
- Push back, rebuking, resistance
- Self-aggrandizing
- Scapegoating



Flight (escape)

- Avoidance, withdrawal
- Denial
- Intellectualization, rationalization
- Humour
- Masking, shut down (internal withdrawal)



Freeze (invisibility)

- Response to feeling of loss of control, not able to fight or flee
- Panic, paralysis (emotional or physical)
- Alexithymia (no words for emotions)



“Emotionless Sculpture” En Iwamura

Fawn (submission)

- May be a learned response to trauma
- Allows manipulation
- Over-compliant
- Dependency



As a leader ...

When you feel stressed, under attack,
without coping resources ...

How do you react (fight, flight, freeze, fawn)?
Does this usually work for you?

Do you see these defences in others? How
do you react?



“V” by digital artist, [Olivier Caron](#)

The observing and experiencing self

When you sense swirling mysteries, put on your night vision goggles.

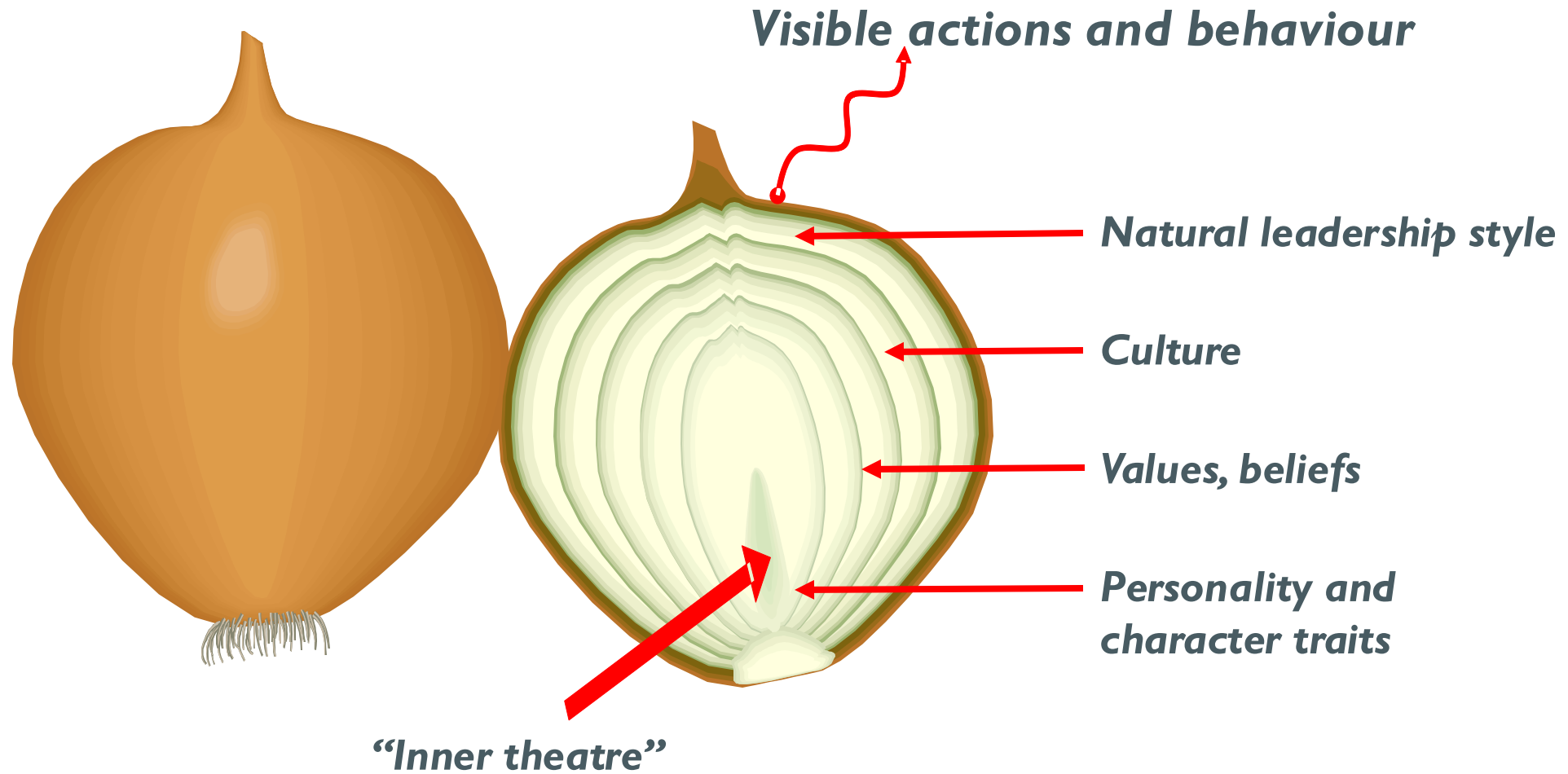
- How do I feel listening to the other person? What are they doing to me?
- What do I find disturbing or weird in this encounter or relationship?
- Is there 'someone else' here with us?
- Do I catch a glimpse of something unexpected? What does that mean?





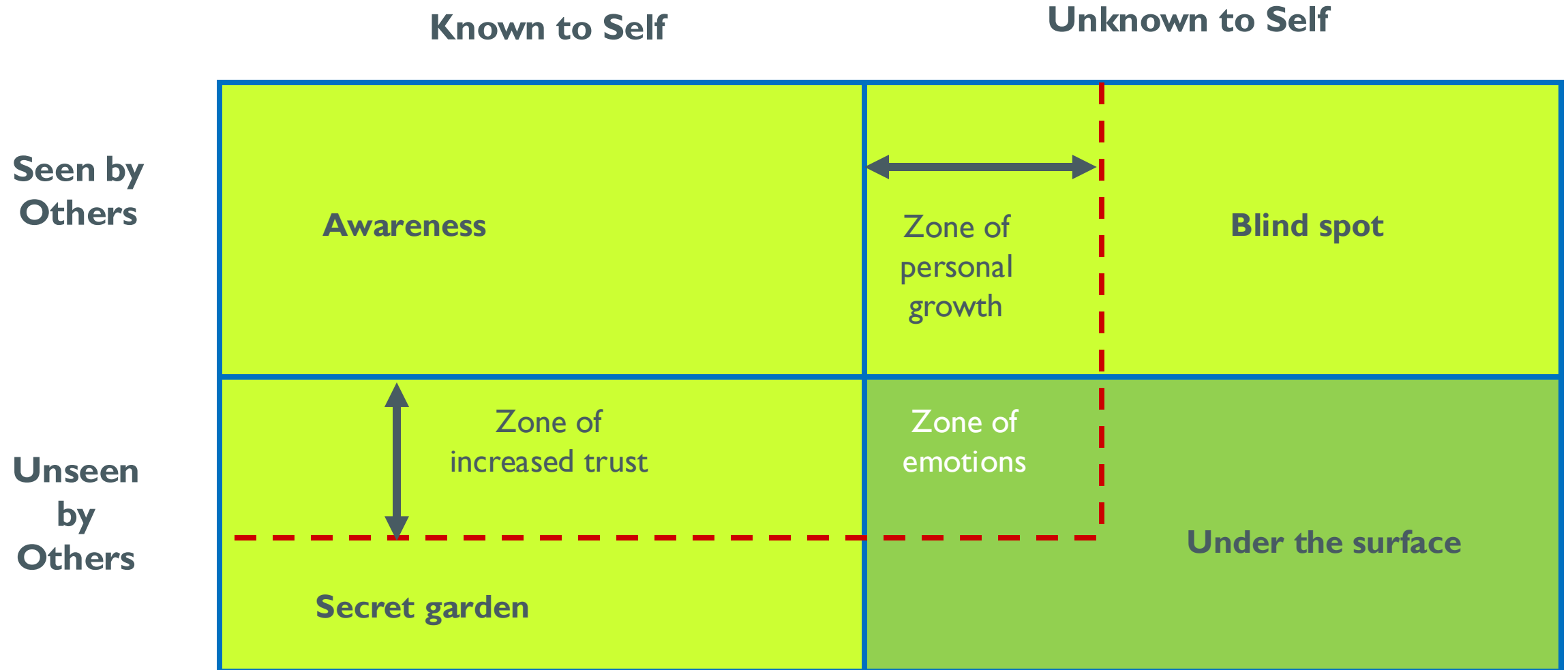
360 Feedback: Our visible behaviors and blind spots

The Leadership Onion



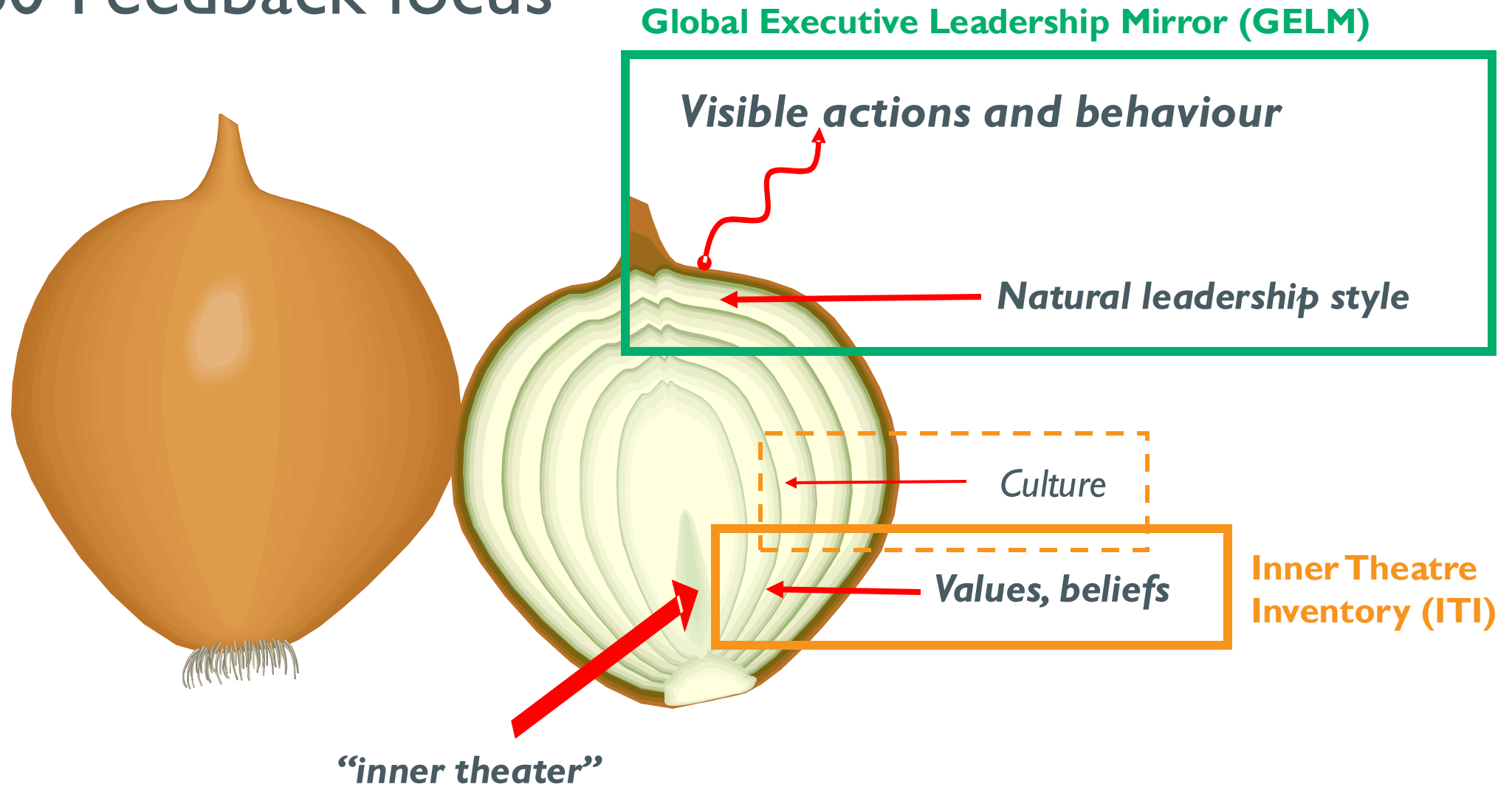


Johari Window





360 Feedback focus



Global Executive Leadership Mirror (GELM™)

The GELM™ is the result of our decades-long research into effective top leader behavior.

- 360 feedback
- Validated with senior executives, not students
- Combines leadership roles, emotional intelligence and life balance

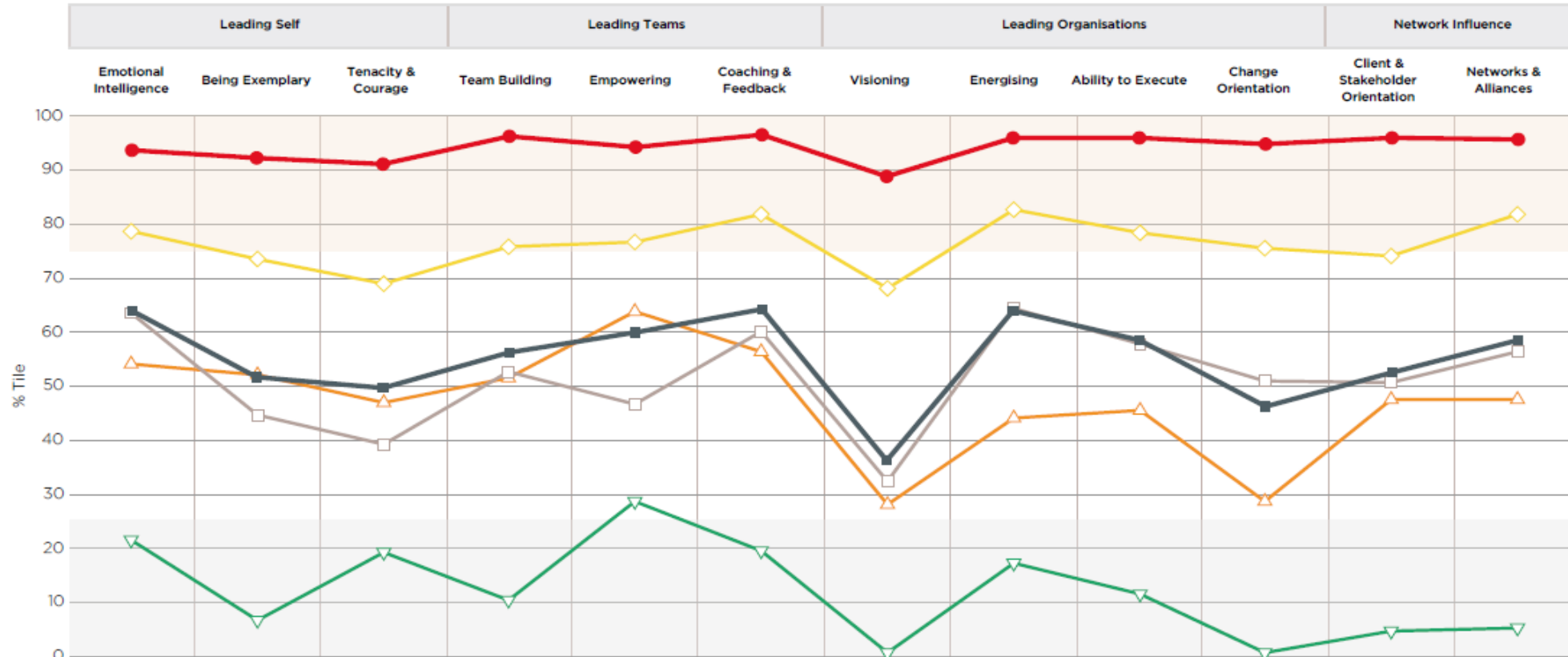
Leading Self

Leading Teams

Leading Organizations

Network Influence

Leadership Strengths and Areas of Development



Values

- Self
- Observers
- ▽ Superior
- ◇ Co-worker
- △ Direct Report
- Others

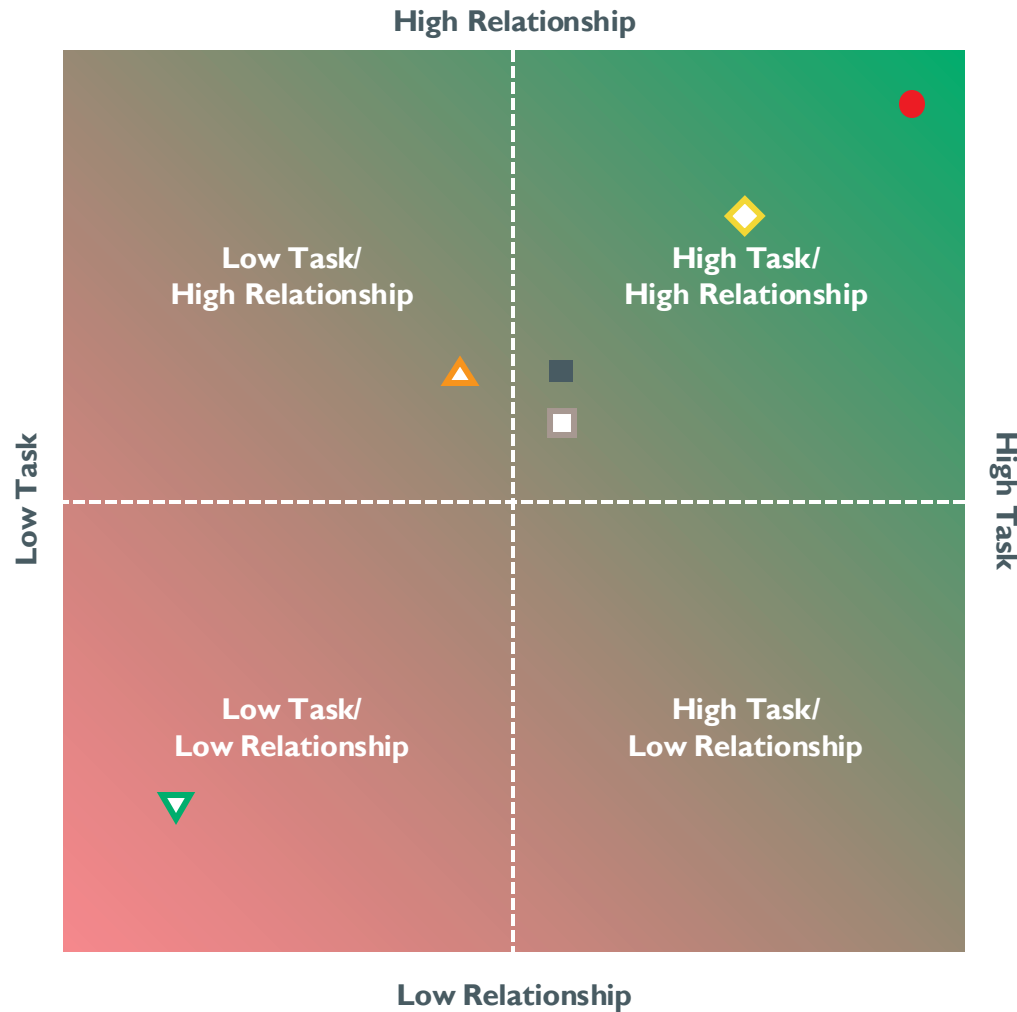
Bands

- 75-100 Percentile
- 0-25 Percentile

The percentile rank provides a relative ranking of your score. If your score falls near the 75th percentile, for example, this means that only about 25% of the people who completed the Global Executive Leadership Mirror had higher scores than you on that dimension which puts you in a higher range relative to peers.

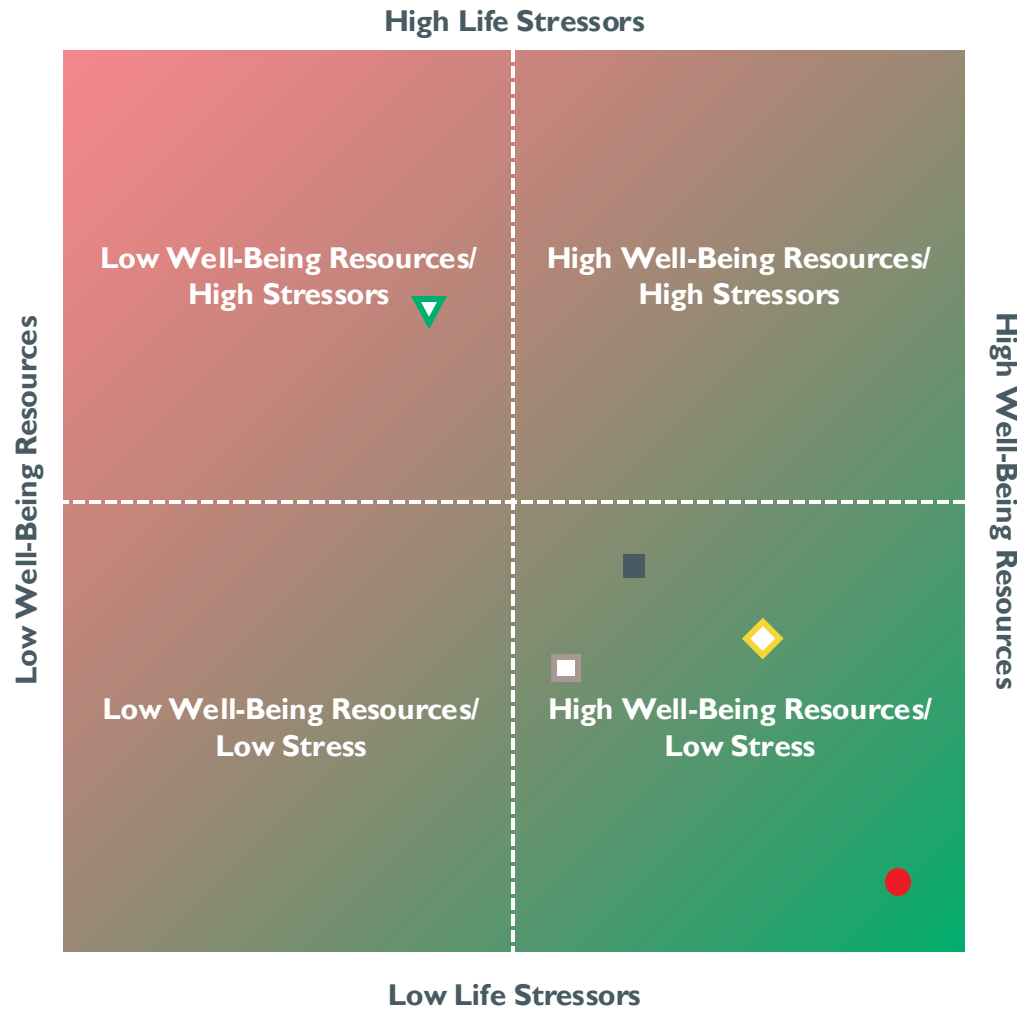


Task vs Relationship focus



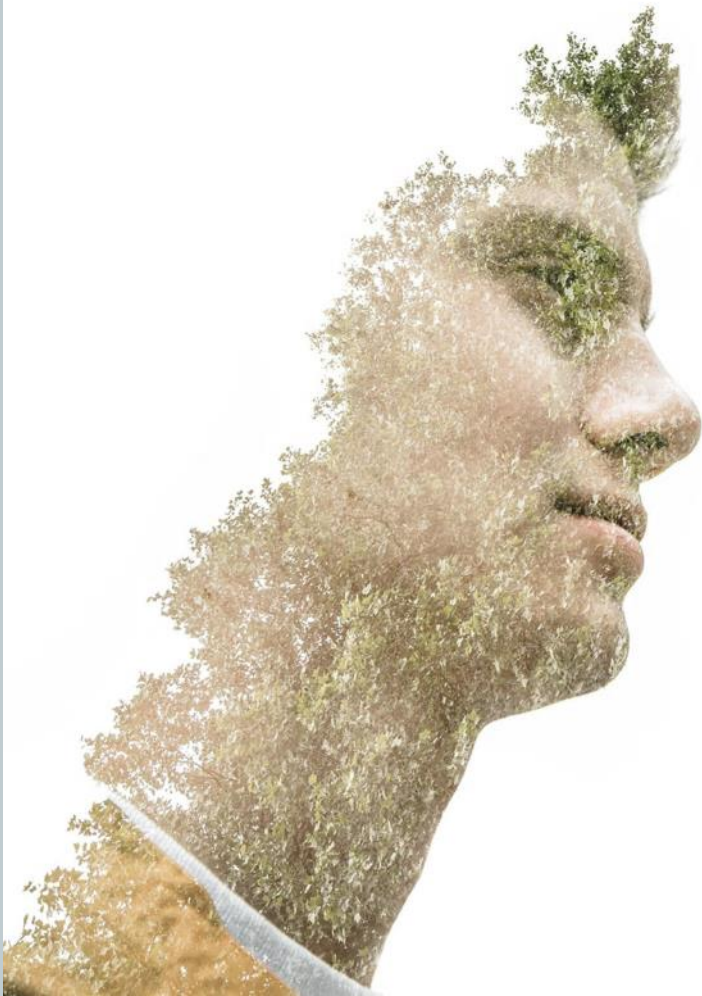
- Self
- Group Observers
- ▽ Superior
- ◇ Peers
- Others

Stress & Coping Mechanisms



- Self
- Group Observers
- ▽ Superior
- ◇ Peers
- Others

Comments: important data



- “Work on his confidence and presence as a leader”.
- “Approach situations with less emotion”.
- “Too hesitant when making hard personnel decisions”.
- “Focus on team development to relieve pressure on him”.
- “She does not seek the centre spotlight, but she should!”

Observers?

- Superiors (not anonymous)
- Peers: Close teams but also geographically distant
- Subordinates: new people as well as those from the past
- Clients: long term and new

DO include people with whom you might have a difficult or distant working relationship.

DO include people from your early professional life and your future orientation.



Inner Theatre Inventory™



Inner Theatre Inventory

- Focuses on our personal values and priorities in life.
- Points to material from our early family “scripts.”
- Highlights what Others see and believe about our personal values and priorities!
- Sheds light on our blind spots.
- Gives us the opportunity to reassess our values—are they still working for me today, as a leader?

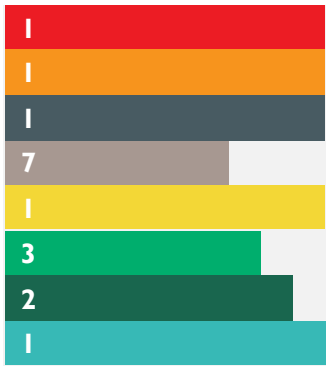


The Inner Theatre Inventory (ITI™)

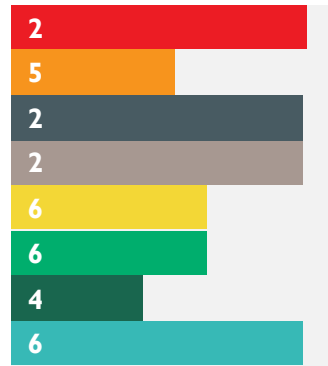
22 Life Anchors

- Achievement
- Aesthetics
- Affiliation/attachment
- Autonomy/independence
- Care
- Exploration/learning
- Food/eating
- Health/well-being
- Honour/integrity
- Lifestyle quality
- Meaning
- Money
- Order
- Power
- Pride
- Recognition
- Revenge
- Security
- Sensuality/sexuality
- Spirituality
- Status/rank
- Voice

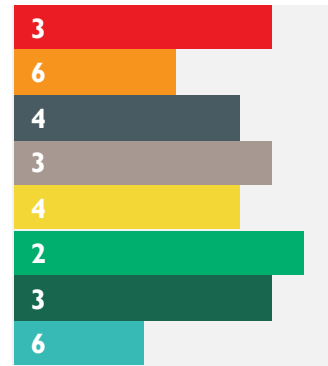
Top 10 Life Anchors, compared to observers' ratings



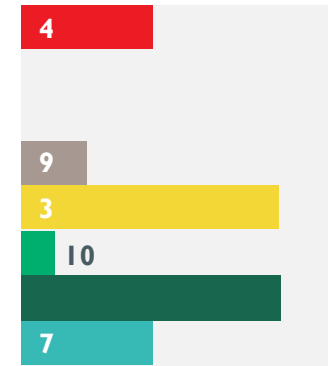
1. Achievement



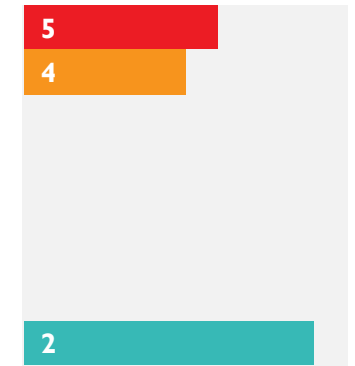
2. Money



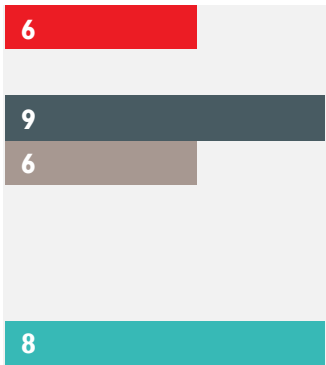
3. Recognition



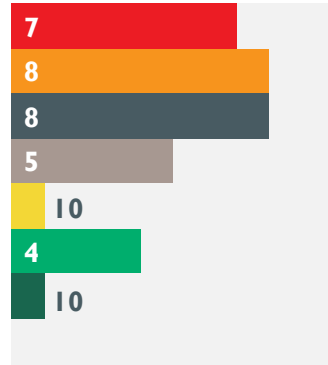
4. Meaning



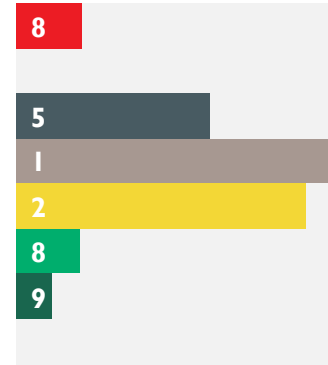
5. Care



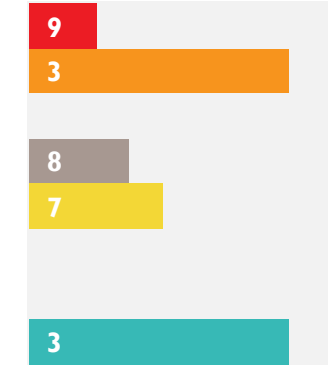
6. Lifestyle Quality



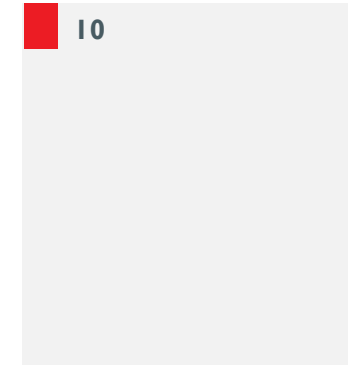
7. Status/Rank



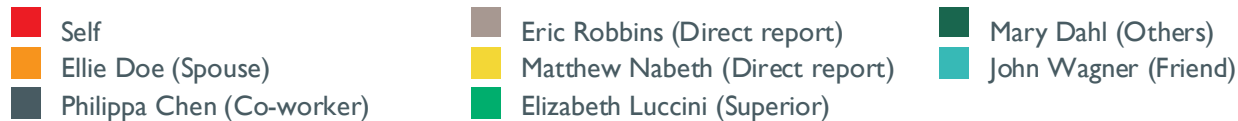
8. Pride



9. Affiliation



10. Spirituality



*The numbers represent the ranking with 1 being the most important Life Anchor.

Surprises? Examples ...

Agreement Quotient

Life Anchors on your Top 10 list also selected by most of your observers

Secret Garden Quotient

Life Anchors or qualities selected by a minority of your observers

Blind Spots(s)

Life Anchors selected by a majority of your observers but not by you

Life Anchors

- Achievement
- Money
- Pride
- Recognition
- Status/Rank

Agreement Quotient



Life anchors selected by you and selected by at least two thirds of your observers.

Life Anchors

- Care
- Spirituality

Secret Garden Quotient



Life anchors selected by you and selected by no more than a third of your observers.

Life Anchors

- Autonomy/Independence
- Power

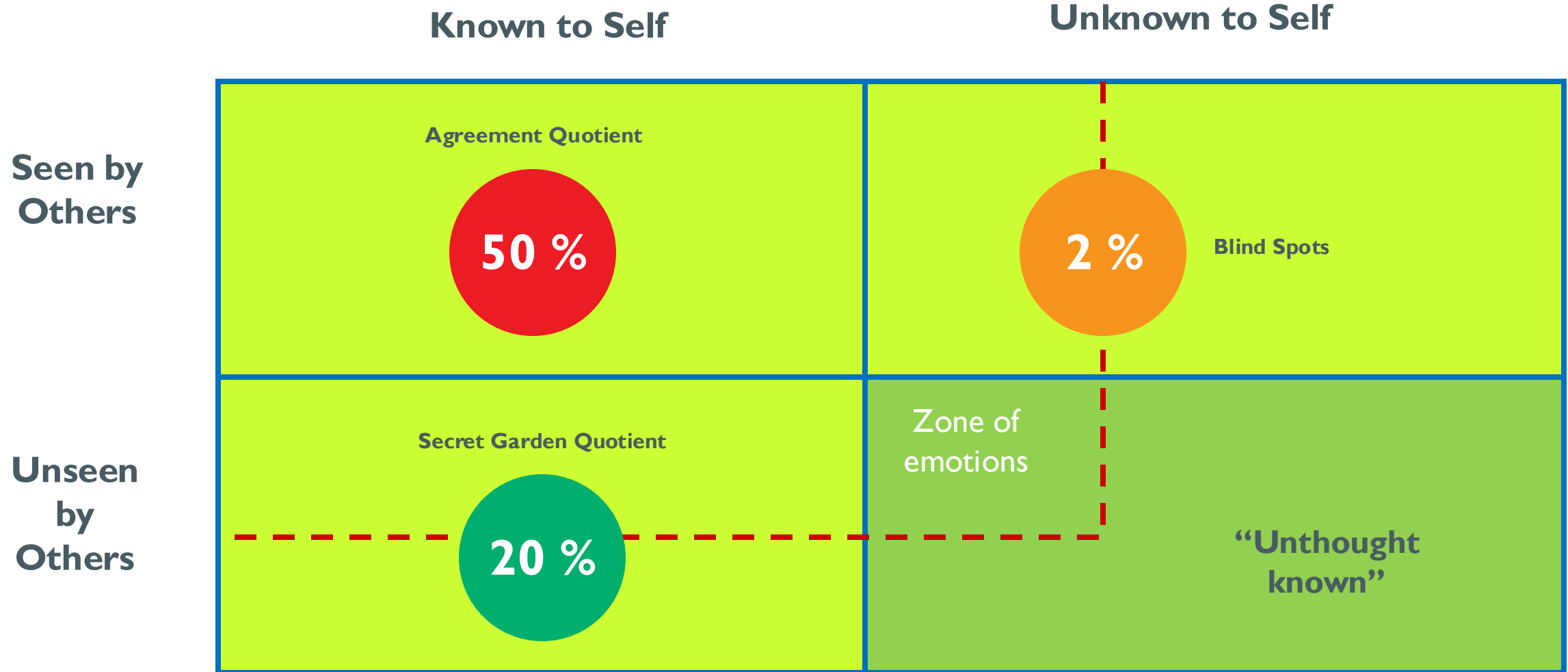
Blind Spots



Life anchors not selected by you but selected by at least two thirds of your observers.

Observer Comments

1. What is the first life anchor that comes to mind when you think of this person?
2. What qualities of character do you like most about this person?
3. Are any of the person's qualities of character getting in the way of living their best professional and/or personal life?



Observers?

- Professional colleagues who know you well.
- Colleagues who don't know you well.
- Acquaintances—sports teammates, club members ...
- Family, including children!



RE-ENTRY

Talk to them about your experience

- What did your peers tell you?
- What insights did you have about yourself?
- What actions will you take?

Reassure them that

- This takes work and takes time
- You welcome their support

