

# **Looking after yourself and your team: relational intelligence and compassion**

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# Compassion is....

...."behaviour that aims to nurture, look after, teach, guide, mentor, soothe, protect, offer feelings of acceptance and belonging in order to benefit another person." Professor Paul Gilbert (2010) *The Compassionate Mind*

## It is not...

- Sentimentality
- Pity
- Indulgence
- Excusing bad behaviour

# Relational Intelligence

Societal, communal, emotional, executive

- Self to self
- Self to other
- Other to self

## **Three habits of relational intelligence:**

- Asking questions that matter
- Listening with a quiet mind
- Authentic appreciation

**“What can you do to take better care of yourself?”**

# There is no such thing as an individual

- **Physically** – the “ecological self” - Arne Naess, Dr. Stephan Harding, “A natural history of me!” BBC R4  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01rvpkb>
- **Psychologically** - “We interact therefore I become”  
(Ryle & Kerr, 2002, *Introducing Cognitive Analytic Therapy*)
- **Logically/philosophically** – the impossibility of separateness  
Chandrakirti and Brent D. Slife

















An “individual” is a mere label for a temporary and ever-changing set of specific relationships

“Strong relationality” Brent D.Slife ([www.brentslife.com](http://www.brentslife.com))  
“Things are not first self-contained entities and then interactive. Each thing, including each person, is first and always a nexus of relations.” *Taking Practice Seriously* (2004)

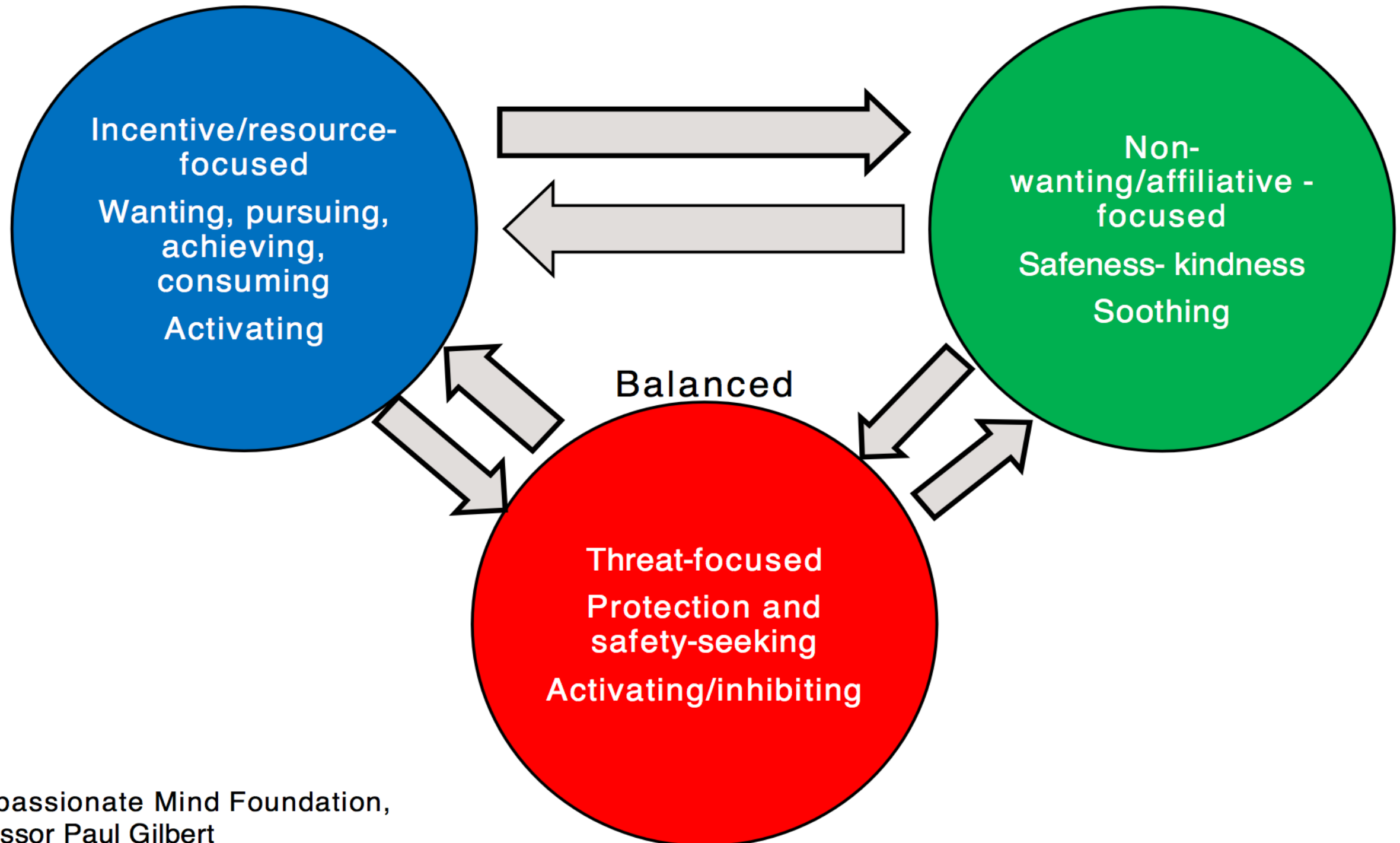
**Everyone is always  
doing their absolute  
best to be happy....**

***...it's just that we often do this in  
relationally unintelligent ways***

# Three Types of Affect Regulation System

Driven, excited, vitality

Content, safe, connected

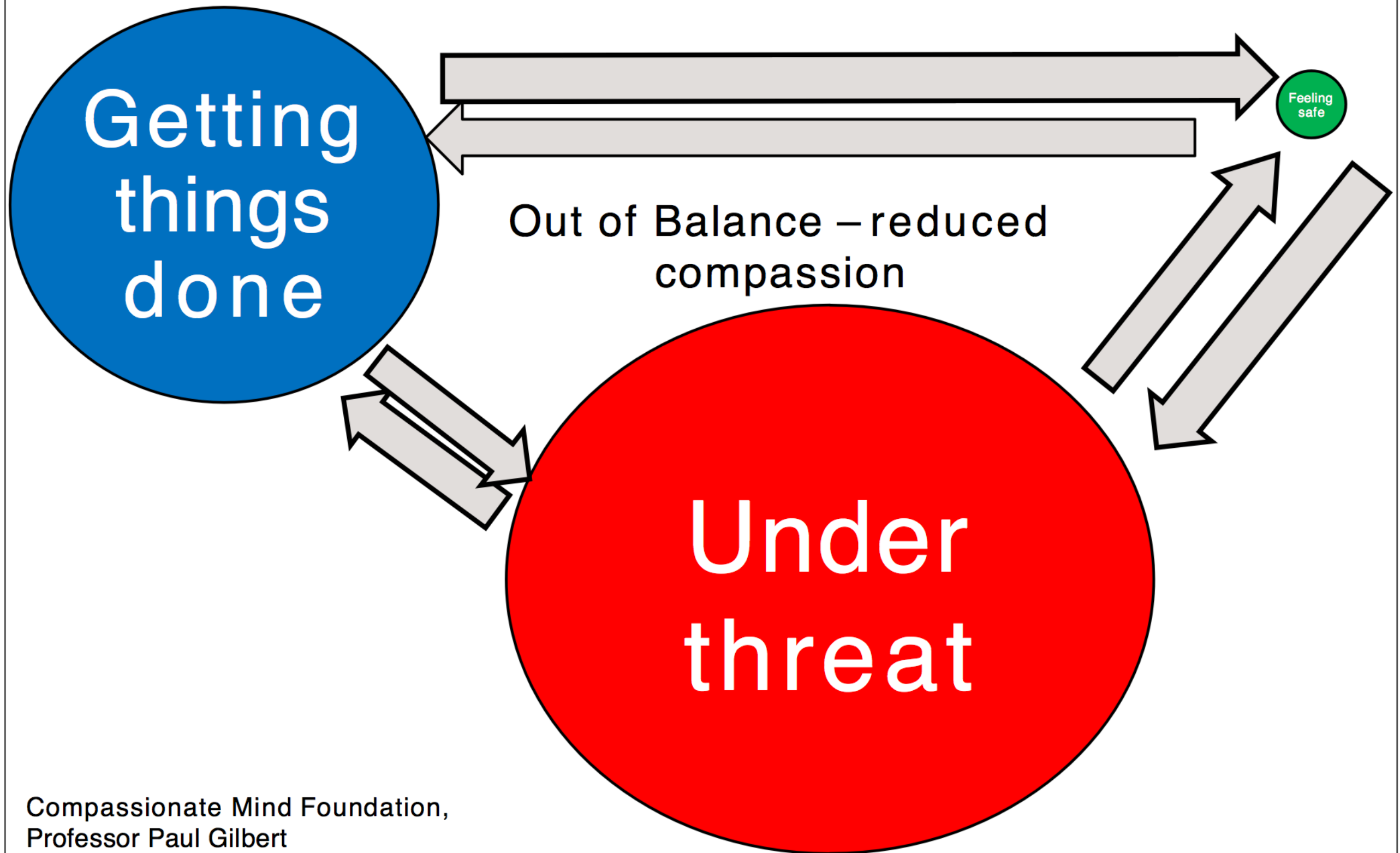




# Current context

- Permanent 'white water': volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity
- Increasing expectations from central government with reduced funding: 'more for less' = industrial model of health care
- Increasing expectations from patients: access, convenience, safety, dignity, compassion, 'best available' treatment = demand for 'intelligent kindness' (Ballatt & Campling, 2011)
- A broken system?

# Three Types of Affect Regulation System



How can we find a more  
healthy balance - reducing  
stress AND improving safety  
and quality?



Feeling  
safe

Humans function best – physically, mentally, emotionally – when they are feeling

- Loving, affiliative and caring
- Loved and valued (rather than unloved and de-valued)

Professor Paul Gilbert  
Compassionate Mind Foundation



# **Health, wellbeing and connection**

## **The dangers of disconnection**

- Self-to-self – poor self-care, dissociation
- Self-to-other – capitalism, competition and inequality
- Other-to-self – marginalisation, exclusion, isolation

**If compassion is at the heart  
of health and social care,  
then self-compassion is at  
the heart of compassion**

# Self-compassion

“The experience of compassion is complete abandonment of the inclination to resist emotional discomfort. It’s *full* acceptance: of the person, of the pain, and of our own reactions to the pain.

*Self*-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others.....it’s a small shift in the direction of our attention that can make all the difference in our lives, both when we’re in intense pain and as we negotiate the travails of daily life”

Chris Germer (2009) *the mindful path to self compassion*

# Self compassion break

from [www.selfcompassion.org](http://www.selfcompassion.org)

Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, that is causing you stress. Call the situation to mind, and see if you can actually feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body.

Now, say to yourself:

## **1. This is a moment of suffering**

That's mindfulness. Other options include:

- This hurts.
- Ouch!
- This is stress.

## **2. Suffering is a part of life**

That's common humanity. Other options include:

- Other people feel this way.
- I'm not alone.
- We all struggle in our lives.

Now, put your hand(s) over your heart, feel the warmth of your hand and the gentle touch of your hand on your chest. Or adopt another form of soothing touch that feels right for you.

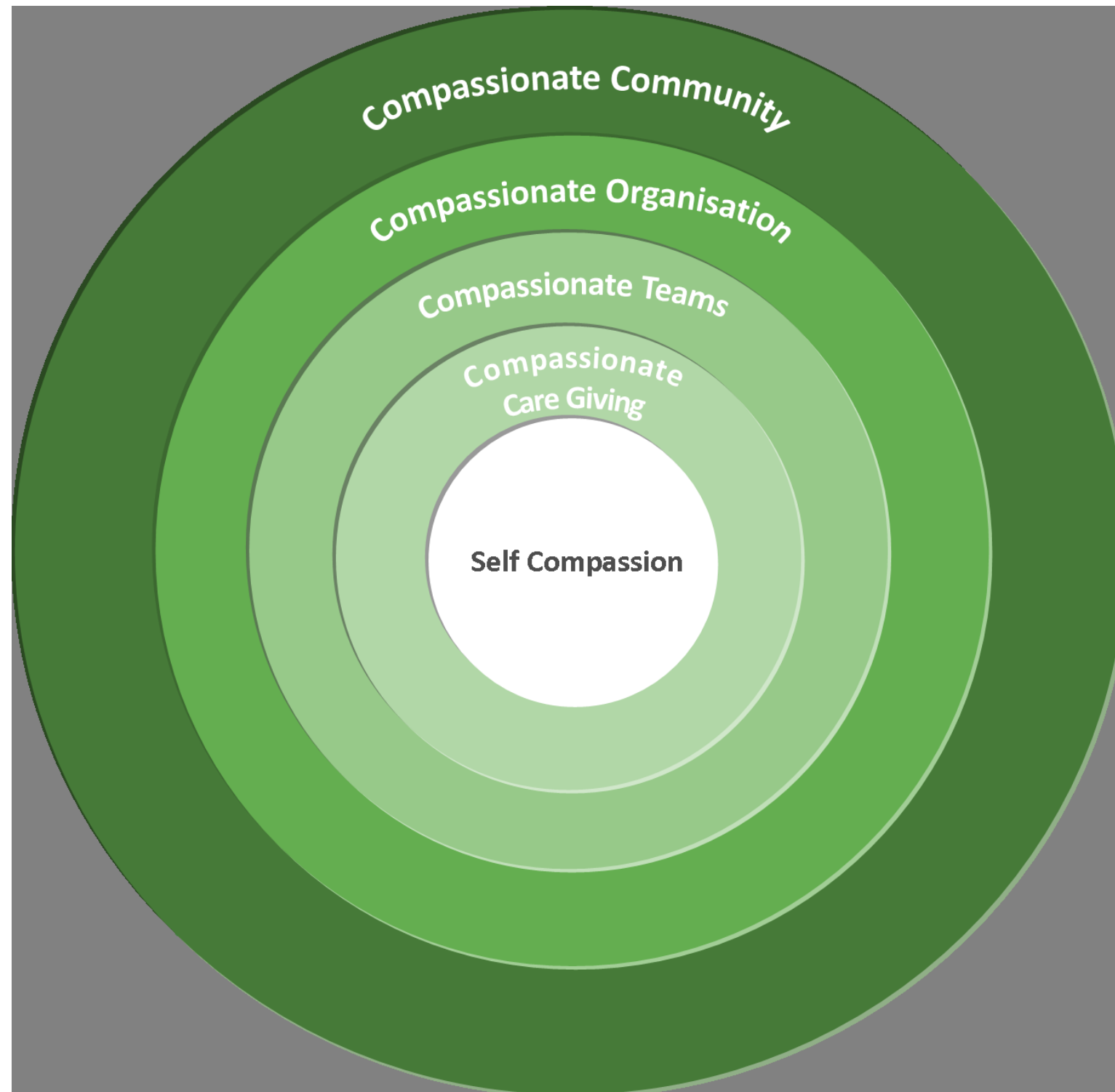
Say to yourself:

## **3. May I be kind to myself**

You can also ask yourself, "What do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?" Is there a phrase that speaks to you in your particular situation, such as:

- *May I give myself the compassion that I need*
- *May I learn to accept myself as I am*
- *May I forgive myself*
- *May I be strong.*
- *May I be patient*





- We are 'hard-wired' for connection/communication
- How you relate to yourself is as important as how you relate to others
- Looking after yourself improves your ability to connect with others
- Dialogue (or person-centred communication) is a key skill for creating safe spaces for reflection at work

# Bohm Dialogue

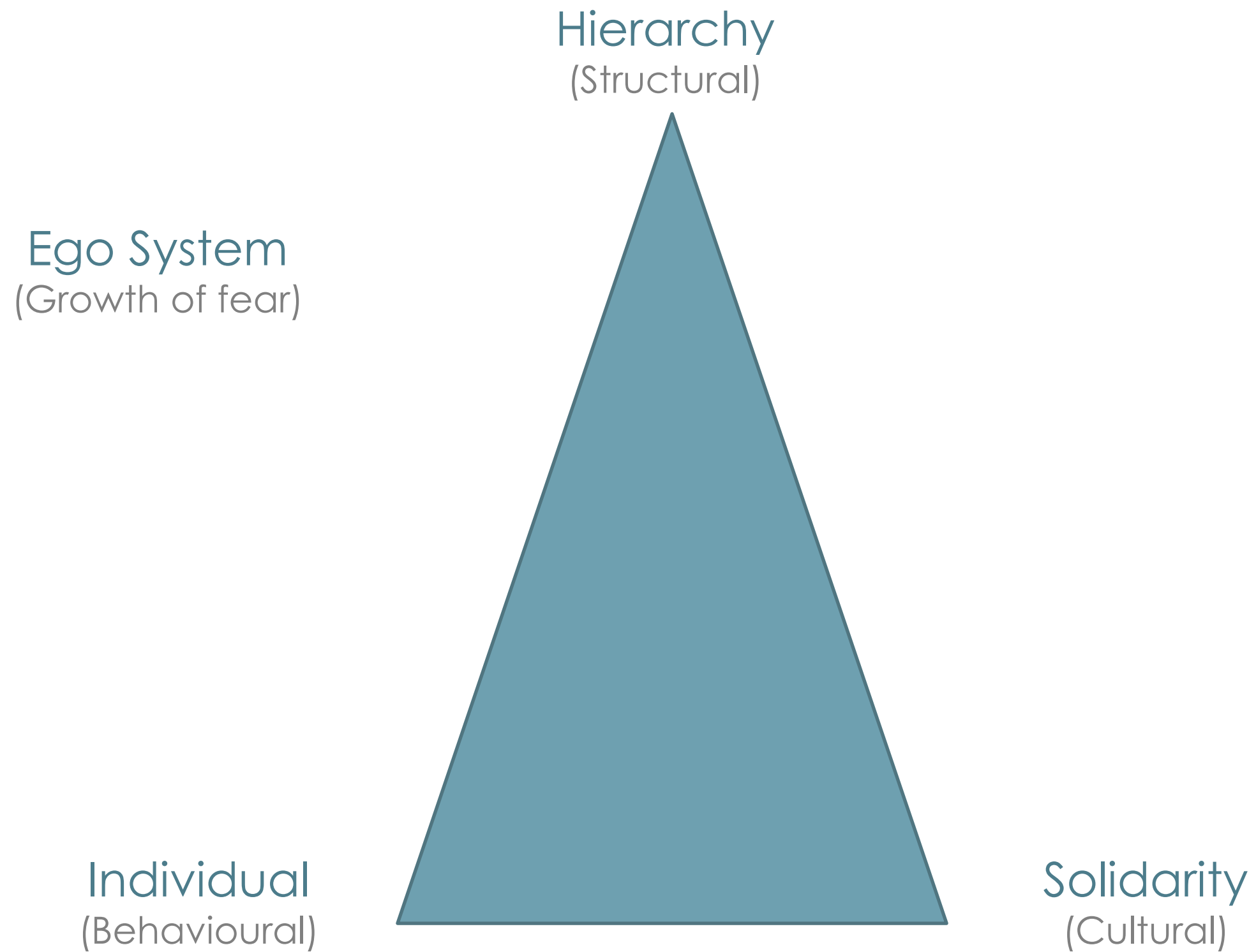
"..it is proposed that a form of free dialogue may well be one of the most effective ways of investigating the crisis which faces society, and indeed the whole of human nature and consciousness today. Moreover, it may turn out that such a form of free exchange of ideas and information is of fundamental relevance for transforming culture and freeing it of destructive misinformation, so that creativity can be liberated."

**David Bohm “*On Dialogue*” (1991)**

[http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue\\_proposal.html](http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html)

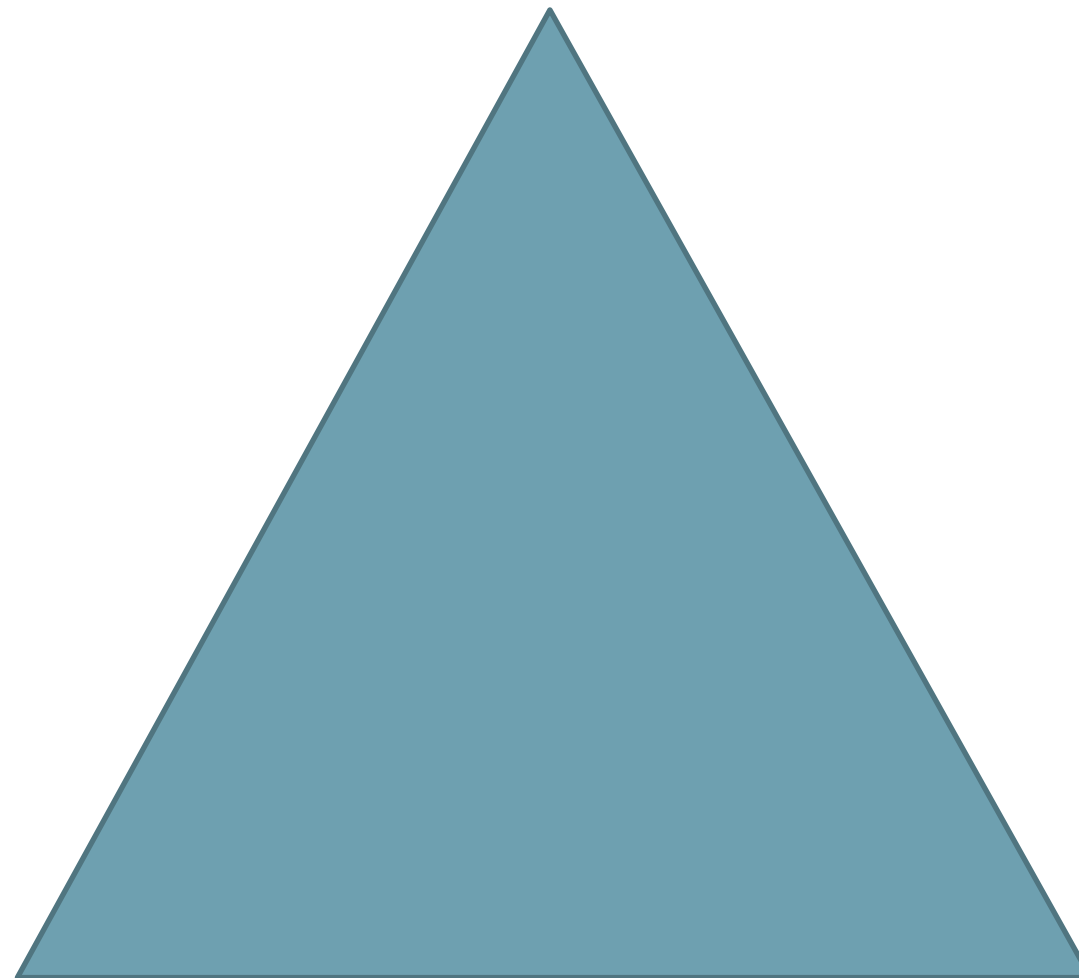
**“What can be done to embed compassion  
in our team/organisation?”**





Individual  
(Behavioural)

Eco System  
(Growth of trust)

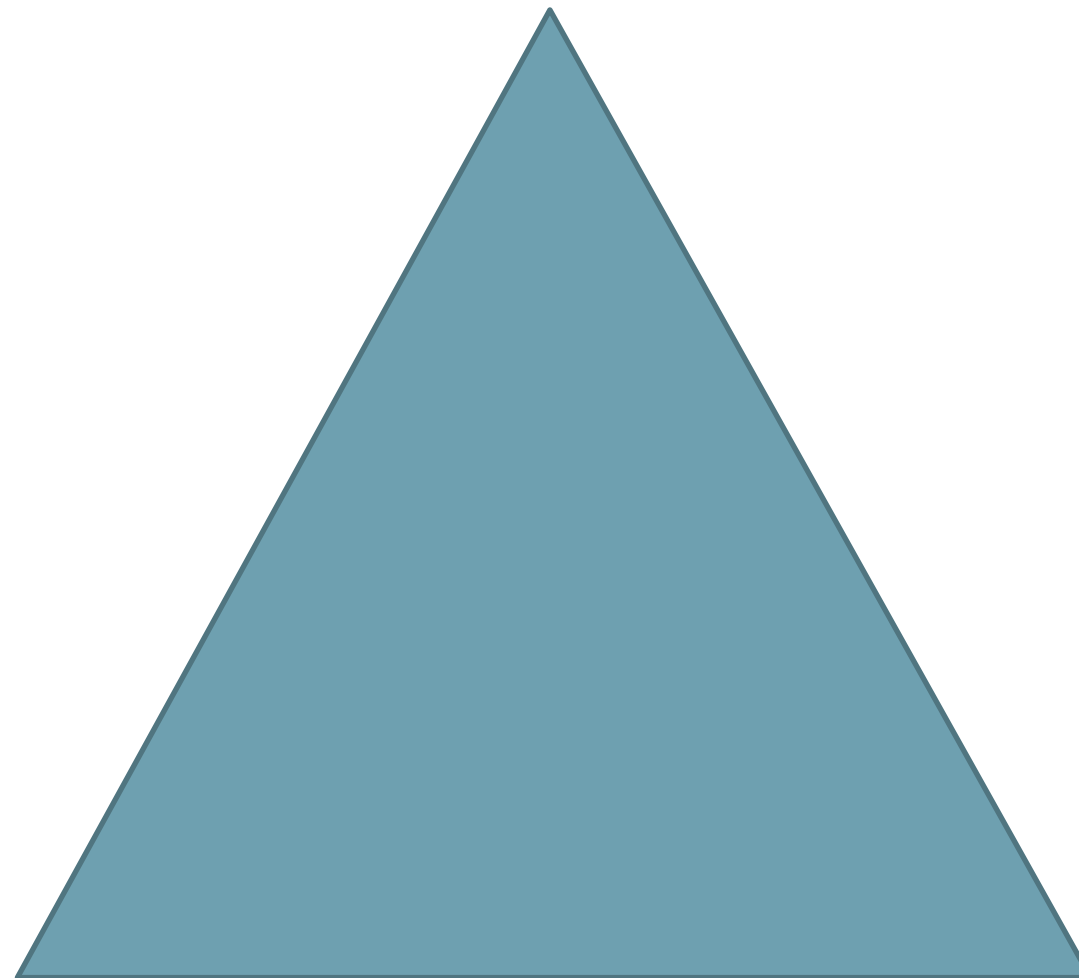


Hierarchy  
(Structural)

Solidarity  
(Cultural)

Dialogue  
(Behavioural)

Eco System  
(Growth of trust)



Trust  
(Structural)

Shared  
knowledge  
(Cultural)

PAUSE...

...BREATHE..

kind presence

# Thank you!

# Questions?

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