

KTH/ITM



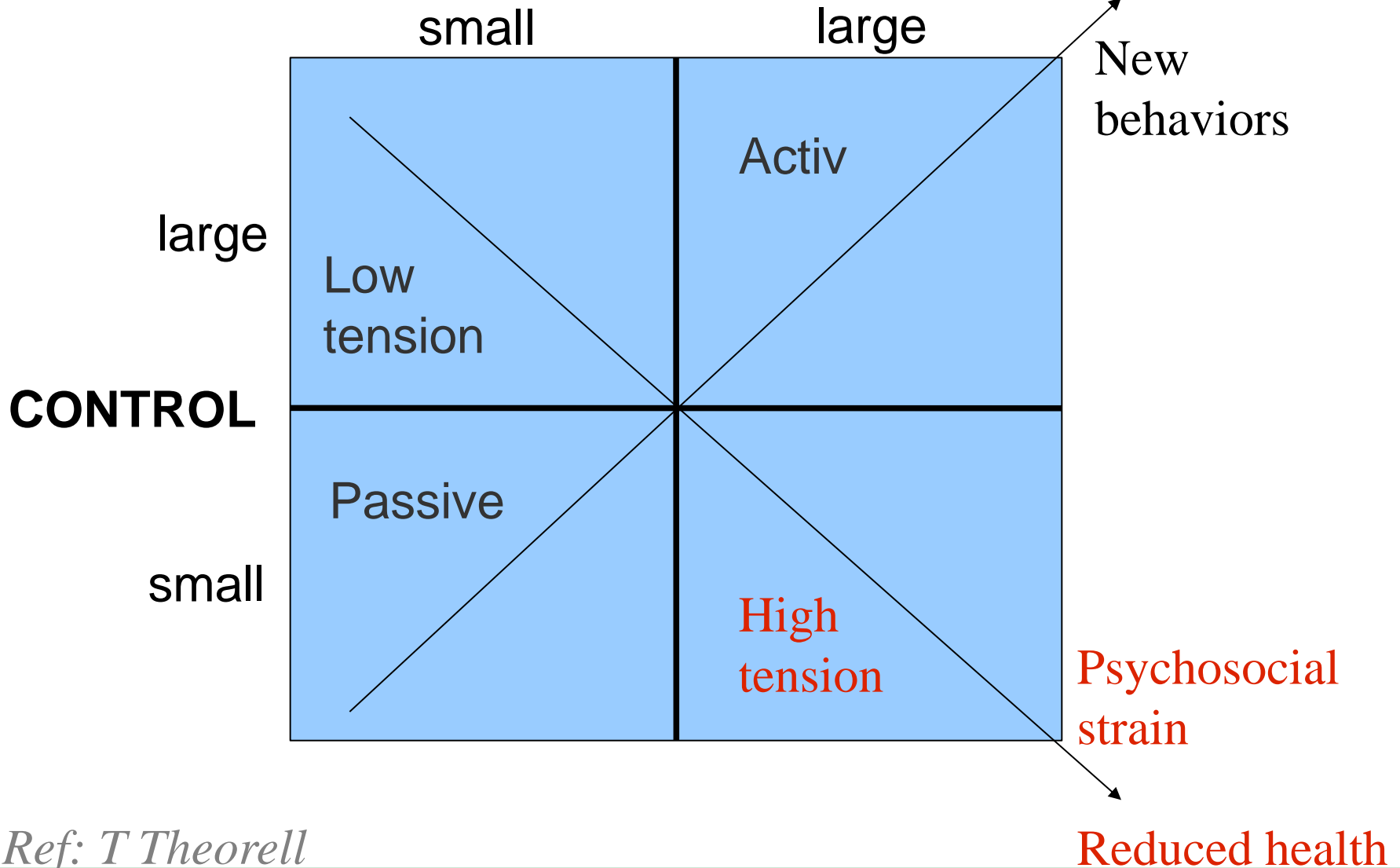
Stress, stress management and mindfulness

Stress is the most common diagnosis of sick leave. 2014 was 40 percent of the total amount of sickness cases in Sweden due to mental illness. (Reference Försäkringskassan Stockholm 01 april 2015)

The cost for sick leave has been doubled in 5 years from 16 billion SEK 2010 to 32 billion SEK 2015. (Reference SVD 2015)

The cost for sick leave increases with 7 billion SEK this year and the estimate for 2019 is 51 billion SEK which is more than the swedish defence budget (Reference Dagens samhälle 2016)

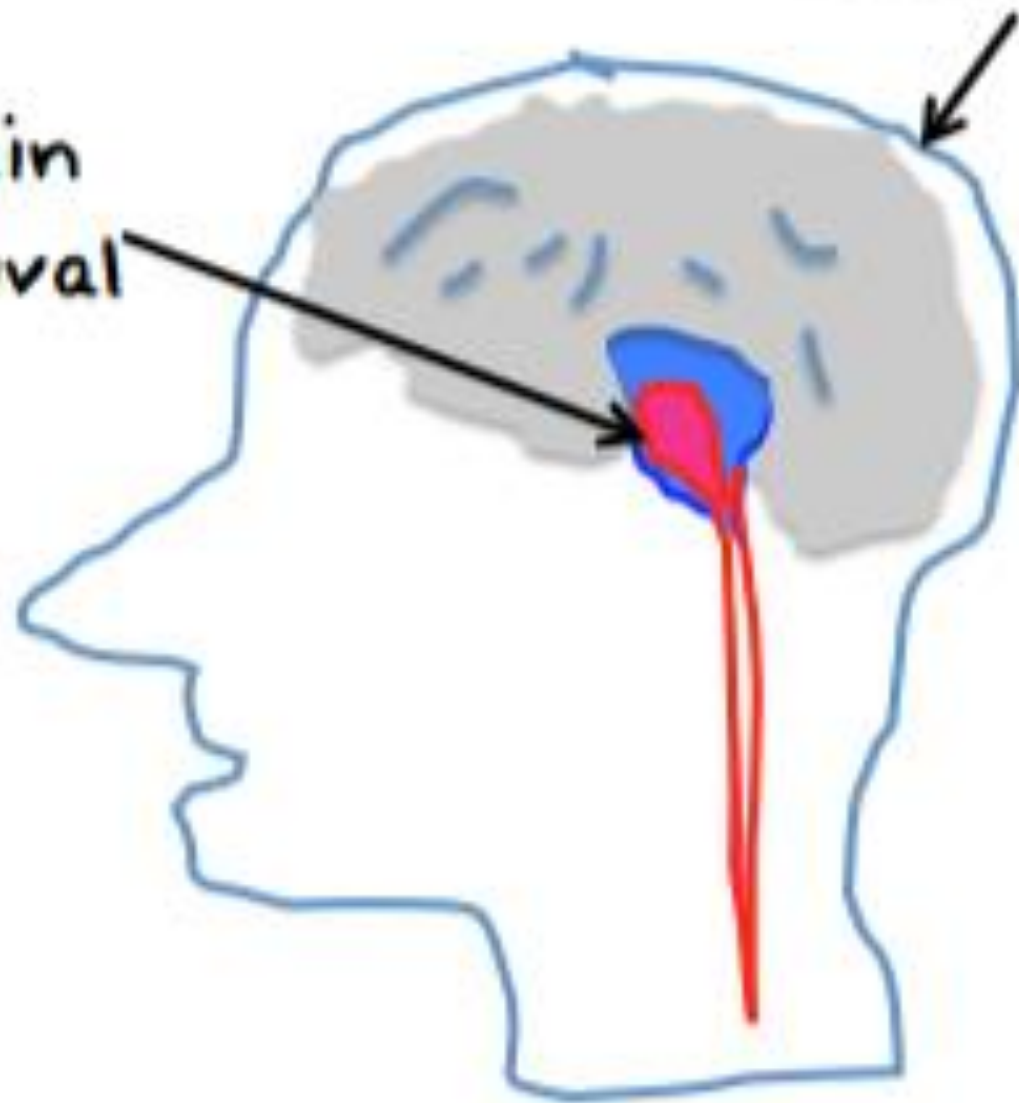
DEMANDS



Ref: T Theorell

new brain
- analysis

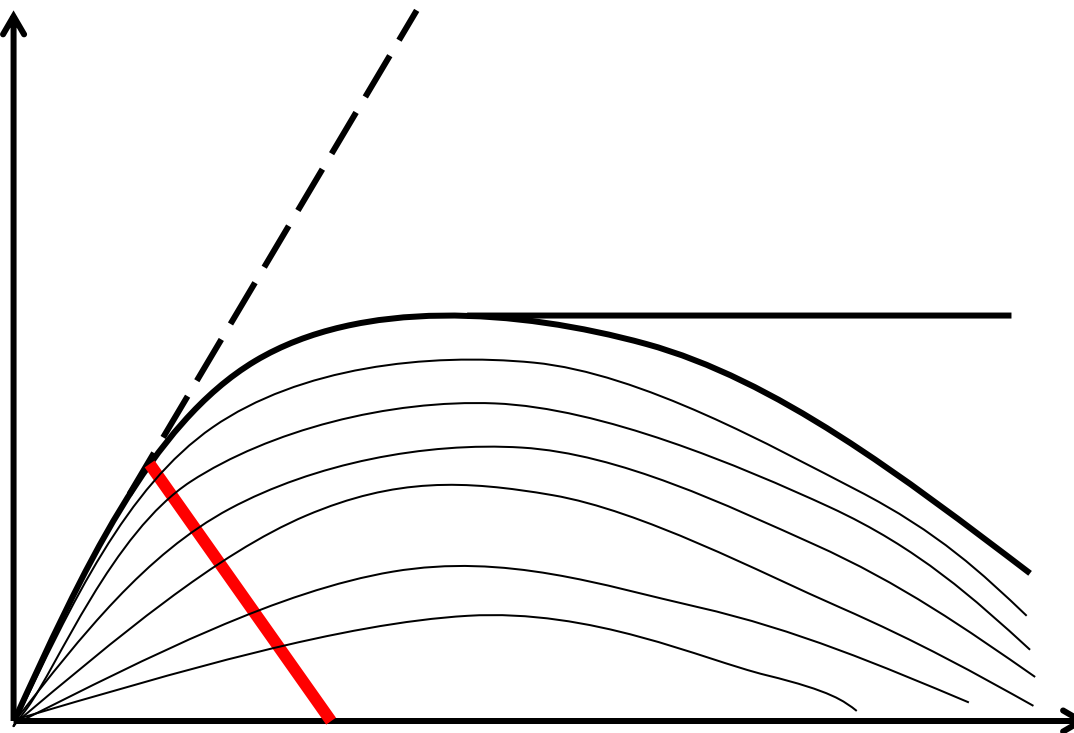
old brain
- survival





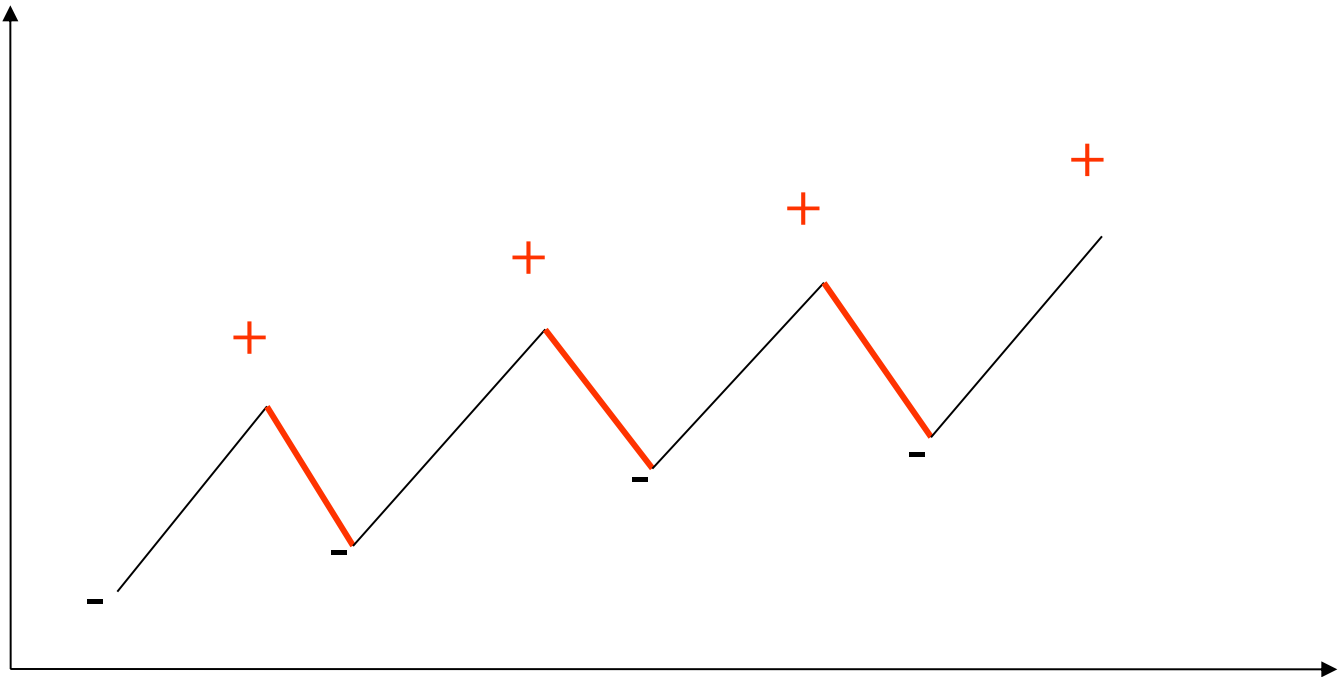
Discomfort in the short and the long term (exposure)

Discomfort



Dwelling-/ worrying sequence

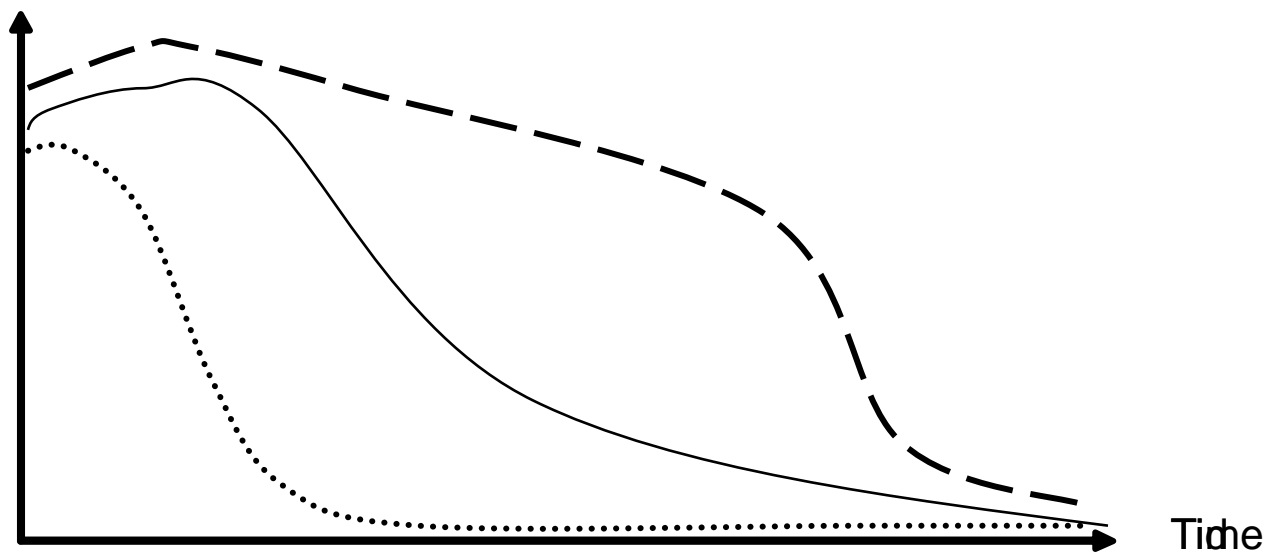
Anxiety/discomfort



”-” = discomforting thoughts, ”+” = **comforting thoughts**

Ref: Olle Wadström

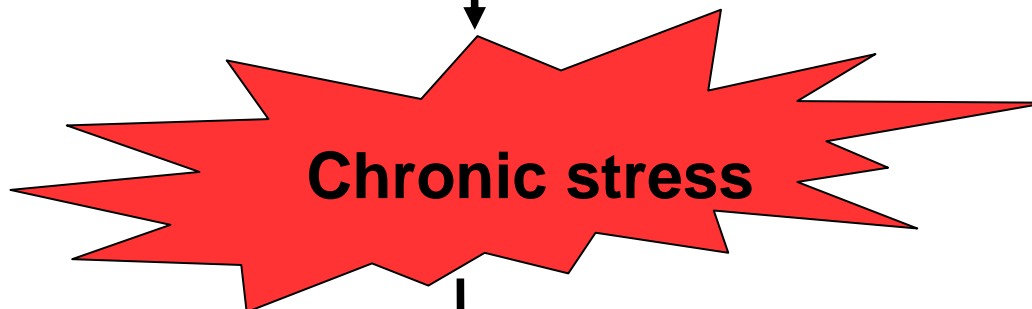
Dwelling



- — . Discomforting thoughts
- Anxiety/discomfort
- Comforting thoughts, safety behaviours

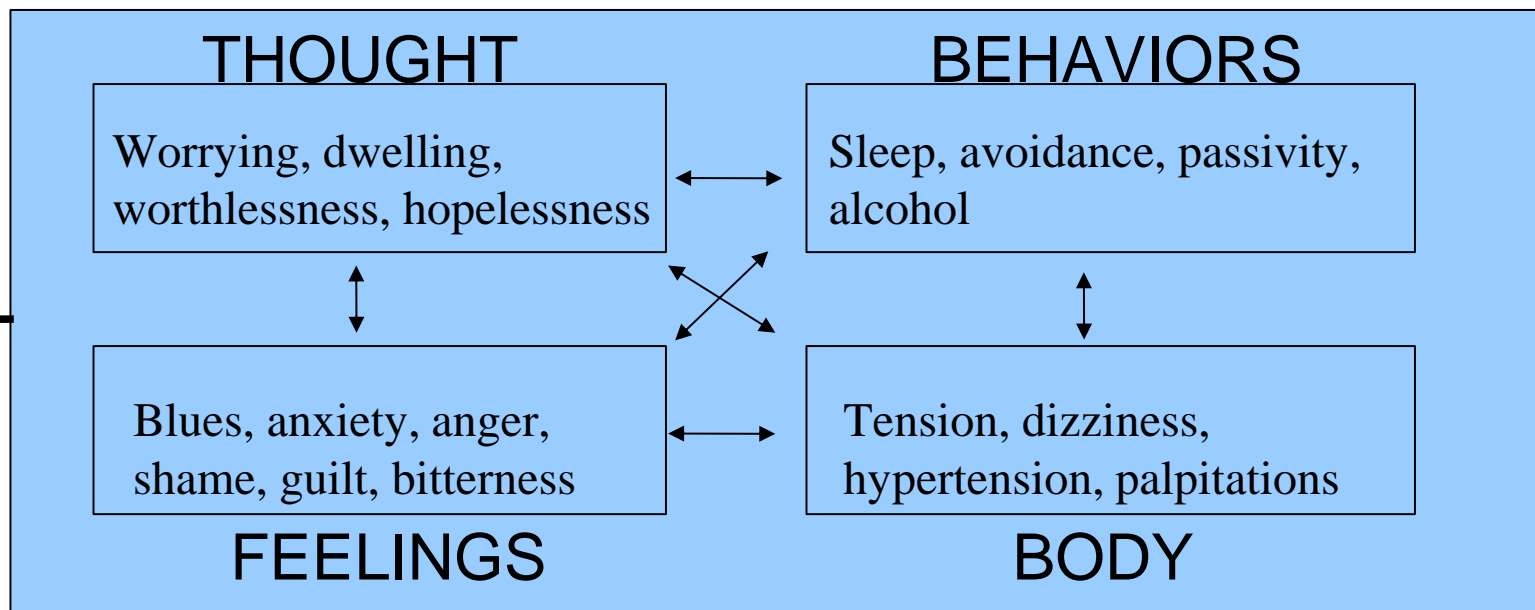
Ref: Olle Wadström

Prolonged imbalance between demand and resources
(strain)



Stress and fatigue

Ref: N. Almén



Examples of the effects of negative stress



- Less creativity
- Hasty decisions
- Decision paralysis
- Poorer opinion, chance taking
- Less overview of the whole
- Reduced reliance

Ref:
Arbetsmiljöverket

Be aware of symptoms of stress

- **Cognitive:** Inability to concentrate, Forgetful, Difficulties to finish a task, Inability to make decisions, A jumble of thoughts
- **Physical:** Shallow breathing, Pressure on chest, Abnormal fatigue, Increased respiratory rate, Gastric problems, Bodily tension , Tension headache, Trembling, Visual disturbances, ex. tunnel vision.
- **Emotional:** Anxiety, Worry, Fear, Panic, Irritability, Frustration, Unstable emotions, Guilt, Shame, Sadness
- **Behaviour:** Sleep Problems, Passivity, Less social activities, Doing everything fast, Increased intake of food, alcohol, nicotine, Control Behaviors, Doing many things at the same time, Deliver cynicisms

Need for new habits?

Example of what can cause stress

- **Big changes in private life (i.e. death or illness in related parties, illness, pain problems, divorce, pregnancy and parenting)**
- **Unemployment, financial difficulties**
- **Conflicts or lack of relationships**
- **Heavy workload and unclear roles**
- **Cutbacks / reorganization in the workplace**

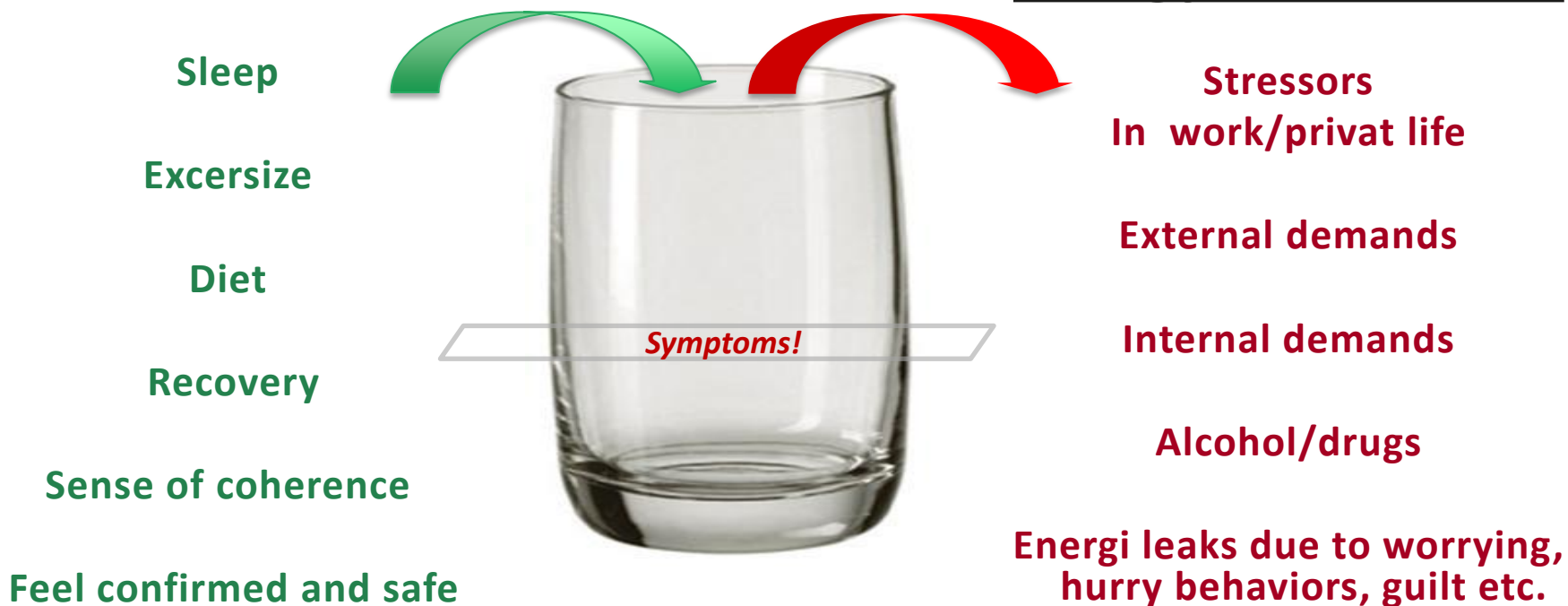


Also big positive changes such as changing workplace or moving to a new house/apartment may cause stress

Life balance

+
Energy replenishment

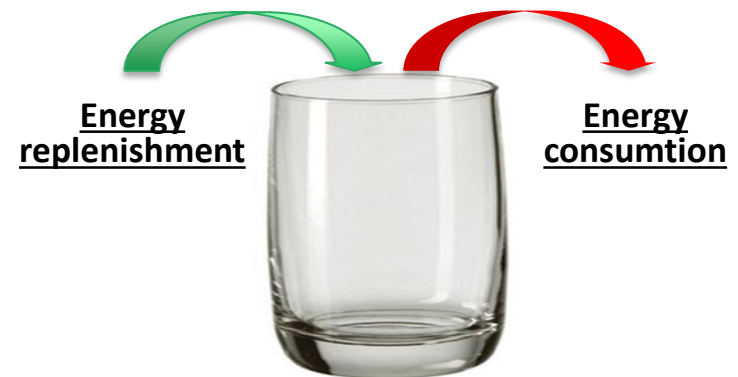
-
Energy consumption



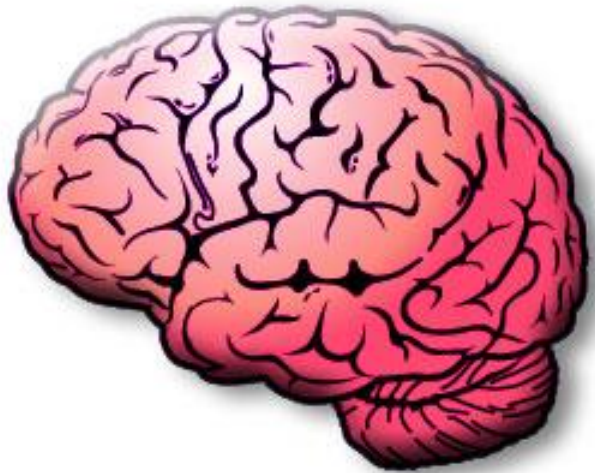
Be aware of what it is that causes stress in you

- Write down changes needed in order for you to get a more balanced life.

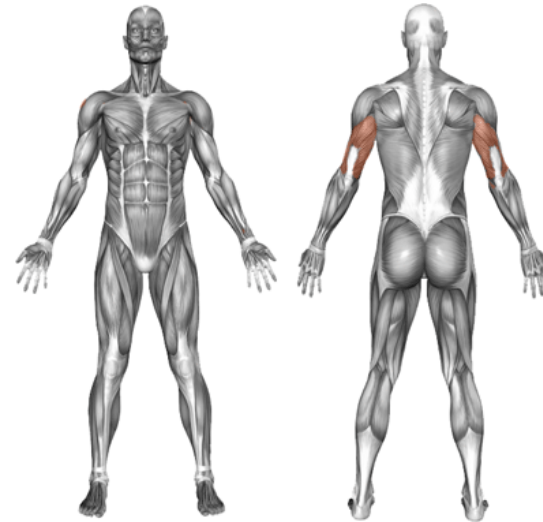
Also consider activities that are fun (or used to be fun), that now increases your stress levels / consumes energy.



Good sleep is good for you!



- Recovery of the brain
- Memory is upgraded

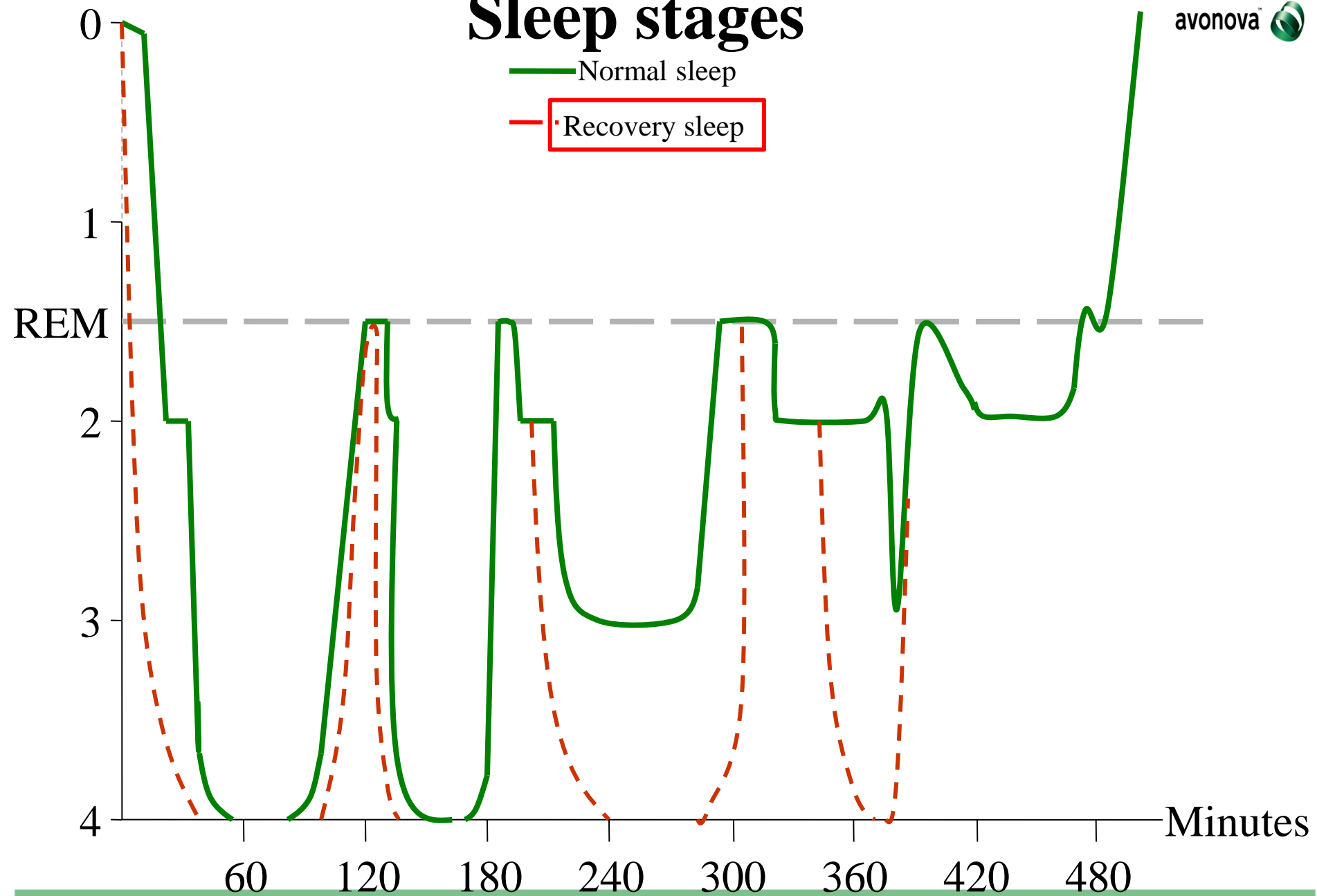


- Repair of body
- Stay healthy

Sleep stages

— Normal sleep

- - - Recovery sleep



Excercise

- Regular exercise gets the brain to work more efficiently
- Increased concentration
- Increased creativity
- Hippocampus grow (memory and learning)
- Soothing, exhilarating, feeling of well being, highs... (serotonin, noradrenalin, dopamin and endorphines)
- Decreases stress hormon cortisol for up to 48 hours.
- Same effect as medicine for light to moderate depression.
- Improves sleep
- As effective as medicine for heart disease, stroke and diabetes

Ref: Carl Johan Sundberg, doctor

How to manage stress

- **Prioritize!**

Think about what's and what's not important. Can it wait? Can someone else do it?

- **Say "No" – Set boundaries**

- **Find support**

- **Change what you can and want to change.**

How to manage stress

• Recovery

Have balance between activity and recovery on a daily basis. Weekends and vacation should not be used for recovery.

• Embrace yourself

Prioritize life balance, physical activity and exercise, diet and sleep.

• Calming behaviours and diaphragmatic breathing

Practise calming behaviours, relaxation and diaphragmatic breathing whenever you can.

Fast relaxation



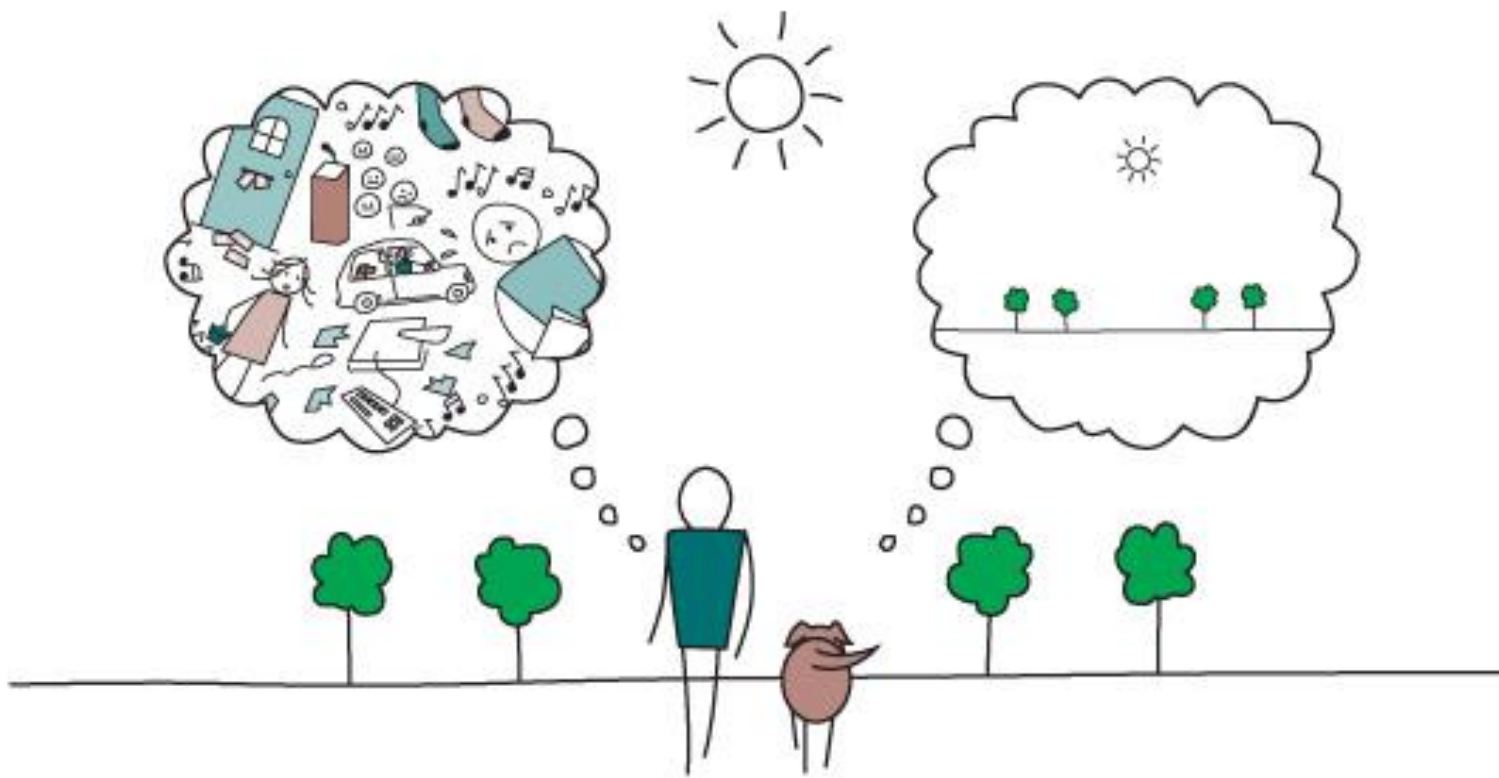
- Take a deeper breath
- Hold your breath for three seconds (count 1 – 2 – 3)
- Slowly release the air and feel at the same time how the whole body relaxes
- Let the next breath come by itself
- Note if you breathe with the stomach or not (diaphragmatic breathing)
- Take a few breaths with the stomach

Examples of calming behaviors:

- Notice your breathing and focus on diaphragmatic breathing.
- Stay in the right lane on the highway and be helpful when you are in a traffic jam.
- Stand on escalators. In the subway don't run or walk when you here the train.
- After meetings wait 15 minutes before you pick up your mobile phone.
- Try to do one thing at the time.
- Remember to brush your teeth slowly and gently and at the same time stand still.
- Ask someone in your family / circle of friends to share how they have had it during the day and listen with attention.



**COMMITMENT:
EITHER YOU DO OR
YOU DON'T, THERE
IS NO IN-BETWEEN.**



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Mindfulness

*- Increase your efficiency
and decrease you stress -*

How does the human mind function?



The thought machine



Where is usually our thoughts?

In the past – In the present – In the future

What are our thoughts usually busy with?

Something unpleasant/uncomfortable, neutral or pleasant/comfortable

Thoughts are often judgemental

Good/Bad, Right/Wrong, Attractive/Unattractive

Can we control what we think?

Where does the content of our thoughts come from?

What does this say about our mind?



Thought chains



We can control what we focus on!





- **It's not about relaxation. It's about to train your mind to consciously control your attention towards the present moment, here and now.**

Tomorrow this wonderful situation will end. Then everything will be boring and dull...

OMG here I am thinking about tomorrow...

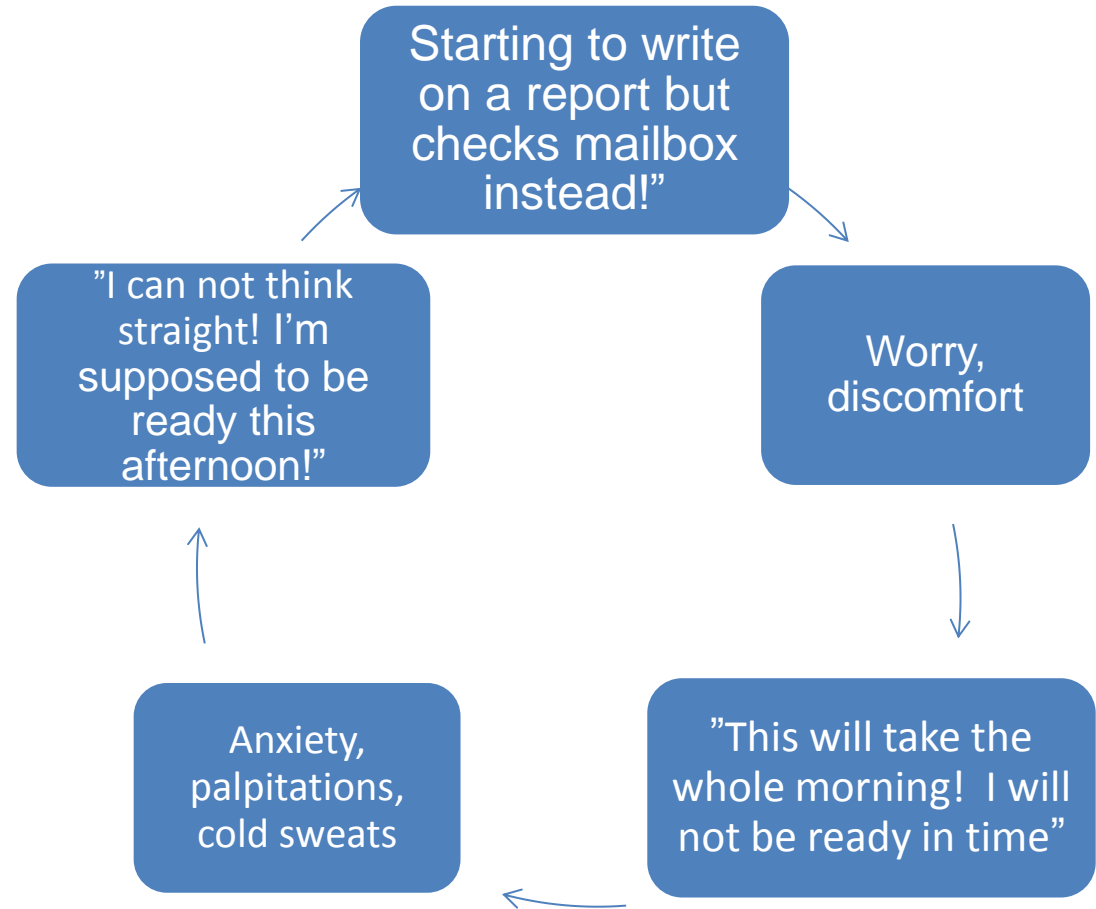
He seems angry. Why he does not say anything. Yesterday, he was happier ...



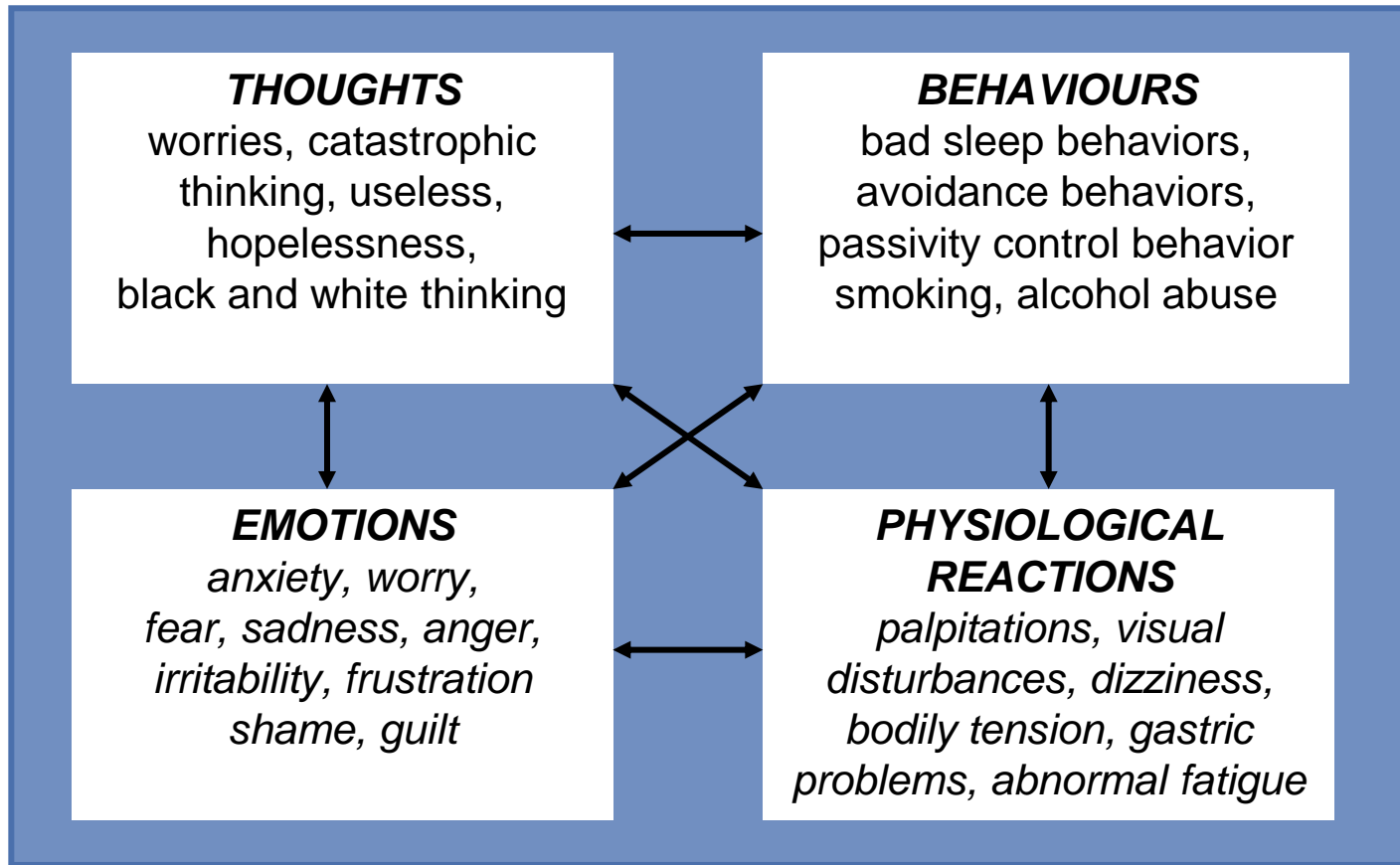
- **It's about separating events from the ideas that emerge, and to understand that thoughts are thoughts and not reality.**

Thoughts can increase stress

- Thoughts that are emotionally colored tend to engage us more than neutral thoughts.
- These thoughts often starts physiological reactions, which lead to a negative spiral of increasing anxiety and negative thought content.

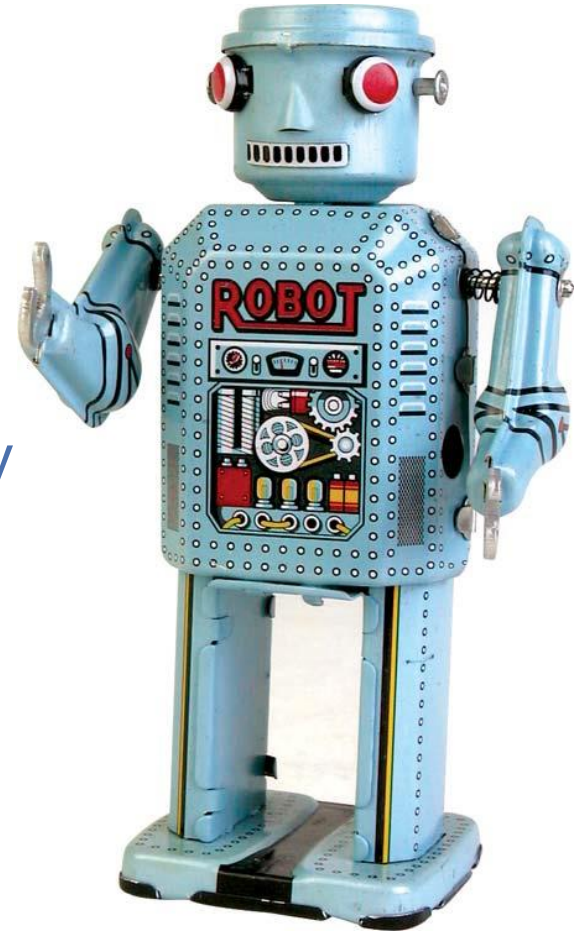


Self generating stress



Autopilot

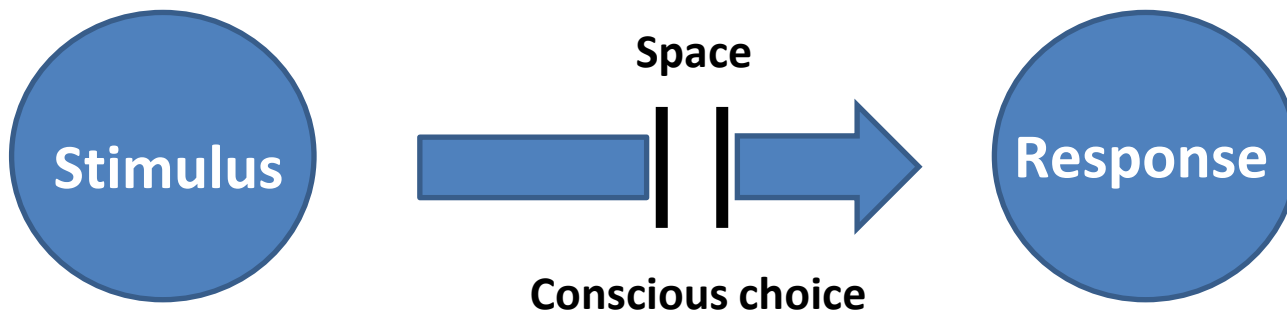
- We interpret the present based on old experiences / values (thoughts)
- We react to situations and events without being aware of why
- We are not free to choose how we want to act in the situation
- We miss the experience of the moment such as it actually is



Autopilot



Presence



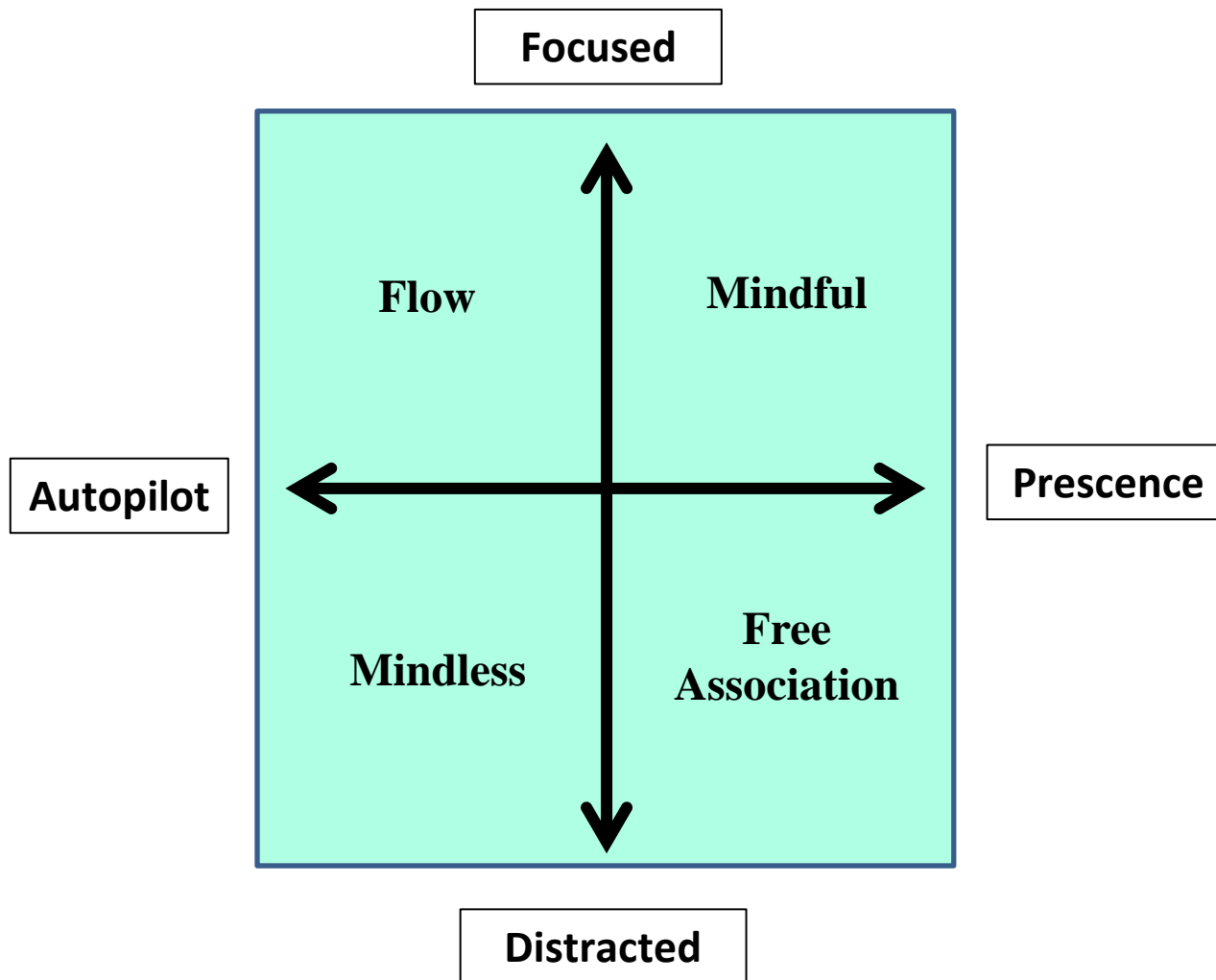
Respond or react?

Observe

Accept

Let go or **A**ct



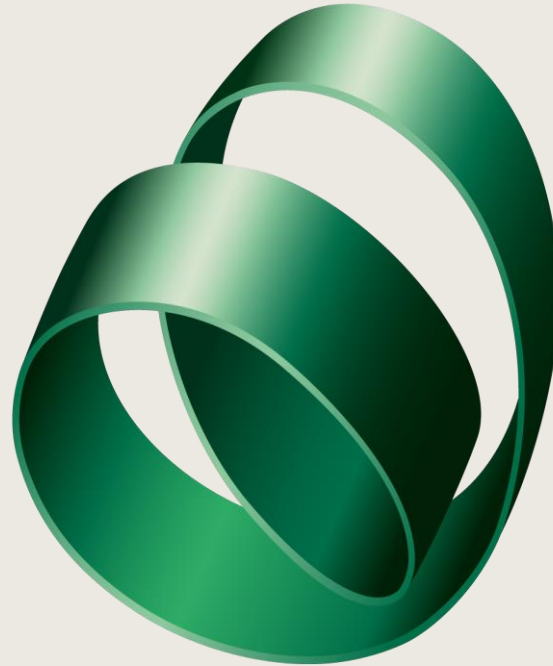


What is mindfulness?



Reading tips

- **Jon Kabat-Zinn, (1996). Full Catastrophe Living: How to cope with stress, pain and illness using mindfulness meditation**
- **Olle Wadström, (2015). Quit Ruminating and Brooding: It is easier to Do with Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)**



Tack för uppmärksamheten!

Malkolm Thorén, Licensed psychologist