

“ALL” ABOUT
TRUST

MARTA KARLSONE

THE TRUST TRIANGLE

FRANCES FREI


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


How to build (and rebuild) trust

6,942,996 plays ⓘ | Frances Frei | TED2018 • April 2018

 Takeaways ^{NEW}

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EMPATHY

The most common fallback according to Frances

“I believe you care about what's important.”

Accepting empathy from others.

Offering our empathetic perception to others.

LOGIC



Quality of logic

Ability to communicate the
logic

We need to have empathy to allow others to communicate their logic



AUTHENTICITY

Multi culturality comes in hard!

Do we not trust them for a reason, or because they're not *typical*?

How do we stay authentic in a position of power?

Authenticity as a part of vulnerability.

TYPES OF TRUST

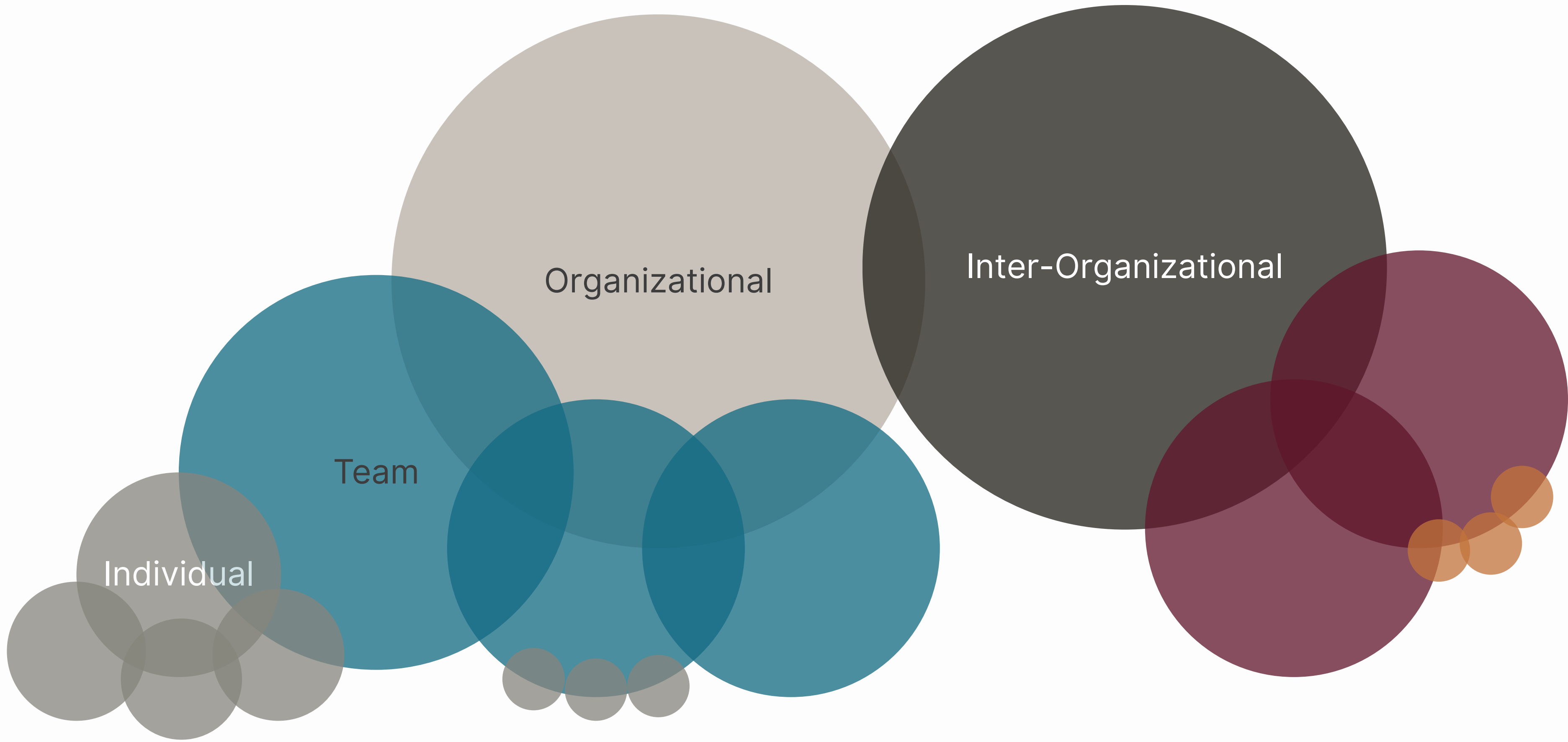
Identification-based: I've learned that we share the same vision, goals, values, etc.

Knowledge-based: we've learned to trust each other.

Calculus-based: we “rely” on each other because there is no other option. We must trust.

Institutional Trust

LEVELS OF
TRUST



Individual

Team

Organizational

Inter-Organizational

WHERE IT
GETS MESSY -
CULTURE,
POWER,
PERCEPTION

WARMTH- COMPETENCE MATRIX

One of the quickest and most important evaluations we're making in seconds.

WARMTH- COMPETENCE MATRIX



What are someone's intentions towards us? Friend or an enemy?

How likely and competent are they to act upon those intentions?



The Warmth-Competence Matrix builds ground for:

- how well we're trusted
- our own bias



Ways to challenge ourselves, by asking:

- Is my perception evidence or assumption based?
- Am I taking care to show both - warmth and competence?



We have to be careful not to unintentionally put someone in the “bad” categories based on our stereotypes, biases, and stigmas. We have to intentionally check in with ourselves about where our mistrust is coming from.

During a project meeting, a partner from one country openly criticises another partner's deliverables:

“This work package is very weak. We expected a much higher level of expertise.”

The criticised partner becomes visibly uncomfortable and later writes privately to the Joint Secretariat, saying the meeting felt disrespectful.

CASE WORK

Which Trust Triangle pillar might be threatened? Is it the same for both parties?

Is this a trust problem? Or a cultural differences problem? Or both?

Is there a Warmth-Competency mismatch?

A Lead Partner who has always been warm and responsive receives a routine compliance email from you requesting missing documentation. It is professional, references the relevant rules, and states the deadline. Standard procedure.

Within a week, you hear informally that the Lead Partner has told a colleague the JS "clearly doesn't trust us anymore" and seems to be "just looking for problems."

During a progress review call, the Lead Partner presents enthusiastically and says everything is going well. When you ask detailed questions about specific budget lines, they say "our finances handle all of that" and move on.

This happens twice more during the call. They remain warm and positive throughout.

The report is due in three weeks.



TRUST
BIAS &
MULTI-
CULTURALITY



We trust those who “speak our language”

HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

POWER DISTANCE

INDIVIDUALISM

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

LONG-TERM ORIENTATION

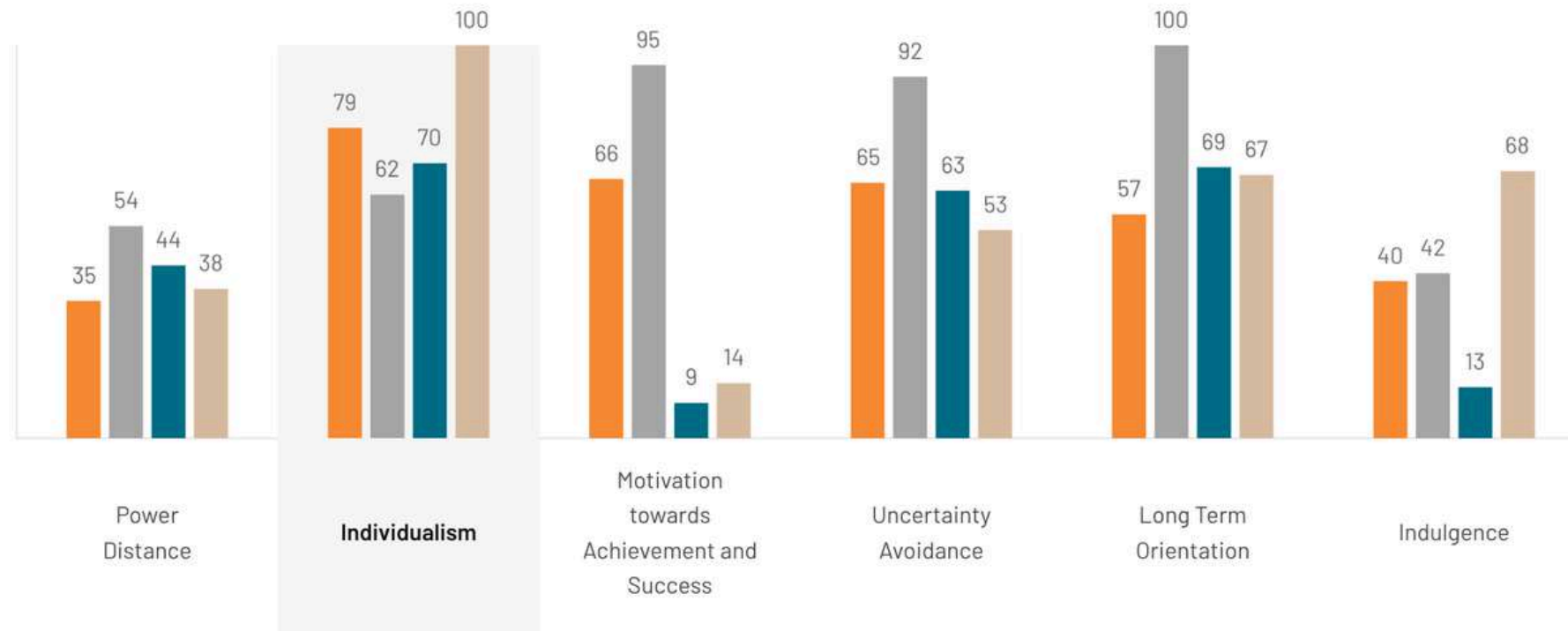
INDULGENCE

our default modes a.k.a. the idea
that “my common sense is your
common sense”

CLARITY ABOUT
HIERARCHY IS NOT
THE ENEMY OF
TRUST



Germany × Japan × Latvia × Netherlands ×



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WHAT TO DO?

1. **NAME IT** - not the behaviour, the trust dynamic.

“Something in our collaboration has become tense.”

2. **UNDERSTAND WHAT** - which dynamic or part of trust has broken or hasn't been developed. Is it empathy? Logic? Repair has to match the “damage”.
You can't fix empathy wound with logic.

3. **REBUILD** - through consistent small actions, not one big gesture(one hard conversation).

BUILDING
THE GROUND
WE'LL WALK
ON



WHY ARE YOU COLLABORATING?

(usually) to reach the results.

a.k.a. to meet everyone's needs
agreed upon at the start of the
project.

CLEAR IS KIND

Part of trust and psychological safety is just being clear.

Psychological safety is not a lack of rules and restrictions. It's the clear presence of them.



I TRUST THAT YOU WILL BE CLEAR AND
HONEST, AND I WILL NOT HAVE TO
GUESS...

...the rules

...the expectations

...the ways of interaction

...the frequency of interaction

...your communication preferences, etc, etc.

This is a space for clear and honest communication and
collaboration.



Emotions

Boundary

Need

YOUR TOOLBOX OF SUPERPOWERS

- Being clear about rules, needs, and roles.
- Showing up in an authentic and honest way.
- Extending empathy towards others.
- Naming issues before they escalate.
- Setting expectations for communication, problem solving and conflict escalation.

FIRST CONVERSATION

- **Your role - clearly and without an apology.** What they can and cannot expect from you. Where do you come in and why.
- **Their context and needs.** How do they prefer to communicate? What are they uncertain about? What do they need from you to feel supported? Not blurring the hierarchy, but being genuinely curious about how you can best collaborate within the framework you have.
- **What happens when problems arise?** What will you do. What to expect from you, and what do you expect from them. How do you want to handle disagreement.

SETTING STAGE FOR SUCCESS

- What unspoken expectations or fears do you want to make explicit from the start?
- What's one thing you wish all Lead Partners understood about your role - and one thing you'd like to understand better about theirs?
- How can we prepare for the conflicts before they arise?
- What is our mutual commitment?

“ALL” ABOUT
HARD
CONVERSATIONS
AND CONFLICTS

MARTA KARLSONE

Why we avoid hard conversations:

- **Anticipatory anxiety** - the imagined conversation feels worse than the real one almost always is
- **Not sure how to start and what to say**
- **The “bad guys” problem** - enforcing rules feels like a relational act, not just an administrative one.
- **Fear of how the other person might react**
- **Cultural caution** - fear of misreading the situation adds another layer of hesitation.

“What if they're having some personal issues?”

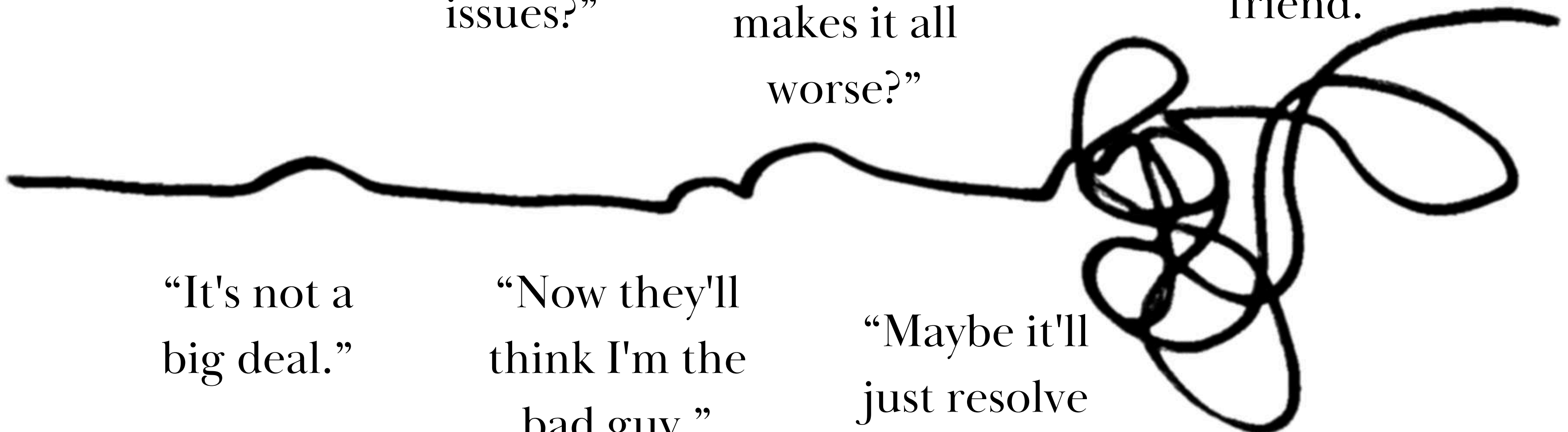
“What if talking makes it all worse?”

“They'll think I am a terrible person / colleague / friend.”

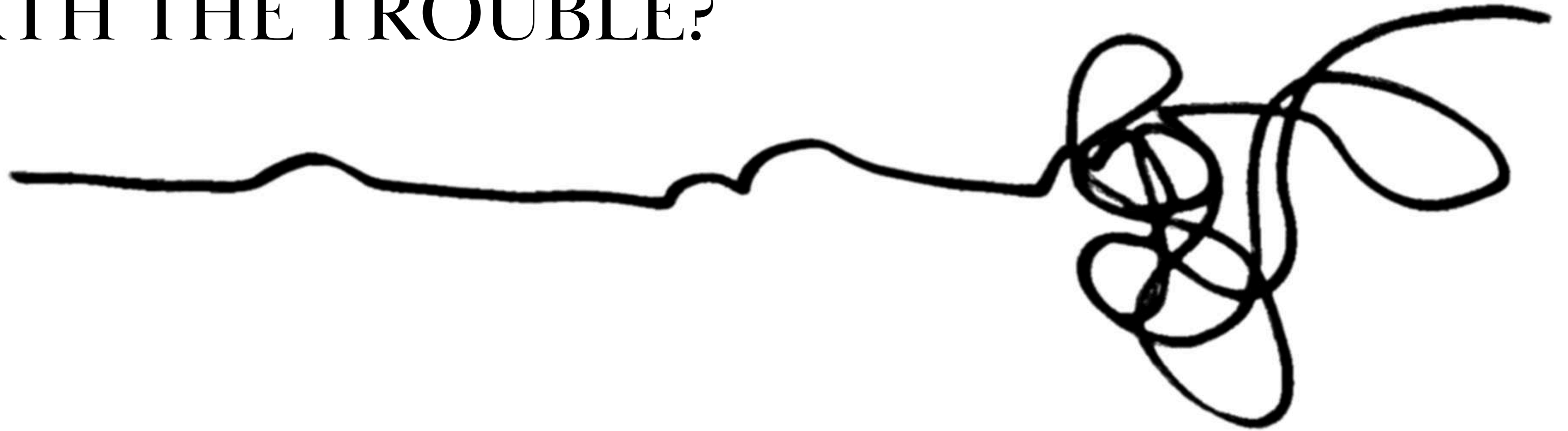
“It's not a big deal.”

“Now they'll think I'm the bad guy.”

“Maybe it'll just resolve on its own...?”



IS MY DISCOMFORT
WORTH THE TROUBLE?





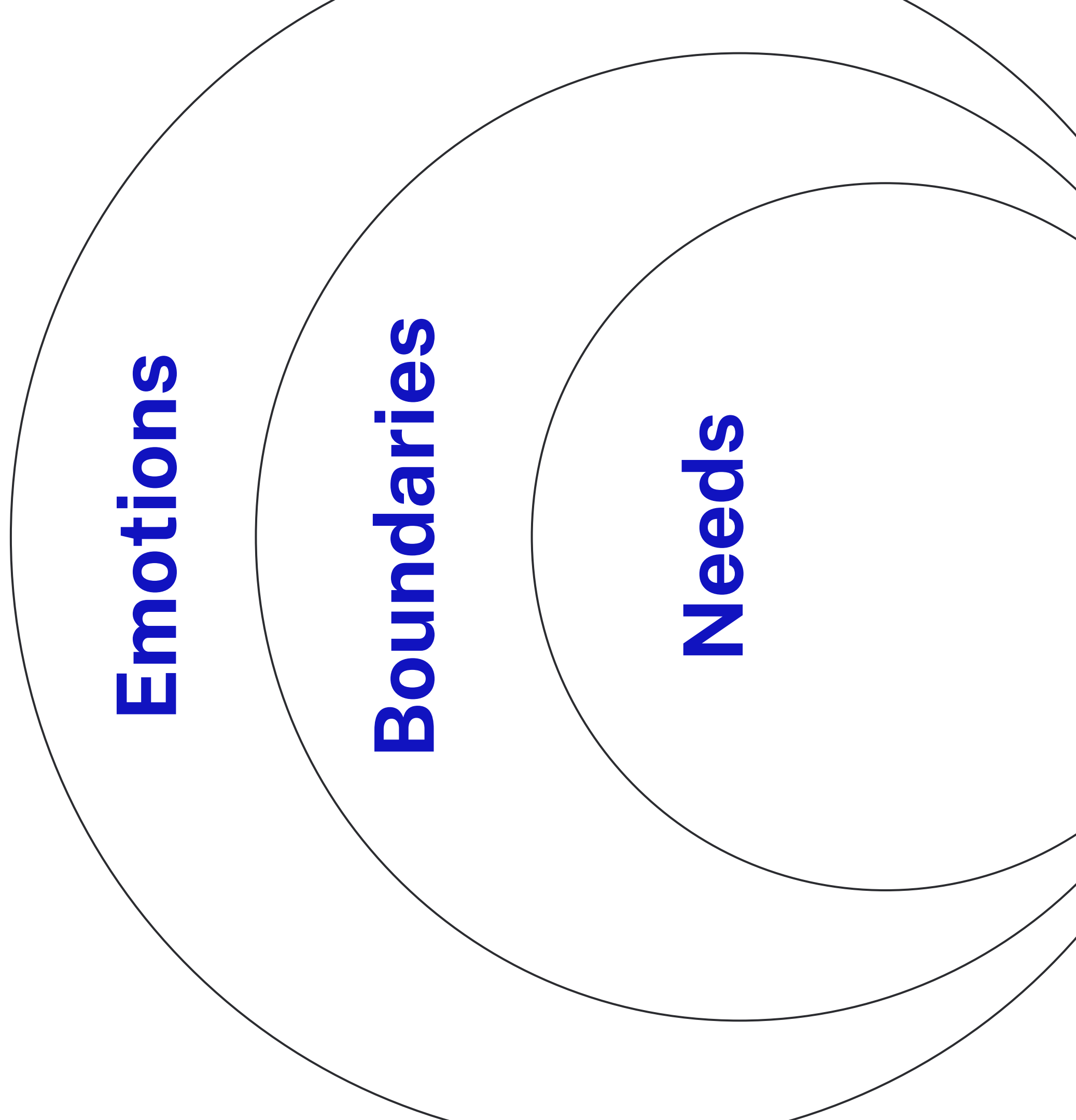
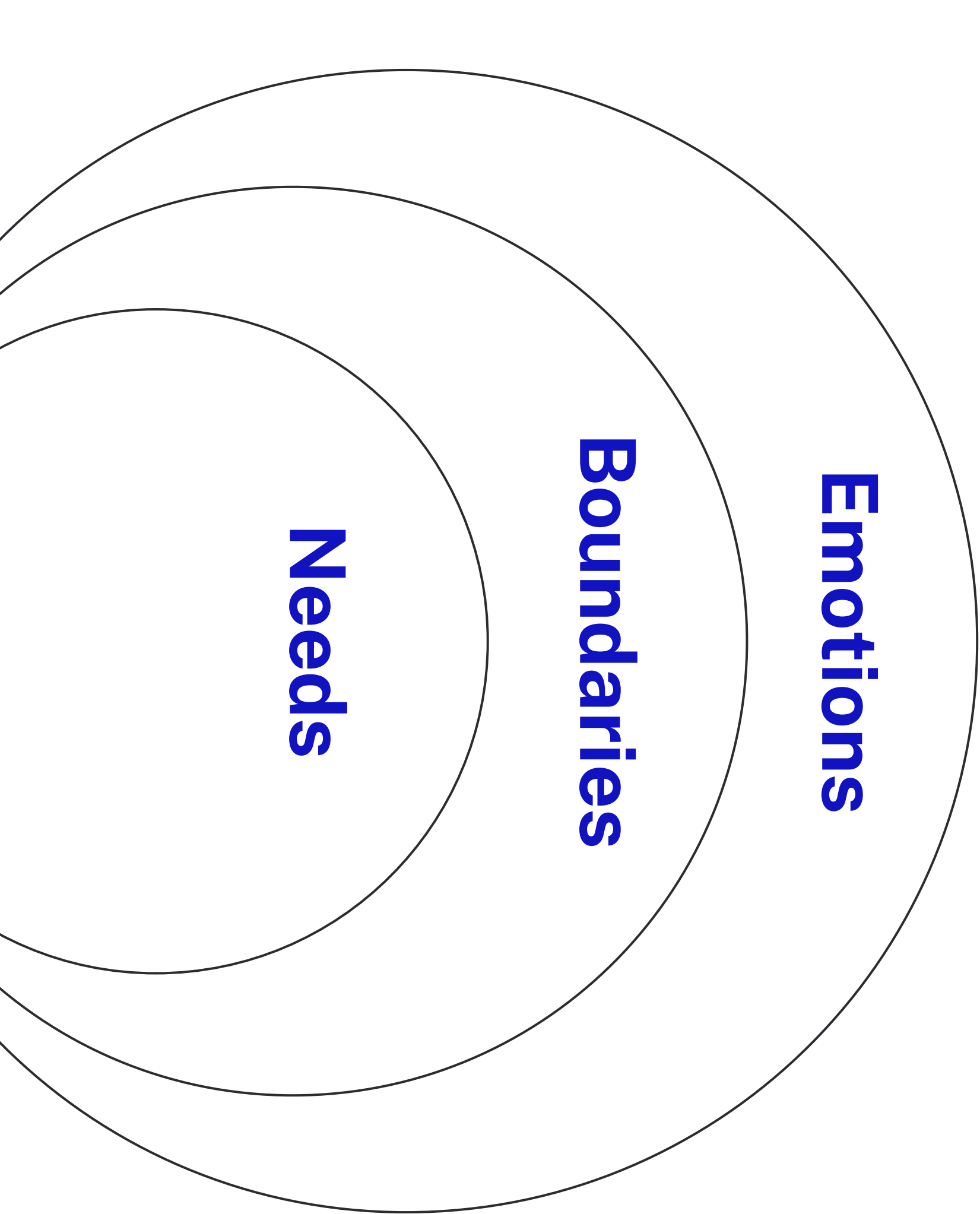
Emotions

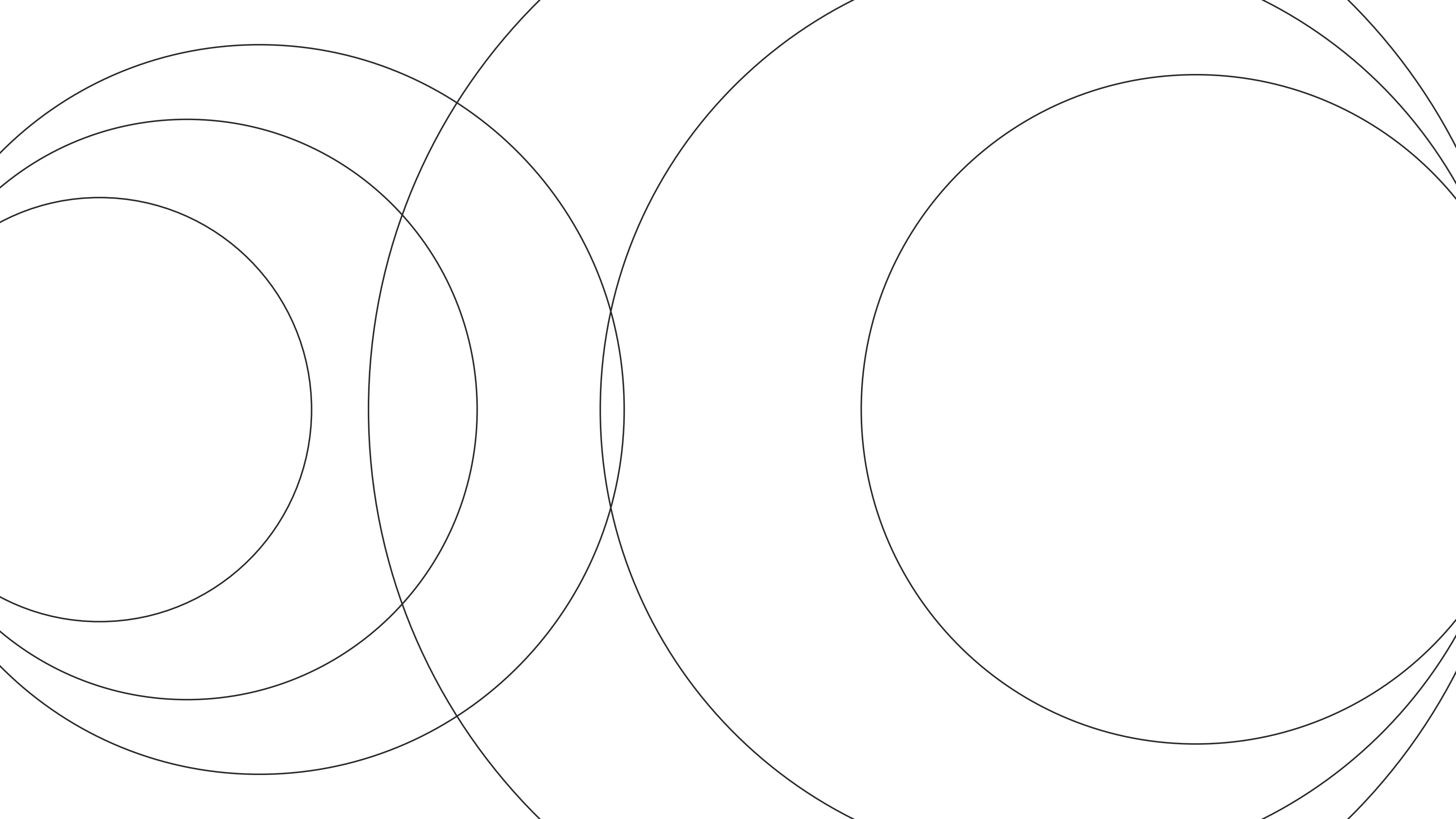
Boundary

Need



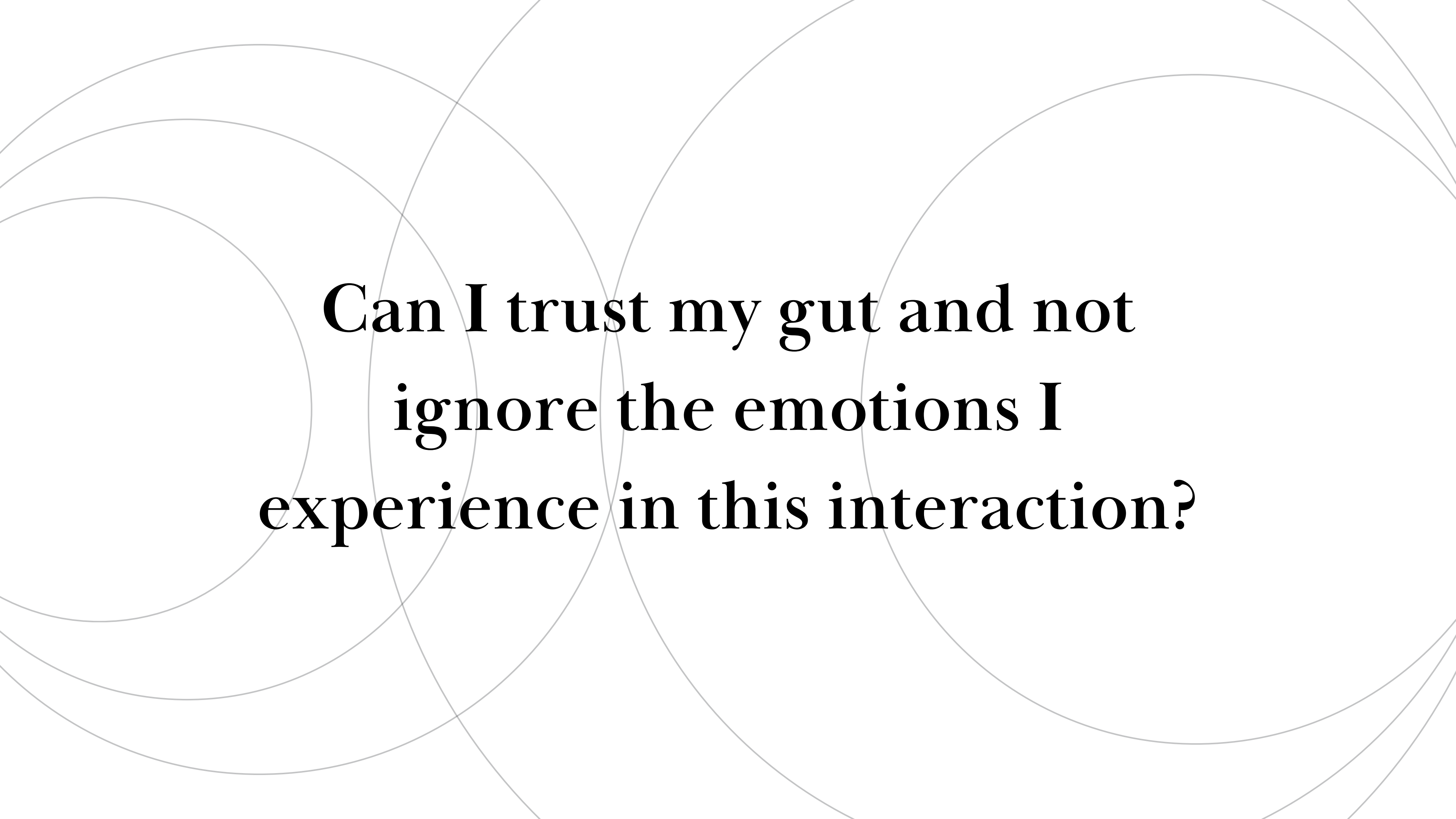
**Difficult
conversations
start as unmet
needs**





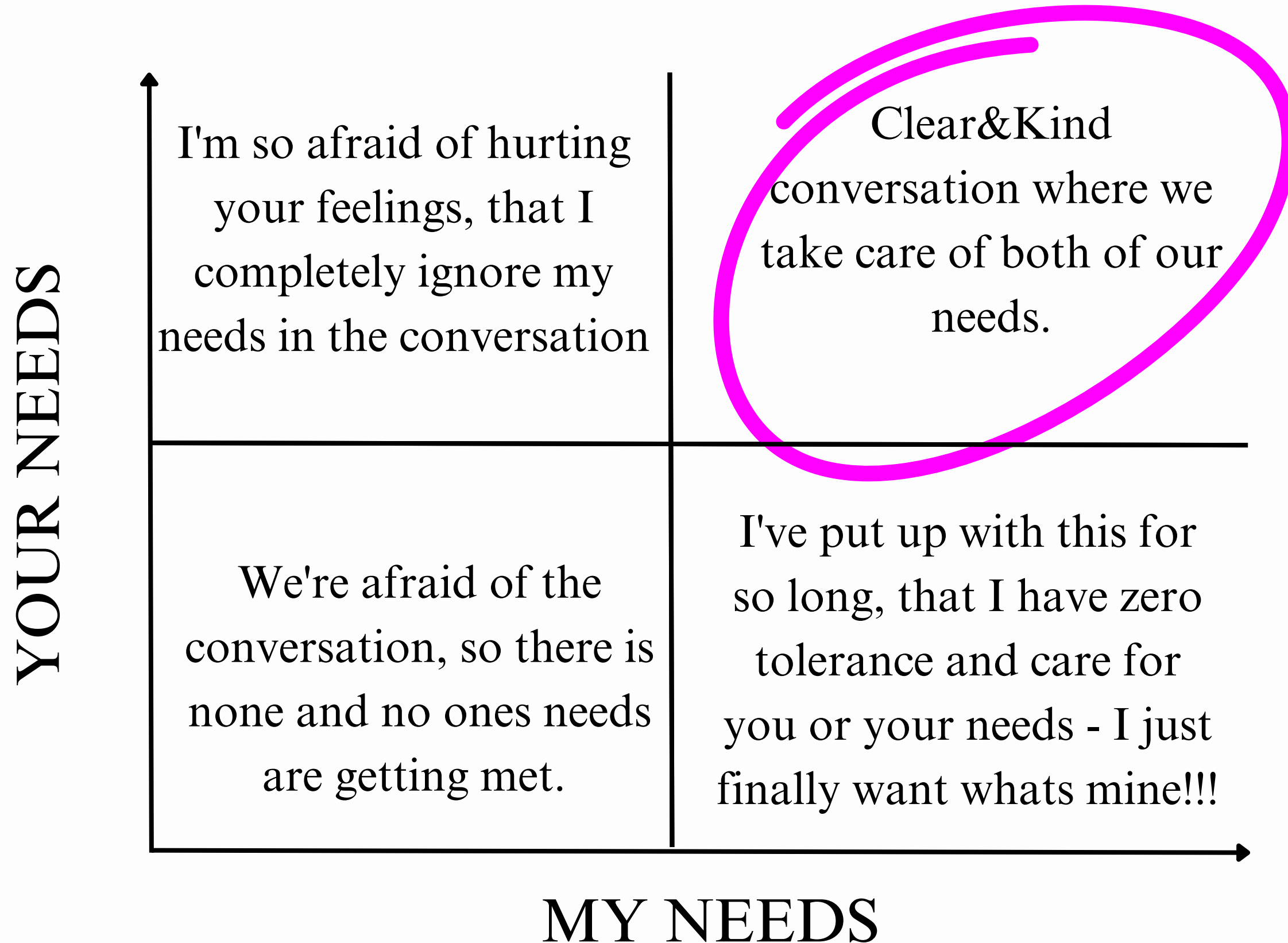
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**Am I stopping them before it
gets too late?**

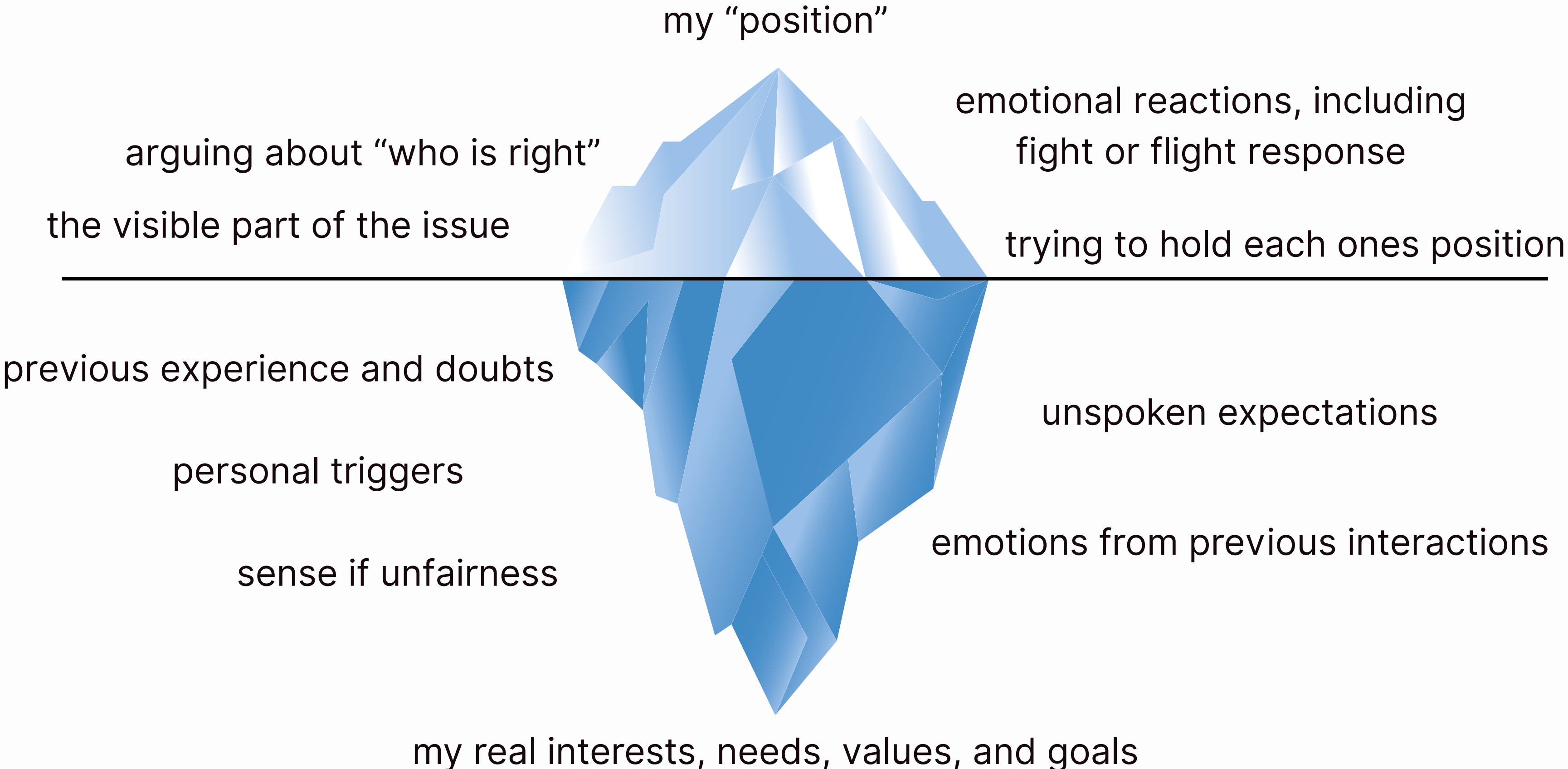
The background features several overlapping, thin, light gray circles of varying sizes, creating a complex, abstract pattern. The circles are centered in a way that they overlap significantly, with some appearing in front of others.

**Can I trust my gut and not
ignore the emotions I
experience in this interaction?**

ADAPTED THOMAS-KILMANN MODEL



THE CONFLICT ICEBERG

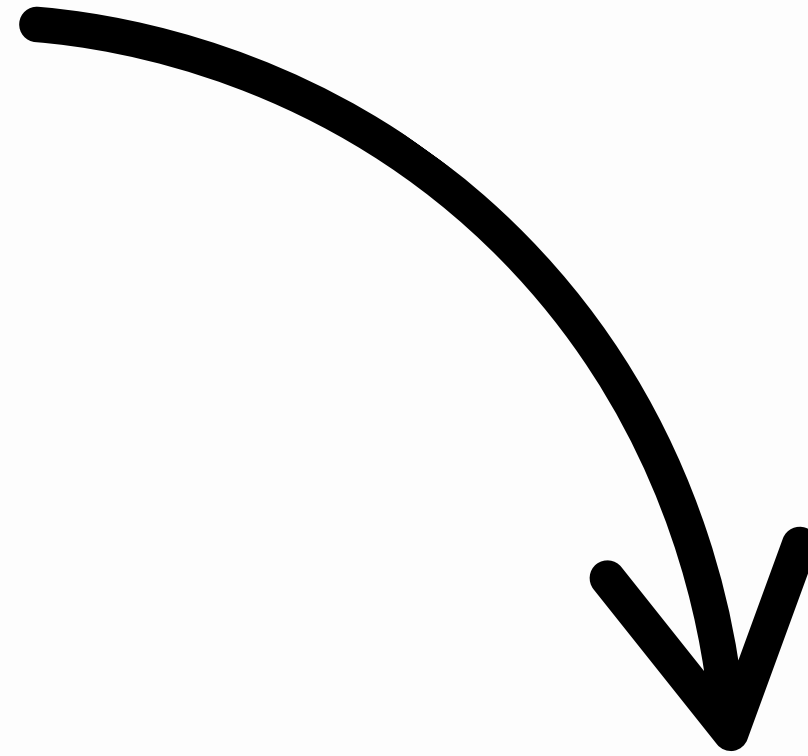


LEVELS OF CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

Informing

Negotiating

Communicating a decision



Informing

“In the future, the reports should be handed in no later than...”

“Unfortunately, these costs are not eligible under programme rules. I understand this may be frustrating, but unfortunately, it cannot be reimbursed.”

“All the additional costs must be pre-approved by JS, so next time, please communicate in advance not after.”

a.k.a. deliver a clear and kind message

Negotiating

“We can’t approve the current version of your communication plan. But let’s look together at which activities we could adjust to meet the programme’s visibility requirements, while keeping your team’s goals in mind.”

“We've been having a hard time staying on the same page about cost eligibility[insert anything], how do you see this situation? What can we do to meet both - the project goals and budget?

a.k.a. hold boundaries *and* invite the partner in for the solution

Communicating a decision

“Given the consistent delays and insufficient reporting, we’ve decided not to approve the extension request. I know this is not the outcome you hoped for. I’d like to discuss how we can close the project in a way that minimizes disruption.”

a.k.a. hold boundaries *and* emotional ground - the decision is not up for a debate, let's stay civil

HARDEST PART:
BEGINNING

The key distinction is **observation vs. evaluation**:

- **Observation** describes what happened without attributing meaning or intention:

“The report was submitted three weeks after the deadline.”

- An **evaluation** interprets or judges:

“You’re clearly not prioritising this project.”

“You violated the reporting rules.”

✓ “I’d like to talk through one item in the report so we can make sure the project stays compliant.”

“This is the third time we’ve had this conversation.”

✓ “We’ve raised this before and I want to make sure we find a solution - the timeline is now affecting the whole project.”

“I’m afraid I have bad news.”

“I want to flag something from the report that we need to address before the next payment cycle.”

AVOIDANT

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE

CLEAR &
KIND

COLD &
DETACHED



GROUP WORK

1. **Identify:** What type of conversation could this be - Informing, Negotiating, or Communicating a Decision? Why?
2. **Draft:** Write the first two or three sentences of your message. Use an observation, not an evaluation. See where you fall on the communication continuum.
3. **Anticipate:** What emotional reaction do you expect?

BUT WHAT
ABOUT
EMOTIONS?



When things get hard... what do we do?



FIGHT

(VERBAL OR
PHYSICAL)

FLIGHT

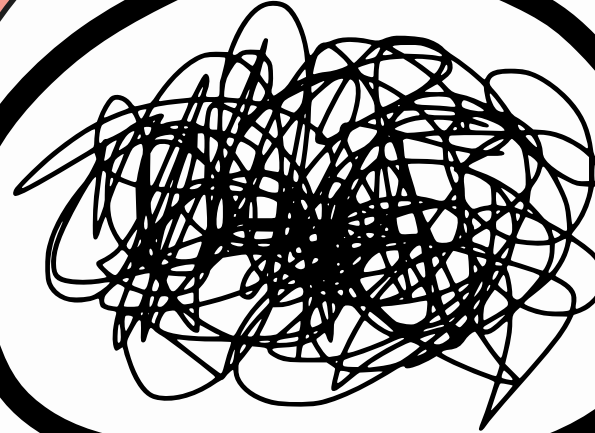
(MENTALLY
OR
PHYSICALLY)

FREEZE

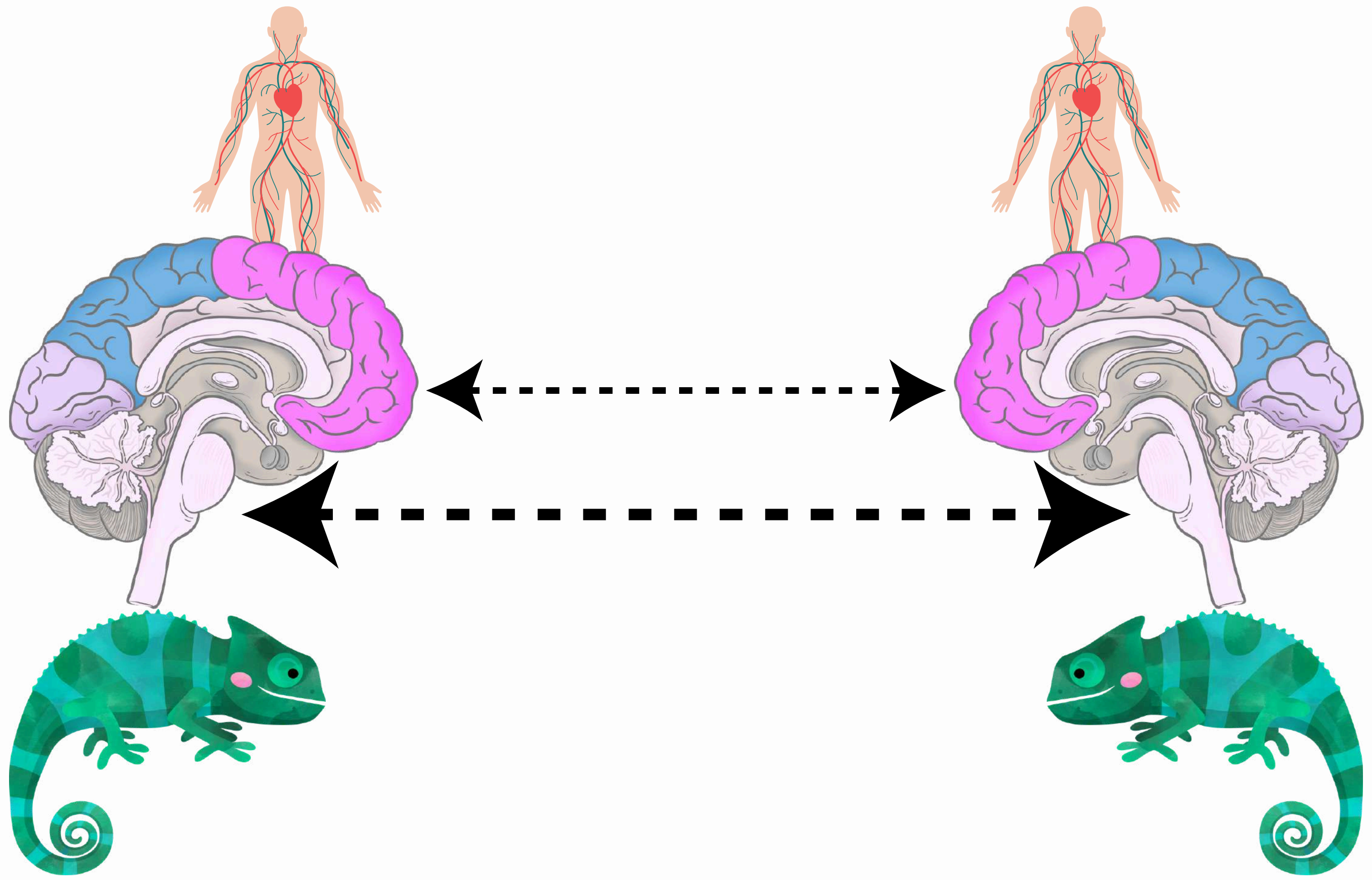
(SYSTEM
SHUTDOWN)

FAWN

(PLEASE AND
ACCOMMODATE)



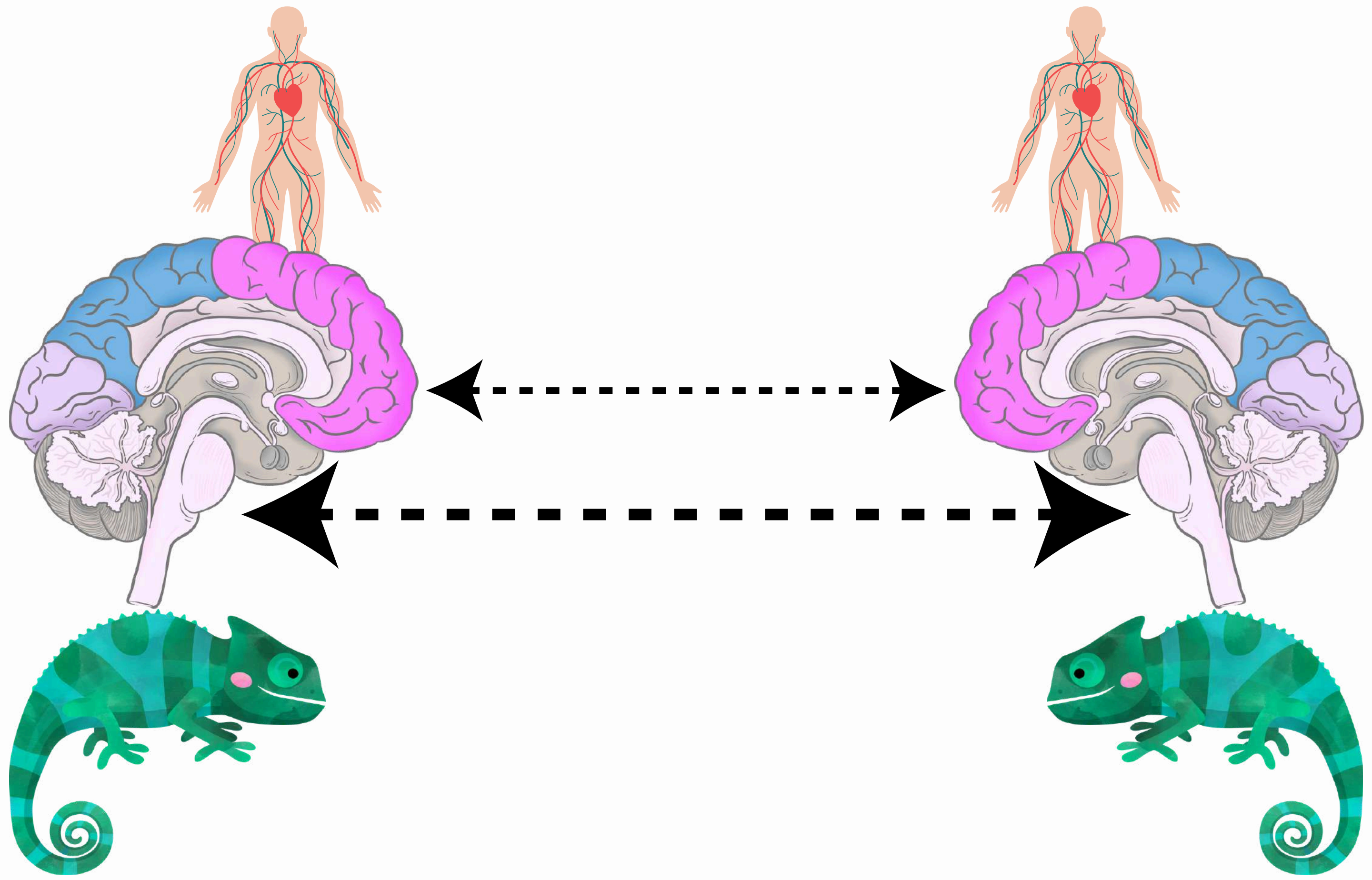
MASTERING THE LIZARD
BRAIN



In the 3min before the conversation:

1. **Name what you're feeling.** Not to someone else - just to yourself. Feelings that are named lose some of their charge.
2. **Slow your breathing.** Genuinely. It activates your parasympathetic nervous system and brings you out of threat response. Or shake it out.
3. **Remind yourself of your role.** Not who you are as a person - what your job is in this conversation: clear, kind, and consistent.

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Marta Karlson

Organizational Psychologist

