



AWAKE TO WISDOM

CENTRE FOR MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS RESEARCH

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**Awake to Wisdom Centre for Meditation
and Mindfulness Research**

**Meditation and the Essence of
Buddhist Teachings**

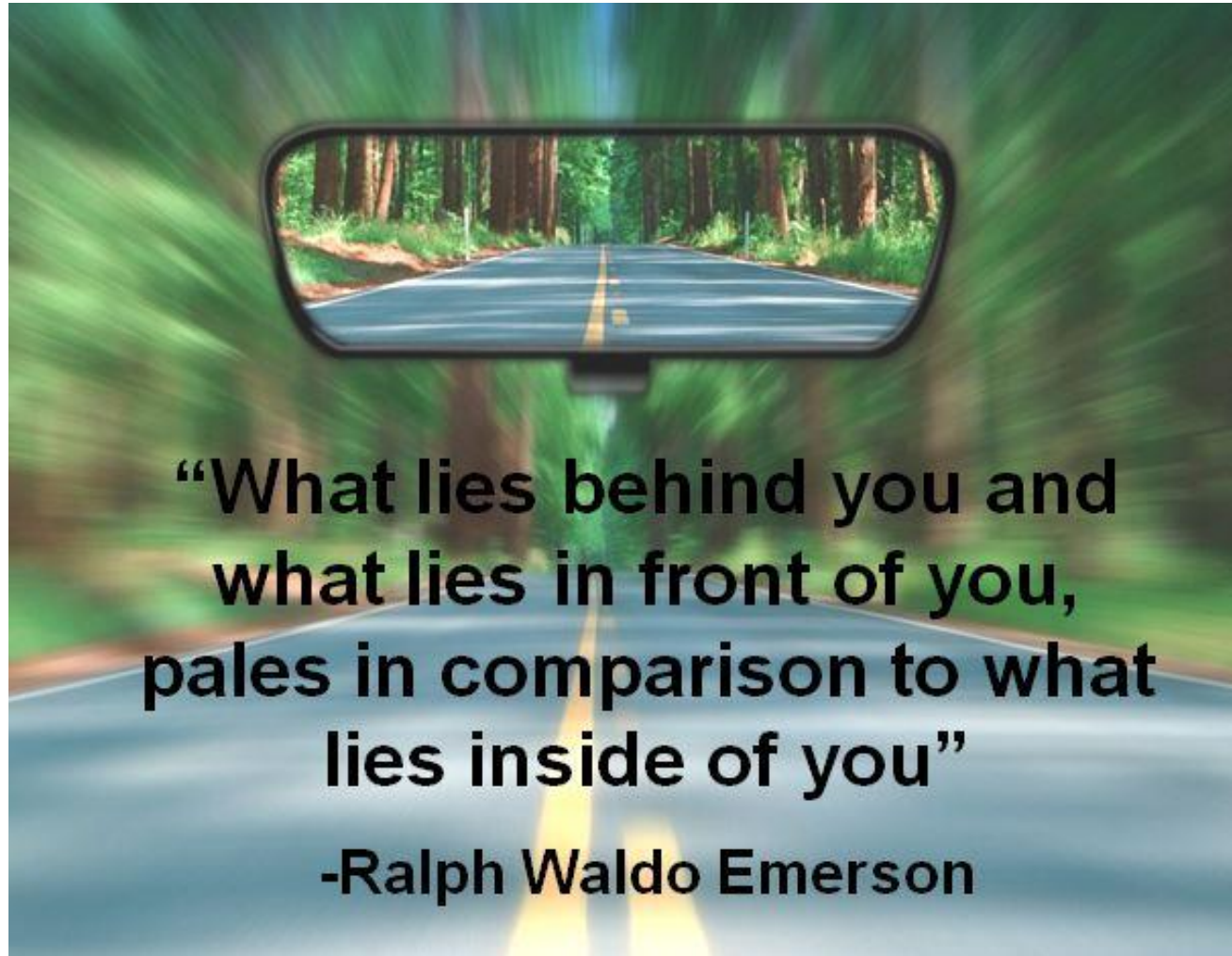
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Today

- Knowing how to assimilate teachings on meditation
- An integrative approach to meditation
- Unpacking the 4 Noble Truths
- Pain and suffering
- Finding balance on the path of meditation
- Karma and conditioning



Meditation: An adventurous journey within



Meditation and a Bundle of Straw

- In the beginning, this is how we are
- Can we use this for our own progress?
- What happens if we do not use it?



Meditation and a Bundle of Straw

This is how we become:



Meditation and a Bundle of Straw

This is how we proceed:



Meditation and a Bundle of Straw

This is how we should be:



Knowing How to Assimilate

- Be natural
- Practice must be enjoyable
- Instrument doesn't work if string is too slack or too tight
- Right type of vessel



Knowing How to Assimilate




- The upside-down pot (easily distracted): Pay attention
- The pot with holes (easily forgets): Listen and reflect
- The pot containing poison: (knows everything): Let go of concepts

Meditation: An Integrative Approach



Contemplative Psychology: History, Key Assumptions, and Future Directions

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Abstract

Contemplative psychology is concerned with the psychological study of contemplative processes and practices, such as meditation, mindfulness, yoga, introspection, reflection, metacognition, self-regulation, self-awareness, and self-consciousness. Although contemplative psychology borders with other psychological and nonpsychological disciplines, some of its underlying assumptions distinguish it from other remits of psychological and scholarly inquiry, as do its component areas of empirical focus, conceptual nuances, and challenges. Furthermore, the discipline has tended to be somewhat disparate in its approach to investigating the core techniques and principles of which it is composed, resulting in a need for greater intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary awareness of the commonalities and differences of core contemplative psychology attributes. As a remedy to these issues, in this article, we adopt a whole-discipline perspective and aim to explicate contemplative psychology's history, breadth, key assumptions, challenges, and future directions.

Meditation: An Integrative Approach

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The Emerging Role of Buddhism in Clinical Psychology: Toward Effective Integration

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Research into the clinical utility of Buddhist-derived interventions (BDIs) has increased greatly over the last decade. Although clinical interest has predominantly focused on mindfulness meditation, there also has been an increase in the scientific investigation of interventions that integrate other Buddhist principles such as compassion, loving kindness, and “non-self.” However, due to the rapidity at which Buddhism has been assimilated into the mental health setting, issues relating to the misapplication of Buddhist terms and practices have sometimes arisen. Indeed, hitherto, there has been no unified system for the effective clinical operationalization of Buddhist principles. Therefore, this paper aims to establish robust foundations for the ongoing clinical implementation of Buddhist principles by providing: (i) succinct and accurate interpretations of Buddhist terms and principles that have become embedded into the clinical practice literature, (ii) an overview of current directions in the clinical operationalization of BDIs, and (iii) an assessment of BDI clinical integration issues. It is concluded that BDIs may be effective treatments for a variety of psychopathologies including mood-spectrum disorders, substance-use disorders, and schizophrenia. However, further research and clinical evaluation is required to strengthen the evidence-base for existent interventions and for establishing new treatment applications. More important, there is a need for greater dialogue between Buddhist teachers and mental health clinicians and researchers to safeguard the ethical values, efficacy, and credibility of BDIs.

Keywords: mindfulness, meditation, compassion, loving kindness, Buddhism

Meditation: An Integrative Approach

- **Phase 1 (since early 1980s):** Exploring mindfulness and related meditative attentional processes
- **Phase 2 (since 2000):** Exploring contemplative approaches concerned with empathetic and ethical awareness, such as compassion and loving-kindness meditation
- **Phase 3: (last 6-7 years):** Exploring wisdom-based contemplative practices, including emptiness

Meditation: An Integrative Approach

- “The Buddhist ‘three trainings’ (Skt: *trishiksha*) principle:

1. **Meditation**
2. **Ethics**
3. **Wisdom**

- This three-fold categorisation also corresponds to the chronological order that research into, and the subsequent implementation of, contemplative approaches has followed

Meditation: An Integrative Approach

Meditation Awareness Training:

1. Mindfulness
 2. Meditation
 3. Contemplative Principles
 4. Self-practice component
 5. One-to-one support sessions
- 

Weekly full-group sessions

Guided meditation & mindfulness exercises

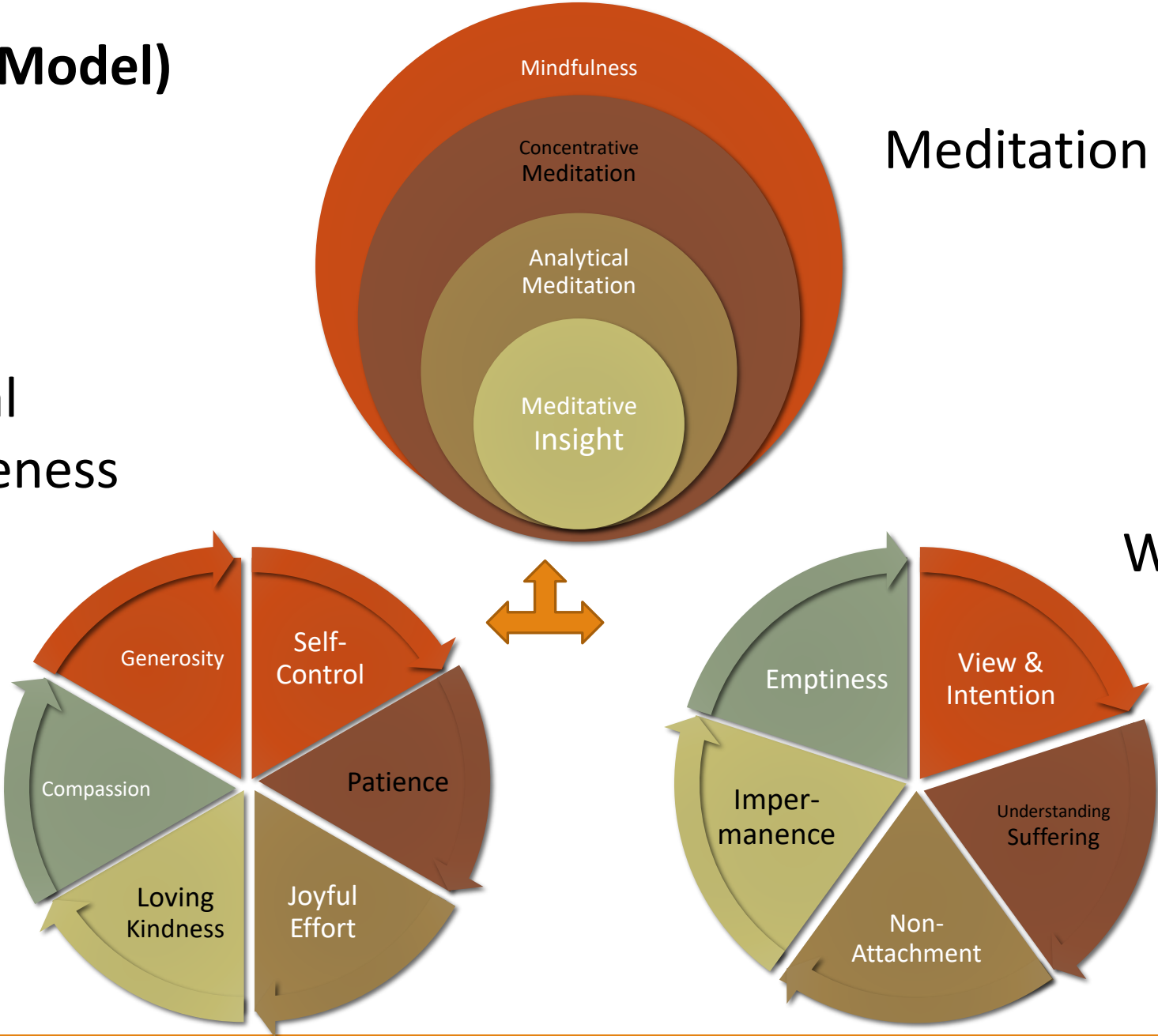
Seminars, discussion, group work

(MAT: Detailed Model)

Ethical
Awareness

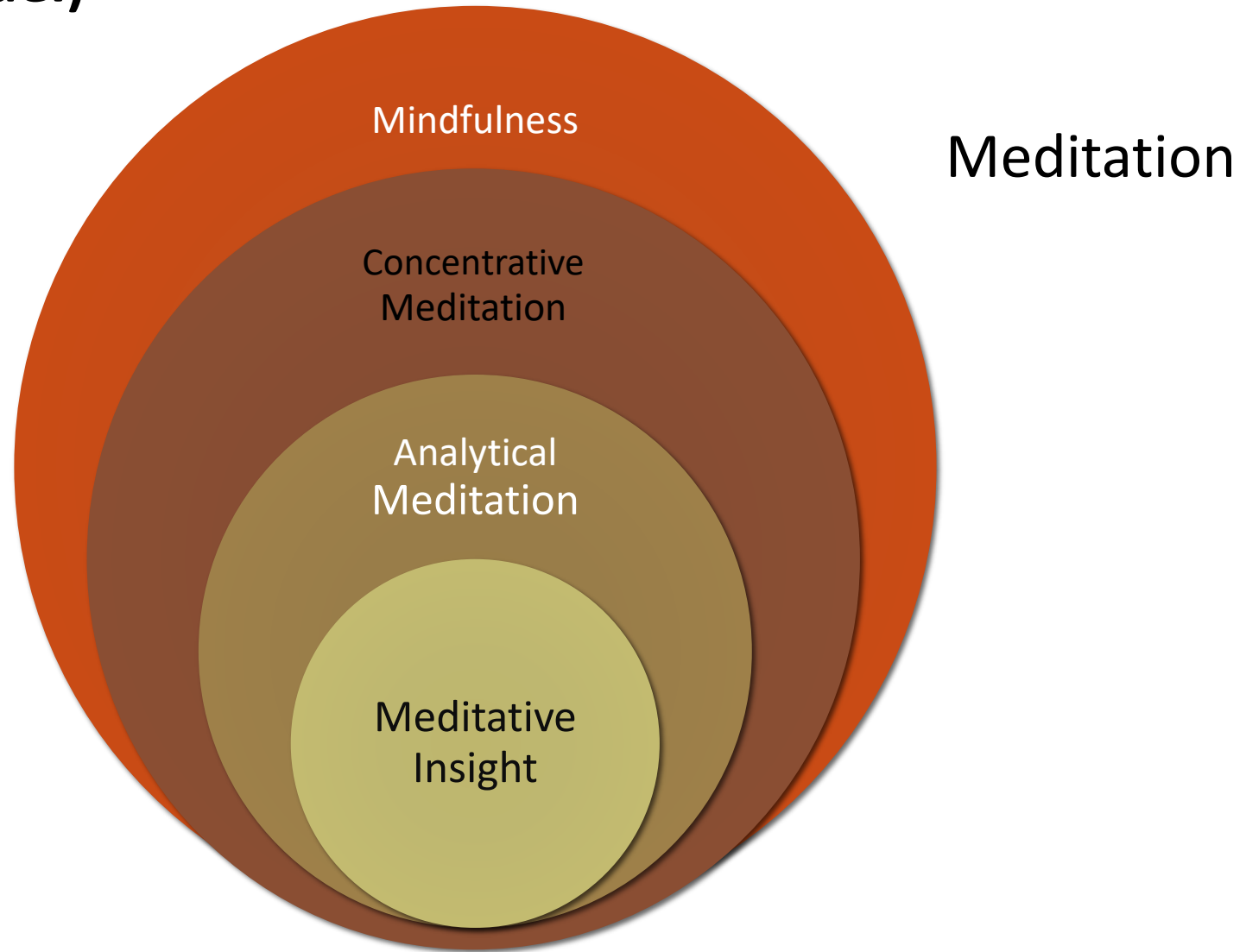
Meditation

Wisdom



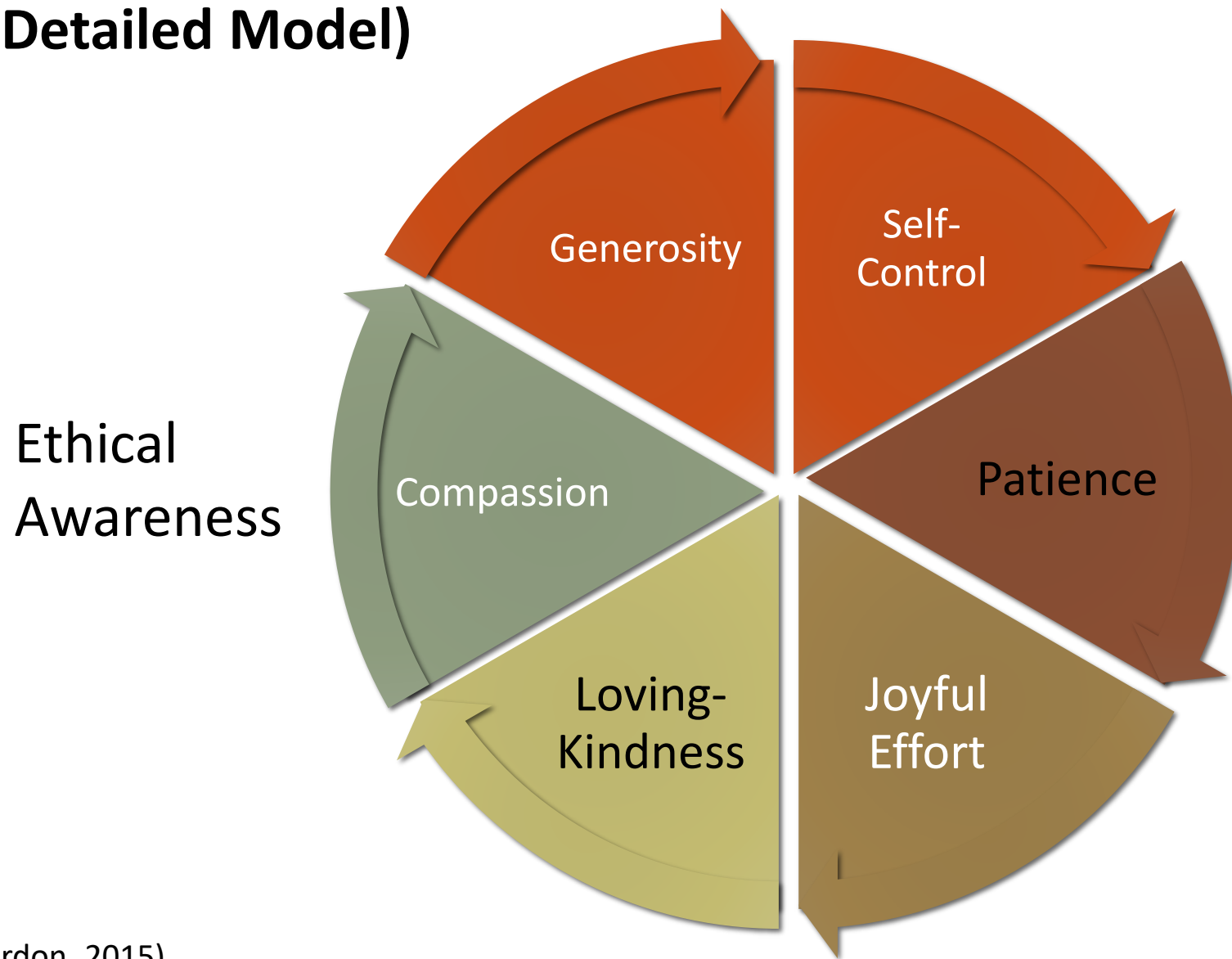
(Shonin & Van Gordon, 2015)

(MAT: Detailed Model)



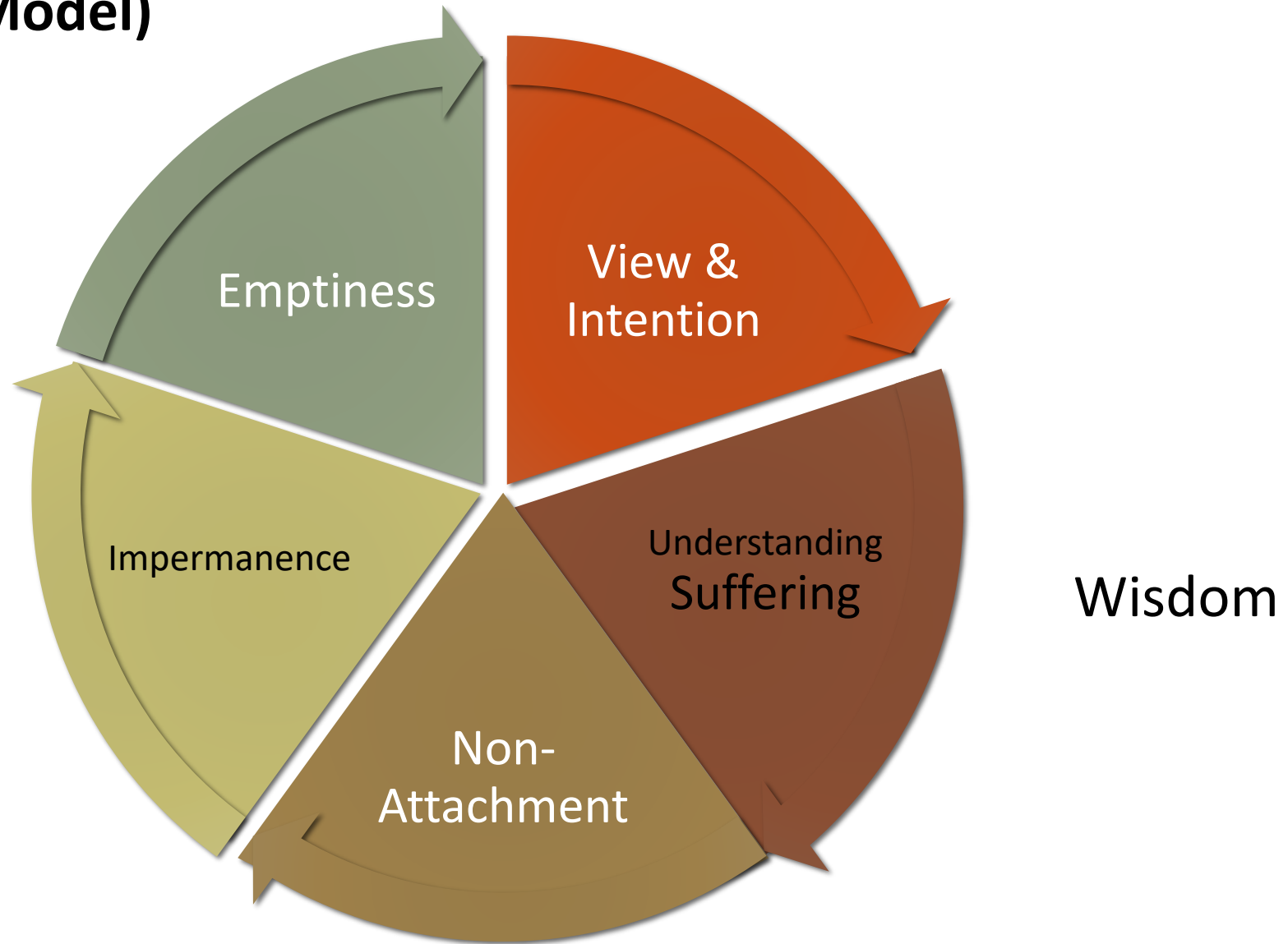
(Shonin & Van Gordon, 2015)

(MAT: Detailed Model)



(Shonin & Van Gordon, 2015)

(MAT: Detailed Model)



(Shonin & Van Gordon, 2015)

Unpacking the Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths:

1. Suffering exists
2. There is a cause to suffering
3. There is cessation of suffering
4. There is a path that leads to the cessation of suffering

See the [*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*](#)

(The Discourse that Sets the Wheel of Truth in Motion)

Unpacking the Four Noble Truths

Until we attain spiritual liberation (**Third noble truth**), we are going to suffer (**First noble truth**). The only way to end this suffering is to walk the path (**Fourth noble truth**) that acts upon the causes of suffering (**Second noble truth**).



Unpacking the Four Noble Truths

Causality:

All effects are the result of a cause, therefore the second and fourth truths follow on logically from those that precede them.

So perhaps we could reduce the 4 noble truths to 2 truths:

1. “Suffering exists” – (because cause is implied)
2. “Liberation exists” – (because cause is implied)

But I prefer “liberation exists” as it’s more optimistic!

Unpacking the Four Noble Truths

The profound and simple message of the Four Noble Truths:

We will suffer – for an indefinite period – until such time that we **choose** to dedicate ourselves to spiritual growth in order to stop creating the causes of suffering.

This **choice** must be made by each individual.



Unpacking the Four Noble Truths

A meditation practice:

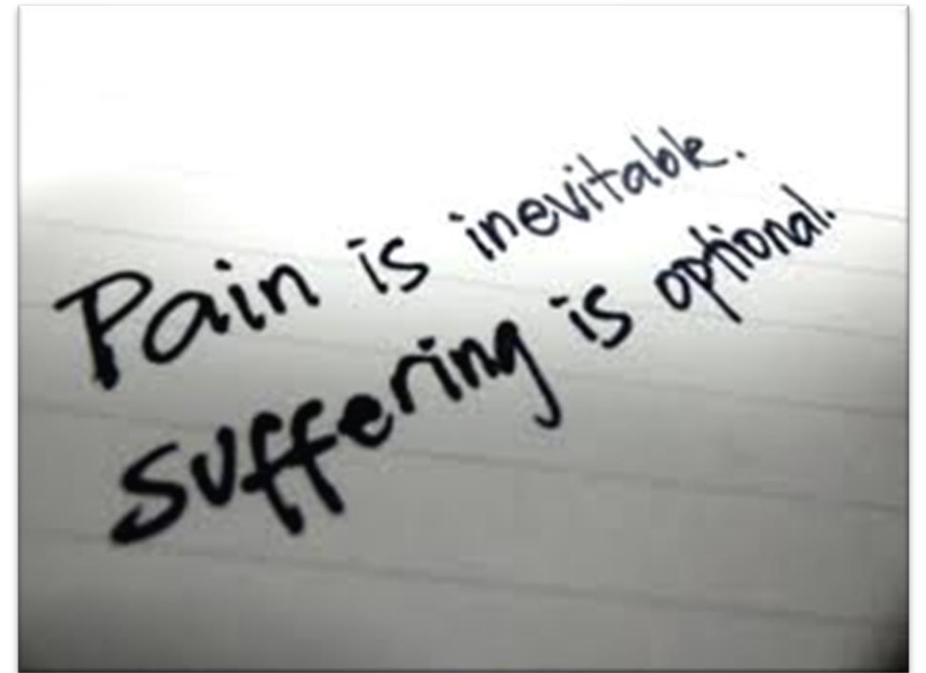
- With the in-breath say to yourself suffering exists.
- And with the out-breath say to yourself but so does liberation exist.

Break the chain!



Pain and Suffering

- Pain is with us throughout our lives
– at work, at home, the cut finger, arthritis, cancer, and so forth
- Suffering is the anxiety, worry and panic that we add to it
- Try not to resist pain – this causes suffering



Pain and Suffering

It is a beautiful day and you go for a walk in the sunshine, birds are singing, you feel relaxed and happy but



After an hour, the sky clouds over and it starts pouring down – what do you do?

Pain and Suffering

Getting Wet - 1st choice

- You pull the jacket over your head, your shoulders tighten up and you start running.
- All you can think of is:
“Ahhhhh, I’m getting soaked”.
- The water is running down your underwear and into your shoes – you becomes plastered to your head –
“Ahhhhhhh”



Pain and Suffering

Getting Wet – 2nd choice

- You breath and relax
- You're going to get wet anyway – so you continue to enjoy your journey
- You get home an hour later – soaked through – have a hot bath and a cup of soup
- Don't resist the rain – if you do then you suffer!



Pain and Suffering

Try to observing feelings just as they are:

- Pleasant
- Unpleasant – even painful
- Neutral

The non-meditator clings to the pleasant and rejects the unpleasant

The meditator is free of ego – no longer **MY** feelings – just feelings



Pain and Suffering: Finding Balance

- The meditator pays complete mindful attention to that which is pleasant, that which is unpleasant and that which is neutral
- Thus, the meditator remains in unperturbed equipoise



Pain and Suffering: Finding Balance

- We begin to realise that the primary feelings arise out of conditioning – we do not control them – they’re just there
- The trick is – don’t worry about them – let them be
- Become familiar with their arising but do not connect the “I”
- They are a flow of experiences – where is “self” in this process

Feelings and thoughts do not define who we are; they are just part of the weather of our inner world.

– John Daishin Bukshazen –

OkDay.com

Pain and Suffering: Finding Balance

- We tend to get sucked into the drama of our secondary thought processes – we panic and worry about the primary feelings
- Feeling worried or anxious is fine – it’s “normal”
- Feelings are just that – feelings
- However, worrying about worrying is a problem!
- Getting angry with ourselves because we’re angry is a problem!
- We use primary emotion as a rifle that shoots us into a vicious cycle



Pain and Suffering: Finding Balance

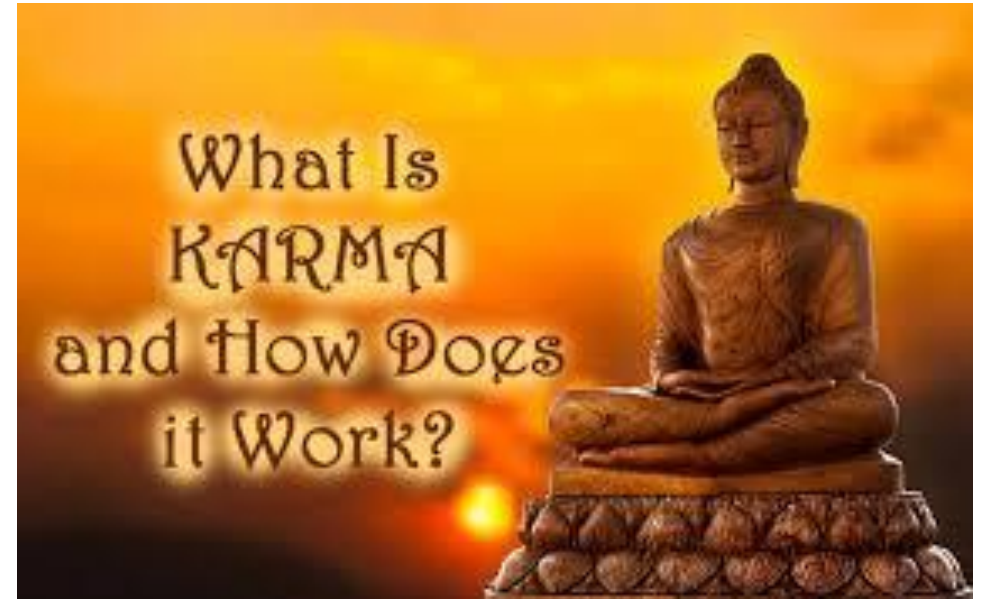
- Like the body, feelings are born, they live, and they die – if we allow them to
- We investigate the impermanent nature of feelings
- We do not chase after them, we observe the causes and conditions
- We use intelligence to penetrate and dismantle feelings
- We observe pleasure and suffering arise
- We observe pleasure and suffering dissolve



I am chasing my thoughts
they set the path
all I do is follow.

Karma and Conditioning: Perceiving the Now

- Karma is a Sanskrit term which means 'action' – action driven by intention or thought to be more exact.
- Right intention (thought) is the most important point.
- Actions lead to consequences.
- Three types of action – body, speech and mind.



Karma and Conditioning: Perceiving the Now



- Karma influences perception
- What is the here and now? How do you perceive it?
- Does the past exist?
- Does the future exist?
- Does the present exist?

Karma and Conditioning: Perceiving the Now

- Karma can only be experienced and created here and now.
- From a certain point of view, everything you experience is karma!



Thank you

THE WAY OF THE MINDFUL WARRIOR

EMBRACE
AUTHENTIC MINDFULNESS
FOR WELLBEING, WISDOM,
AND AWARENESS



WILLIAM VAN GORDON and EDO SHONIN

“Mindful Warriors are persons who, when modern society wants to draw them into living an ever more superficial soap opera, have the courage to stand on their own feet and embrace their innermost nature of peace, wisdom, and compassion”

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