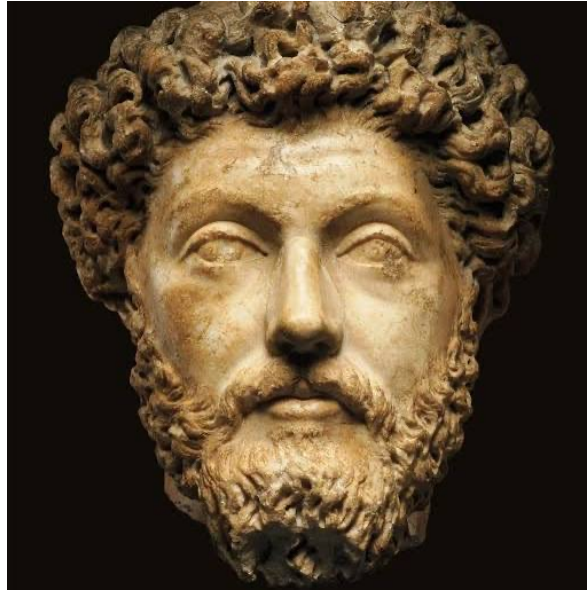




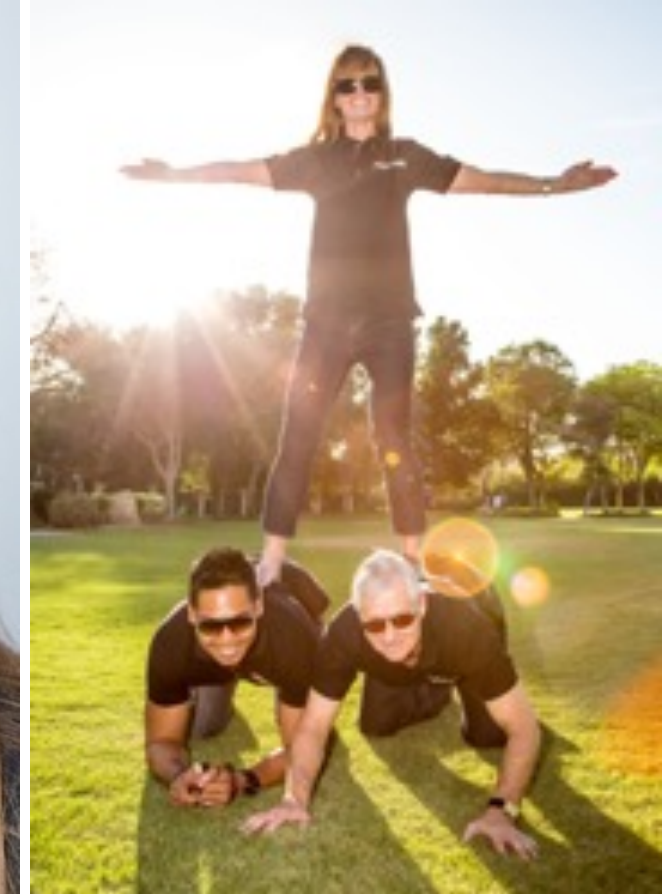
*The session will start shortly....*





“You have power over your mind — not outside events.  
Realize this, and you will find strength.”

**Marcus Aurelius**  
**Roman Emperor (161 to 180)**  
**Stoic Philosopher**



Catherine Bentley



John Bentley

# Where in the World are we right now?

A hand holding a smartphone displaying a poll interface. The phone screen shows a poll titled "Where in the World are we right now?" with five options: UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar. A "SUBMIT" button is at the bottom. The phone's status bar at the top shows signal strength, Wi-Fi, and battery icons. The poll interface has a blue header with the word "Poll" and a hamburger menu icon.

Poll

Where in the World  
are we right now?

- UAE
- Bahrain
- Saudi Arabia
- Kuwait
- Qatar

**SUBMIT**

# Middle East ...The Environment We Are Living In

Tuesday briefing: 'An historic rupture' as the Middle East crisis spreads

In today's newsletter: senior international co... Julian Borger on what next as Iran targets its neighbours and the conflict escalates



Smoke rises following an explosion in Tehran, Iran, on Sunday. Asgaripour/Reuters

B B C

Improve grammar everywhere you write. Grammarly

'All red lines have been crossed' as Gulf states weigh response to Iran

2 days ago

Barbara Plett-Usher BBC correspondent, Doha, Qatar



Berths at Dubai's Jebel Ali Port caught fire due to debris from an intercepted missile. Reuters

Gulf states have found themselves on the front line of the Middle East's newest war, and they are angry.

Iran has retaliated to US-Israeli air strikes by firing hundreds of missiles and drones at its Arab neighbours - targeting American military bases on their soil, but also civilian



## Emergency Alert

now

نظرا للأوضاع الراهنة تهديد صاروخي محتمل، يرجى الاحتماء فورا في مبنى آمن بعيدا عن النوافذ والأبواب والمناطق المفتوحة وانتظر التعليمات الرسمية ( وزارة الداخلية )

Due to current situation, a potential missile threats, Seek immediate shelter in the closest secure building, and to steer away from windows, doors, and open areas. Await for further instructions. ( MOI )



Israel strikes Beirut after evacuation warning sparks panic

Heavy traffic jams form after the unprecedented warning for people to leave the Hezbollah stronghold, as Israel steps up strikes across Lebanon.

Flight from Beirut back due to missile fire

NewsFeed

Trump threatens to hit Iran harder if it blocks energy supplies

US President Donald Trump threatened to escalate attacks on Iran if it disrupted global oil supplies, saying "they'll get hit at a much, much harder level."

10 Mar 2026

Share Save Add AI Jazeera on Google

An Air France repatriation flight leaving the United Arab Emirates on Thursday evening was forced to return due to "missile fire in the area," the minister for transport confirmed in a post on X.

**PANIC!**

**BREAKING NEWS**

**OUT OF CONTROL**

**ANOTHER CRISIS!**

**DANGER FEAR**

♥ 79

**DANGER**

**MARKET MELTDOWN**

**WARNING!**

♥♥ 14

♥ 32

**DEADLY OUTBREAK!**

**WAR**

**WARNING!**

**EMERGENCY ALERT**

**GLOBAL CHAOS**

♥ 79

♥ 32



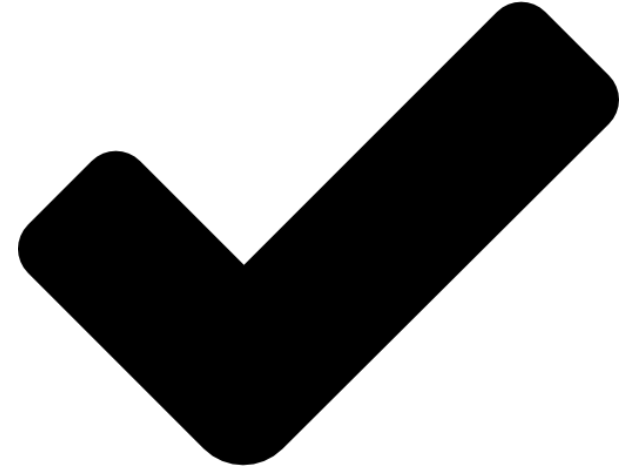


How would AI handle this situation ?

# A.I Response

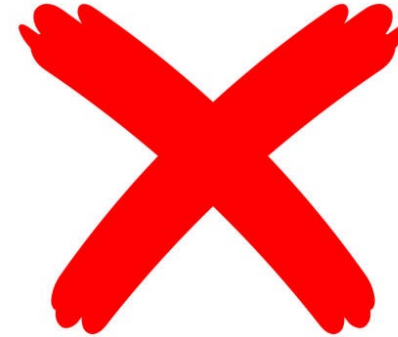
## Would:

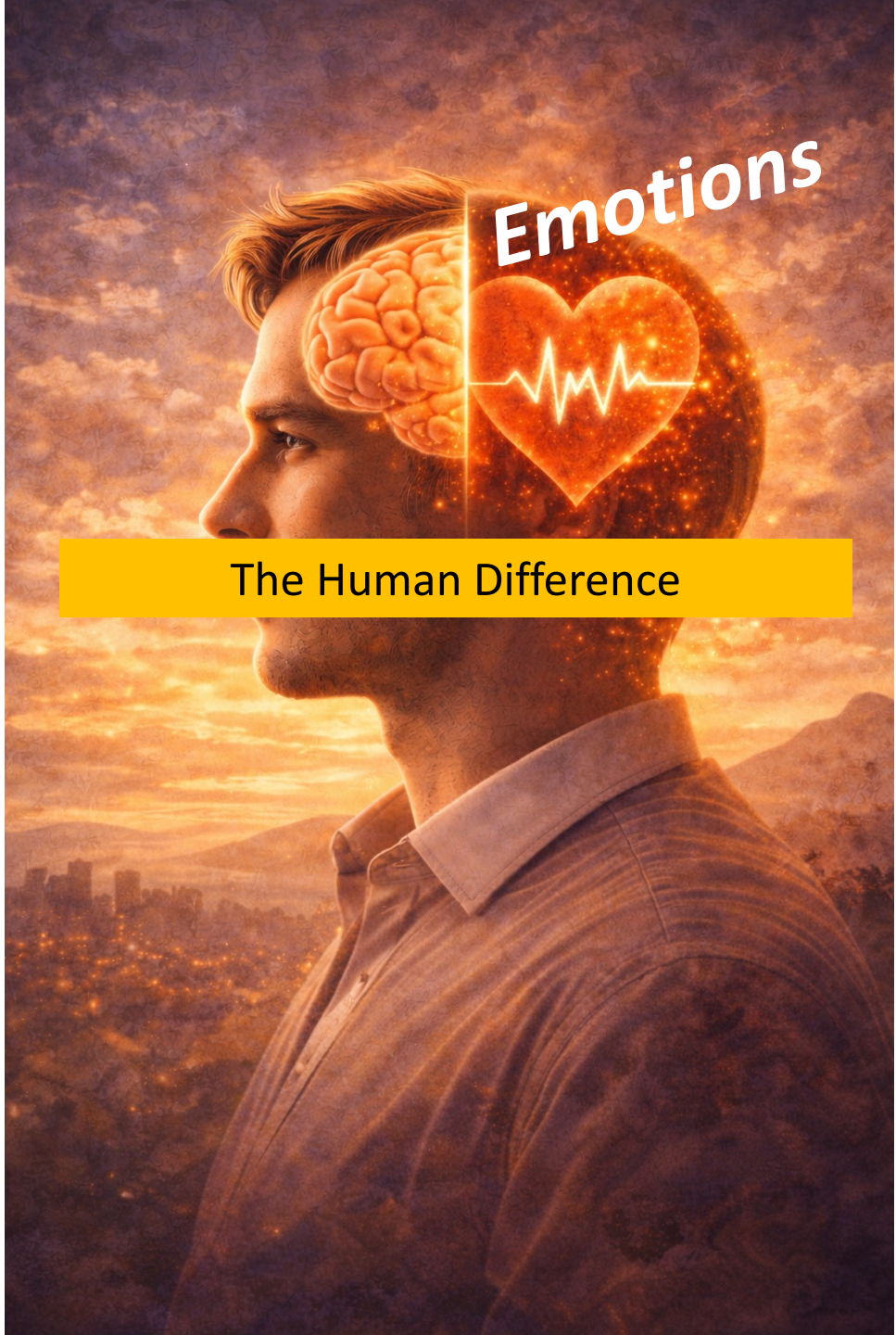
- Process incoming data
- Identify patterns
- Calculate probabilities
- Recommend possible **responses**



A.I would not:

- **Experience fear, anxiety, or uncertainty**
- Lose sleep
- Catastrophise
- Feel overwhelmed by headlines



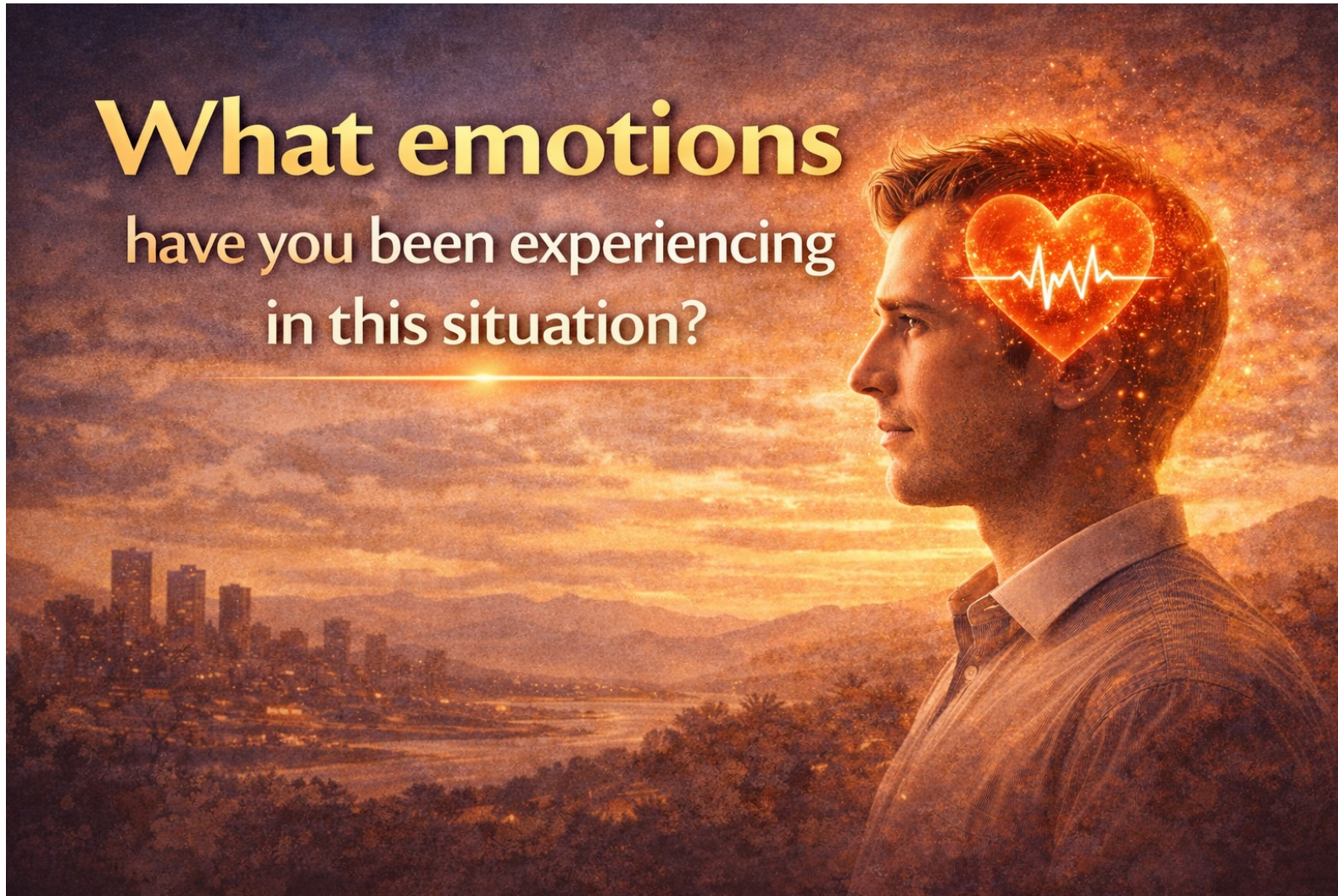


Emotions

The Human Difference

*Is having EMOTIONS a good thing - or a barrier to clarity of thought and logical thinking?*

**What emotions**  
have you been experiencing  
in this situation?



# The Emotional Rollercoaster



**ANXIETY**

**PANIC**

**FEAR**

**HOPEFUL**

**HOPELESS**

**UNCERTAINTY**

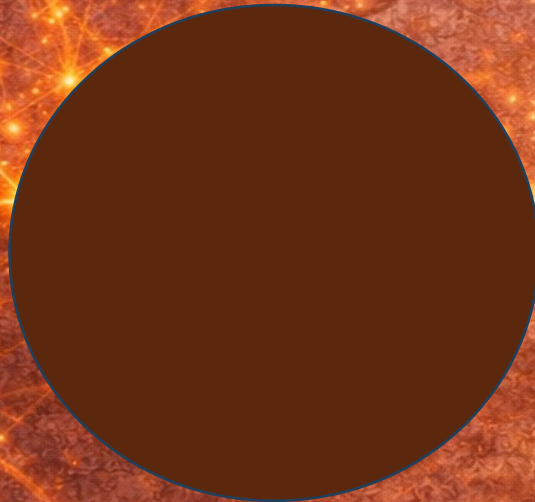
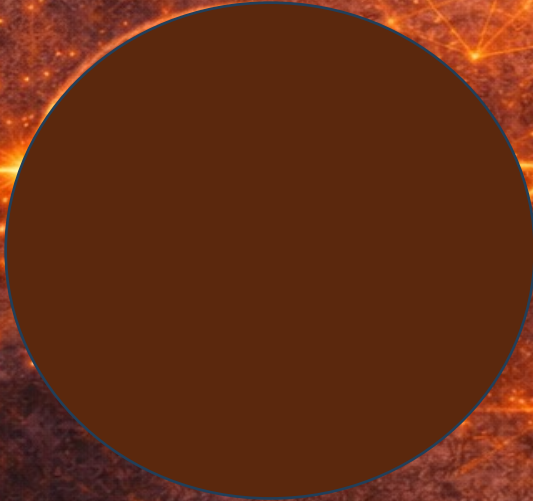
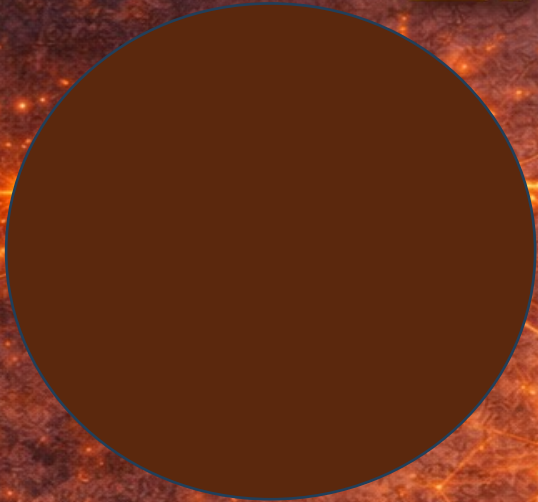
**GRATITUDE**

**RELIEF**

**RELIEF**

# Emotional Systems

The Human Difference



Is this *weakness*?

ABSOLUTELY  
NOT

They are VITAL

# ANCIENT BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

*Designed to Protect • Wired for Survival*

**FIGHT**

**FREEZE**

**FLIGHT**

**HYPER-VIGILANCE**

**SURVIVAL INSTINCTS**

*Fast • Automatic • Protective*



*Based on Six Seconds Research*

**80 – 85%**

decisions are based on emotion

**AI Logic**

**Human Response**



**VS**

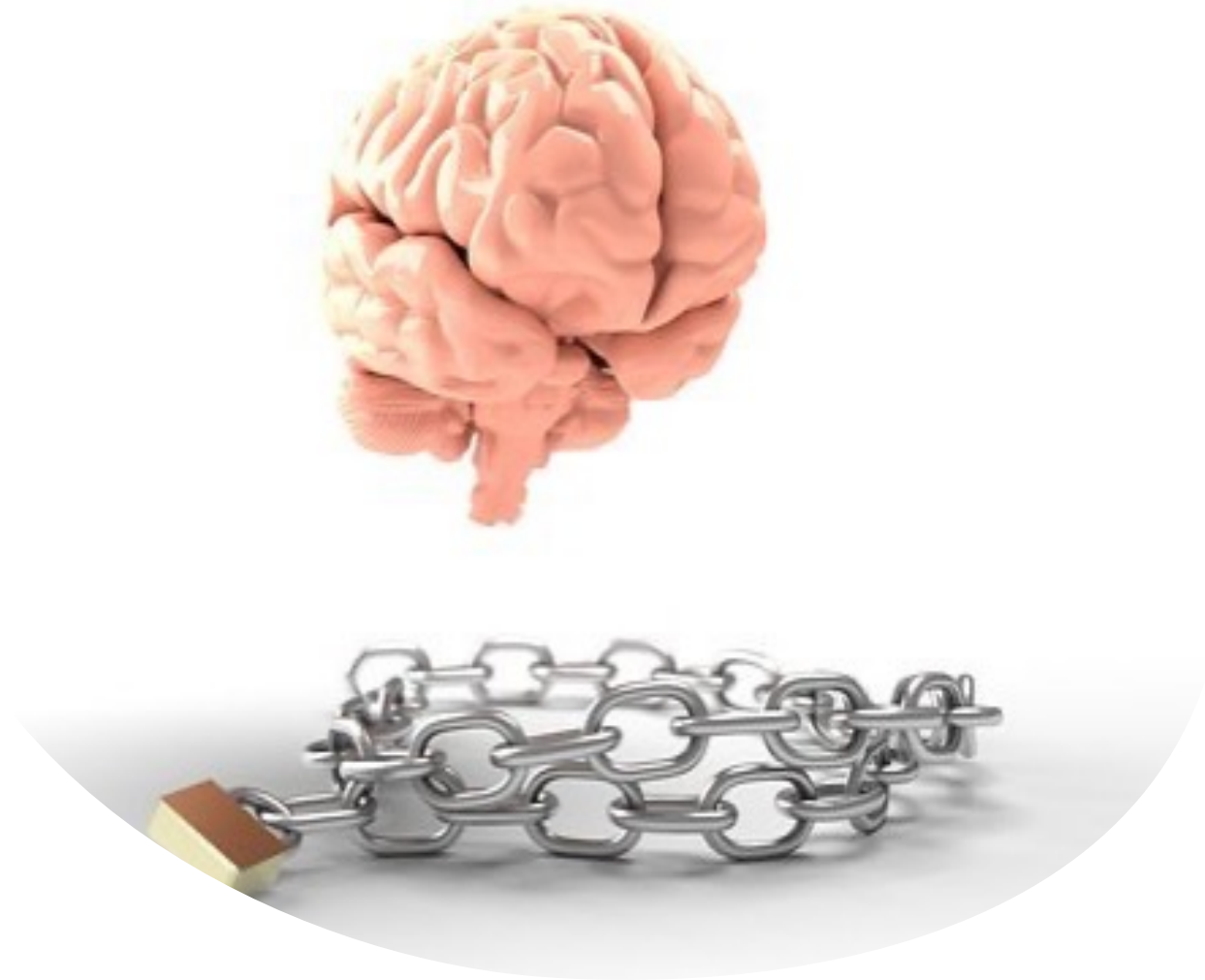


**AI vs Human  
Response to Uncertainty**



and for the  
**stress**  
on a new

# What *is* Stress?



# Stress is ...

An automatic biological reaction to an event *perceived* to be beyond our control; the magnitude of which is dependent upon the *perceived* consequences.

Our adaptive *reaction* to stimuli can create excessive psychological or physical demands

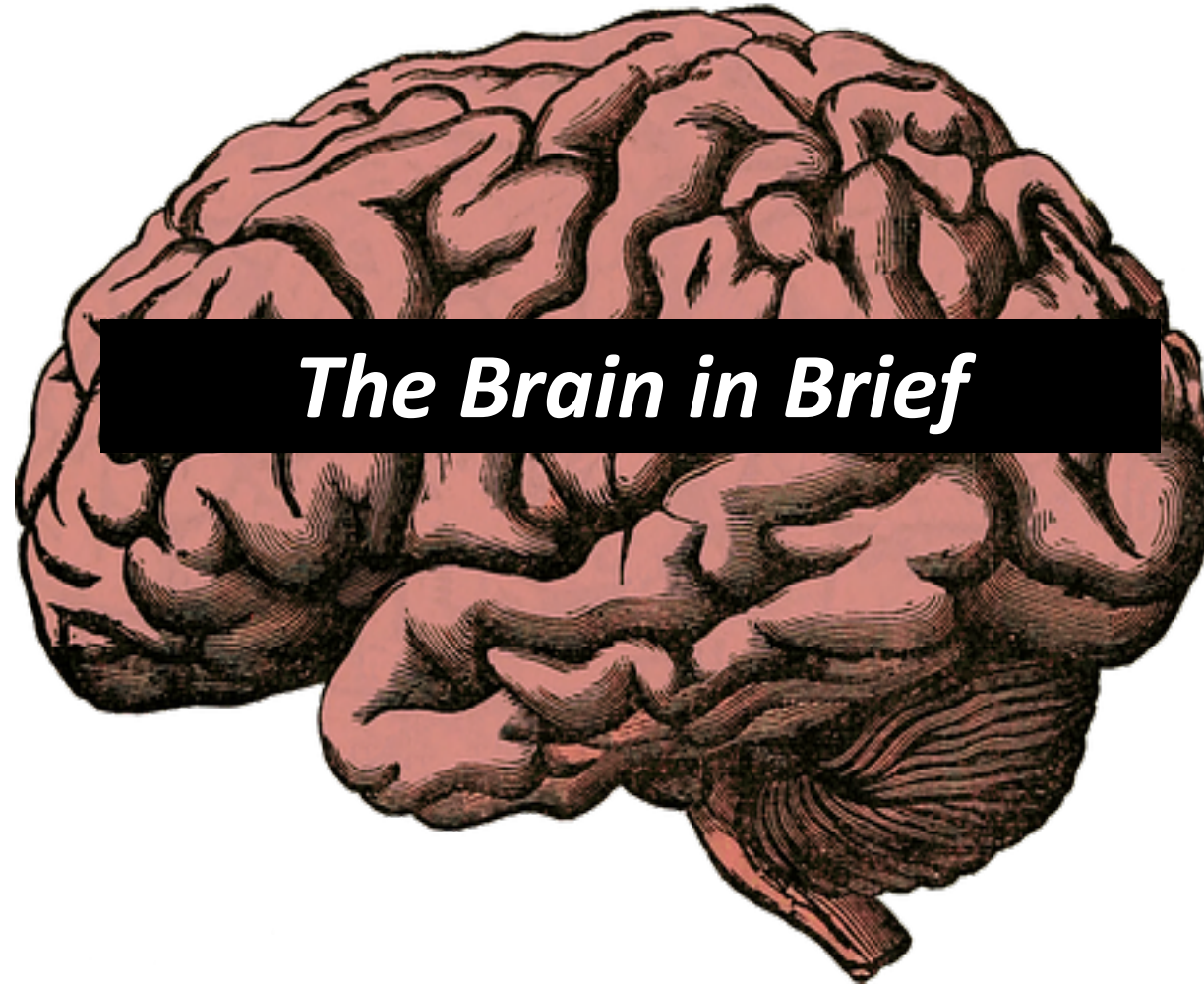


# STRESS CAN be Controlled...

# ANXIETY

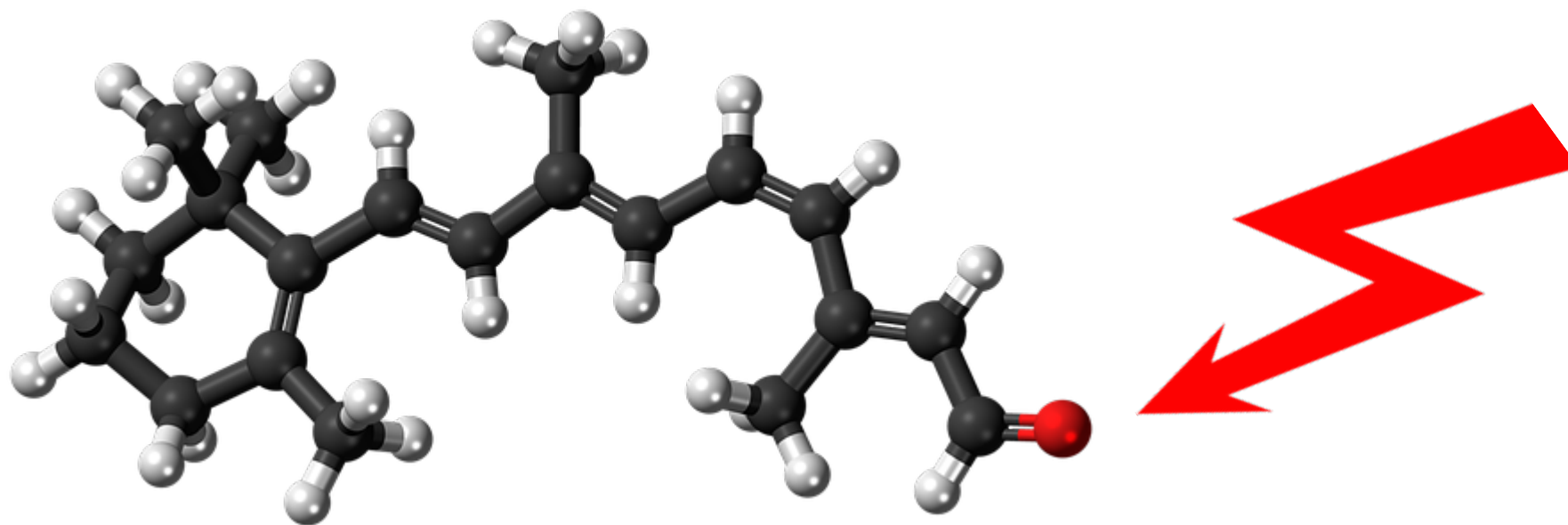
*Stress is a physiological and psychological reaction to an event that alarms us*

*Stress is not something that happens to us.... it is how we react to what happens*



*The Brain in Brief*

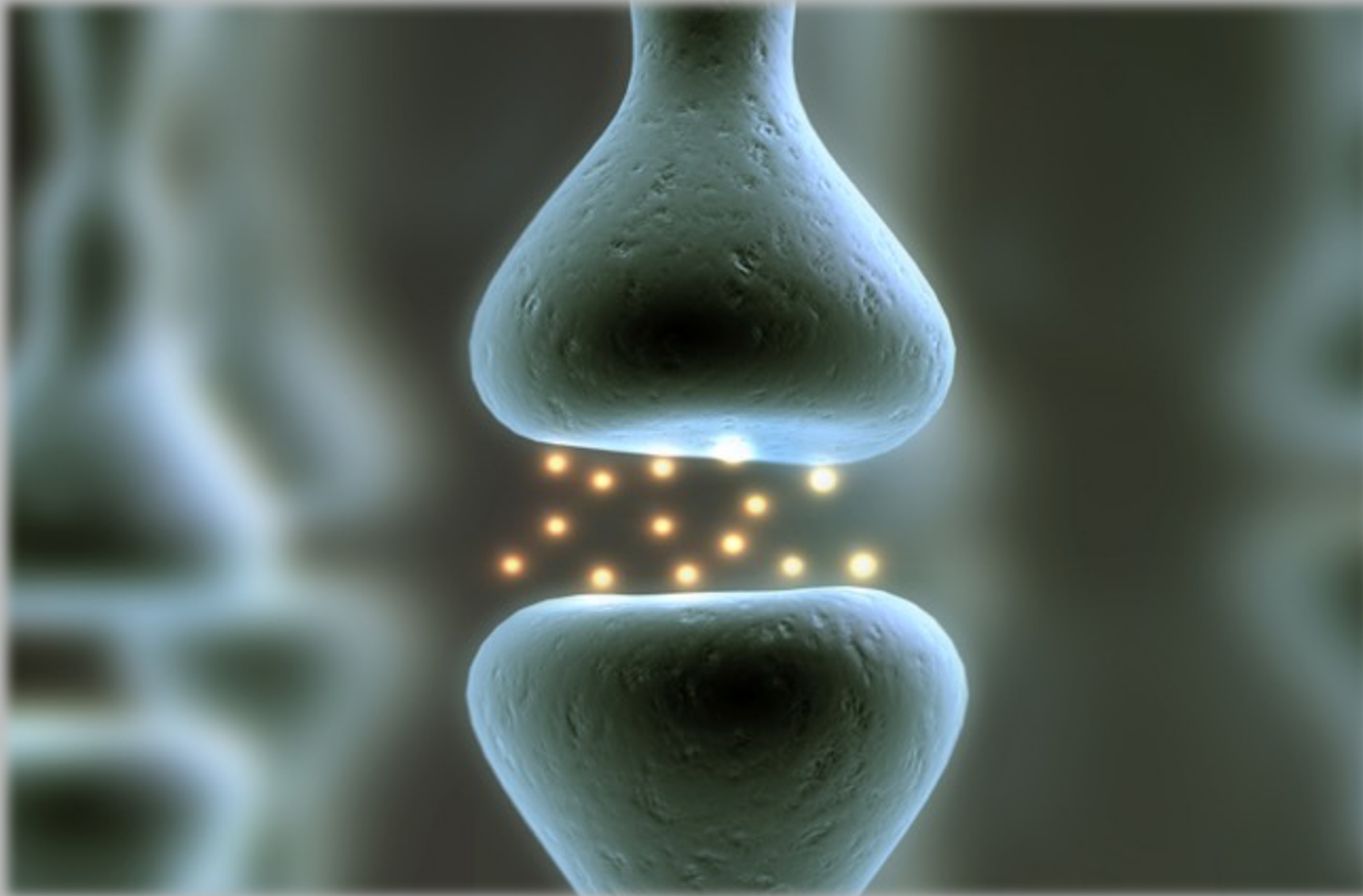
# Electro-Chemical Signal



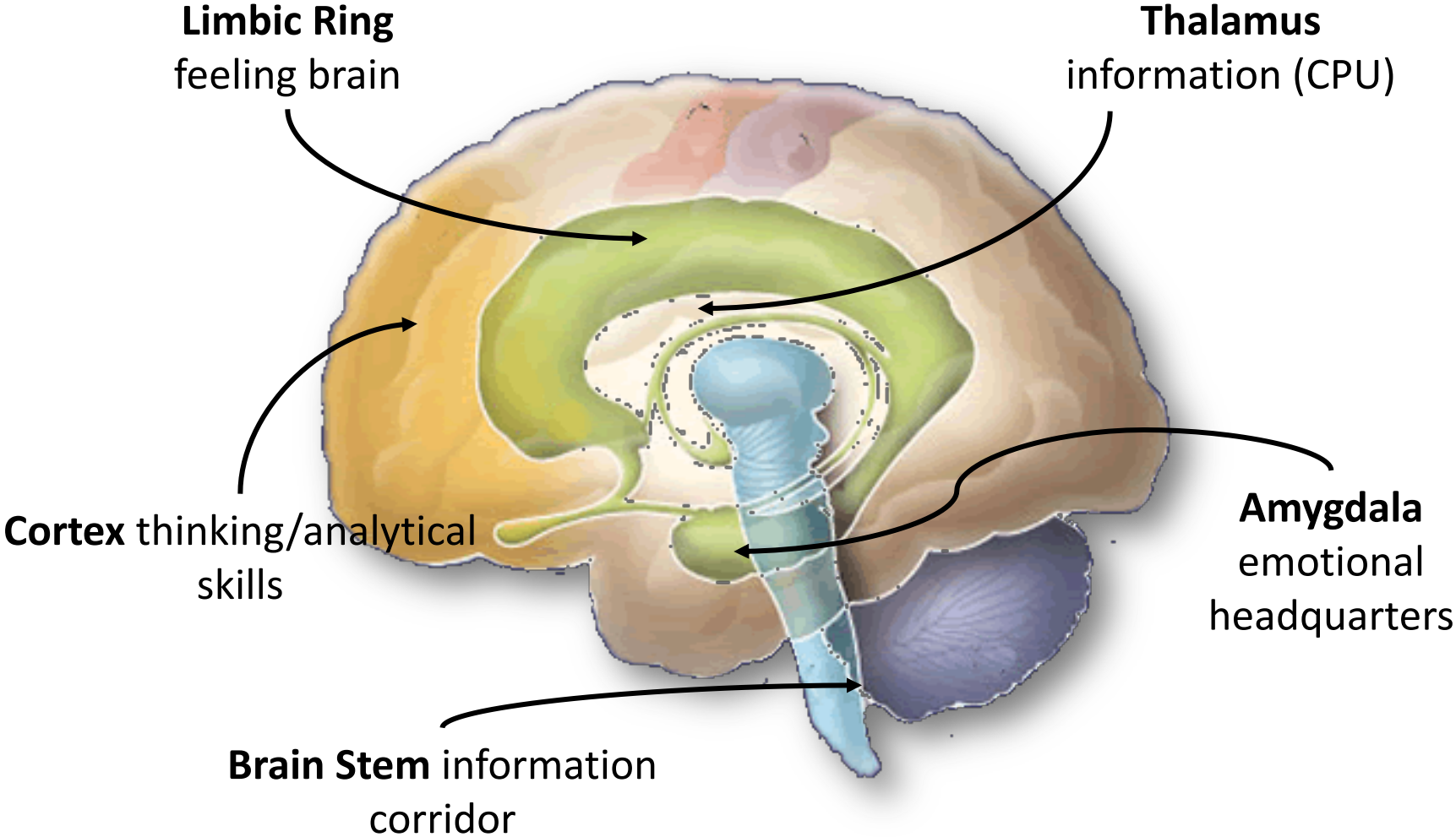
The background is a complex, multi-colored network of thin, glowing lines. The lines radiate from several central points, creating a starburst or web-like pattern. The colors transition from deep reds and oranges on the left to bright yellows and greens in the center, and then to purples and blues on the right. The overall effect is that of a dynamic, interconnected system, possibly representing neural connections or data flow.

# Dendrites

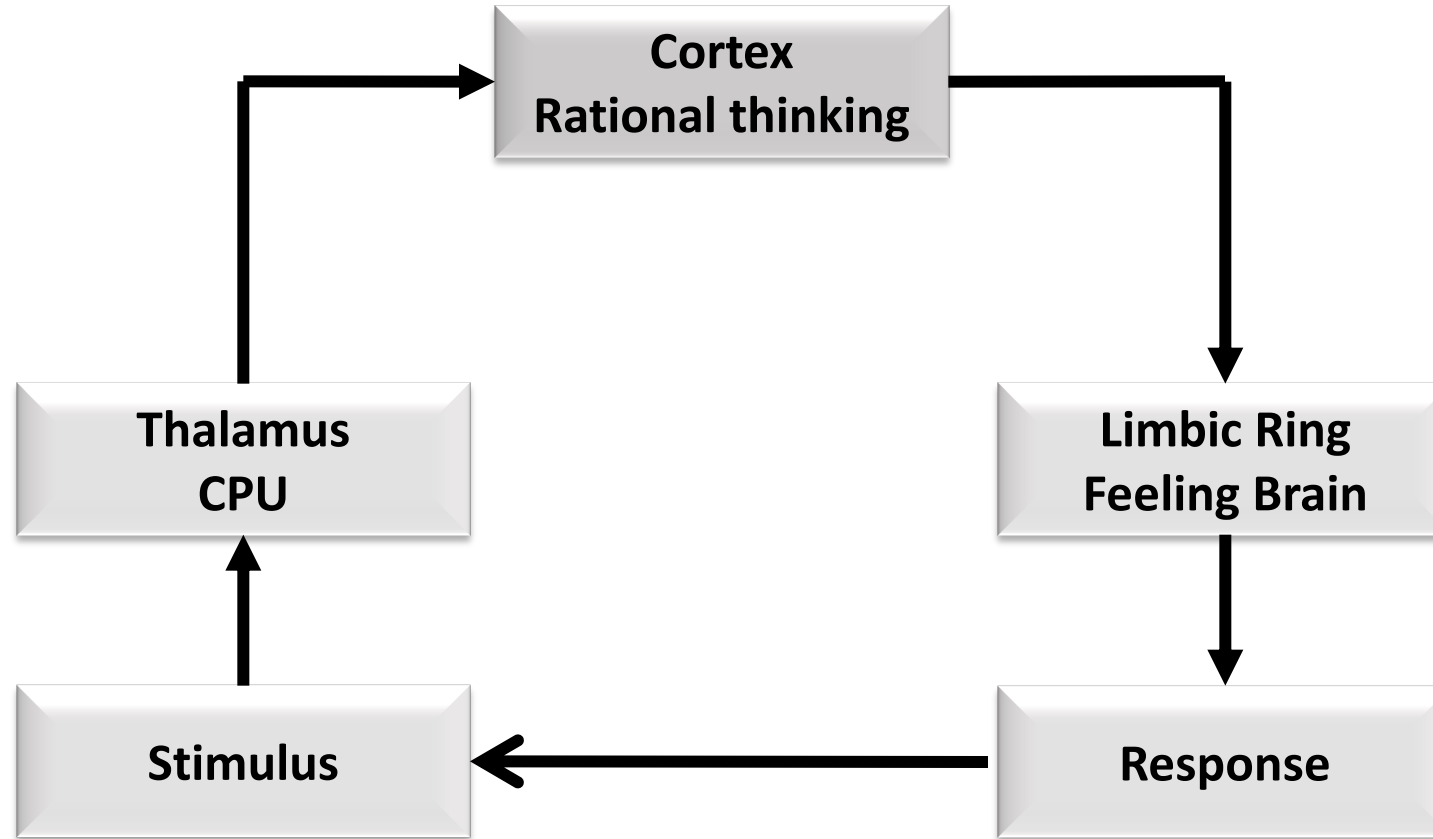
# SYNAPSES



# How our Brain Works



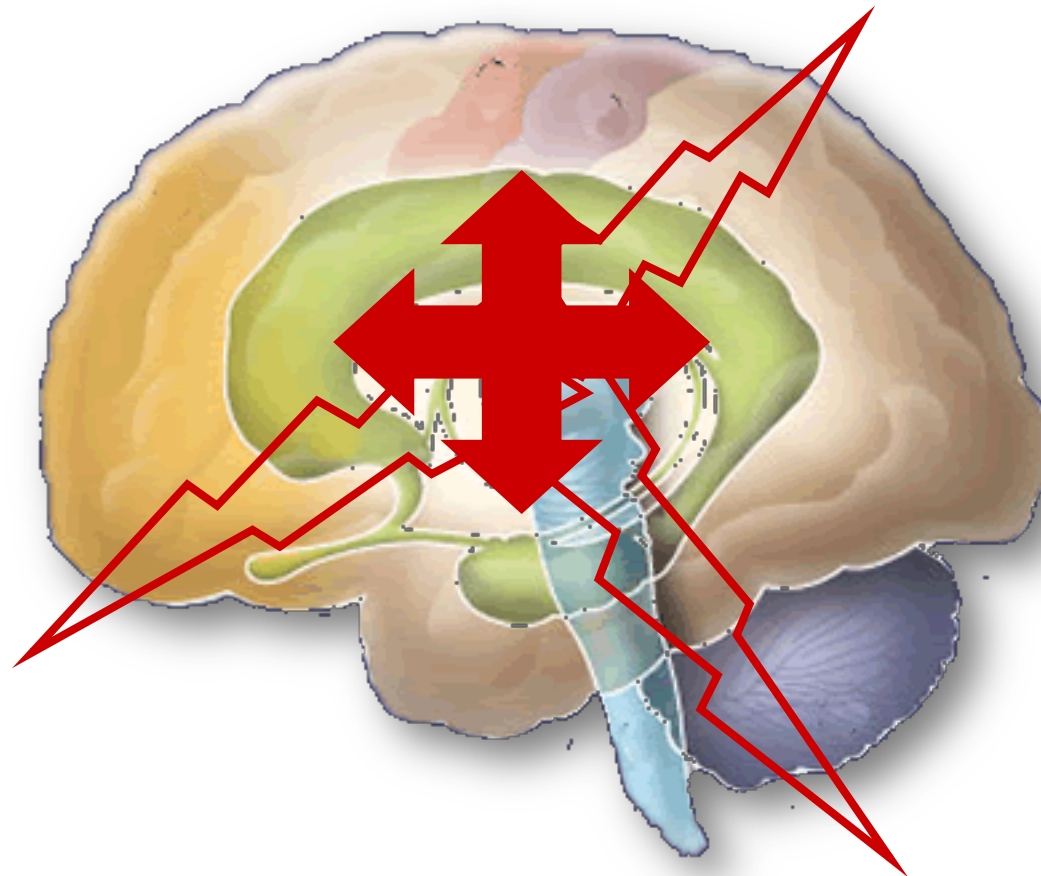
# How our Brain Works



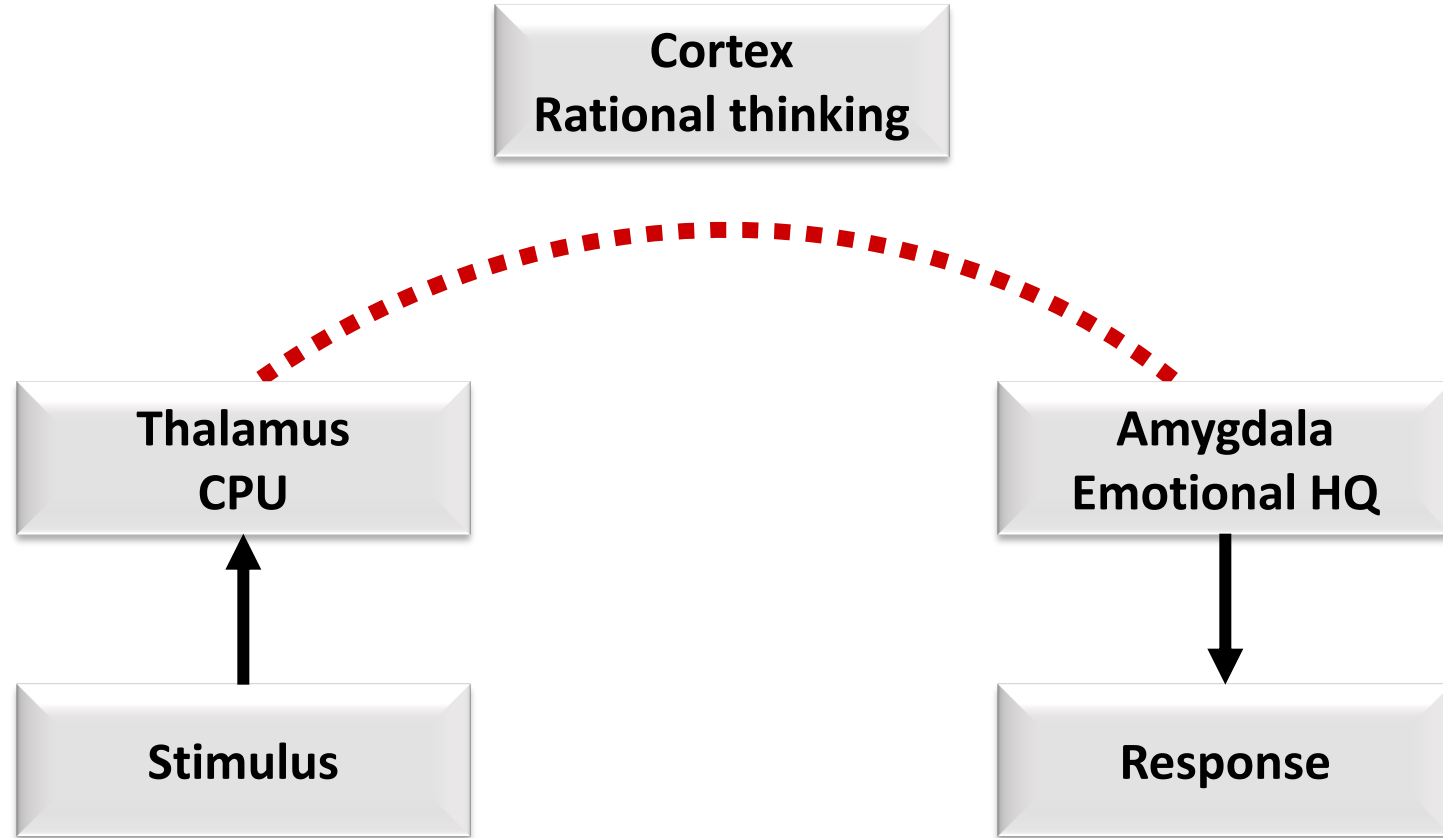
**Or ... is it ?**

# Brain Stew

Reaction “floods” through brain and body, like spice in the stew



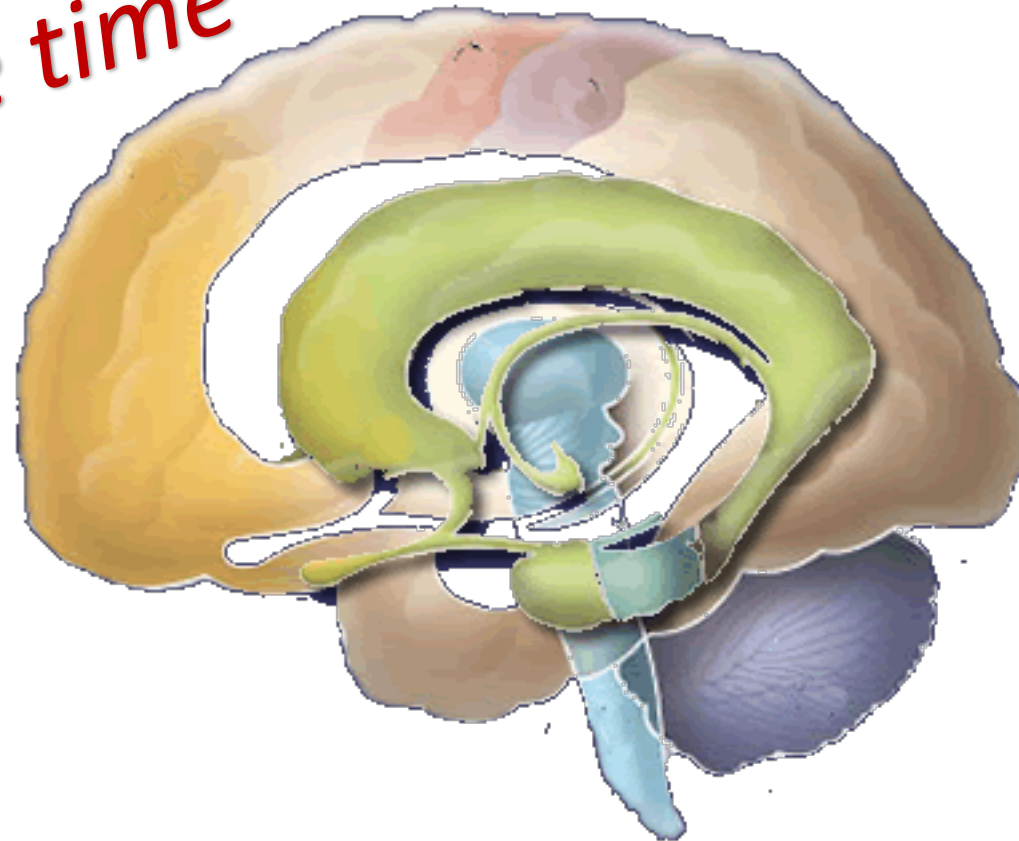
# Emotional Shortcut



“Hijacking”

Feeling Brain “cut off” from Thinking Brain

80 – 85 % of the time



Mindset



***“Don’t bring Emotions to work! ..”***

***“Leave your Emotions at Home!...”***

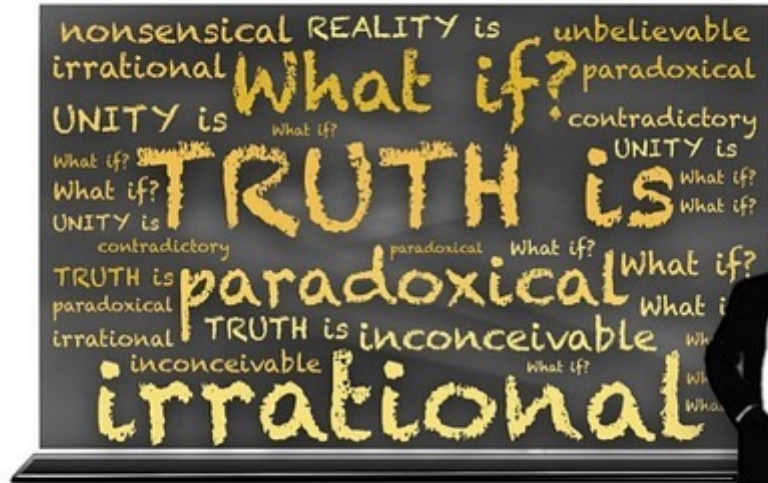
***“Keep emotions out of decision-making ...”***



***Hmmm.....***

***“Keep Emotions out of decisions-making....”***

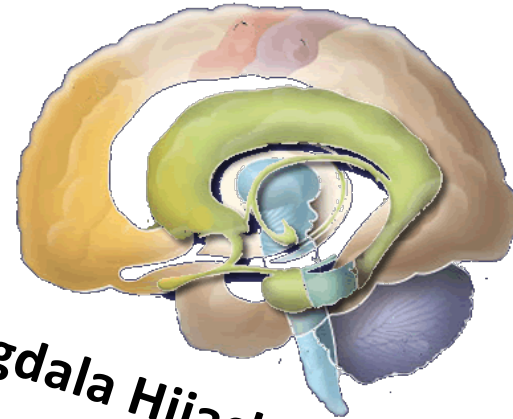
*Hmmm.....*



*“Keep Emotions out of decisions-making...”*



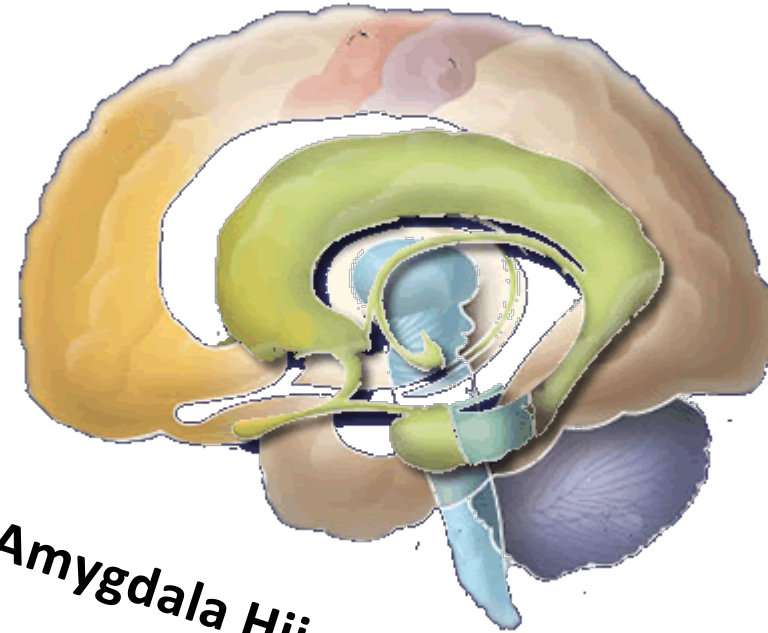
**IMPOSSIBLE!**



*Amygdala Hijacking'*

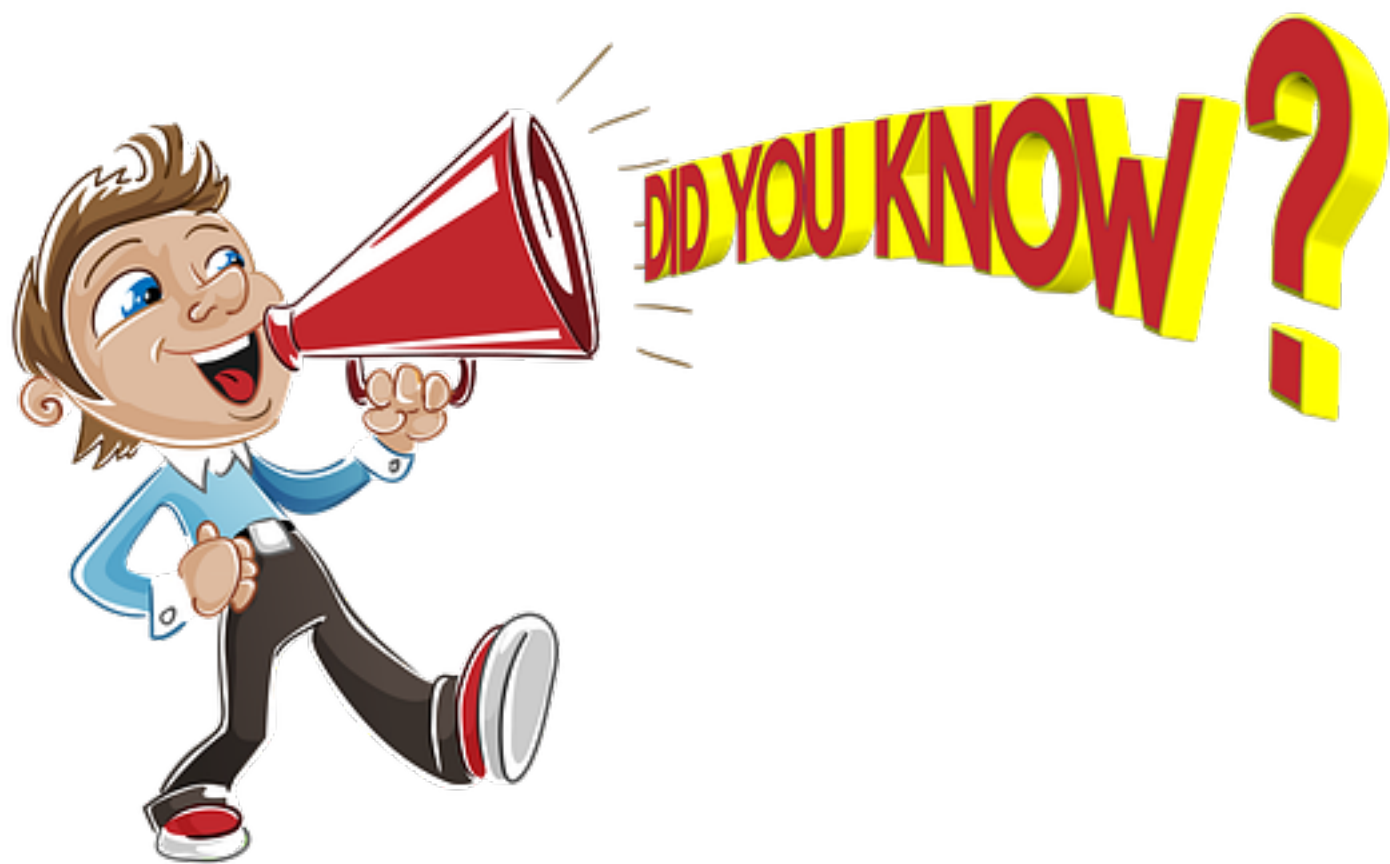
***“Keep Emotions out of decisions-making...”***

***“Keep REACTIONS out of decisions-making!”***



***Amygdala Hijacking’***

---



# The Emerging World in 2026



# Meta-crisis



*The term “metacrisis” refers to overlapping and multiplying factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, polarization, and the rise of AI and hybrid work.*

# Stress in Conflict Zones – By the Numbers

One in five people in conflict zones suffer significant mental health impacts:



**1 IN 5**

experience a  
mental health condition



**~30%**

experience anxiety  
or depression



**~1 IN 4**

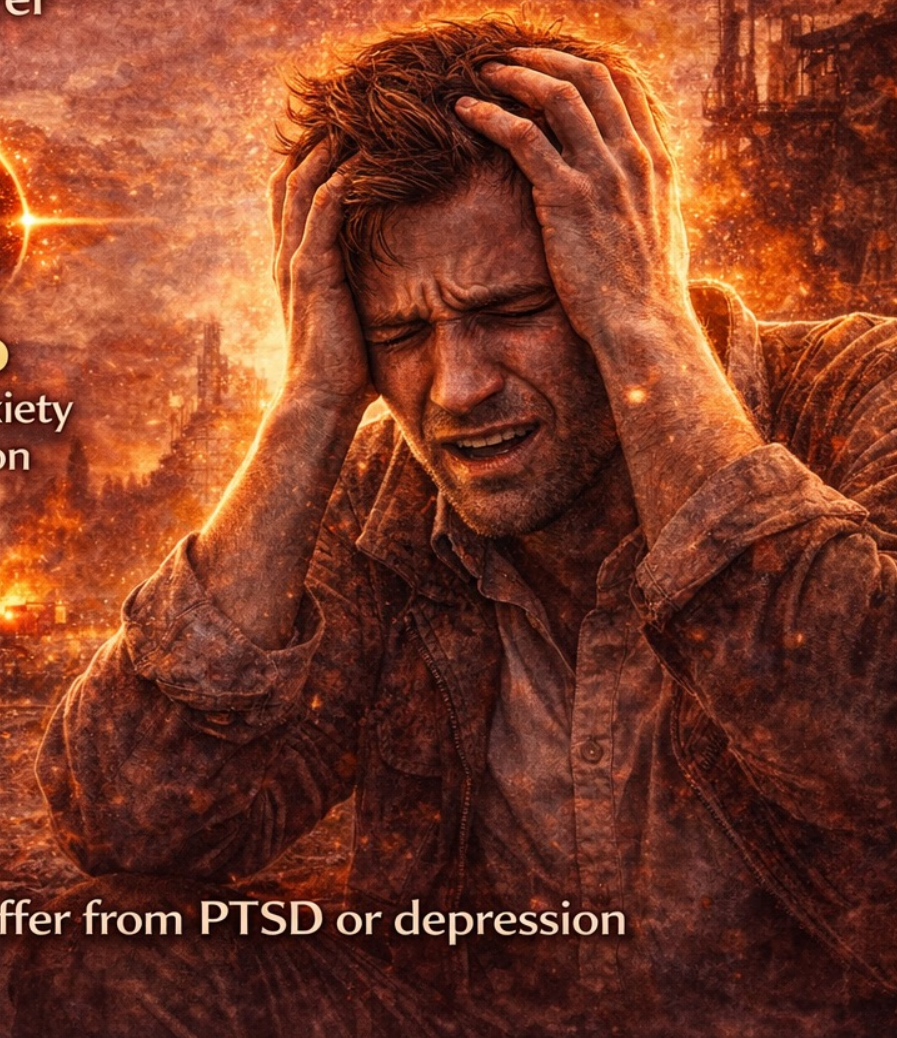
experience PTSD symptoms



**354 MILLION**

war survivors suffer from PTSD  
or depression

🔥 Estimated **354 million** war survivors suffer from PTSD or depression





How Can We  
Gain Clarity through Uncertainty?

# Simple 3-Step Emotional Regulation



# Notice....



# External Stimulus → Think - Feel - Act



*T-F-A Model*

# Notice....

**Recognise what is happening inside you**

Ask yourself:

- What are my thoughts?
- What am I feeling right now?
- What triggered this reaction?

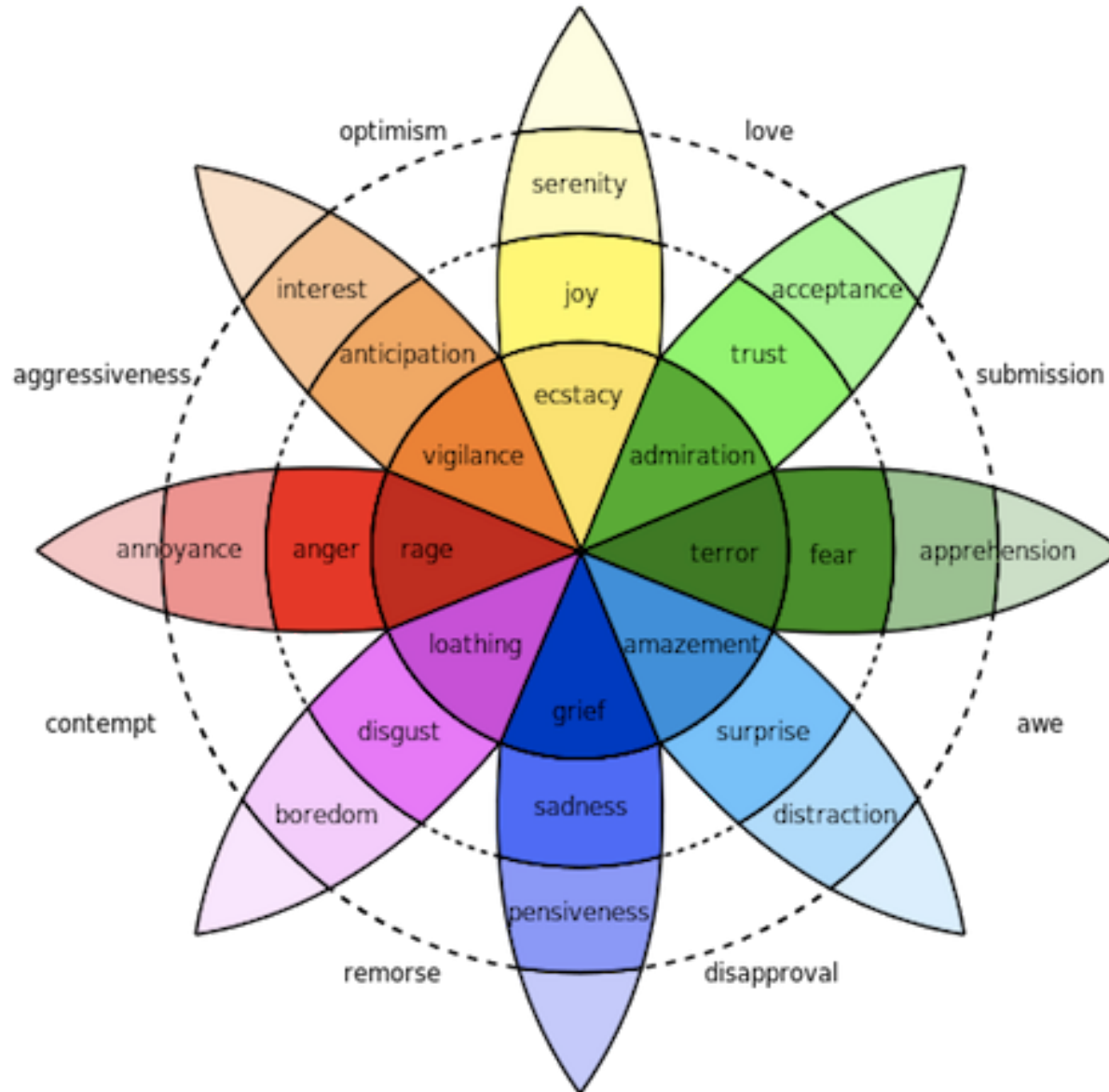
Examples:

- Anxiety
- Fear
- Overwhelm
- Anger



***You cannot regulate what you have not noticed.***

# Plutchik Model



# Mapping Our Emotions

Understanding emotions through intensity and tone

HIGH INTENSITY / ENERGY



All emotions carry information. Recognising them helps us respond more consciously.

# Notice....

*What patterns can we observe?*

*You cannot regulate what you have not noticed.*



# Recognising Patterns



**Behavioral Patterns  
& Habits**

Situation:

Thoughts

Feelings

Actions

When \_\_\_\_\_, I/ they \_\_\_\_\_

Reaction - Autopilot

Recognising Patterns

**Becomes Your MENTAL MODEL**

Situation: We see a news report about a conflict incident with details about damage and casualties

Thoughts: *This is going to get worse*

Feelings: Fear, Anxiety, Helplessness

Actions: Constantly checking news and social media

Reaction **Autopilot**

When \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_

**Recognising Patterns**

**Costs**  
Time Loss  
Emotional Exhaustion  
Increase anxiety  
Distraction / Inefficiency

**Benefits:**  
Informed about the situation  
Being aware of safety guidance  
Taking precautions if necessary

**Consequential Thinking**

Conclusions ???

# Recognising the 'Triggers' ....



**When I hear new reports about attacks, I immediately check the news and start imagining worst-case scenarios.**

# What are your triggers?



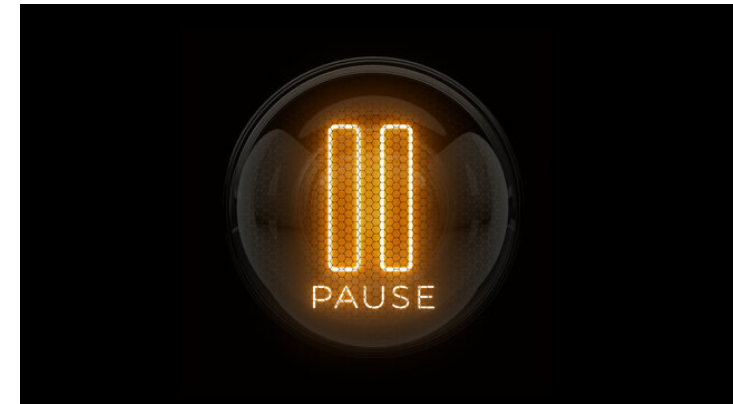
# Pause....

## Create space before *reacting*

Techniques:

- Slow your thinking
- Step back from the news or situation momentarily

This helps the brain move from **emotional reaction** → **rational thinking**.



*The pause is where control begins....*

***Consequential Thinking***

# Emotional Intelligence

**Effectively blending thinking and feeling  
to make optimal decisions**

# Choose ....

## Respond intentionally rather than react automatically

Ask yourself:

- What is within my control right now?
- What would be the most helpful response?
- What action will help me stay steady?

Possible choices:

- Refocus on work
- Limit media exposure
- Connect with others
- Reset / Refresh activities
- Reframe thought



***Navigating Emotions***

***Our power lies in choosing our response.....***

# External Stimulus → Think - Feel - Act



*T-F-A Model*



**Your STRESS  
is.....**

***How You  
Handle it!***

STRESS is.....*How You Handle it!*

THINK

FEEL

ACT

**T – F – A Model**



Resilience

RESILIENCE is to  
Gain Clarity through Uncertainty

**Control Stress**

**Build Resilience**



# Resilience in Uncertain Times



What does this look like?

# Resilience in Uncertain Times

A group of nine people, including men, women, and children, are silhouetted as they walk across a series of stepping stones in a river. The scene is set against a dramatic sky with a bright sunset or sunrise, a vibrant rainbow arching across the upper right, and a bright lightning bolt striking the clouds on the left. The overall mood is one of hope and perseverance.

**Resilience = The ability to adapt and recover  
when facing stress, uncertainty, or adversity.**

## Resilience in Uncertain Times

*Resilience is not about ignoring reality.*

It is the ability to:

- Absorb pressure
- Adapt to change
- Maintain perspective
- Continue moving forward
- Prepare for change



**Resilience =** Capacity to **prepare for, recover from, adapt** and move forward with **agility and energy** in the face of stress, adversity or challenge

How is ***YOUR*** Resilience?



# The Resilient Reframe

Situation → Thought Choice → Emotion → Response

## SITUATION



You hear air defence activity nearby and see news alerts reporting regional escalation.

## STEP 1 – THOUGHT CHOICE

### AUTOMATIC THOUGHT

‘Things are getting worse.  
We may not be safe.’

### RESILIENT THOUGHT

‘This situation is uncertain, but right now I  
am safe and I will focus on what I can control.’

## STEP 2 – EMOTIONAL SHIFT

### AUTOMATIC EMOTION

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Helplessness
- Overwhelm

### REGULATED EMOTION

- Concern (but manageable)
- Alertness
- Calm focus
- Determination

### INTENTIONAL RESPONSE

- Check trusted information sources at specific times
- Use breathing or grounding techniques

## KEY INSIGHT

The situation may not be under our control.  
But the way we interpret and respond to it often is.

# What *is* Resilience?

*John's Resilience Formula*

$$R = SM\{TFA\} + EO\{EQ\}$$

*Stress Management: T-F-A*

*Exercise OPTIMISM: EQ*



# Resilience Begins with Optimism

Resilience is not about denying difficulty. It is about believing that challenges are temporary, manageable, and that our actions still matter.



**OPPORTUNITYISNOWHERE**

A dramatic sky scene with a sun partially obscured by dark, jagged clouds. Bright rays of light fan out from the sun's position, illuminating the surrounding clouds and creating a strong contrast between the dark shadows and the bright light. The overall mood is one of hope and breakthrough.

Optimism

....to see beyond the clouds....

# Exercising Optimism

Sir Winston Churchill

*"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty"*



# Optimists

- Healthier, happier and longer lives
- More successful in work
- Take constructive action to resolve challenges
- Seek out others for help
- Better relationships
- Better able to handle stress - more resilient**

# Optimism

## The Science of Resilience

Scientific research shows that optimism is a powerful predictor of resilience and positive outcomes in times of crisis.



**11-15%**  
LONGER LIFE  
EXPECTANCY

Harvard & Boston  
University



**37%**  
HIGHER WORKPLACE  
PERFORMANCE

University of Pennsylvania



**LESS  
DEPRESSION  
& ANXIETY**

Journal of Personality  
& Social Psych.



**BETTER  
PHYSICAL  
HEALTH  
OUTCOMES**

Proceedings of the  
Nat. Academy of Sciences.

# 3 Optimism Factors

Time

Isolation

Effort

“This situation is going to continue for a very long time  
..and is going to affect everything — our safety, our jobs, our future  
...and there is nothing I can do about it.”

# PPP vs TIE

## Time / Duration

“This situation is going to continue for a very long time.”

**Permanent**

**Temporary**

“This situation is serious, but conflicts and crises eventually stabilise.”

## Isolation / Scope

“This is going to affect everything — our safety, our jobs, our future.”

**Pervasive**

**Isolated**

“This affects some parts of life right now, but many parts of our lives are still functioning normally.”

## Effort / Personal Involvement

“There is nothing I can do about it.”

**Powerless**

**Effort Possible**

“There are things I can do to take care of myself and the people around me — staying informed, maintaining routines, supporting others, and taking shelter when required”

# The Lens We Choose

How we interpret events shapes our experience



**PESSIMISM**

**Permanent**

**Pervasive**

**Powerless**

**OR**



**OPTIMISM**

**Temporary**

**Isolated**

**Effort**



# What can we learn from the bamboo?

*“The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists”*

Japanese Proverb.

# What can we learn from the bamboo?

Bamboo is a symbol of longevity because of its durability, strength, flexibility, and resilience. It survives in the harshest conditions, still standing tall and staying green year-round.

*We bend but we don't break!*

# No Man is an Island



Key  
Takeaways

- *2026 – Living in a Meta-crisis World*
- *AI versus Human Response to Conflict Scenarios: Pure Logic Vs Emotional Consideration*
- *Definition of Stress: Individual Perception of an Outcome*
- *3 – Step Emotional Regulation*
  - *Notice: Think – Feel – Act*
  - *Pause: Six Seconds Pause – Consequential Thinking*
  - *Choose: Navigate Emotions – Reframing Thought*
- *Resilience*
  - *Preparing for, & Recovering from, Adversity*
  - *Moving forwards with agility & energy*
- *Key Resilience components:*
  - *Resilience Reframe*
  - *Optimism*
  - *Human Support*





الله يحفظكم 🙏

*Thank you.....*



# Staying Steady in Uncertain Times: Resilience, Emotional Balance & Wellbeing

