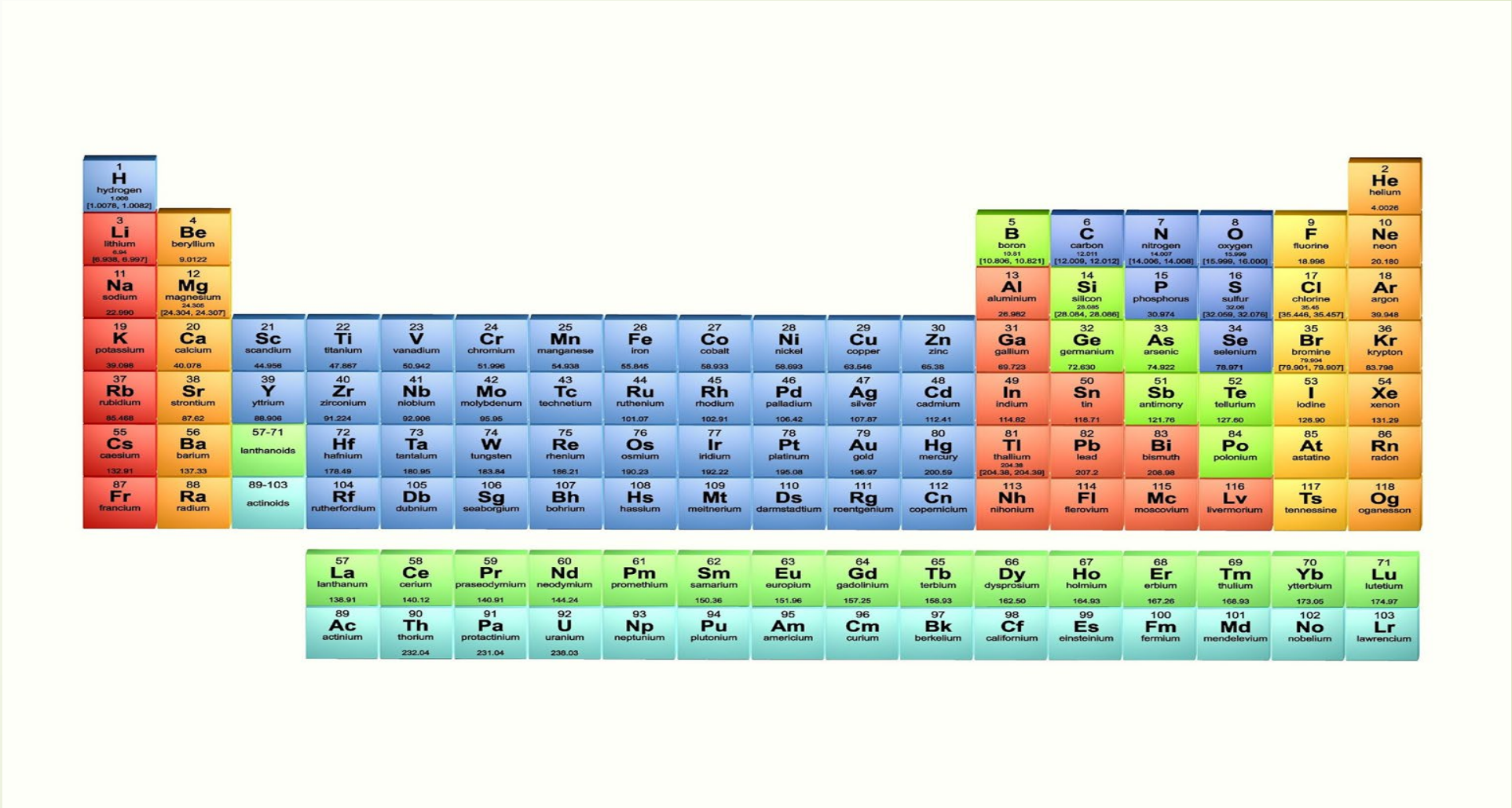
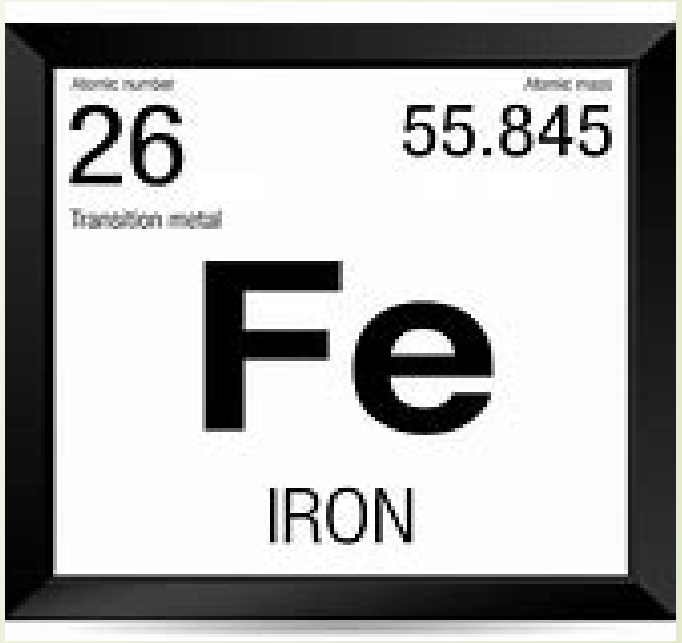
Mental Health on College Campuses and Workplaces: Are we in a period of crisis or a time of transformation?

Dr. Erick Bacho, Ph.D., ABPP

The Periodic Table

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26
Atomic mass
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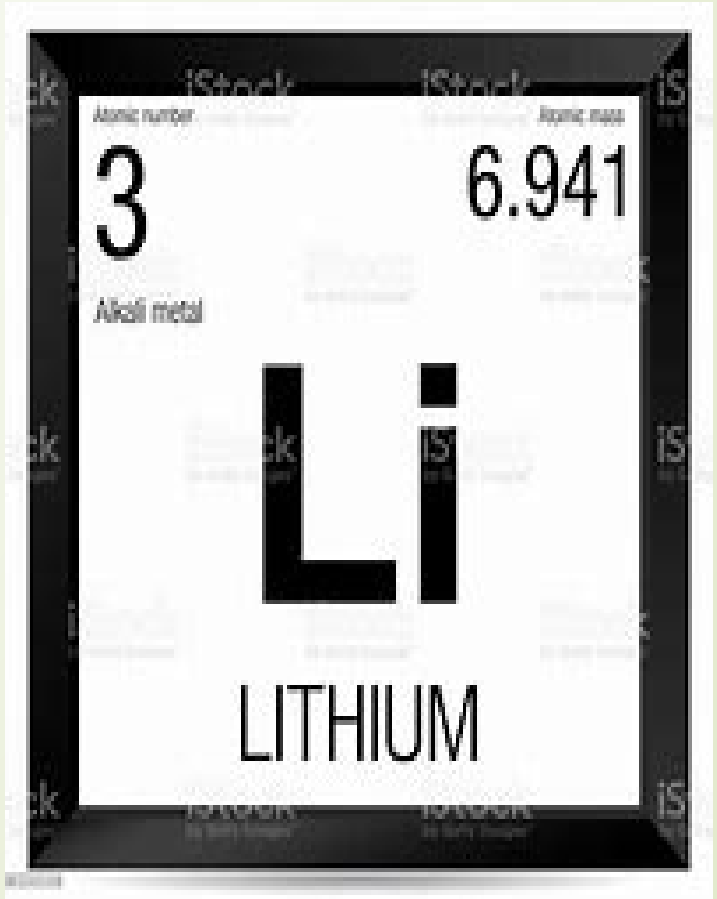
Transition metal
Fe
IRON


Atomic number
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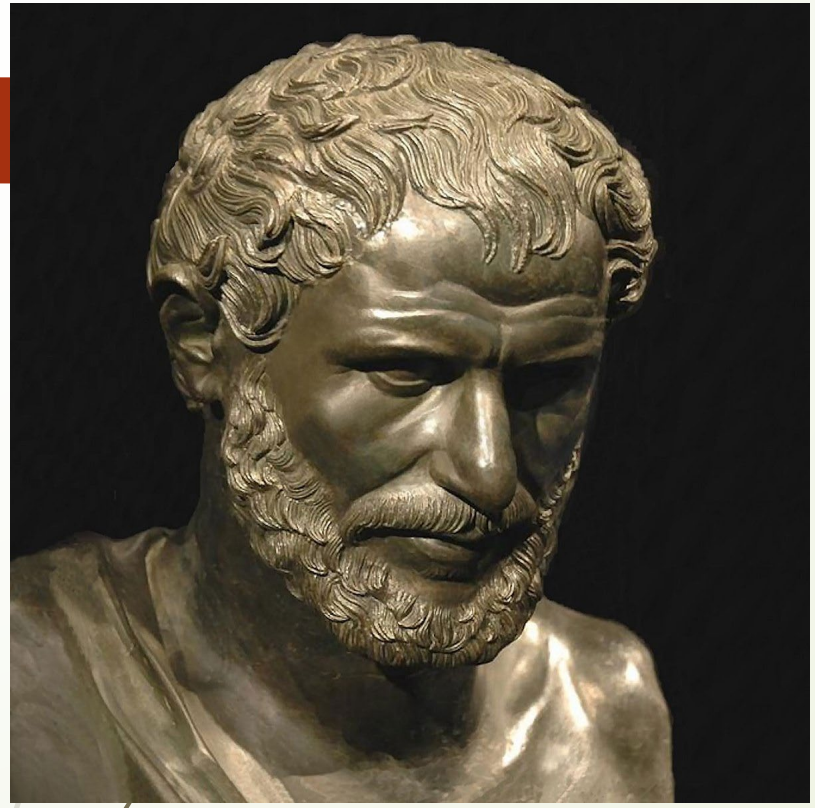
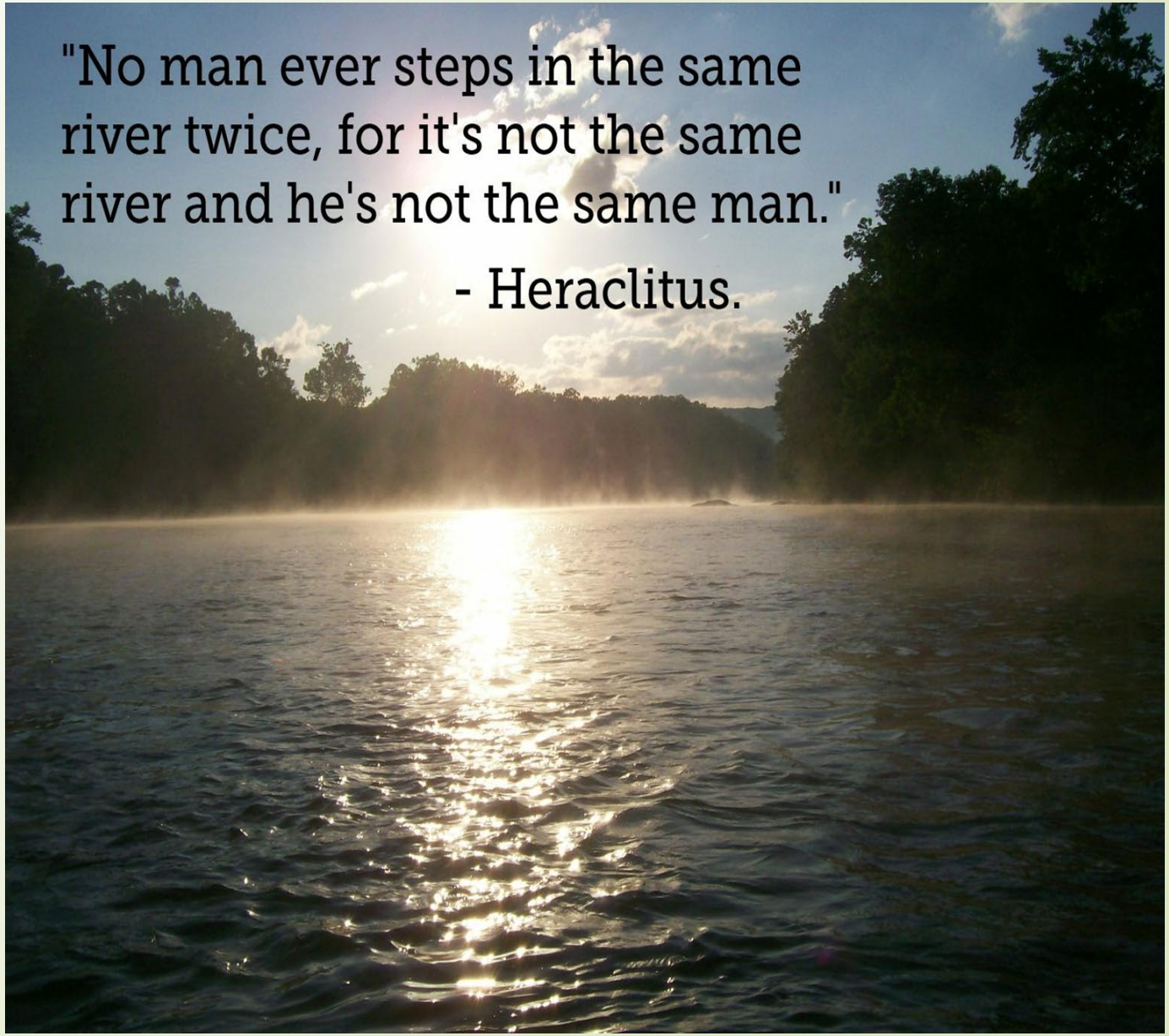
Atomic mass
6.941
Alkali metal
Li
LITHIUM

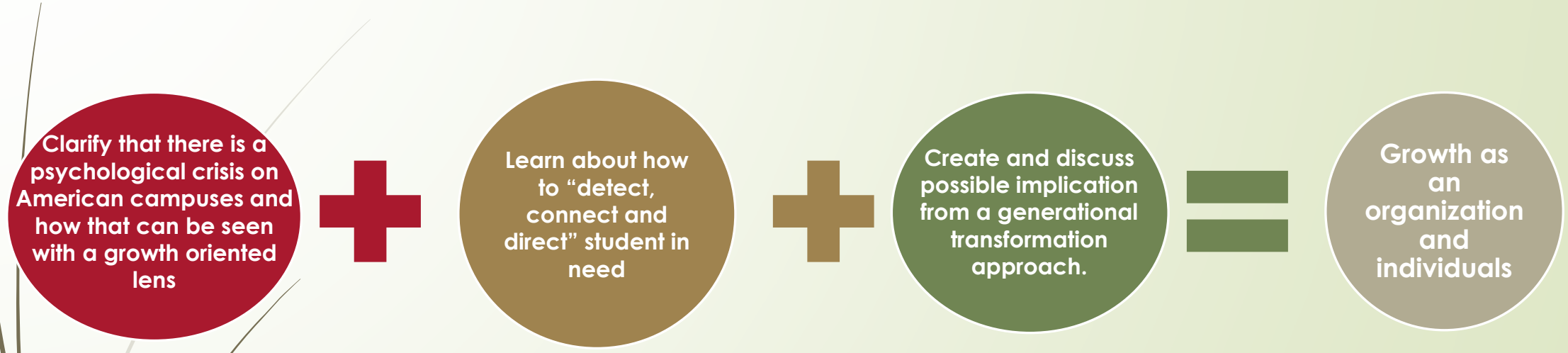
The Human Element

“All in all, you’re just another Brick in the Wall!”…(Pink Floyd, 1979)




"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man."
- Heraclitus.

Today's Objectives



This is not an annual training requirement. It is meant to provoke thought. So keep an open mind and a curious ear. We will take question/discussion breaks during the presentation and a final one at the end.

Today's Road Map

- Student Mental Health has deteriorated across the nation.
- This crisis is a sign that modern college campuses (and by extension early career scientists) are undergoing a transformation and what you can do about it.
- Discuss what I mean by "Detect, Connect, and Direct" those in need.

A tale of two kingdoms: “Once upon a time…”

Scenario: Your student, Jim, doesn't turn in assignments or completes projects on time. Initially, he presented as motivated, articulate in group meetings, and very conscientious. He has potential, but seems to be "blowing it all off." He's become moody, unfocused, disheveled and you think you smell alcohol on his breath. You decide to meet with him.

How do you and your institution deal with the Jim's of the world?

(you can replace student with early career professional).

Student mental health has deteriorated across the nation. (APA, 2022)

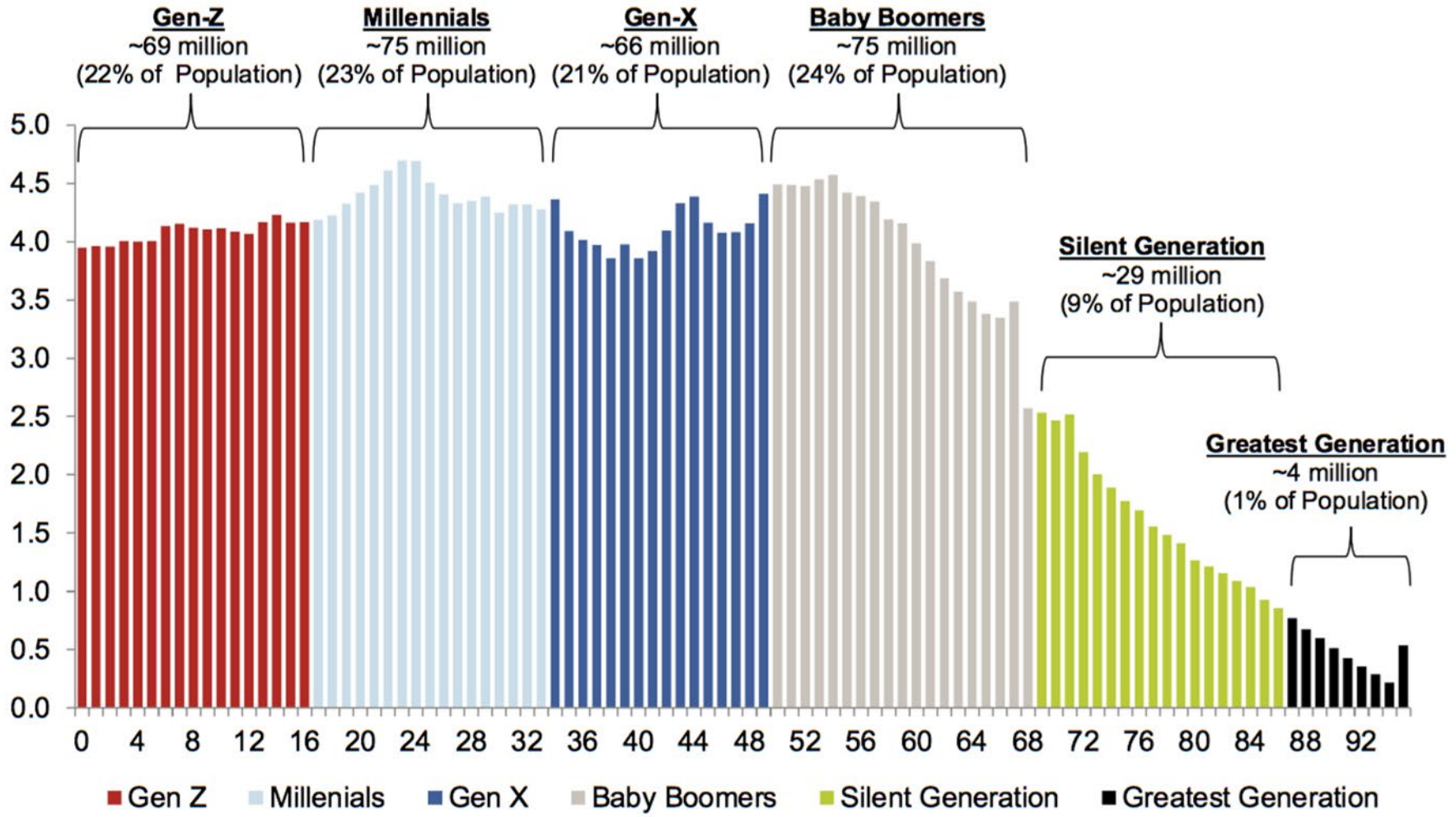
Adolescents are experiencing more concerning mental health problems, all across the nation. And it may get worse. (CDC, 2022)

This crisis may be a sign that modern college campuses, and our children, are undergoing a generational transformation. (Bacho, 2022)

Generational Differences vs Generational Transition

Gen-Z represents more than 20% of the U.S. Population…

Total US Population by Age and Generation*, millions

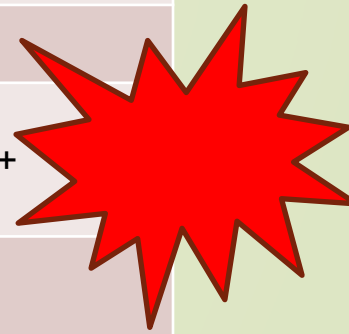


Source: Census Bureau, Pew Research Center, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research.

Emerging adulthood

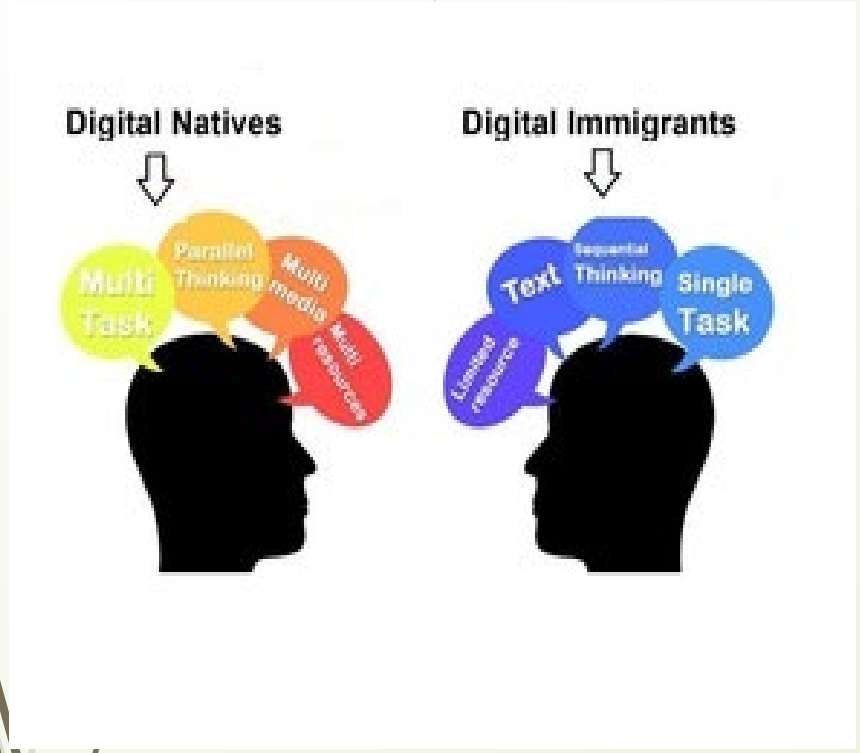
Generations at a Glance

Generation	Greatest	Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z
Years Born	1920-1940	1940-1960	1960-1980	1980-2000	2000-2020
Age range	80-100	60-80	40-60	20-40	1-20
% of Global Pop.	5%	15%	20%	30%	30%
Life-Defining Events	WW-II Depression	Cold War Moon Landing	End of Cold War First Desktop Computers	9/11+ Gulf Wars Rise of Social Media	COVID-19 Rise of AI + Metaverse
Communication Style	Letters	Telephone	Email/SMS	Instant Message	Emojis
Key Technology	Automobile	TV	PCs	Smartphones	AR/VR
Current Living Situation	Retirement Homes	Detached House (Rancher)	McMansions	Sharing an apartment	Parent's House
Deepest Fears	The World in 2020	No longer the "center of attention"	What about our generation? (Boomer echo)	Paying off student debt	Low batteries



Generational Comparison Chart

	"Greatest Generation"	"Boomers"	Gen X	Gen Y (Millenials)	Gen Z (NETGEN)
Born	1920-40	1940-60	1960-80	1980-2000	2000-2020
Age Today	83-103	63-83	43-63	23-43	3-23
% of US Pop.	9%	22%	15%	25%	26%
Parenting & Childhood	Strong nuclear family, parenting associated with discipline	Single income, larger classrooms, competitive job market	Dual Income, increasing growing single parent homes, "latch-key" (self-sufficiency)	Helicopter Parenting, Participation Trophies, Video-game systems	Both parents working, raised by grandparents or other caretakers. Social Media
Formative Life Experiences	Depression World War, Nuclear Family, Gender specific roles	Cold War, Vietnam, Moon landing, Woodstock, communal living	Fall of Berlin Wall, Introduction of PCs, and video games, rising divorce rates	9/11 and Global War on Terror, Reality TV, Google	COVID Social Distancing policy, Teleworking parents, Wiki-Leaks, Global Warming/Environmental focus.
Career Attitudes and Leadership style preferences	Job for Life. Work is a privilege Command and control leadership style/ top-down	Live to Work! Competitive workplace. "Face time" with boss to promote. Positional Leadership/Meritocracy	Loyalty to profession not employer, "knowledge worker," Work to Live, "free agents" Task oriented, Transactional Leadership style	First Digital Careers/work. Work my way not your way. Desires Meaningful Work Participatory workplace. Relationship oriented Transformational Leadership	Teleworkers/ Mobile workers, Internet seen as authority, technologically reliant, multi-taskers. Quick promotion, fast turn-around, and the rise of "Quiet Quitting" Coaching Leadership style



1946-1964	1965-1985	1986-2000	2001 to Present
Baby Boomers (born during the demographic Post–World War II)	**Generation X** (born after the Western Post–World War II baby boom)	**Generation Y** (also known as the "Millennial" are the demographic cohort following Generation X)	**Generation Next** (the demographic cohort following Generation Y)
Television	**Computer**	**Internet**	**Internet+ Apps**

Digital Immigrants

Digital Natives

“Times, they are a changin’…(Bob Dylan, 1963)

“Be professional, then get personal. No, do the personal work, then you will get professional work.” Dr. Cuevas, Vice Provost, University of Tennesee.

OLD: The old process was “do professional-grade, reliable, and timely work” on a consistent basis, then you get to know me more on a personal level, if at all.

New: The new process is, “get to know me as a person, first, then I will provide you good, reliable, and timely work” more consistently.

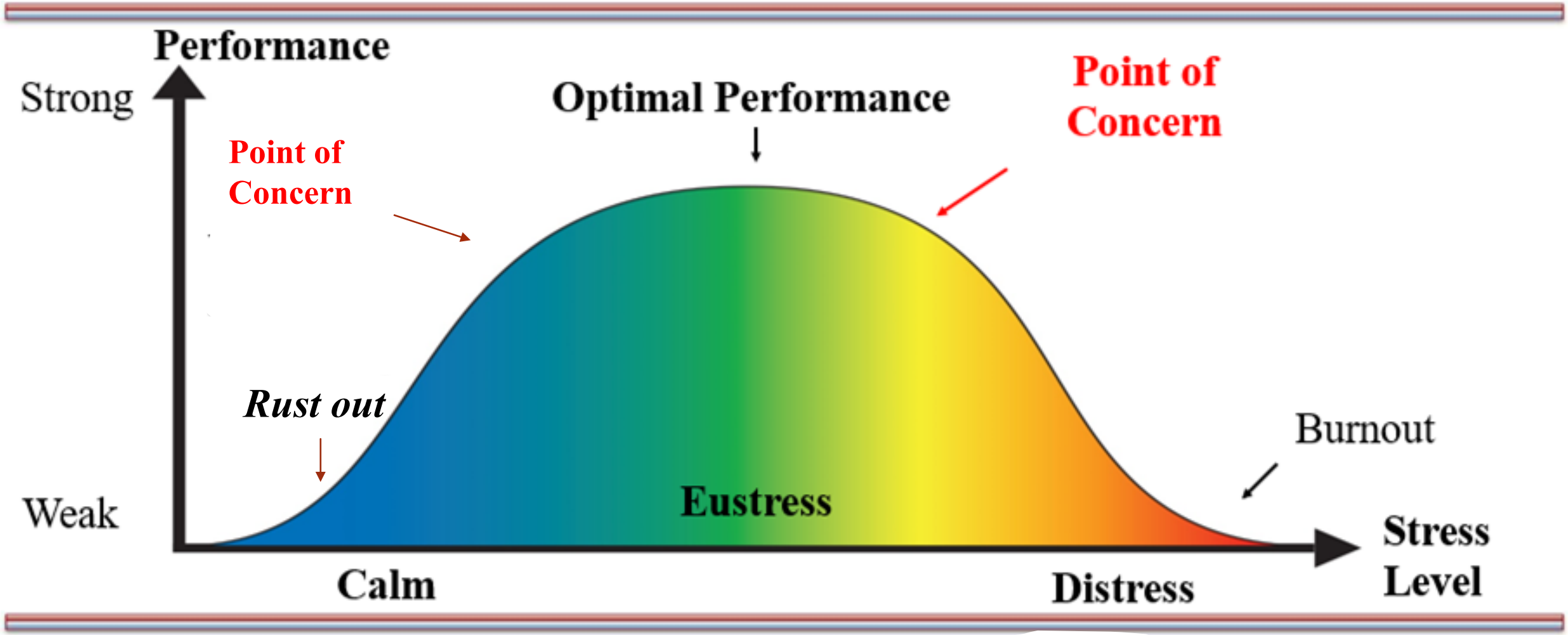
“They didn’t understand the assignment.” Stephen Bacho (8th Grade)

“Our teachers are saying it is important to know about mental health problems and that they care. But, we are all crowded into a gymnasium, made to watch a power-point and then sent back to class. It seems like they are checking a box and can say that they talked about it. No one took it seriously and everyone was on their phones. Adults don’t seem to know how to talk to us about this stuff.”

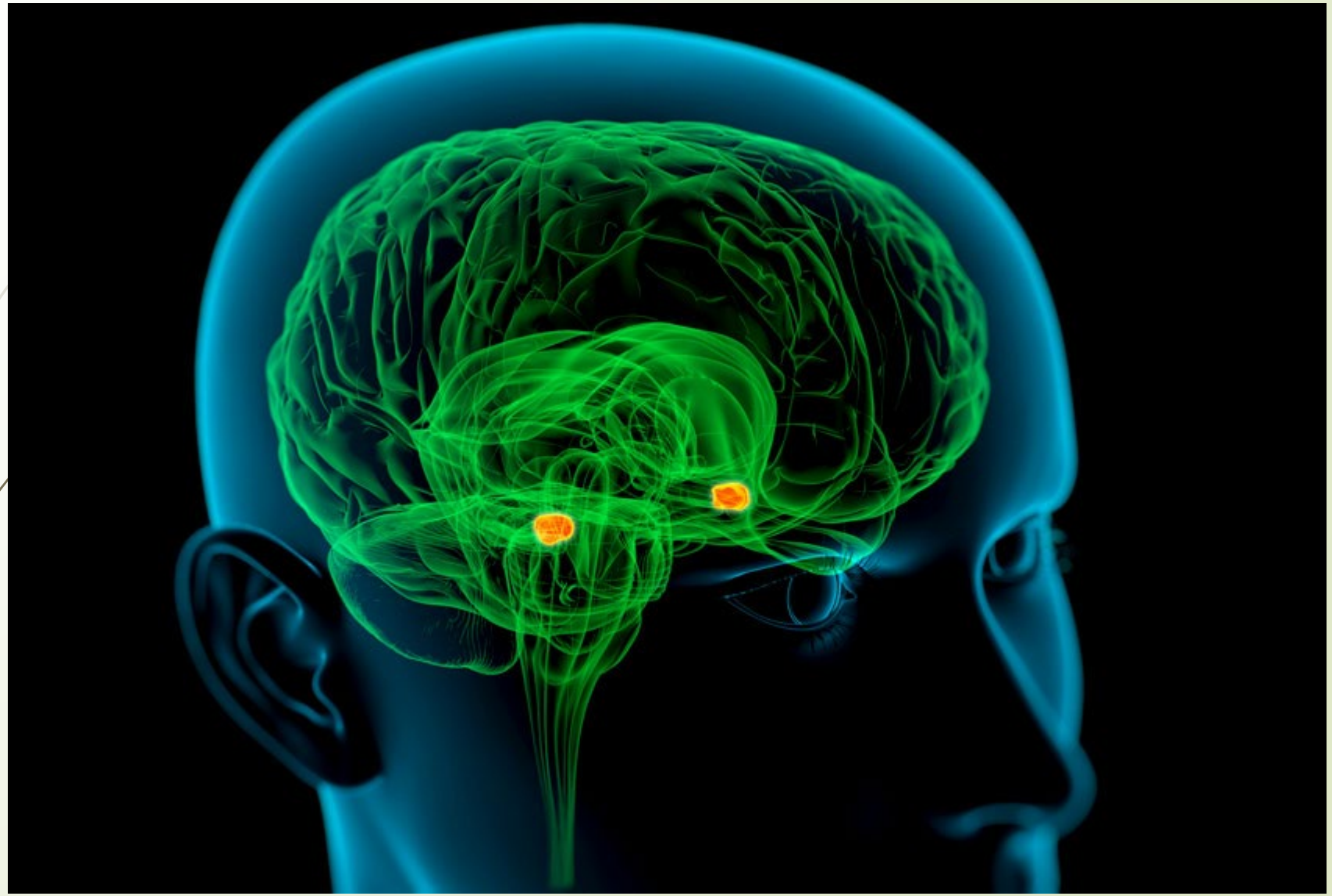
Rethinking Stress

Adversity as Transformation

Success Requires Some Stress



Detect when things start to go “wrong”



Stress Continuum Model - Be Aware of Your Student's Current Zone and Alert to Changes

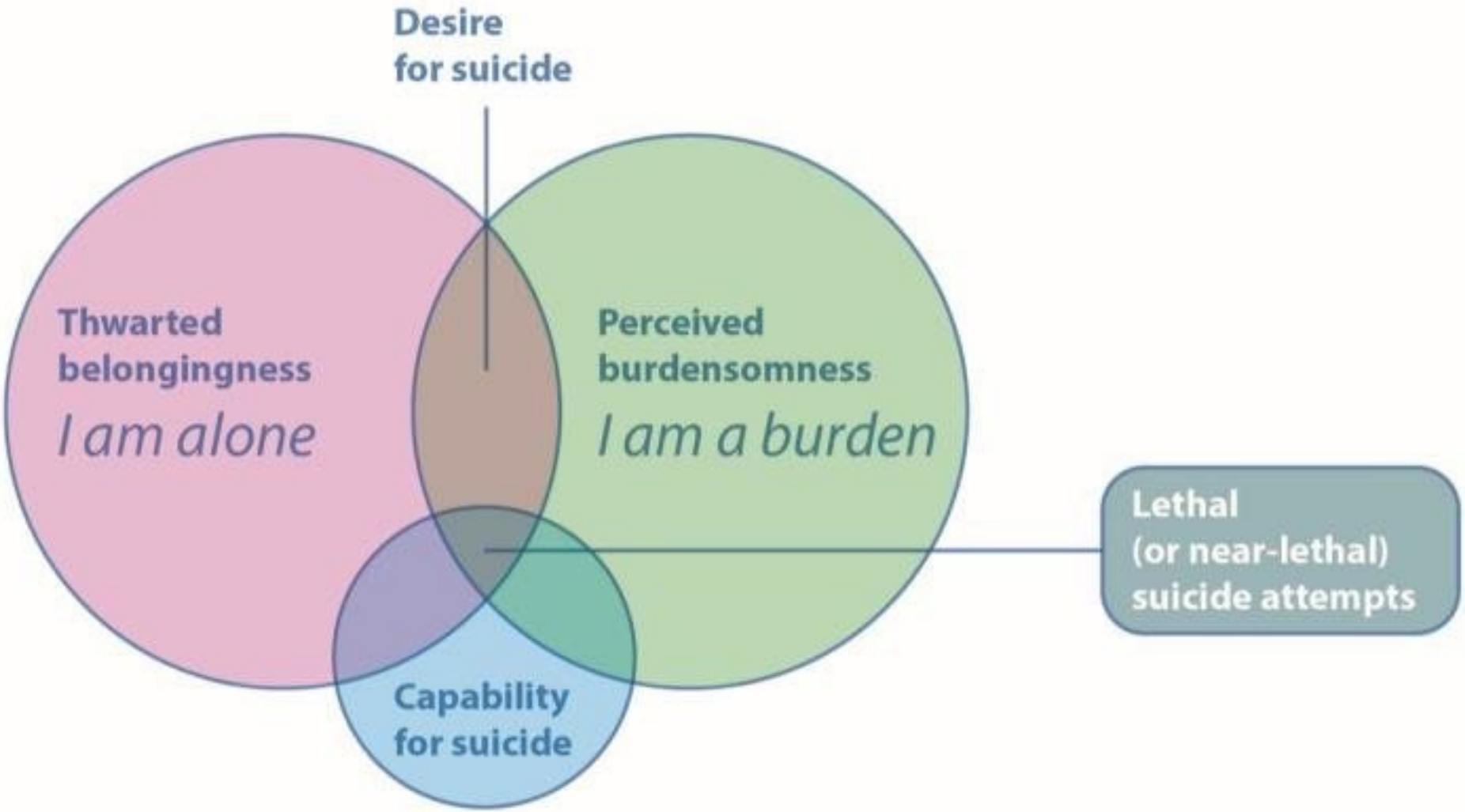
Idle	Ready	Reacting	Injured	Ill
- Lethargic - Unfocused, not thinking clearly - Unmotivated, apathetic - Bored - Slow, unproductive - Time goes slowly - Not contributing to the unit	- Good to go - Well-trained - Fit and focused - Cohesive units - Ready families - Personal & social life is good - Optimal performance	- Distressed or impaired - Decrease in function or performance - Mild & temporarily anxious, irritable or sad - Physical or behavioral changes - Trouble sleeping - Difficulty concentrating - Increase in alcohol related incidents	- More severe or persistent distress - Serious suicidal or homicidal thoughts - Experiencing panic attacks or rage - Disruption of moral values - May leave lasting memories, reactions, and impressions	- Experiencing orange zone symptoms for more than 60 Days - Stress injuries that don't heal without help - Symptoms persist, get worse Feeling depressed or anxious - Feeling suicidal and/or homicidal with a plan

USNA Mental Health Dashboard

- **Alcohol Related Incidents (ARIs)**
- **Conduct offenses**
- **Honor offenses**
- **Academic probation or physical readiness problems UNSAT (PE/Academic)**
- **Midshipman Development Center (MDC) utilization and mental health survey data**

Connect with them to protect them.

Connect: to protect



The “Love Potion”

“What if they resist?”

FRICTION VS FUEL

The Four Frictions (Nordgren, 2021)

Inertia
The powerful desire to stick with what we know, despite the limitations

Effort
The energy (real and perceived) needed to make change happen

Emotion
The unintended negative emotions created by the very change we seek

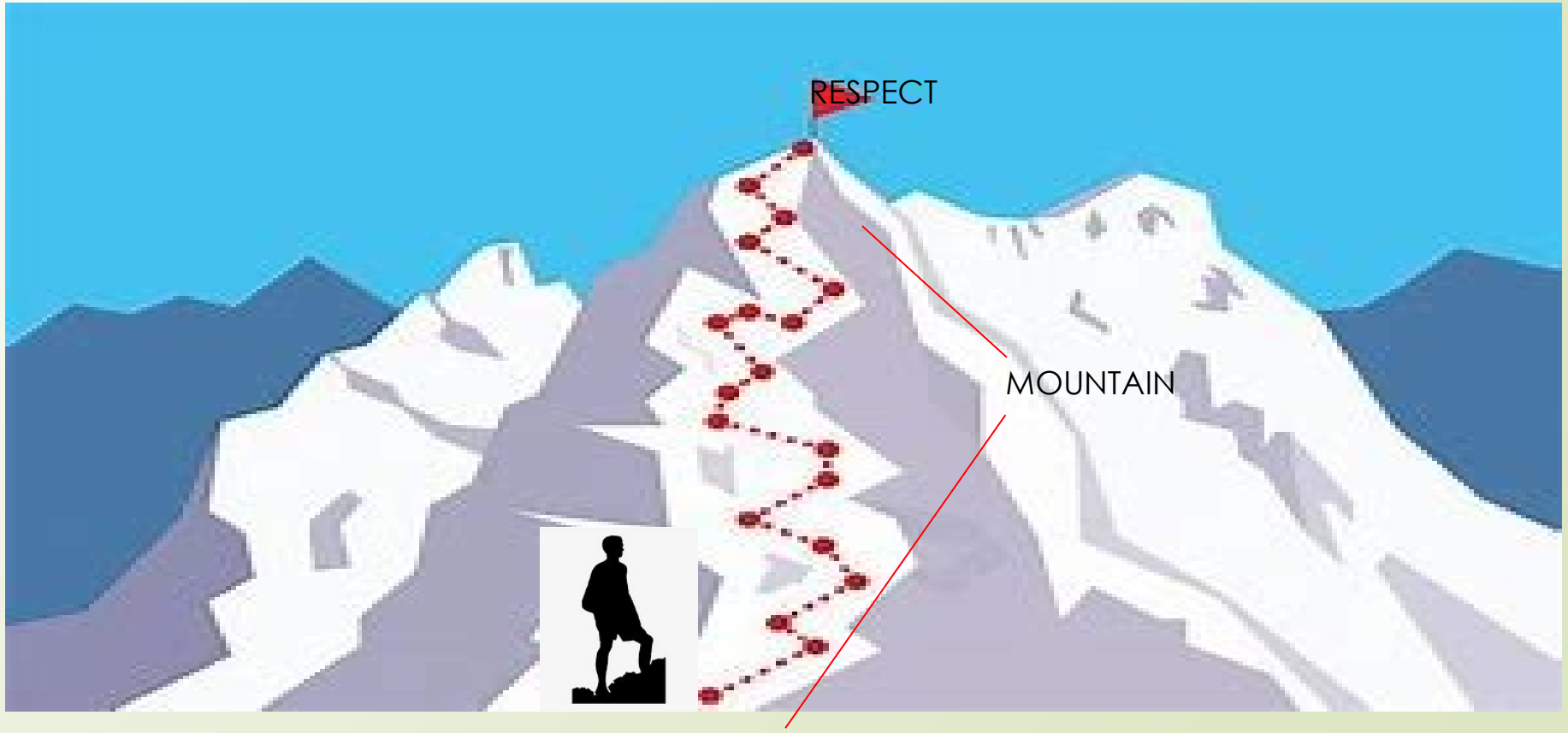
Reactance
The impulse to resist being changed

Quiet Quitting (Sinek, 2023)

- Millennials and Gen Z
- “Entitled, hard to manage and lazy”
- Want to be purposeful and impactful
- Missing pieces
    - Parenting (Failed strategies)
    - Tech
    - Impatience
    - Environment

Quiet Quitting (Sinek, 2023)

- Chasing the Dopamine Rush and avoiding the Cortisol flood

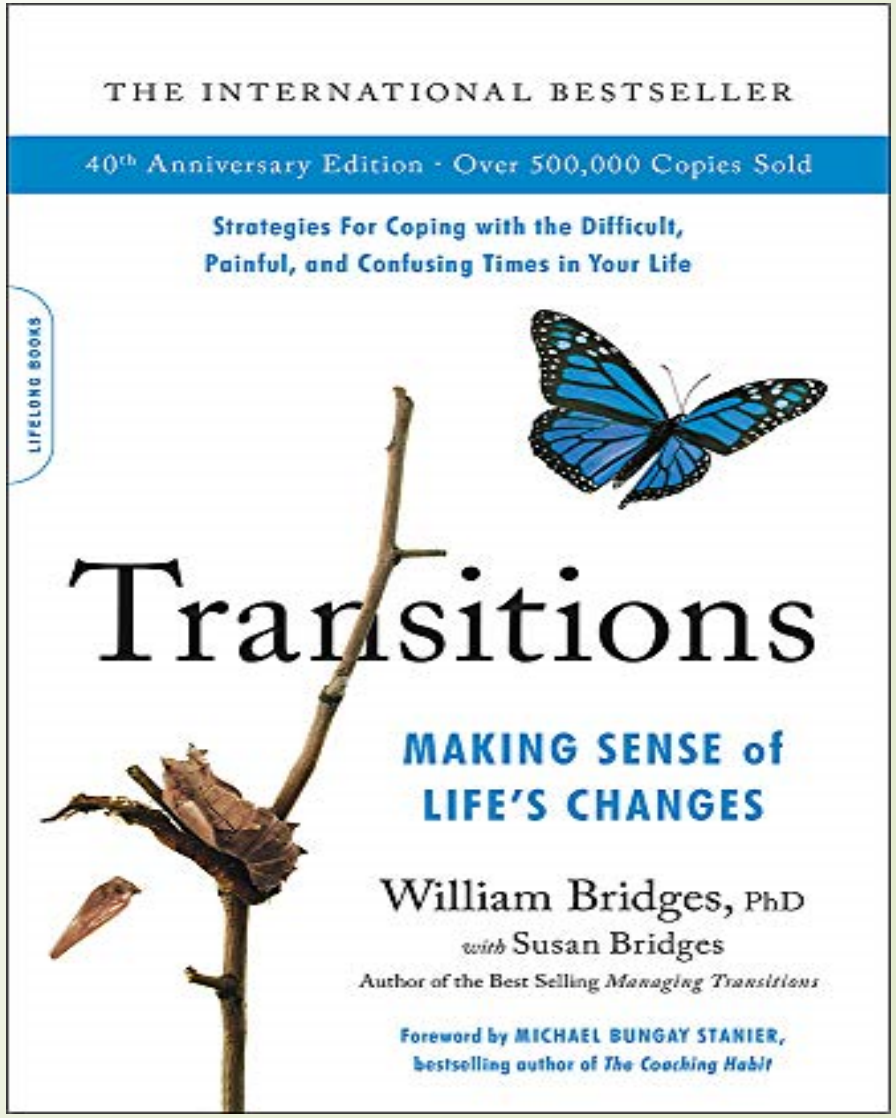


If this “adulting” get rough, here’s the keys to the Dopamine cabinet. Take all you need!”

What game are they playing? The tension of two opposing paradigms (Sinek, 2022)

The finite games

The infinite game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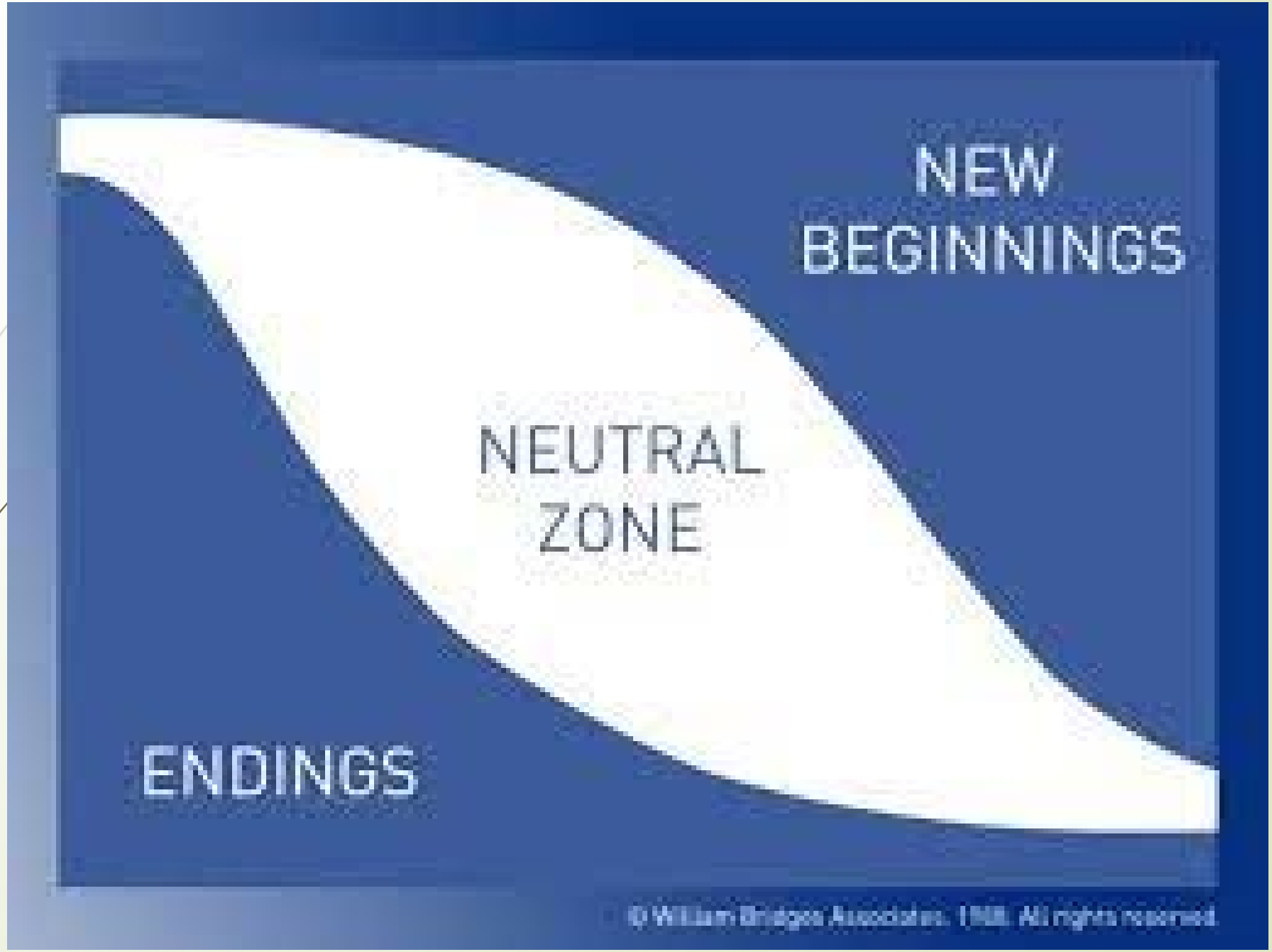
Foreword by MICHAEL BUNGAY STANIER, bestselling author of The Coaching Habit


NEW
BEGINNINGS
NEUTRAL
ZONE
ENDINGS
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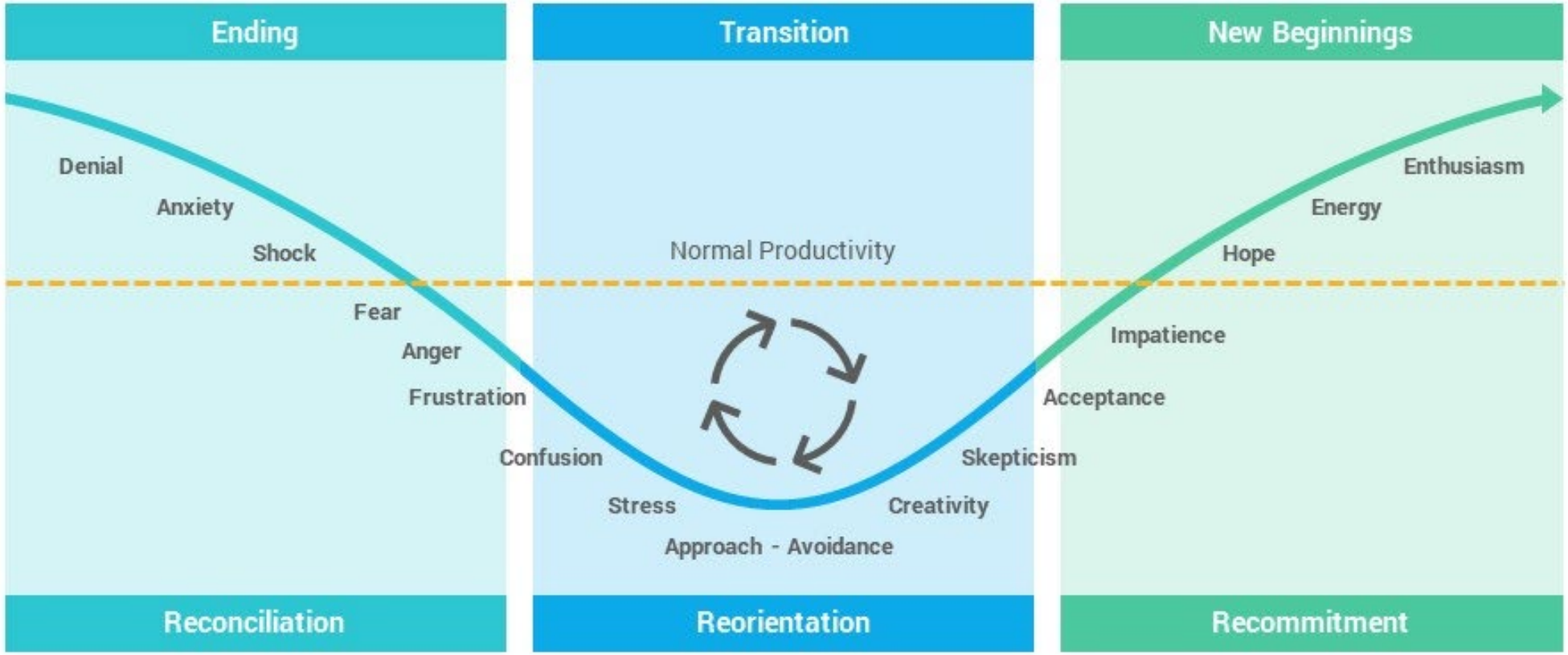
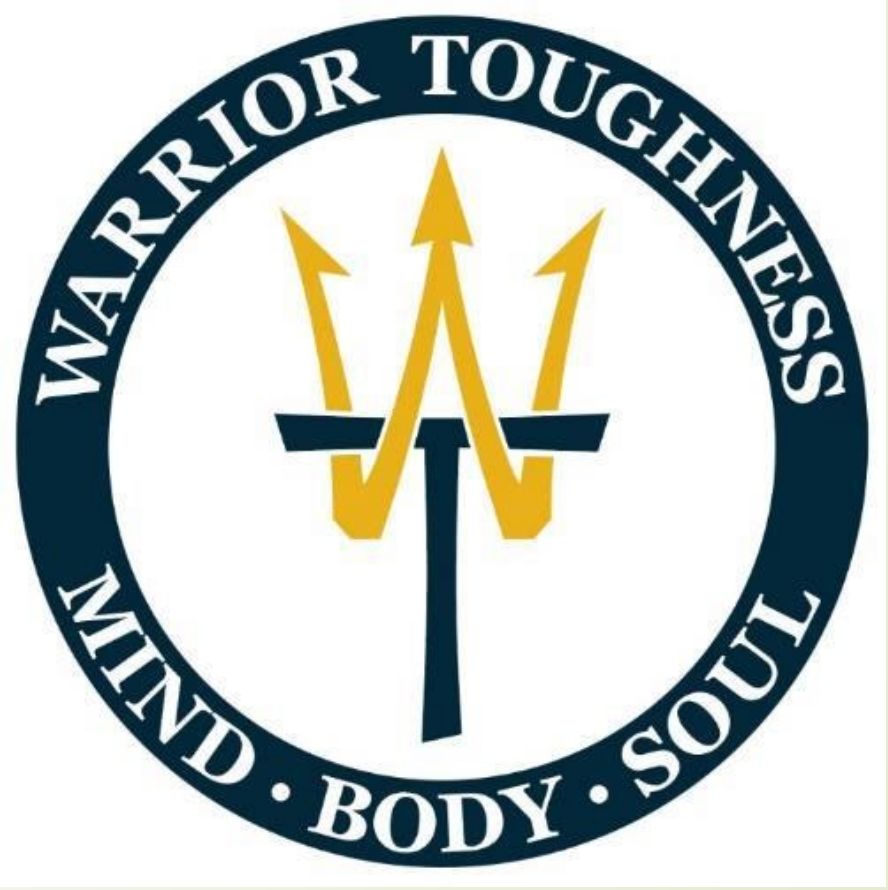
Bridges Transition Model

William Bridges Transition Model



4 PILLARS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

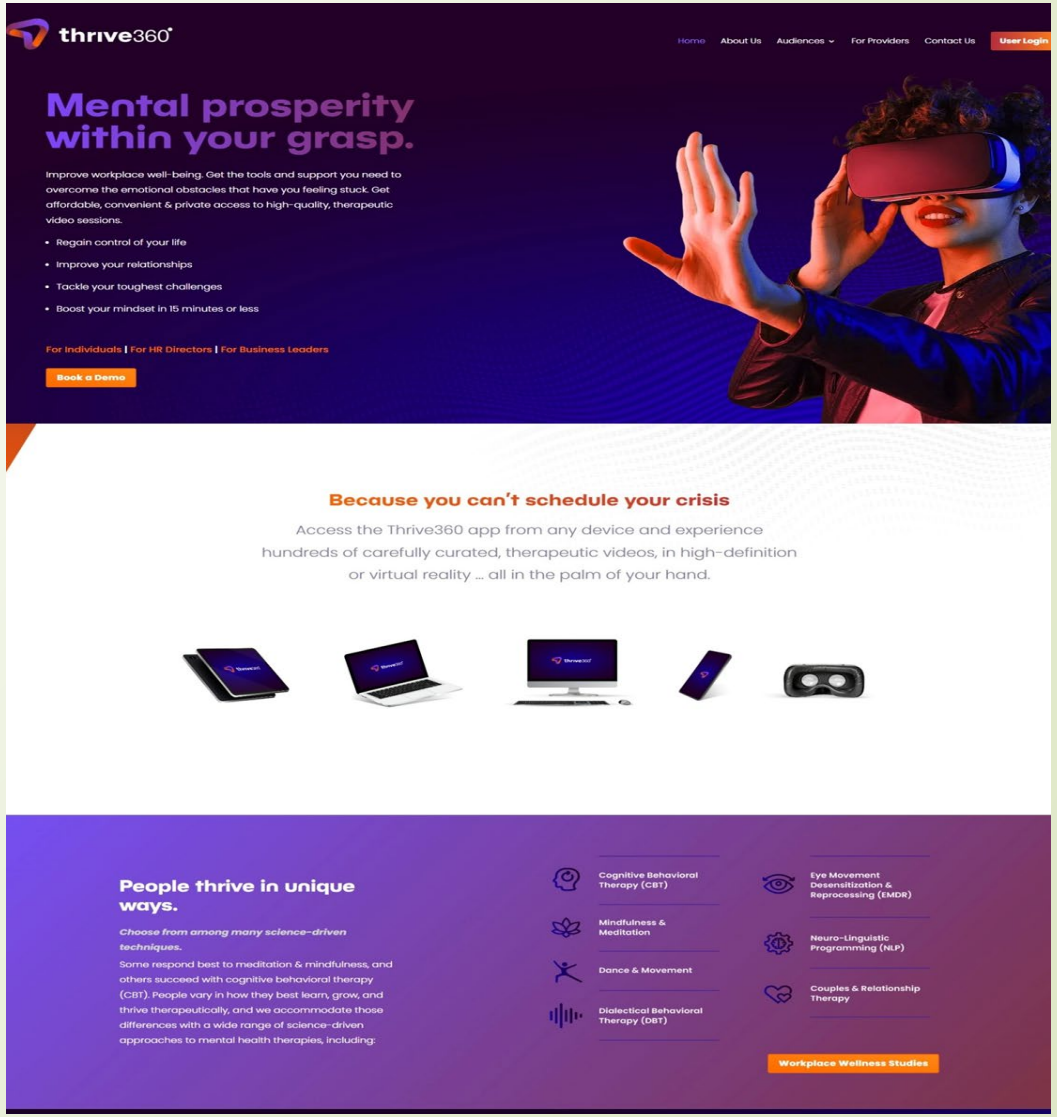
Direct them to the appropriate resources



USNA's Warrior Toughness

Toughness and Warrior Mindset

Navy's: Thrive 360



Reciprocity

"As a parent and a leader, I promise to treat your kid's professional and personal development; like I hope you are treating my kids professional and personal development."

In summary…

- As you return back to your students, know that their interactions in this new world of learning and work transformation can be emotionally challenging. There is a mental health crisis going on. You are on the front lines. Know what it looks like for your institution.
- Meaningful human relationships can help your students establish a sense of control when faced with emotional turbulence. Reach out to those in need. Be a first responder.
- Remember the adversity can be transformational, stress is not necessarily all bad, connect to protect, balance fuel with friction and remember the four pillars of emotional intelligence and how they can help us cope. Engage your students, and if you can't fully meet their needs, direct them to those who can.

Detect, Connect, Direct

Scenario: A student, Jim, doesn't turn in assignments or completes projects on time. Initially, he presented as motivated, articulate in class, and very conscientious. He has potential, but seems to be "blowing it all off." He's become moody, unfocused, disheveled and you think you smell alcohol on his breath.

You decide to meet with him. How do you and your institution deal with the Jim's of the world?

ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL

- Baker, A.C., Jensen, P.J., Kolb, D.A. (2005). Conversation as Experiential Learning. Management Learning, Vol. 36, No. 4, 411-427.
- Boyatzis, R.E., Smith, M.L., Blaize, N (2006). Developing Sustainable Leaders Through Coaching and Compassion. Academy of Management Learning and Education, Vol. 5, No. 1, 8-24.
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- Sinek, Simon. (2009). Start With Why. Penguin Books. London, England
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