

Live better with your stress at university

The ACT matrix as a practical tool

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While waiting, make sure you have a piece of paper and a pencil to take notes. You will need it during the workshop.



Workshop plan

- 1) Context
- 2) Discussion
- 3) Introduction to the ACT matrix
- 4) Questions or impressions
- 5) Resources

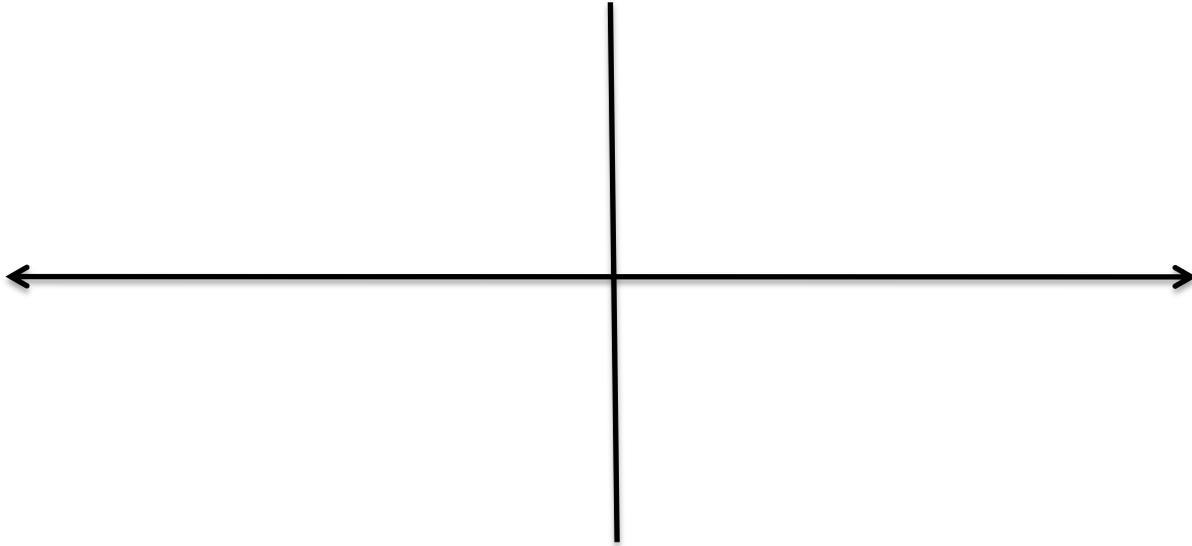
In context

Among 55,284 students from Canadian post-secondary institutions:

- 88.2% felt overwhelmed by all they had to do;
- 87.6% felt exhausted (not from physical activity);
- 69.6% felt isolated;
- 68.9% experienced overwhelming anxiety

...within the last 12 months (ACHA-National College Health Assessment, 2019).

Discussion



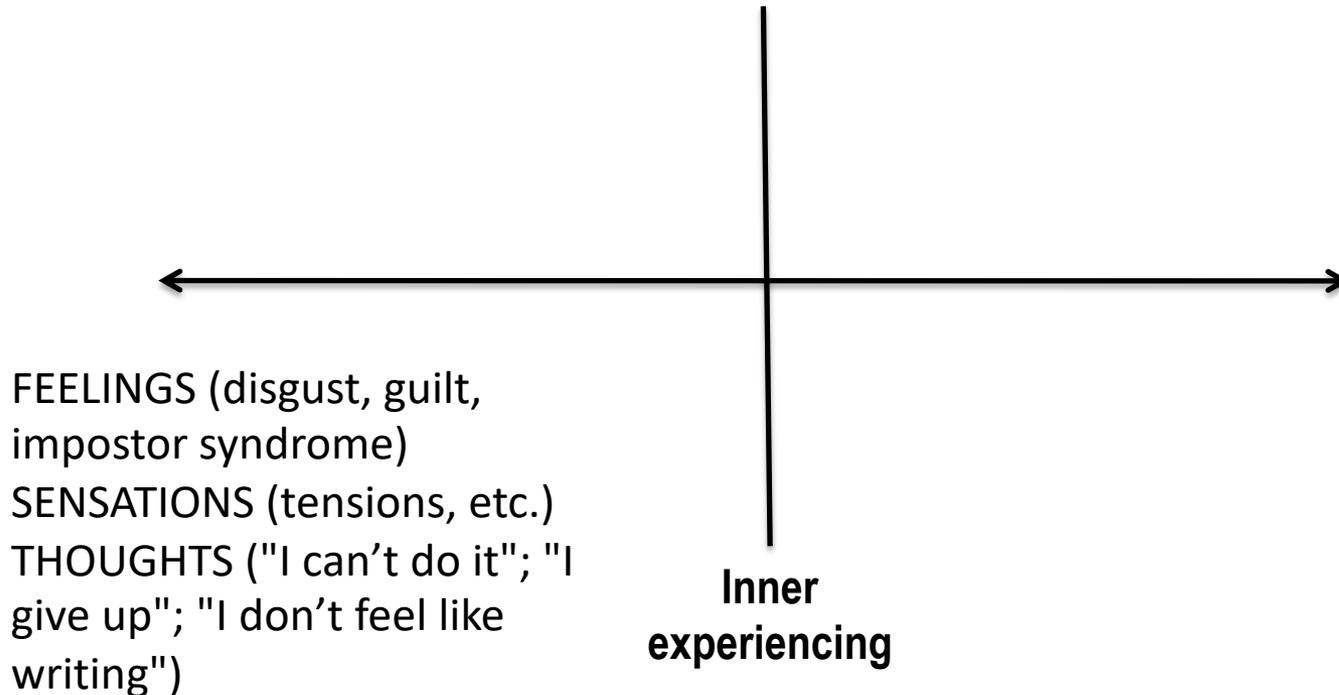
Discussion

1. What are your symptoms of stress?

What are the sensations, thoughts, and feelings that show up when you are stressed or in a difficult situation?

Discussion

On your sheet, write down your unwanted inner stuff:



Discussion

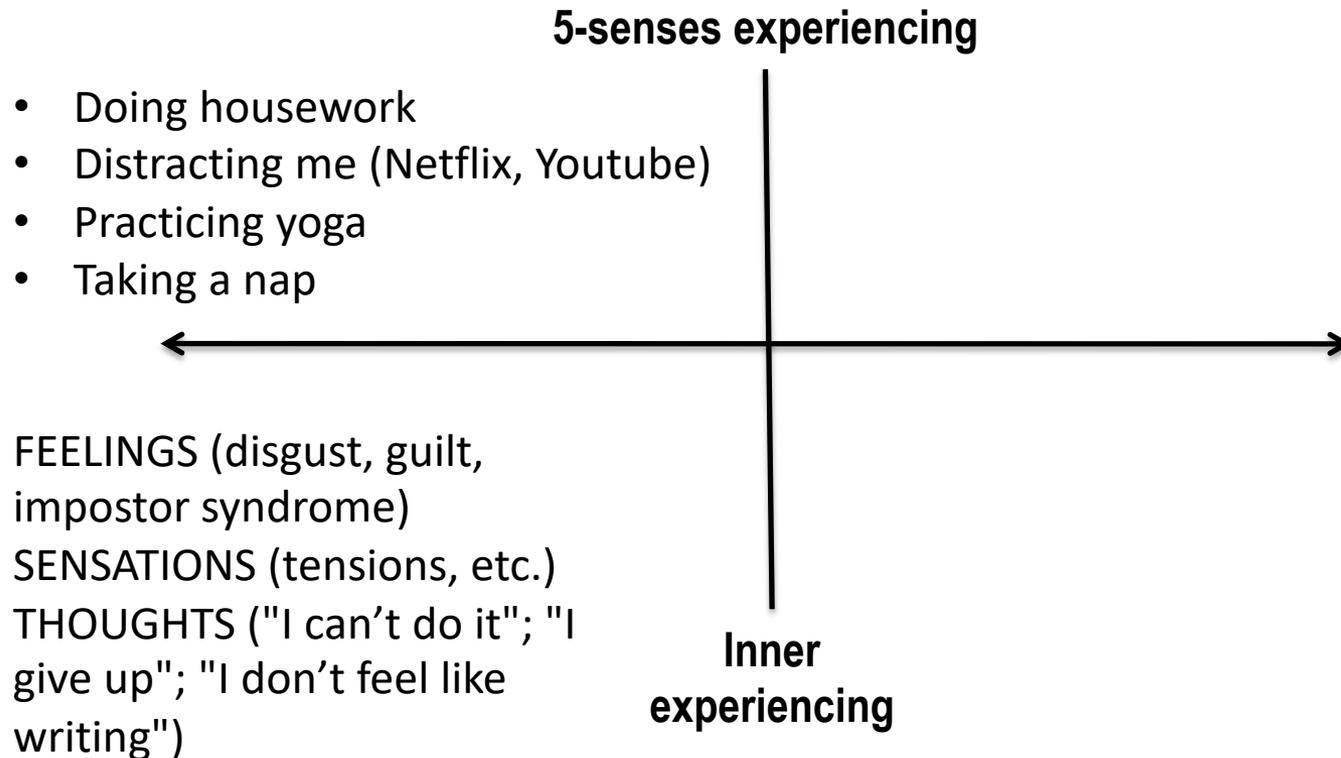
2. What are you doing to get out of this uncomfortable situation, to stop thinking about it?

What are you doing to move away from your unpleasant feelings and sensations as well as to reduce your stress?

What are you doing, in short, to feel better?

Discussion

On your sheet, write down your away behaviors:



Discussion

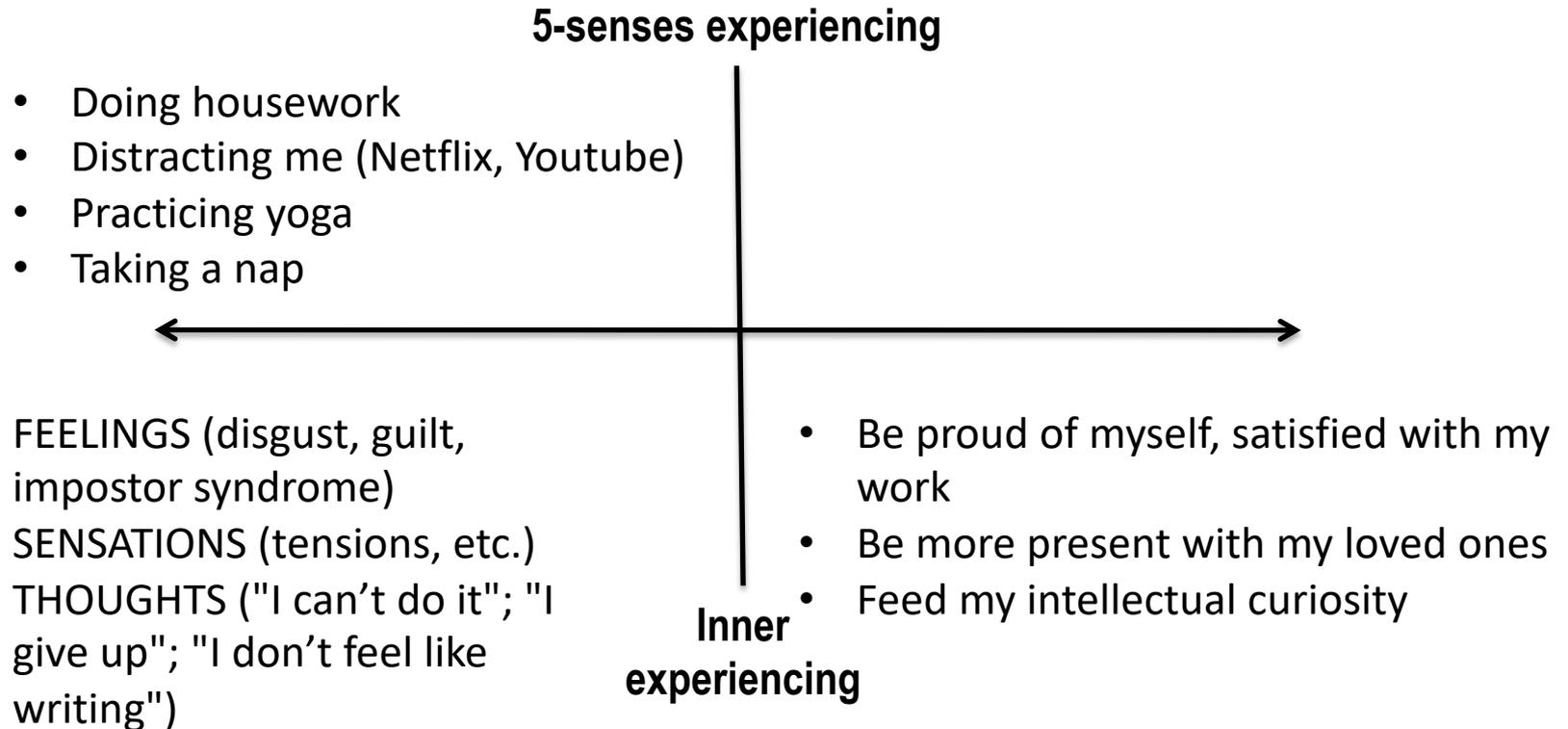
3. Who or what is important to you at this time in your life?

What are the people, causes, activities or values that matter to you?

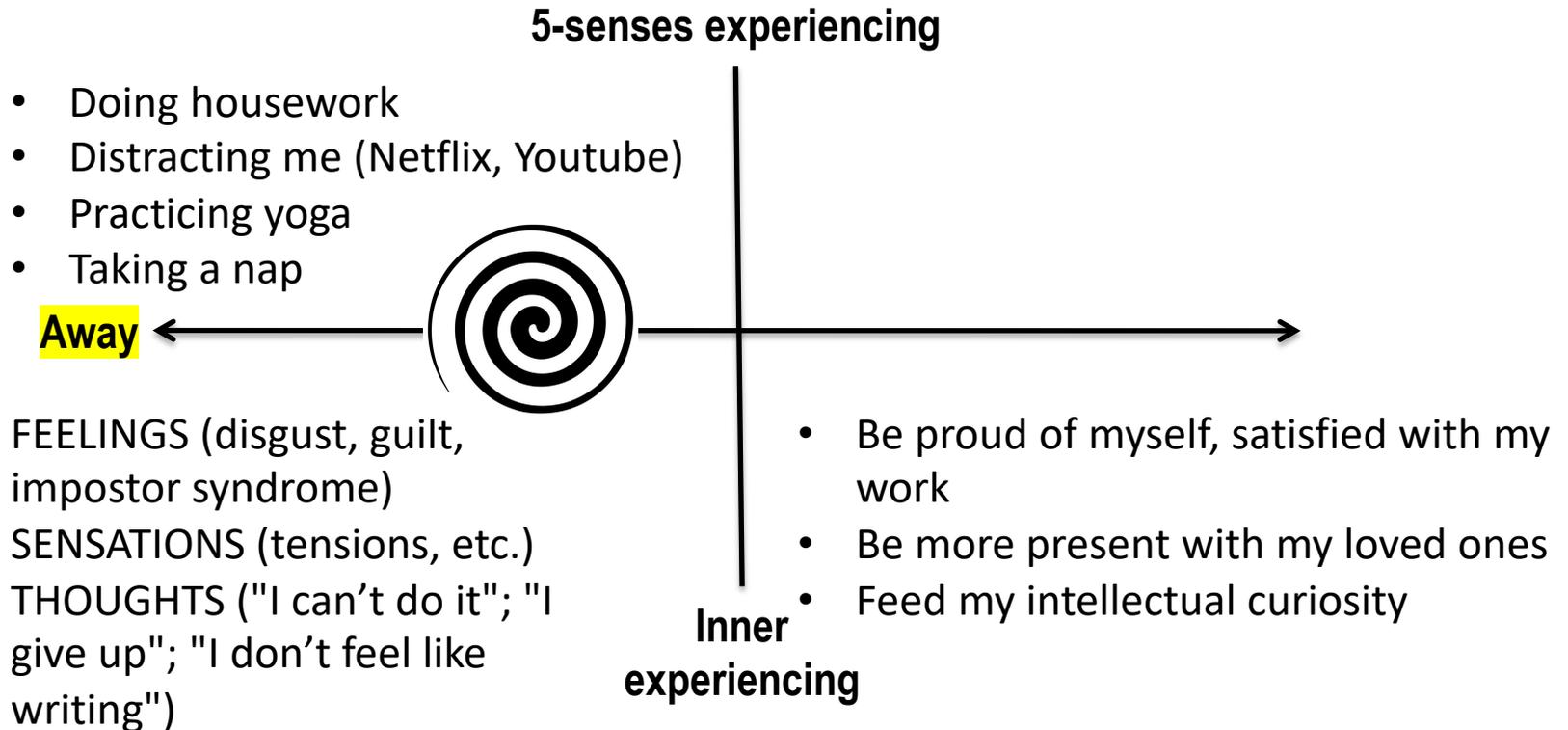
What areas of life do you think are essential for your fulfillment?

Discussion

On your sheet, write down your values:



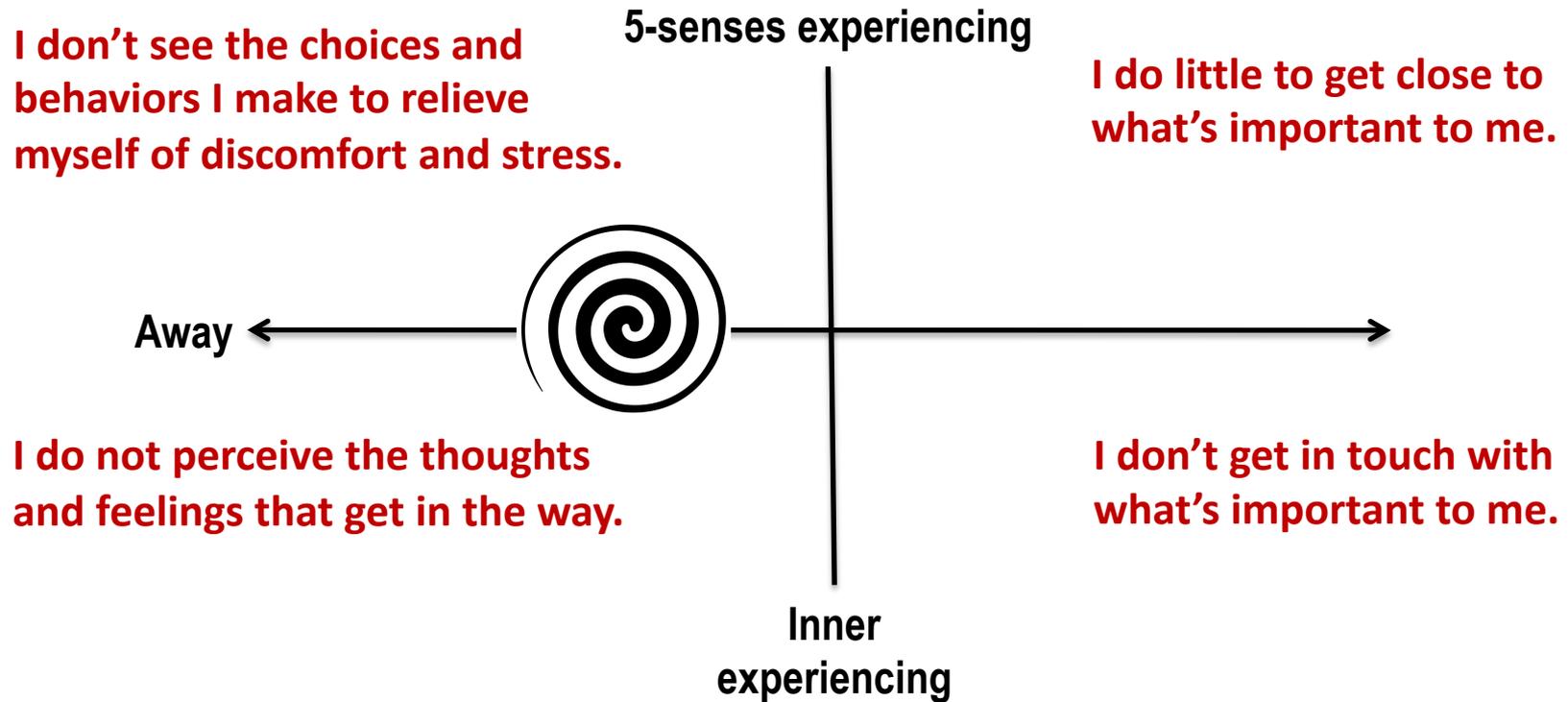
Discussion



Introduction to the ACT matrix

- What happens with our feelings, our thoughts when we use these strategies?
- Do these strategies work in the long term?
- Do you sometimes feel like you are in a vicious cycle (inertia)?

Introduction to the ACT matrix

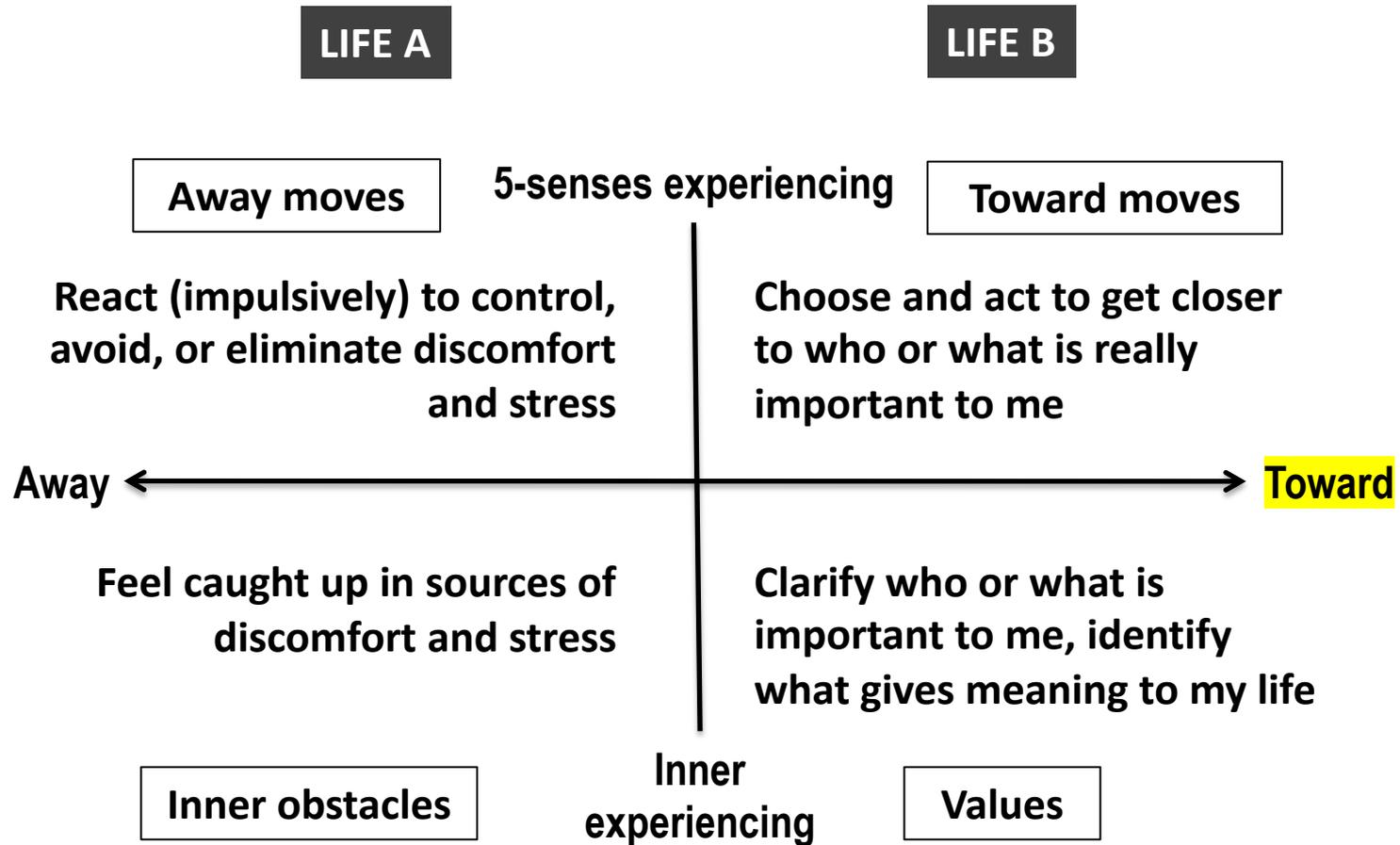


Introduction to the ACT matrix



Can I really
control, avoid, or
eliminate stress?

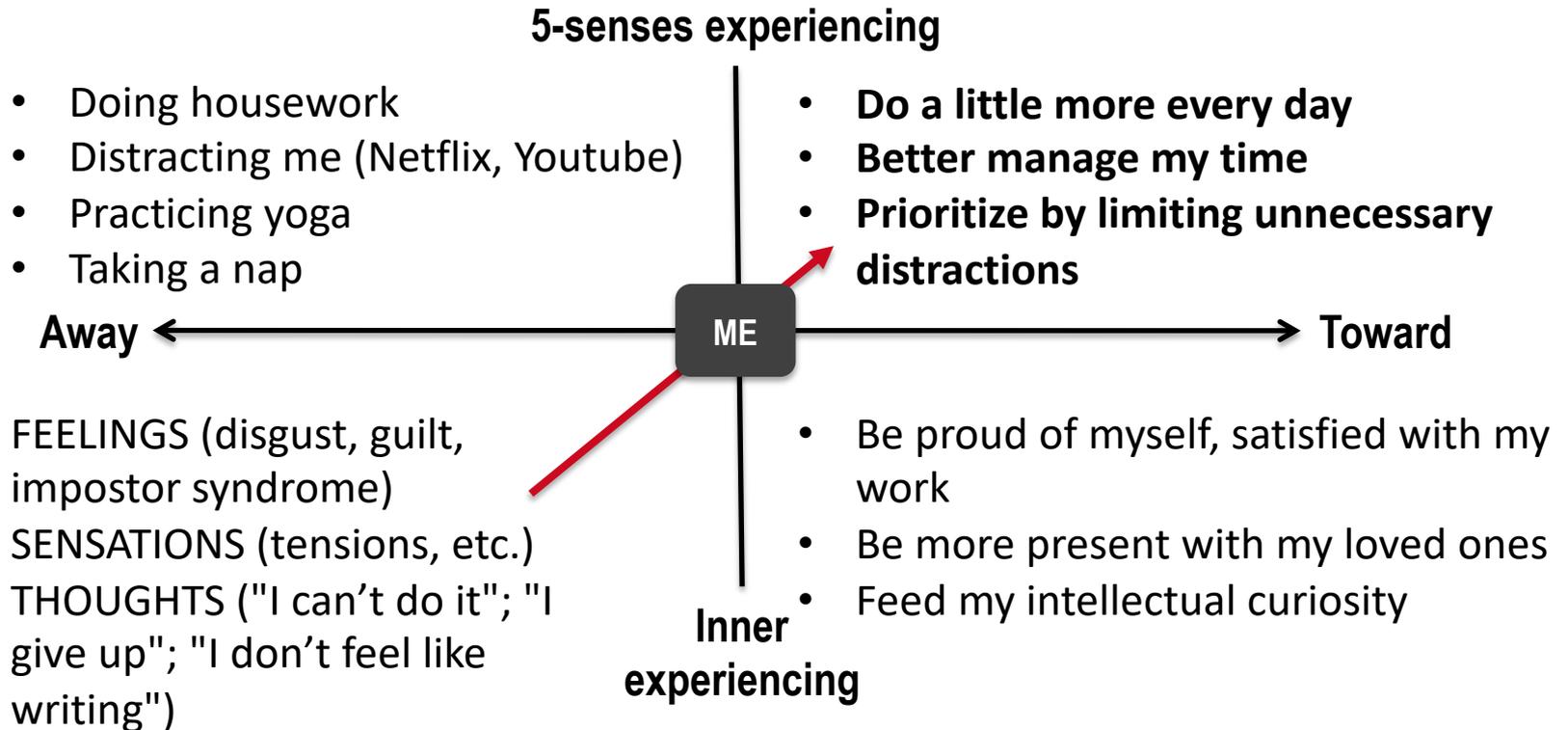
Introduction to the ACT matrix



Would you like to learn how to choose life B to approach who or what is important to you?

Introduction to the ACT matrix

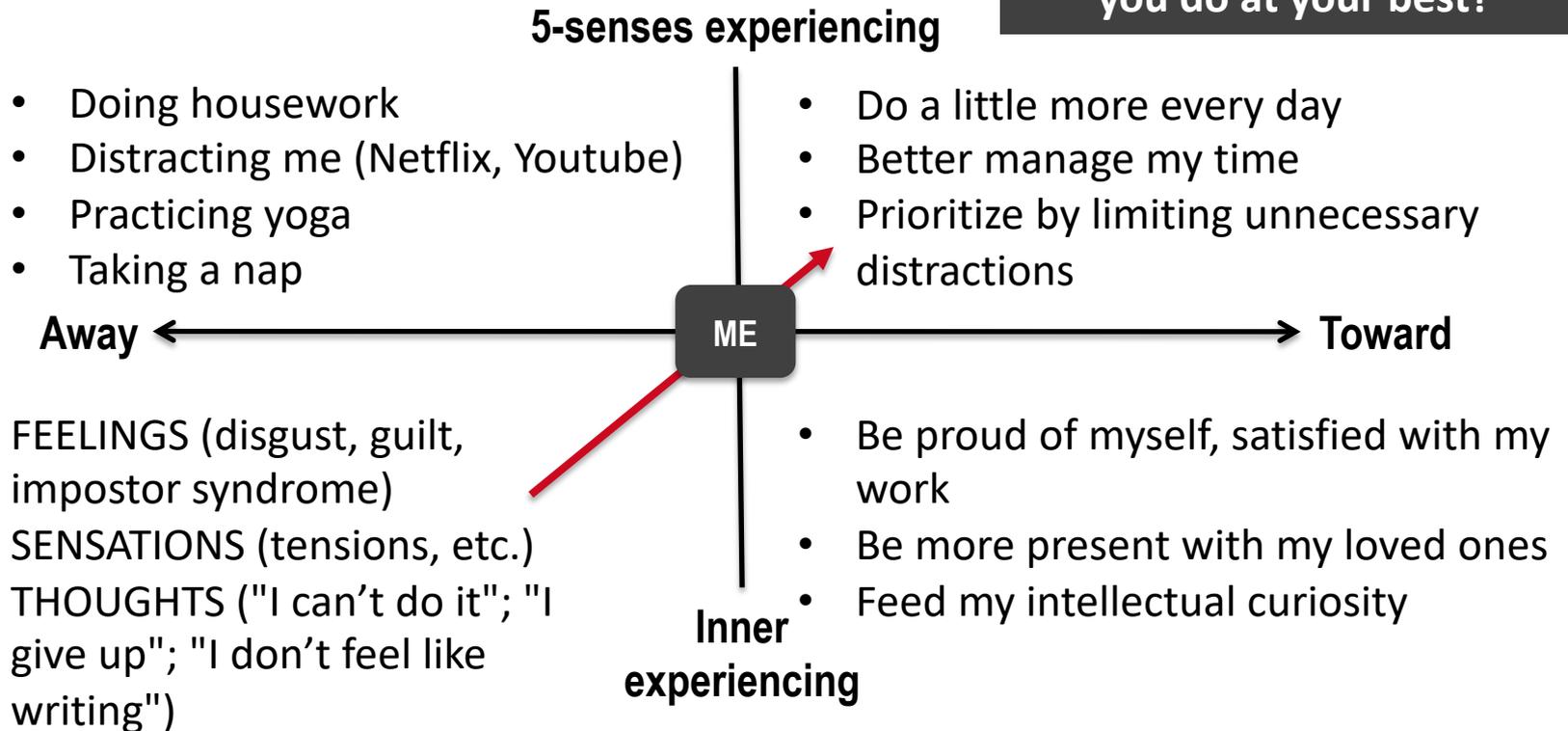
I choose to do this ...



... in the presence of that!

Introduction to the ACT matrix

What would the person you want to be do? What would you do at your best?



I choose to rely on who or what is important to me to guide my actions rather than my thoughts and feelings.

Introduction to the ACT matrix

Example of clarification of values:

What is important to me about studying? In other words, why am I studying?

I study because ...

Ideally, what type of student would I like to be?

Make a list of qualities:

– ...

– ...

– ...

Introduction to the ACT matrix

Formula for committed action:

I am ready to experience ...

(your inner obstacles : boredom, anxiety, etc.)

to ...

(your task to do)

for bringing my values to life as:

(your list of who or what is really important to you)

Introduction to the ACT matrix

- Two things that I am ready to do differently in my student life:

1) ...

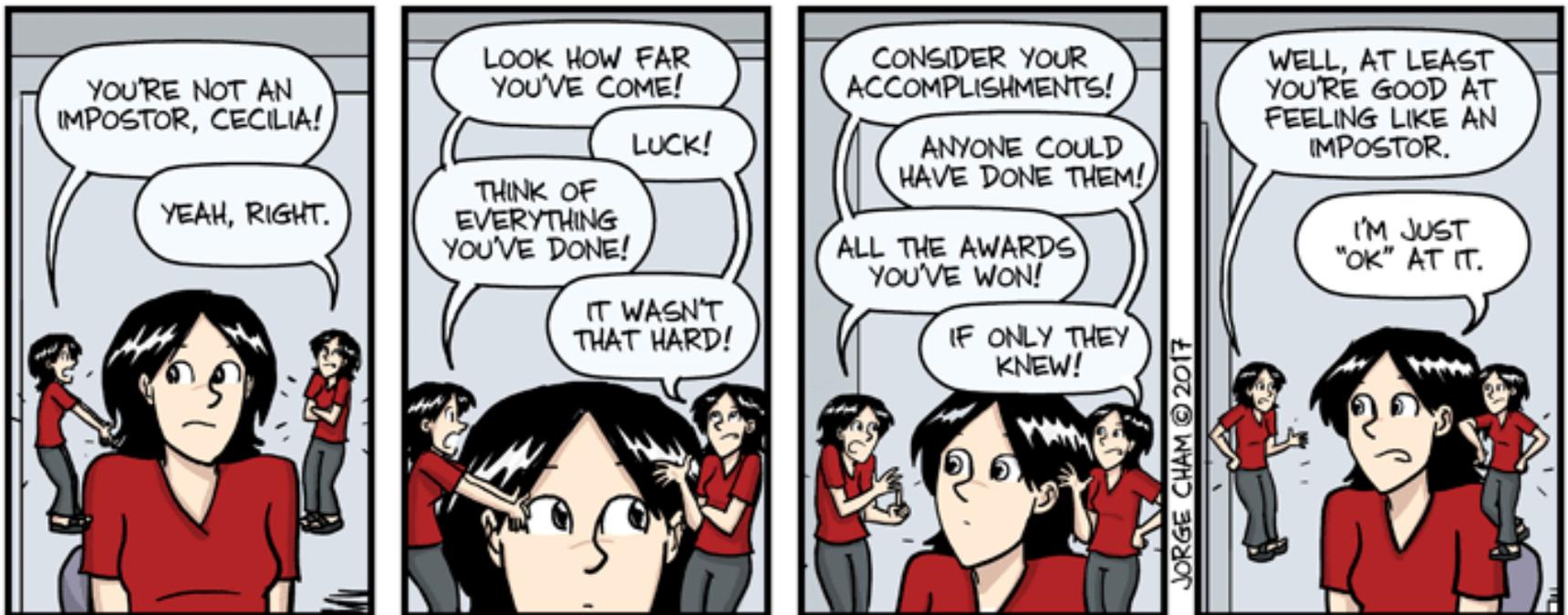
2) ...

- Two things I'm ready to do differently in my personal life:

1) ...

2) ...

Questions or impressions



Resources

- Frankl, V. (2013). *Découvrir un sens à sa vie. Avec la logothérapie* (C. J. Bacon et L. Drolet, trad.). Montréal, QC : Les Éditions de l'Homme.
- Harris, R. (2014). *Le piège du bonheur*. Édition illustrée. Montréal, QC : Les Éditions de l'Homme.
- Neff, K. D., Hseih, Y. et Dejitthirat, K. (2005). Self-compassion, achievement goals, and coping with academic failure. *Self and Identity*, 4, 263-287.
- Schoendorff, B. (2018). *Faire face à la souffrance avec la thérapie d'acceptation et d'engagement*. Paris, France : Éditions Retz.
- Segal, Z. (2016). The three-minute breathing space practice. *Mindful*. Disponible en ligne sur le site : <https://www.mindful.org/the-three-minute-breathing-space-practice/>