

**FAILURE IS SUCCESS IN PROGRESS**

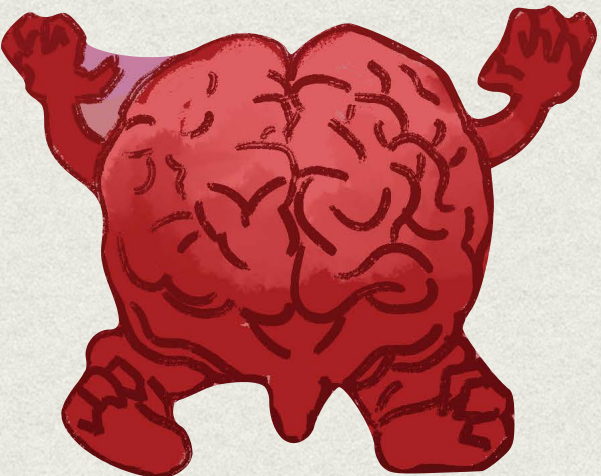
*A. Einstein*

# LIFE FAVORS THE COURAGEOUS

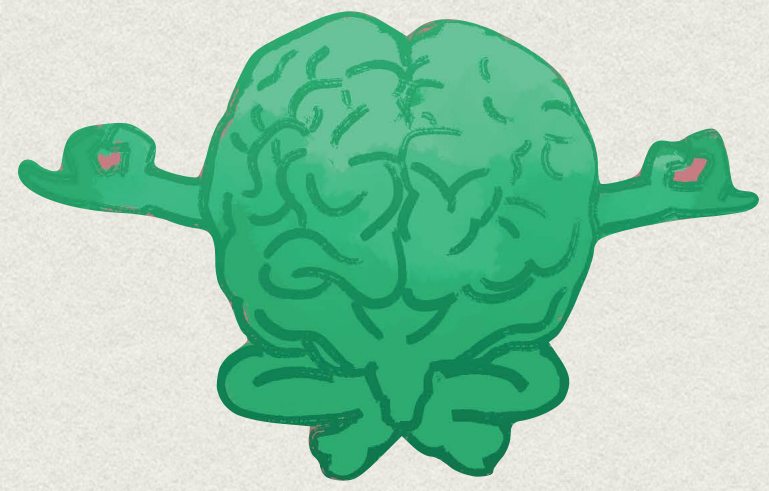
- The only real failure is failure to thrive (or become a better version of yourself over time)
- That requires courage
- Courage is commitment to step out of your comfort zone and overcome irrational/exaggerated fears

# THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO REMEMBER WHAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS

THREAT



SOOTHE



Courage to Fail

Competence/Confidence

Fear/Avoidance

# THE HERO'S JOURNEY

- Fear is the only thing that gets smaller the closer you get to it
- Overcoming your irrational fear allows you to trust yourself
- Trusting yourself is the building block of confidence to approach your fears and build competence over time
- The Hero's journey is about making the unknown known (and NOT the uncertain certain)

# HOW THE BRAIN ORGANIZES REALITY

Life is a Rorschach test. We interpret reality through the prism of two brain systems:

- **System I: Thinking Fast**

- Largely effortless
- Mostly Unconscious
- Operates under “Seek Pleasure, Avoid Pain” principle
- Emotions, intuition, “gut feeling”
- Prone to emotional biases



- **System II: Thinking Slow**

- Meaning-making part of the brain
- “Lazy Brain”
- Operates under “Pattern Recognition, Confirmation Bias” principle
- Rational cognitive processing
- Prone to cognitive biases

# DUAL PROCESSING IN THE BRAIN

- Top-Down (voluntary control)
  - System II is controlling System I
  - The idea of Learned Helplessness
  - Cognitive therapies are effective
- Bottom-Up
  - System I is controlling System II
  - Our feelings can control the way we think
  - Self-compassion / gratitude practices help

# COMMON ERRORS IN THINKING

- The Three Ps

- Permanence


- The belief that things are stable. Future is more of the past.  
*If I'm sad now, I'll always be sad.*

- Pervasiveness

- The belief that the event will affect all areas of your life. *If I fail a test, I'll be a failure.*

- Personalization

- The belief that you are at fault in events where you have no agency. *If I fail a test, there's something wrong with me.*

Stable  Unstable

Global  Specific

Internal  External

# THE EVOLUTION OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FEELINGS

I think, therefore I am.

René Descartes, 1637

I feel, therefore I think.

Contemporary Neuroscience/“Descartes’ Error”

I think, therefore I fear.

“The curse of the overeducated Westerner”



# STRIKING THE BALANCE BETWEEN THINKING AND FEELING

- The unexamined life is not worth living

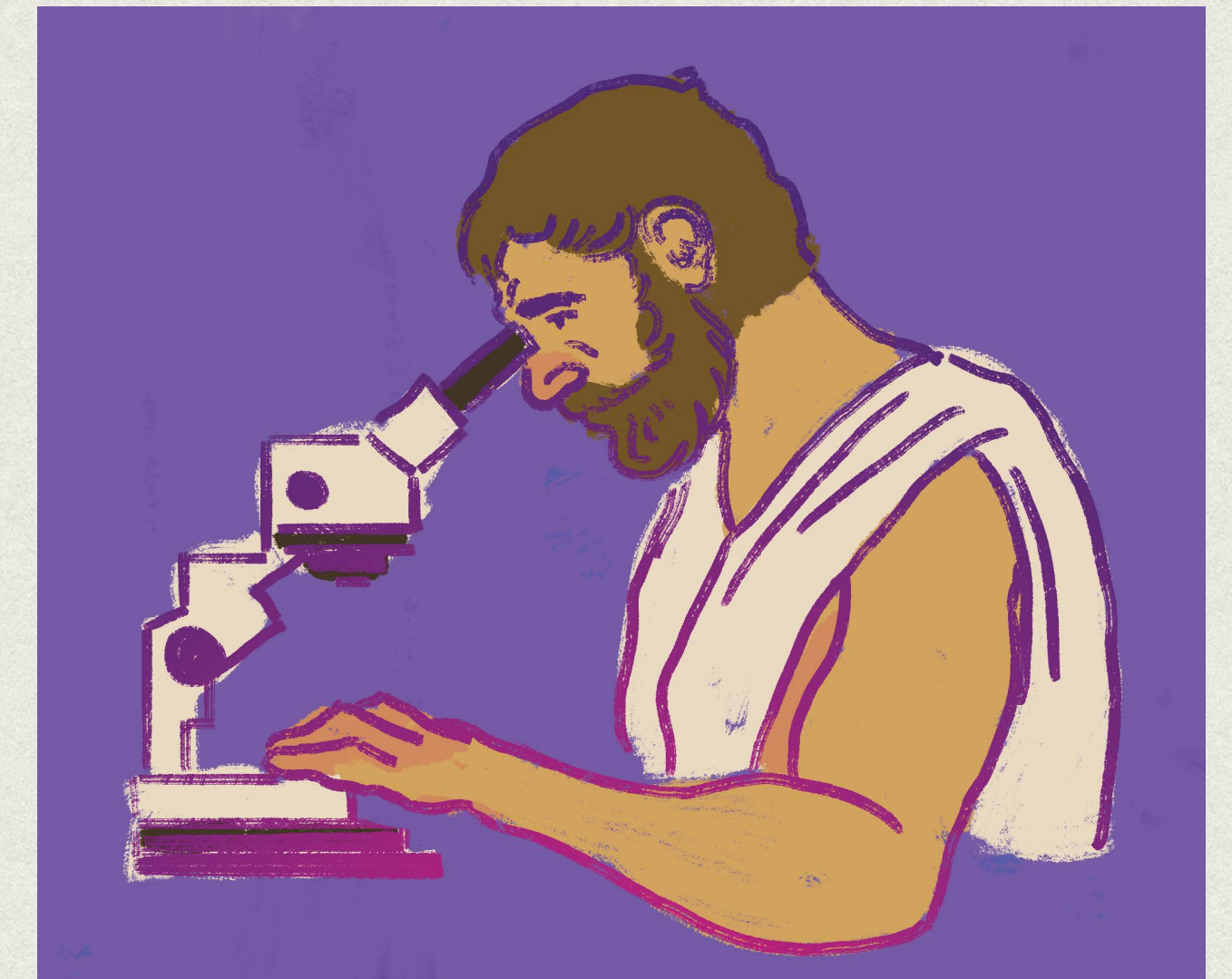
Socrates

- The over-examined life is not worth living

Common wisdom

- The unlived life is not worth examining

Empirical observation



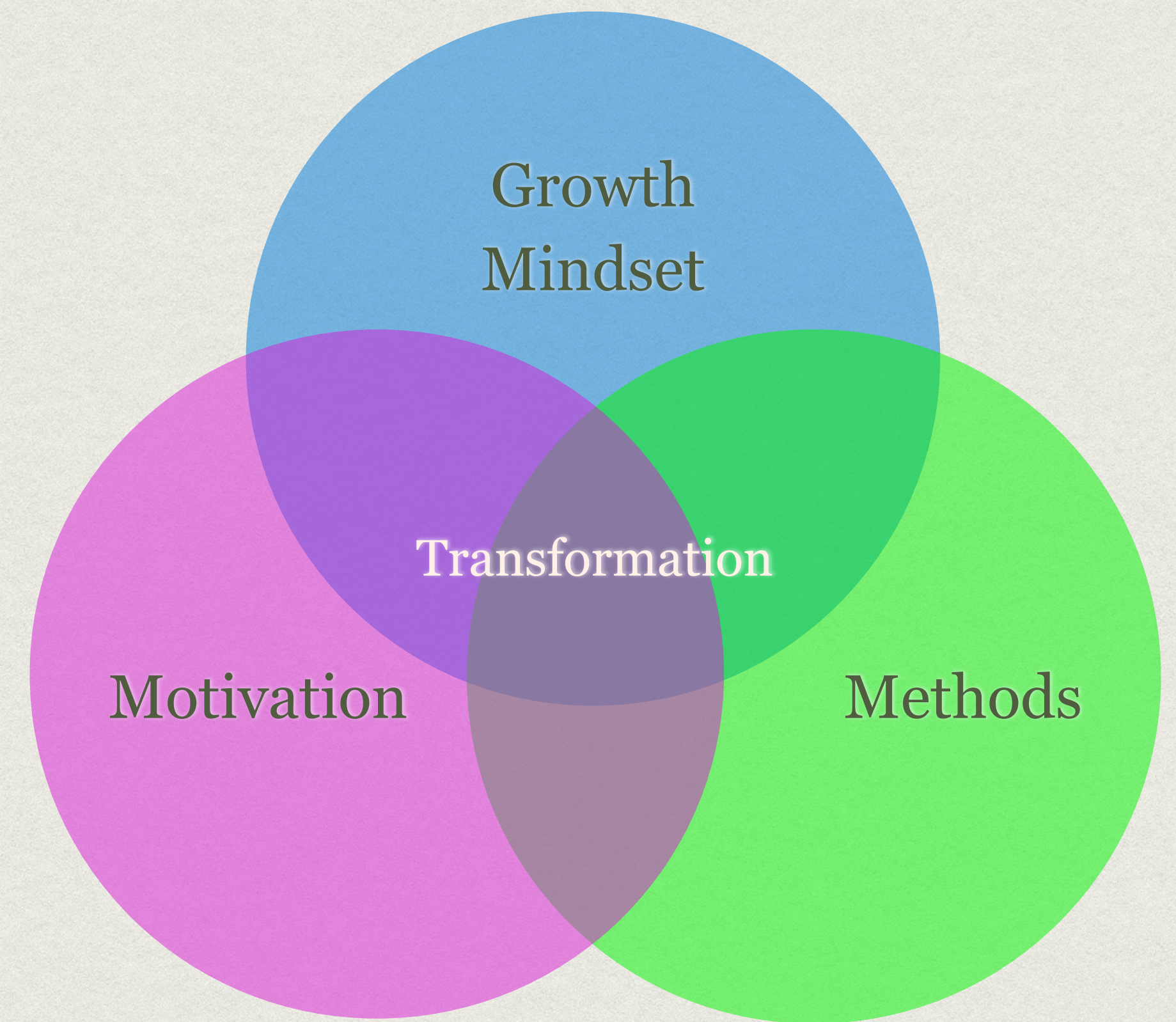
Creating the whole-brain state, when System I and System II communicate effectively, allows us to create the life we want

# CREATING THE WHOLE-BRAIN STATE IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE

- Our ancient brain is a danger-detecting machine. When there is no danger, we make it up due to the activation of the default-mode network (DMN).
- Mistakes in assessing what is safe create learned helplessness.
- “What-if thinking” leads to imagined dangers, creating the fear-avoidance cycle.
- Changing your thinking to be better at interpreting the “Rorschach of life” is teachable and learnable.
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy is an effective, evidence-based approach.

# LIFE IS A PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

- Creating the life you want requires you to work on your mindset, motivation, and develop and master effective methods for both mindset and motivation



# COMPASSIONATE CURIOSITY INVESTIGATION

## C++ Language

- Calmness
- Clarity
- Competence
- Confidence
- Courage
- Creativity
- Connection
- Cooperation

CURIOUS AND COURAGEOUS



# OUR SUPERPOWER AND KRYPTONITE ARE FLIP SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Mind Habits associated with competence (helpful)

- Responsibility
- Competence as a core value
- Resilience
- Ability to learn from experiences

Mind Habits associated with burnout (hurtful)

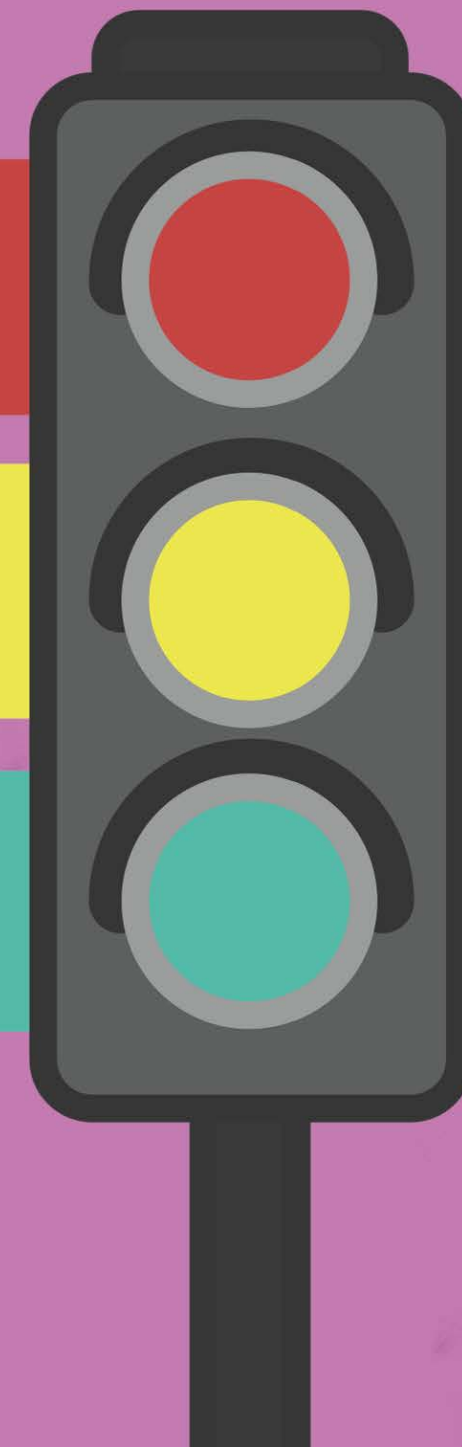
- Excessive sense of responsibility
- Perfectionism
- Shame or excessive guilt
- Rumination

- Context determines whether a mind habit is hurtful or helpful
- Our prefrontal cortex has to be “online” for us to choose wisely

# RECLAIMING YOUR PREFRONTAL CORTEX

- A Pause-and-Plan phase is a prerequisite for resilience
- Resilience is teachable and learnable, but we are not born with it
- Increasing the “window of tolerance” of discomfort is the key to resilience

## Stoplight Strategy



**Red = Fight, Flight, Freeze or Appease**

**Yellow = Pause and Plan (SMARTT)**

**Green = Rest and Digest**

# HOW EXACTLY DO WE FAIL WITH GRACE?

- **G:** Growth mindset
- **R:** Recognize the gift
- **A:** Accept
- **C:** Create a new idea
- **E:** Execute your plan



# MINDSET RESET

- **R: Reflect**
  - Find the “hot thought”
- **E: Examine**
  - Examine the “hot thought” through the lens of evidence
- **S: Summarize**
  - What prevails - evidence for or evidence against?
- **E: Entertain a new thought**
  - Find the helpful thought to get unstuck
- **T: Test**
  - Test this new thought by asking “How true this sounds?”





# PILLARS OF GRIT

- **G:** Growth mindset (mindset is everything)
- **R:** Resilience (bounce-back factor)
- **I:** Integrity (heart-brain alignment)
- **T:** Tenacity (don't give up too soon)



# MAKING POWERFUL CHOICES

- Life is the C between B and D
- B is Birth
- D is Death
- C are the Choices we make



# SMARTT QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to me?
2. What if I couldn't fail?
3. How do I do it?

OPEN, RECEPTIVE, AND AWARE

