

Coaching with Compassion: A Framework for Optimizing Parasympathetic Activation to Cultivate Sustainable Change

Tracy Asamoah, MD



Who believed in you and
inspired you?

OBJECTIVES

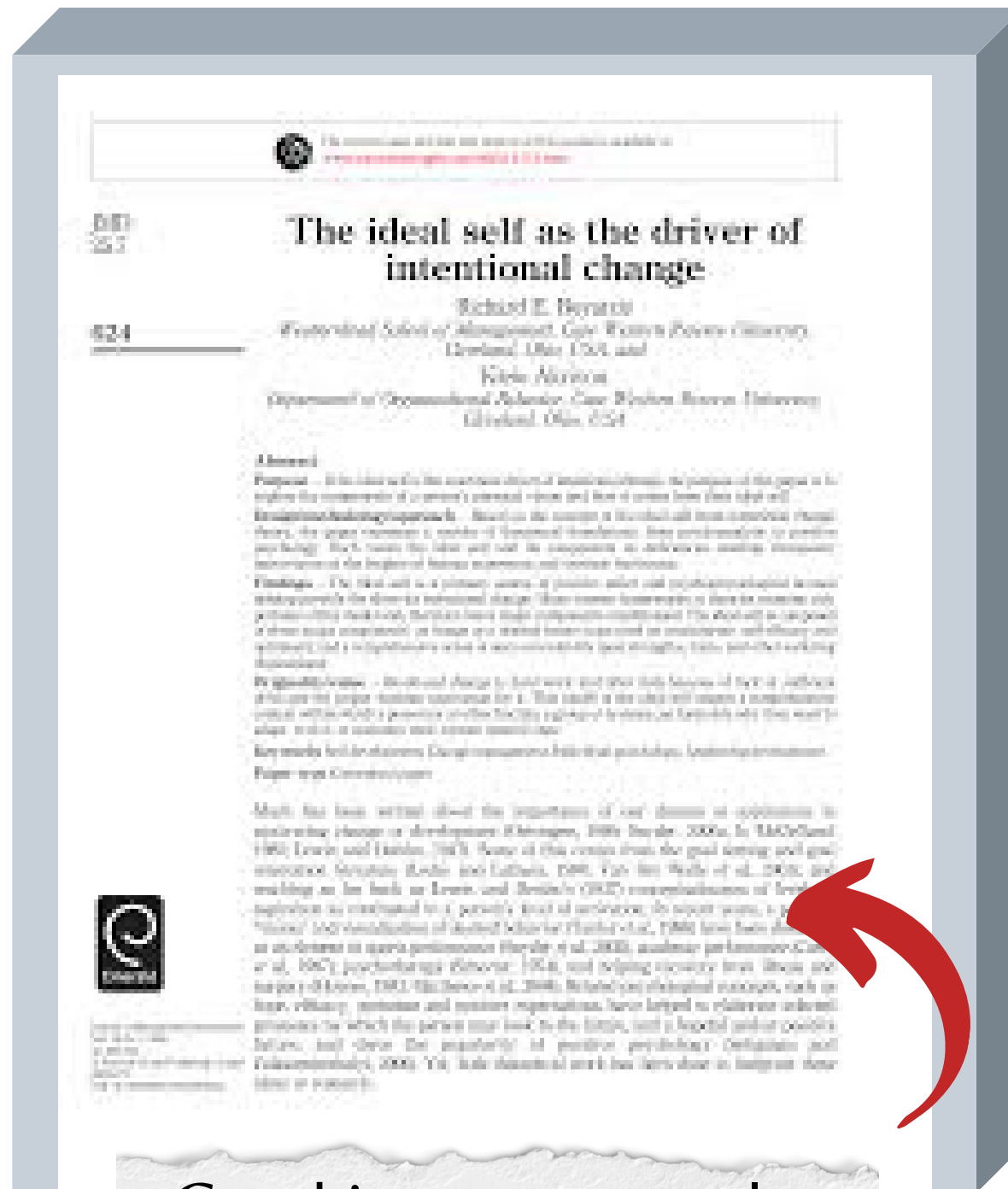
- Introduction of Intentional Change Theory Framework
- Role of the autonomic nervous system in change
- How coaching can be optimized by an understanding of neuroscience

Why See a Coach?

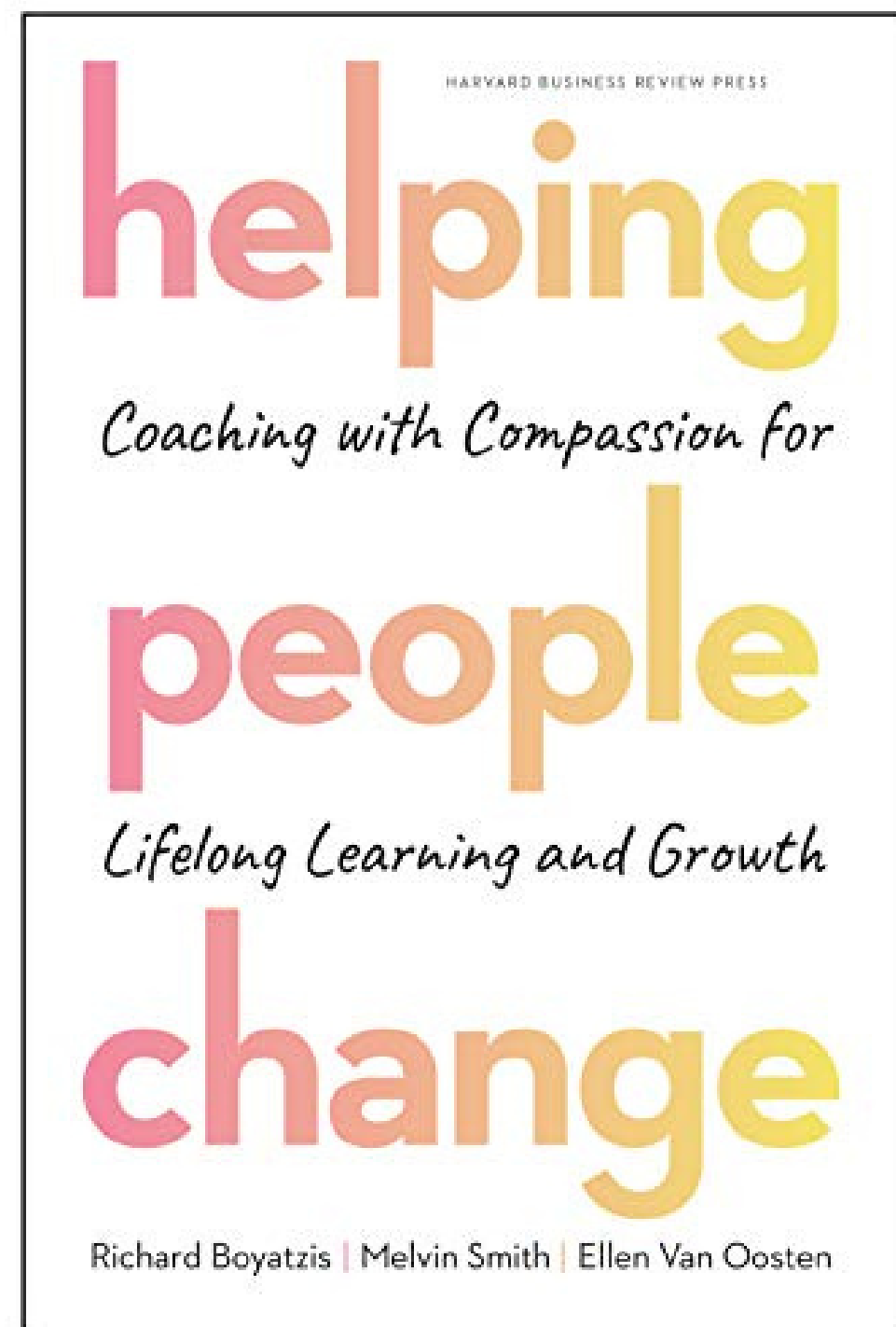
- Stress management/burnout
- Health/Wellness
- Career
- Leadership/executive development
- Change/transition
- Financial planning



Richard Boyatzis, PhD



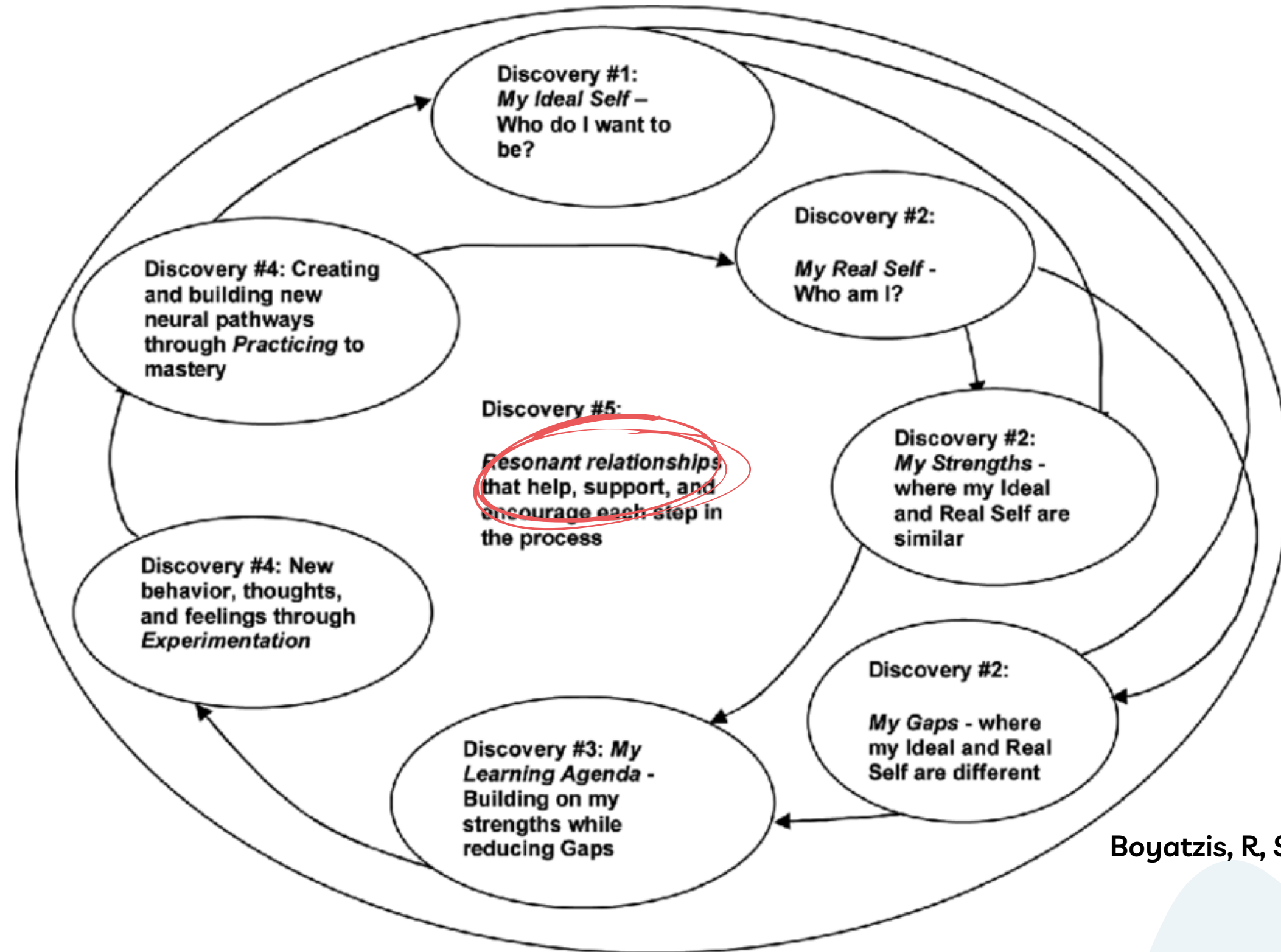
Coaching to personal vision leads to sustainability and desirable change.



Coaching with Compassion

"Coaching to help another person make progress on their intentional efforts towards sustained, desired change "

Intentional Change Theory



Boyatzis, R, Smith, M

Autonomic nervous system activation

Sympathetic nervous system

- **Flight, fight, freeze**
- **Gas**
- Norepinephrine/Cortisol
- Tenses muscle
- Increase BP
- Inhibits digestion
- Dilates pupils



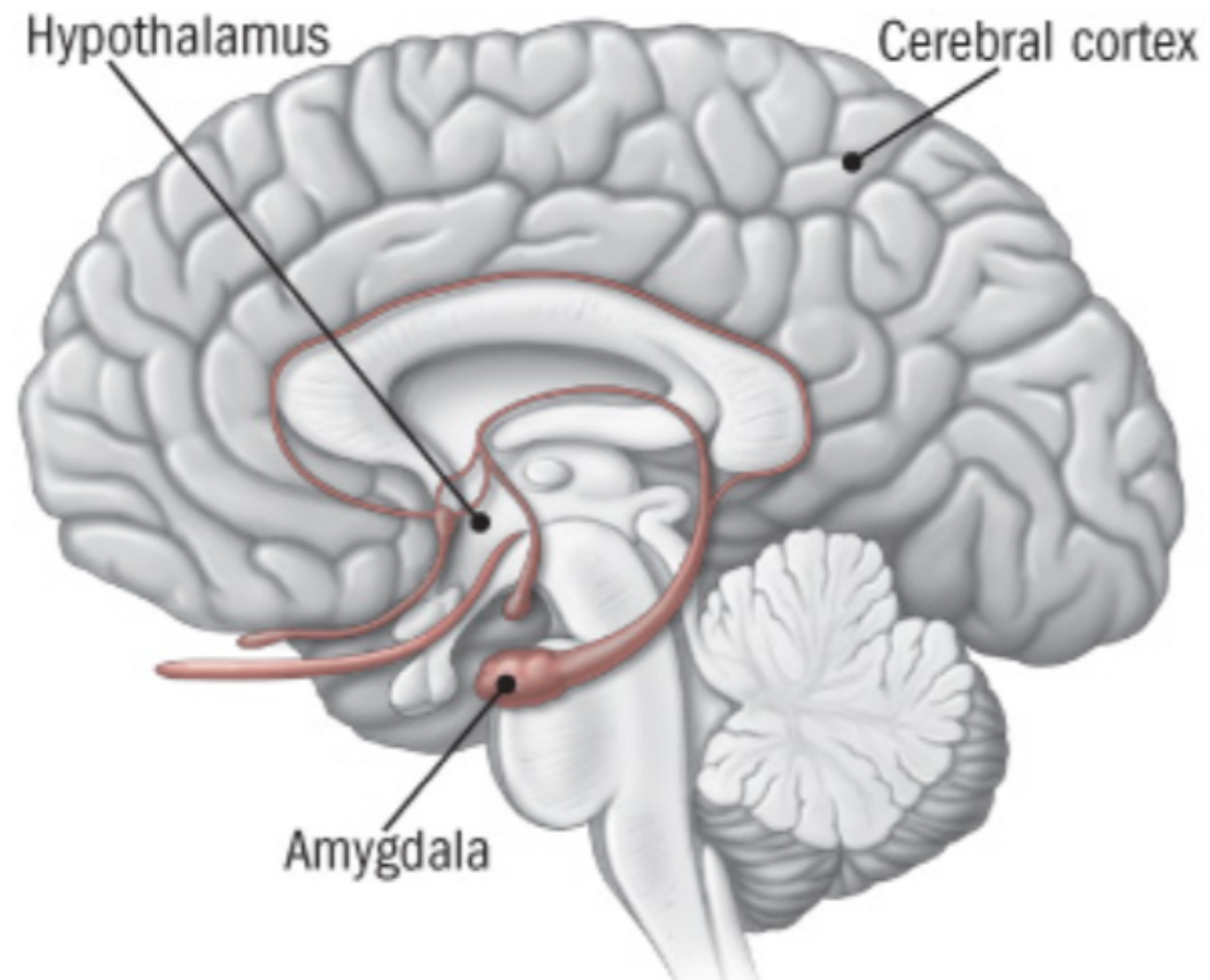
Parasympathetic nervous system

- **Rest and digest**
- **Brakes**
- Acetylcholine
- relaxes muscle
- decreases BP
- Stimulates digestion
- Constricts pupils

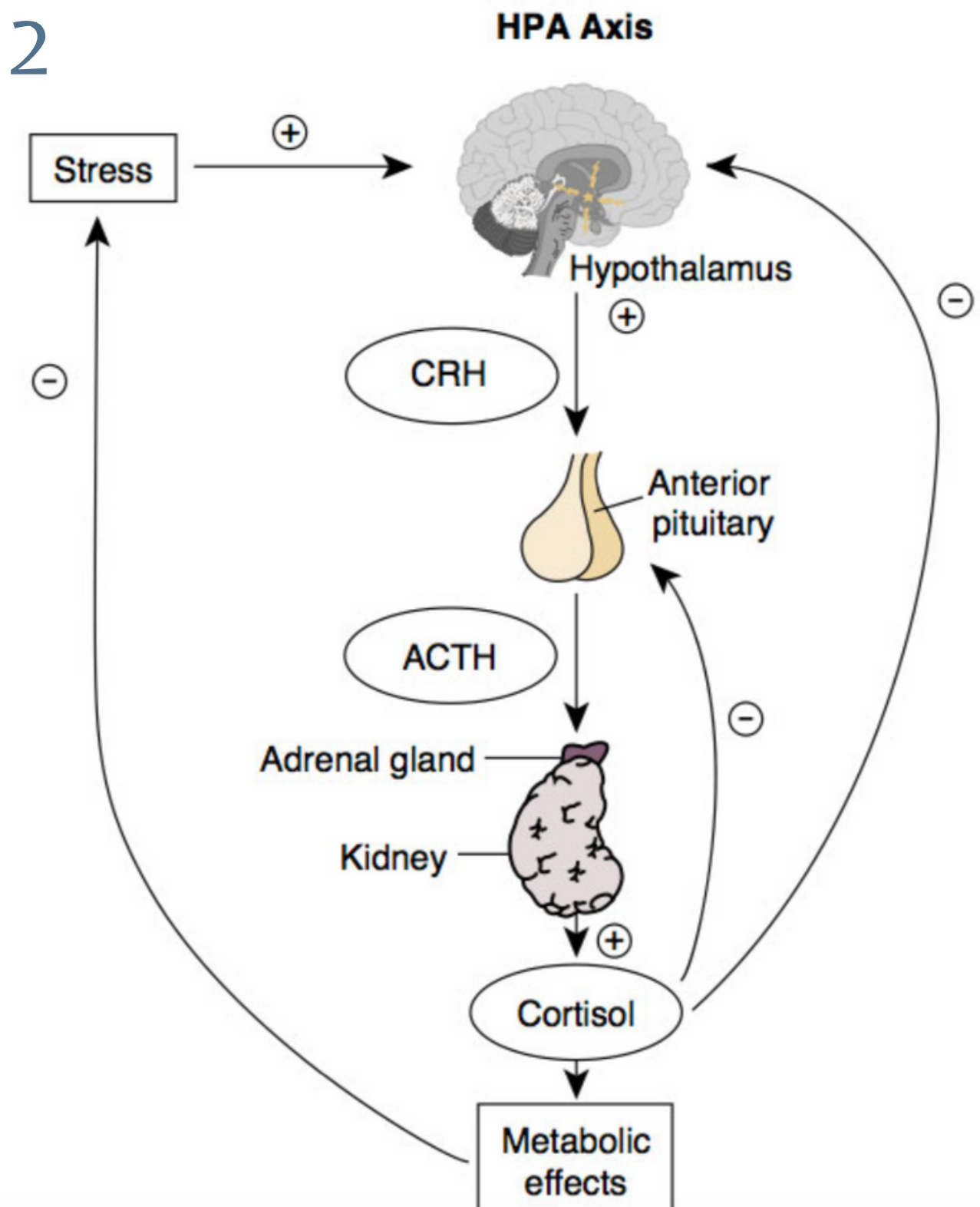


Stress response (autonomic nervous system)

Part 1



Part 2



Stress in the body

INSOMNIA

Excess cortisol sends alert signals to brain, disrupting sleep cycles

BRAIN FOG

Fuzzy thinking, poor focus, memory problems

MOOD CHANGES

Anxiety, racing thoughts (especially at bedtime), depression

HEADACHES

Migraines and tension headaches

WEIGHT GAIN

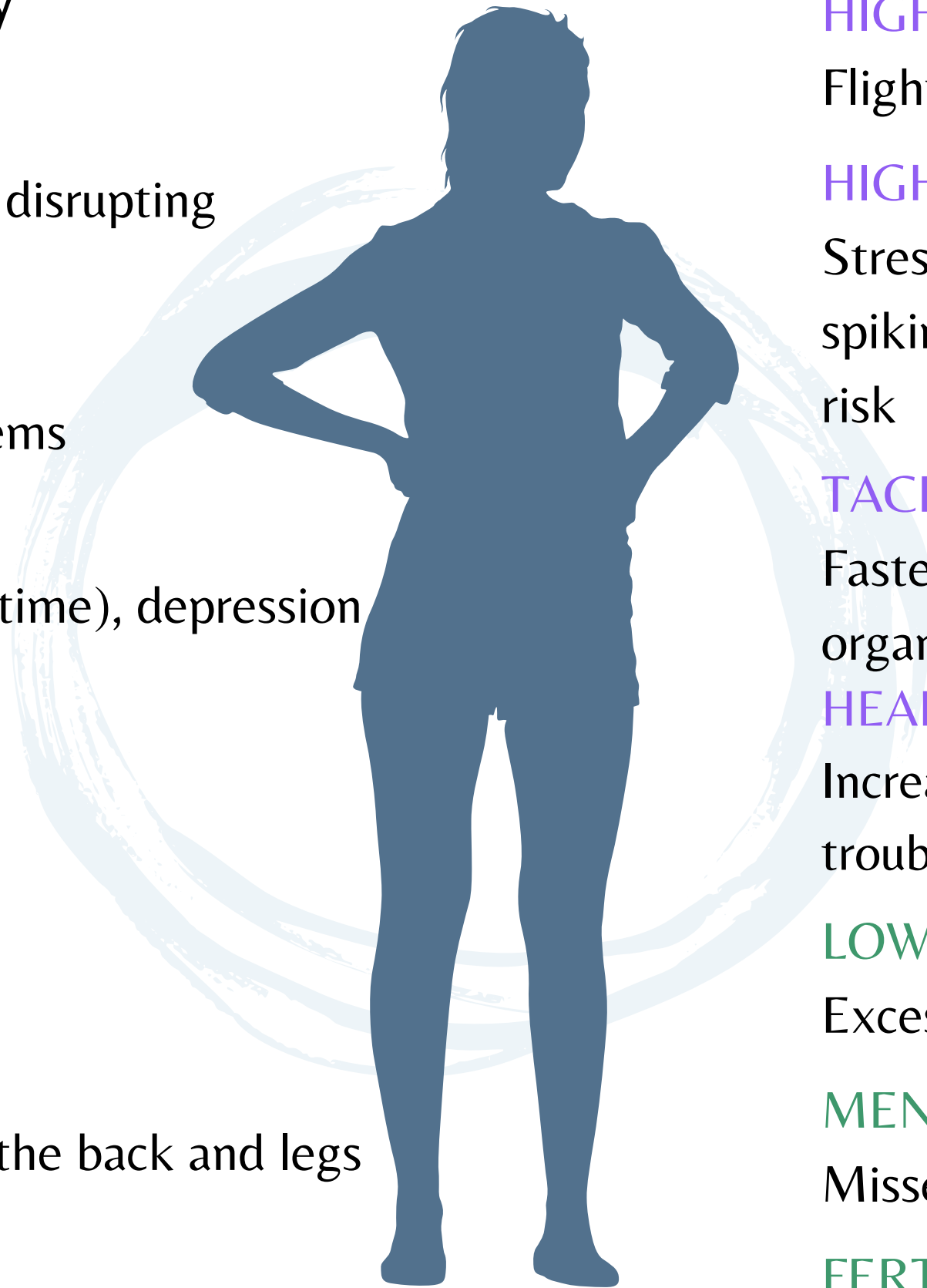
abdominal adiposity

MYSTERY MUSCLE ACHES

Muscle tension and stiffness, especially in the back and legs

COMPROMISED IMMUNE FUNCTION

Frequent respiratory infections



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Flight, fight or freeze causes vasoconstriction

HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

Stress triggers release of stored glucose, spiking blood sugar and increasing diabetes risk

TACHYCARDIA

Faster heart rate to pump blood to the organs and limbs

HEARTBURN INDIGESTION

Increased stomach acid production and digestive trouble

LOW LIBIDO

Excess cortisol suppresses sex hormones

MENSTRUAL IRREGULARITIES

Missed and periods

FERTILITY PROBLEMS

Disruption to ovulation cycles



Coaching in the Brain

PEA and NEA

Psycho-physiological states that a person engages in when creating a idealized vision or goal

Positive emotional attractor

Possibilities, dreams, optimism, hope, strengths-focused, approaching desired outcome

Negative emotional attractor

Problems, expectations, pessimism, fear, weakness focused, avoiding undesired outcome

Coaching and Parasympathetic vs Sympathetic Activation

PNS (Renewal Response)

- Activated by positive emotional attractor (PEA)
- Thriving
- Relaxed, open state
- Creativity
- Learning, new neural pathways
- Moving towards/seeking a desired outcome

SNS (Stress Response)

- Activated by negative emotional attractor (NEA)
- Surviving
- Defensive state
- Decreased capacity for creativity or openness
- New learning inhibited
- Moving away from/avoid a negative outcome

PEA and NEA (cont')

Positive emotional attractor

- Neuro-endocrine
- Affect
- Learning Agenda

- Practice

- Relationships

- PNS arousal
- Positive
- Excited to try

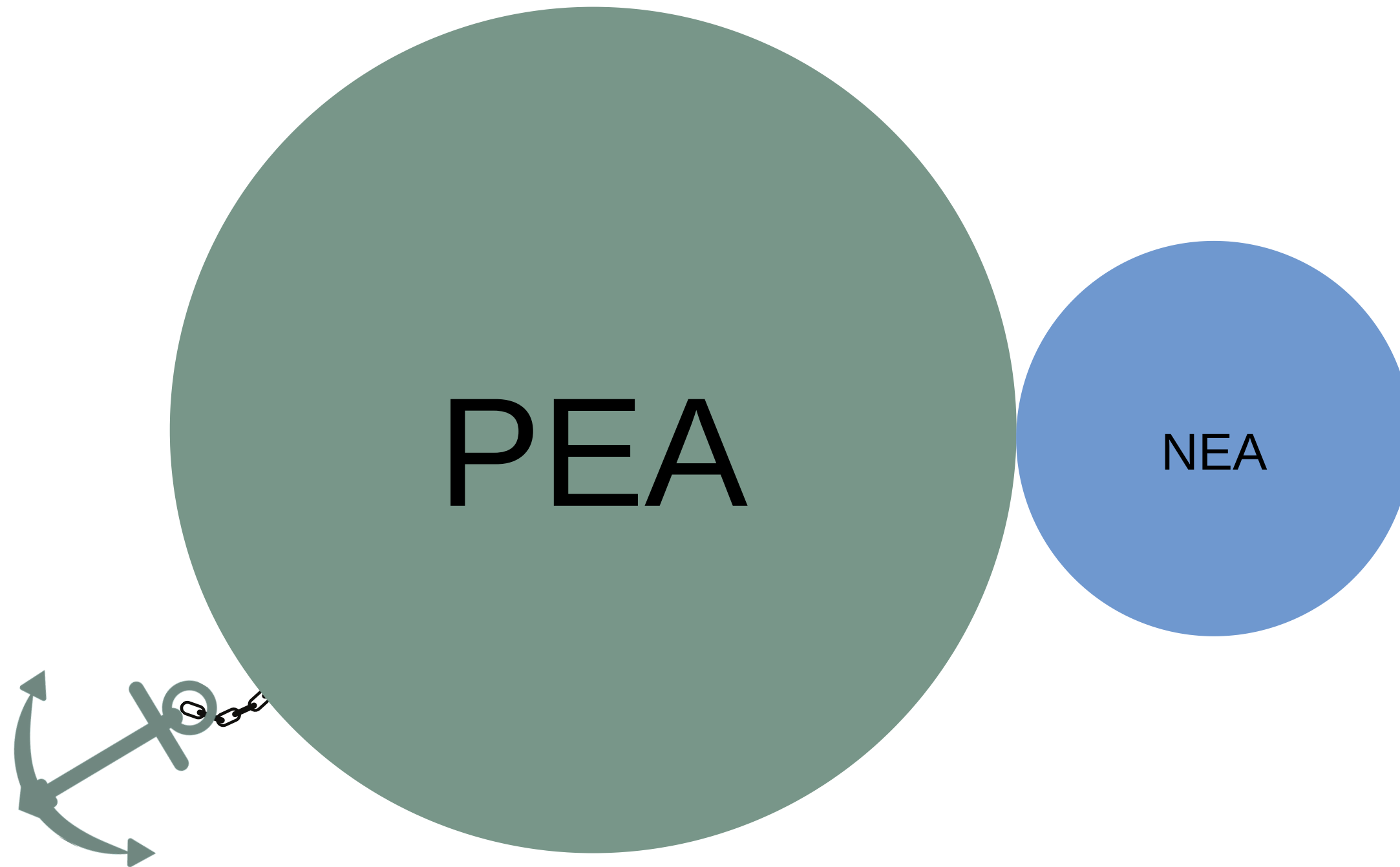
- Practice to mastery

- Resonant

Negative emotional attractor

- SNS arousal
- Negative
- Should do, performance improvement
- Expected actions, supposed to do
- Dissonant, annoying

PEA and NEA (cont')



Visioning in the brain: An fMR study of inspirational coaching and mentoring

Anthony I. Jack, Richard E. Boyatzis, Masud S. Khawaja, Angela M. Passarelli, and Regina L. Leckie

PURPOSE:

To understand neural pathways involved with Positive Emotional Attractors (PEA) vs Negative Emotional Attractors (NEA)

Design:

2 coaches

20 college-age students

Day 1:

Coached using either PEA or NEA

Days 4-6:

- MRI study

Watched videos of PEA, NEA or neutral statements

RESULTS:

With PEA statements:

- Lateral visual cortex (imagining)
- Nucleus acumbens
- Orbitofrontal cortex
- Posterior cingulate cortex

With NEA statements

- Medialprefrontal regions
- Right lateral prefrontal cortex

A person's silhouette is seen from behind, looking out over a vast landscape of mountains at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a clear blue at the top. In the foreground, dark, jagged rock formations are visible. A light blue rectangular box with a white dotted border is centered in the lower half of the image. The text "Coaching 'what if' vs 'you should'" is written in a dark grey, serif font within this box. On the left and right sides of the box, there are vertical lines of five black dots each, with a black circle at the bottom of each line, resembling hole punches in a document.

Coaching "what if" vs "you should"

Compassion vs Compliance

Coaching with Compassion

- Client-centered
- Client's expectations
- Transformation focused
- Focus on optimizing the client's strengths
- Supportive/collaborative
- Proactive
- Long-term behavioral change

Coaching for compliance

- Other-centered
- External expectations
- Achievement focused
- Focus on improving the client's deficits
- Directive
- Defensive
- Short-term behavioral change

Compassion vs Compliance (cont')

Personal vision

- Internal/self-motivated
- Working towards a desired vision of yourself
- Empowered

"Ought" self

- External/other-motivated
- Working out of fear and avoidance of disappointing someone else
- Defensive

Coaching with Compassion

- Caring relationship
- Mutual commitment
- Focus on facilitating desired change

Envisioning

Hey, I was thinking about you from our coaching a year ago and I remember how great your plans sounded. I could see, hear, feel and smell every detail. how have things turned out?



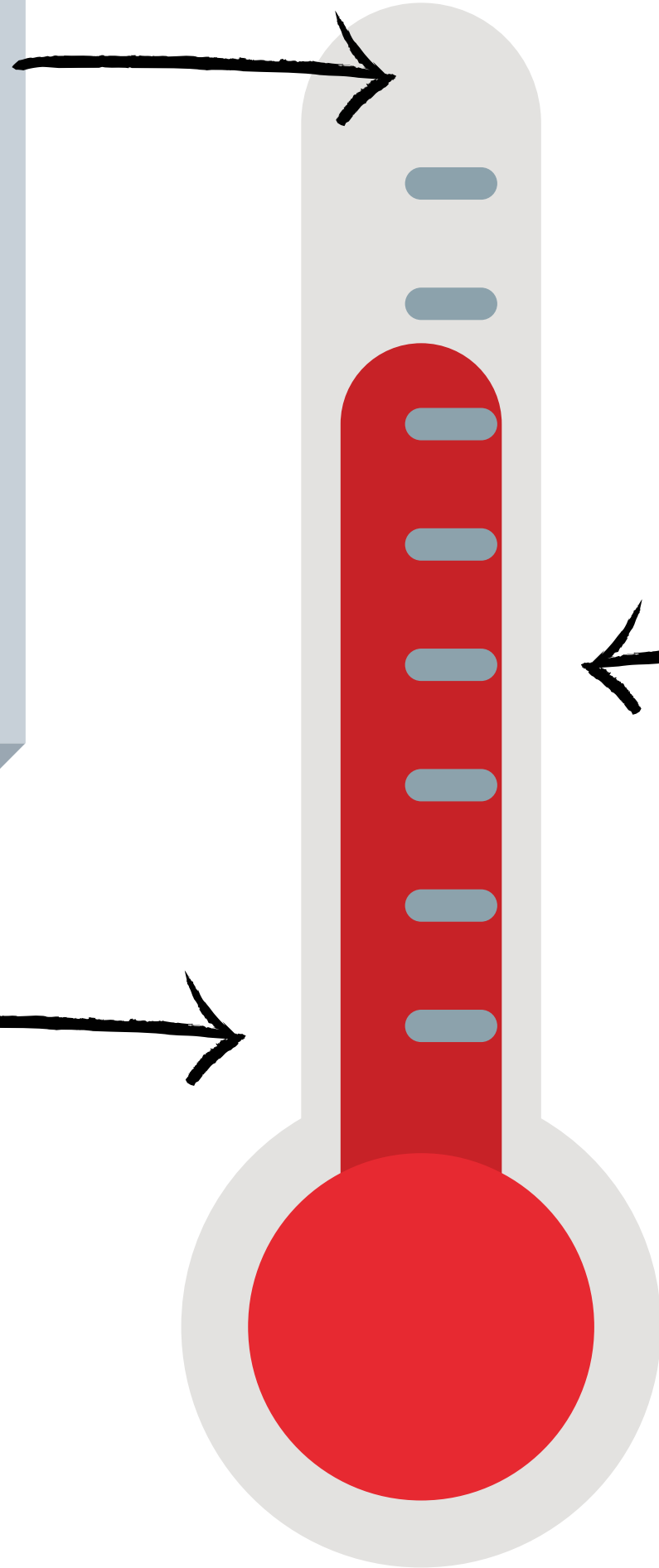
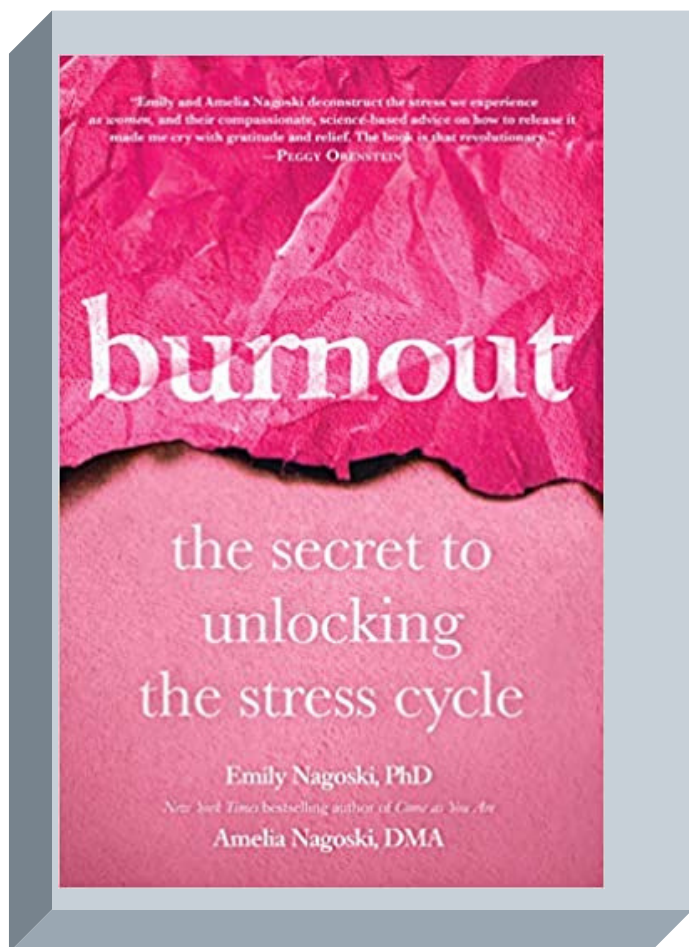
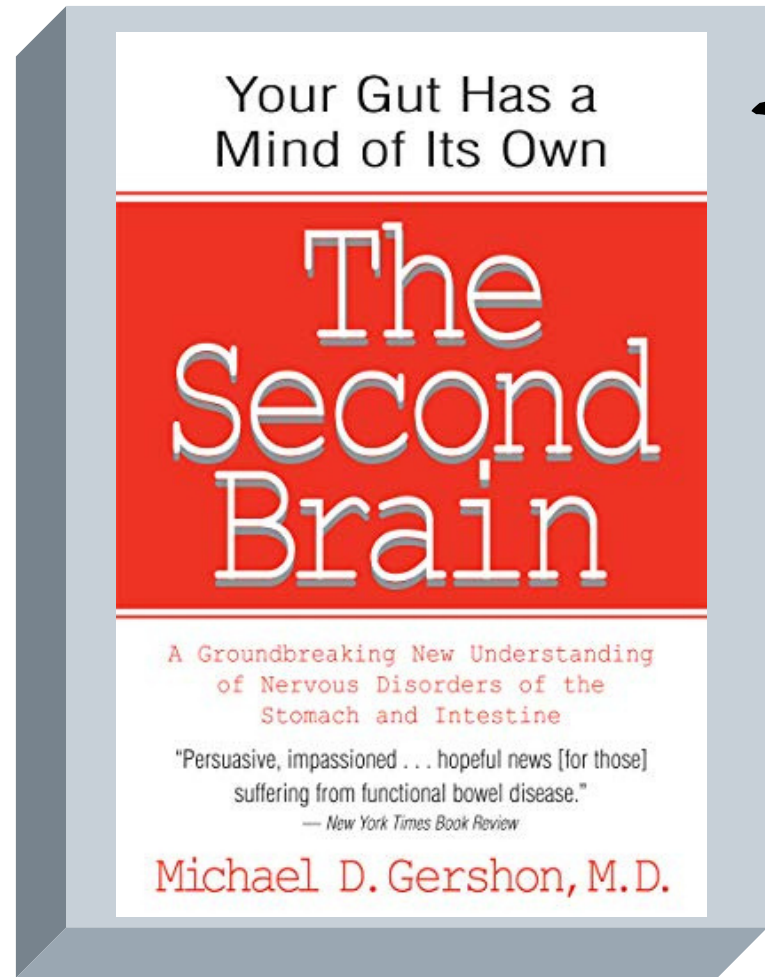


Parasympathetic Renewal

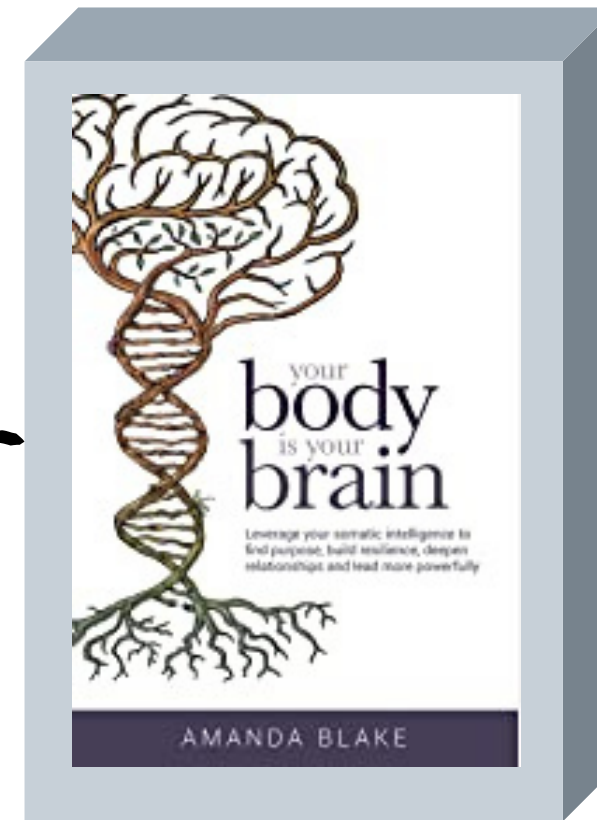
Renewal: parasympathetic activation

- Mindfulness practices/breathing exercises
- Hopefulness
- Exercise
- Compassion, helping someone
- Joy, laughter, playfulness,
- Prayer/meditation
- Time in nature
- Resonant relationships
- Petting an animal

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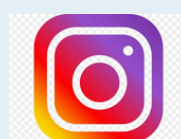


Self-help

Thanks!

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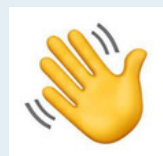
www.tracyasamoahcoaching.com



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