

Awareness System

I keep the sun of **self-kindness** shining on my whole process. There is no scolding in the awareness system.

When I sense I am activated, I **pause** to **adjust the volume** on my inner state to a stable range. My feelings are data. I do not repress or suppress them. I simply ease my feelings so I retain access to the decision-making portions of my brain.

I **sort thoughts** into "helpful" and "unhelpful" categories. I may need to co-travel with unhelpful thoughts but I shift my attention to helpful thoughts, often facts and reassurances.

I **identify feelings** as primary (happening naturally without thought) or secondary (happening as a result of thoughts) so I know which feelings to comfort (primary) and which feelings (secondary) for which I must seek the thoughts that created them.

Having identified my feelings and thoughts, I have access to my **inner wisdom**. Regardless of what is happening, regardless of what external supports may or may not be available, I can now use my own mind and my own heart to assist myself.
"The self is the tool."

I **identify thoughts** that create feelings. I become aware of thoughts that are **beliefs rather than facts**. Some beliefs may have complex origins which I may need time and thought to pry apart. These complexities may include family of origin issues and problematic patterns of feeling, thinking, acting, relating, and working. Some facts I may experience as painful realities that I must accept with my mind and comfort with my heart. After doing a cost-benefits analysis with rank ordering on each one, I may choose to continue to hold some beliefs I find helpful.

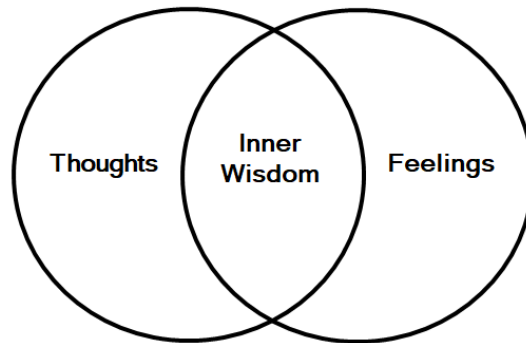
I offer myself understanding and compassion for the beliefs I may hold AND I examine, challenge and/or refute thoughts that are unhelpful beliefs. I use **precise** rather than abstract words. I **approach rather than avoid** reality. I can now do this because 1) I am kind to myself, 2) I am aware of my inner state so I have access to my inner wisdom, 3) I stay stable because I adjust my inner volume the whole way, and 4) I use my self as a sword to smite mean thoughts and fend off persistent, unhelpful beliefs.

Within my inner wisdom reside my humanity, skills, values, and priorities. Within the context of my **humanity and self-kindness**, with my **values** to power me, my **priorities** to direct me, and my **skills** to execute my intentions, I acknowledge **opposites that are both true**, consciously calculate **possibilities and probabilities**, do **cost-benefit analyses with rank ordering**, **optimize within constraints**, and devise reality-based **strategies** to deal with facts.

I assess for the presence of **automaticity** in my life—action without thought. If it is present, I acknowledge this and I do what I need to do to override automaticity and regain my power to choose what I say and do.

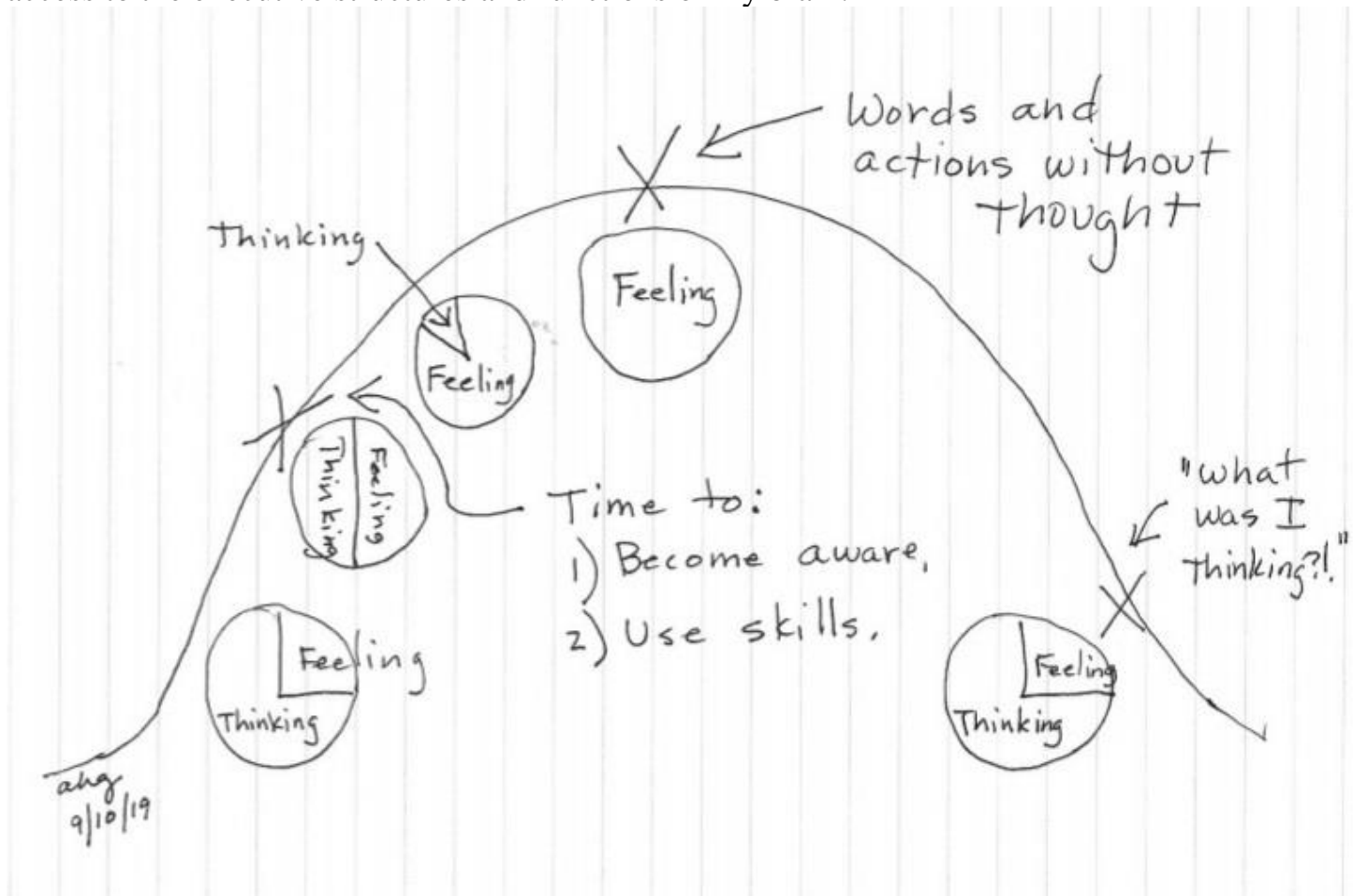
Within the context of self-kindness, I make conscious choices and take conscious **action**. Rather than seeking singular perfection, I do **enough** things, well enough, enough of the time—including **self-care** practices—to have an impact. I cannot control or predict outcomes but my reality-based, conscious choosing may be more likely to result in **desired outcomes** than feelings-driven, belief-based actions.

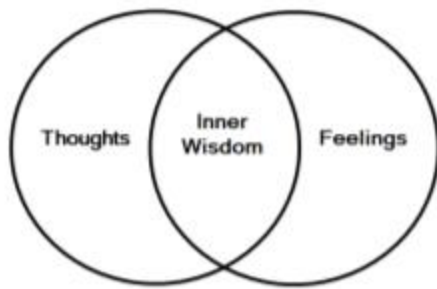
Inner Wisdom. If I can become aware of what I am feeling and thinking, then shift my attention to their intersection, I can access the best of both, my fullest, deepest humanity, and seek guidance from my inner wisdom.



("Inner wisdom" diagram is an adaption of "States of Mind," a concept from Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), invented by Marsha Linehan, Ph.D.)

Interrelationship Between Feelings and Thoughts. If I can become aware of the intensity of my feelings, I can use skills to adjust the volume on my inner state to a stable range and retain access to the executive structures and functions of my brain.





Acknowledgement
Acceptance

Approach
Avoid

(avoidance = illusion of power to protect, prevent, predict, and/or control)



Suffering



The "Awareness System" is a synthesis informed by Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), other counseling modalities, the findings of neuroscience, and philosophy. Formulated and compiled by Anne Giles, M.A., M.S., L.P.C. ▪ www.annegiles.com ▪ This content is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical or professional advice. Consult a qualified health care professional for personalized medical and professional advice. Last revised 9/21/20