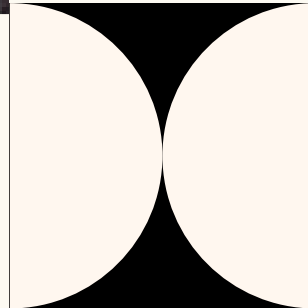
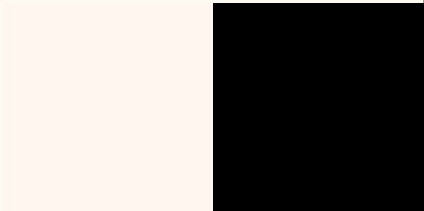


# Avoiding Emotions

Leaning into Discomfort to Revitalize Connections with Yourself, Others, and the World Around You

Joshua Germain, MA, LMHC



# Embracing Discomfort

## Overview

### Participant Objectives

- Identify at least two ways that avoidance and the pursuit of certainty contribute to increased anxiety and/ or disconnection from personal values.
- Demonstrate at least one mindfulness-based skill to engage with discomfort or uncertainty during a guided exercise or group activity.
- Describe how the acceptance of uncertainty in relationships can foster deeper connection and explain one strategy for applying this concept in their personal or professional life.

# Natural Response To Discomfort



Fight



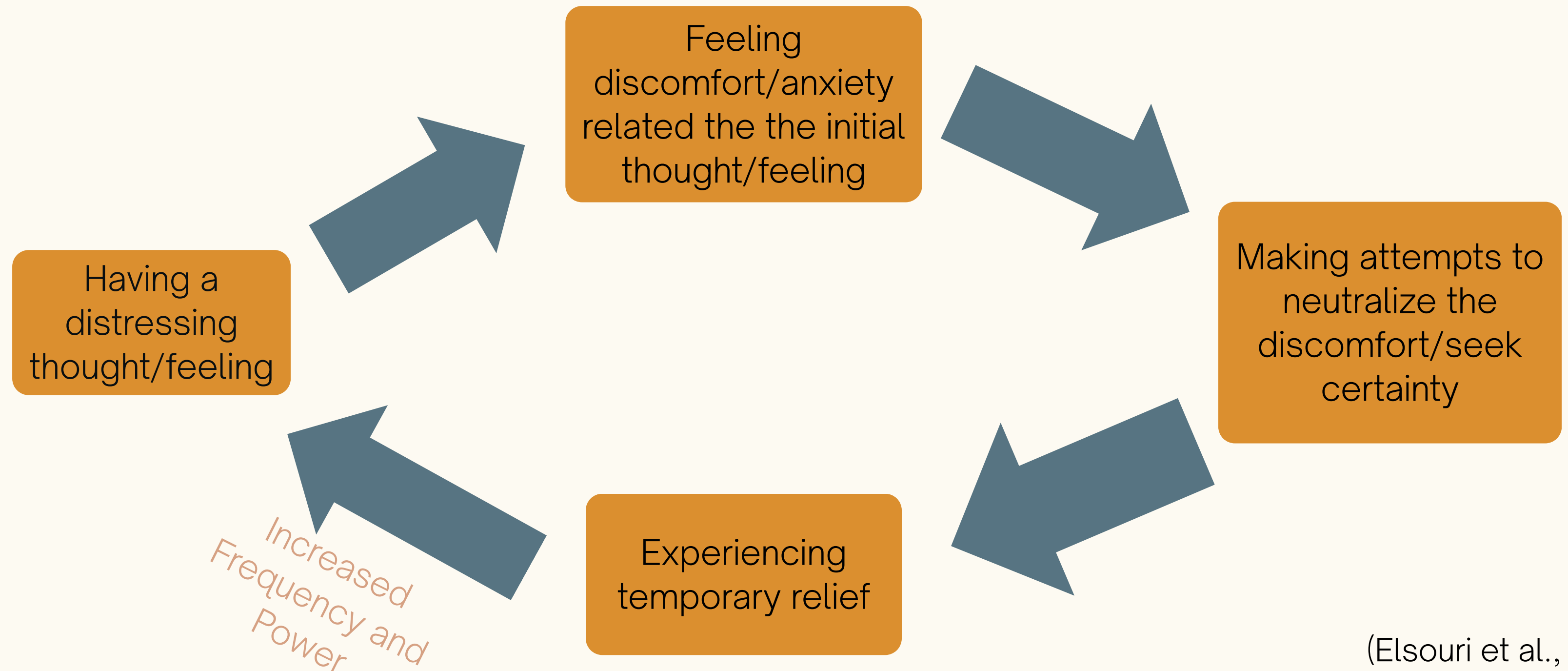
Flight



Freeze



# Avoidance/Anxiety Cycle

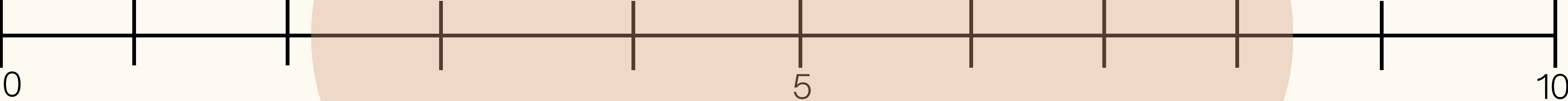
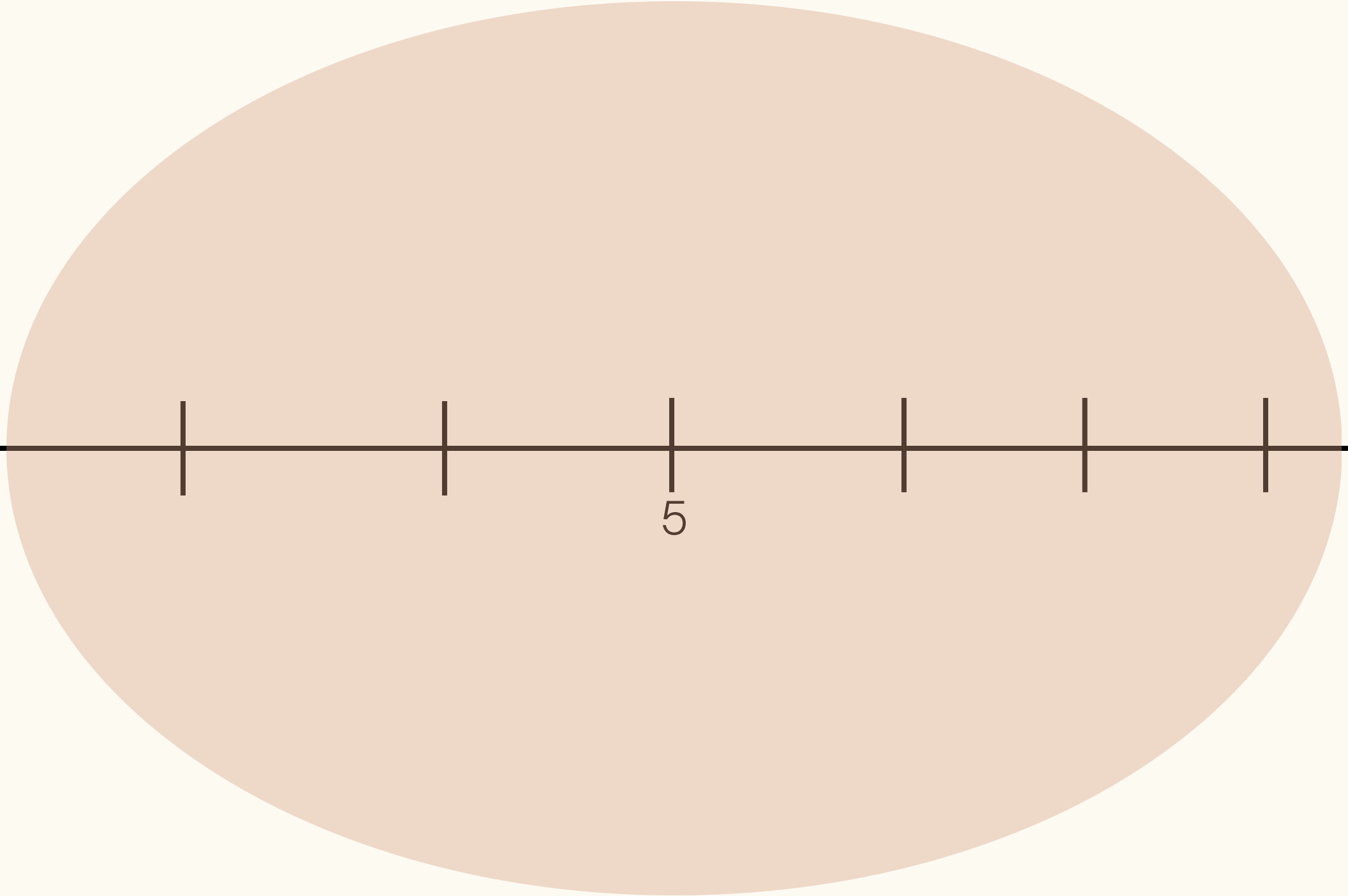
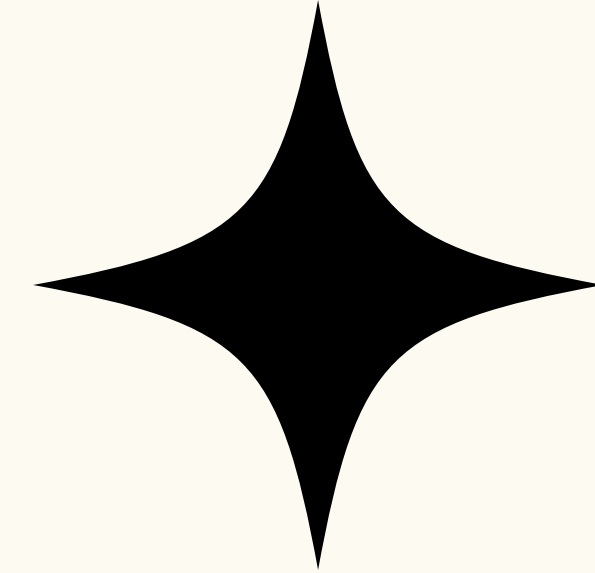


“Fear is upsetting in its own right; you engage in rituals [certainty-seeking behaviors] in an attempt to alleviate your anxiety as much as to avoid the feared consequences itself...Finding a way to know, to be absolutely certain your fear won't be realized, seems like the only possible escape from fear. But there is always another what-if.”

(Grayson, 2014, p. 21-22)



# SUD Scale



Total Comfort

Total Discomfort



**1**

**What do you  
avoid?**

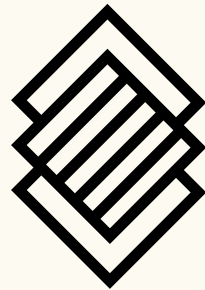
**2**

**How do you  
avoid it?**

**3**

**What are the  
impacts of  
this  
avoidance?**

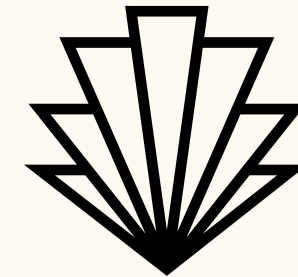
# Discussion



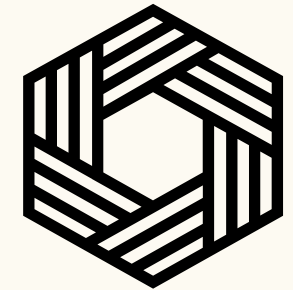
**How does avoidance  
influence one's  
connection with  
themselves?**



**How does avoidance  
influence one's  
connection with  
others?**



**How does trying to  
pursue certainty  
influence one's  
connection with  
themselves?**



**How does trying to  
pursue certainty  
influence one's  
connection with  
others?**

# The Alternative....



“I Don’t Know”



# Accepting Uncertainty

# Guided Meditation

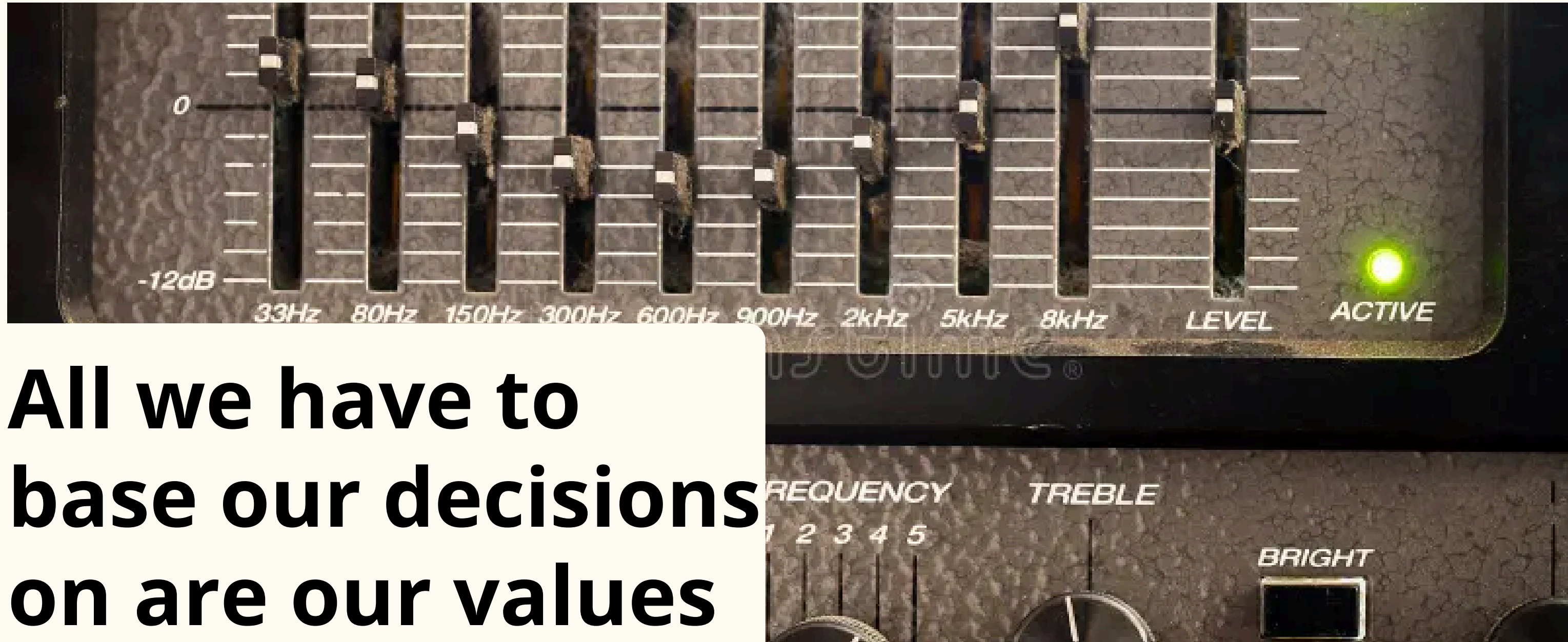


“

**Mindfulness keeps us from fusing with our thoughts and feelings...Being mindful does not mean pushing thoughts away or clearing our minds of obsessions or the urges to do compulsions; rather, it allows us to step back and see them for what they are, and this distance makes it easier for us to stop confusing the perceived intensity of the content of the thoughts with their importance**

”





**All we have to  
base our decisions  
on are our values**

“Values, from an ACT perspective, have a quality of personal ownership, meaning that the individual has the subjective experience of choosing for themselves the principles they want to guide their behavior (Hayes et al., 2012). Values are by definition not selected based dominantly on aversive control or pliance, that is, behavior that follows relatively fixed, socially mediated rules. Another way to say this is that values are not dominantly based out of, constructed, or serving goals of avoidance or escape from pain or based on the expectations of others...Framing values as a choice also has strategic advantages in that it can help foster novel behavior that is less constricted by people’s histories and personal narratives.”

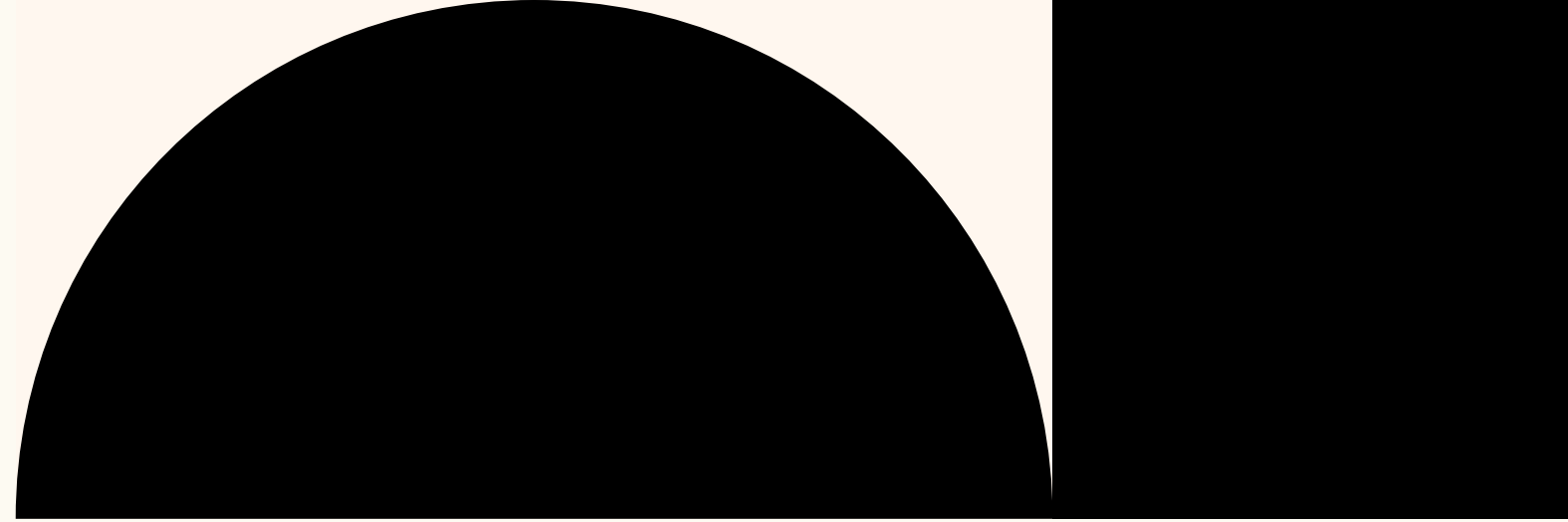


(LeJeune & Luoma, 2021, p. 2-3)

**How can  
accepting  
uncertainty and  
aligning with  
values increase  
connection  
with oneself?**

**How can  
accepting  
uncertainty  
and aligning  
with values  
increase  
connection  
with others?**

Stay  
Connected  
and Reach  
Out!

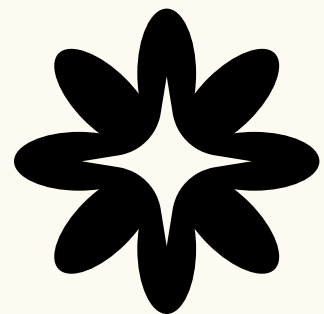


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