

Harnessing the Seeking, Satisfaction and Embodiment Circuitries in Contemplative Approaches to Trauma

Symposium on Contemplative Approaches to Trauma

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Craving
Attachment



Fear
Aversion

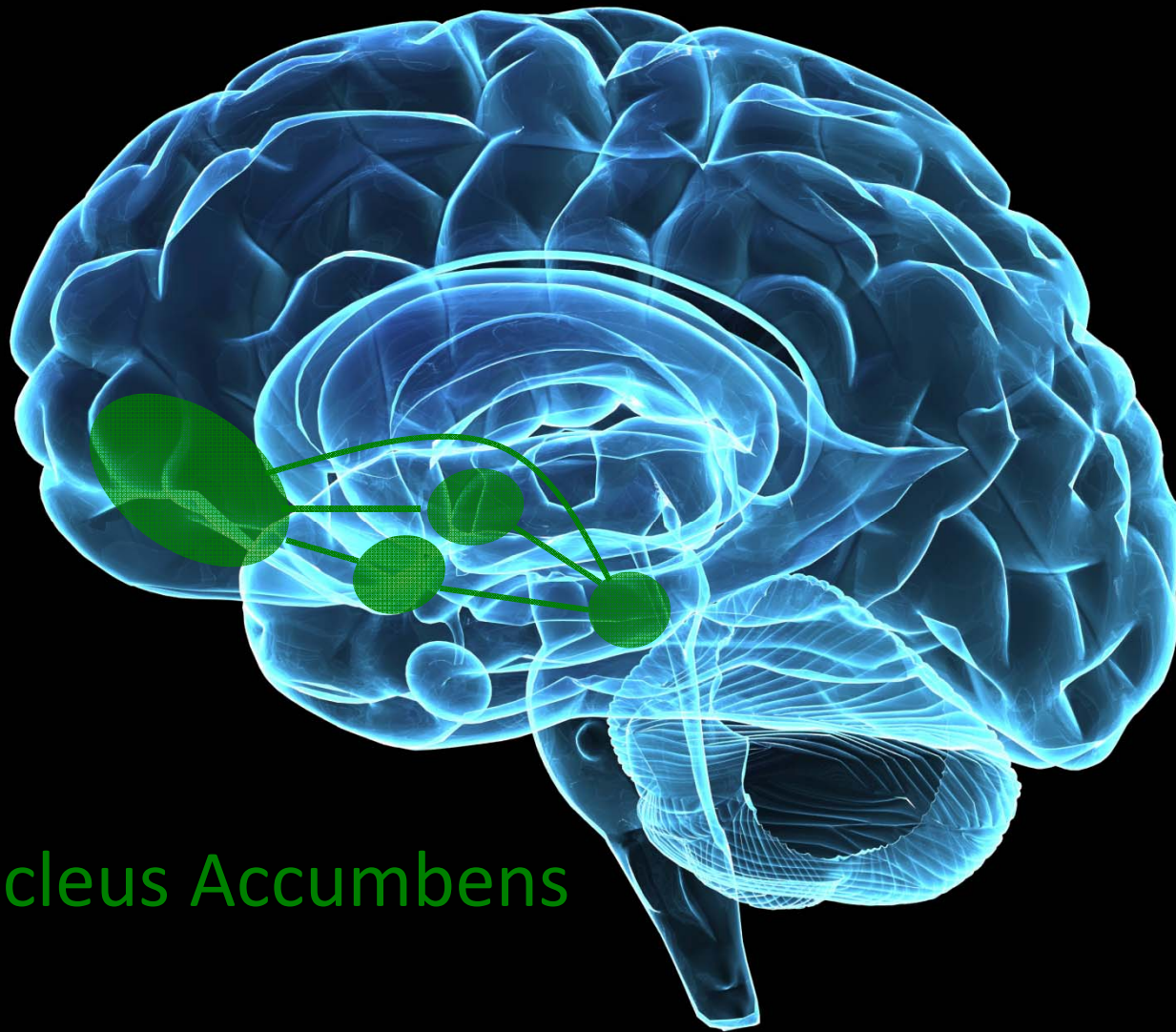
Ignorance



Fear/Aversion Circuitry



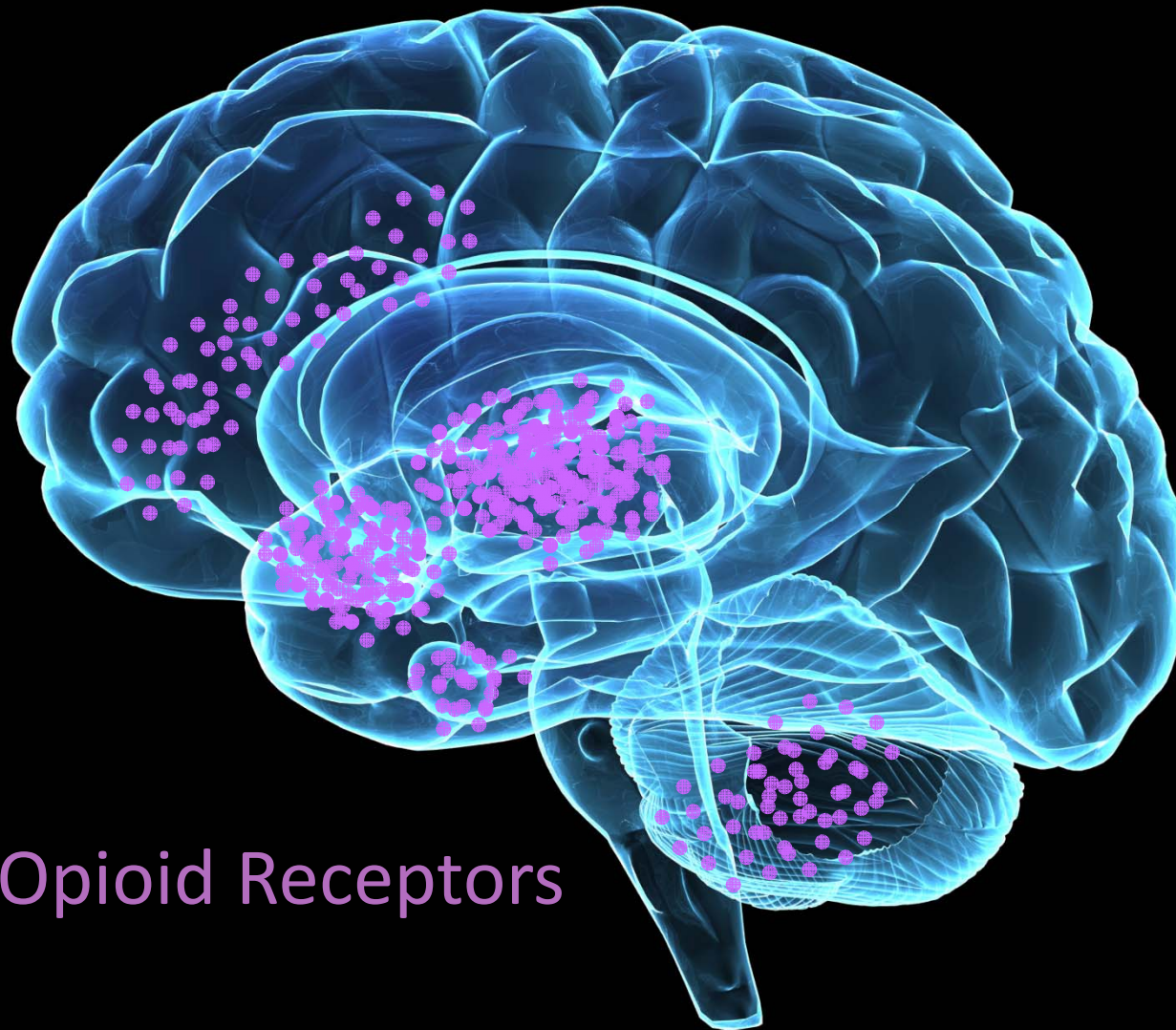
Seeking Circuitry



Nucleus Accumbens



Satisfaction Circuitry



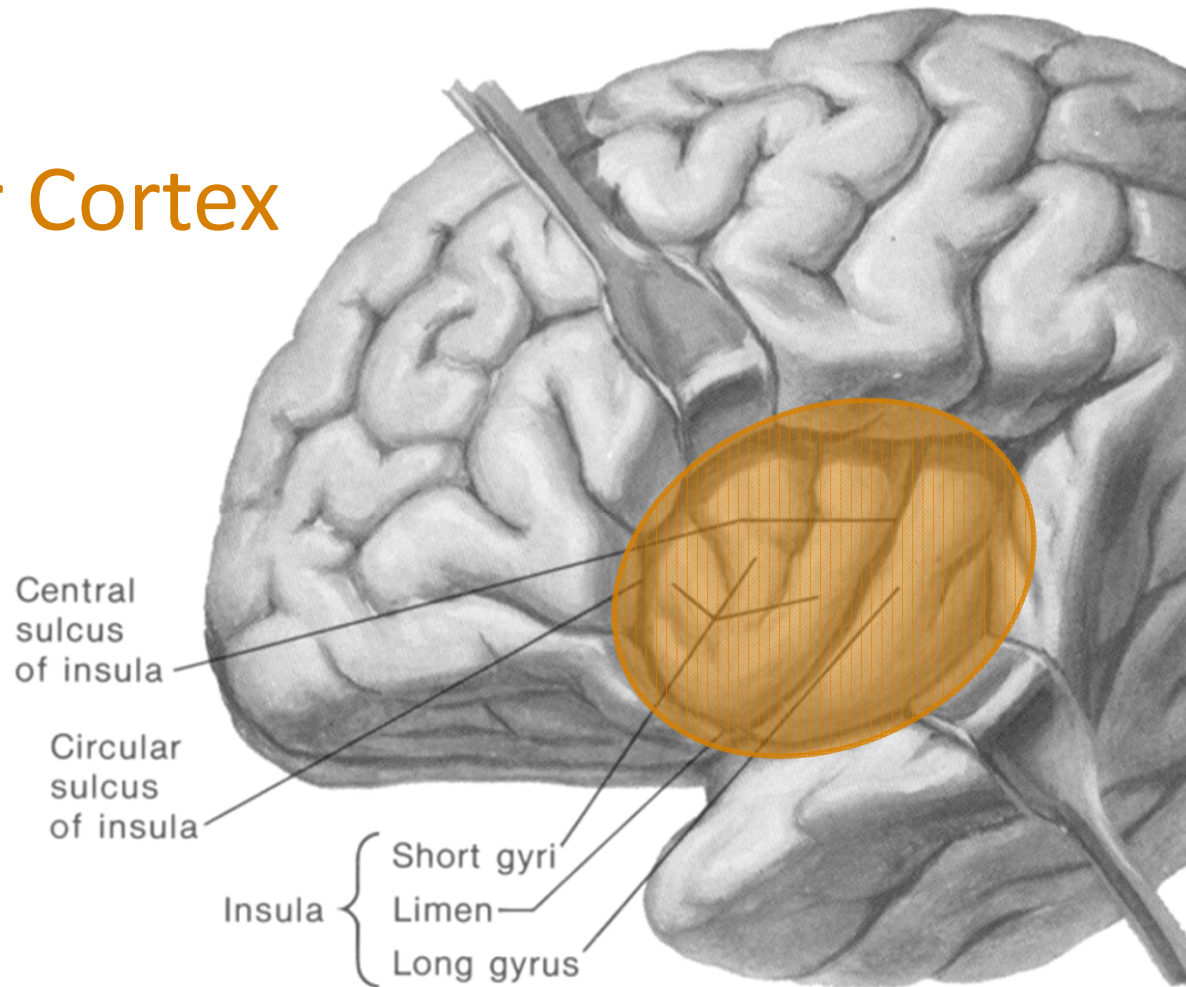
μ Opioid Receptors





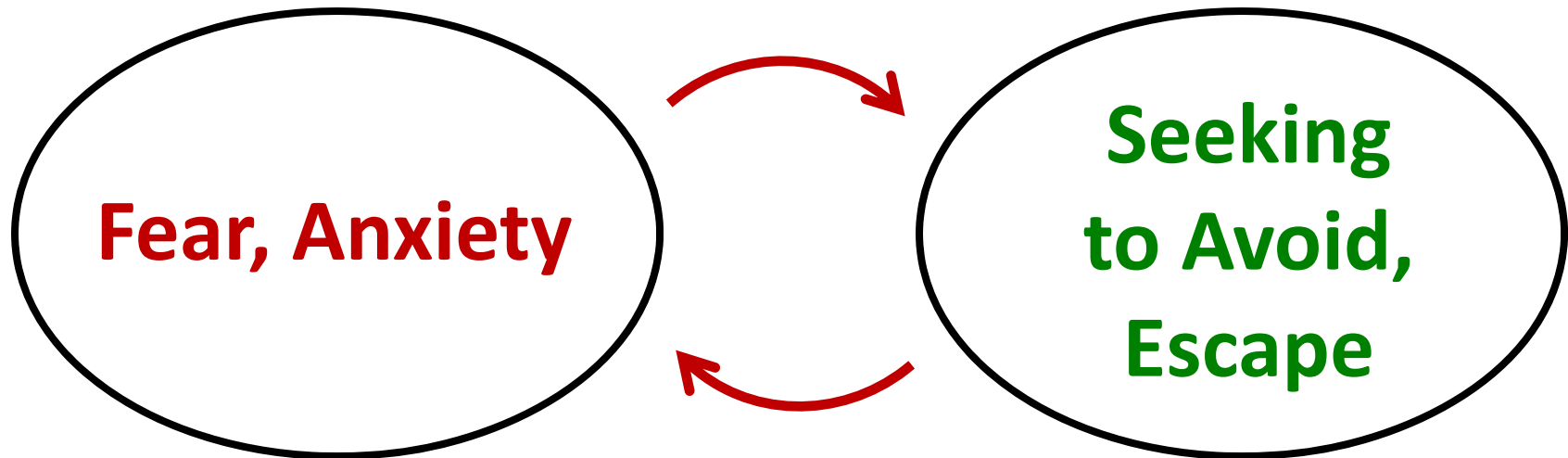
Embodiment Circuitry

Insular Cortex



Netter 1985, *CIBA Collection: The Nervous System*

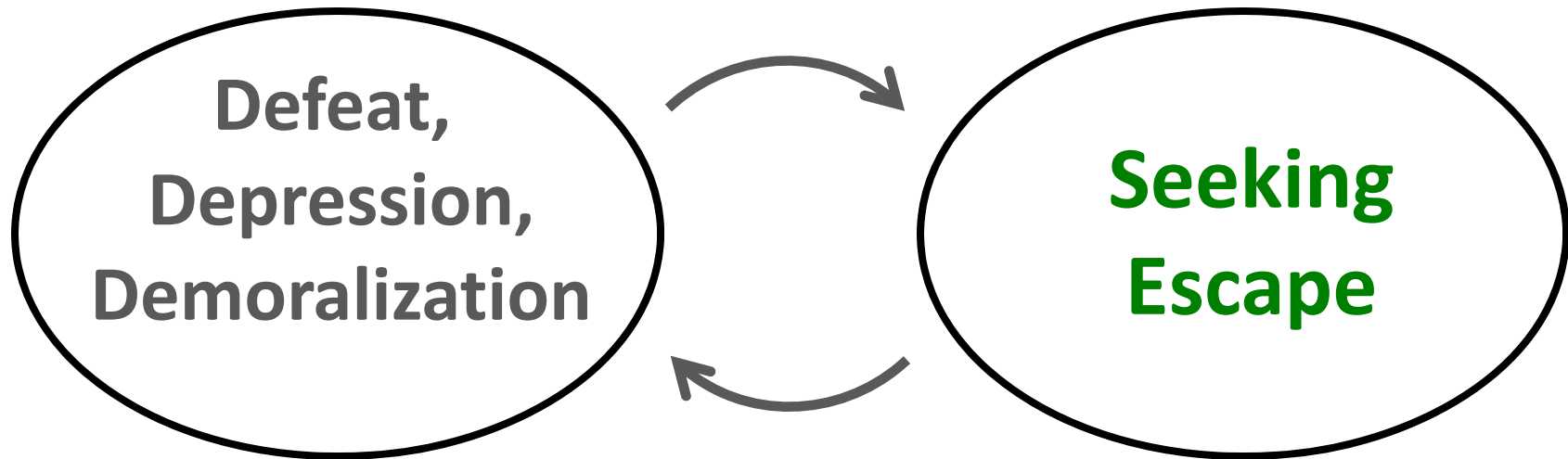
Suffering Cycle



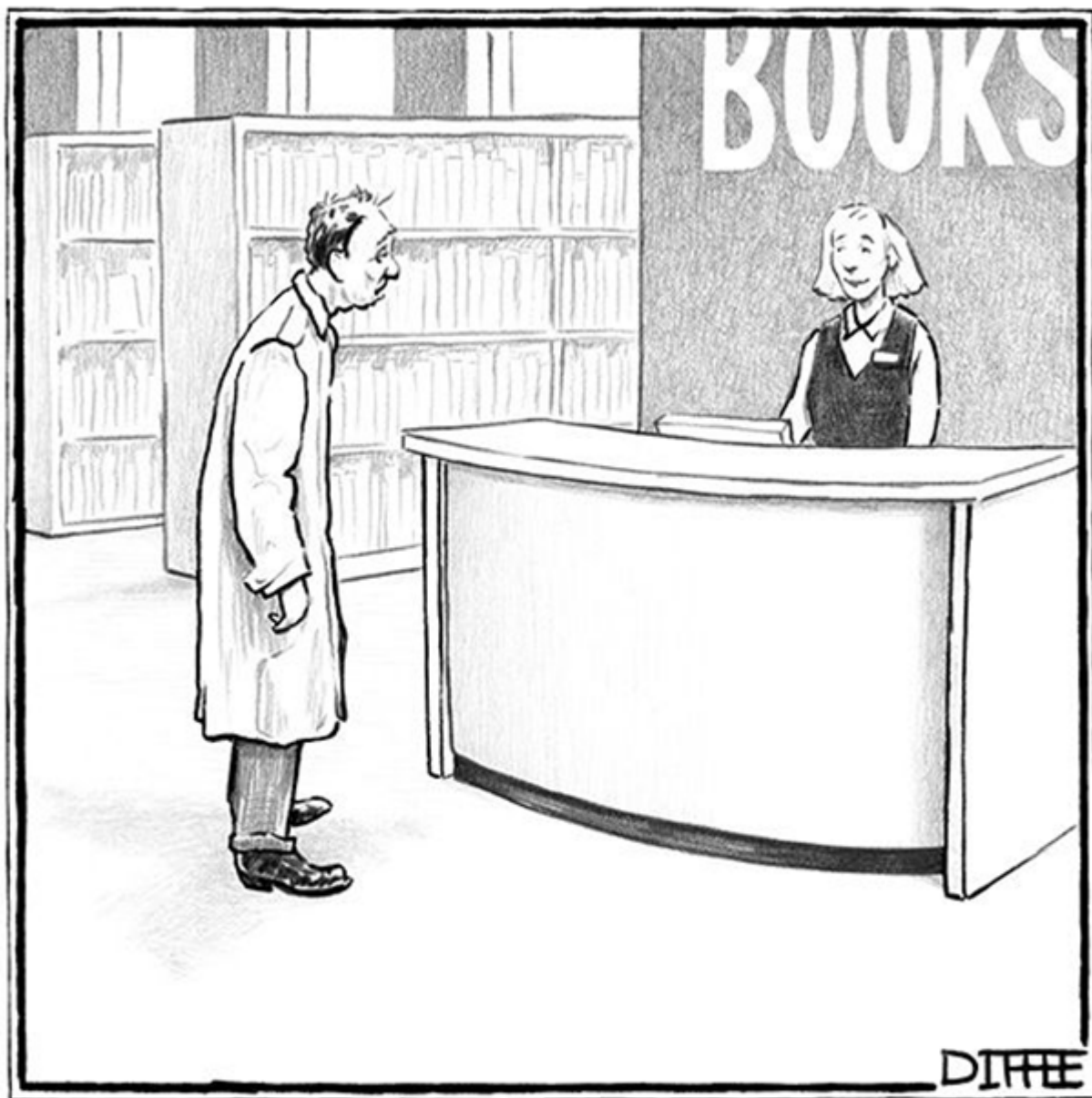
Wanting more, settling for less.

When you get what you want, but not what you need.

Suffering Cycle



Seeking circuit activity suppressed, sporadic.



"Do you have any why-to books?"

Circuitry Activity in Suffering Cycles

Fear/Anxiety

Fear ↑↑

Seeking ↑

Satisfaction ↓

Defeat/Depression

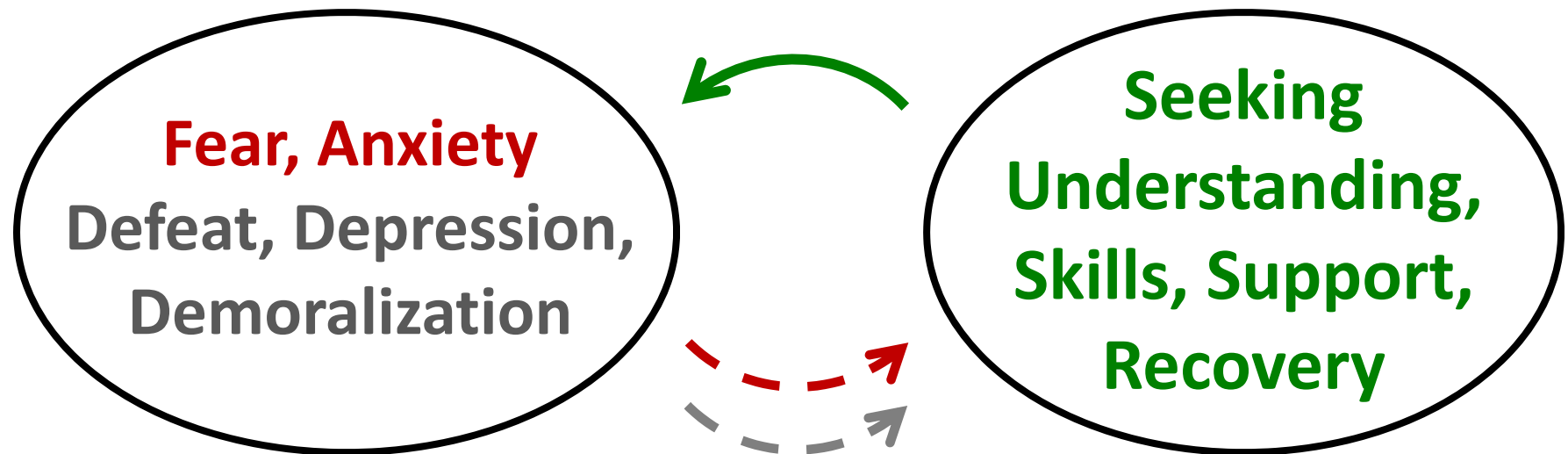
Fear ↓

Seeking ↓

Satisfaction ↓

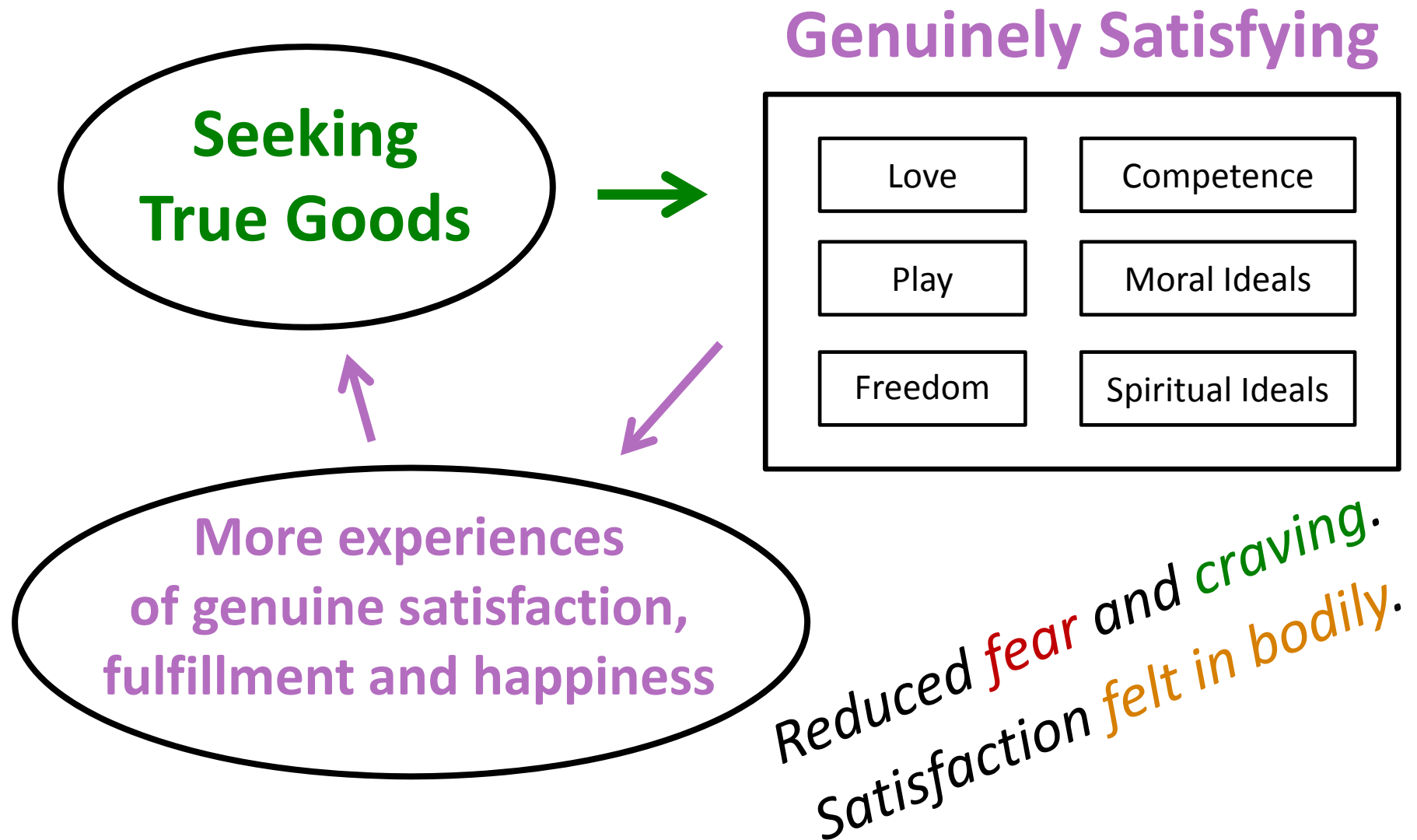
Embodiment Circuitry: Bad Sensations

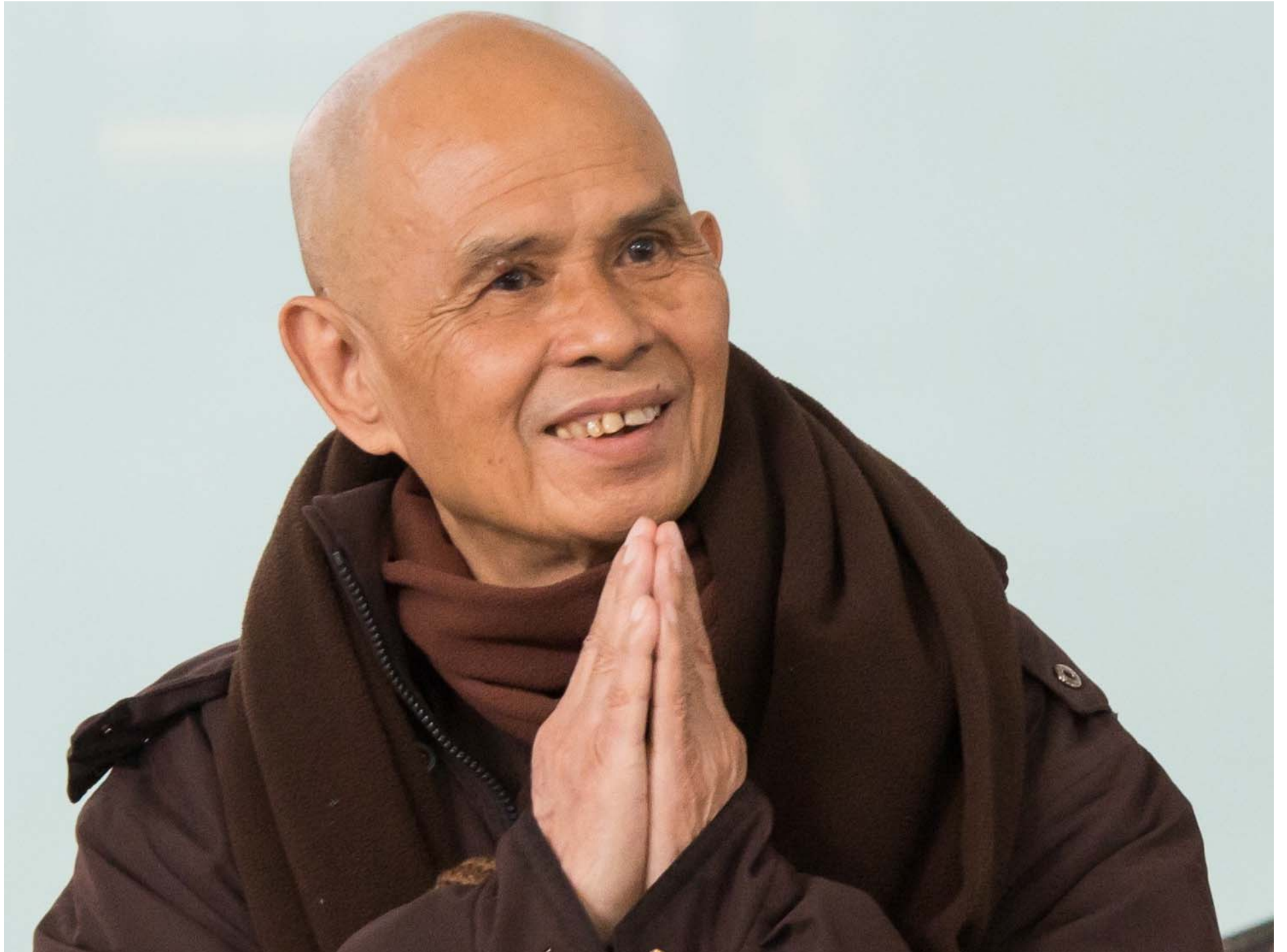
Healing Cycle: Engage and Transform Suffering

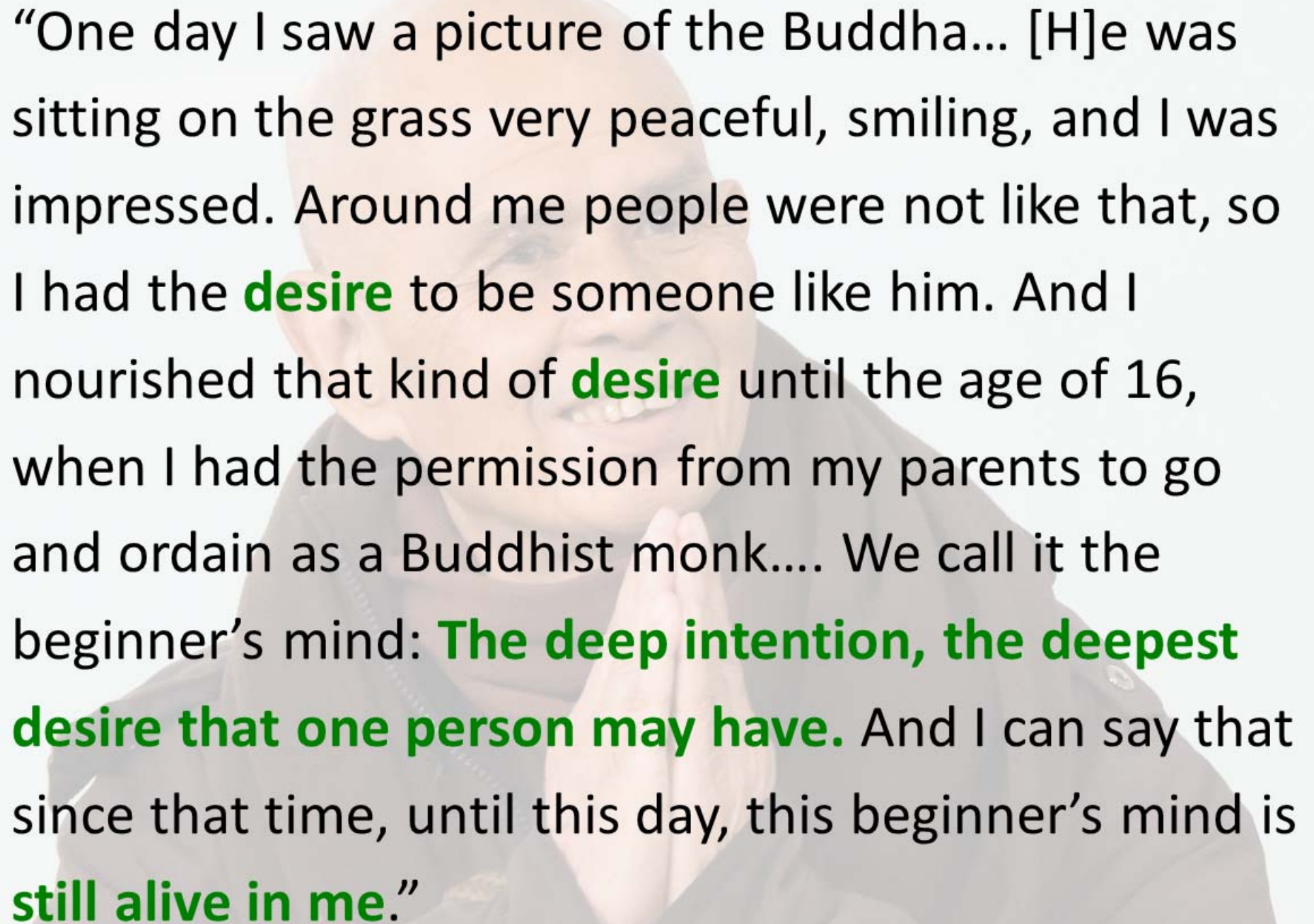


*Greater awareness and acceptance
of **bodily experiences** are key.*

Healing Cycle: Seek True Goods

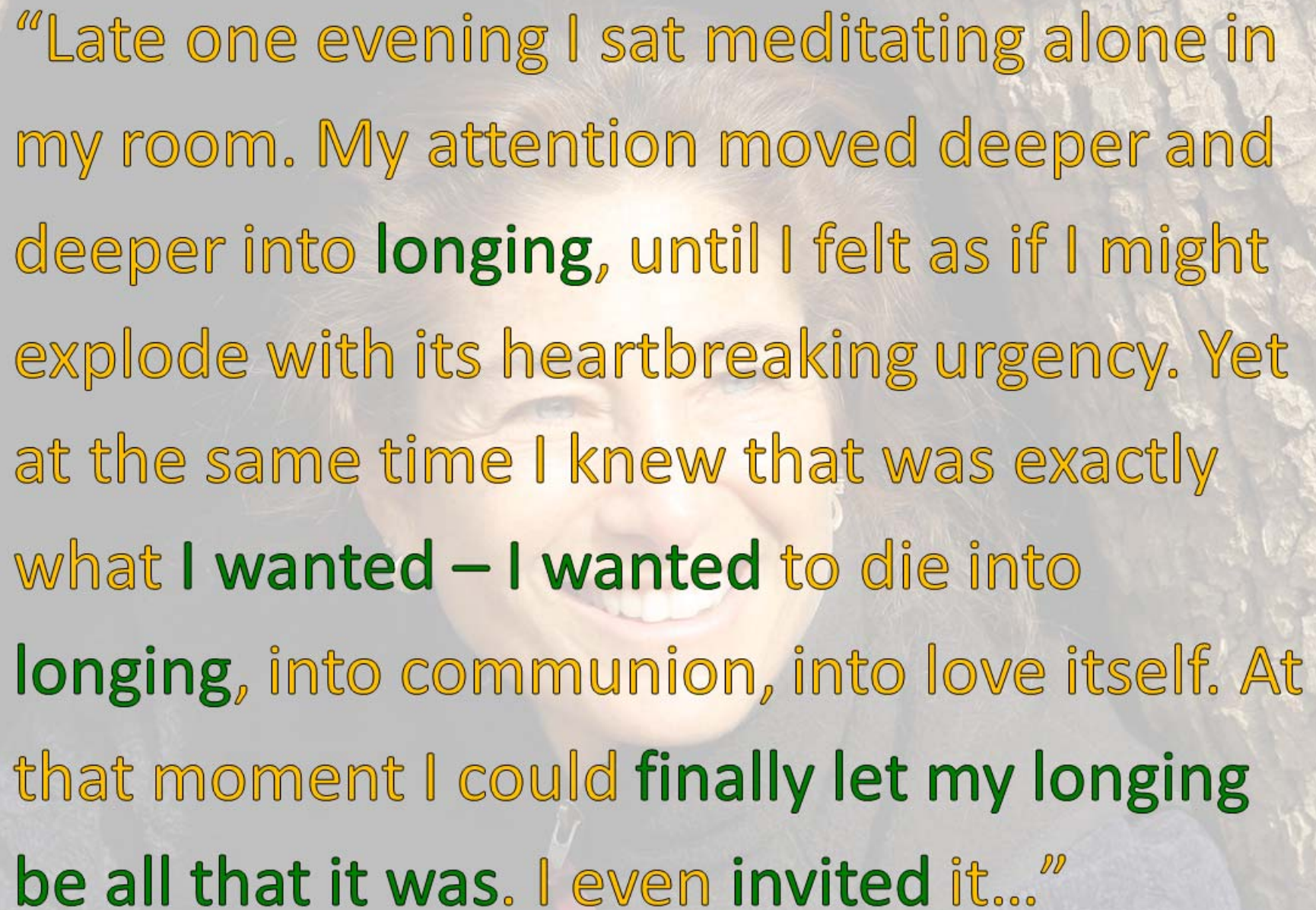






“One day I saw a picture of the Buddha... [H]e was sitting on the grass very peaceful, smiling, and I was impressed. Around me people were not like that, so I had the **desire** to be someone like him. And I nourished that kind of **desire** until the age of 16, when I had the permission from my parents to go and ordain as a Buddhist monk.... We call it the beginner’s mind: **The deep intention, the deepest desire that one person may have.** And I can say that since that time, until this day, this beginner’s mind is **still alive in me.**”





“Late one evening I sat meditating alone in my room. My attention moved deeper and deeper into **longing**, until I felt as if I might explode with its heartbreaking urgency. Yet at the same time I knew that was exactly what I wanted – I wanted to die into **longing**, into communion, into love itself. At that moment I could **finally let my longing be all that it was. I even invited it...**”





Wishing for Love and Happiness

=

*Harnessing the **Seeking** Circuitry*



Experiencing Love and Happiness

=

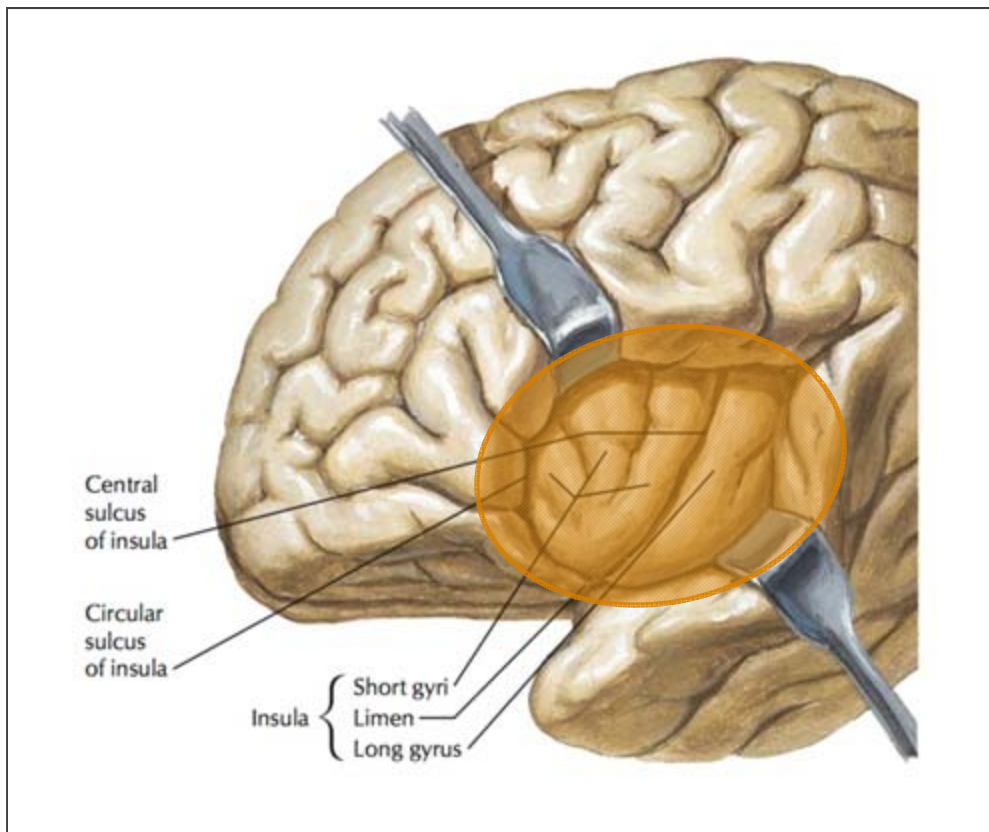
Activating *Satisfaction* Circuitry

Releasing Brain's Own *Opioids*

Calming *Fear* and *Seeking* Circuitries

Lovingkindness and Compassion

How Do They Feel?



- Warmth
- Softness
- Tenderness
- Gentleness
- Connection



Fearing Love?



