

Meaning Creation for Meaning protest in Emotion Focused Therapy



"La Vie" - Chagall

Reprocessing
Tasks

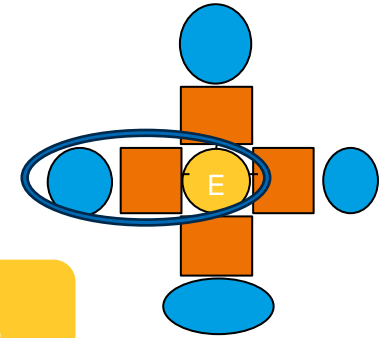
Systematic
Evocative
Unfolding

Narrative/
Trauma
Retelling

Meaning Creation
Meaning Protest

EFT is an ocean of Empathy
with islands of work

Narrative, Re-processing Work



Use perceptual-situation elements to access emotion schemes

- Episodic memories to activate heightened recall of affect
- Vivid, emotionally charged memories of particular situation
- Leading to access core primary maladaptive emotion responses/emotion schemes

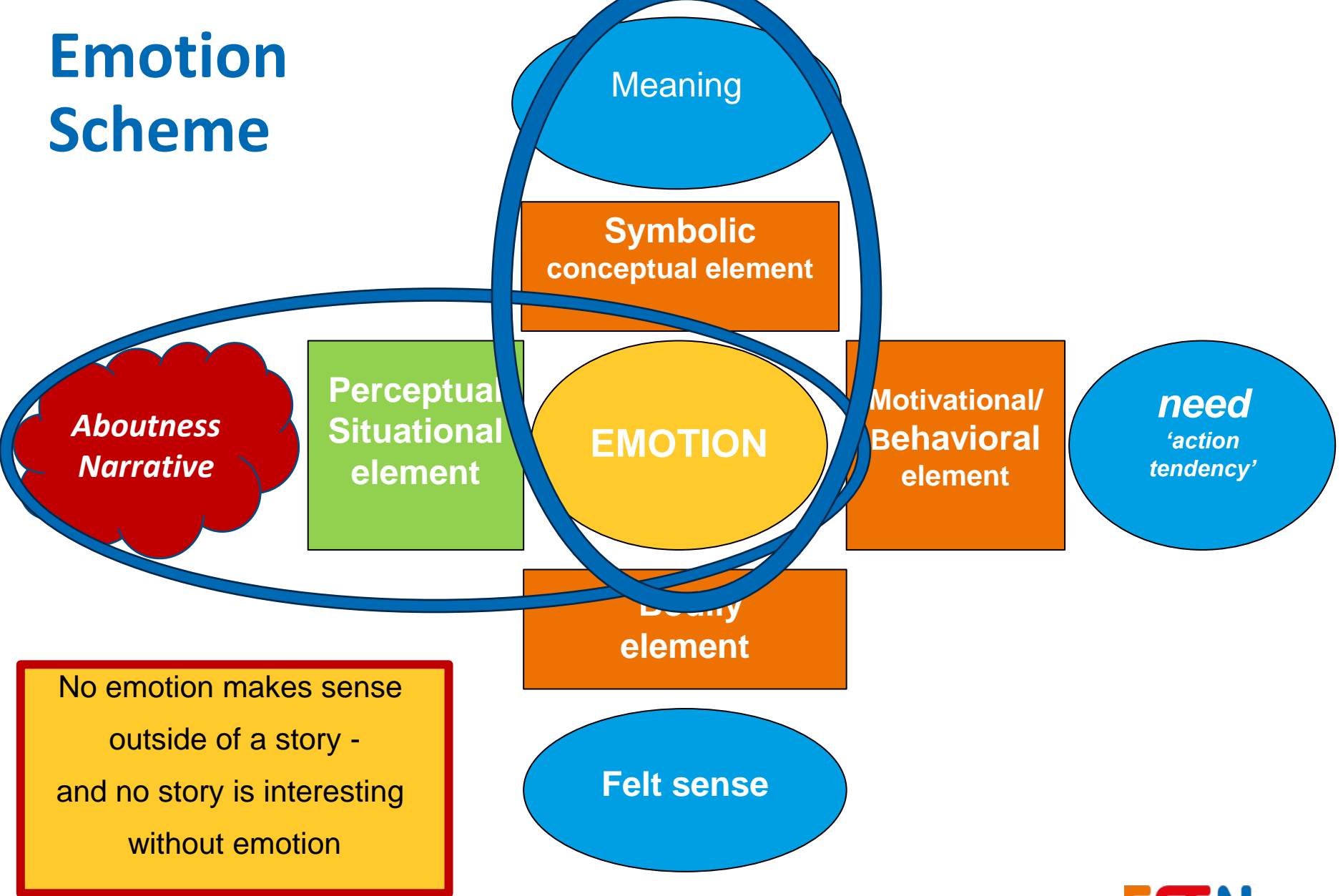
Tracking emotion

- Curiosity, puzzlement
- Pain and vulnerability
- **Anger and pain at unfairness**
- Problematic Reaction Point
- Trauma Re-Telling
- **Meaning Work**

Importance of staying with and inside the story

- Slowing down and stay with important moments
- Circling and repeating key parts of the story
- To see what else will emerge going deeper into the painful feelings

Emotion Scheme



Reprocessing- Narrative Tasks

MARKER	TASK	TRACKING EMOTION	GENERAL APPROACH	KEY CHANGE PROCESS PARTIAL RESOLUTION	END STATE
Problematic Reaction Point	Systemic Evocative Unfolding	Puzzlement Curiosity	Help client re-tell/ re-experience PRP like being in a movie	Meaning Bridge Identification of trigger for reaction	New view of self in-the-world Functioning
Narrative pressure	Narrative/ Trauma Retelling	Externally derived Pain/ Vulnerability	Help client re-tell/re-experience traumatic event and most difficult moment like being in a movie	Vivid evocation of most difficult moment	Narrative completion → Relief, restoration of narrative gaps
<i>Meaning Protest</i>	<i>Meaning Work</i>	<i>Anger, Pain at Unfairness</i>	<i>Meet and hold client pain, help to describe challenging event and identify cherished beliefs</i>	<i>Identification of source of cherished belief</i>	<i>Revision of cherished belief</i> <i>The healing power of emotions</i>

Re-Creation of Meaning for Meaning Protest

Creation of meaning – (Clarke)

The affective-cognitive processing in which a client engages when an experience highly discrepant with cherished beliefs and expectations produces **strong emotional arousal**.

The client's task in this event is to understand the **meaning** of the emotion: **Meaning Symbolization**

Meaning Symbolization seems to produce the most successful client processing in creation of meaning events.

Creation of Meaning (Clarke)

While some new information is relatively easy to admit to cognitive-emotional scheme's, other data appear to be difficult for individuals to accommodate.

Beliefs which have been invested with emotion, beliefs which people care about and have a stake in, give rise to emotion when they are confronted with discrepant experience.

Because the person cherishes these beliefs, it is difficult for smooth processing and accommodation of the new information to take place.

Thus the person often remains stuck in a state of emotional arousal unable to move to the accommodation which will provide emotional relief.

Cherished Beliefs

Beliefs about the world or life, the self in this world and the world of interpersonal relations

Invested with emotion –
you care about these beliefs

The evaluations of something as good or bad for the self become ‘cherished beliefs’ – charged with emotion

The kind of cognitions, assumptions in which you have a vested interest.

Not *irrational* beliefs –
cherished beliefs

“He who does good meets good”

“Honesty is the best policy”

Creation of Meaning

The degree to which a particular cognition is cherished and the size of the discrepancy between the belief and the experience it meets, seems to determine the level of emotional arousal.

The centrality of the belief to the self-scheme also appears to affect the level of emotional arousal.

Emotional Arousal

Attend to Emotion

Symbol

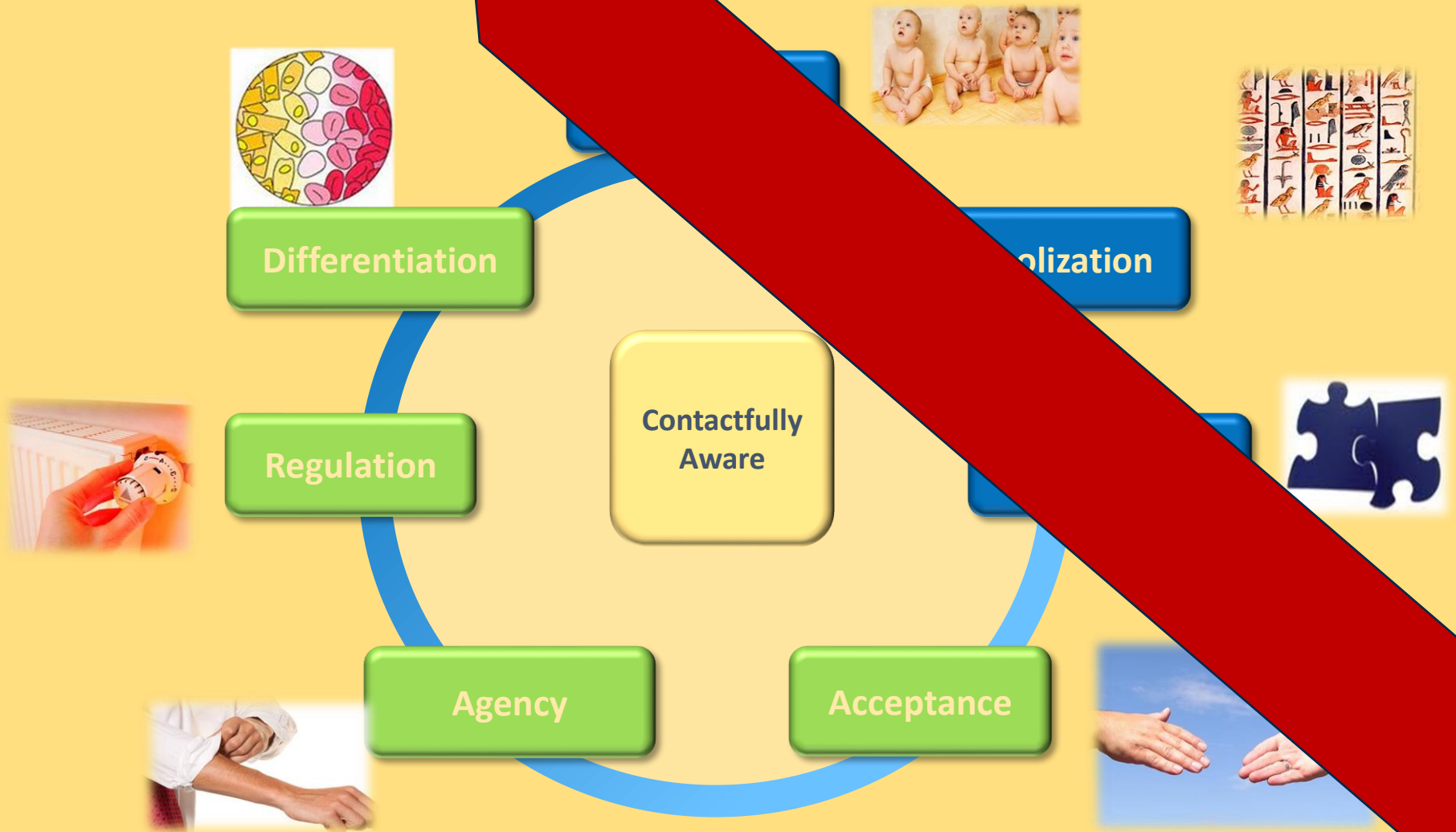
Adequate self-compassion

Accommodation

Emotional relief

Emotion Processing

(Auszra, Greenberg & ... 2013)



Theoretical Model



Gendlin

Gendlin (1962) described the essential activity involved in the creation of meaning as:

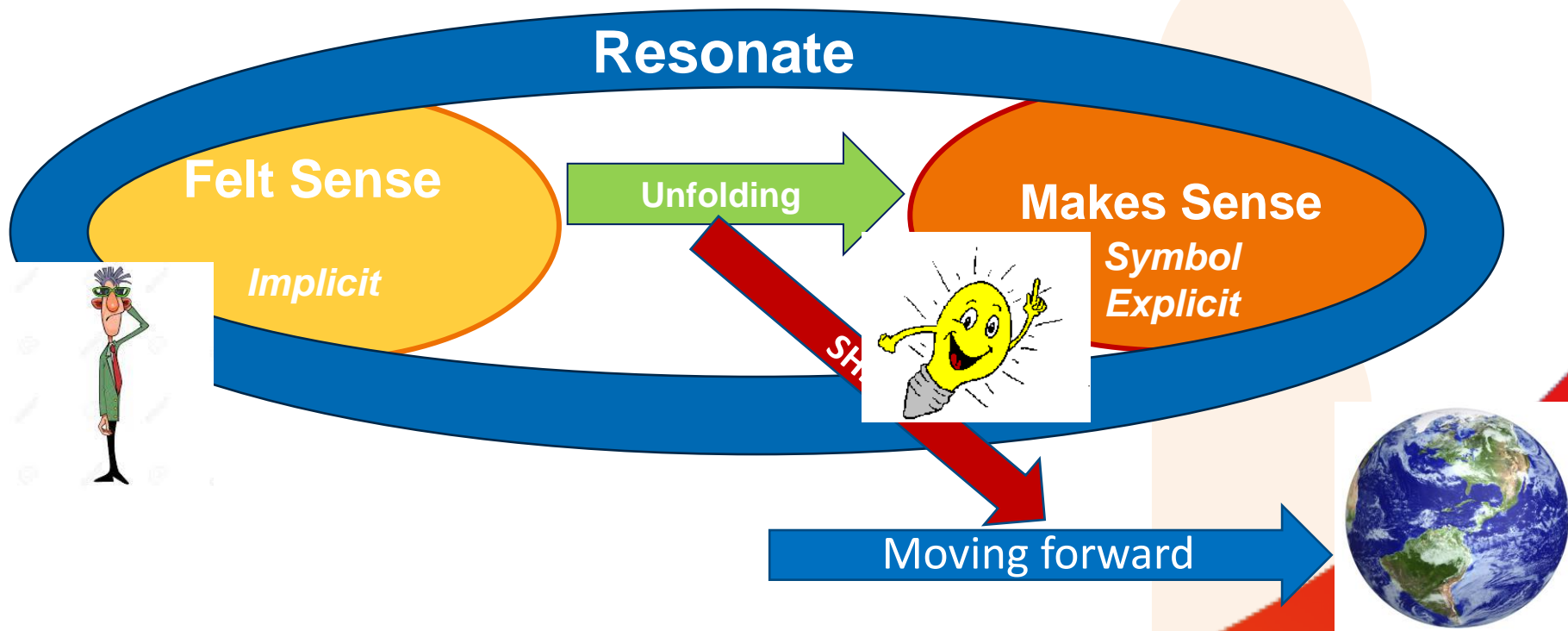
The individual attends to a "Felt Sense"— a stream of experiencing— and attempts to symbolize its meaning.

In this way the tacit knowledge that is inherent in experiencing becomes explicit.

What is Felt becomes Known

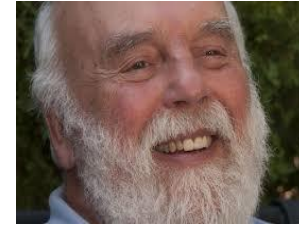
Core of Focusing

Symbolizing the implicit felt sense leads to unfolding and change:
"moving forward"



Theoretical Model

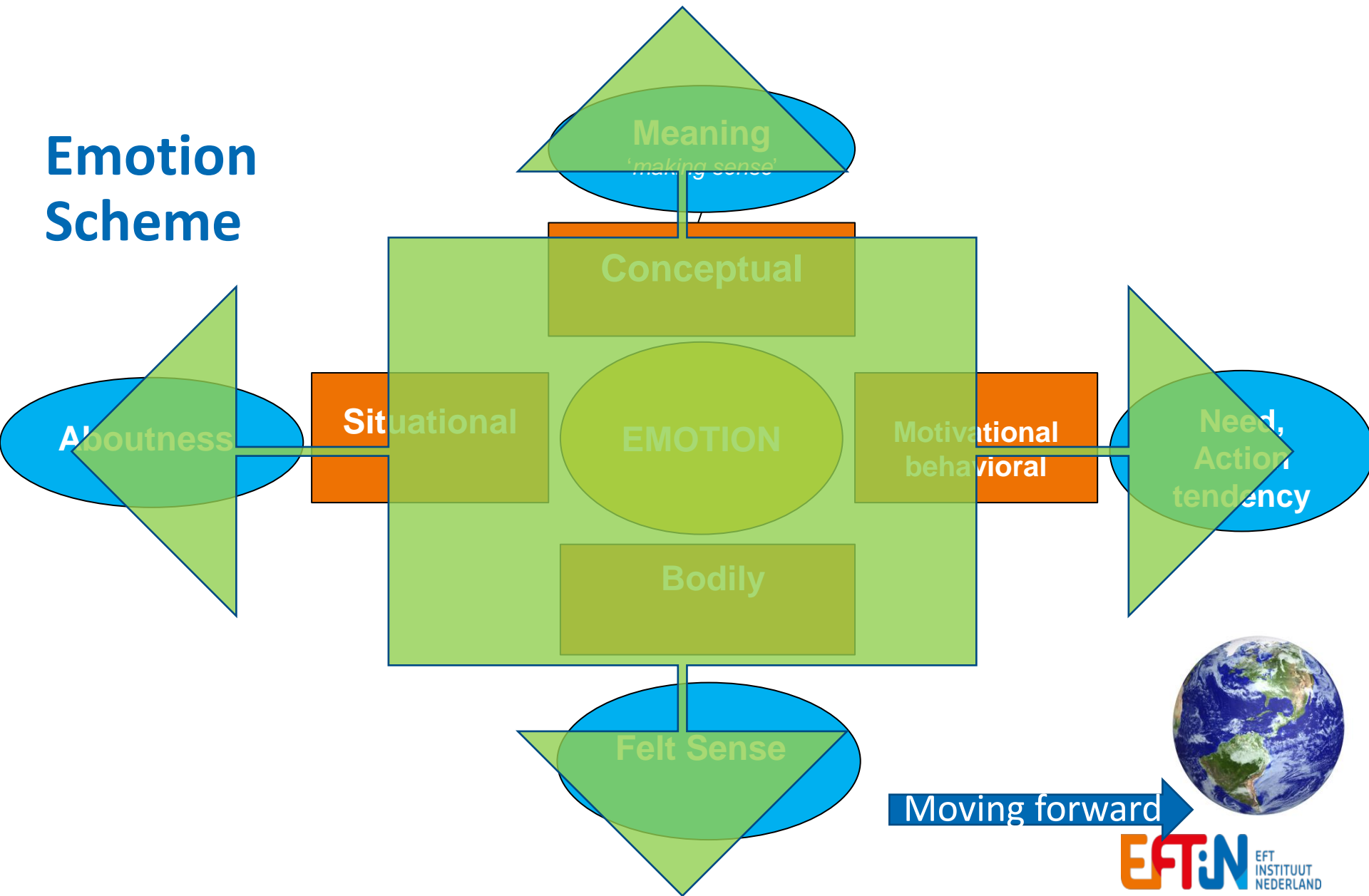
Greenberg



Greenberg and Safran (1987) describe this in information processing terms, suggesting that new affectively grounded meaning is created by attending to already existing emotional schemata and symbolizing them explicitly.

The process of shuttling back and forth between the conscious conceptual level and the automatic level of emotional schematic processing facilitates this explication.

Emotion Scheme



Moving forward →



Vanhooren



Existential concerns are decisive factors in how we feel. Meaning in life plays a crucial role in regard to our life satisfaction. The way we relate to our existential givens also plays a major role in our psychological suffering as well as in our growth. Therapists feel hesitant when existential themes become explicit.

“towards a being-centered approach?” (2023)

Vanhooren



As Rogers already suggested, it is high time to explore the existential layer more thoroughly and to facilitate existential processes in therapy **explicitly**.



There is no question that research into and knowledge of micro-processes is important



It becomes difficult to continue to see through the microscope the cosmos or 'das Ganze'. Have we, highly trained in therapeutic microscopy lost our ability to relate to this whole?

Perhaps, now that we have learned to look through the microscope we may also need a telescope



????

"La Vie" - Chagall





“The most personal is the most universal”

Death

Life

Meaninglessness

Meaning



Isolation

Connection

Freedom

Responsibility

Meaning Protest Marker Clarke 1989

1. Strong emotional arousal

**2. An indication of confronted or challenged
Cherished Beliefs**

**3. An indication of Confusion, surprise or lack
of understanding**

Be aware of

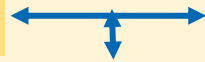
Pre- Marker: Global Distress

- Marker rarely presented in a neat, clear statement
- Emotional arousal with vagueness or confusion
 - Empathic Exploration
 - differentiate into **Meaning Protest**

Specification Phase

Preliminary performance model - Clarke 1991

Emotional Arousel



Vagueness or confusion about emotion

Statement of discrepant experience



Symbolization of cherished
belief(s) challenged

Symbolization of exact emotional
reaction to discrepant experience

Exploration Phase

Proposition: Why this feeling?

Hypothesis as to origin of cherished belief

Evaluation of tenability of cherished belief;
comparison of past and present experience

Judgment about tenability of cherished belief

Revision Phase

Alteration or elimination of cherished belief

Statement of exact change needed

Reference to or plans for the future

Meaning Symbolization Interventions

Uses metaphors or analogy

Condenses various feelings into words and symbols

Synthesizes the relationship between various thoughts and feelings

Verbally symbolizes the discrepancy between the cherished belief held and the experience met

Verbally symbolizes the emotional reaction to the discrepancy

Adequate symbolization is considered to be the essential ingredient for accomplishing this task

Nature of interaction: Referential Activity (Clarke 1996)

Because the task of creation of meaning involves verbal symbolization of 'felt experience' overall Referential Activity should be higher in succesful events:

Successful events:
RA of Therapist > Client

Unsuccesful events:
RA Therapist ≤ Client

Effective meaning creation is facilitated by the therapist providing verbal symbols to link the perceptual to the verbal domain.

1. Challenging life event

- Client refers to difficult painful life event that violates expectations
- Strong, dysregulated emotion, frustration, indignation

2. Emotional protest, often in the form of:

- Disbelief: *"I can't believe this."*
- Sense of unreality: *"This isn't happening."*
"These kinds of things don't happen."
"This doesn't feel real."
- Feeling of wrongness: *"It's not supposed to be like this."*
"This is just so wrong/unfair."

3. Confusion, surprise or lack of understanding

- Challenged cherished beliefs: one or more cherished beliefs are present or emerge
- High level of arousal interferes with ability to make sense out of the experience

EFT Task: Meaning Creation

1. Marker

Reflect/confirm marker with client. Offer task. Help client elaborate narrative of life event.

2. Specification of Cherished Belief

- Help client bring out core pain (use pain compass) and deepen associated cherished beliefs
- Validate and help regulate the pain

Empathic affirmation

- Narrative retelling:

Begin to explore and spell out, the exact nature of the cherished belief and the emotional reaction to challenging life event

“What is at stake?”

“What is the most painful?”

Empathic exploration, evocation

The Core Pain That Points To Cherished Belief

3. Self-Reflective Exploration of Reaction and Cherished Belief

Facilitate reflection on the origins and meaning of cherished beliefs in clients' lives. :

Experiential basis- *“why this feeling?”*

Historical sources – *“where does it come from?” “what is the origine of the cherished belief?”*

Meaning of cherished belief – *“how does it make sense in my live?”*

Empathic exploration, conjectures and validation

*Expressing
and
symbolizing
core pain:
emotional
reaction*



*Symbolizing
shattered
Cherished
Belief*

4. Exploring and Evaluating the tenability of the Cherished Belief

- Facilitate exploration of the continuing value of the belief in the client’s life
- Open to explore and change cherished belief key change point
- Explore “then” (origin) vs. “now” of cherished belief(s);
“Where does this get me at this point in my life?”
“how is this now?”

Partial
Resolution

5. Revision

- Listen for, reflect emergence of alternative formulations of cherished belief(s).
- Change in Cherished Beliefs sometimes involves simple change or softening in the belief itself
 - > *Changing it from an “is” belief about how the world is to a “ought” belief about how things should be*
 - > *Holding on to it as core belief but narrowing the range of the belief*
 - > *Strengthening belief as core cherished belief/value*
 - > *Change meaning of life event*
 - > *Renunciation, give up the cherished belief*
 - > *Accepting the consequences of the cherished belief*

Full
Resolution

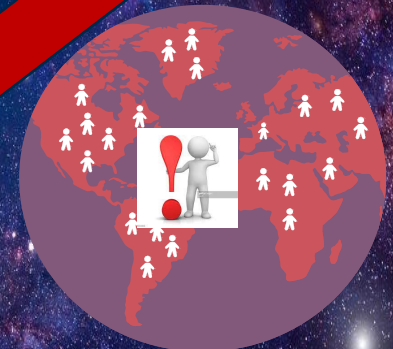
6. Action Planning - Moving Forward...

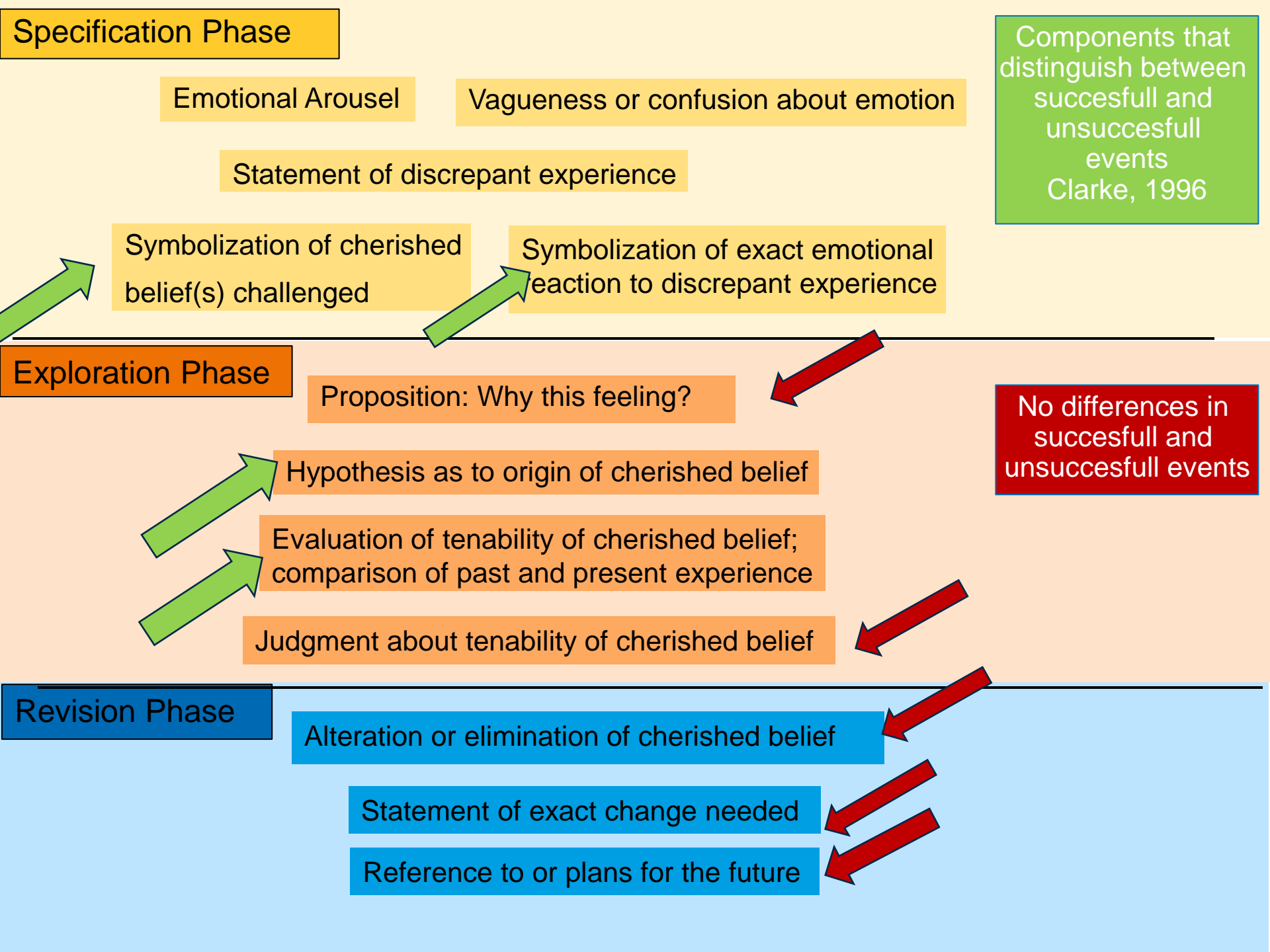
Explore consequences and potential actions based on revised, or more honored conscious cherished beliefs

Self ↔ Self
Self ↔ Other
Self ↔ World

There & Then

Here & Now





Specification Phase

Emotional Arousal

Vagueness or confusion about emotion

Statement of discrepant experience

Symbolization of cherished belief(s) challenged

Symbolization of exact emotional reaction to discrepant experience

Components that distinguish between successful and unsuccessful events
Clarke, 1996

Exploration Phase

Proposition: Why this feeling?

No differences in successful and unsuccessful events

Hypothesis as to origin of cherished belief

Evaluation of tenability of cherished belief; comparison of past and present experience

Judgment about tenability of cherished belief

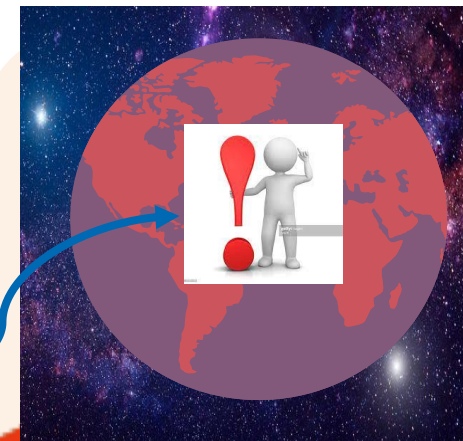
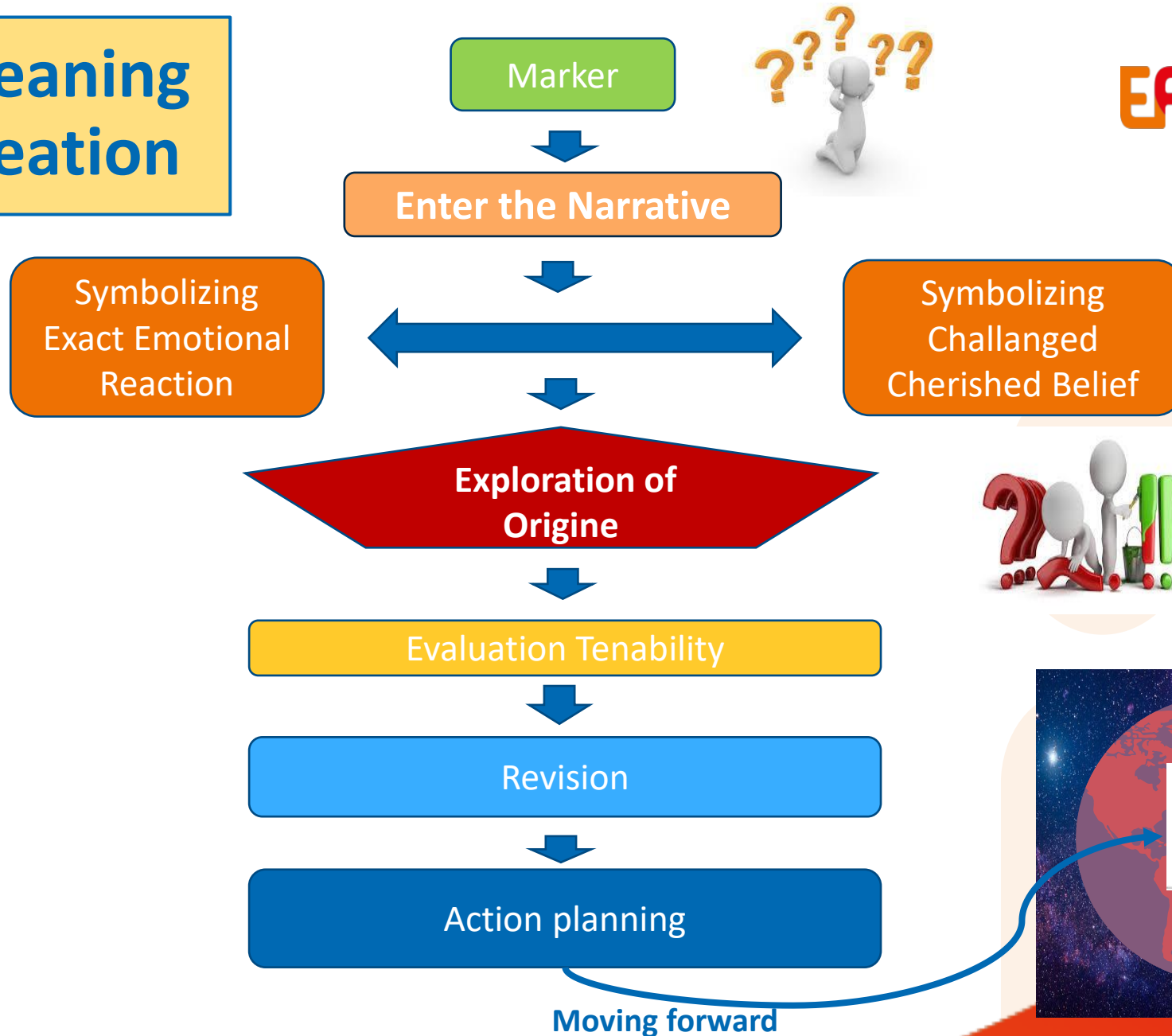
Revision Phase

Alteration or elimination of cherished belief

Statement of exact change needed

Reference to or plans for the future

Meaning Creation



Meaning Protest ← → Unfinished Bussiness

Closely related

Often related to abuse, violated bounderies or loss of significant others

Difference

- **Meaning Protest:** client highly emotionally aroused
core pain: violated cherished beliefs
- **Unfinished Bussiness:** emotion blocked or interrupted
core pain: unmet need

In surching for the origin of the Cherished Belief you may well find Unfinished Bussiness markers

Discussion & Questions

