

CONTACT AND INTERRUPTIONS TO CONTACT

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Aims of the workshop

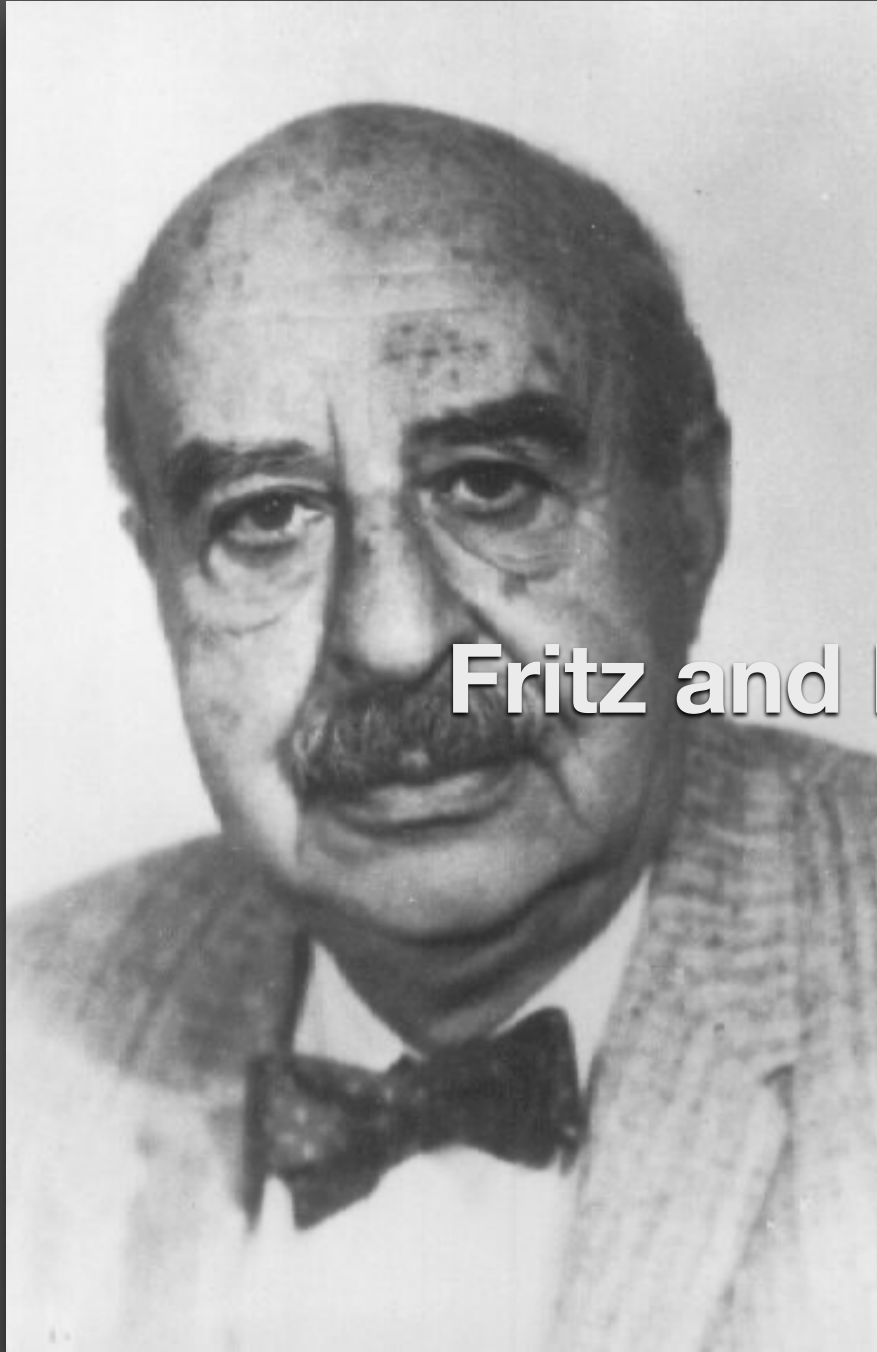
- To have a basic knowledge and understanding of contact and interruptions to contact within the framework of classical and contemporary Gestalt.
- To critically reflect on this from a relational perspective with an awareness of personal contact styles, how these manifest in our lives and how they can impact the therapeutic relationship.
- To link this understanding and awareness into an integrative framework based on presence, mindfulness, attunement, affect regulation and compassion.



Put your own life mask on first before helping others

Structure of the Workshop

- Theory and Experiential Exercises.
- Personal work in large group. Feedback and reflections.
- Small group practice? .
- Process and reflection in large group.



Fritz and Lore Perls

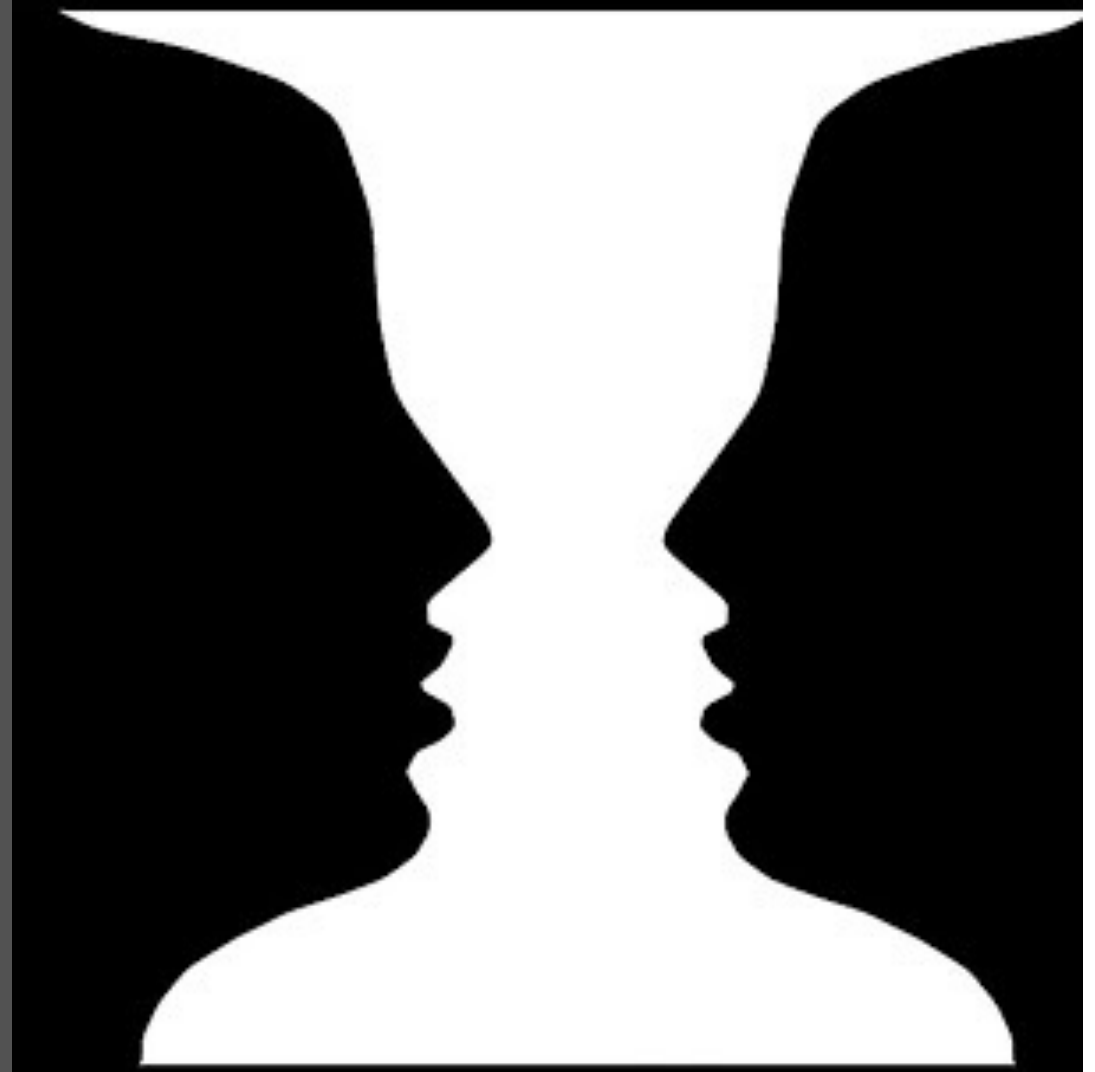


Fundamentals of Gestalt

- Gestalt: The whole is more than the sum of the parts.
- Holism : body, affect, emotions, cognitions, social and spiritual dimensions.
- Phenomenology: a search for understanding/meaning based on what is revealed by the situation rather than the interpretation of the observer.
- Field Theory : organismic regulation within the context of the environmental field.
- Here and Now: immediate experience, incorporating the 'here and then' and 'there and then'.
- Response-ability: Existentialism.
- Dialogic relationship, presence, inclusion, mutuality, co-creation, the between.
- Creativity, experiment, metaphor.
- Awareness: a form of experiencing, of being 'in contact' with self, other, the environment.

Making Sense of the Field

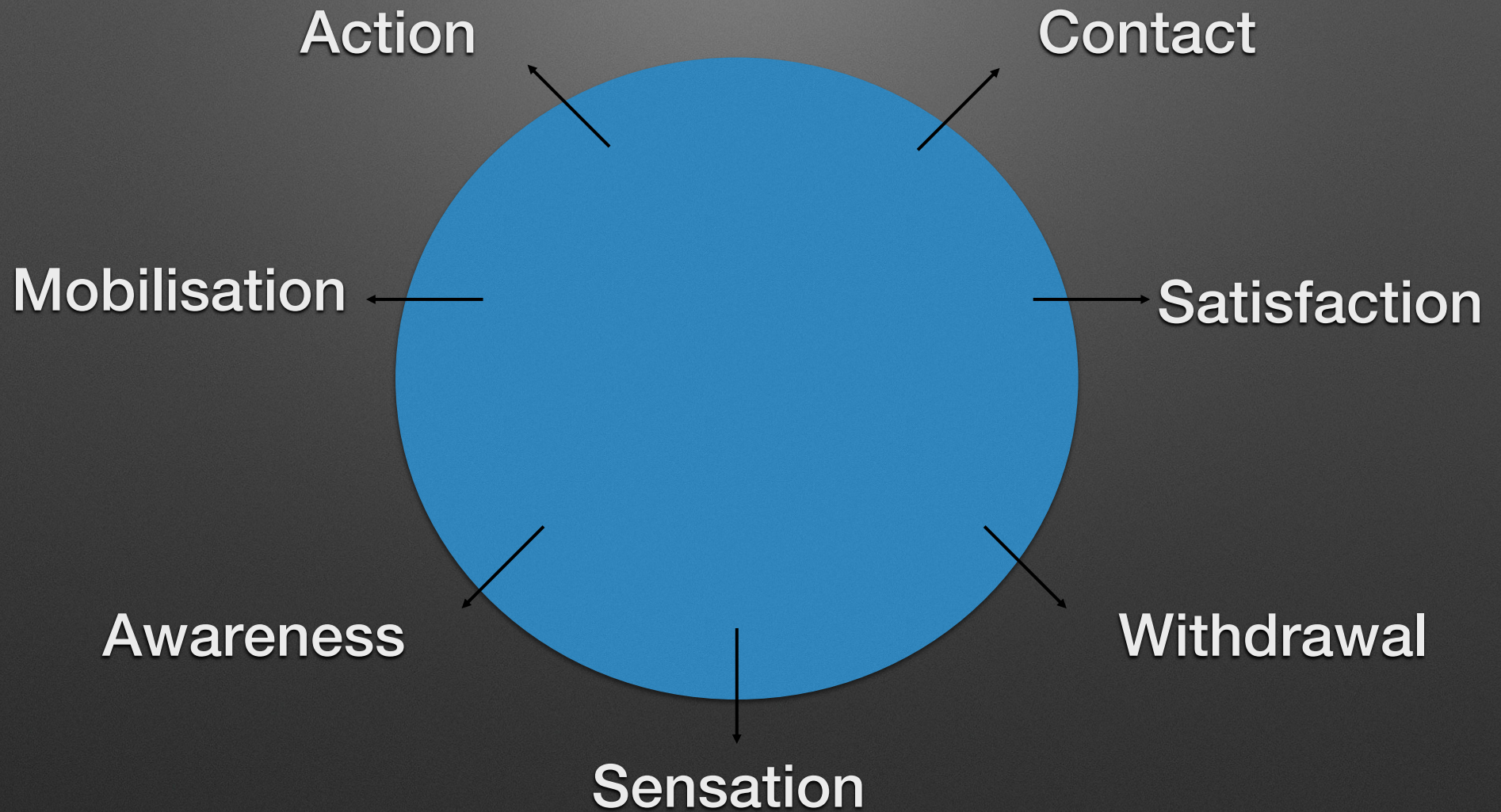
- The Urge to Complete
- Figure and Ground
- Self /Other Regulation



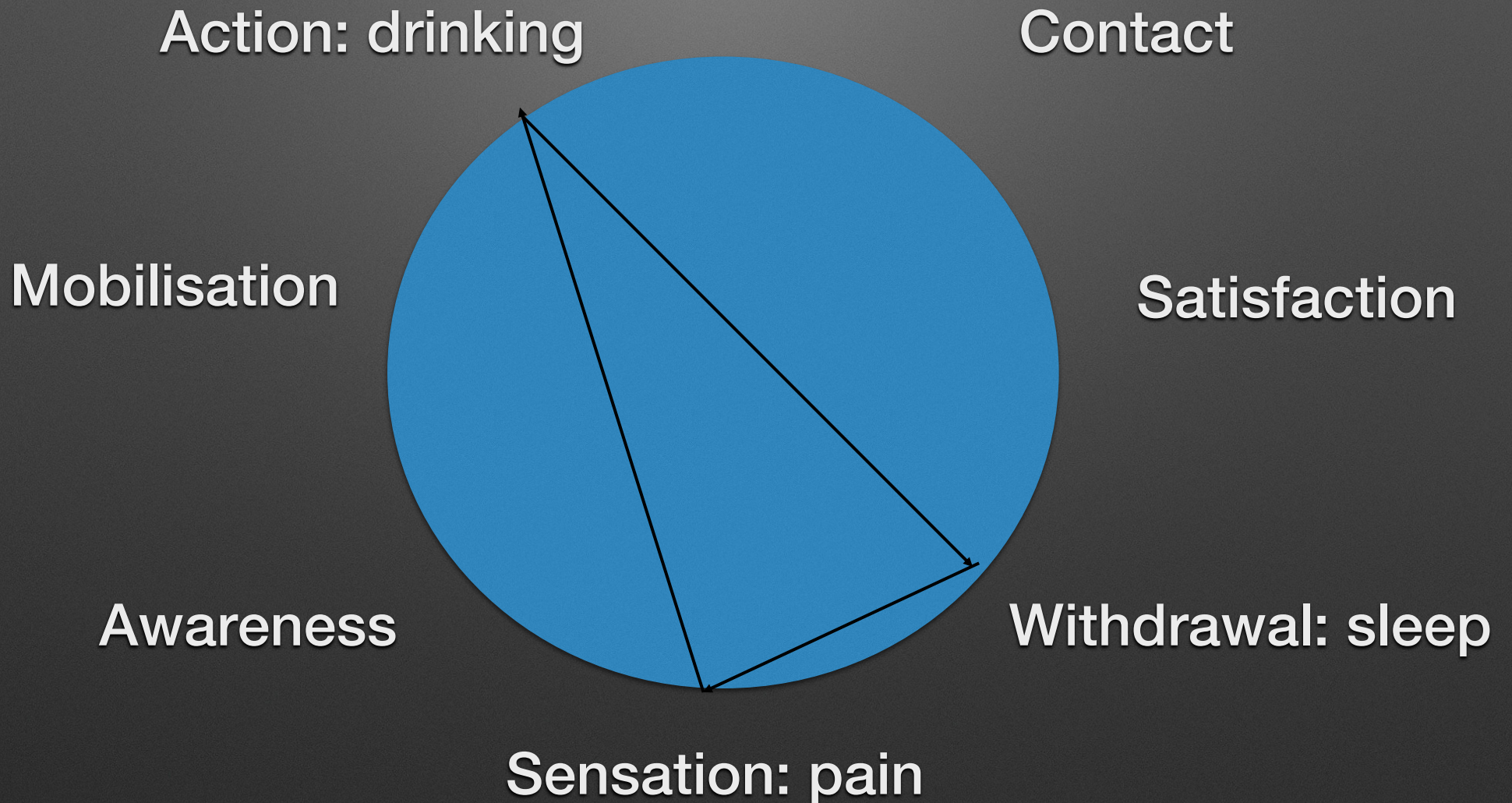
Contact

- Focusing clearly and vividly on the most important aspect of a situation.
- Whole hearted and full engagement with that which is most significant at a given moment.
- Implicitly incompatible with staying the same.
- Takes place at the boundary of the self and the environment.

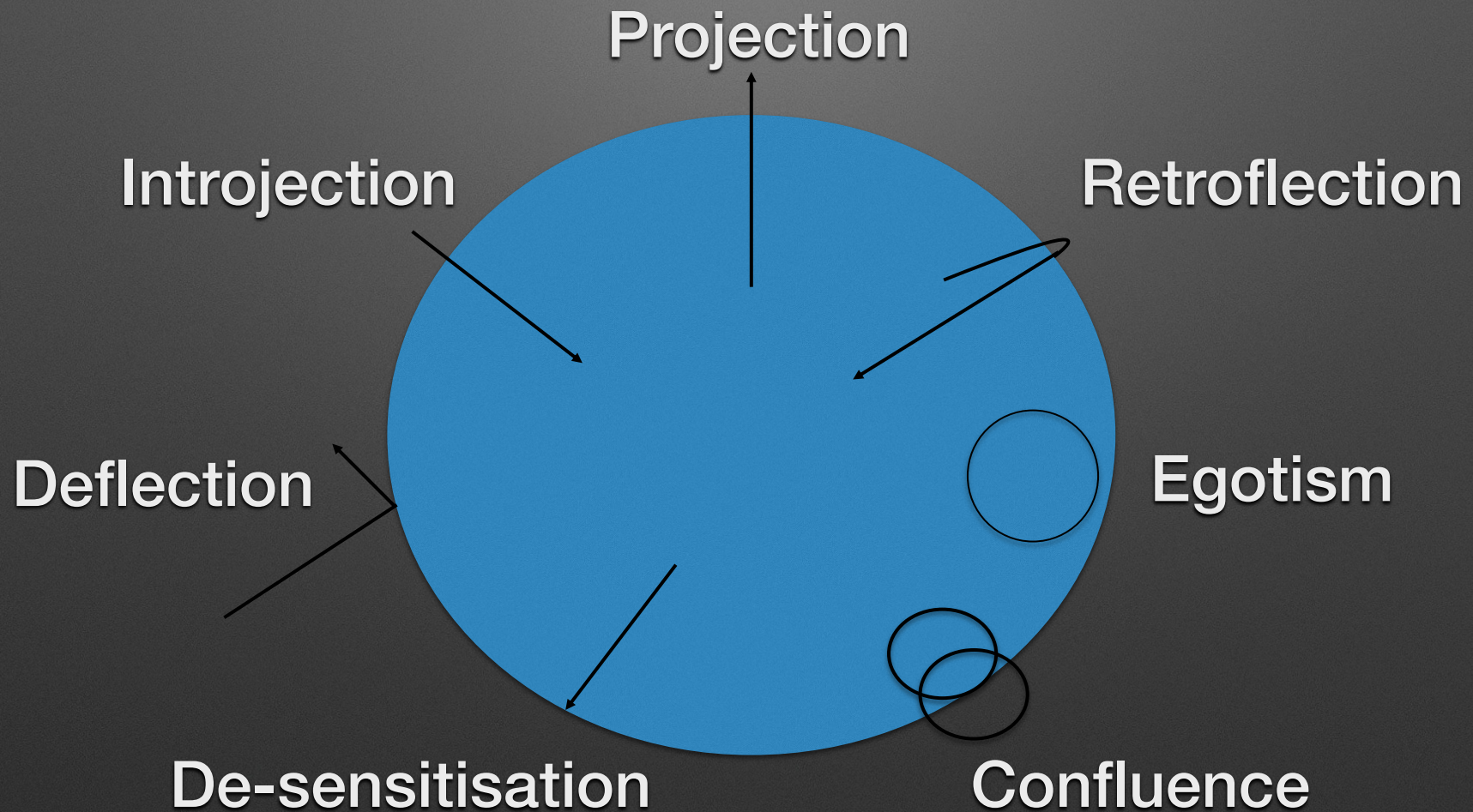
Contact Cycle



Incomplete or fixed Gestalt



Interruptions to Contact



Interruptions to Contact

- De-sensitisation
- Introjection
- Projection
- Retroflection
- Deflection
- Confluence
- Egotism
- Pro-flection.

Introjection

- Being governed by internalised shoulds.
- Not questioning or chewing over, swallowing whole without discrimination.
- 'Rules' coming from family, school, church, society, culture...
- Limiting beliefs/ Injunctions.
- Can be absorbed by osmosis.



Projection

- Seeing in others what I don't acknowledge in myself.
- Attributing a disowned trait, attitude or feeling to another.
- Can be constructive-anticipation, planning, creativity.
- Can be very damaging-scapegoating, prejudice.



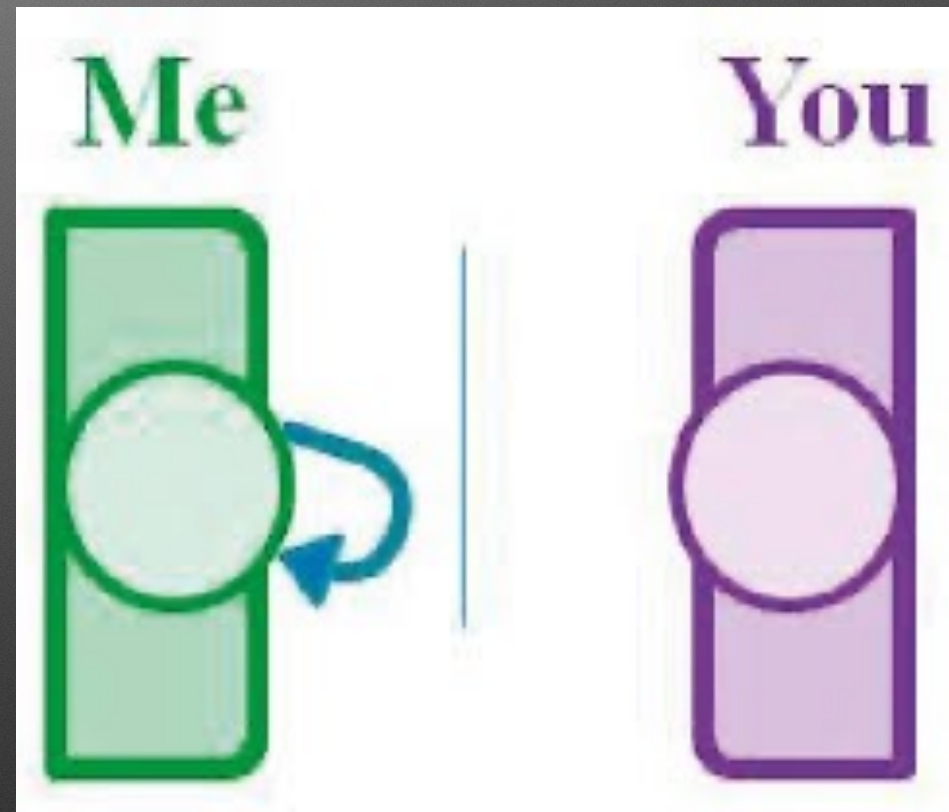
De- sensitisation

- Minimising or losing sensation for example of bodily needs or emotions.
- Sensations and feelings are diluted, disregarded, neglected.
- Feeling anaesthetised / deadened, shut down.



Retroflection

- Doing to myself instead of to the other.
- Turning back against the self.
- Holding in an impulse instead of taking action.
- Somatising.
- Proflection.



Deflection

- Avoiding sensation or meaningful impact
- Turning aside from direct contact with self/another / the environment
- Energy used inefficiently, avoiding genuine feedback form self or others
- Examples: humour, changing the subject, intellectualisation



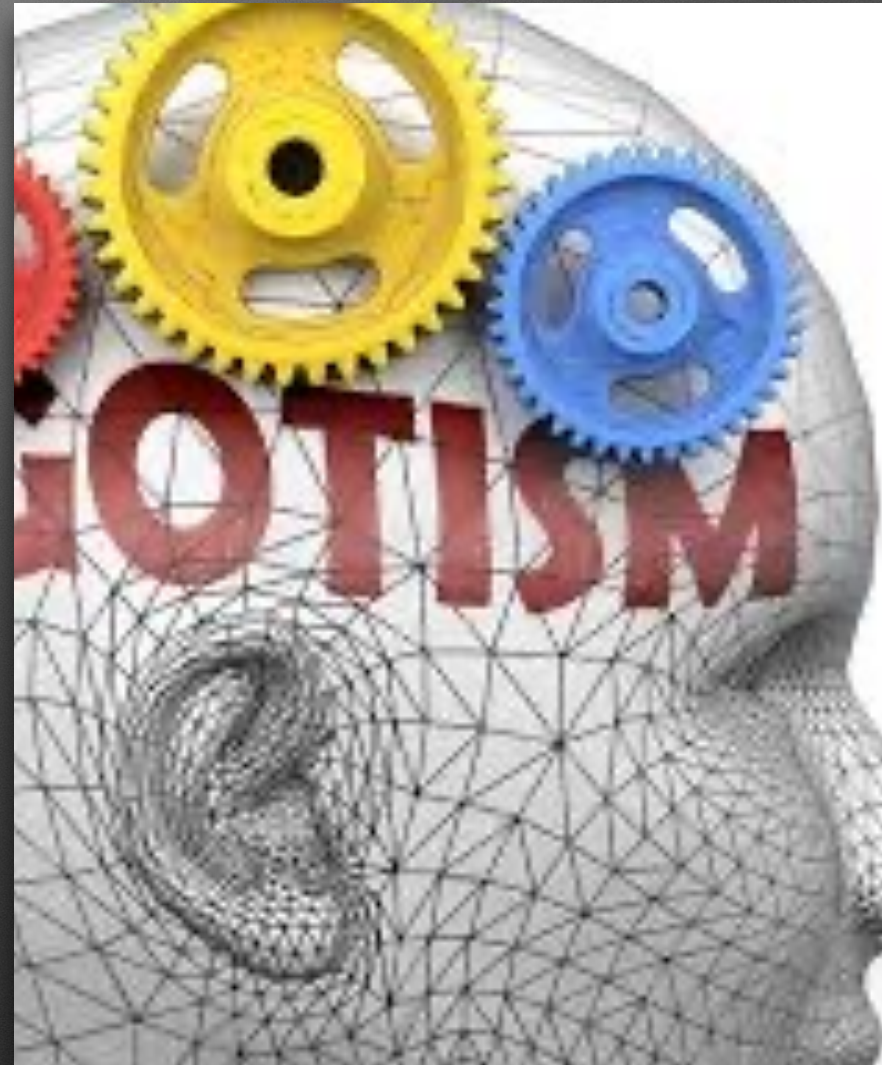
Confluence

- Lack of differentiation, boundaries.
- Unhealthy merger.
- ‘We’ think, feel, do..
- ‘Separateness’ feels threatening, fear of existential ‘aloneness.’



Egotism

- Blocking spontaneity through control.
- Self conscious, spectating of the self, internal commentary.
- Chronic egotism can lead to narcissistic personality styles.
- Interrupts full experience of satisfaction.



Modifications of Contact

De-sensitisation

Sensitivity

Over sensitivity

Introjection

Chewing over

Rejection

Projection

Imagination

Owning

Retroflection

Expression

Aggression/Proflection

Deflection

Focusing

Directness/bluntness

Confluence

Differentiation/separation

Isolation

Egotism

Spontaneity

Impulsivity

Observations of Contact Functions

- Appearance
- Verbal- sound and quality of voice and expression
- Seeing, eyes, eye contact
- Hearing, mishearing
- Smell
- Taste, eating
- Movement , mobility, use of space, touch



Being available at the contact boundary

- Being grounded, moderating presence, mindful awareness of what you bring to the meeting.
- Offering attunement, inclusion - the client feels seen, understood, “felt.”
- Compassion.
- Resonance, reciprocity.
- Alliance, trust.
- Organismic regulation/ affect regulation.



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