

How mindfulness works in organisations...

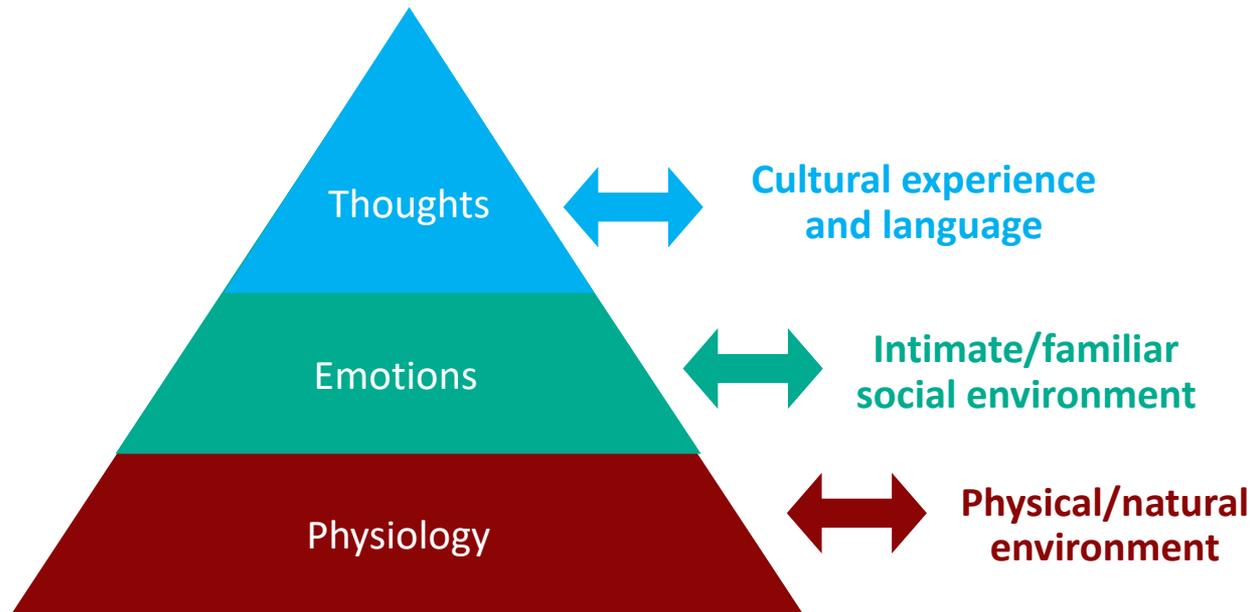
- We need to understand how the human mind works
- We need to understand how we create a sense of self
- ‘Social mindfulness’ works in three domains
- Q&A

Mark Leonard, Mindfulness Connected

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The human mind integrates physiology, emotions and thinking in relationship to the human environment



The Default Mode Network – ‘connections’ in our brains that make us human

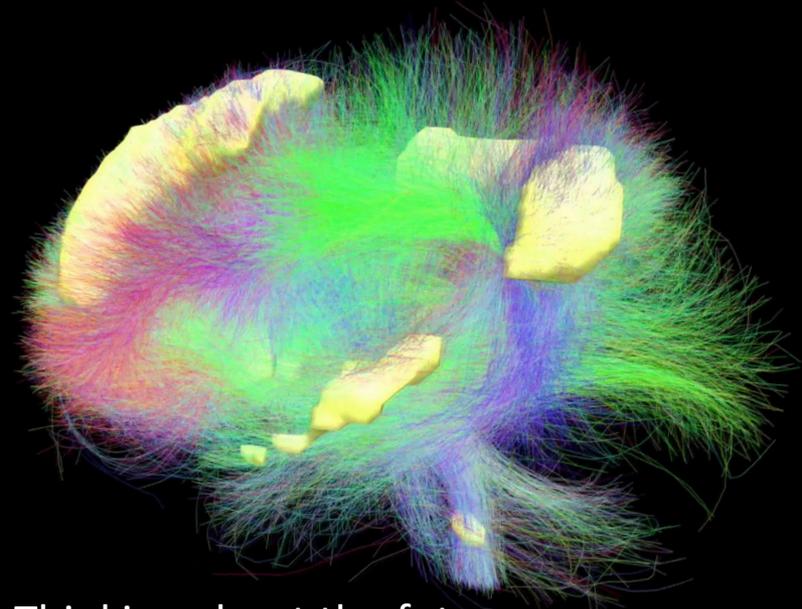
Symbolic processing

The neurological basis for the self:

- *Autobiographical information*
- *Self-reference*
- *Emotion of one's self.*

Thinking about others:

- *Thinking about what others think*
- *Think about emotions of others*
- *Moral reasoning*
- *Making value judgments*
- *Evaluating social status.*



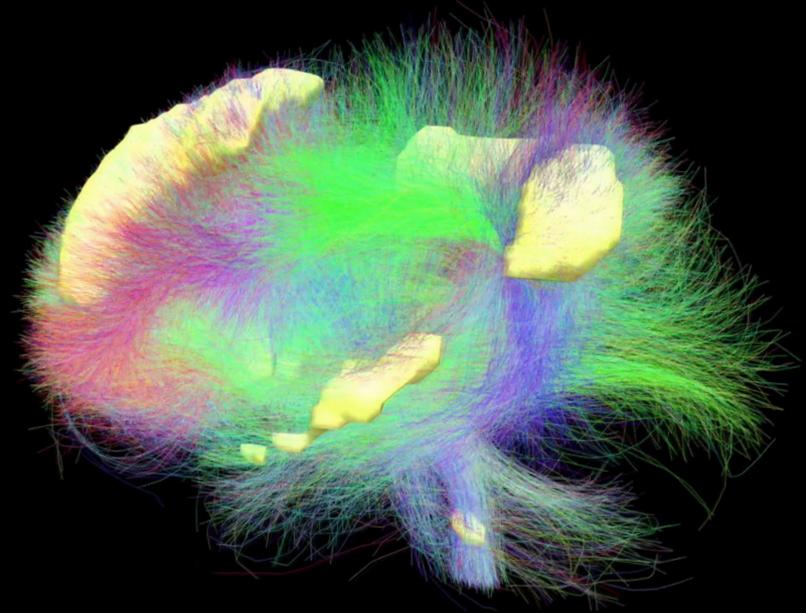
Thinking about the future:

- *Remembering the past*
- *Imagining the future*
- *Remembering events*
- *Piecing the story together.*

Our brains are not made to spend so much time problem-solving – and this becomes a problem

	Goal oriented tasks (implicit threat)	Activity without an objective (implicit safety)
DMN de-activated when attention absorbed in activity	Adrenaline fueled physical activity	Social bonding Play
DMN activated	Problem-solving Ruminating Planning	Creative mind- wandering Processing past experiences Intuition

If the 'mind' is over-active, we can't focus on a task – we need to re-connect with our feelings to think clearly



- DMN deactivates when attention is focus on a goal-oriented task.
- Failure to deactivate at proper times impairs cognitive function.

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The way we are made



Source: Maturana et al (2012). *The Origin of Humanness in the Biology of Love*

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Powerful creations from an imaginary world



Source: Harari (2011). Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind.

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There is a cost to organising ourselves in large groups



There is a cost to organising ourselves in large groups



We are not evolved for modern life, and it shows

	Everyday experience	Nature of threat	Frequency	Predictability	'Self-construct'
Hunter-gatherer	Emotional security	Life-threatening	Infrequent/short lived	Unpredictable	?
'Modern' society	Stressful	Threat to self-worth	Much of the time	Predictable	Psychological individual



The causes of distress more to do with social conditions than to do with individual weakness



“It is my belief that we are as profoundly misled by the perspective from self-as-centre as our ancestors were by their geocentric view of the universe.”

David Smail, Professor of Clinical Psychology

Source: Smail (2005). *Power, Interest and Psychology: Elements of a Social Materialist Understanding of Distress*.

Wellbeing is a social function, it's not a psychological process



“You know, we had a lot of trouble with western mental health workers who came here immediately after the genocide and we had to ask some of them to leave.

“What was the problem?” I asked.

A Rwandan talking to author, Andrew Solomon

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“They came and their practice did not involve being outside in the sun where you begin to feel better. There was no music or drumming to get your blood flowing again. There was no sense that everyone had taken the day off so that the entire community could come together to try to lift you up and bring you back to joy, there was no acknowledgement of the depression as something invasive and external that could actually be cast out again.” He paused meaningfully. “Instead they would take people one at a time into these dingy little rooms and have them sit around for an hour or so and talk about bad things that had happened to them. We had to ask them to leave.”

Holding hands shares out pain



...findings support the theoretical framework of a biopsychosocial model of pain that suggests a dynamic interaction between biological, psychological, and social factors affecting pain perception.

Source: Goldstein et al (2018). *Brain-to-brain coupling during hand-holding is associated with pain reduction.*

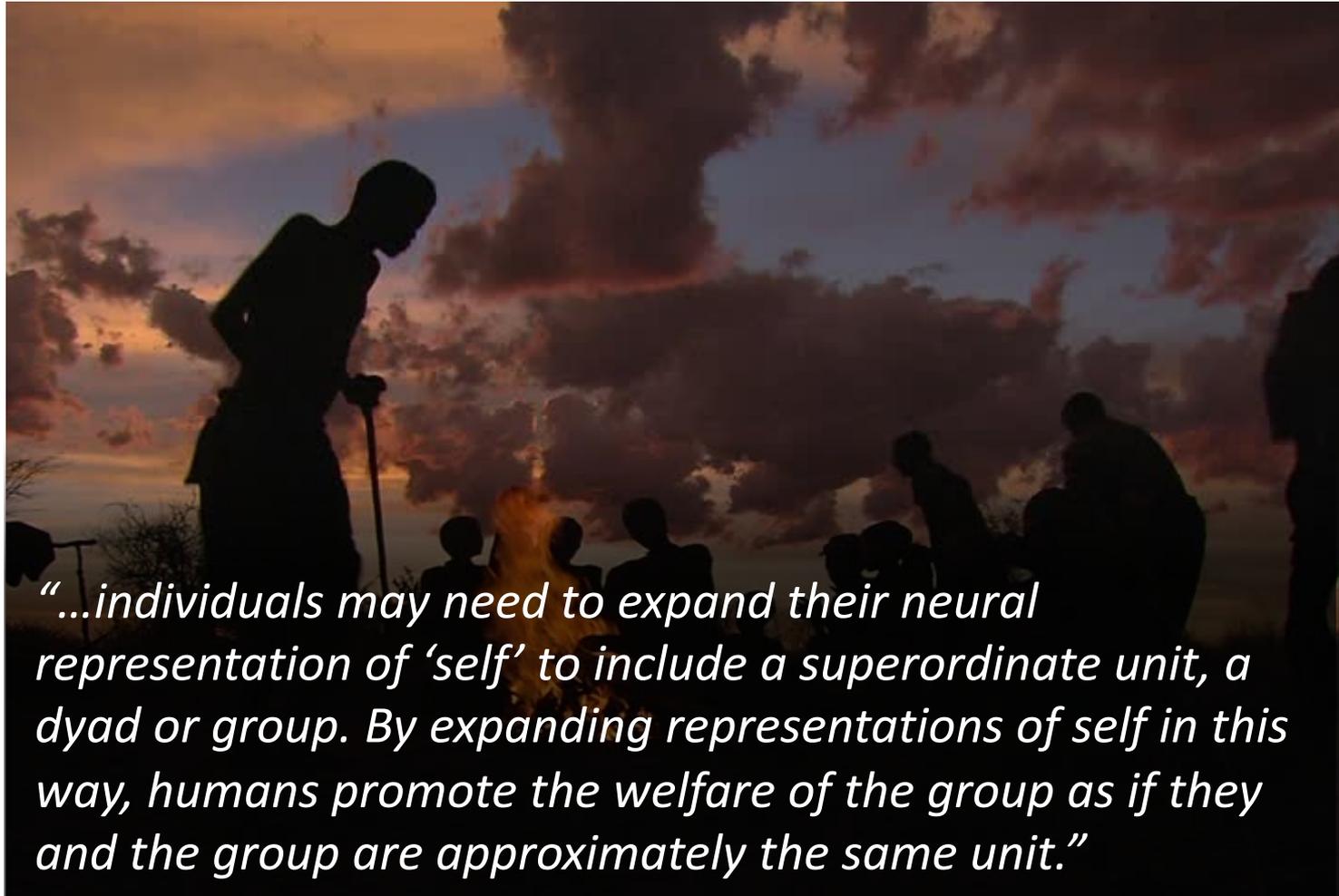
And many hands make light work



Participants accompanied by a friend estimated a hill to be less steep when compared to participants who were alone.

Source: Schnall et al (2008). *Social Support and Perception of Geographical Slant*.

We need each other – we *are* each other

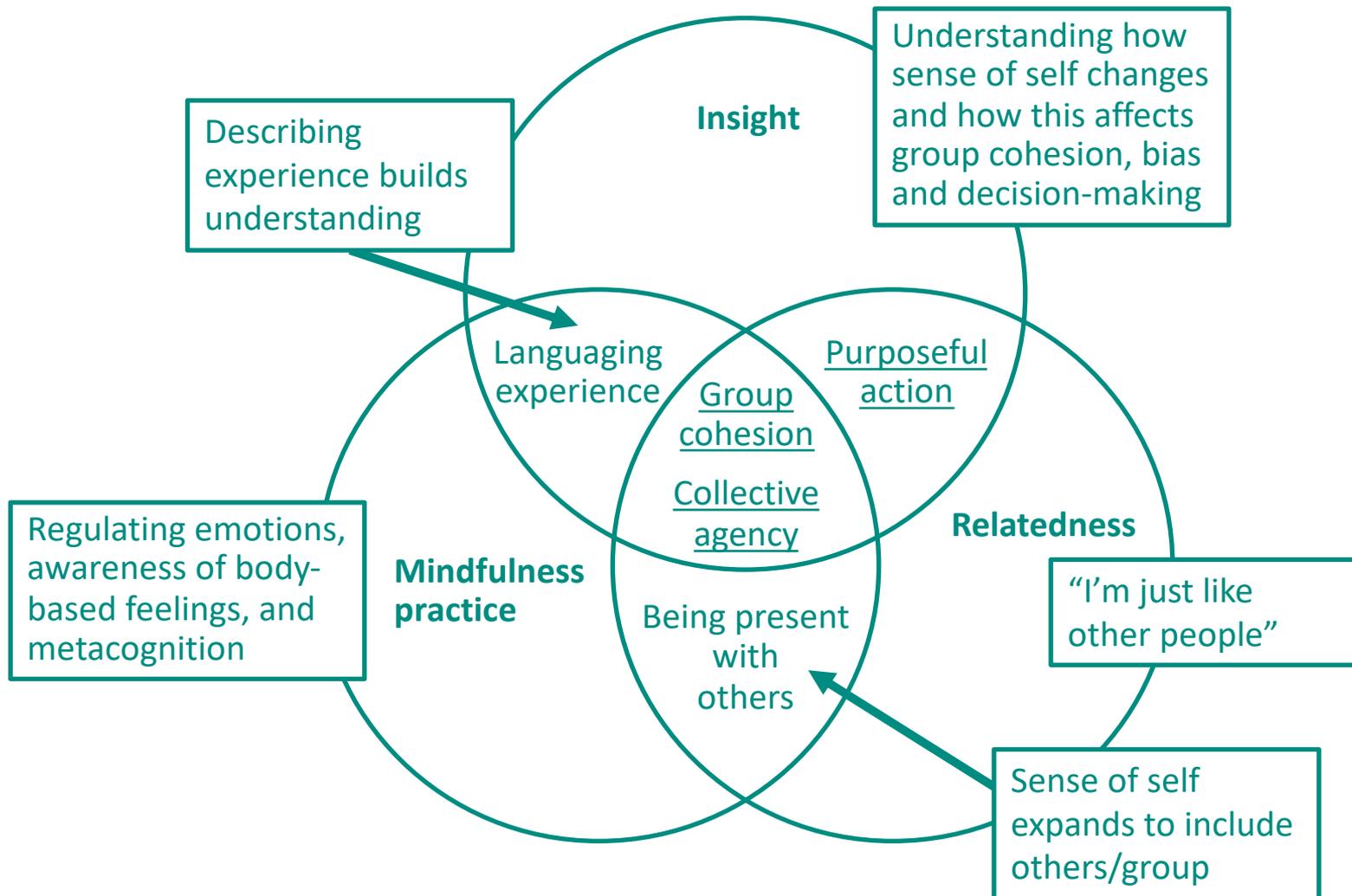


Source: Beckes et al (2013) *Familiarity promotes the blurring of self and other in the neural representation of threat.*

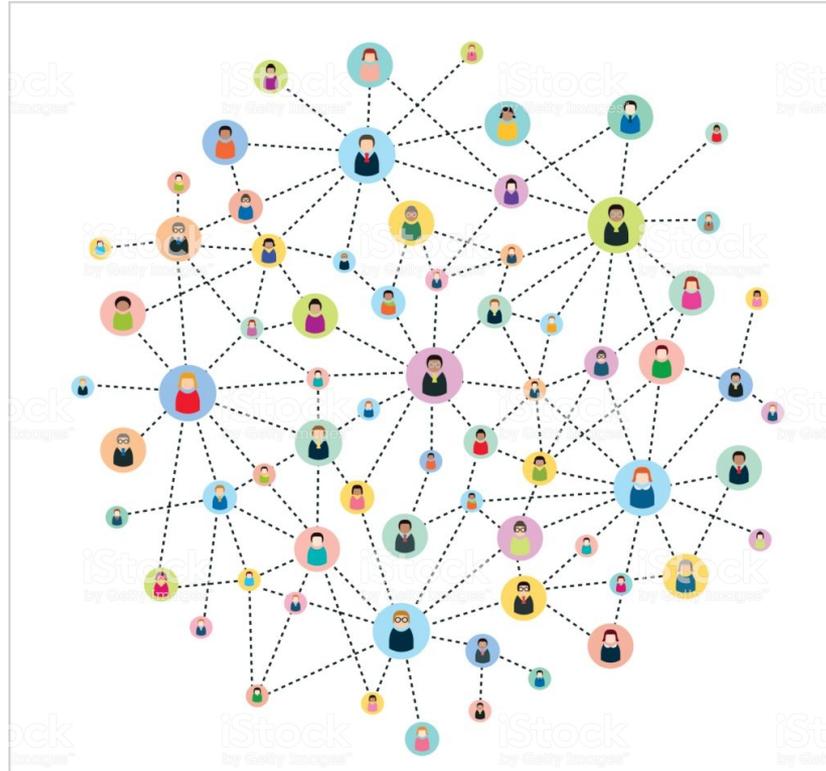
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Social mindfulness has three domains – it's not just 'mindfulness'



A 'critical mass' leads to organisational change



Tipping point reached with a critical mass of 25% committed to change

Source: Centola et al. (2018) *Experimental evidence for tipping points in social convention*

UKGBC early findings

Intent

Collective intent from Inquiry calls (heard from multiple people)

- Be more conscious of others' styles
- More trusting relationships
- Empathise with others' difficult feelings e.g., interpersonal, despair eco-grief
- Being able to reduce my personal stress levels
- More team cohesiveness

Social Mindfulness intent

- Experiencing difficult feelings paradoxically dissipating when approached with curiosity
- Experiencing the wandering mind paradoxically wandering less when approached with curiosity
- Understanding it's about 'being kind'

Outcome

- All those intents mentioned as outcomes by multiple survey respondents – not everyone, but it's not going to be everyone at this stage and the journey's far from over
- 'Nut and bolts' of theory explained
- Experience available through guided mindfulness practice
- Incredible effort to stick with this virtually

- A 'critical mass' of you has expressed having these experiences - some noticed how they lead to greater choice
- Words like "compassion" and "empathy" were introduced by you, not us

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