

What's Right with Me? A Healing Journey

Moving away from the instability of self-esteem toward something more profound. This presentation explores a three-phase journey to discover what's right within ourselves.



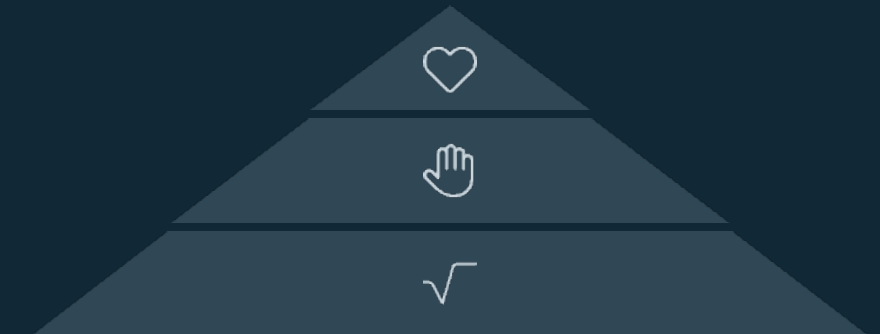
by Peter Koufos






The Foundation: Self-Acceptance



- **Self-acceptance reduces shame and self-blame, shifting the focus from self-judgment to healing.**
- **Self-compassion is a crucial part of self-acceptance.**
- **Everything that has a front has a back, meaning that almost everything has dimension.**
- **Behind self-acceptance is the supporting structure of mindfulness and self-compassion, giving us a dimension that self-esteem cannot provide.**



-  **Resilience**
The strength to bounce back from life's challenges
-  **Self-kindness**
Treating ourselves with the care we'd offer a friend
-  **Self-acceptance**
The foundation that reduces shame and self-blame

Beyond Self-Esteem's Limitations

The Problem with Self-Esteem

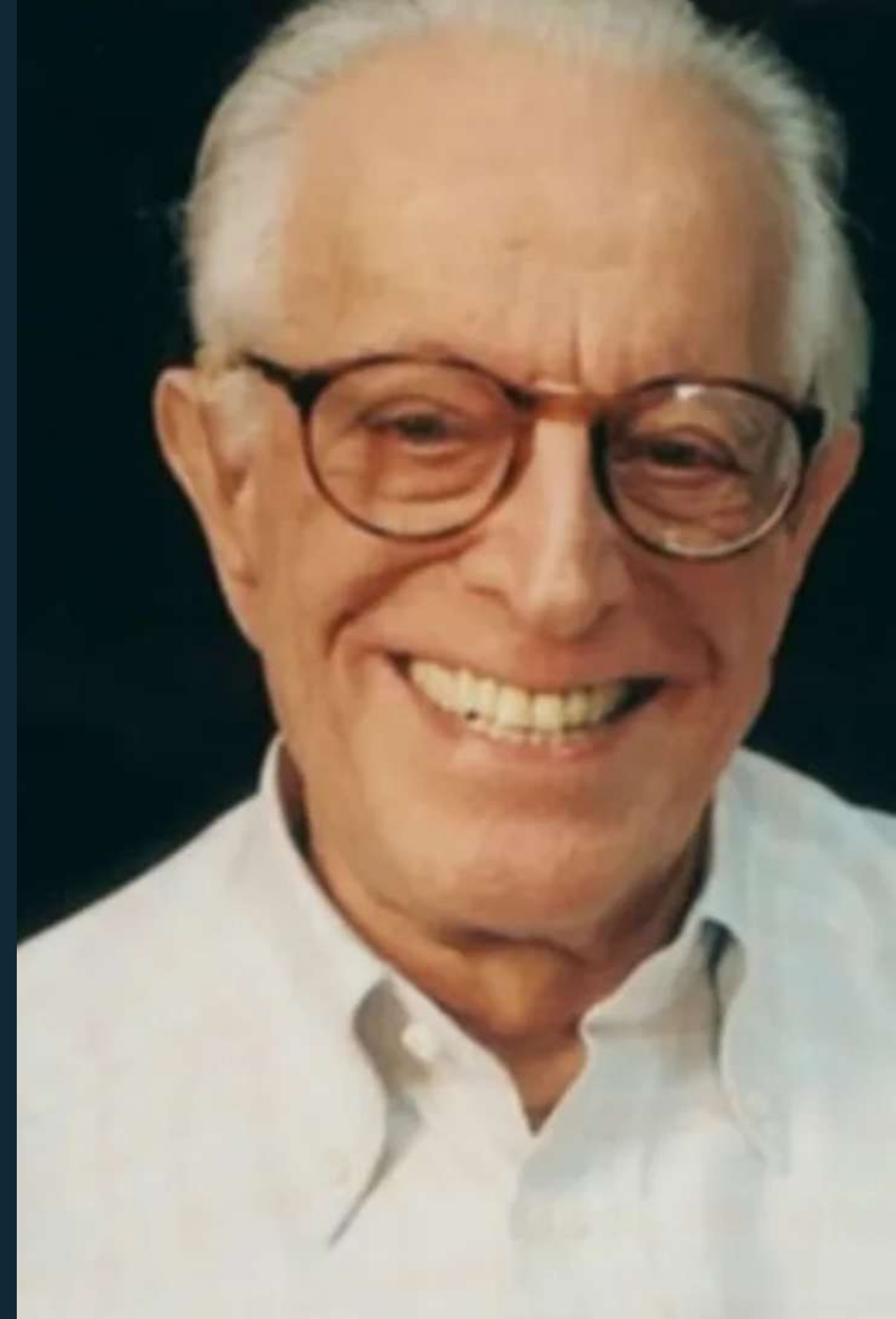
Self-esteem is inconsistent and conditional. It follows rigid rules for what makes us "worthy."

Albert Ellis's Insight

The founder of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy viewed self-esteem as a harmful myth leading to emotional disturbance.

A Better Alternative

Self-acceptance offers stability. There is no right or wrong way to be yourself.



Ellis's Critique of Self-Esteem



Conditional & Unstable

Self-esteem depends on meeting specific standards, causing emotional fluctuations with each success or failure.



External Validation

We praise ourselves when others approve but condemn ourselves when they don't.



Hindrance to Growth

This conditional nature creates emotional setbacks and prevents personal development.

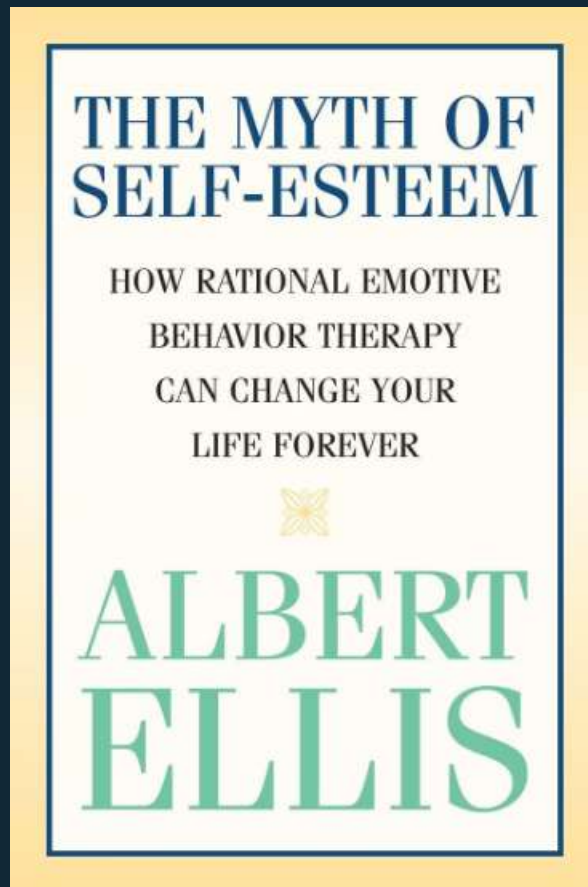
THE MYTH OF SELF-ESTEEM

HOW RATIONAL EMOTIVE
BEHAVIOR THERAPY
CAN CHANGE YOUR
LIFE FOREVER



ALBERT
ELLIS

The Unhealthy Pursuit



Emotional Disturbance

Ellis believed pursuing self-esteem causes **great emotional disturbance** by tying worth to external factors.

This creates anxiety when our image is threatened.

Self-Centeredness

It leads to an unhealthy focus on maintaining a positive image rather than genuine growth.

We become prisoners to others' opinions.

The Better Alternative

Ellis championed unconditional self-acceptance instead. This means embracing ourselves fully, flaws and all.

↘
No external validation required.

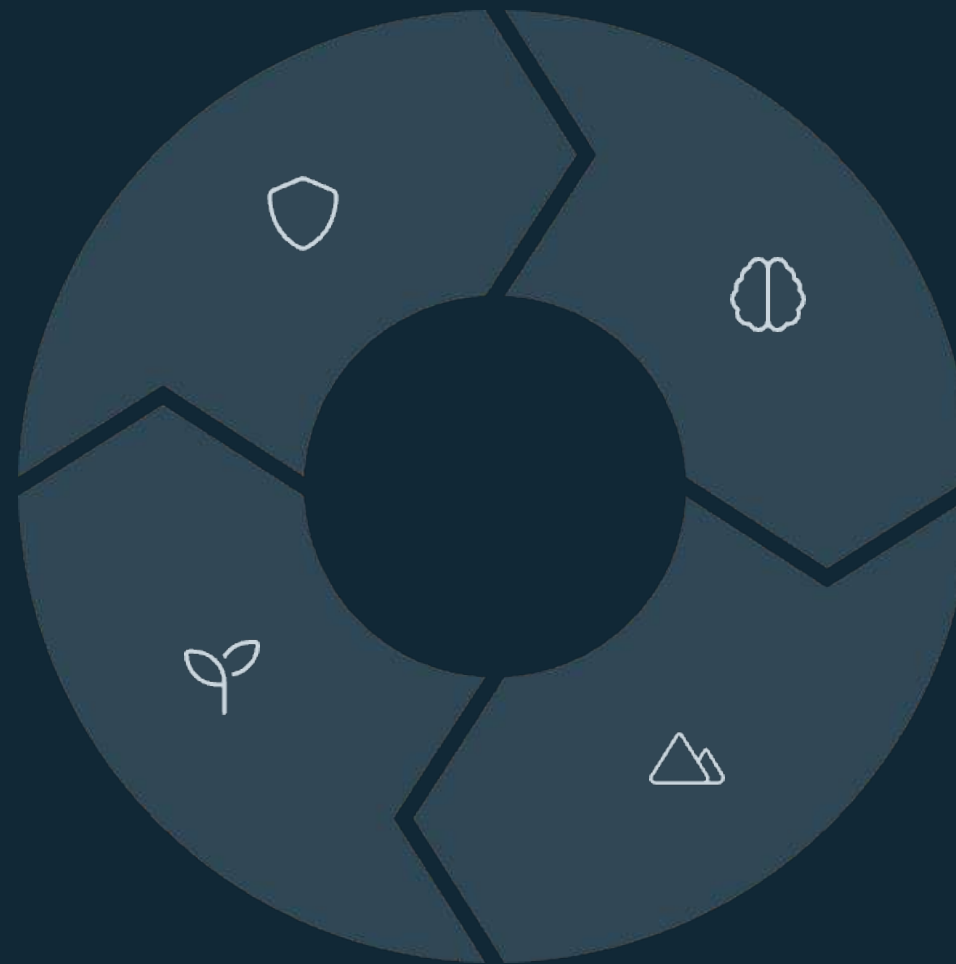
The Benefits of Self-Acceptance

Emotional Resilience

Self-acceptance builds a inner strength to effecticely face life's inevitable ups and downs.

Personal Growth

Focus shifts from validation to genuine well-being and development.



Mental Health

It reduces anxiety and depression by removing the pressure of perfection.

Fearless Pursuits

We can pursue our goals without the paralyzing fear of failure.

The Healing Journey Begins



Awareness

Recognizing healing unfolds in stages



Navigation

Understanding where we are in the process



Transformation

Moving through each phase with compassion

Healing isn't linear. It's a journey, sometimes with distinct phases that we embrace to progress.

Phase 1: "What's Wrong With Me?"



Self-Criticism

Constantly searching for personal flaws and defects



Shame & Blame

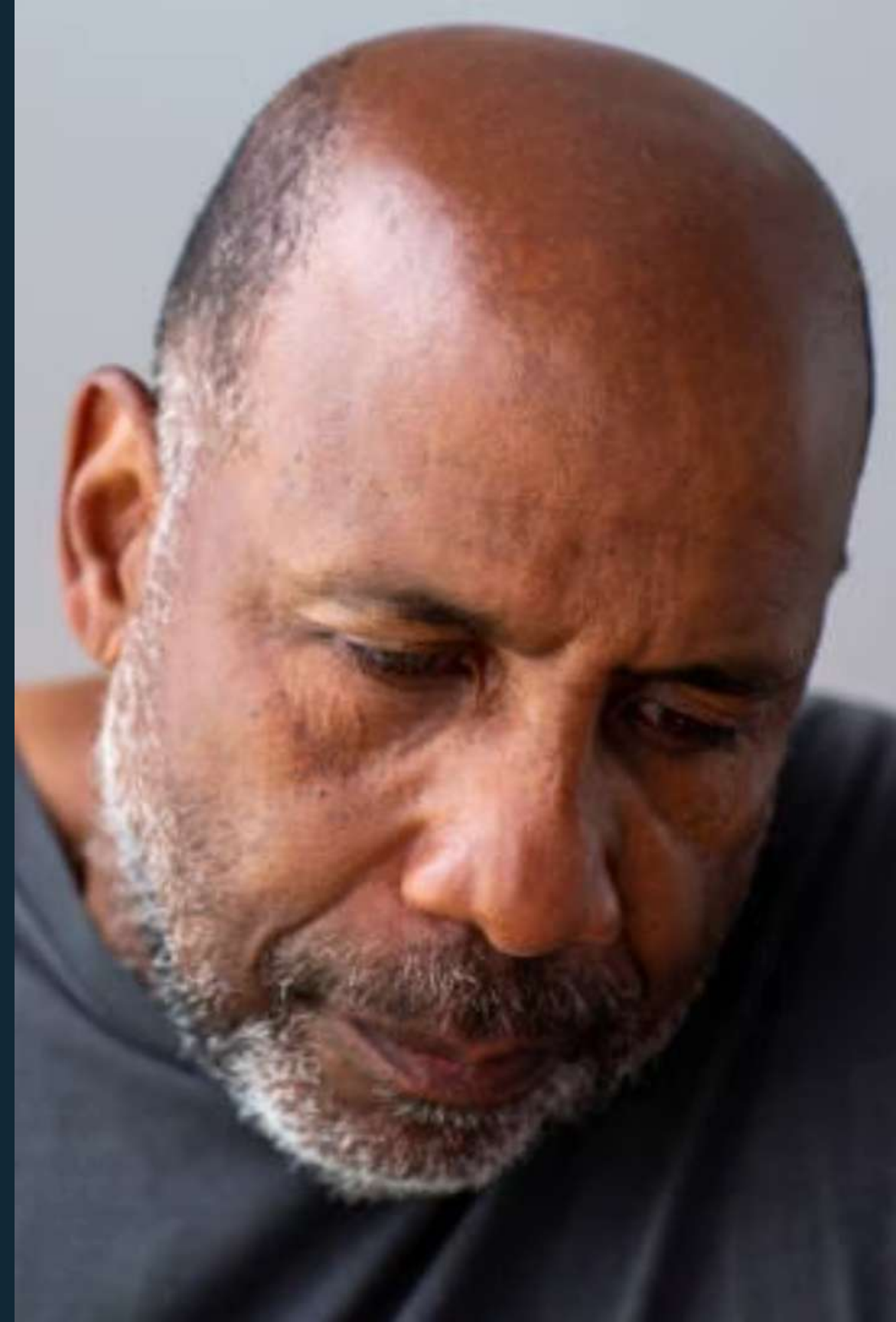
Feeling trapped in negative self-perception



Emotional Weight

A heavy burden of anxiety and depression

This initial phase keeps us stuck in patterns of self-judgment rather than healing.



The Self-Critical Trap



"I'm Broken"

The belief that something is fundamentally wrong with us



"I Always Fail"

Seeing patterns of failure rather than learning experiences



The Guilt Prison

Research shows self-blame traps us rather than liberates







Forward Motion Blocked

Healing cannot begin while we remain in judgment





Recognizing Phase 1 Patterns

-  Questioning Worthiness Doubting if we deserve healing or happiness
-  Feeling Stuck Unable to move forward due to self-doubt
-  Negative Self-Talk The inner critic drowns out compassionate voices
-  Glimpsing Possibility Beginning to question if change might be possible

Recognizing these patterns is the first step toward breaking free from them.

Phase 2: "What Happened to Me?"

This pivotal stage reframes self-blame. We shift focus to understanding past experiences and external influences. It's about gaining new perspectives on our journey.



Gaining Perspective on Our Past



Beyond Self-Blame

Shift focus to external factors.



Explore Experiences

Understand past trauma and stress.



Identify Systems

Recognize wider systemic influences.



Embrace Acceptance

Form a new, compassionate narrative.

Reframing the Narrative



Shift Blame

Move focus from personal defect to external factors.



Integrate Story

Weave past events into a coherent life narrative.



Normalize Feelings

Realize emotions are valid responses to experiences.



Ease Shame

Separate the problem from the person, reducing guilt.

Phase 2: Building Self-Discovery

- **Shift Perspective:** Move focus from problems to identifying personal strengths.
- **Engage in Growth:** Seek support, journal, or explore self-discovery activities.
- **Recognize Assets:** Identify innate talents and positive accomplishments.
- **Explore Inner Resources:** Connect with your inherent wisdom and resilience.



PHASE 3: “WHAT’S RIGHT WITH ME?”

This pivotal phase shifts focus from past wounds to present strengths. We cultivate empowerment and foster personal growth.

1 Embrace Strengths

Identify and leverage innate talents and positive attributes.

2 Cultivate Empowerment

Discover inner resilience and agency in your healing journey.

3 Foster Growth

Actively engage in practices that support your well-being.



Phase 3: Embracing "What's Right With Me"



Affirm Personal Worth

Recognize your inherent value beyond past experiences. Celebrate small victories and acknowledge your journey's progress.



Cultivate Self-Compassion

Speak to yourself with kindness. Replace critical inner dialogue with understanding and acceptance.



Build Forward Momentum

Engage in activities aligned with your values. Utilize your unique talents to create meaning and purpose.

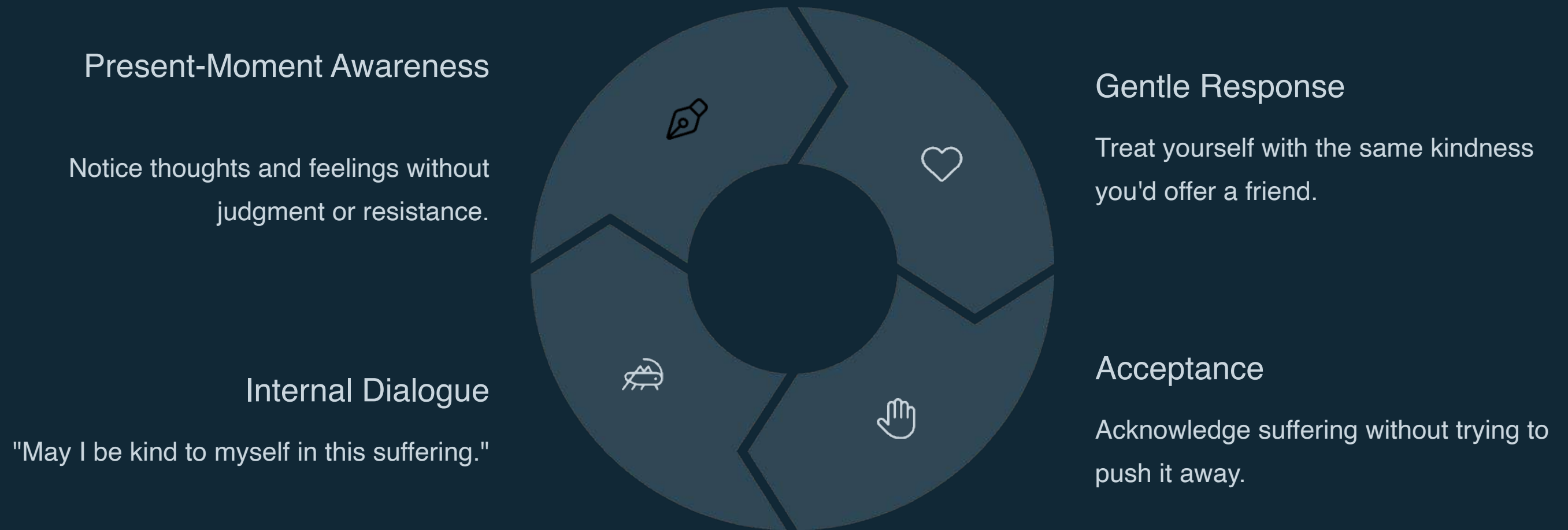


Develop Resilience

Transform challenges into opportunities for growth. Foster hope and confidence in your ability to navigate life.

Mindfulness + Self-Compassion

Phase 3 invites us to embrace mindfulness and self-compassion as essential practices on our healing journey.



These practices help us recognize our inherent worth beyond past wounds or traumas.

Notice Your Resilience and Resources



Acknowledge Survival Skills

Recognize the strengths that helped you navigate challenges. These skills demonstrate your innate capacity for healing.



Honor Your Empathy

Your ability to understand others often emerges from personal struggles. This compassion is a powerful resource.



Celebrate Creativity

Notice how you've adapted and found unique solutions. Creative thinking reflects your resilience.



Embrace Your Courage

Acknowledge each brave step on your healing journey. Courage isn't fearlessness—it's moving forward despite fear.

The Self-Acceptance Journey

- **Understand Yourself Deeply:** Cultivate awareness of your thoughts, feelings, and patterns without judgment.
- **Embrace Imperfections:** Recognize that flaws are part of being human, not evidence of unworthiness.
- **Navigate with Compassion:** Respond to challenges with the same kindness you'd offer a loved one.



- **Find Stable Ground:** Develop a sense of self that doesn't fluctuate with achievements or failures.
- **Live Authentically:** Honor your true values and needs rather than external expectations.

Self-Acceptance: Embracing Imperfections

Self-acceptance means acknowledging all aspects of yourself—both strengths and weaknesses.

When we embrace our imperfections as natural parts of being human, we nurture a kinder inner dialogue.

Wholeness Over Perfection

Recognize that your flaws don't diminish your worth. They complete your authentic self.

Compassionate Inner Voice

Replace harsh self-criticism with the nurturing tone you'd use with a dear friend.

Living Authentically

When we accept ourselves fully, we live more freely and genuinely in the world.



Navigating Challenges with Strength

Resilience is the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. It's fostered through self-acceptance and self-compassion.



Resilience: Building a Strong Foundation

Self-acceptance and self-kindness create solid ground for resilience. They help us bounce back from setbacks with greater ease.

When we embrace resilience, we transform challenges into growth opportunities. Each obstacle becomes a chance to learn and strengthen our core.

Self-Kindness

Treat yourself with the compassion you'd offer a friend facing difficulty.

Growth

View setbacks as valuable lessons that strengthen your character.

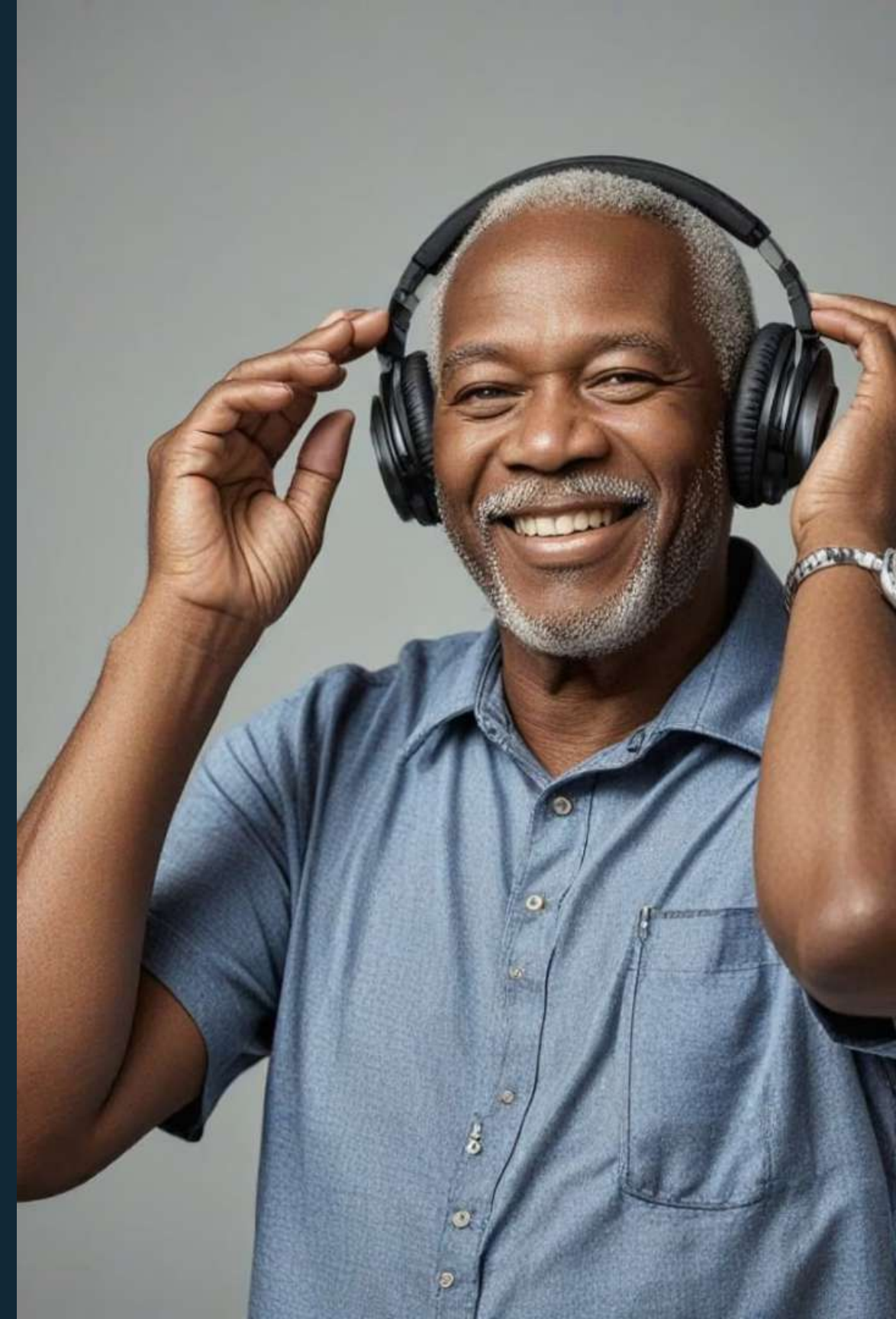


Acceptance

Acknowledge your whole self—strengths and struggles alike.

Adaptation

Adjust your approach when facing obstacles rather than giving up.



Self-Esteem vs. Self-Compassion

Self-Esteem as a Fluctuation

Self-esteem often depends on external validation and achievements.

This foundation creates instability when we face inevitable failures.

- Rises with success
- Falls with perceived failure
- Requires constant maintenance

Self-Compassion as Stable Ground

Self-compassion offers consistent worth through all experiences.

It creates resilience that withstands life's natural ups and downs.

- Remains steady through challenges
- Based on inherent worthiness
- Grows through self-kindness

A Shift in Perspective

Moving from self-esteem to self-acceptance requires a fundamental change in how we view our worth.

When we release the need for external validation, we discover a more authentic sense of self.



I Accept Myself

Mindfulness and self-compassion are not just practices. They are declarations of self-worth.

When we recognize what's right within us, we discover our inherent value exists independently of external validation.

This awareness becomes the cornerstone of genuine self-acceptance and lasting inner peace. It is an amazing inner journey!



I ACCEPT MYSELF.

I AM MINDFUL.

I AM SELF-COMPASSIONATE.

**THESE THINGS ARE WHAT'S
RIGHT WITH ME.**





**Thank you for joining
me on this journey of
healing!**

Peter Koufos