



# Languishing vs. Flourishing: A Compassionate Community Dialogue About Personal Well-Being

---

**Suzanne Carmack, PhD, MFA, MEd, ERYT 500, NBC-HWC**

22 November 2021

UNC Chapel Hill Network for Research Professionals



**Thank you for  
having me!**



**Thanks to my  
colleagues**



**Thanks to my  
team**

# “Suzie...What Do You Do?”



Survivor  
She / Hers



Daughter  
Fiancee  
Mom  
Bonus Mom  
Bonus Grandma



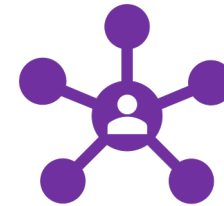
Yoga Coach,  
Teacher,  
Therapist, &  
Trainer



CEO  
YogaMedCo



Speaker



Online  
Course  
Creator &  
Mentor



Author  
(3X)

“I have a portfolio career...”

## Presentation Objectives:

In this interactive session, well-being scholar/practitioner Dr. Suzie Carmack of George Mason University's Center for the Advancement of Well-Being will facilitate a knowledge sharing session on realistic **work/life well-being solutions -- with a particular focus on sharing the science of compassion and the the quadratic model of well-being (Eisel, 2020).**

In the first half of the session, Dr. Carmack will share a high-level summary of the latest compassion research, and will then facilitate a discussion in which participants compassionately explore their current well-being status along the languishing-flourishing continuum.

Then, Dr. Carmack will coach participants through the process of actively taking an evidence-informed approach to creating a personal action plan based on their current vs. desired state of well-being. Participants will leave the session having had the opportunity to share and receive support for their well-being, and having practiced several well-being micro-interventions (practices). Participants will also receive access to Dr. Carmack's followup resources for continued well-being that can be used for personal use and/or shared with their teams.

### Objectives:

- Understand the mental health continuums of languishing-flourishing and struggle-surrender
- Experience the support of a board-certified health and wellness coach in self-identifying current well-being status and setting of SMART goals
- Evaluate one's own personal and current state of languishing vs. flourishing and struggle vs. surrender
- Select the most efficacious well-being micro-practice based on own's personal self-assessment
- Create a personal plan of action for continuing a personal plan of well-being

***Before we begin...***

***These topics are tough.***

***There is Help.***

***Please Seek It...***

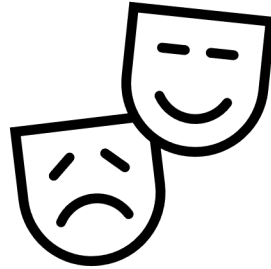
***Share It...***

***Receive It.***

***Chat Share***  
***What Drew You Here Today?***

**IF...**

**Health is not just the  
absence of disease...  
but also well-being**



**Then...**

**Mental health is not just the  
absence of mental illness...  
but also well-being**

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO, 1948)

“Empirically, mental health and mental illness are not opposite ends of a single continuum.” (Keyes, 2002)

---

World Health Organization. (2006). A state of complete physical mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. *Constitution of the World Health Organization Basic Documents, Forty-fifth edition, Supplement.*

Keyes, C. L. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 207-222.

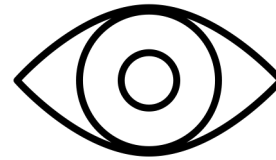
# Meet the Problem With Well-Being



## What They Say...

OWB: Objective Well-Being

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Welfare
- ▶ Societal / epidemiological trends



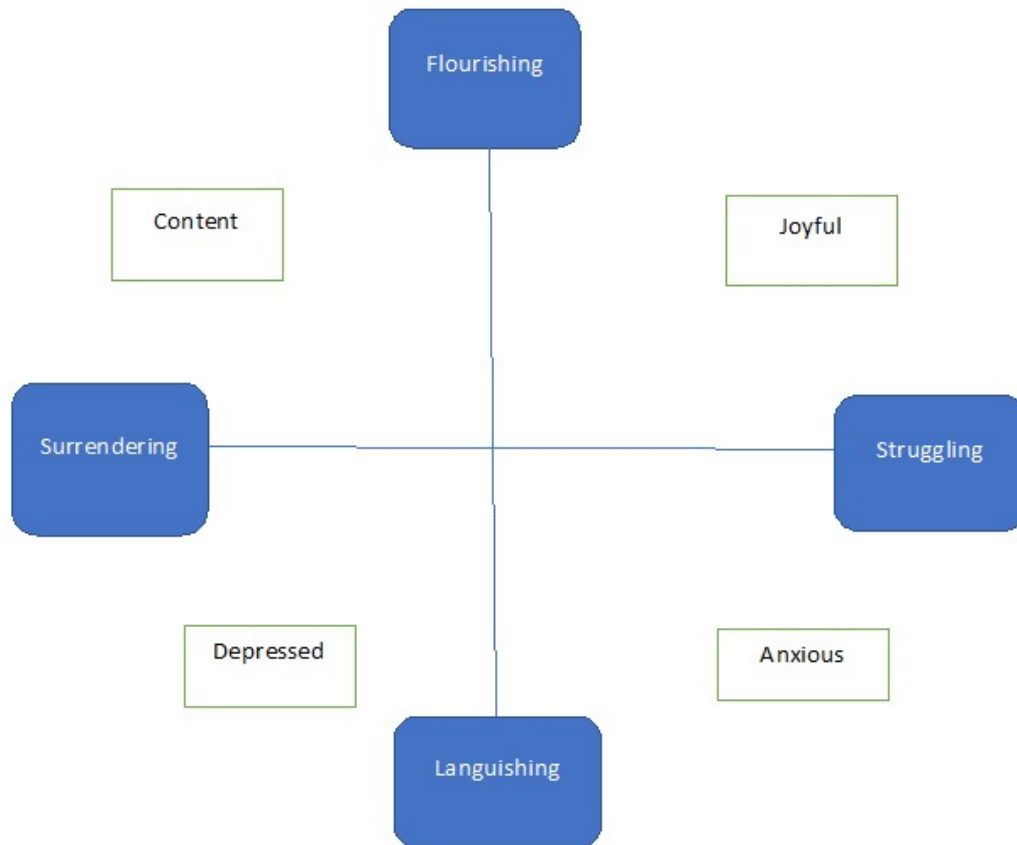
## What I Say...

SWB: Subjective Well-Being

- ▶ Measured by the individual (subjective)
- ▶ Affect / Experience (feel)
  - ▶ Happiness vs. Depression
  - ▶ Quality of Life
- ▶ Cognition / Evaluation (think)
  - ▶ Meaning and purpose
  - ▶ Life satisfaction
- ▶ Preference Hedonism (both)



# Meet the Quadrative Model of Well-Being



Well-Being is not two dimensional...

How do we feel? (vertical)

How do we perceive? (horizontal)

Find the Scale –

Eisele, P. (2020). Languishing but Not Giving Up: Suggesting A Surrender-Struggle Continuum as the Missing Piece of The Mental Health Puzzle. *Journal of Mental Health & Clinical Psychology*, 4(3).

Original Source –

Keyes, C. L. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 207-222.



## Please Share - What do you notice when you see these definitions?

### **Languishing** (Keyes)

- ✓ Sense of Restlessness
- ✓ Feeling Unsettled
- ✓ Overall lack of interest in *life*
- ✓ Lack of interest in things that bring you joy (*work, hobbies*)
- ✓ Stagnation

### **Flourishing** (Seligman)

- ✓ Positive Emotion
- ✓ Engagement
- ✓ Relationships
- ✓ Meaning
- ✓ Accomplishment

# More About Languishing...

*"I don't feel fully present in my life."*

---

- Unlike a panic disorder or depression, languishing is a series of emotions, not a mental illness.
- Individuals with a history of depression and anxiety or who are genetically predisposed to psychiatric conditions are more prone to languishing than others.
- Languishing is tough to diagnose, monitor and treat...we aren't asking, so how do we track it?

# Why Well-Being (incl. Joy) Matters at Work



## ME Individual Problem Space = Individual Well-Being as Risk

- Super Hero Syndrome
- Maladaptive Perfectionism
- Structural Divergence
- Burnout
- Compassion Fatigue
- Isolation Issues from Privacy Management (Disclosure)



## WE Team Engagement = Practices & Training Programs

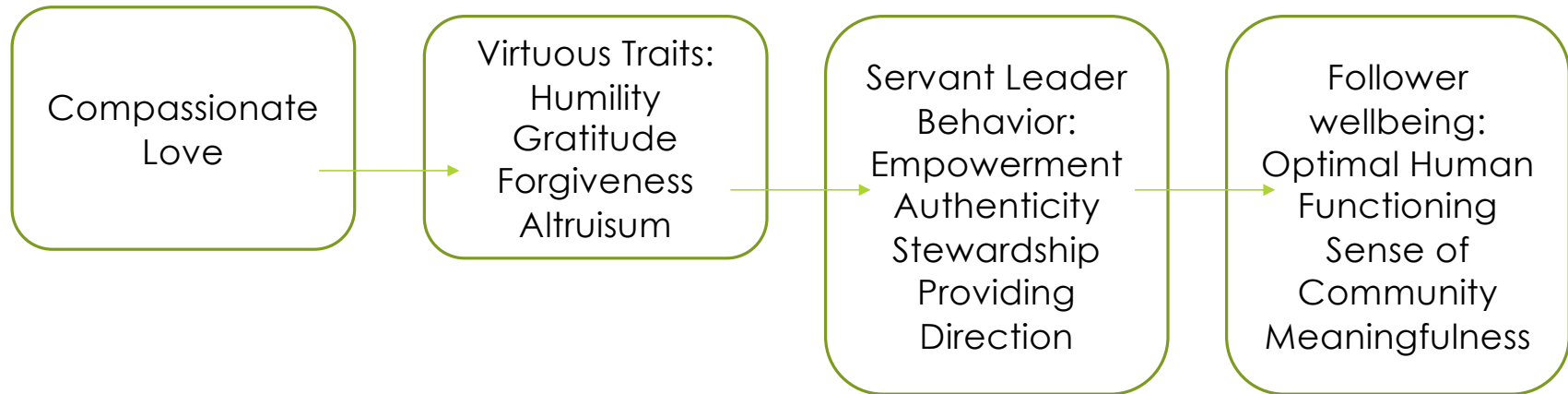
- Stress Contagion
- Compassion
- Mindfulness
- Strategic Coaching
- Social Support (Battle Buddies)
- Leadership Coaching and Training
- Holding Space (Somatic Listening)



## US Organizational Solutions = Productivity & Performance

- Compassionate Leadership
- Risk Reduction
- Return on Investment
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Readiness
- Resilience

# Why “Compassionate Leadership” Matters Too



van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2015). Compassionate love as a cornerstone of servant leadership: An integration of previous theorizing and research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 128(1), 119-131.

# Servant Leadership - Dimensions

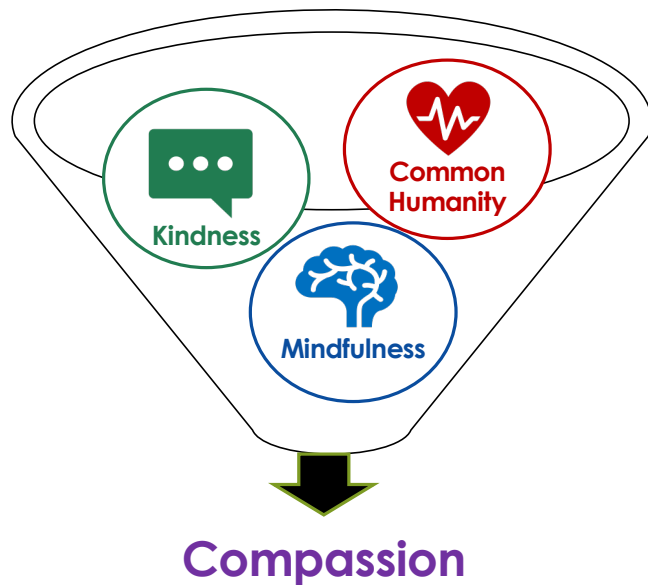
1. **Emotional healing**—the act of showing sensitivity to others' personal concerns
2. **Creating value for the community**—a conscious, genuine concern for helping the community
3. **Conceptual skills**—possessing the knowledge of the organization and tasks at hand so as to be in a position to effectively support and assist others, especially immediate followers
4. **Empowering**—encouraging and facilitating others, especially immediate followers, in identifying and solving problems, as well as determining when and how to complete work tasks
5. **Helping subordinates grow and succeed**—demonstrating genuine concern for others' career growth and development by providing support and mentoring
6. **Putting subordinates first**—using actions and words to make it clear to others (especially immediate followers) that satisfying their work needs is a priority (Supervisors who practice this principle will often break from their own work to assist subordinates with problems they are facing with their assigned duties.)
7. **Behaving ethically**—interacting openly, fairly, and honestly with others
8. **Relationships**—the act of making a genuine effort to know, understand, and support others in the organization, with an emphasis on building long-term relationships with immediate followers
9. **Servanthood**—a way of being marked by one's self-categorization and desire to be characterized by others as someone who serves others first, even when self-sacrifice is required

Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Page & Wong, 2000; Spears & Lawrence, 2002



# Activity 1: Coaching Skill

## Compassionate Listening



Compassion is “operationalized as experiencing kindness, a sense of common humanity, mindfulness, and lessened indifference toward the suffering of others.”

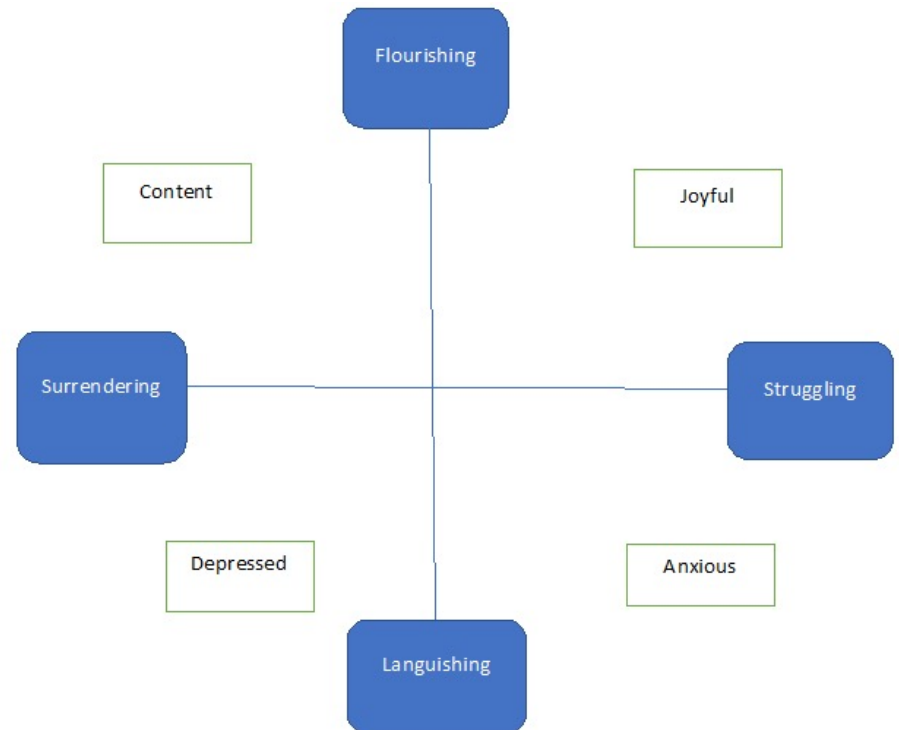
Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., & Tóth-Király, I. (2020). The development and validation of the Compassion Scale. *Assessment*, 27(1), 21-39.

# Activity 1: Ask

Where Are You Today?  
Where Would Like to Be?

## Coaching Scope

We ask we don't tell.  
We listen without judgement.  
We acknowledge.  
We care deeply.  
We are thought partners.  
We trust that our client has the answers within.

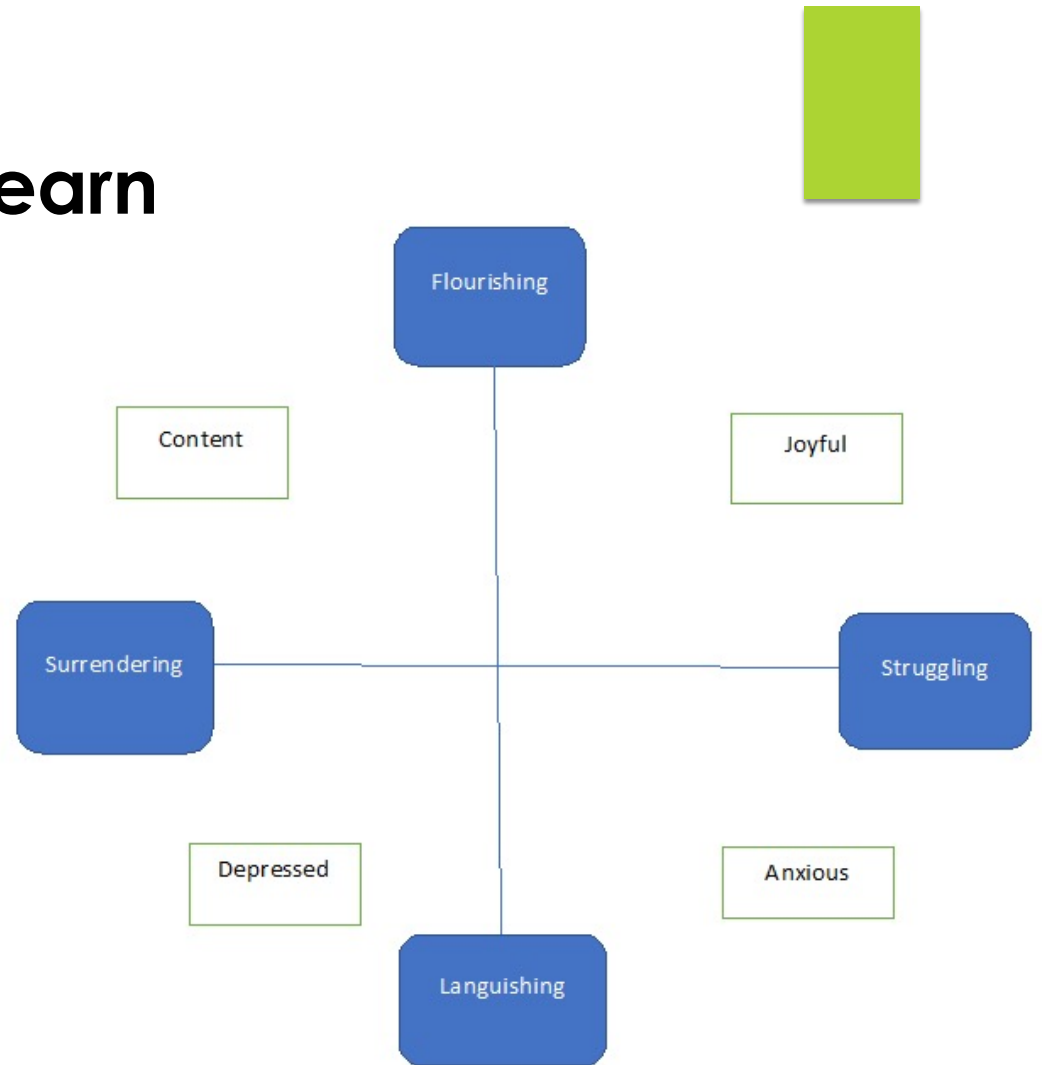
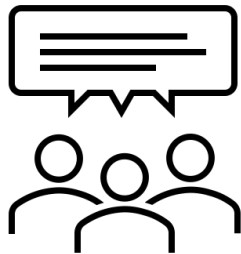




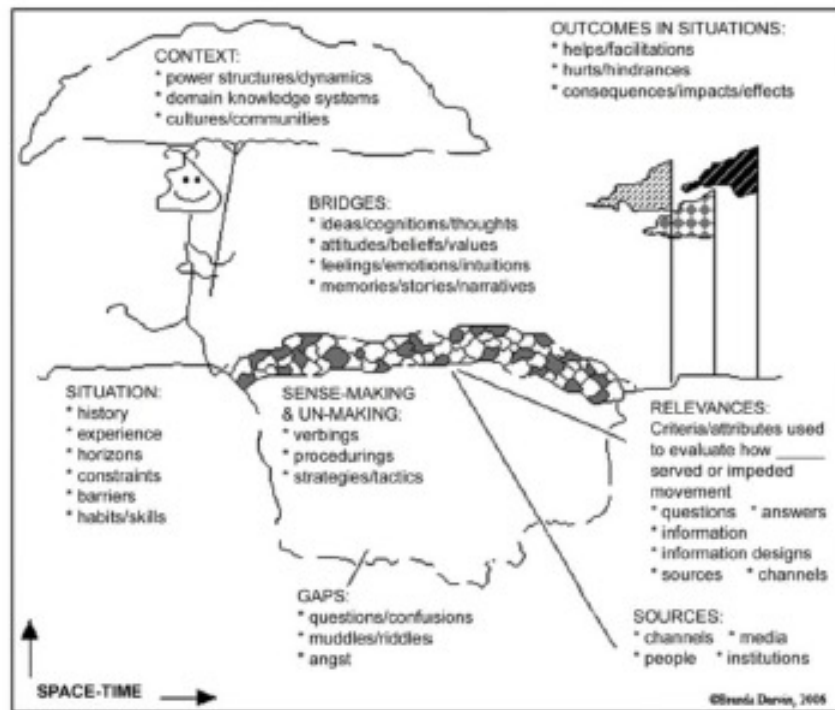
# Activity 1: Reflect and Learn

Compassionate  
Community  
Shares

We are here.  
We care.  
We listen.  
We ask.  
We reflect.  
We stay curious.



# Sense-Making as Well-Being = The Art and Science of Our Life Story

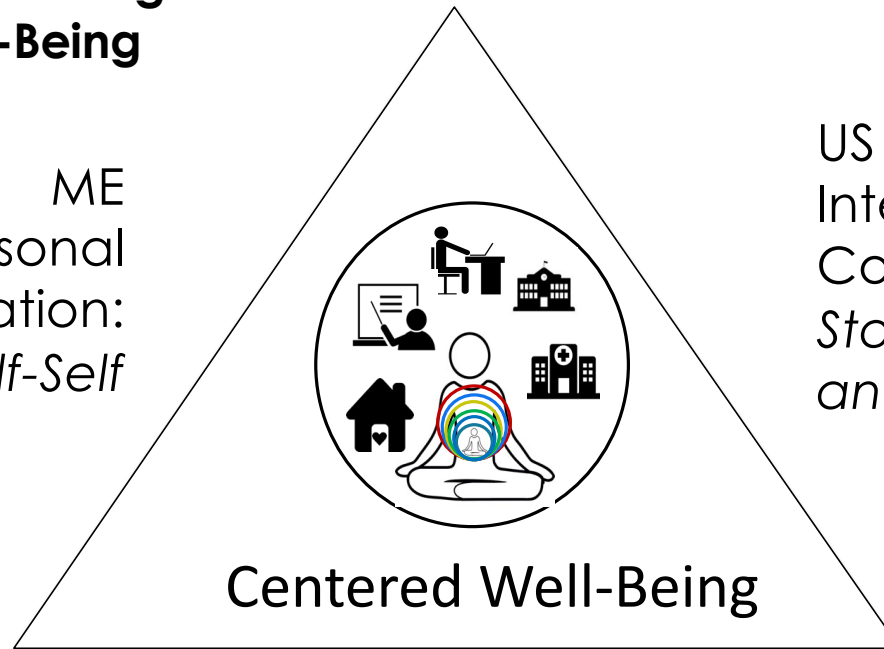


“While **well-being** is difficult for scholars and the public to define, it functions as a communication (**sense-making**) process in which the individual makes sense of **health outcomes, role identities, life situations, and/or lived experience.**” (Carmack, 2014)

## Centered Well-Being Theory as the “Art of Life”

**Congruent Stories = Well-Being**  
**Incongruent Stories = Ill-Being**

ME  
Intrapersonal  
Communication:  
*Story of Self-Self*



US  
Intercultural  
Communication:  
*Story of Self-Culture  
and Self-World*

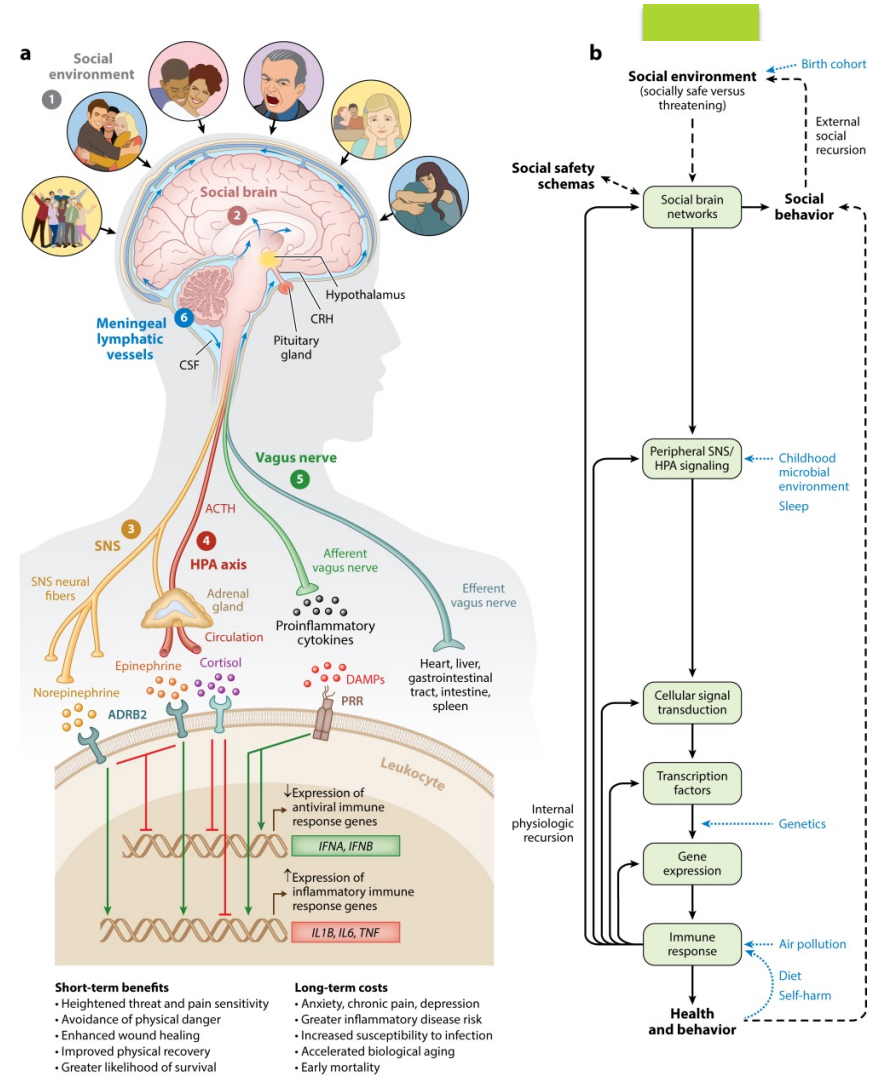
WE Interpersonal Communication:  
*Story of Self-Other (Family, Friends, Colleagues)*

# Centered Well-Being Theory as the Science of Life Part 1 = Us (Humans)

## Social Safety Theory

“Social Safety Theory hypothesizes that developing and maintaining friendly social bonds is a fundamental organizing principle of human behavior and that threats to social safety are a critical feature of psychological stressors that increase risk for disease.”

Slavich, G. M. (2020). Social safety theory: a biologically based evolutionary perspective on life stress, health, and behavior. *Annual review of clinical psychology*, 16, 265-295.



# Centered Well-Being Theory as the Science of Life

## Part 2 = We (Social Support)



### Lack of Social Support

#### **Physiology**

- Elevated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Maladaptive stress response
- Increased morbidity

#### **Experience**

- Fatigue and Overwhelm
- Increased engagement in unhealthy behavior
- Decreased adherence to treatment plans



### Presence of Social Support

#### **Physiology**

- Buffering effect for mental & physical illness
- Boosted immune response
- Lower anxiety prevalence
- Adaptive stress response
- Lower morbidity

#### **Experience**

- Vitality
- Reduced engagement in risky behaviors
- Less negative self-appraisals
- Increased adherence to treatment plans

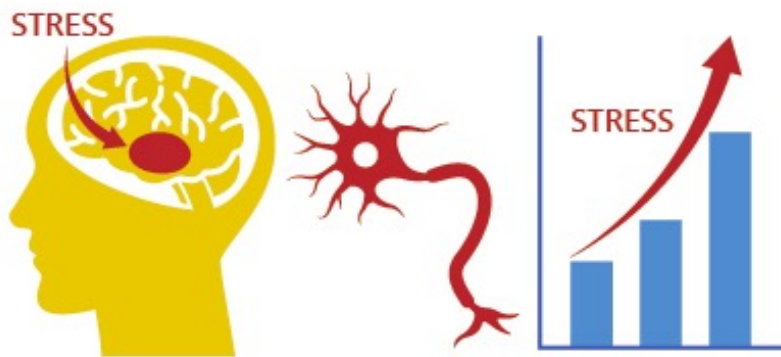
“Social support is not only correlated with but predictive of well-being.”  
Carmack, 2014

Carmack, S. (2014). *Making Sense of Well-being: A Mixed-methods study applying sense-making theory to explore the role of communication competence and social support in physical, emotional, mental and comprehensive well-being*(Doctoral dissertation, George Mason University).

# Centered Well-Being Theory as the Science of Life

## Part 3 = Me (Sense-Making)

### SELF-COMPASSION LEADS TO DECREASED STRESS



Harsh self-criticism activates our sympathetic nervous system and elevates stress hormones. The sting of self-criticism can be so intense that it stops us from learning and being resilient in the face of failure.



Self-compassion, on the other hand, may activate our biological nurturance and soothing system which leads to greater feelings of well-being.



## **Let's Try Out Centered Well-Being Theory**

**What do you tell yourself when you are trying to get out of the gap of confusion or overwhelm? (Sense-making)**

**Who do you go to when you need help back stage in the performance of life? (Social Support)**

**What happens in your body when you feel heard and seen? (Social Safety)**

# WIFM: The Big Reveal



## We Can Transform Stress Into Well-Being w/Sense-Making

Self-compassion can help us to shift the perception of threat from foe to friend.

We don't actually need solutions...

We need hope for solutions and to feel we are moving forward to them without going it alone.



## Whether it is Stress, or Well-Being -- It Will Ripple Out to Your Team and Loved Ones

So too within...so too without.

Our team, clients, patients and loved ones feel what we feel.

We are hard-wired to reach out to each other for help.



## Leader and Team Well-Being Impacts Health THEN Performance Outcomes

Together we can reduce suicide risk and optimize well-being – as the basis not by product of performance.





## ***Let's Check-In***

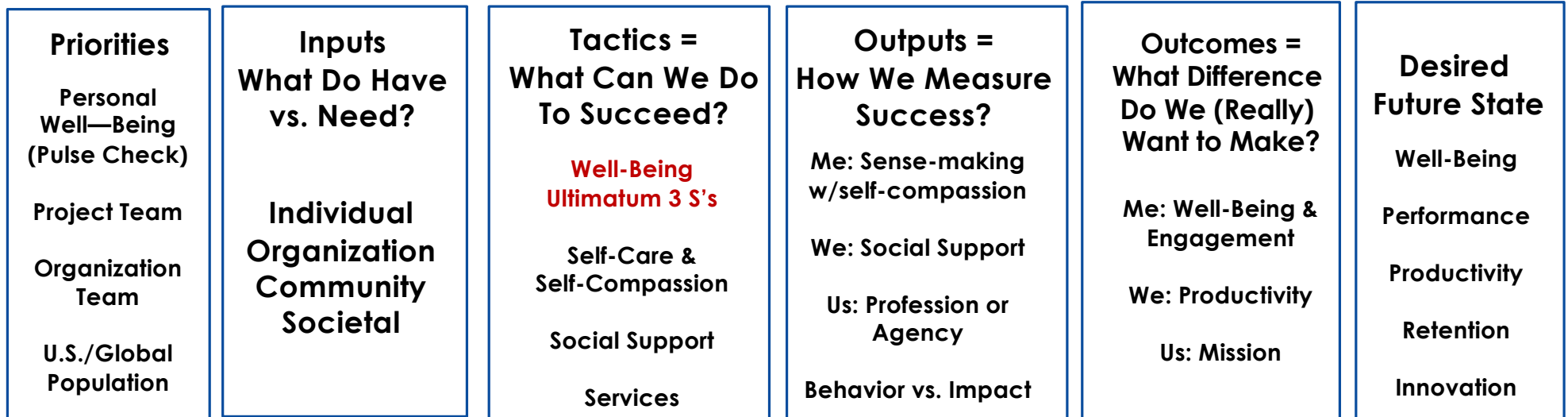
### **Today's Learning Objectives:**

- ***Where we've been***
  - Understand the mental health continuums of languishing-flourishing and struggle-surrender
  - Evaluate one's own personal and current state of languishing vs. flourishing and struggle vs. surrender
  - Experience the support of a board-certified health and wellness coach in self-identifying current well-being status
- ***Where we go next***
  - Experience the support of a board-certified health and wellness coach in setting of SMART goals
  - Select the most efficacious well-being micro-practice based on own's personal self-assessment
  - Create a personal plan of action for continuing a personal plan of well-being



# How I approach SMART Goal-Setting

## Meet the *Well-Being Ultimatum* CONOPS



**Let's Refine This as We Go....**

# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)



**As Is:  
Reality of Today**

**Logic Model =  
Evaluation-Based Program Planning**

**“Build it right to left...  
Live it left to right”**



**Future State: Vision  
For Tomorrow**

Priorities

Inputs

Activities “3S”

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)

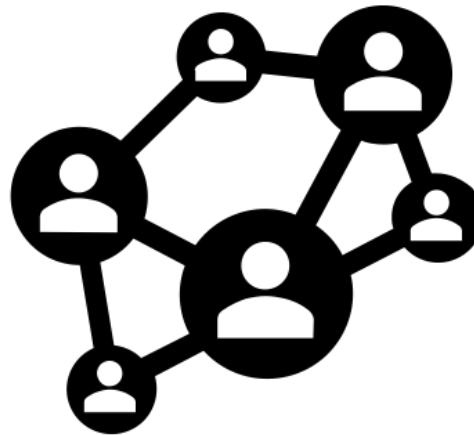
*If you had a magic wand...*

**Leader Impact Statement:**

What could well-being look like  
for you as a leader?

**Team, Impact Statement:**

What could well-being look like  
for your team?



Impact

**Future State:  
The Vision for the Life  
You Want to Live**

# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)



## Share with a Buddy:

Personal Impact Statement

Team Impact Statement

Your Why  
(Mission)

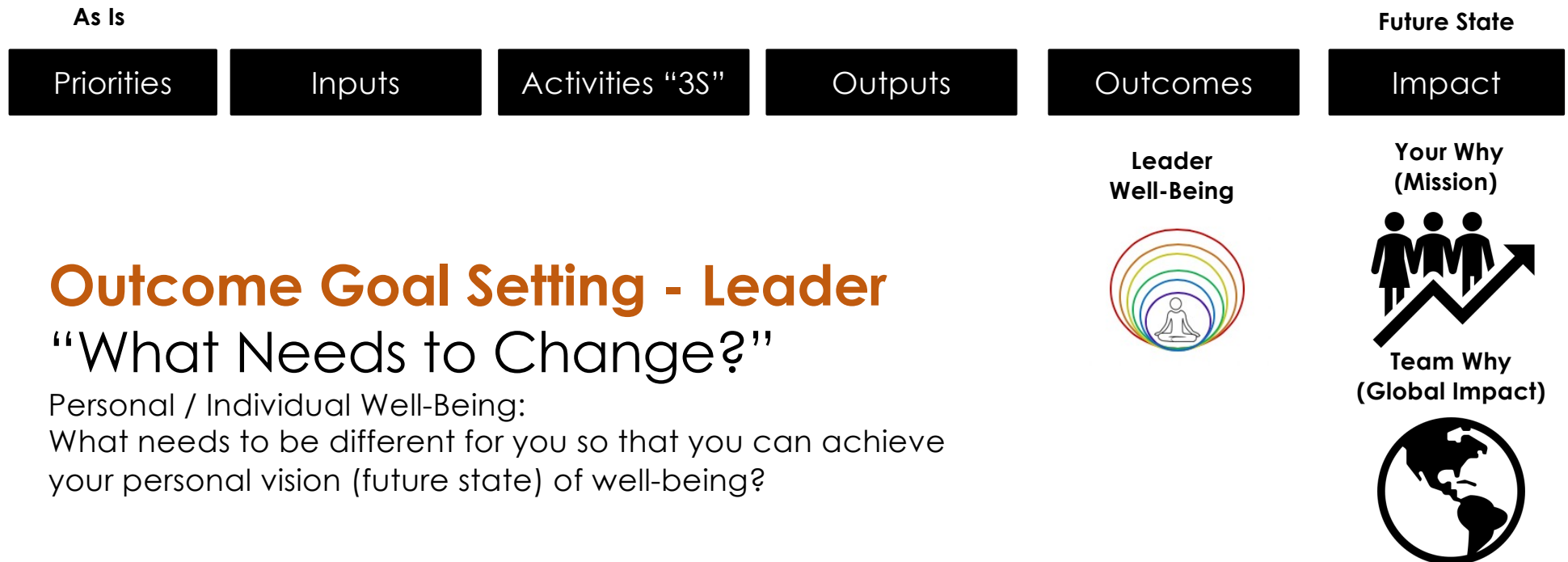


Team Why  
(Global Impact)



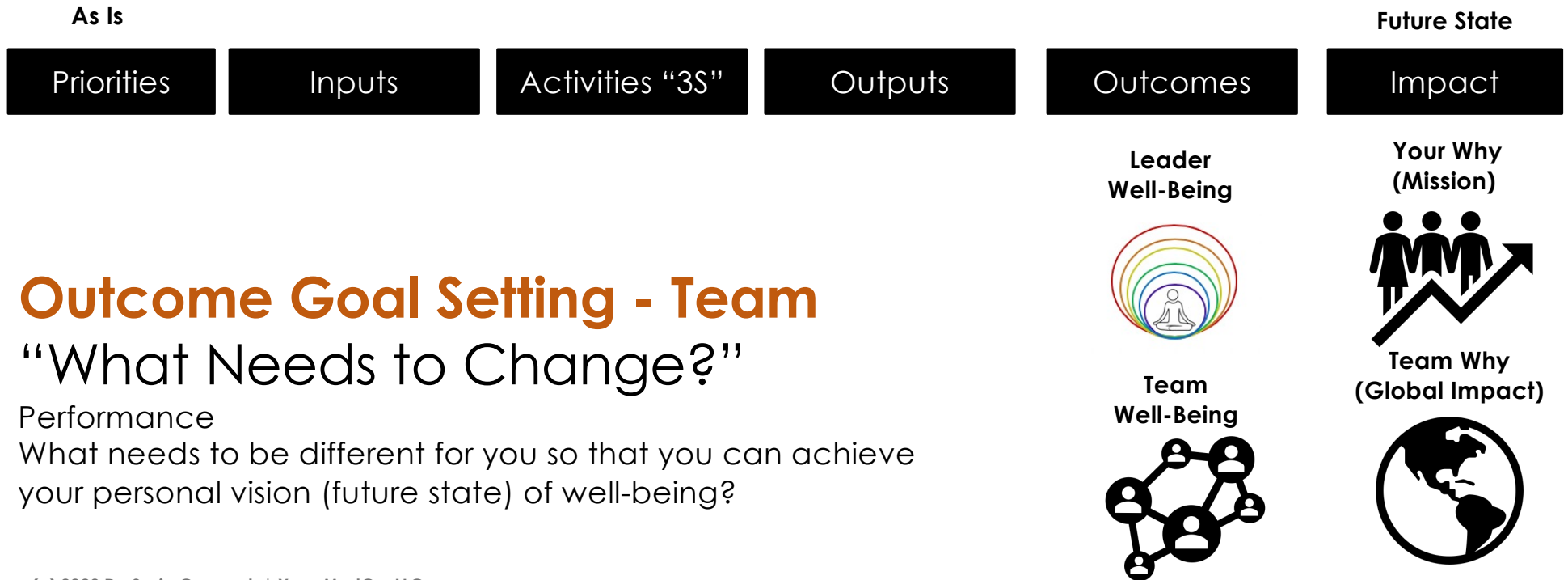
# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)



# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

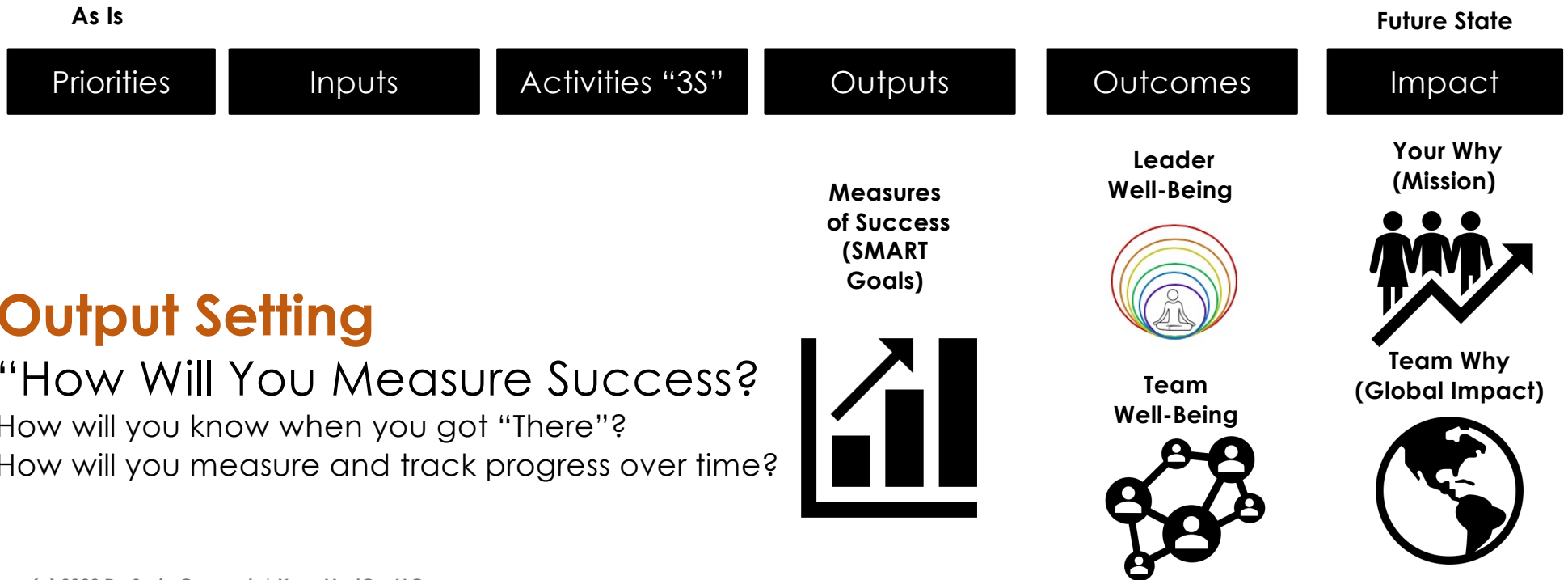
(Carmack, 2020; 2015)





# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)



# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)

As Is

Future State



## Activity (Tactics) Goal Setting

"What Do I Need to Do  
(or Stop Doing)  
To See Measurable Progress  
to My Desired Outcomes  
and Future State?"

Self-Care



Social Support



Services



Measures  
of Success  
(SMART  
Goals)



Leader  
Well-Being



Team  
Well-Being



Your Why  
(Mission)



Team Why  
(Global Impact)



# Well-Being Ultimatum = Meet the 3 S's for Stress Management

*Well-Being Ultimatum* (Carmack, 2020; 2015)

Meet  
The  
“3 S's”

Self-Care



Social Support



Services



**Ultimatum:** “A final offer or demand made by one party to another, especially in diplomatic negotiations, expressing or implying the threat of serious consequences or the breakoff of relations if the terms are not accepted.” (Merriam-Webster, 2015)

**Well-Being Ultimatum (Carmack, 2015):** A personal commitment to practicing self-care daily, reaching out to give and receive social support weekly, and willingness to seek help (“services”) monthly in order to thrive; a socio-ecological approach to well-being transformation at the individual worker level, and well-being in the workplace culture change at the organizational level.

# Well-Being Ultimatum = Meet the 3 S's for Stress Management

*Well-Being Ultimatum (Carmack, 2020; 2015)*



## Self Care Daily

Take Time for Yourself at Least  
10 Minutes Daily

*Examples: Mindfulness, walk, deep breathing, stretch at office*



## Social Support Weekly

Make Time for Those You Love Weekly

*Have a coffee date, make a phone call, go for a  
walk together, connect – “see and be seen”*



## Services Monthly

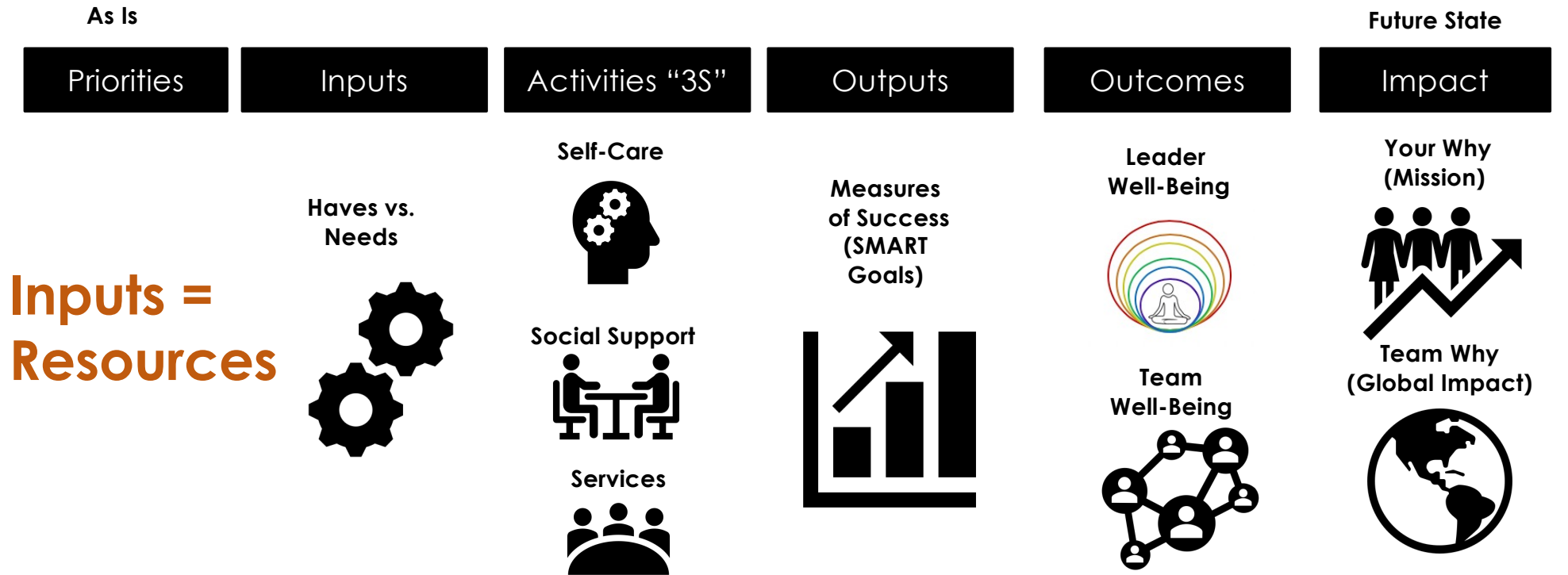
Optimization Doesn't Happen Alone –  
Professional Services Monthly

*Service providers, coaching, therapy – “round out your team”*



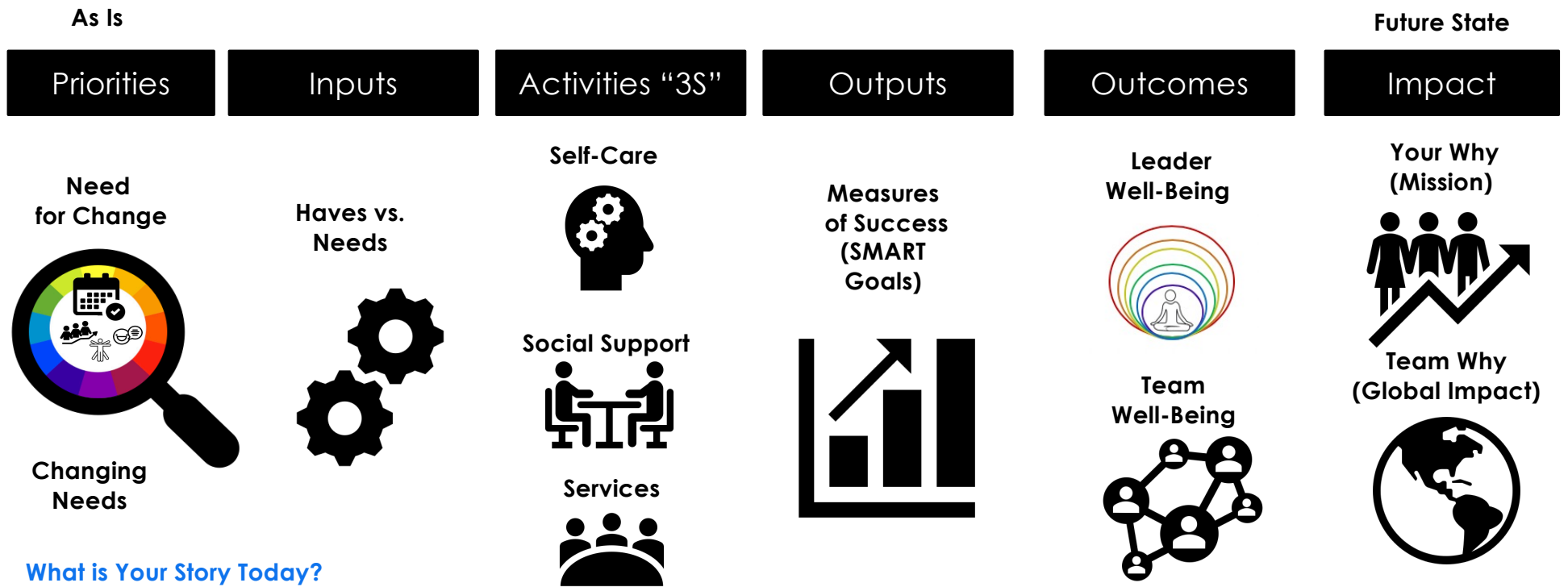
# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)



# Well-Being Ultimatum Coaching Logic Model

(Carmack, 2020; 2015)



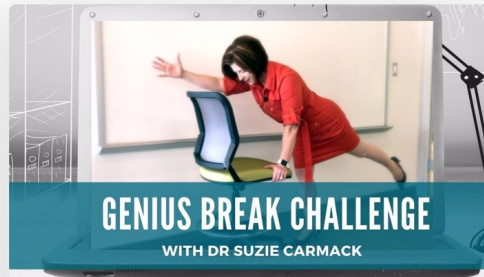
# Free Resources:

[www.DrSuzieCarmack.com/FreeTools](http://www.DrSuzieCarmack.com/FreeTools)



## Well-Being Pulse Check

- ✓ Assess your personal well-being
- ✓ Reflect on the last year
- ✓ Create goals for the coming year



## Genius Breaks Challenge

- ✓ E-Book
- ✓ Genius Break Challenge
- ✓ 8 Yoga practices for the mat

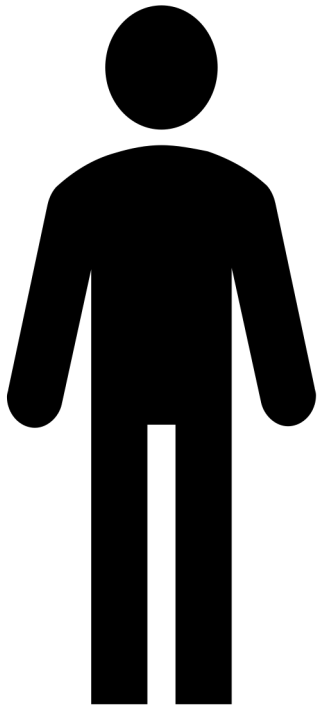


## Well-Being Ultimatum Toolkit

- ✓ E-Book
  - ✓ WBU Planner
  - ✓ WBU Contract
  - ✓ Online Community
-



# But What If I Only Have Two Minutes...



## Conflict Zone

Too Much +  
Too Little -

**Thinking**

Then →

Self World Conflict

Movement



Meaning



Mindfulness



Too Much +  
Too Little -

**Feeling**

Then →

Self Other Conflict

Mindfulness



Movement



Meaning



Too Much +  
Too Little -

**Doing**

Then →

Self Self Conflict

Meaning



Mindfulness



Movement





**Q and A**



*Final Thought...*

**Don't Forget to Pull Over  
And Welcome Help from  
the Experts**

**Me = We = Us**



# Thanks again!



**Dr. Suzie Carmack**  
PhD, MFA, MEd, ERYT 500, NBC-HWC  
suzie@yogamedco.com  
[www.DrSuzieCarmack.com](http://www.DrSuzieCarmack.com)