The Essence of Motivational Interviewing

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Nordic MI Conference
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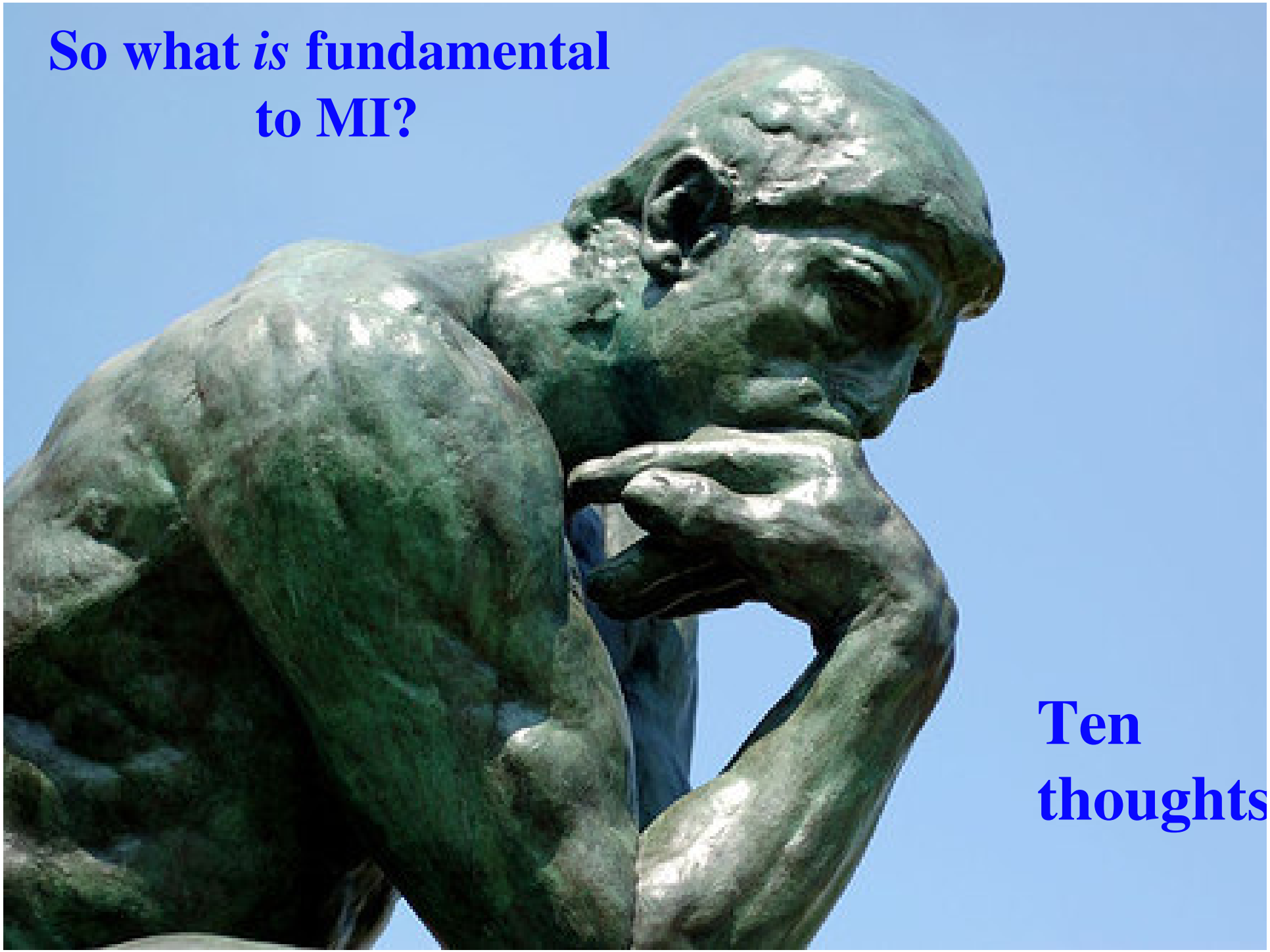
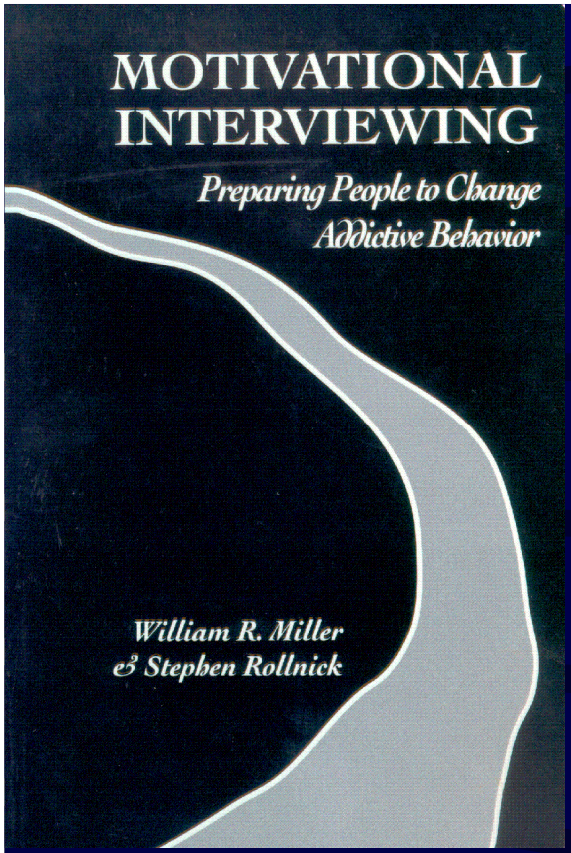
Ten Things that MI Is Not

Miller & Rollnick (2009)

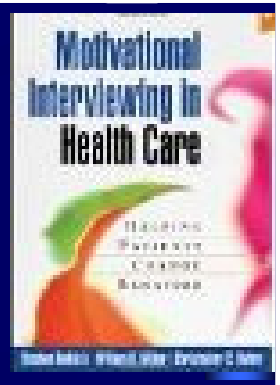
1. Based on the transtheoretical model
2. A trick
3. A technique
4. A decisional balance
5. Assessment feedback
6. A form of cognitive-behavior therapy
7. Just client-centered therapy
8. Easy
9. What you were already doing
10. A panacea


So what *is* fundamental to MI?
Ten thoughts

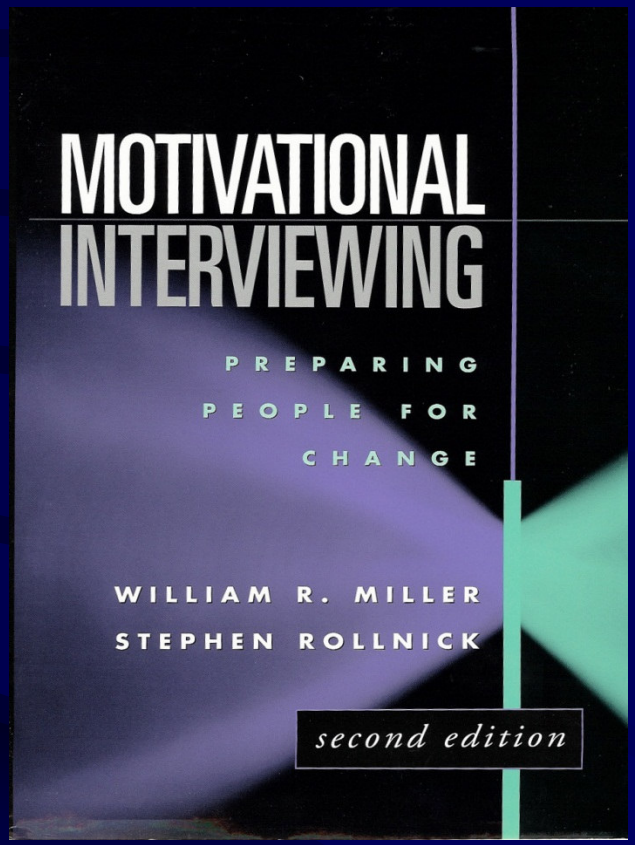


1991

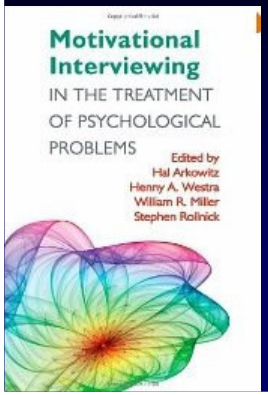
2008



2002



2008



MI-3
?

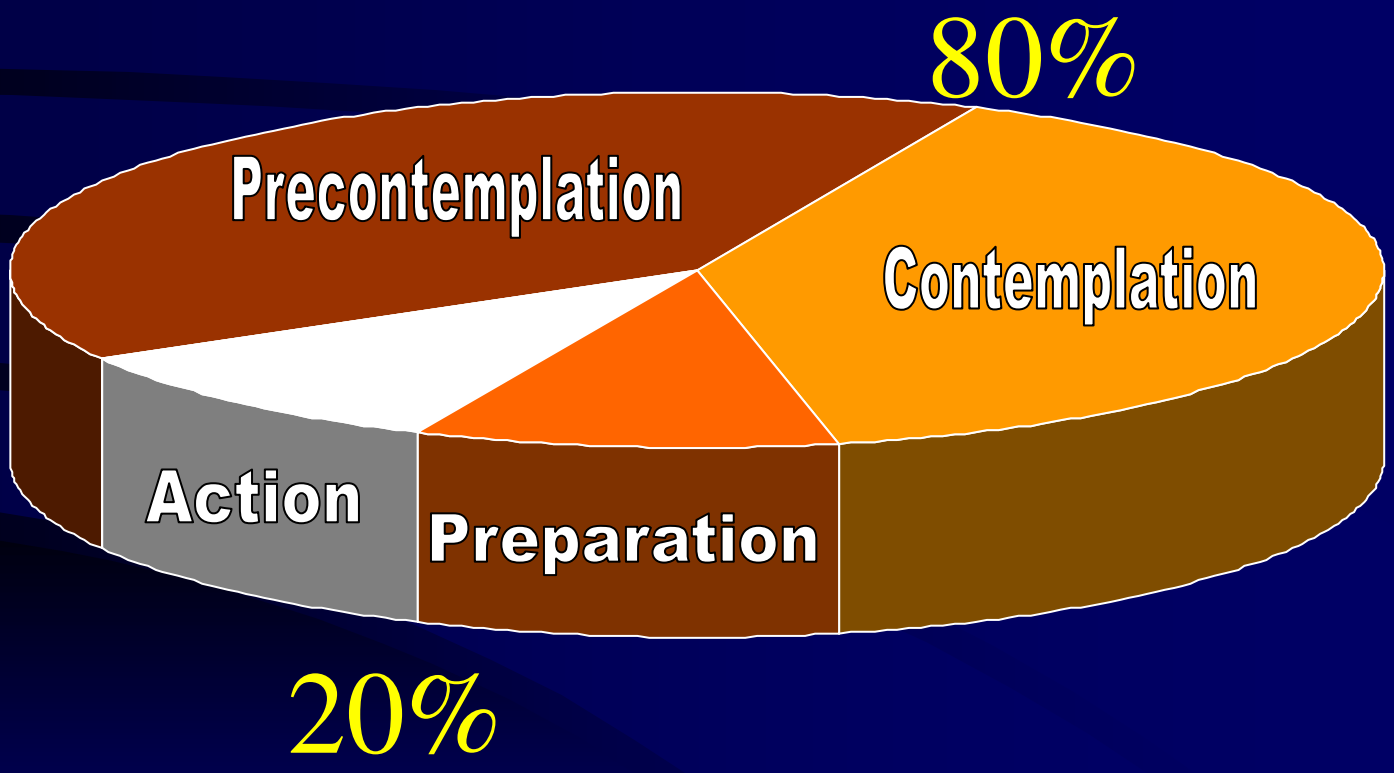
2012

1. Ambivalence

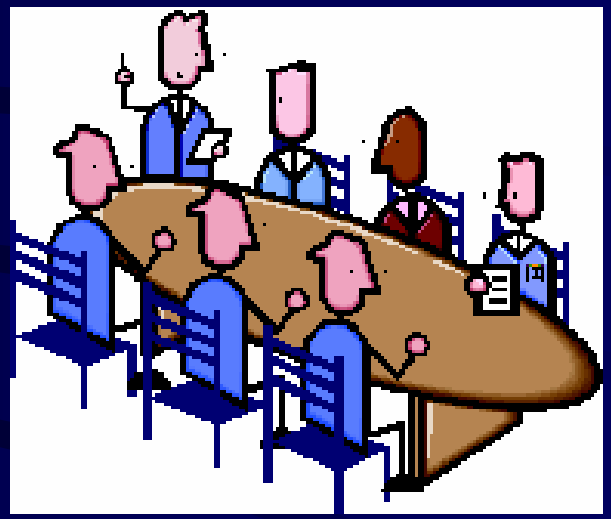
a normal dilemma where people can get stuck in the process of changing

Motivational Interviewing was originally designed for working with people who are less ready to change . . .

. . which could be most of your clients



Ambivalence is like a committee



Voices both for and against change are already present within the client

2. The Righting Reflex

In seeking to be helpful, professionals often voice the arguments for change:

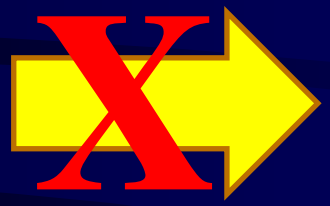
Why and how to change

When Worlds Collide

The Righting Reflex ⇔ Ambivalence

Normal Human Reactions to the Righting Reflex (Teach/Direct)

Invalidated	**Resist**	**Withdraw**
Not respected	Arguing	Disengaged
Not understood	Discounting	Disliking
Not heard	Defensive	Inattentive
Angry	Oppositional	Passive
Ashamed	Denying	Avoid/leave
Uncomfortable	Delaying	Not return
Unable to change	Justifying	



Change

Making people feel bad
doesn't help them to change

3. Reactance

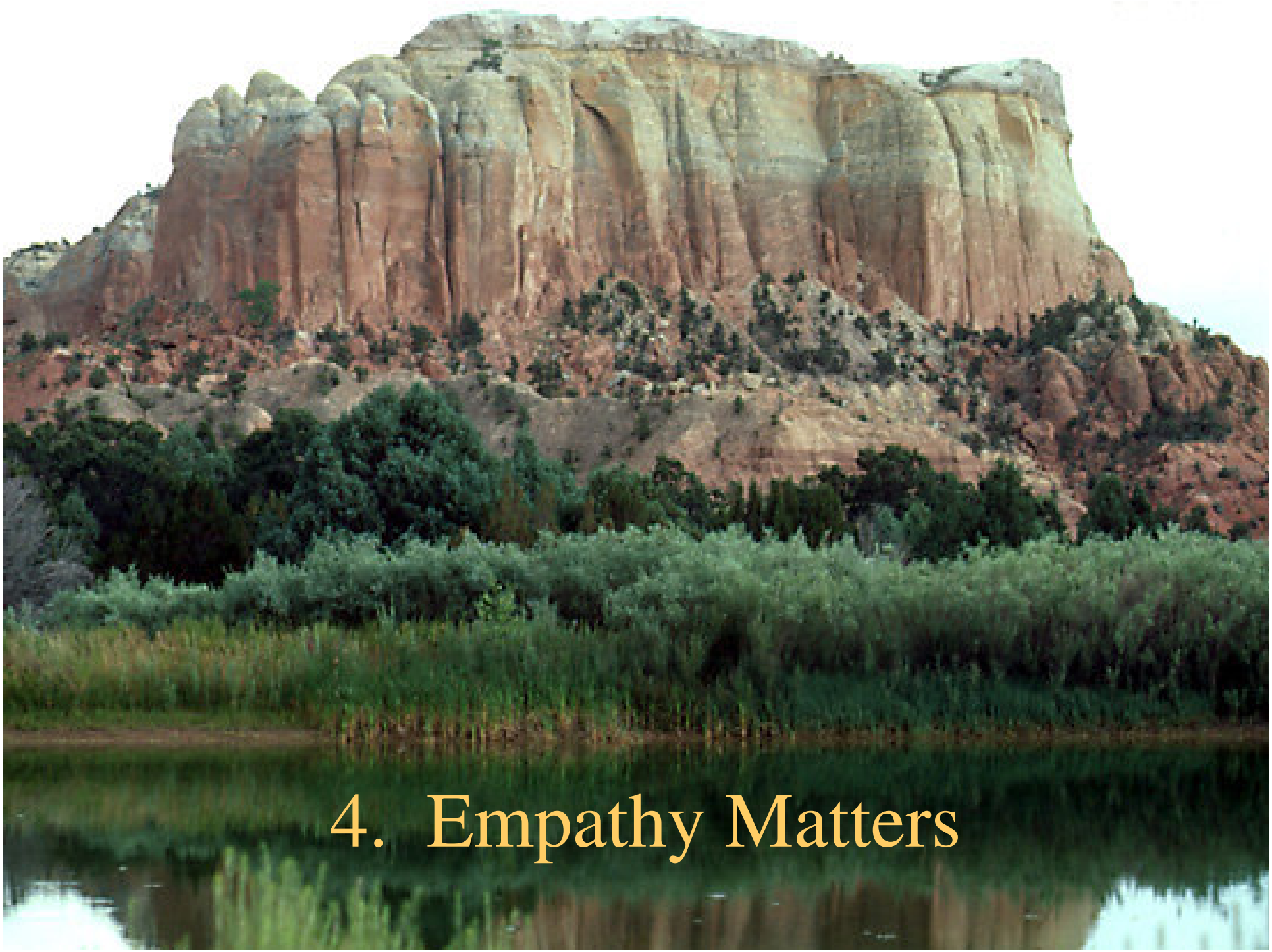
Furthermore,

causing clients to voice arguments against change *decreases* the likelihood that change will happen

Ironic Process

In other words:

What people often do instinctively when trying to motivate someone to change can actually make change *less* likely to occur


4. Empathy Matters

Empathy in Addiction Counseling

- Counselors who show high levels of empathic skill have clients who are:
  - Less resistant
  - More likely to stay in treatment
  - More likely to recover
  - Less likely to relapse
- Empathy is the single best predictor of a higher success rate in addiction counseling

Empathy is a Clinical Skill

- It is not identification with the client or necessarily experiencing the same emotions
- It is a *learnable* skill
- It can be reliably measured from practice samples
- Originally described and defined by Carl Rogers as “accurate empathy”
- The ability to understand another person’s internal frame of reference and reflect it back like a mirror through “active listening”

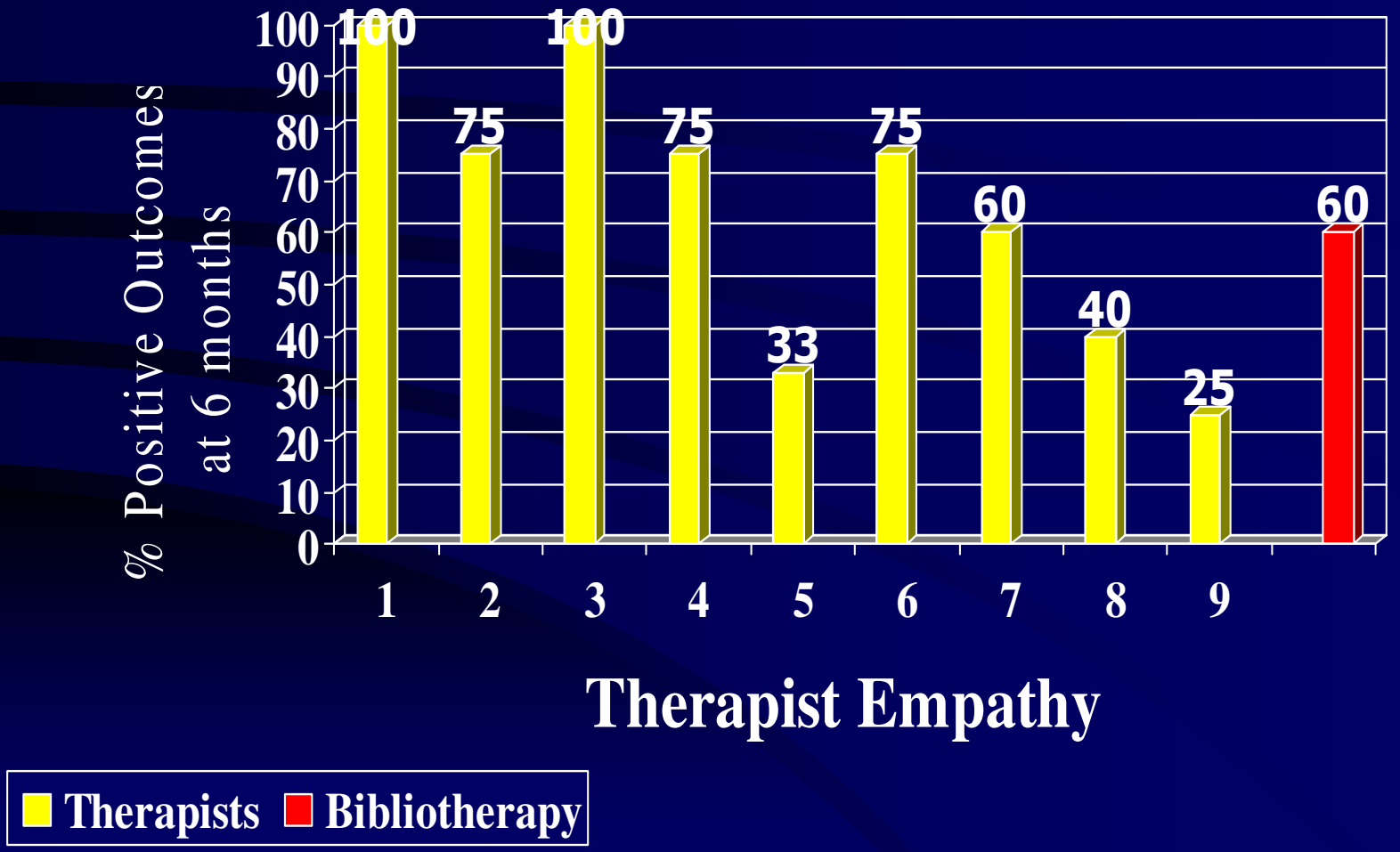
Miller, Taylor & West, 1980

Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 48:590-601

- Problem drinkers were randomly assigned to bibliotherapy or to one of nine outpatient counselors, all delivering the same treatment: behavioral self-control training

- 3 supervisors rated counselors' levels of accurate empathy (Truax & Carkhuff scale) with high inter-rater reliability

Counselor Empathy and Client Outcomes



Correlation Between Counselor Empathy and Client Drinking at Follow-up

(standard drinks per week)

Miller & Baca (1983) *Behavior Therapy 14*: 441-448

6 months	$r = .82$	$r^2 = .67$
12 months	$r = .71$	$r^2 = .50$
24 months	$r = .51$	$r^2 = .26$

COUNSELORS' INTERPERSONAL SKILL (ROGERS) AND CLIENTS' DRINKING RELAPSE RATES

VALLE (1981) *J STUDIES ON ALCOHOL 42*: 783-790

Patients in treatment for alcoholism were randomly assigned to counselors with:

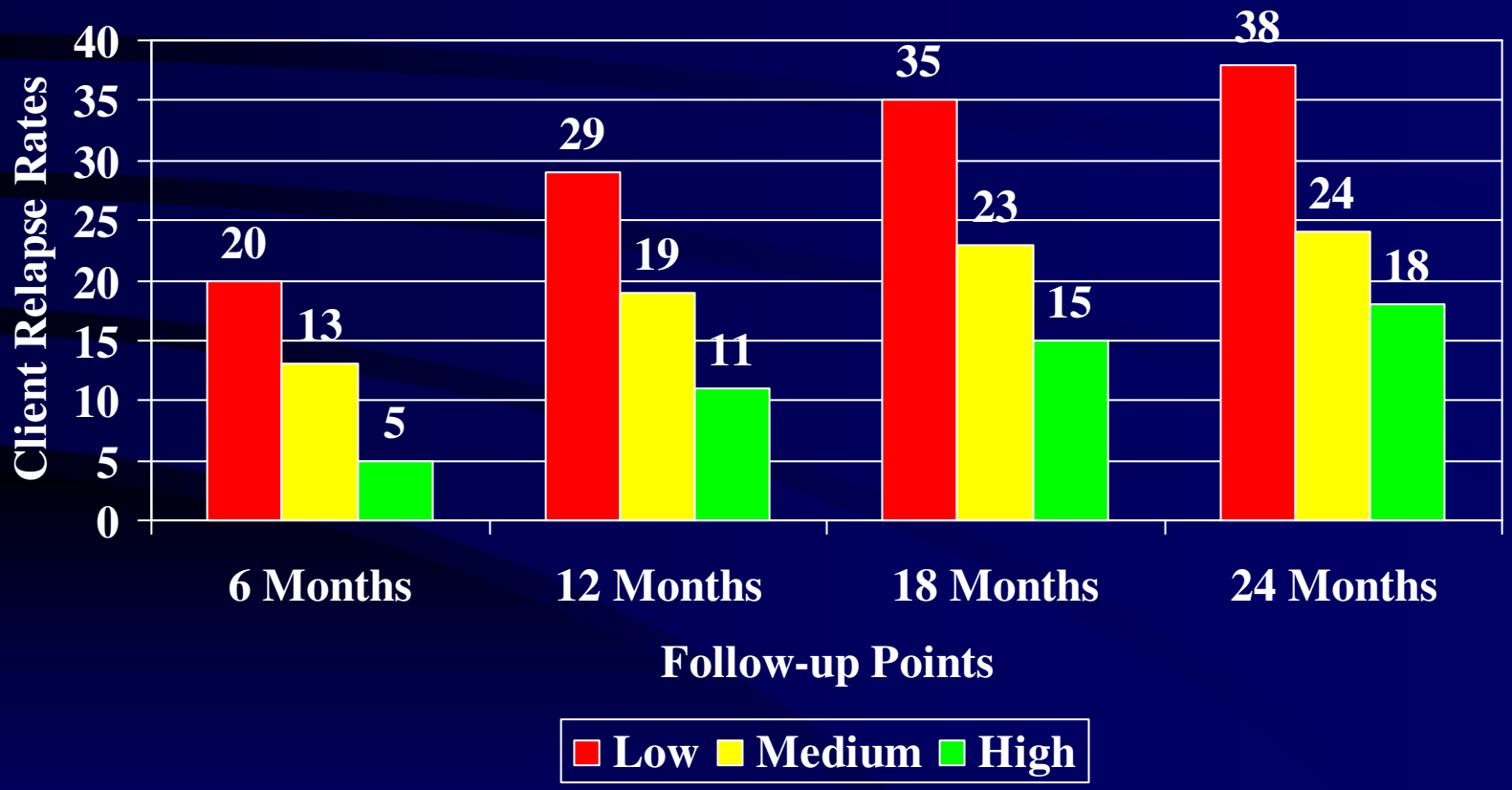
LOW levels of empathy and related interpersonal skills

MEDIUM levels of empathy and related interpersonal skills

Or HIGH levels of empathy and related interpersonal skills

What percentage of patients relapsed?

Drinking Relapse Rates to 2 Years



Normal Human Responses to a Listen/Evoke/Empathic Style

Affirmed	**Accept**	**Approach**
Understood	Open	Talk more
Accepted	Undefensive	Liking
Respected	Interested	Engaged
Heard	Cooperative	Activated
Comfortable/safe	Listening	Come back
Empowered		
Hopeful/Able to change		

In other words, you get to choose which clients you want to work with:

Open	**Defensive**
Cooperative	**Oppositional**
Listening	**Arguing**
Engaged	**Disengaged**
Active	**Passive**
Empowered	**Powerless**
Hopeful	**Unable to change**
Liking	**Disliking**

A Change of Role

- You don't have to *make* change happen.

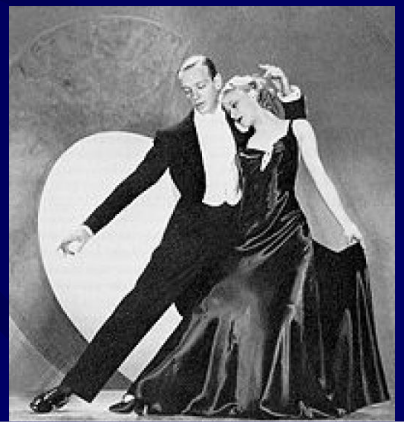
  You can't

- You don't have to come up with all the answers

  You probably don't have the best ones

- You're not wrestling

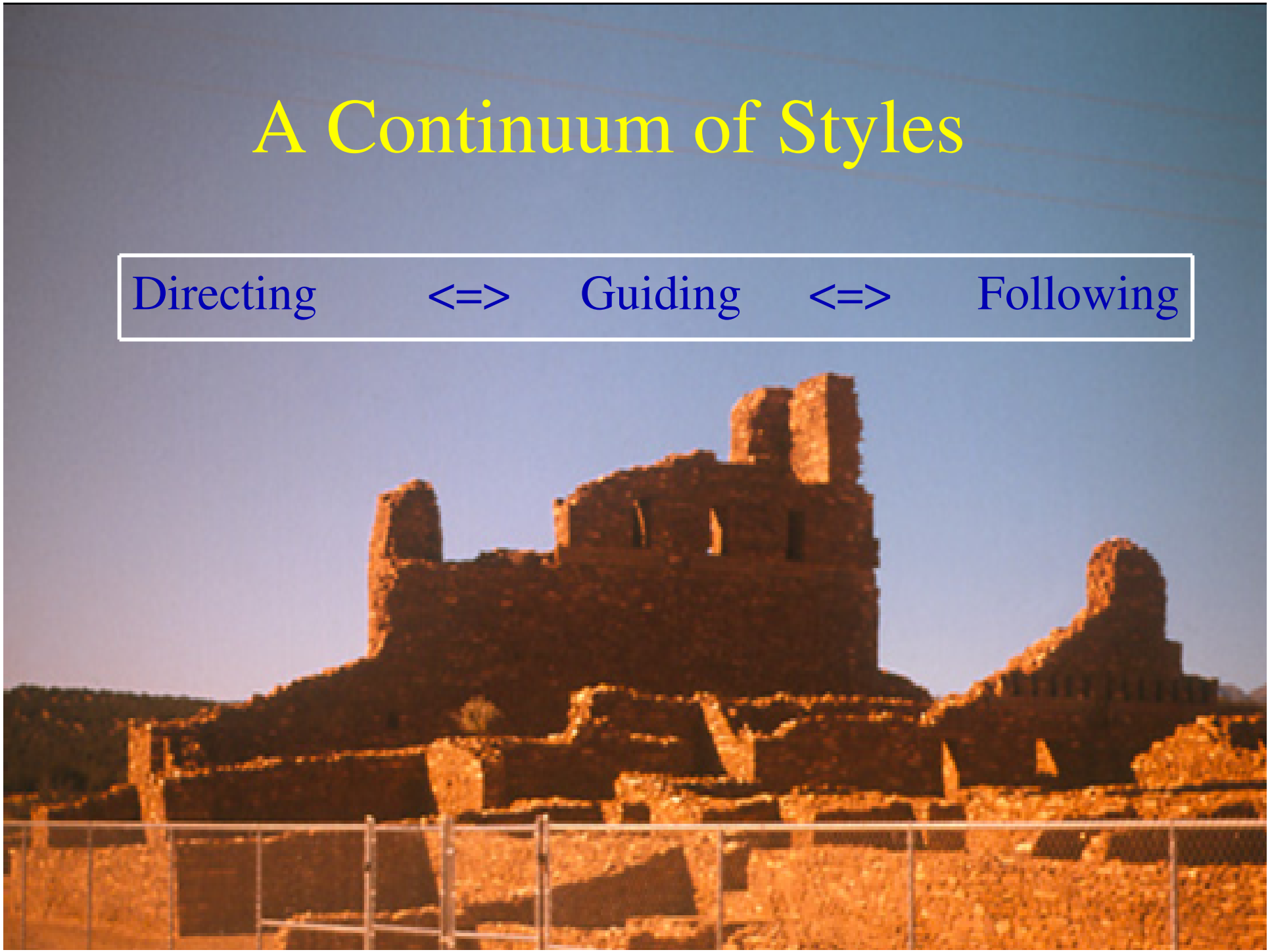
  You're dancing



5. MI is a refined form of *guiding*

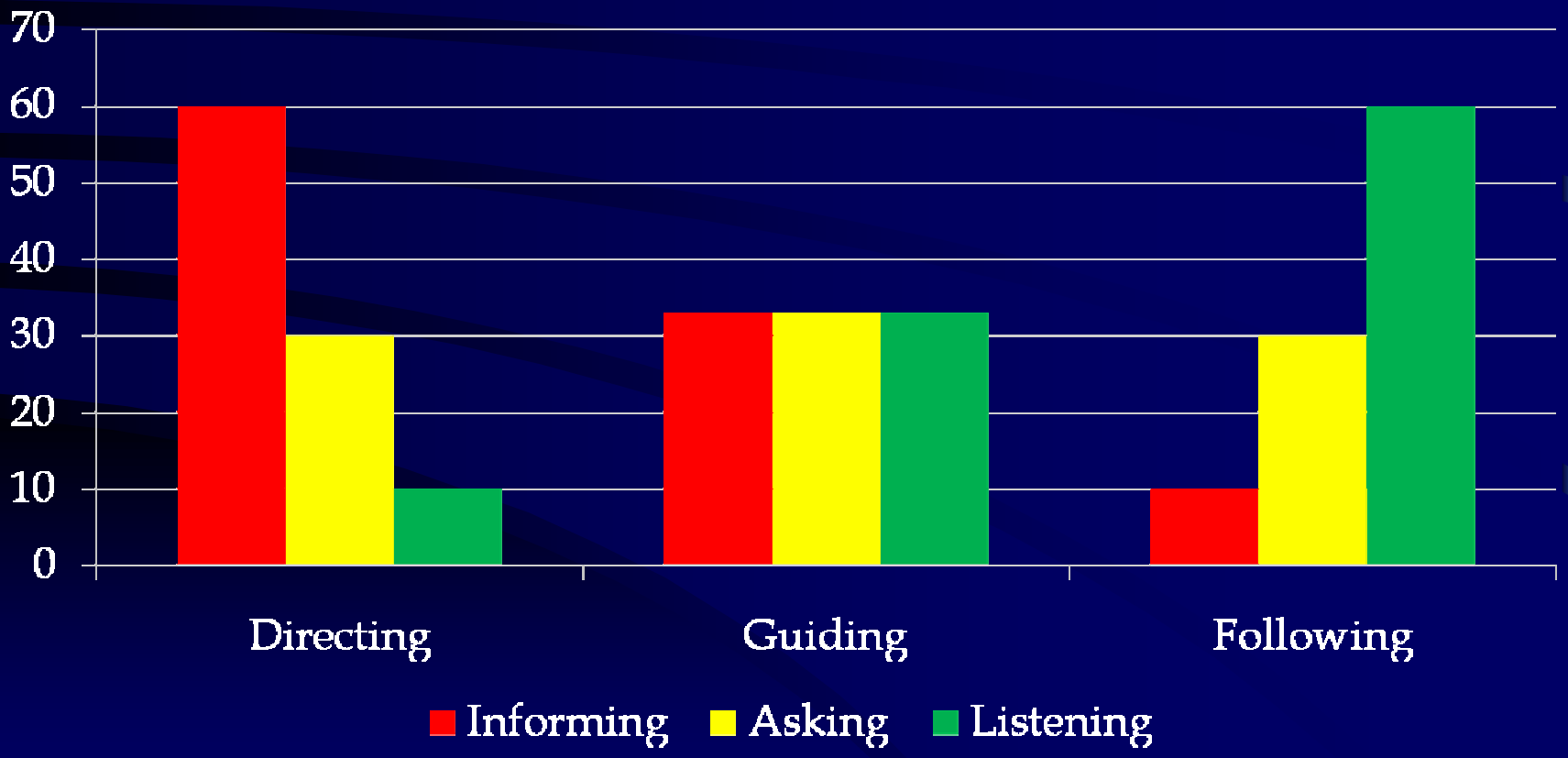
A Continuum of Styles

Directing <=> Guiding <=> Following



A Continuum of Styles

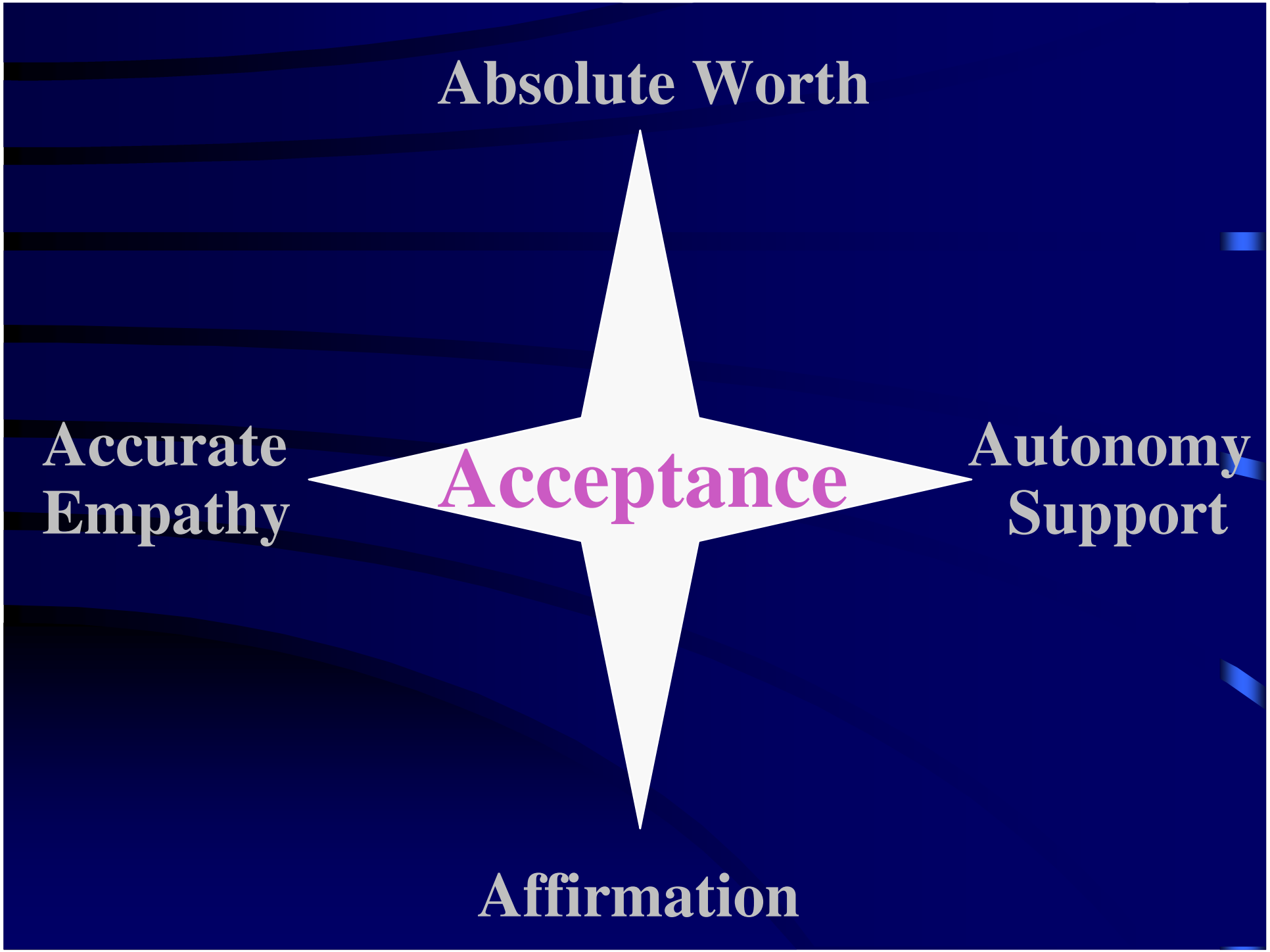
Directing <=> Guiding <=> Following

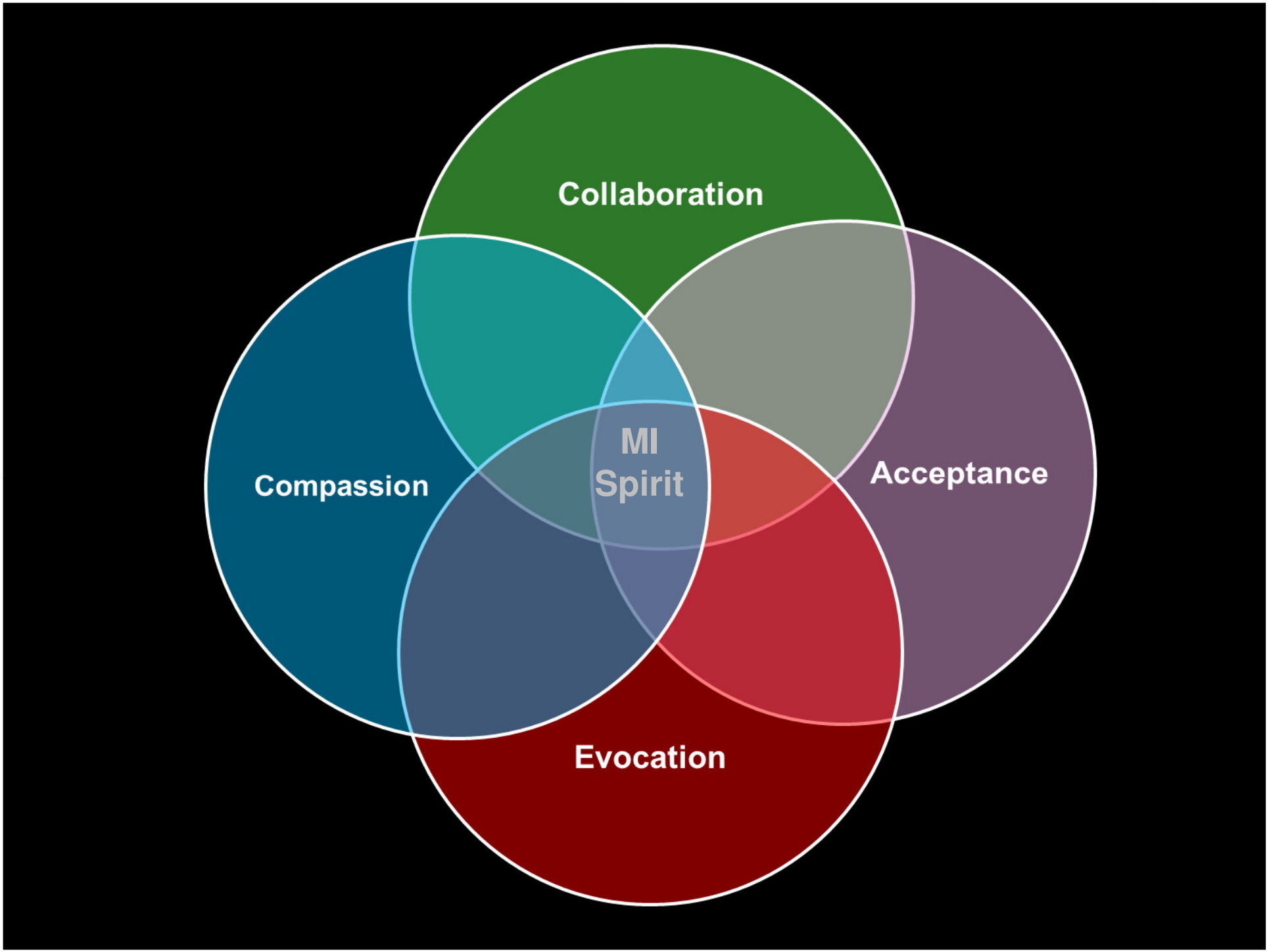


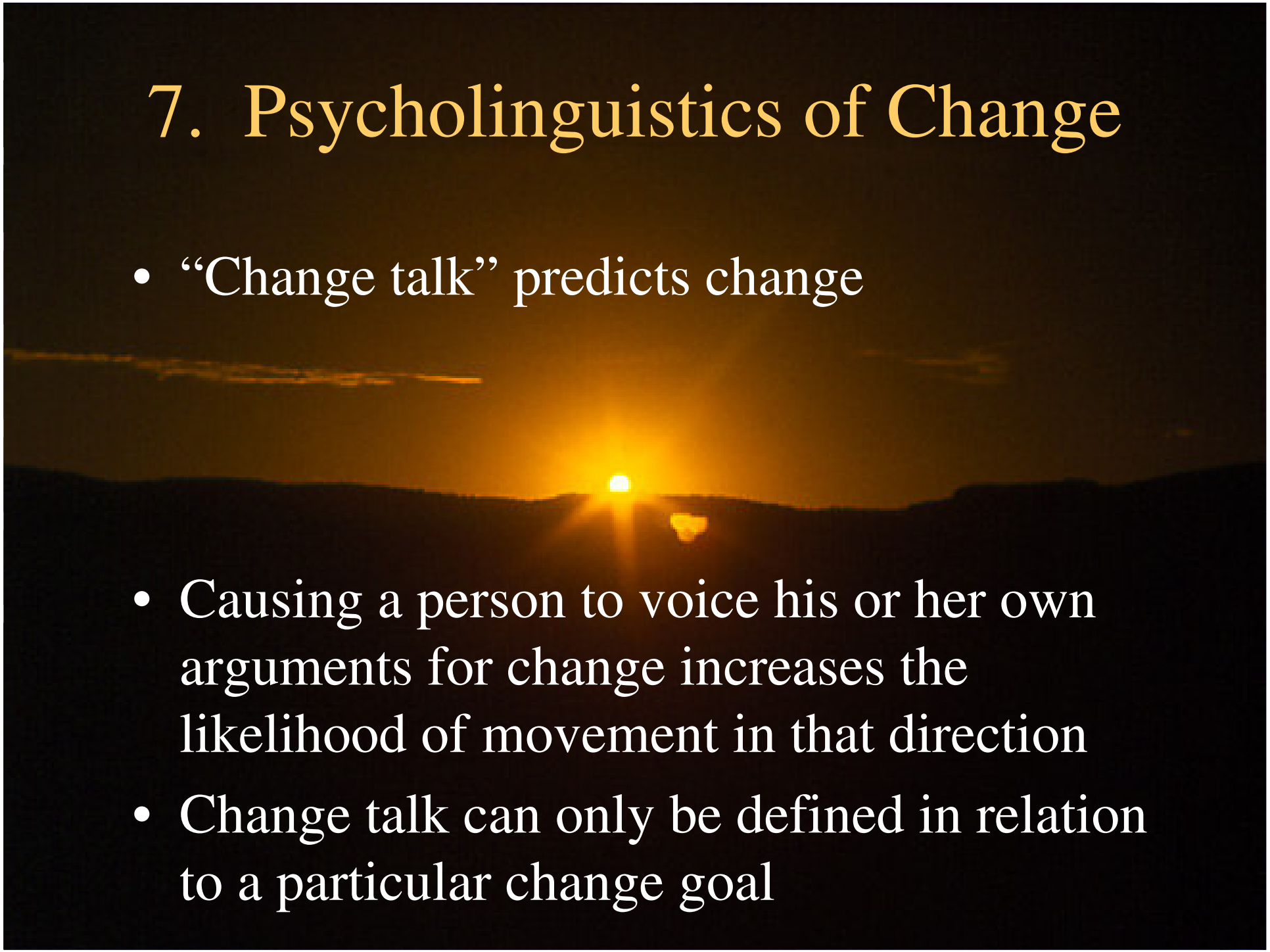
6. The underlying spirit of MI is important

The Spirit of MI

- Partnership
- Acceptance
- Compassion
- Evocation


Absolute Worth
Accurate Empathy
Acceptance
Autonomy Support
Affirmation


Collaboration
Compassion
MI
Spirit
Acceptance
Evocation

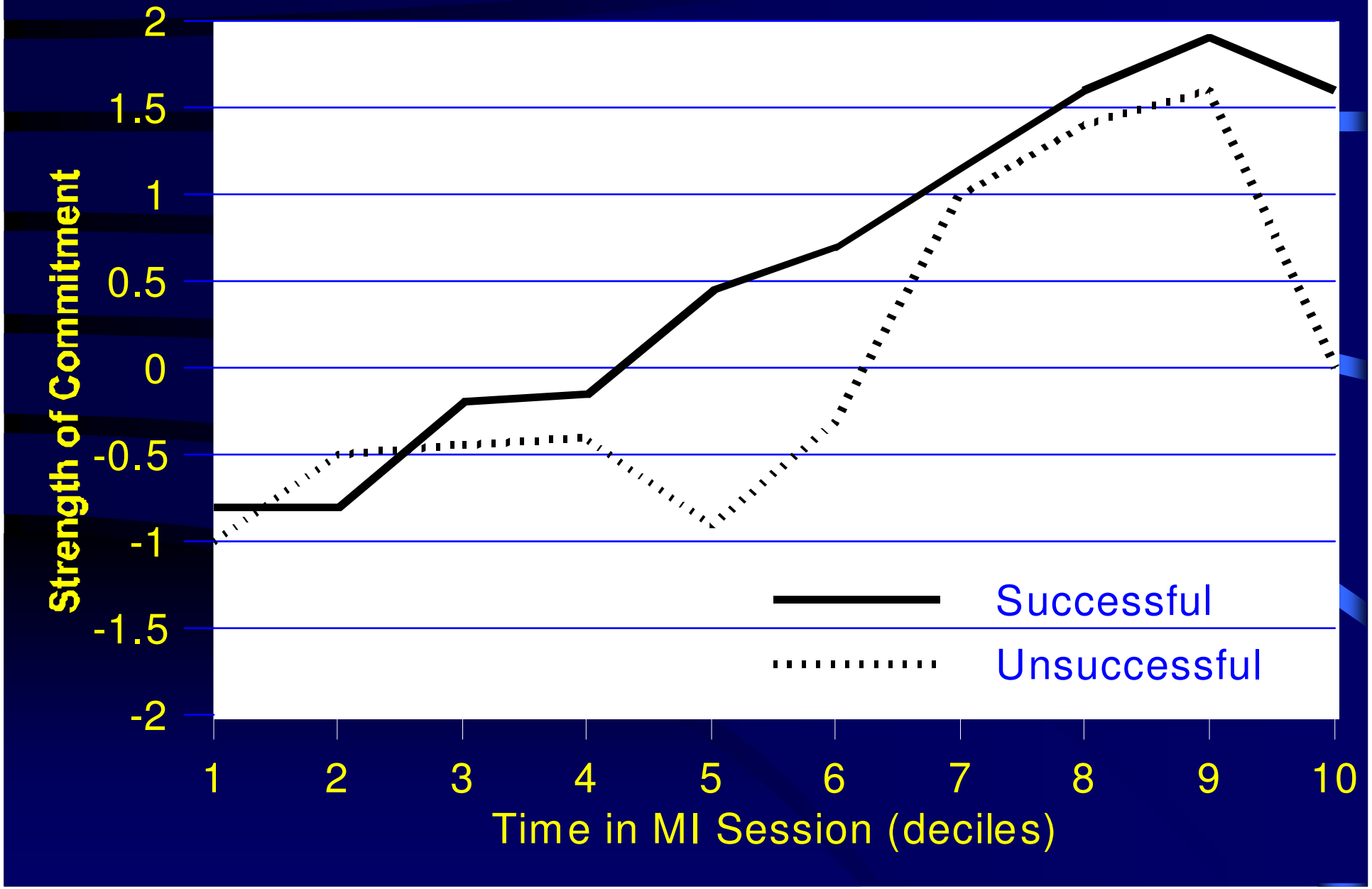


7. Psycholinguistics of Change

- "Change talk" predicts change

- Causing a person to voice his or her own arguments for change increases the likelihood of movement in that direction
- Change talk can only be defined in relation to a particular change goal

Commitment Language in MI



Change Talk

- Change talk is any patient speech that favors movement in the direction of change
- Think of it as “self-motivational statements” (Miller & Rollnick, 1991)
- Change talk is necessarily linked to a particular change goal

Preparatory Change Talk
Four Examples

DARN

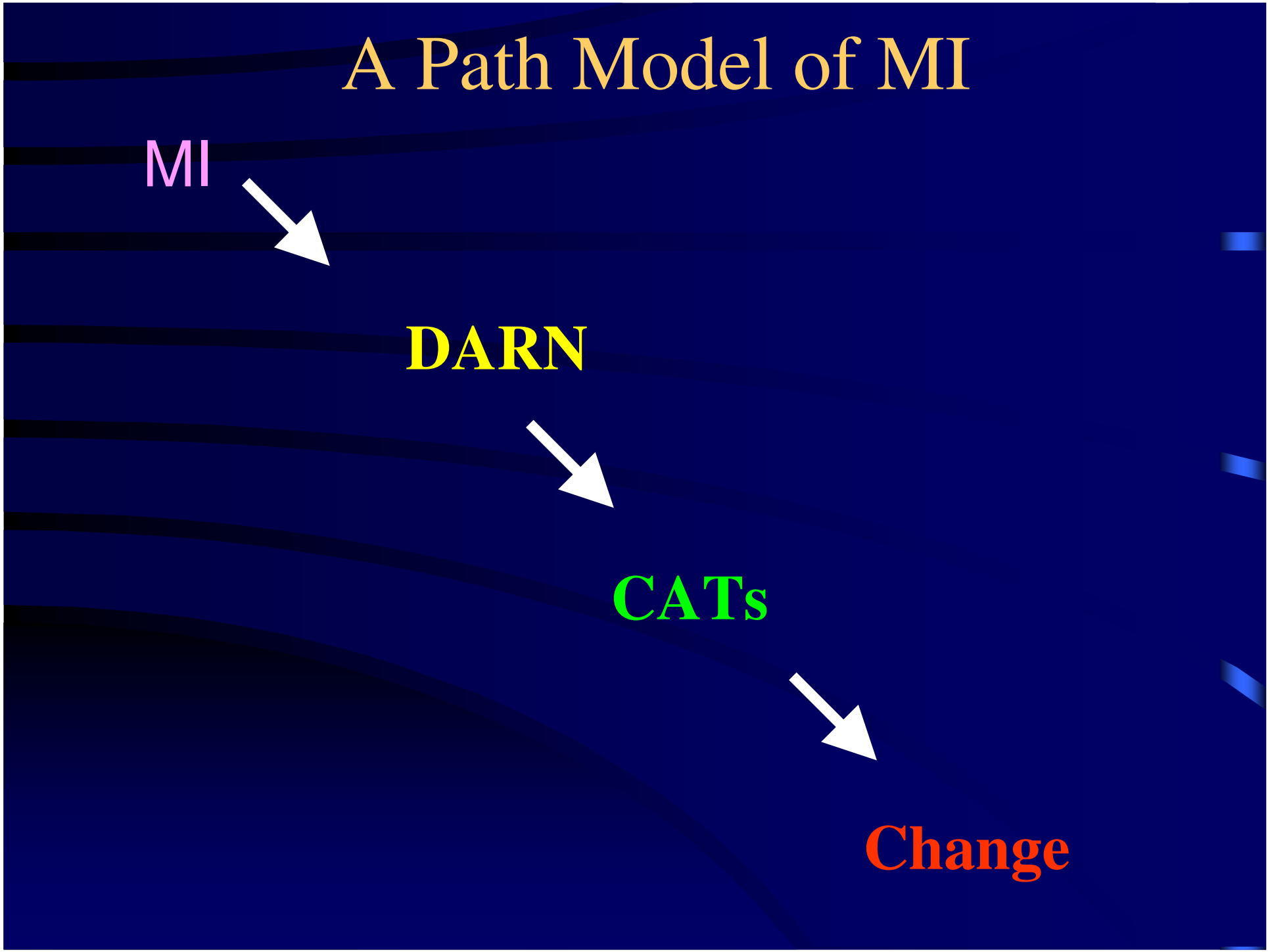
- DESIRE to change (want, like, wish . .)
- ABILITY to change (can, could . .)
- REASONS to change (if . . then)
- NEED to change (need, have to, got to . .)

Mobilizing Change Talk

reflects resolution of ambivalence

CATs

- **C**ommitment (intention, decision, promise)
- **A**ctivation (willing, ready, preparing)
- **T**aking **s**teps


A Path Model of MI
MI
DARN
CATs
Change

Motivational Hill
Preparatory Change Talk
Mobilizing Change Talk
Contemplation
Preparation
Action

Change Talk and Sustain Talk

Opposite Sides of the Same Coin

Sustain Talk

The other side of ambivalence

- I really like marijuana (D)
- I don't see how I could give up pot (A)
- I have to smoke to be creative (R)
- I don't think I need to quit (N)
- I'm not willing to quit (A)
- I intend to keep smoking and nobody can stop me (C)

8. MI is Goal-directed

MI departs from person-centered counseling in being consciously goal-oriented.

The Relational Foundation for MI

1. Engaging

2. Focusing

A Change Goal Can be Broader than Behavior Change

- Decision – to make a choice
  - Forgiveness, Leaving or staying
- Attitude - to become a different person
  - To be more Compassionate, Assertive etc.
- Resolution - Acceptance
  - Complicated grief
  - Finding peace regarding a decision
  - Tolerance for anxiety, uncertainty etc.

9. Evoking lies at the heart of motivational interviewing

Four Fundamental Processes in MI

Relational Foundation

Motivational Interviewing

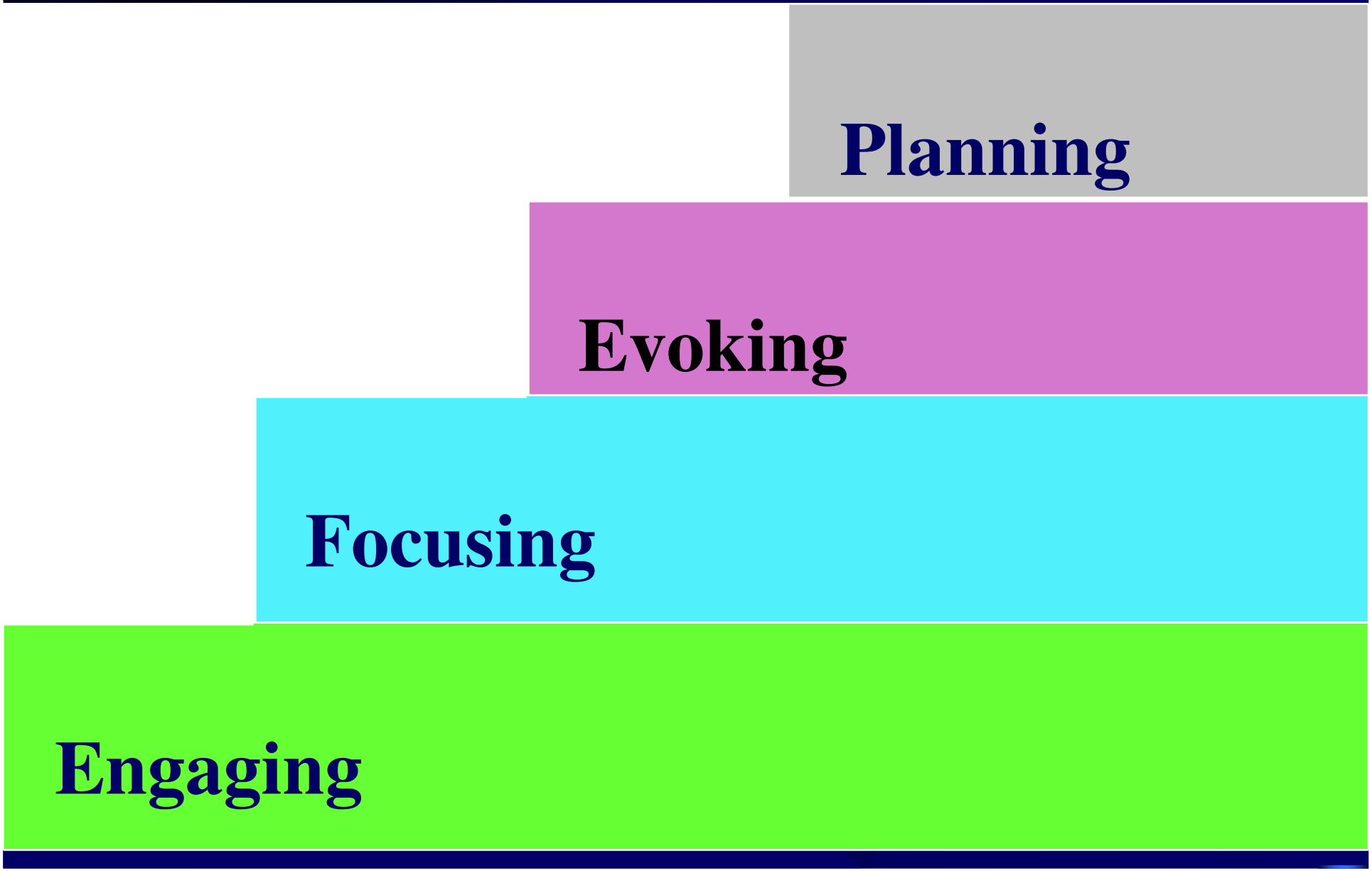
1. Engaging

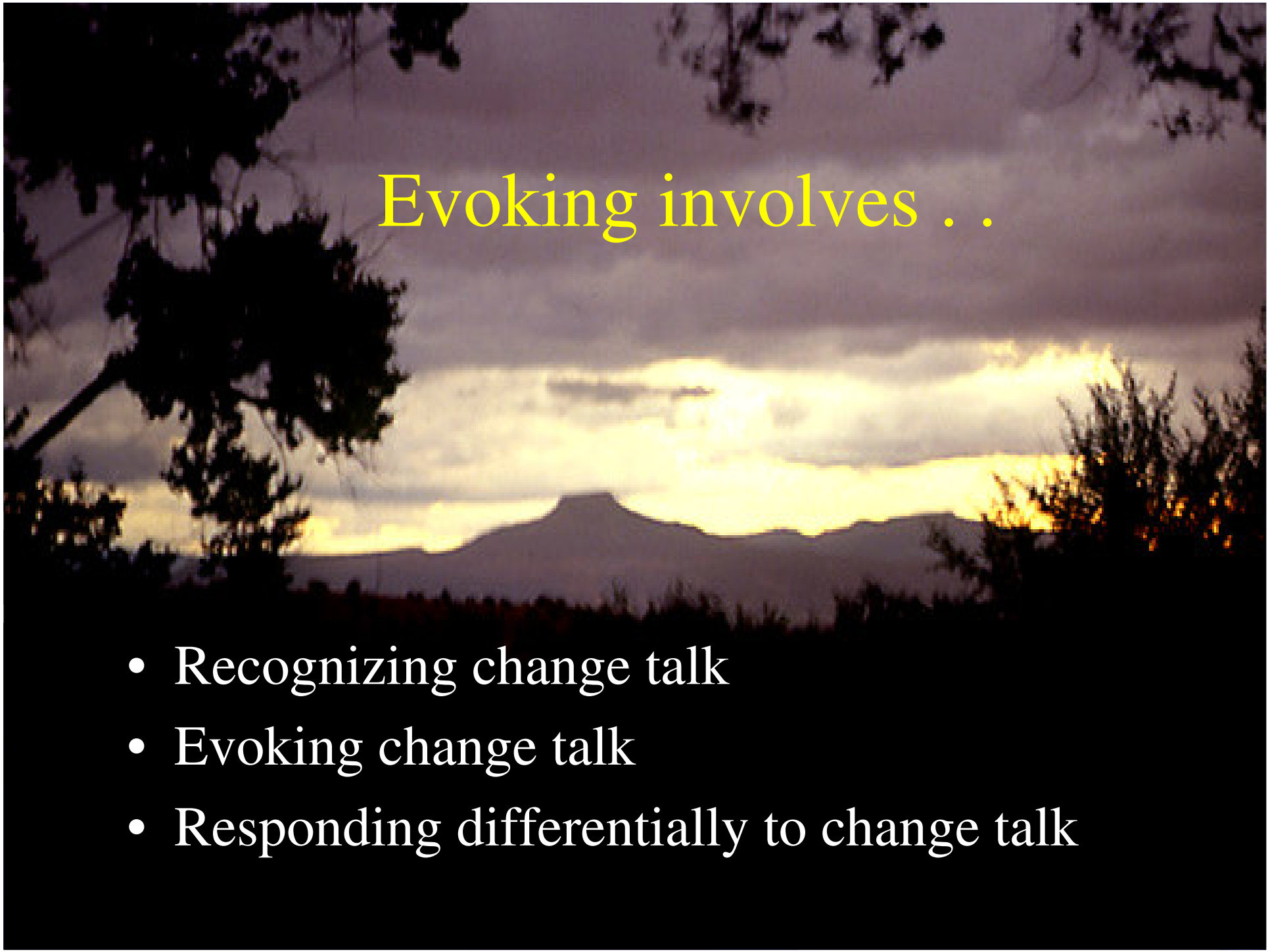
2. Focusing

3. Evoking

4. Planning

Four Foundational Processes




Evoking involves . .
• Recognizing change talk
• Evoking change talk
• Responding differentially to change talk

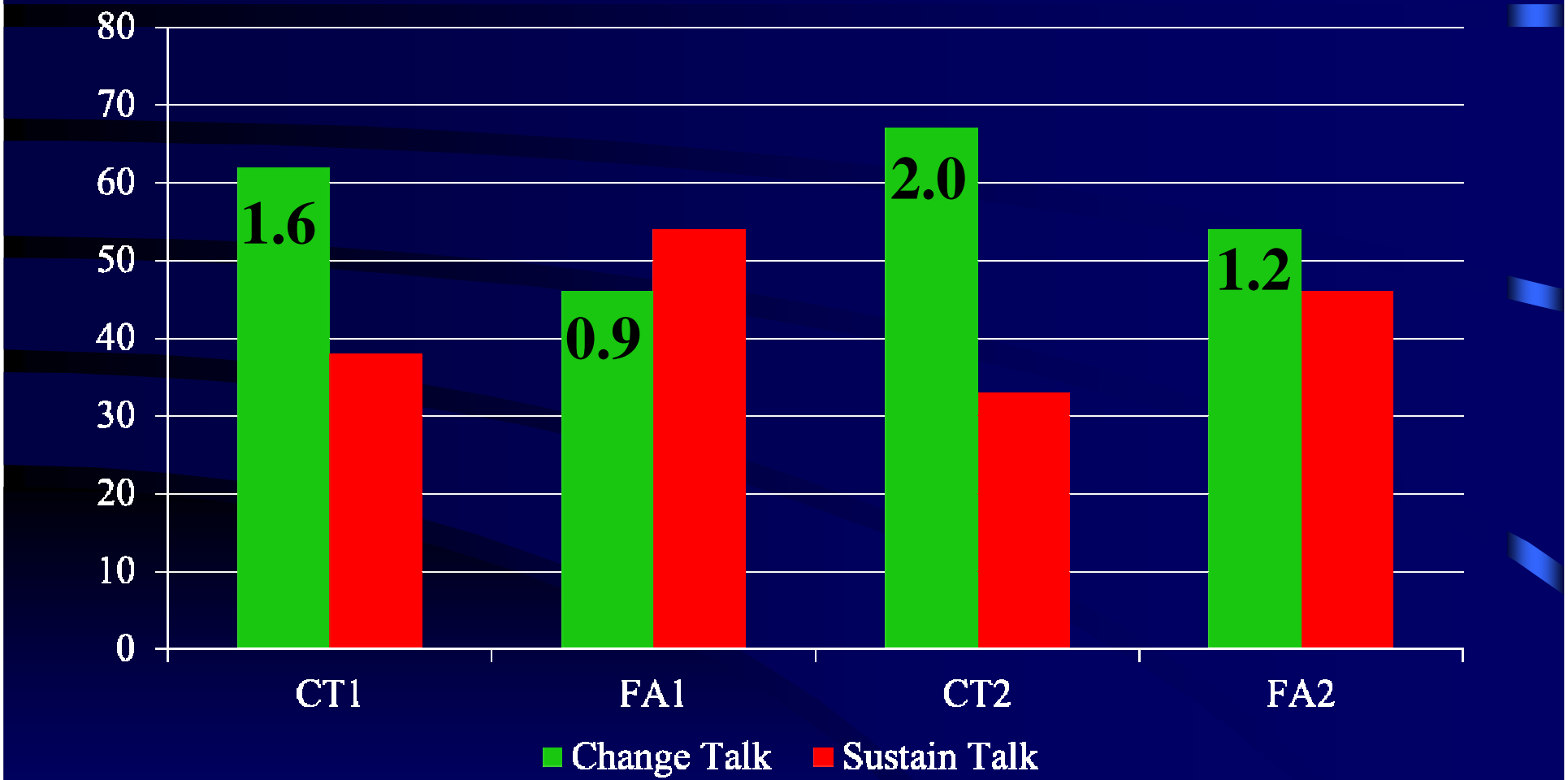
How to get out of a forest

Counselors *can* evoke change talk

Glynn & Moyers (2010), *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment 39*: 65-70

- 9 counselors alternated (in 12-minute segments) between
  - CT: Change talk evocation (CT) and
  - FA: Functional analysis of drinking
- in conversations with 47 college students about drinking concerns
- Coded change talk (CT) and sustain talk (ST)
- Dependent measure: % Change Talk defined as frequency of CT ÷ CT + ST

%Change Talk and Sustain Talk



Two Helping Styles

Direct

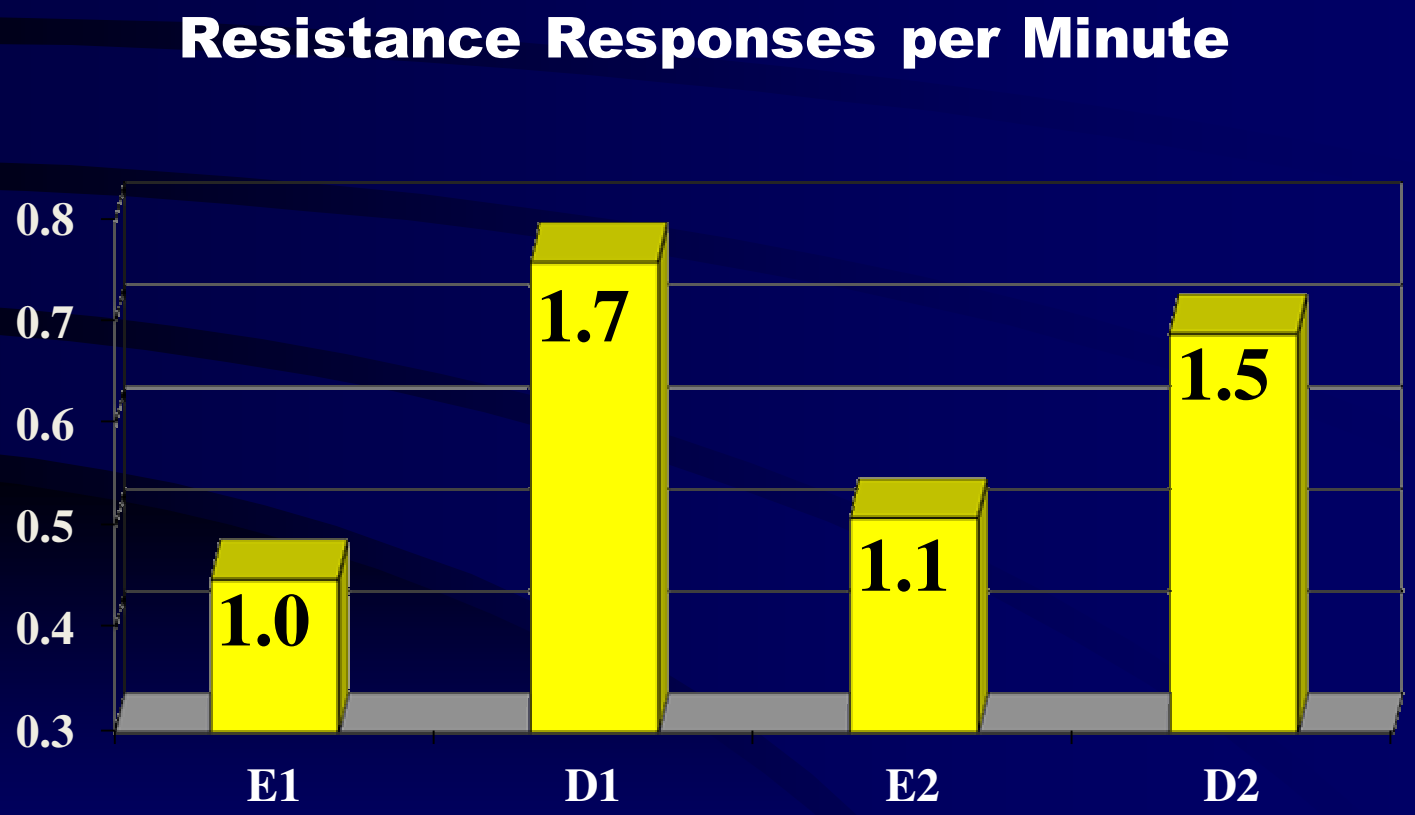
- Give information
- Give advice

Follow

- Ask open questions
- Listen reflectively
- Summarize

Therapist Style and Client Resistance

Patterson & Forgatch, *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology,* 1985, *53*: 846-851.



What's Become of Resistance?

Resistance
X
Sustain
Talk
Discord

So more fully, MI involves:

- *Differentially* evoking change talk relative to sustain talk
- and responding to sustain talk and discord in a way that does not increase them

REMOVING THE DAM

Don't worry about taking down the whole thing. Just remove a few rocks (and don't add any more), and then get out of the way. The water will do the rest. - Cleve Sharp, M.D.

10. MI includes change planning

Change Planning in MI

- Not before the person is ready
- Offer information and advice with permission, as needed
- Negotiate a change plan to which the person will agree (could be a small step)
- Implementation intention (specific plan plus stated intent) predicts change

The Essence of MI

1. Ambivalence
2. Righting Reflex
3. Reactance
4. Empathy
5. Guiding
6. Spirit
7. Change Talk
8. Goal Direction
9. Evoking
10. Planning