

# **Building Psychological Flexibility For Empowered Students and Healthy Learning Communities with the ACT Matrix**

## ***An Experiential Approach to Behavior Change***

### Session Objectives

- Show the principles and practices of the ACT Matrix to help individuals and groups engage in productive living and learning.
- Promote psychological flexibility and effective action in various settings using the ACT Matrix.
- Apply the ACT Matrix to empower and support individuals in overcoming obstacles and challenges.

My process for working with students begins  
before I meet them.

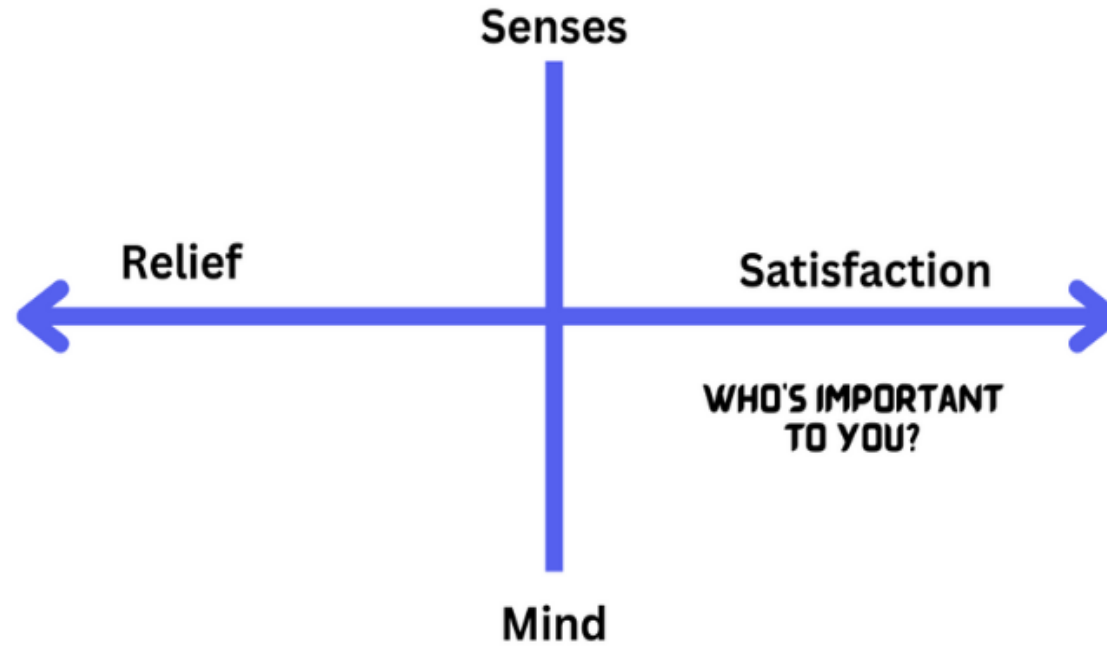
When I walk into a room, I will have the  
diagram visible.

You will get a lot more out of this training if you  
grab something to write with and draw it.

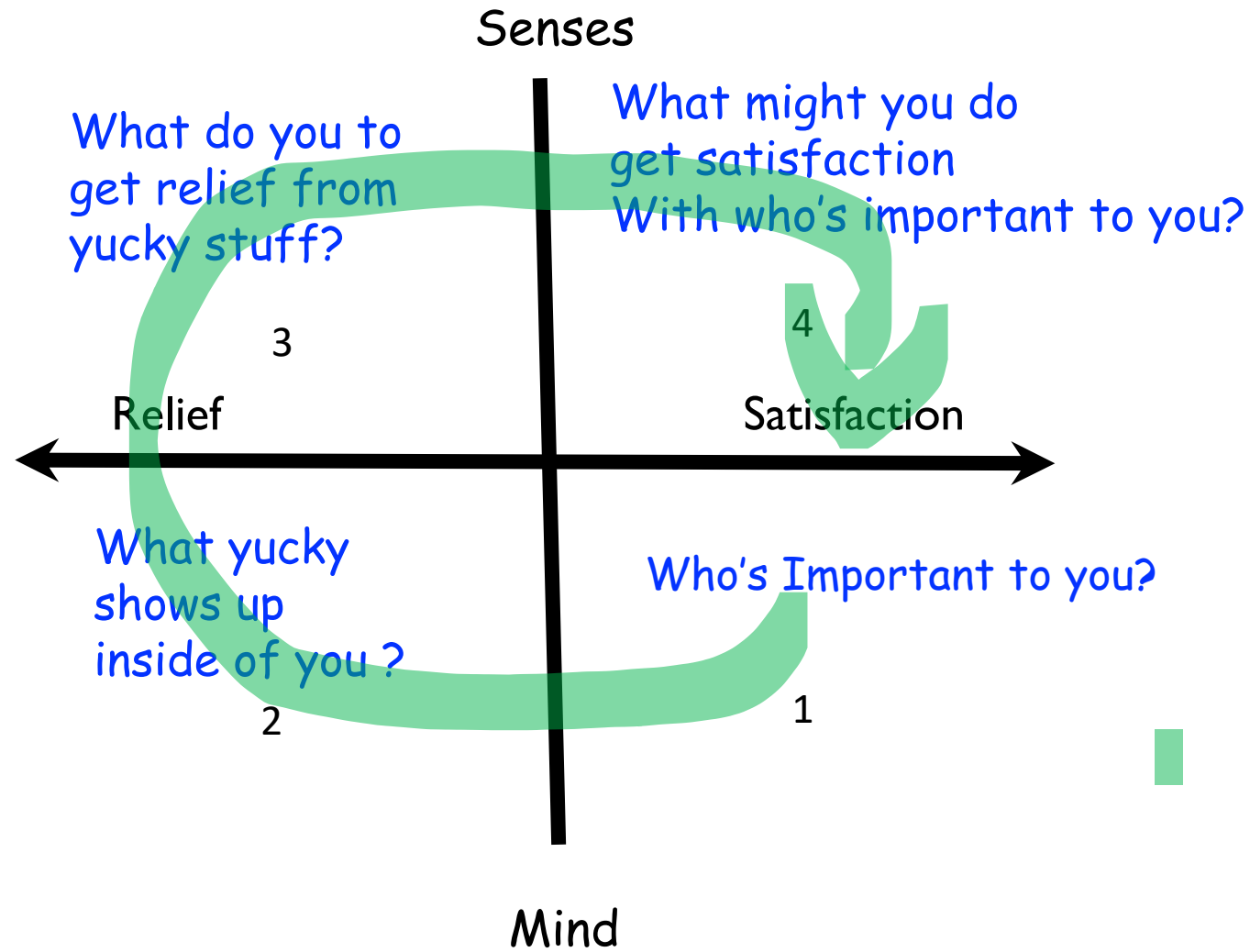
There is some serious mojo that happens when  
you use it.

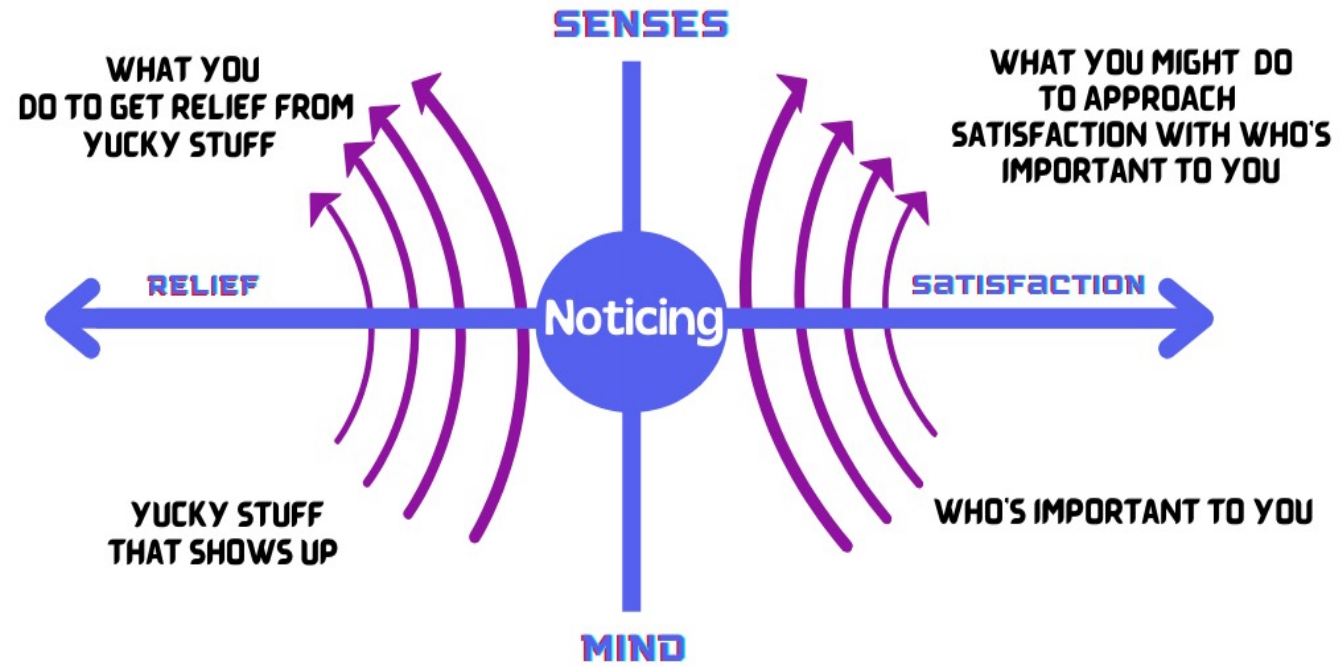
Can I Show You My Point of View?

# The ACT Matrix



*Created by Dr. Kevin Polk*





I have just shown you what is known as the three core processes of the ACT Matrix.

You don't need to talk about it or explain it- you just show it. Asking the questions in this order naturally leads the student into the experiencing these processes.

I have just led you through the process as well since it is equally important that you experience the process with them. I will share more about why that is in a bit.

# Noticing





Noticing is Everyday Mindfulness (Showing Up)

Noticing is Nonjudgmental Awareness (Letting Go)

It is an Action done for a Purpose (For Getting Moving)

To Move Toward a Life Worth Living (For Getting Moving)

***Noticing is Showing Up in the Present Moment  
And  
Increases Psychological Flexibility!***

# The Observer Self

## **Noticing Cues Up** Observer Self

The Observer Self is  
in contact with the  
Present Moment

The Observer Self is Nonjudgmental

**It accepts what is being experienced**

Learning to use the Observer Self perspective allows you to  
**choose behaviors that work for where you want to go**

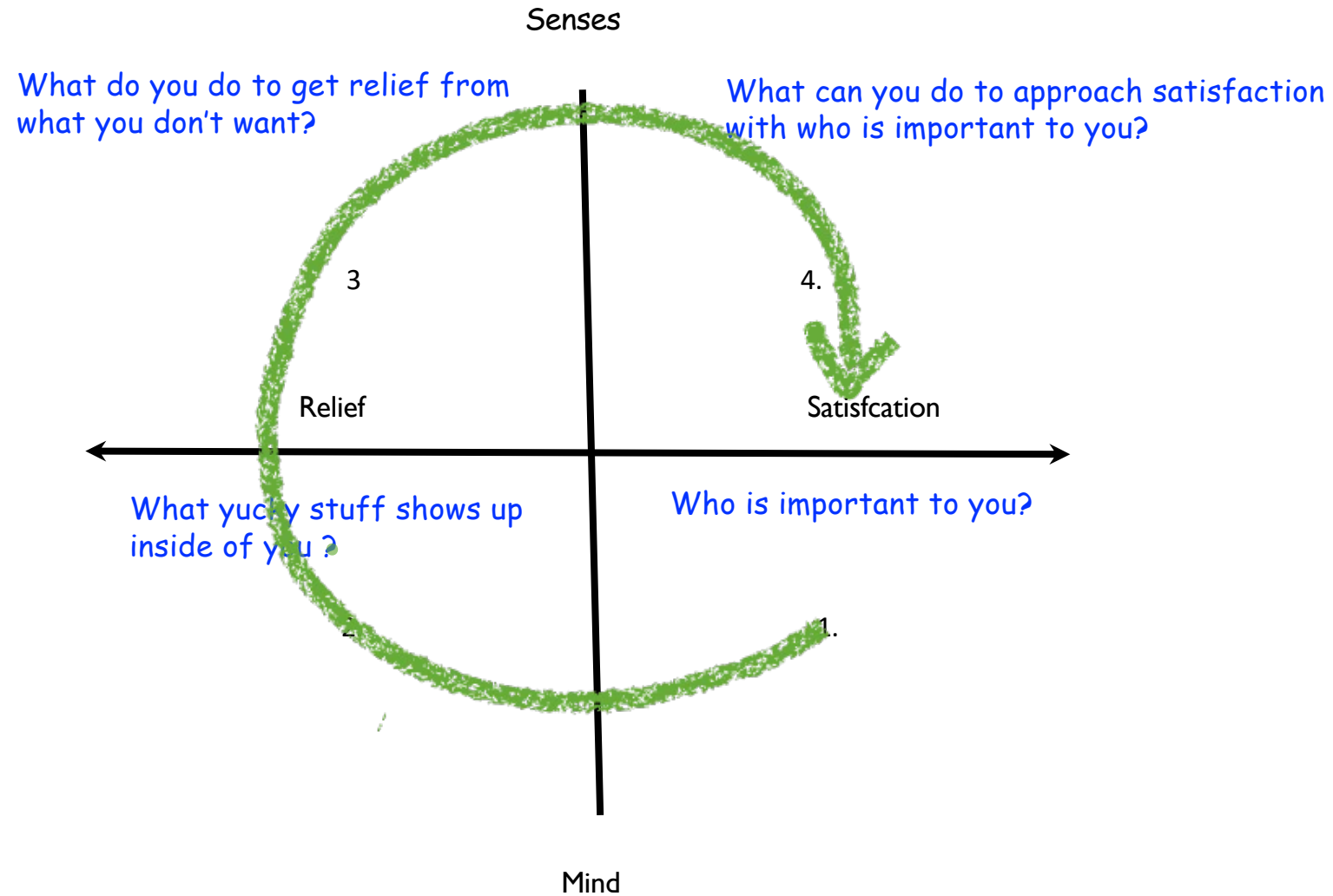
# *The Target of ACT and the ACT Matrix is Psychological Flexibility*

The ability to notice what you are doing and choosing what works to get you where you want to go, ***even in the presence of obstacles.***



Psychological Flexibility is the cornerstone of  
Mental Health and Wellness

# Show Students a Process they experience with the ACT Matrix that engages Observer Self and Increases Psychological Flexibility



Psychological Flexibility is a process which you can develop in learners and in yourself.

## Start Where People Are



Useful interventions with students and humans in general helps them engage in perspective-taking.

Perspective-taking on the self and others cuts across all forms, styles and theories of intervention.

The aim is for the person to figure out how to look back on themselves, their experiences (using their language), and then make different choices.

All therapeutic approaches require perspective taking (Freud, Rogers, MI, CBT, Solution-focused, etc. ), so I am showing you a core process that will work with any of them.

***Dr. Polk created the Matrix so anyone can learn the perspective-taking process and show it to others***

**ACT**

**Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Training**

**Increasing Valued Living while Reducing Suffering**

**Dr Kevin Polk**

**Matrix Developer**

**The ACT Matrix Academy**

**Phil Tenaglia**

**School Psychologist/Licensed Psychologist**

**ACT Matrix Trainer**

**The ACT Matrix Academy**

**Evolving Solutions (for Training and Consulting)**

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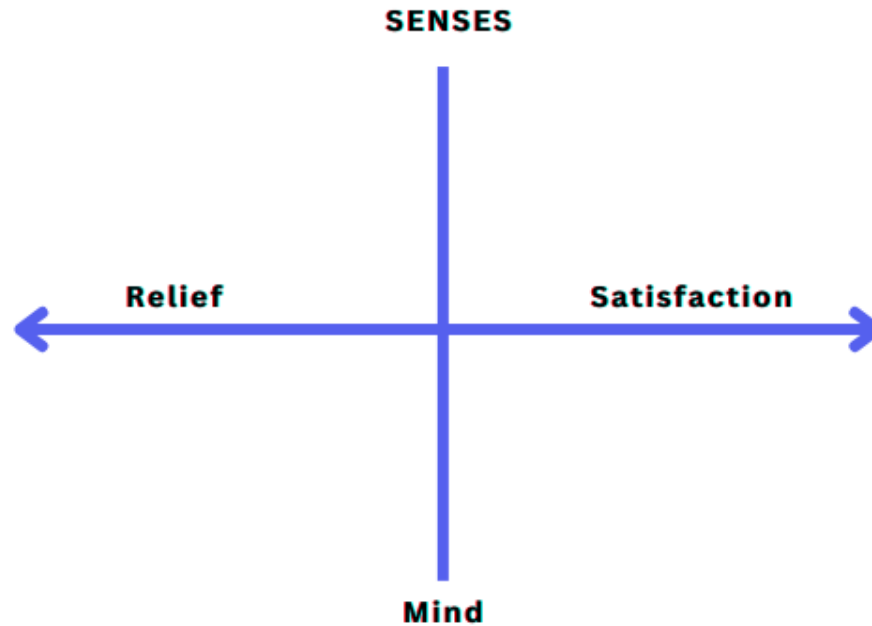
**The ACT Matrix Academy is an Approved Provider for Continuing Education**

**By**

**The American Psychological Association**

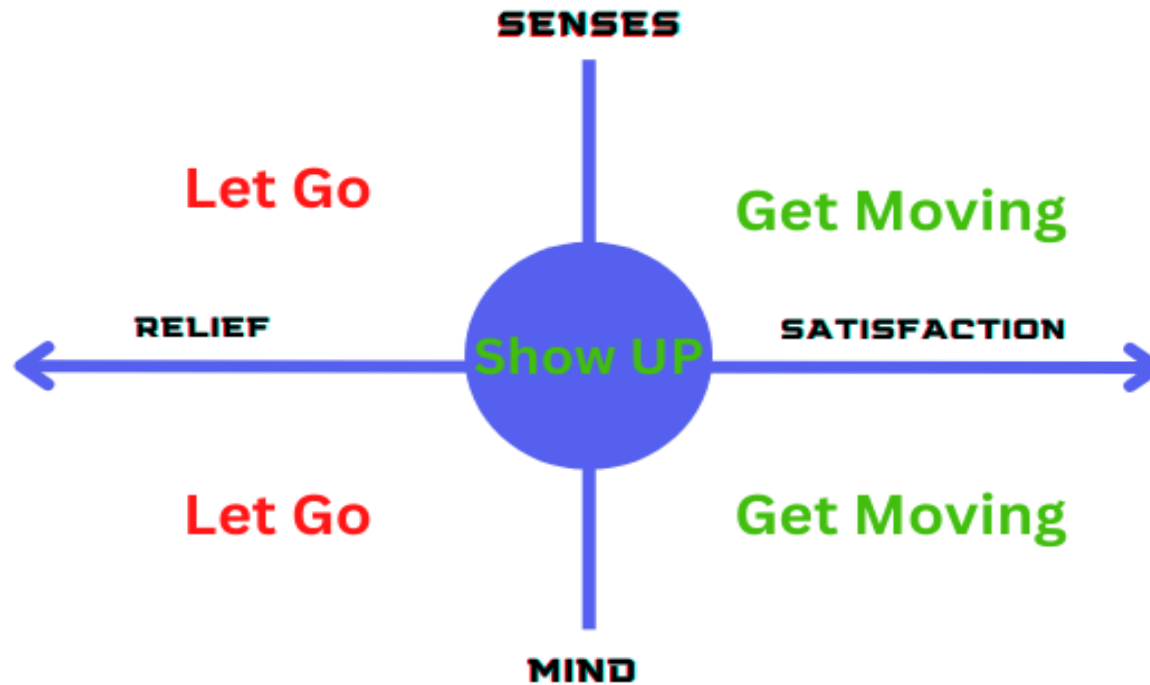


# The ACT Matrix



**A simple diagram and process  
that quickly engages individuals and groups in a collaborative  
learning process  
And  
Loosens Us Up for Learning**

Three Colloquial Core Processes of  
Acceptance and Commitment  
Therapy and Training  
*“Let Go, Show Up, and Get Moving”*



**Noticing with Observer Self Leads to  
Acceptance  
Taking Yucky Stuff with You and Doing Committed  
Actions  
Toward What Matters**

*Put it in Your Backpack while You go about approaching  
Satisfaction*



# The Workability Model

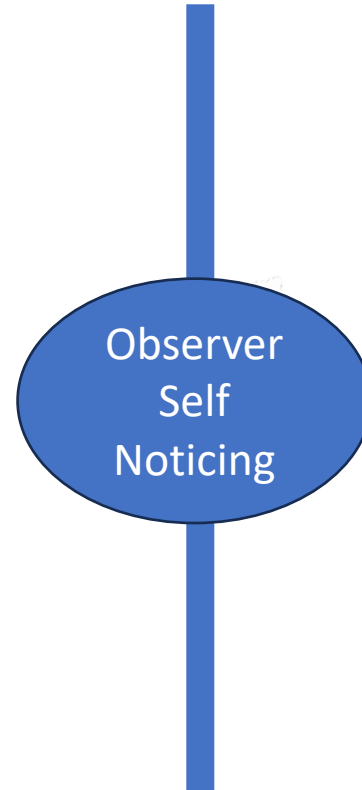




# EXTERNAL CONTEXT

Social World of Actions

MYSELF, OTHERS, WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND ME

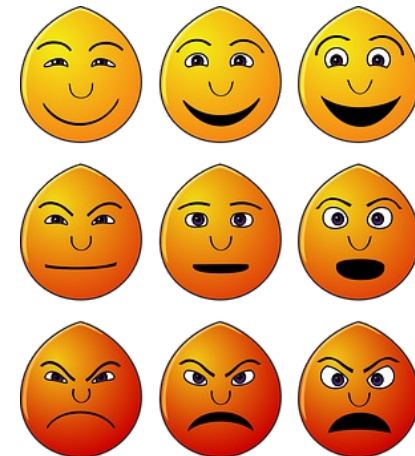


Observer  
Self  
Noticing

Emotional World of the Mind

THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, MOOD, MEMORY, URGES,

# INTERNAL CONTEXT



# Function or Purpose of Behavior



**RELIEF**

**SATISFACTION**

Observer  
Self  
Noticing

Yucky Inside Stuff

Who's Important to Me

“Letting Go”

“Getting Moving”

**Is This Working  
To  
Get Me Where I Want to  
Go?**



**To Move Me Toward  
Who and What is Important to  
Me!**

Do Not  
Answer  
This Question



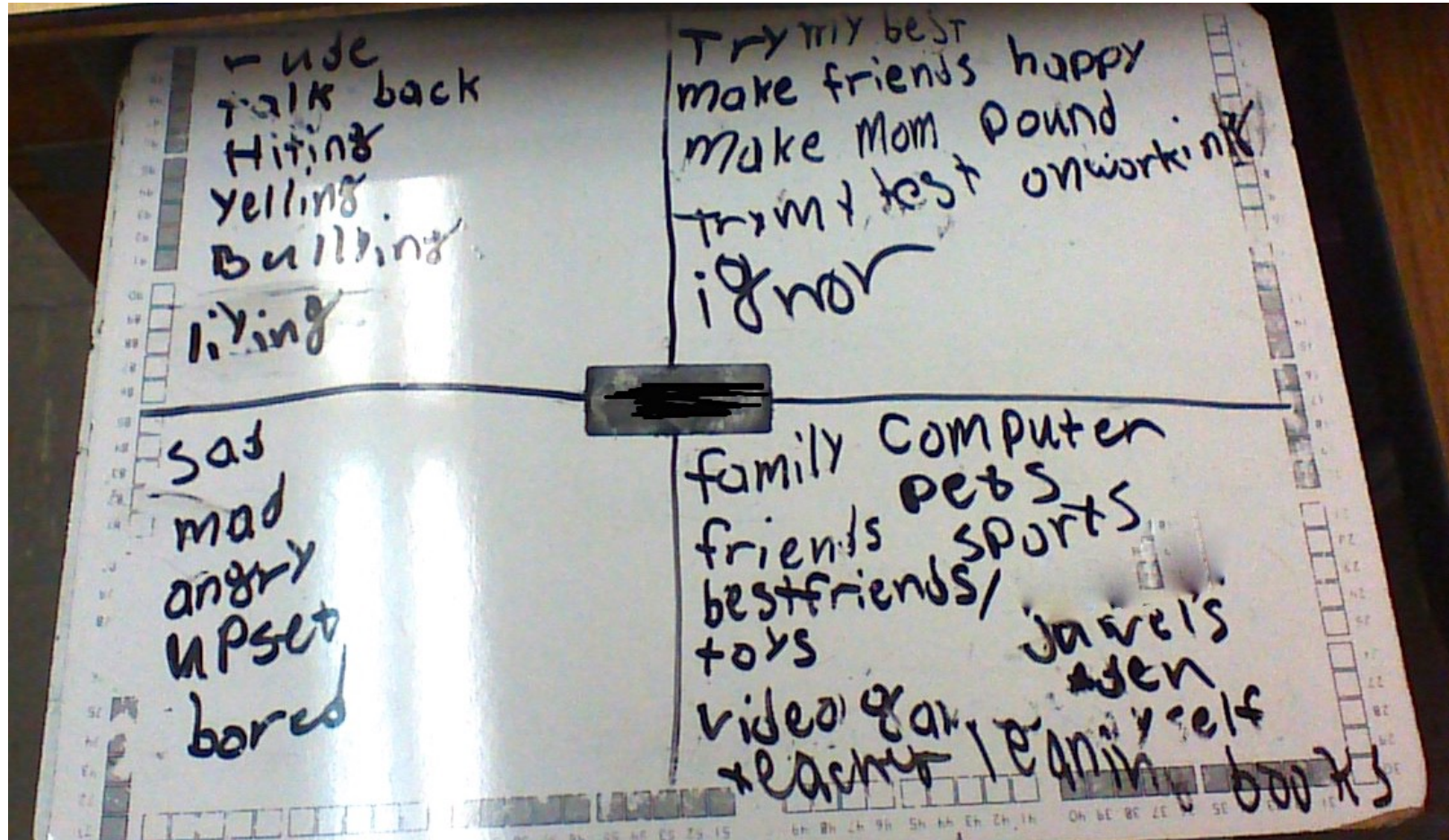
The Question Cues Up  
Noticing and the Observer  
Self

So the student can use ALL of  
their experiences.

It is answered over time.

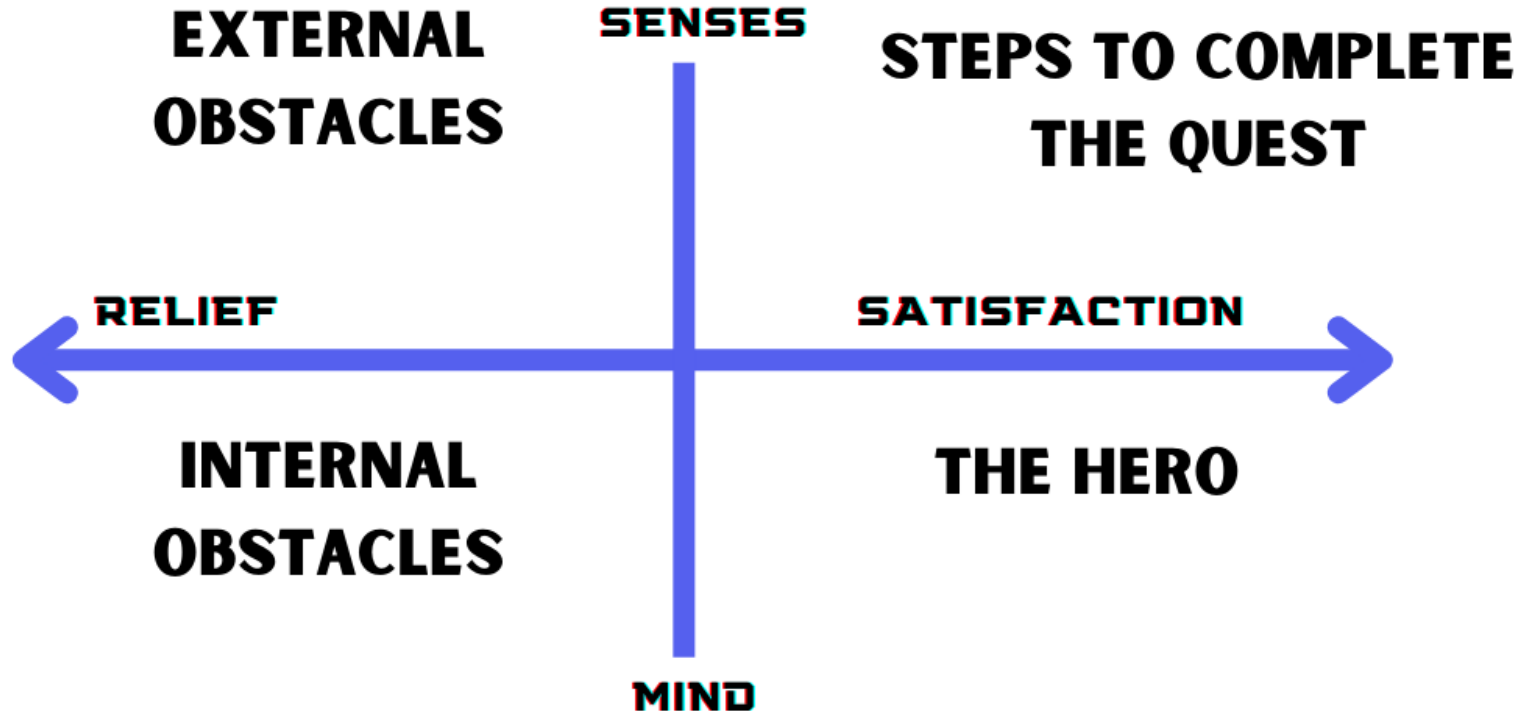
# Workability in Action

## Student Initiated Matrix for Perspective-Taking, Self-Management, Decision-Making and Activating Intrinsic Motivation



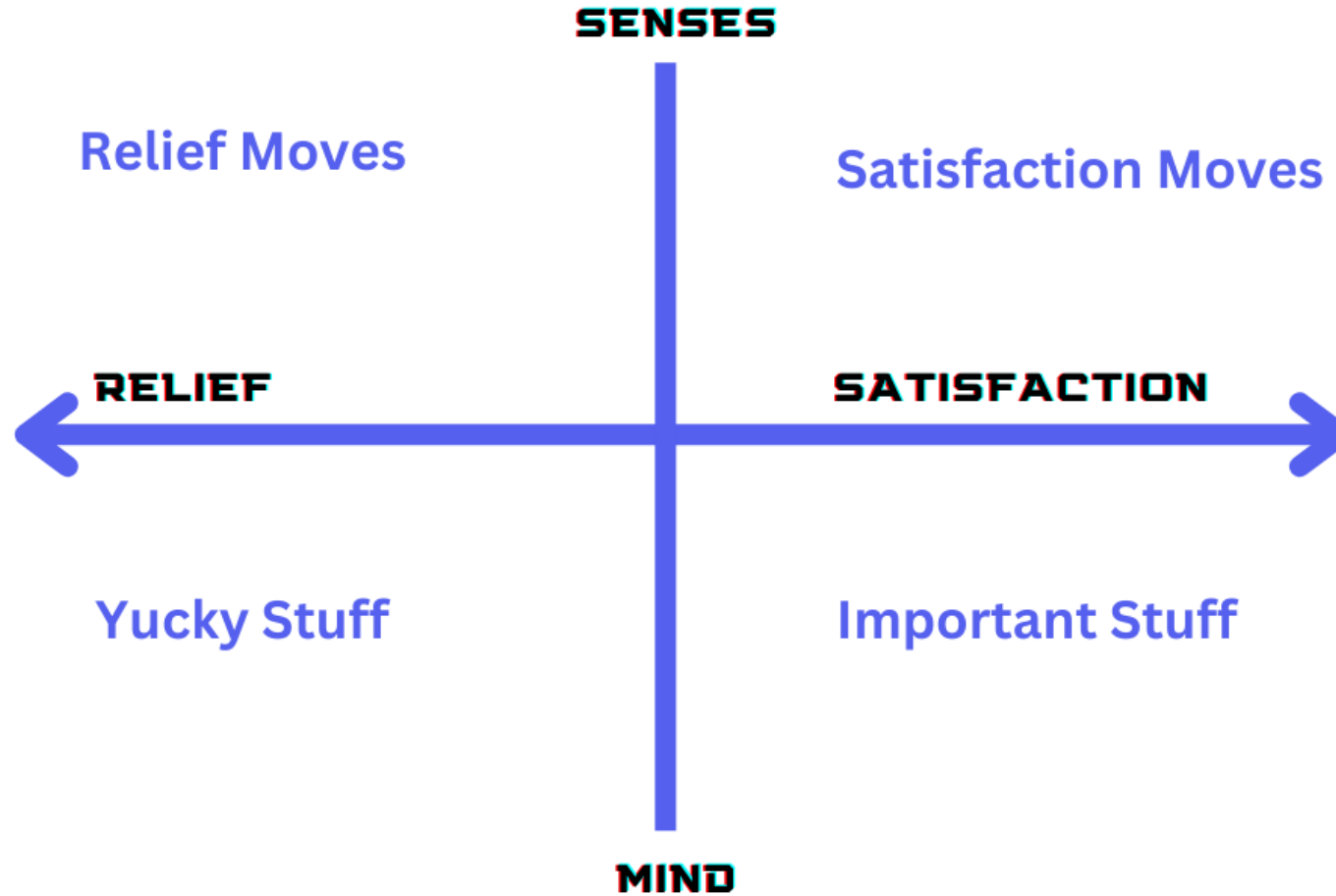
# Empowering Your Student's Hero's Quest

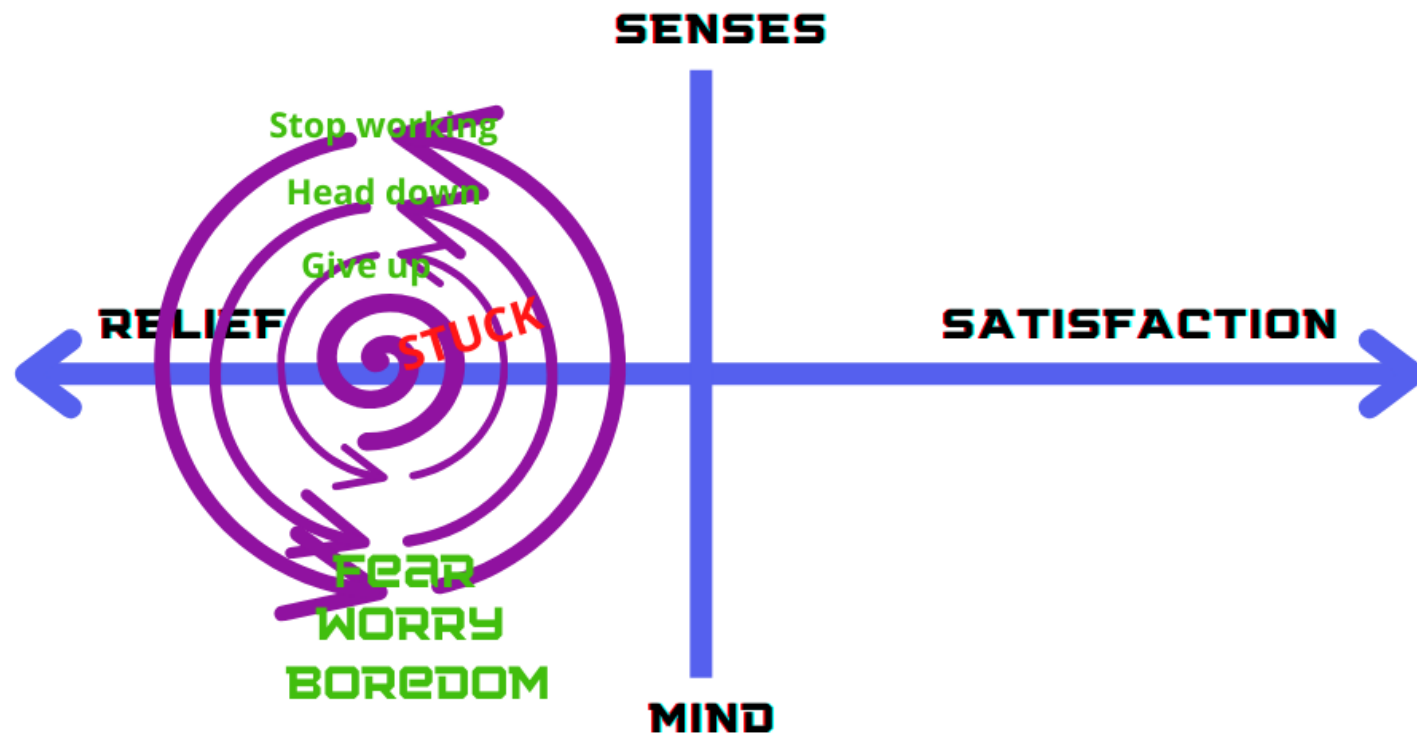
**THE HEROS JOURNEY**



Sorting for Psychological Flexibility

# Sorting for Psychological Flexibility and Workability





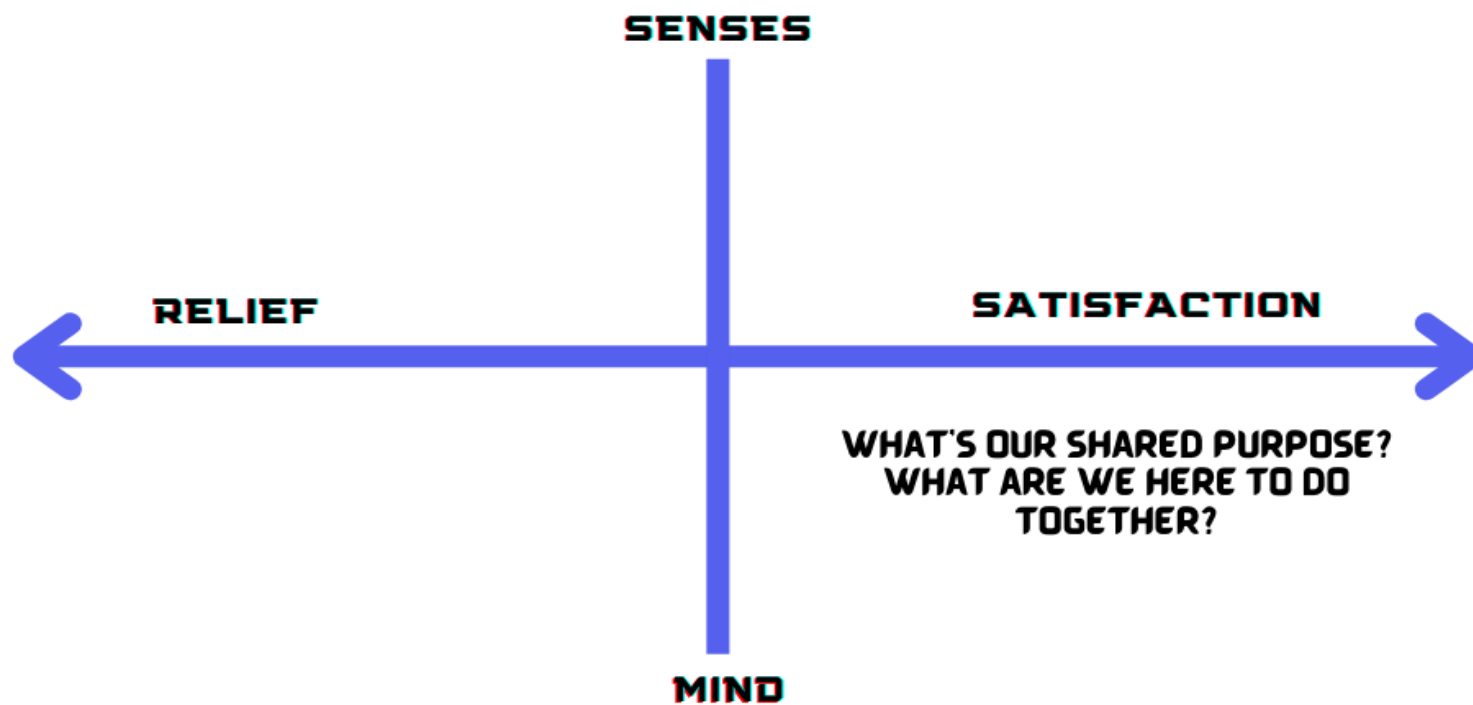
"Yes!" And  
Where Would You Put That  
On The Diagram?



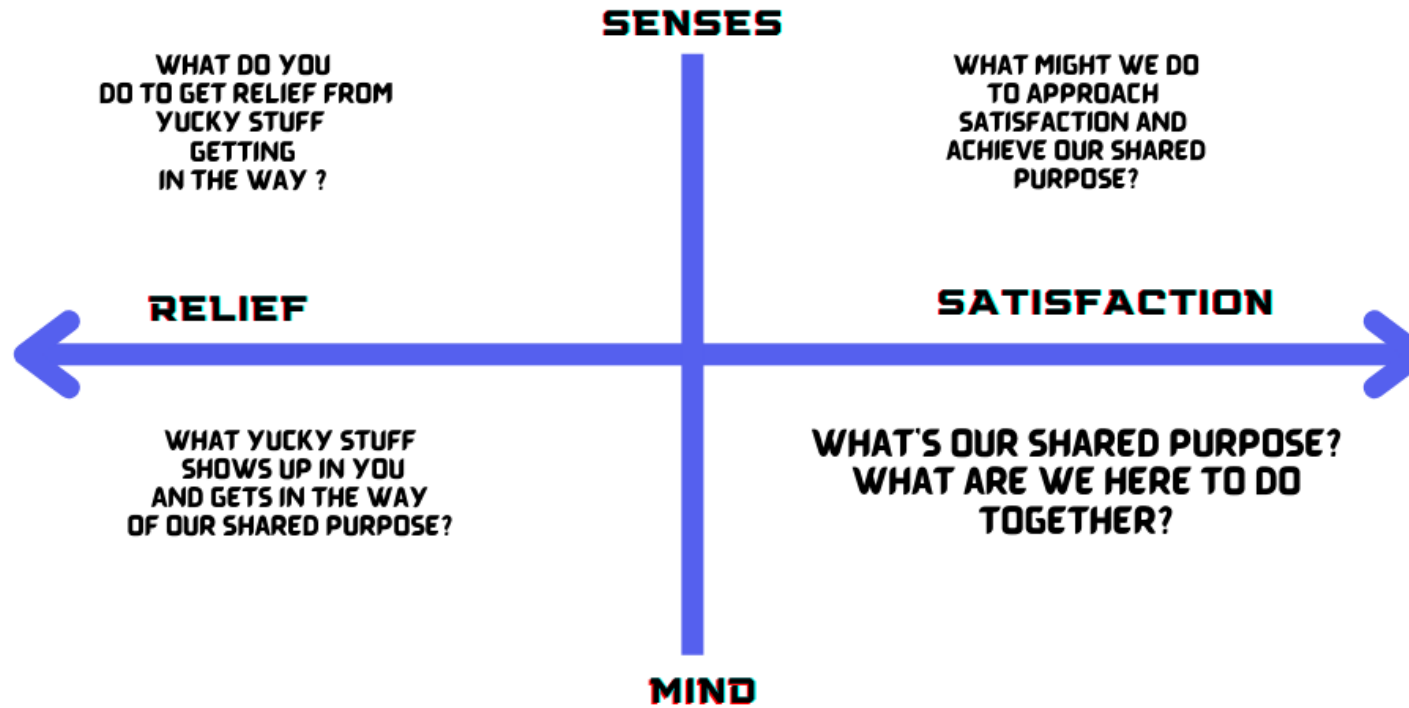
# Empowering Your Groups with the Prosocial Matrix

Getting from  
Me to We

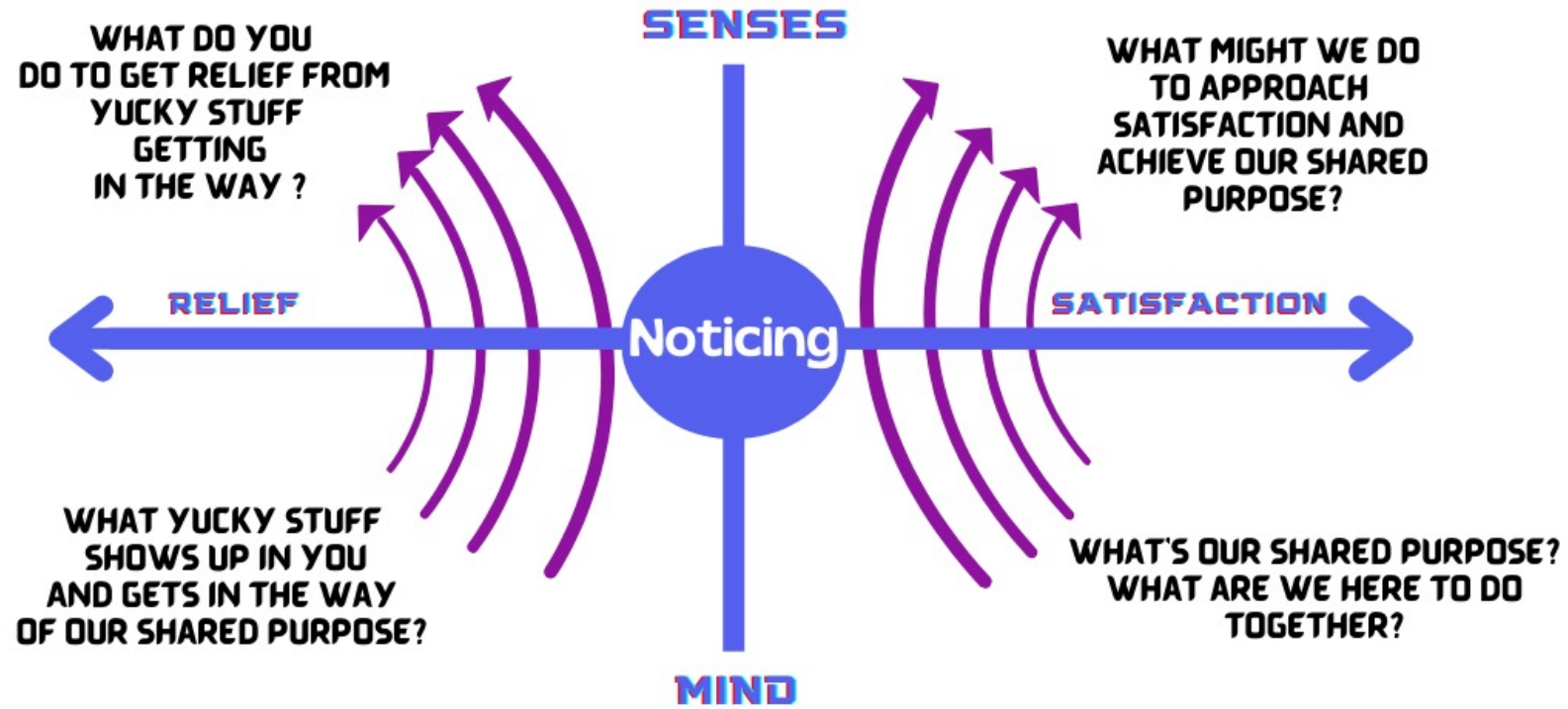
## THE PROSOCIAL MATRIX



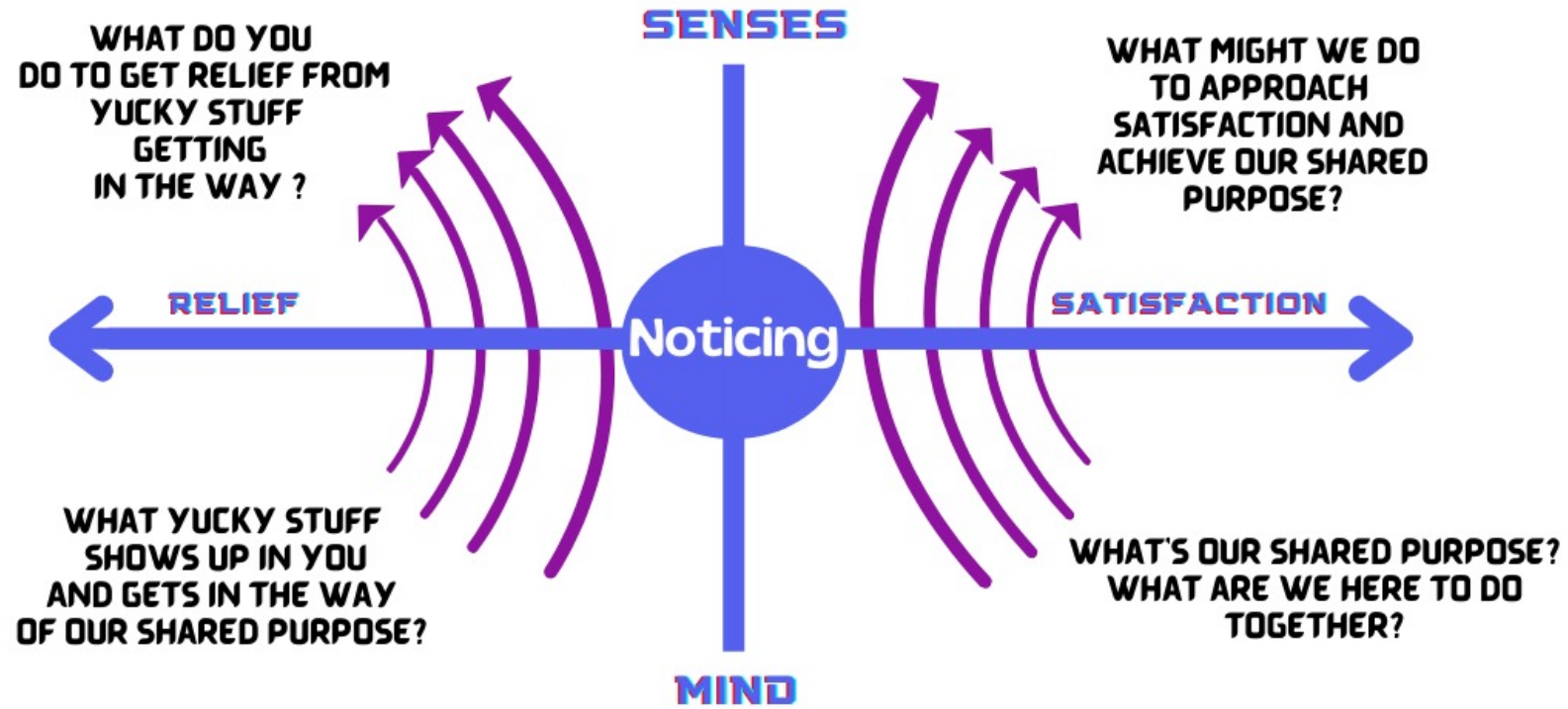
## THE ACT MATRIX



# The Prosocial Matrix



# The Prosocial Matrix



# *Psychological Safety*

A shared belief that it is OK for members to speak up, and feel accepted, respected and acknowledged for their efforts.

**“People have my back”**



**Inviting and Collaborating with Students  
with the  
Prosocial Matrix Communication Process**

**Builds Interest and Engagement**

**Helping them to Notice their Actions by Asking  
Interesting Questions with Respect  
Builds Cooperation and Relationship.**

**Inviting Them to Sort Experiences into  
the matrix builds perspective taking,  
self-monitoring and self-regulation.**

**Including them in the decisions  
and monitoring of the  
shared process of the classroom**

**Empowers them**

**To build a prosocial community  
with you and experience the satisfaction  
of being a member of a successful group.**

**Contact [philtenaglia@evolvingsolutions.co](mailto:philtenaglia@evolvingsolutions.co)  
for more information about ACT and the ACT Matrix**