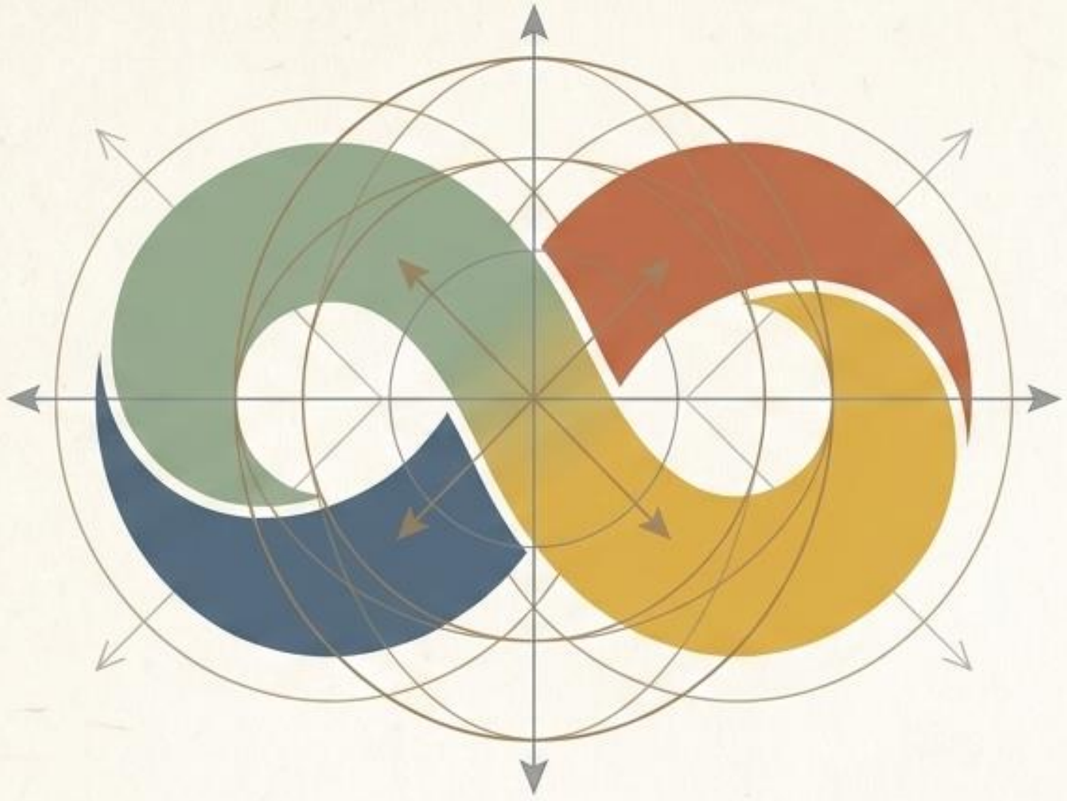

Jesada Boonmahome

Balanced Well-Being: A First-Year Student's Guide

The crucial life lesson not taught in classrooms, but required for a lifetime.

(Self-Awareness and Well-Being Maintenance)

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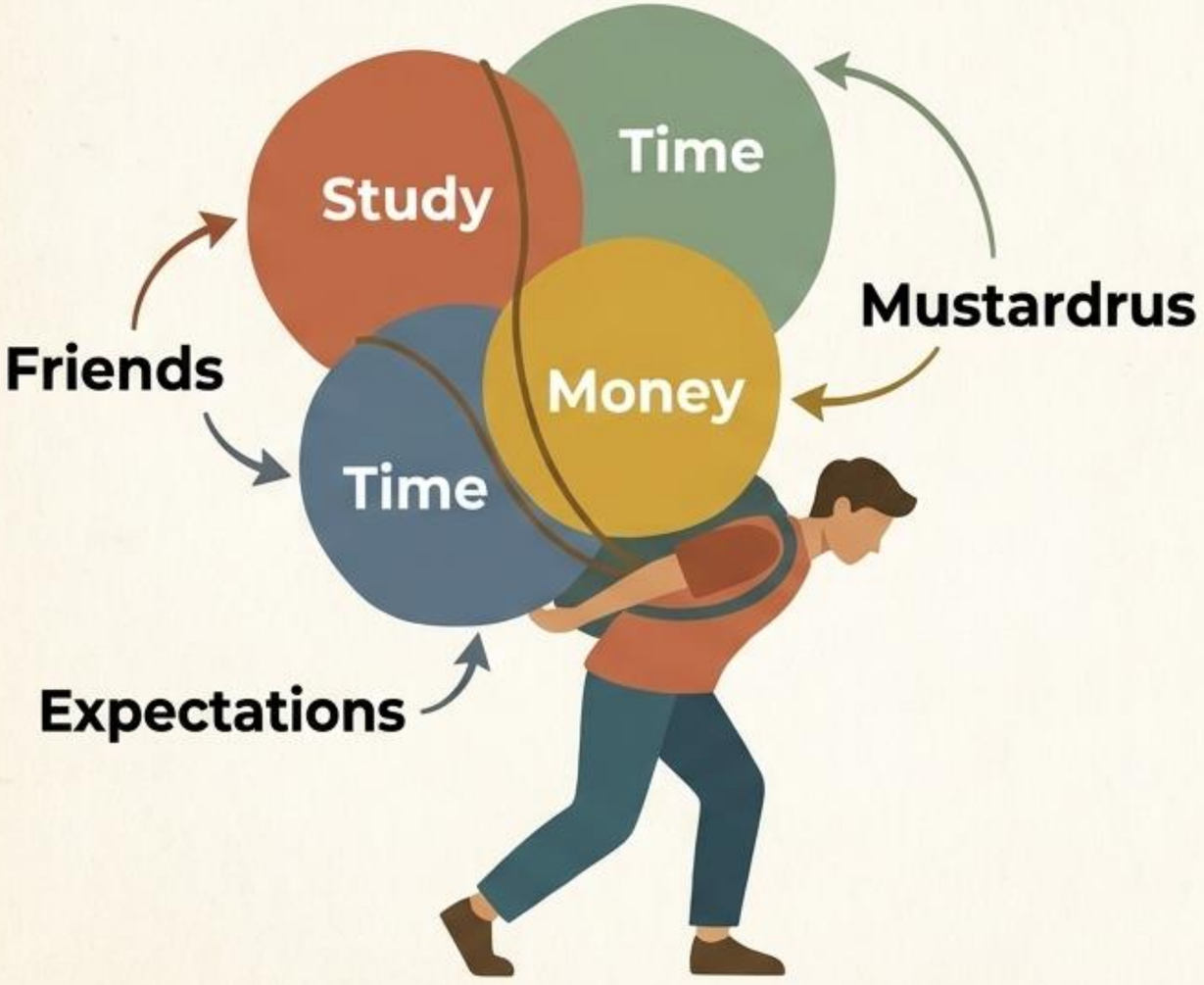
The Invisible Load



Empathy Box

The stress you feel in Year 1 isn't because you "lack ability." It is because you are navigating a massive life transition while lacking the "tools" to cope.

Definition Box

Balanced Well-Being is not about living a "stress-free" or perfect life. It is the ability to live with change mindfully and responsibly.

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The Ecosystem of Well-Being (4 Pillars)

Foundation
(Knowing & Loving Yourself)

Honestly exploring your thoughts, emotions, strengths, and limitations.

Real-world Navigation
(Decision Making & Adapting)

Choosing rationally, adapting, and learning from experience.

Daily Practice
(Holistic Self-Care)

Caring for physical, mental, social, and academic dimensions, plus finding life's meaning.

Internal Check
(Emotional Agility & Healing)

Turning emotions into data, managing stress, and practicing self-compassion.

Well-being isn't a final destination, but a lifelong process of continuously connecting these 4 skills.

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The compass starts with honest, non-judgmental self-reflection.

Self-Awareness (Self-Concept Clarity)

It is not just about knowing what you like; it is about achieving clarity of your self-image.

Triggers: What easily impacts your state of mind?

Coping Patterns: How do you respond to problems? (Fight, flight, or hide?)

Values: What are your core guiding principles?

Reflective Journaling

Practice self-reflection by asking three daily questions:

1. How do I feel today?
2. How did I respond?
3. How do I want to improve next time?

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Healthy Self-Love is not an excuse to escape problems or indulge yourself.

Healthy Self-Love

- Compassion + Responsibility
- Accepting limitations but never stopping self-development.
  (Example: Failing an exam = allowing yourself to feel sad, but then adjusting your study methods)

Self-Indulgence

- Avoiding hardship and abandoning responsibility.

  (Example: Feeling tired = abandoning your group project and running away to sleep every time)

Narcissism

- Elevating yourself above others, overestimating yourself, and making limitless demands of others.

True self-love is having the courage to face your own reality with kindness and honesty.

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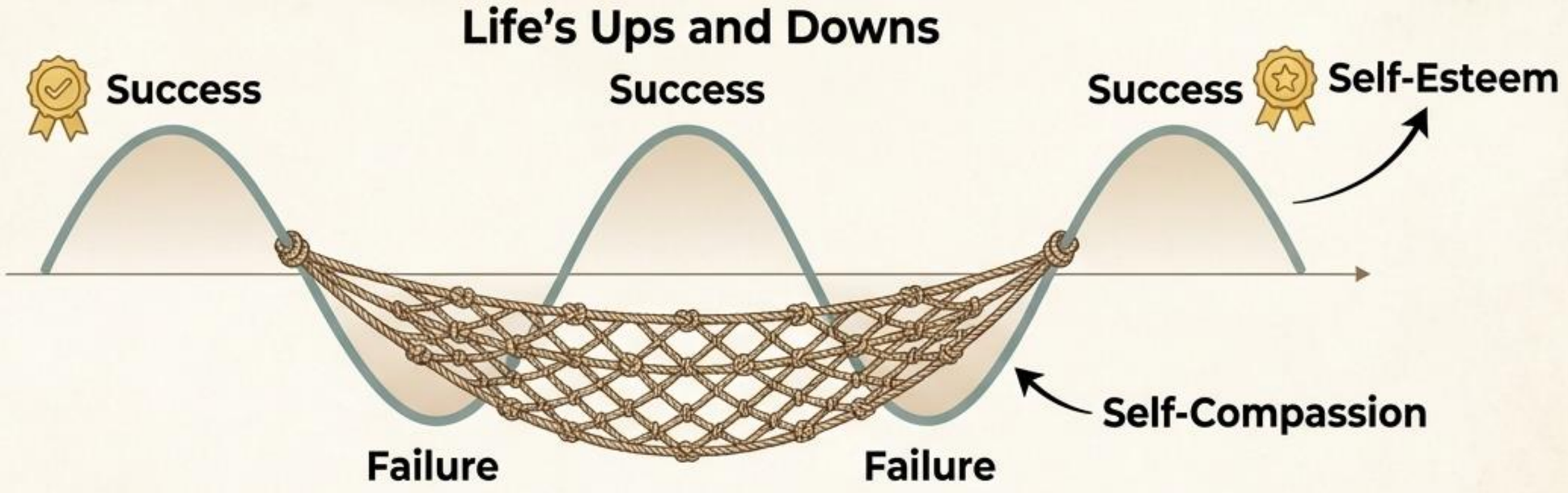
When you fail, use “Self-Compassion” as your psychological safety net



Self-Esteem:

Works well on days of “Success”—you feel capable and accepted.

Self-Compassion:

Your crucial resource on days you “fail”. It has 3 components:

1. **Mindfulness:** Acknowledging emotions without spiraling or exaggerating the suffering.
2. **Self-Kindness:** Speaking to yourself the exact same way you would speak to a friend you love.
3. **Common Humanity:** Understanding that making mistakes is a normal human experience; you are not the only one whose world has crashed.

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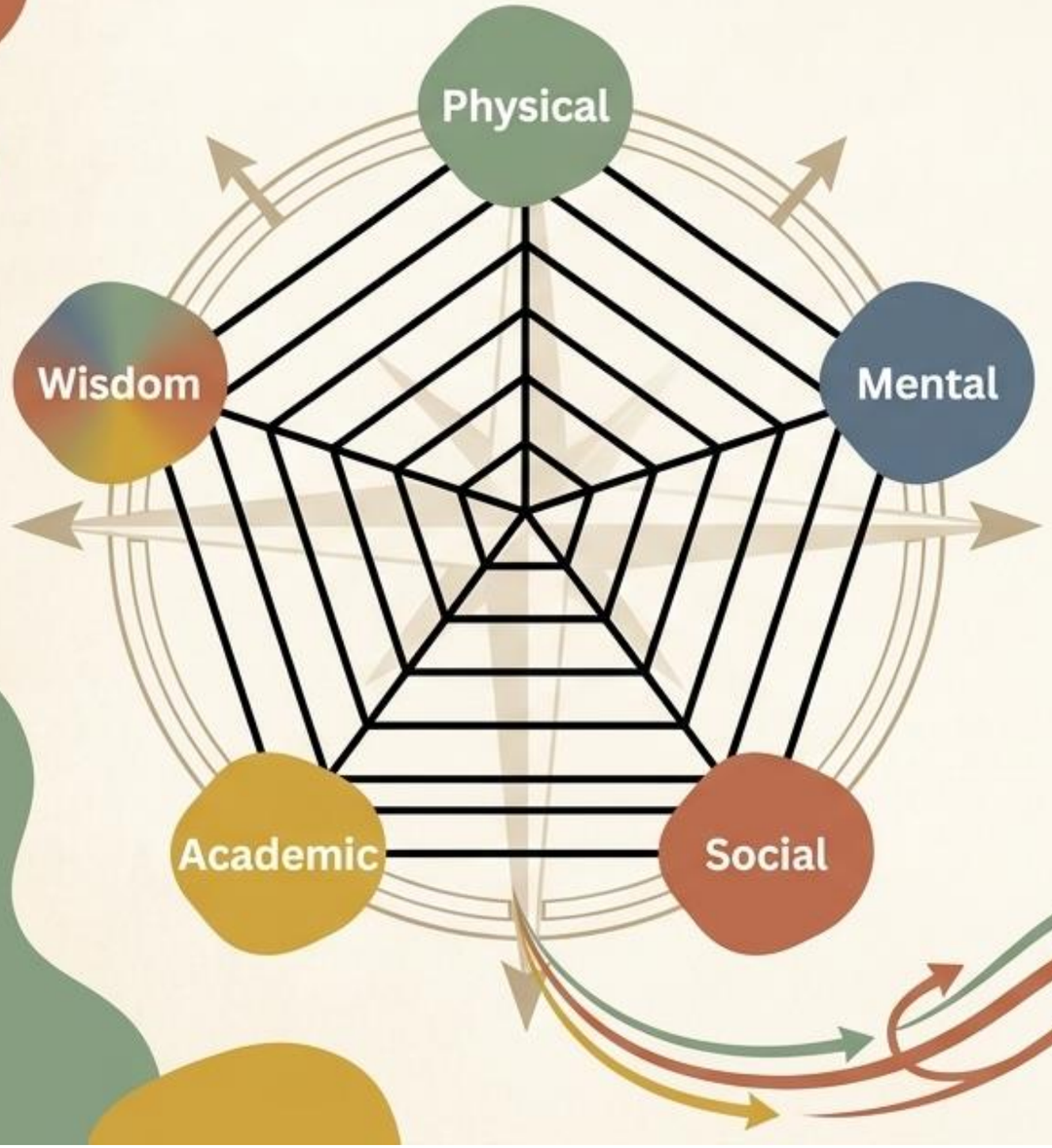
Self-Care is maintaining a 5-Dimensional Ecosystem (It is not a reward after work is done).



1. **Physical:** Sleep, nutrition, screen rest (The foundation of focus).
2. **Mental:** Being mindful of emotions, reducing negative self-talk.
3. **Social:** Setting boundaries, communicating needs, maintaining safe relationships.
4. **Academic:** Time management, financial planning, avoiding procrastination.
5. **Wisdom:** Reviewing life goals and your reasons for studying.

Highlight Note:
The system is **entirely connected.**
(Example: Lack of sleep -> Bad mood -> Arguing with friends during group work.)

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Designing actionable self-care through Micro-Habits.

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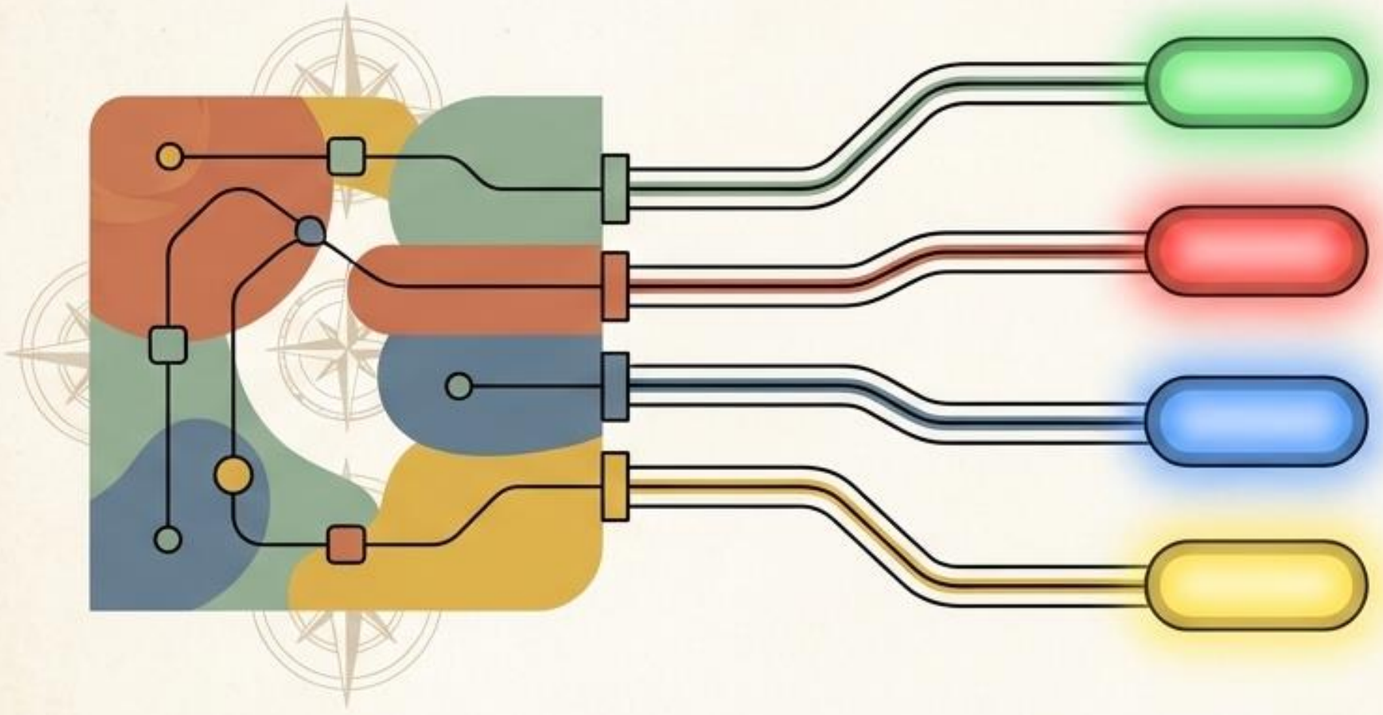
Emotions are not the enemy; they are “Warning Lights” providing vital data.



Fear = Warning that we feel unsafe; we need to prepare.

Anger = Warning that something is unfair or a boundary was crossed.

Loneliness = Warning that we require meaningful connection.

Disappointment = Warning that this specific thing was highly important to us.

Agility Process: → 1. Observe the body → 2. Name the emotion → 3. Find the root cause → 4. Pause before responding (Using Cognitive Reappraisal instead of reacting emotionally)

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Emotional First-Aid: How to regain footing when you lose your balance

Pause: Remove yourself temporarily from the situation triggering intense emotion.

Ground: Return to your body. Slow your breathing, notice physical touch to pull your mind back from racing thoughts.

Process: Organize your thoughts by writing or talking to make the abstract emotion concrete.

Compassion: Stop saying "I'm weak." Change it to: "Right now, I am exhausted and I need to rest."

Environment: Shift your surroundings. Change your seat or turn off mobile notifications temporarily.

Healing is not running away from problems; it is resting so you have the energy to return and solve the problem maturely.

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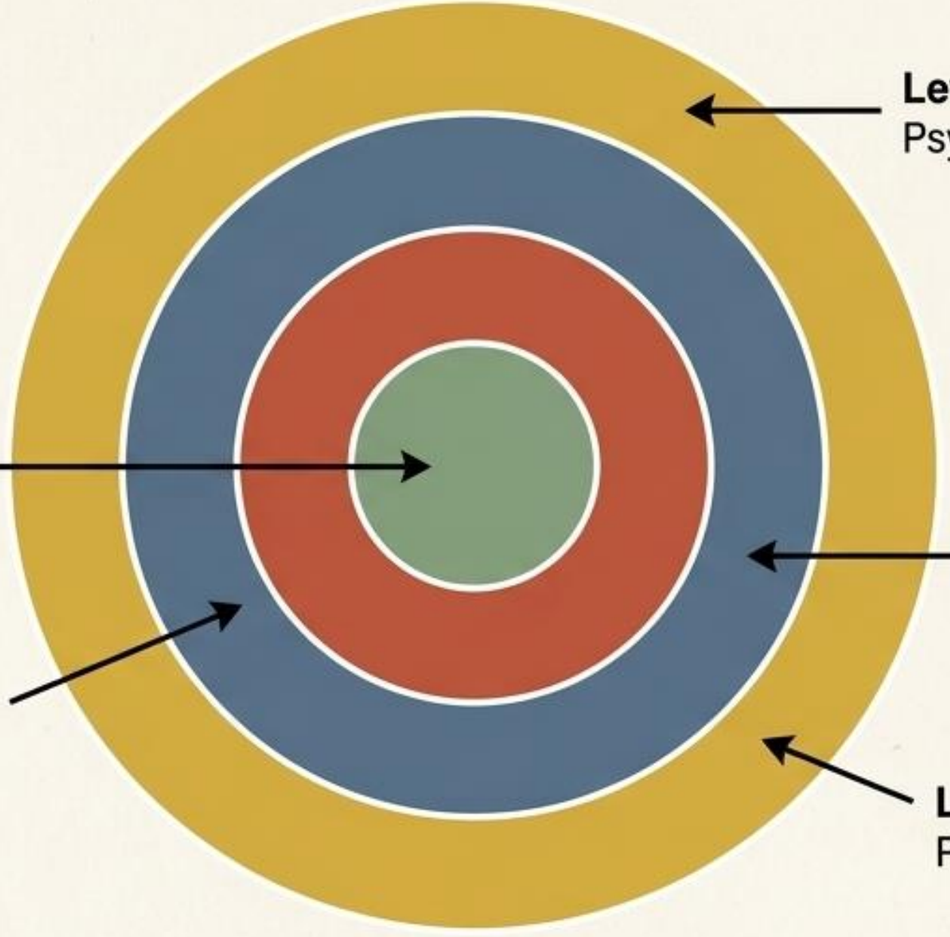
Asking for help when overwhelmed is a symbol of strength.



Level 4: Professional Help
Psychologists and psychiatrists.

Level 1: Self-Regulation
Using basic coping skills for general daily problems.

Level 3: Institutional Support
Academic advisors and student affairs when problems begin affecting studies or environment.

Level 2: Social Support
Friends, family, and senior students for listening and reflecting perspectives.

Level 4: Professional Help
Psychologists and psychiatrists.

Warning signs that require a professional: Chronic insomnia, inability to eat, uncontrollable crying, or thoughts of self-harm. Do not bear this alone under any circumstances.

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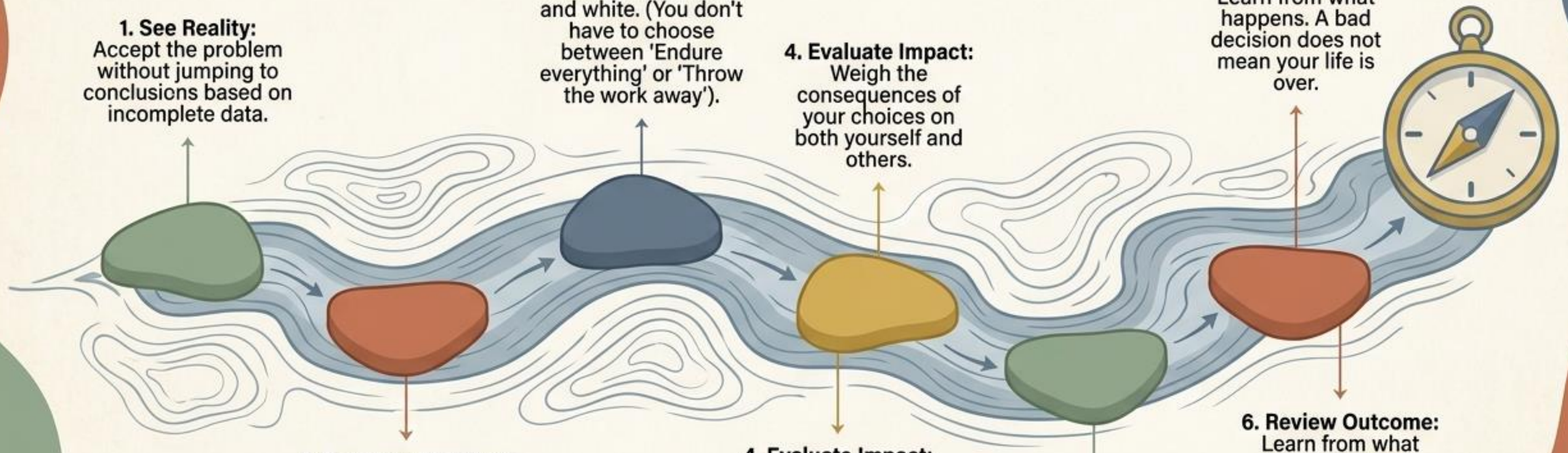
The Art of Decision Making:
6 steps to choose mindfully and responsibly

1. See Reality: Accept the problem without jumping to conclusions based on incomplete data.

2. Separate Fact from Emotion: (Fact: My friend replied late vs Emotion: My friend hates me)

3. Find the 3rd Option: The world isn't black and white. (You don't have to choose between 'Endure everything' or 'Throw the work away').

4. Evaluate Impact: Weigh the consequences of your choices on both yourself and others.



4. Evaluate Impact: Weigh the consequences of your choices on both yourself and others.

5. Choose Balance: Select the path that aligns with both your 'Values' and your 'Autonomy/Well-being'.

6. Review Outcome: Learn from what happens. A bad decision does not mean your life is over.

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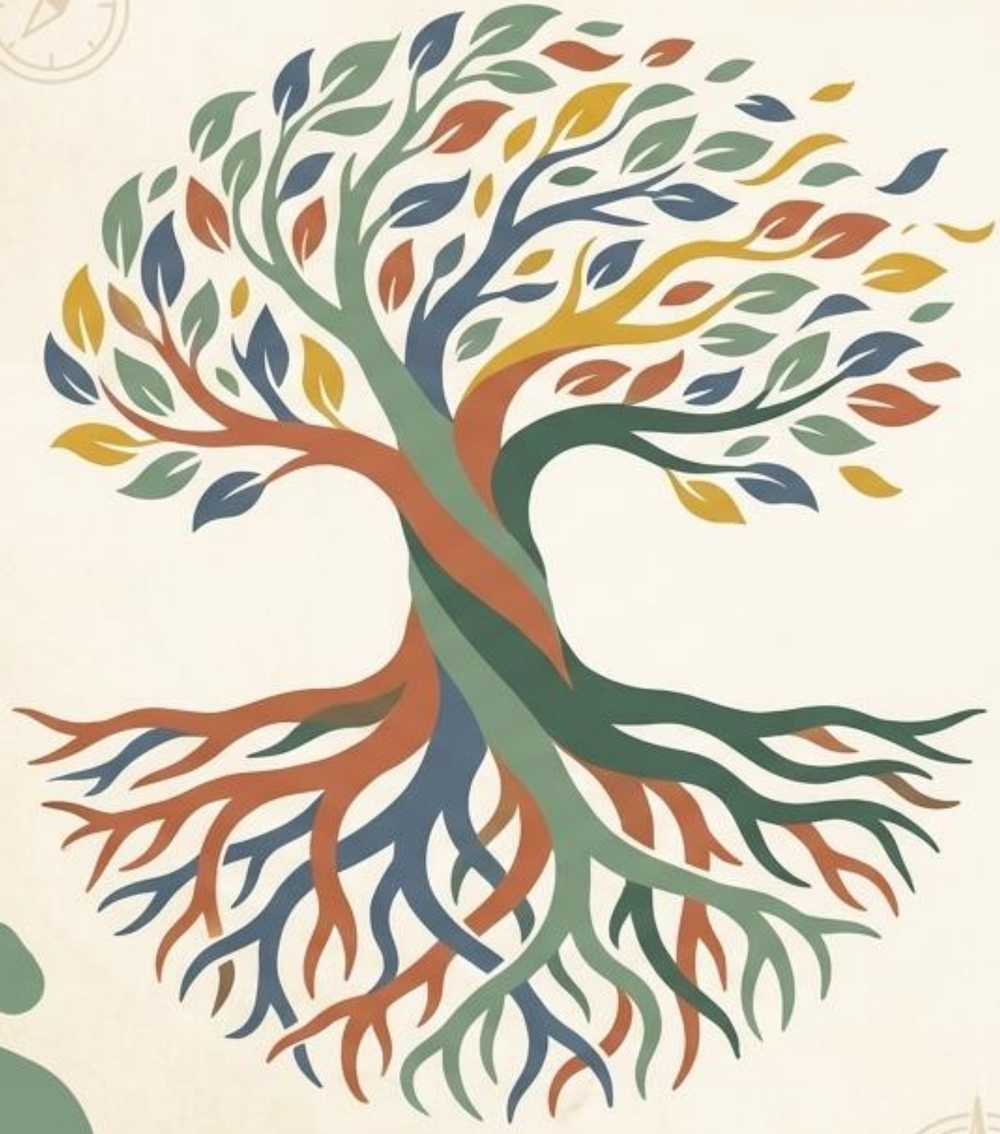
Adaptation is not yielding until you lose yourself.



Insight:

Adaptation is not changing yourself so that everyone likes you. It is simply adding tools to survive in a new context.

Actionable Strategies:

- **Understand Context:** Learn how university rules and this new society operate.
- **Build Routines:** Use a basic daily schedule as an anchor so your life doesn't drift aimlessly.
- **Set Boundaries:** Communicate your needs and decline politely when you are over capacity.

Takeaway: Being slow to adapt doesn't mean you have failed; you just need time to experiment and learn.

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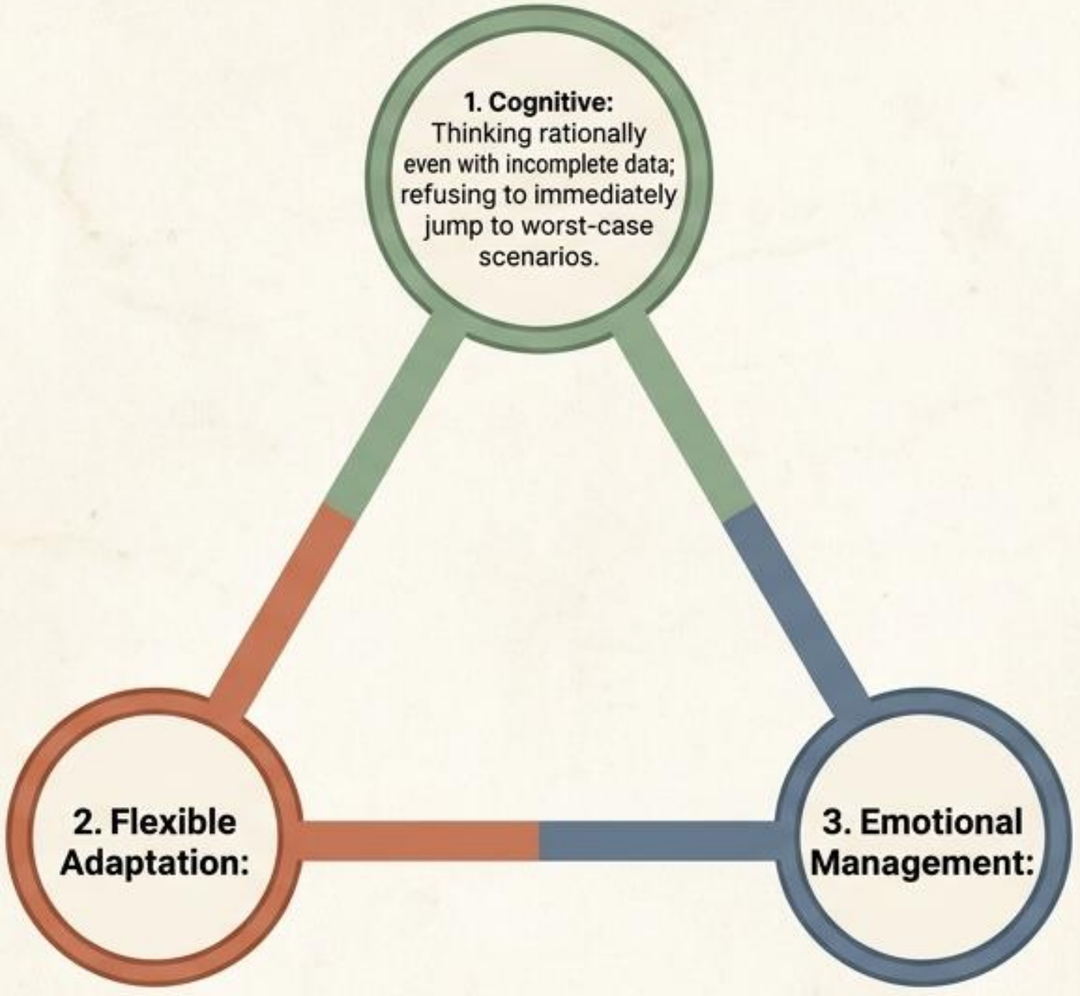
Anchoring in Uncertainty: Managing life on days with no clear answers.

Uncertainty is a **normal state**, not a threat. The skills you must practice are:



2. Flexible Adaptation: Having the courage to change your plans when new data arrives (A changed plan is not a failed plan).

3. Emotional Management: The ability to make decisions and move forward even with lingering anxiety in your heart.

We do not need to have the answers for everything on Day 1. Gather data, consult others, adjust your plan, and give yourself time.

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Well-being doesn’t wait for you at the destination; it lives in your daily responsibility to yourself.

Key takeaways

- We do not need to be perfect or control everything in life.
- Being kind to yourself means balancing ‘compassion’ with ‘problem-solving’.
- Every mistake, negative emotion, and uncertainty is an excellent shovel digging the soil that teaches us to grow.

Start by observing yourself.
Adjust the small things.
Ask for help when necessary...

Balanced Well-Being is a life skill that you must act on and practice yourself, starting today.

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