



# The Challenges of Change: The Good Fight

D. Maria Bivins-Smith, Psy.D  
Doctor of Clinical Psychology  
Licensed Psychologist.  
Wellsmith Psychology, LLC

# Change Can Be Difficult

- Whether at an individual level...
  - Move homes?
  - Change jobs?
  - Migrate to a new Laptop?
- Or the organizational level...
  - New processes
  - New people
  - New rules

# One Aspect of Coping with Change

Let the small stuff go



# What Small Stuff?

- The 4 Ds and Stress
  - Death
  - Disease
  - Divorce
  - Disaster
- Changes at work might be disastrous

# Disastrous versus Disaster

- Work changes could be disastrous
- How do they compare to:
  - Earthquakes?
  - Tornados?
  - Hurricanes?
  - Fires?

# Stressful Nonetheless

- Work changes are stressful.
  - Workloads/Time
  - Relationships
  - Unfamiliarity
  - Uncertainty
  - Confusion



# The Consequences

- Stress may not be at the same level as 4Ds, But...
- **Emotional**: fear, anxiety, depression, anger
- **Bodily**: Tension, body aches, insomnia, hypersomnia, fatigue, GERD, ulcers
- **Cognitive**: Negative thoughts and catastrophic thoughts, impaired memory, difficulty with attention and focus, impaired learning

# Change and Stress: Why?

- The purpose of stress:
  - Survival/Fear Response (3 Fs)
    - Fight
    - Flight
    - Freeze
  - Physiological:
    - Cortisol
    - Adrenaline
    - Heart rate, digestive, blood pressure, blood to extremities.



# 3 Basic Parts of Us Change

- The book asks us to change.
  - Cognitive/Thoughts
  - Emotional
  - Bodily/Behavior
- What part does the book Shark and the Goldfish provide?
  - Some ways to **think** about change
  - Sharks versus goldfish?

# What Can and Will You Do?

- KSA and W (KSAW)
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Abilities
- Necessary Ingredient
  - Willingness

# Willingness and Choice

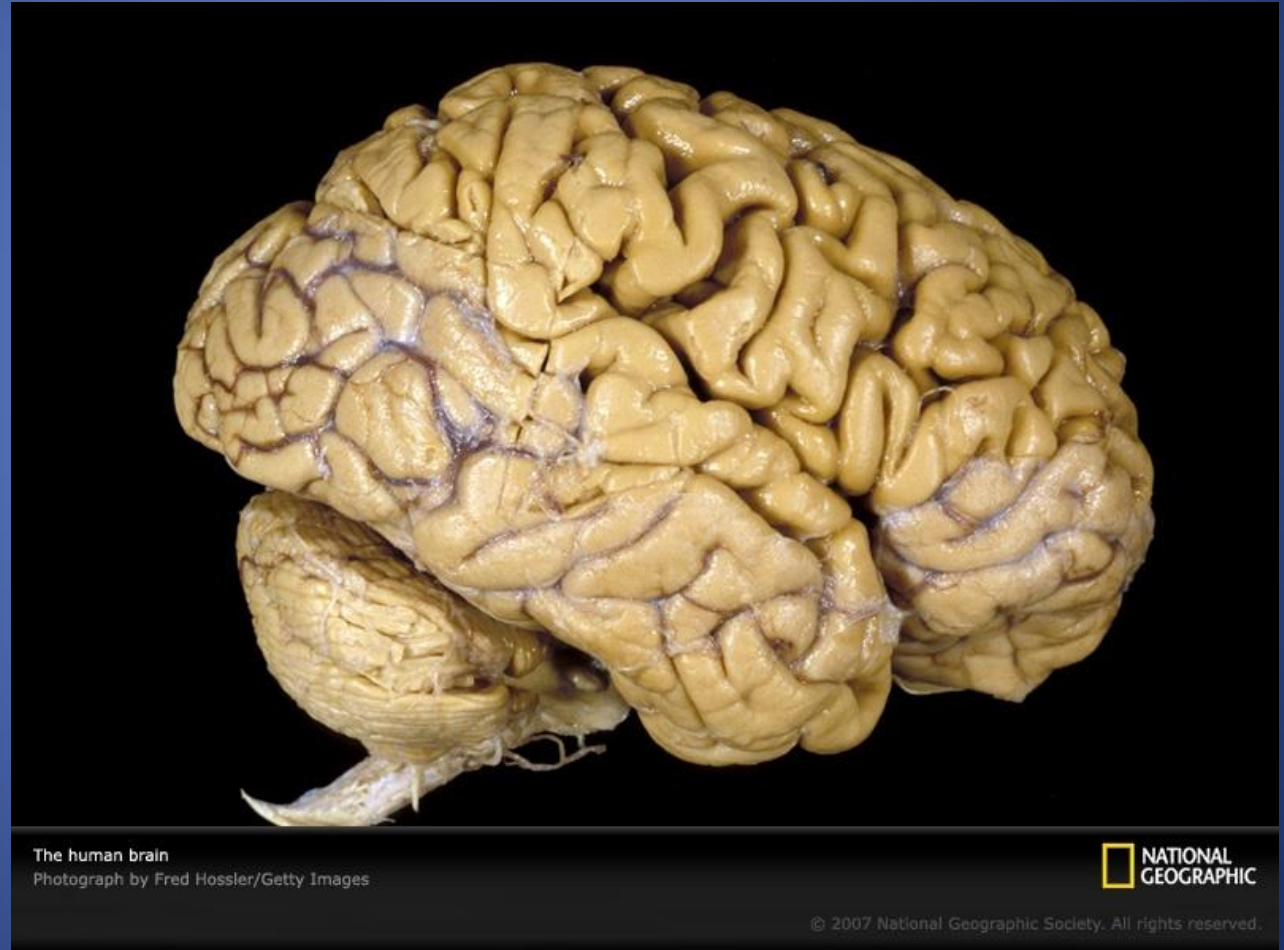
- Willingness refers to choices you make.
- We have human brains, not sharks'.
  - The neocortex
- We are not ruled by instinct.
- We can decide what we will do, and what we will not do. And...
- We have the capacity to think what we choose to think.

# The PITA Factor

- Easy to say.
- Tough to do.
- Why?
  - Learned (Habits, rituals, patterns of behavior, thinking, interacting.)
- Help us respond quickly (survival)

# It's Not Magic, It's Your Brain

The brain is responsible for all we do, sense, think, and feel.



# The 1 Minute Neuroanatomy Lesson

- In the brain there are fats, proteins, chemicals, specialized cells.
- They work together through chemical and electrical reactions.
- Specialized cells (e.g. neurons) grow and connect as we learn.
- Specialized chemicals (neurotransmitters) help this process as well as contribute to how we feel emotionally.

# Blame Your Brain

- The cellular connections are like well worn grooves.
- Those grooves started being etched when you emerged from the womb.
- New thoughts, new behaviors make new “grooves.”
- Thus, change occurs in your brain.

# Change takes Willingness, Time, and Patience

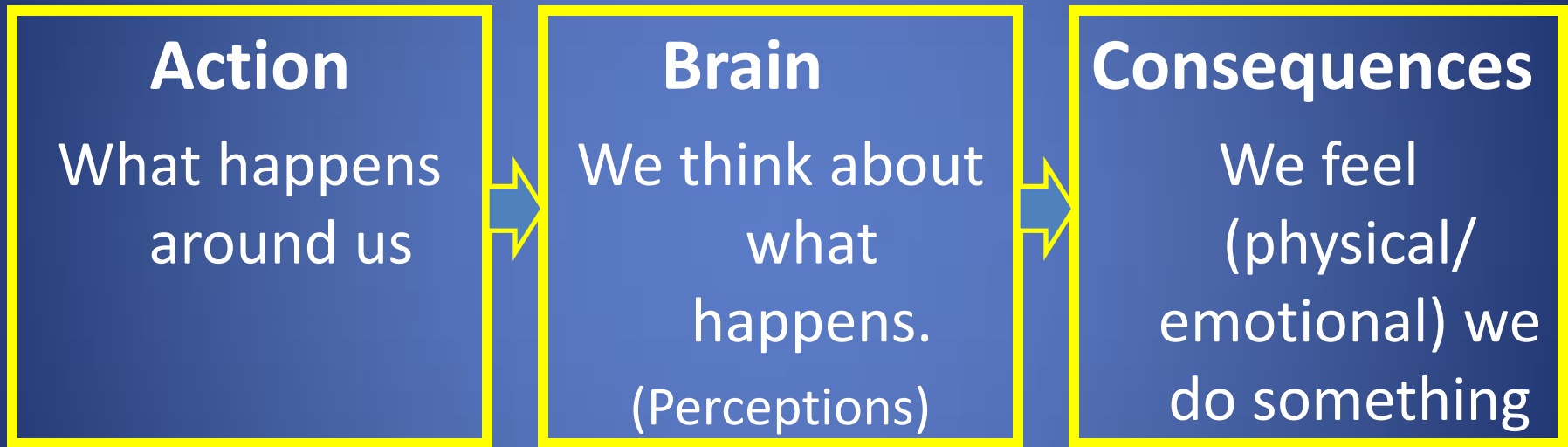




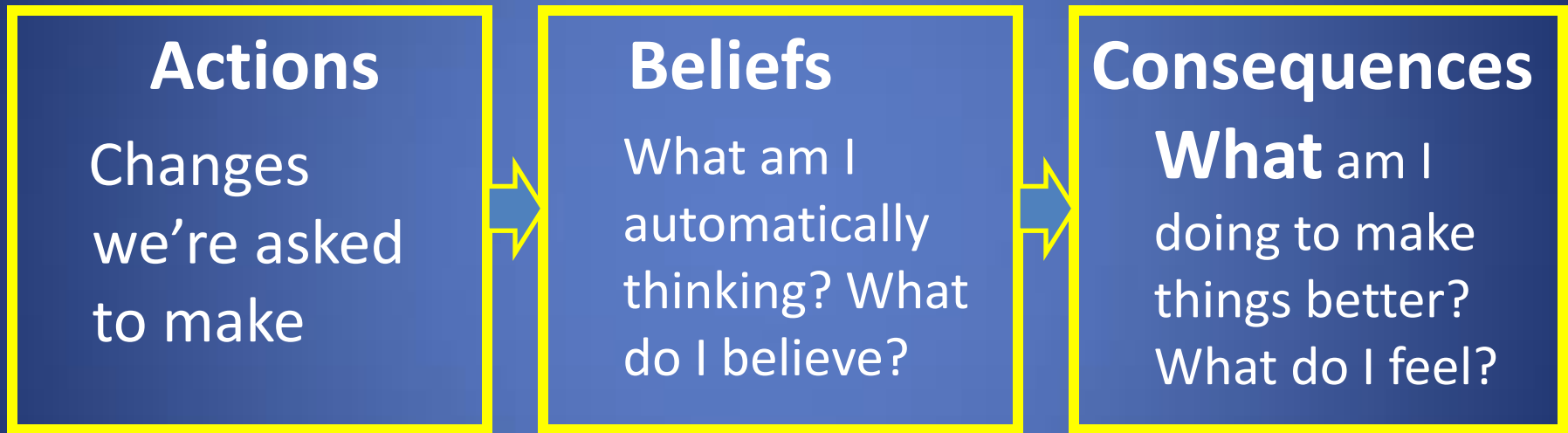
# You Know the Why, Now How

- How do you change your brain?
- Thoughts are the result of chemical/electrical processes
- Over time, thoughts actually change the structure of your brain (learning.)
- The Jon Gordon talks about changing your beliefs and taking action.
- A process that actually changes your brain

# The ABCs to Change



# Organizational Changes



This won't work. I'll never get it done

GBUFs?  
Anxiety  
Depression

# What Else?



Problem  
Solve,  
Cost/Benefit

FAKE IT 'Til  
you make it.

# Still Stuck?

- Ask your self “What if...?”
- What’s the worst that can happen?
- So what?
- Tell yourself, haven’t I survived and prospered through worse?
- Envision a better future

# Challenge Your Status Quo

Questioning ourselves sometimes puts distorted thinking into perspective.



# Don't Go It Alone



- Make connections
- Co workers
- Coaching
- Counseling

# Counseling

- Everyone finds ways to cope:
  - Adaptive versus Not
- Coping affected by:
  - Familial History
  - Past Traumas
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Physical ailments
- Relationship problems



# In General

- Exercise/Relaxation
- Quit Smoking!
- Limit Alcohol
- Sleep well
- Eat well
- Live well!!!

# You “Know” What It Takes

You learned self -

care, as well as caring for  
others before you were

5 years old



# You “Know” What It Takes

- Much of what we talk about is intuitive.
- You learned before you were 5 years old
- But life gets in the way.
- You naturally sought out novelty, growth, happiness.
- Adults make choices to change, thrive, and prosper.