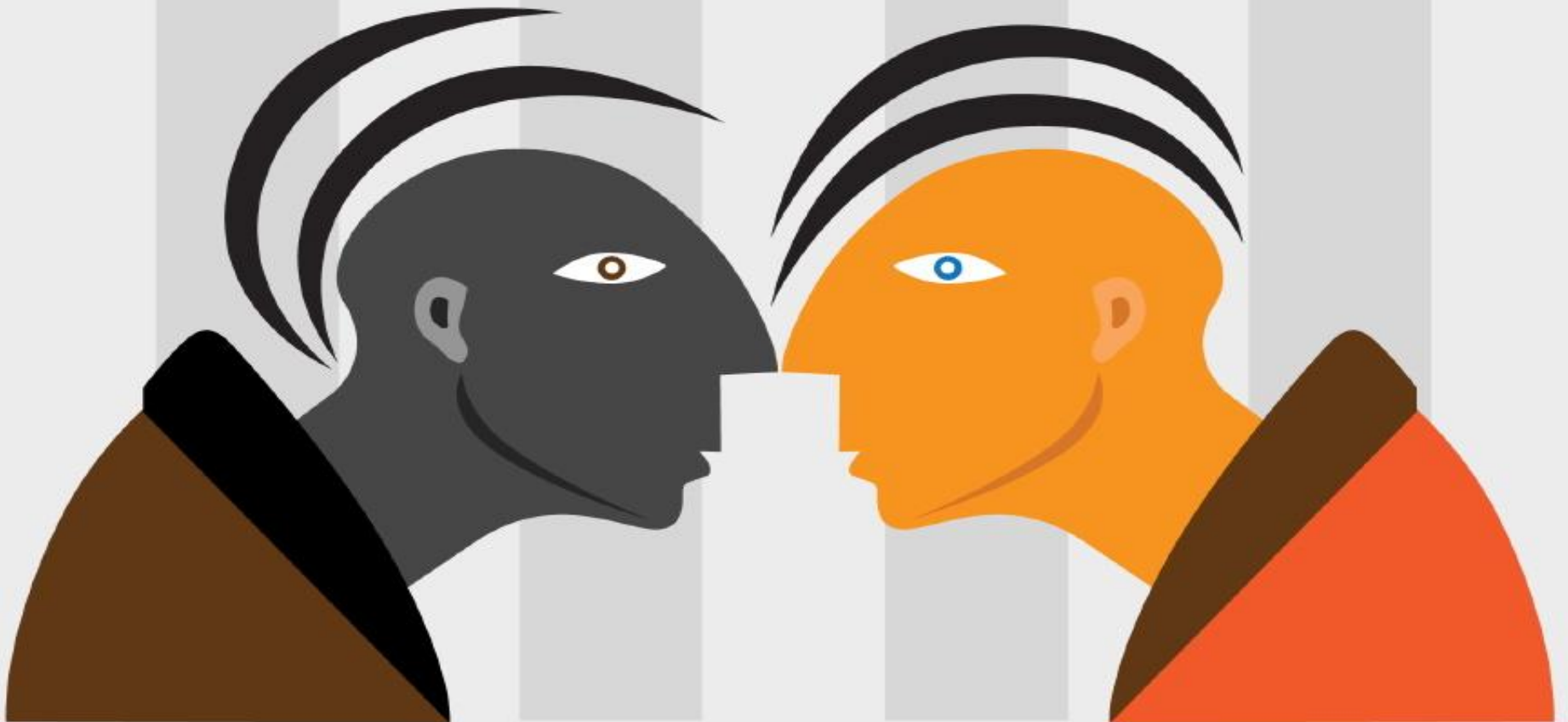


# Dialectics in DBT<sup>®</sup>: The Power of “And”



# Dialectics in DBT®

- Dialectics
  - A system of argumentation (e.g., Hegelian dialectics)
  - A method of persuasion (e.g., Zeno of Elea, Plato's *Dialogues*)
  - A political philosophy (e.g., Marx)
  - An entire semester-long graduate course for political science majors, philosophy majors, and the captain of the debate team!

# Dialectics in DBT®

- Dialectics in DBT®
  - The synthesis of thesis and antithesis, which:
    - Acknowledges that change is the only constant in the universe as we know it, and is a process.
    - Acknowledges that all things are made of opposing forces.
    - Brings together the most valuable parts of two polarities to form a new meaning, understanding, or solution in a given situation.

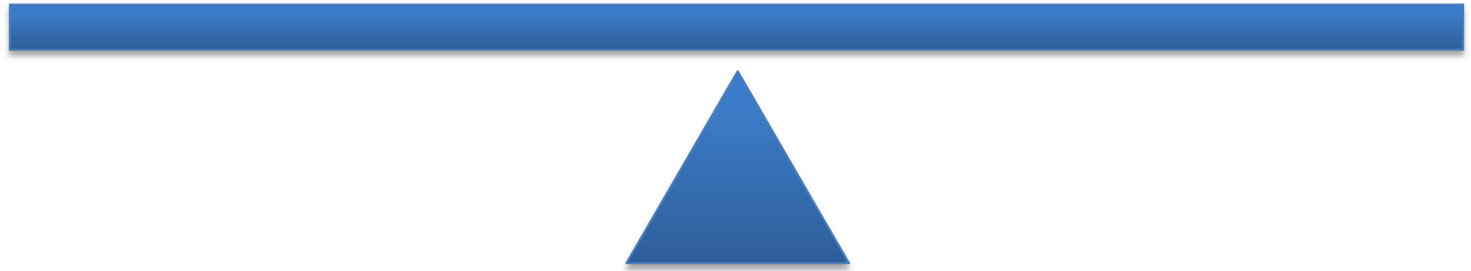
# Dialectics in DBT®

- Core dialectic: Acceptance and Change
  - Although acceptance does not guarantee change, acceptance is a pre-requisite to change.
  - DBT® therapists continually balance acceptance of where the patient is in the moment, while pushing them toward change, and vice versa...
    - When the patient demands change, the therapist also emphasizes acceptance.
  - Too much emphasis on change or on acceptance limits the patient's progress.

# Dialectics in DBT®


**Acceptance**

**Change**



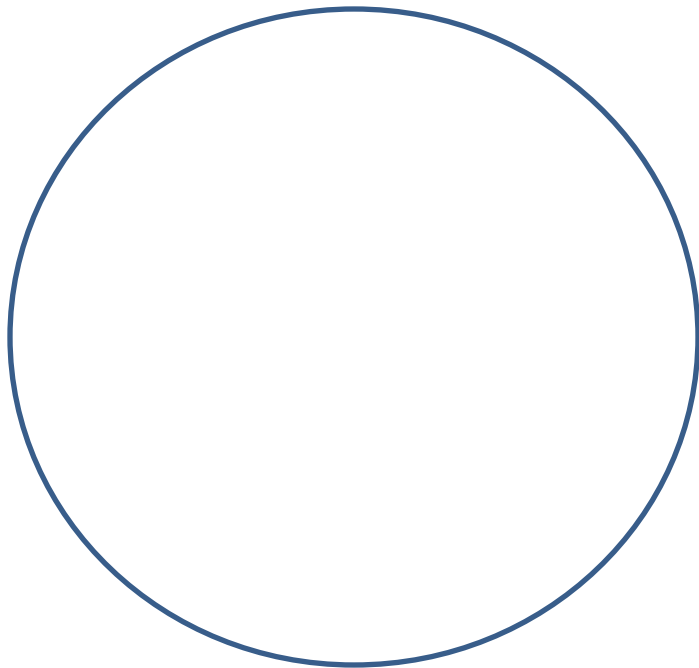
**We are always looking for the “middle path”- which is somewhere in between and rarely in the middle.**

# Dialectics:

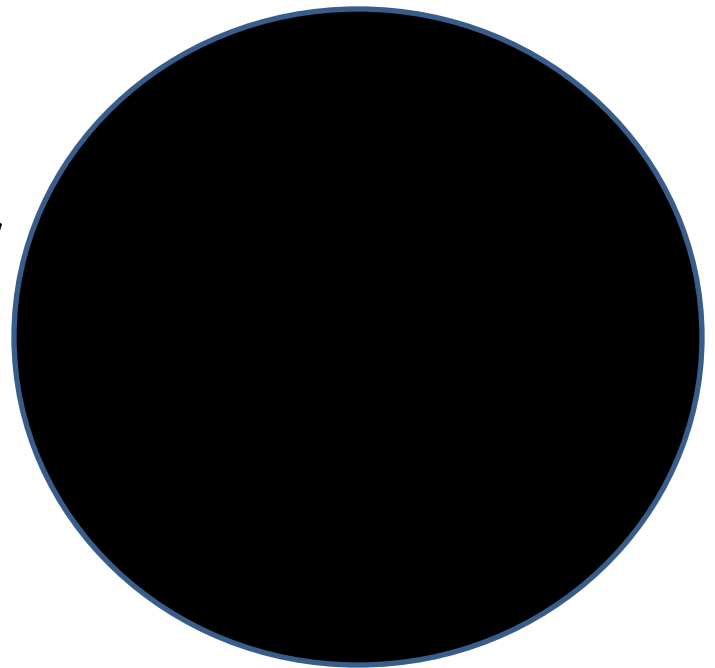
Both  And

**Not “Either/Or”**

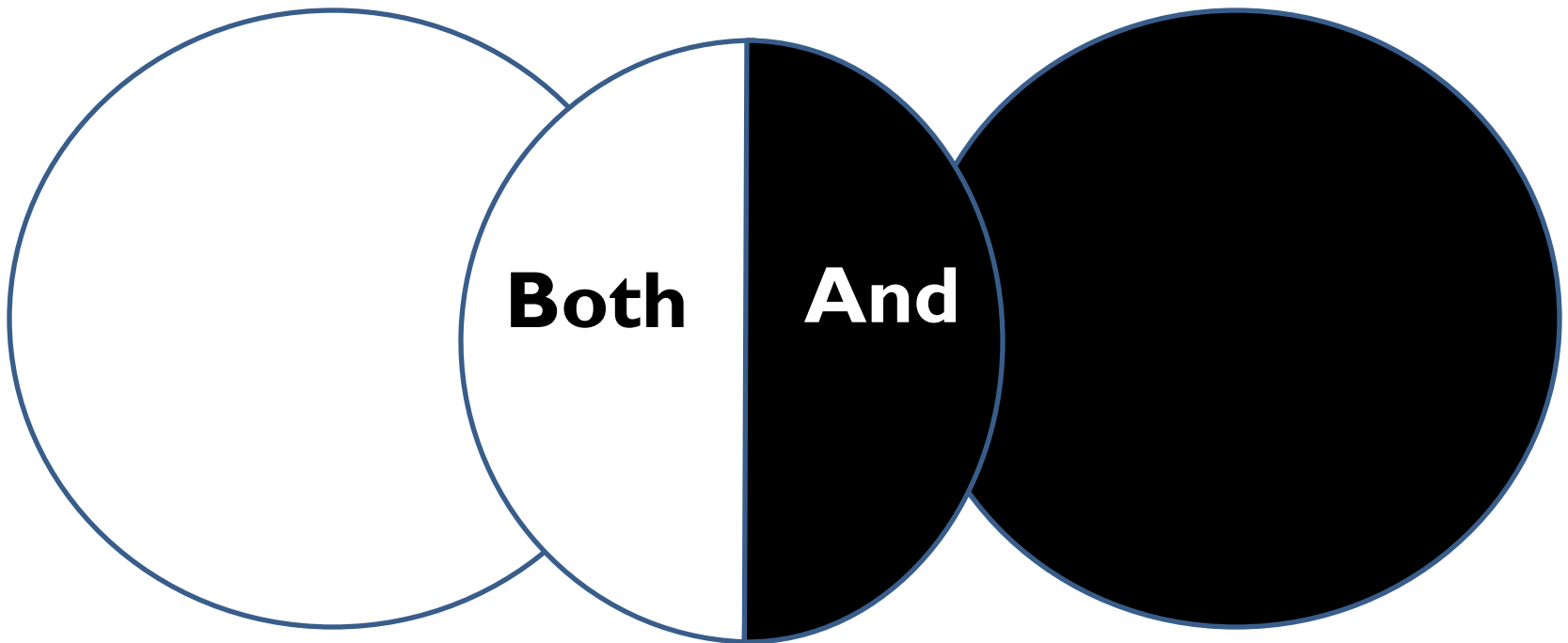
# The Dialectics of DBT<sup>®</sup>: Dialectical Synthesis



**Either  
Or**

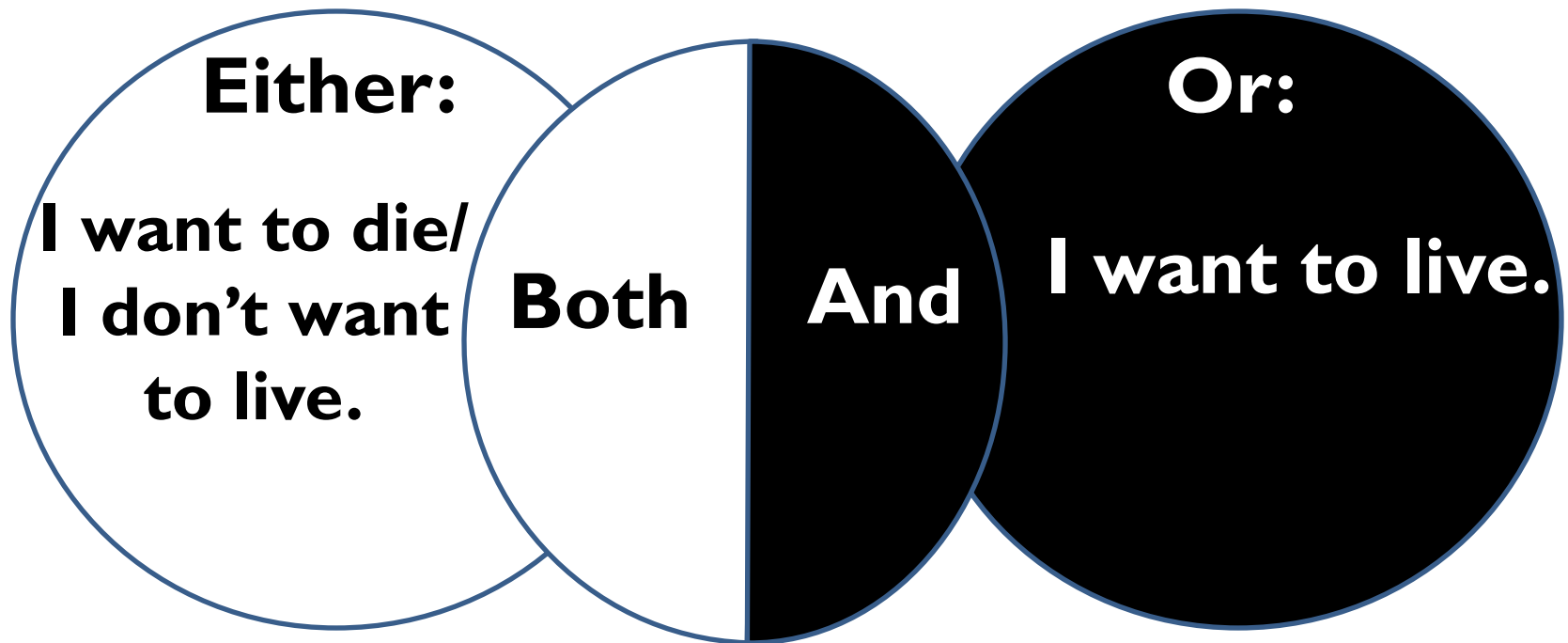


# The Dialectics of DBT<sup>®</sup>: Dialectical Synthesis

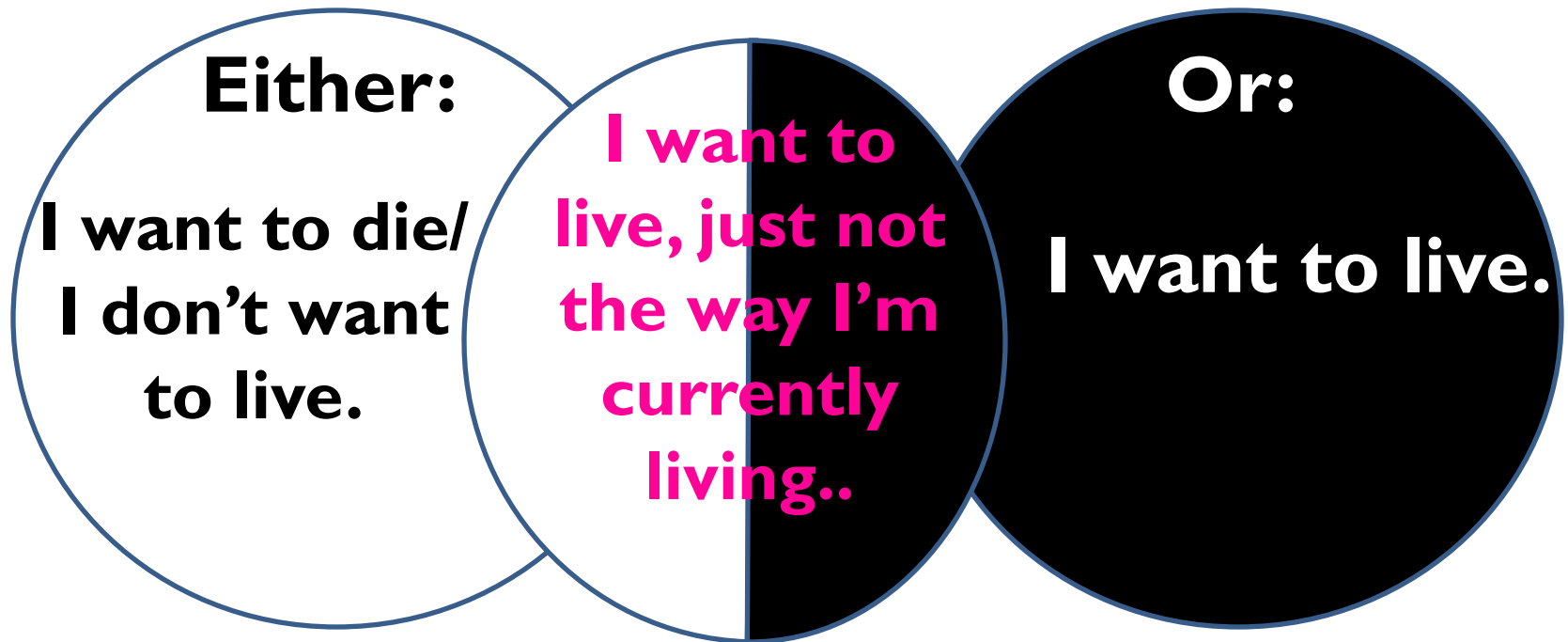




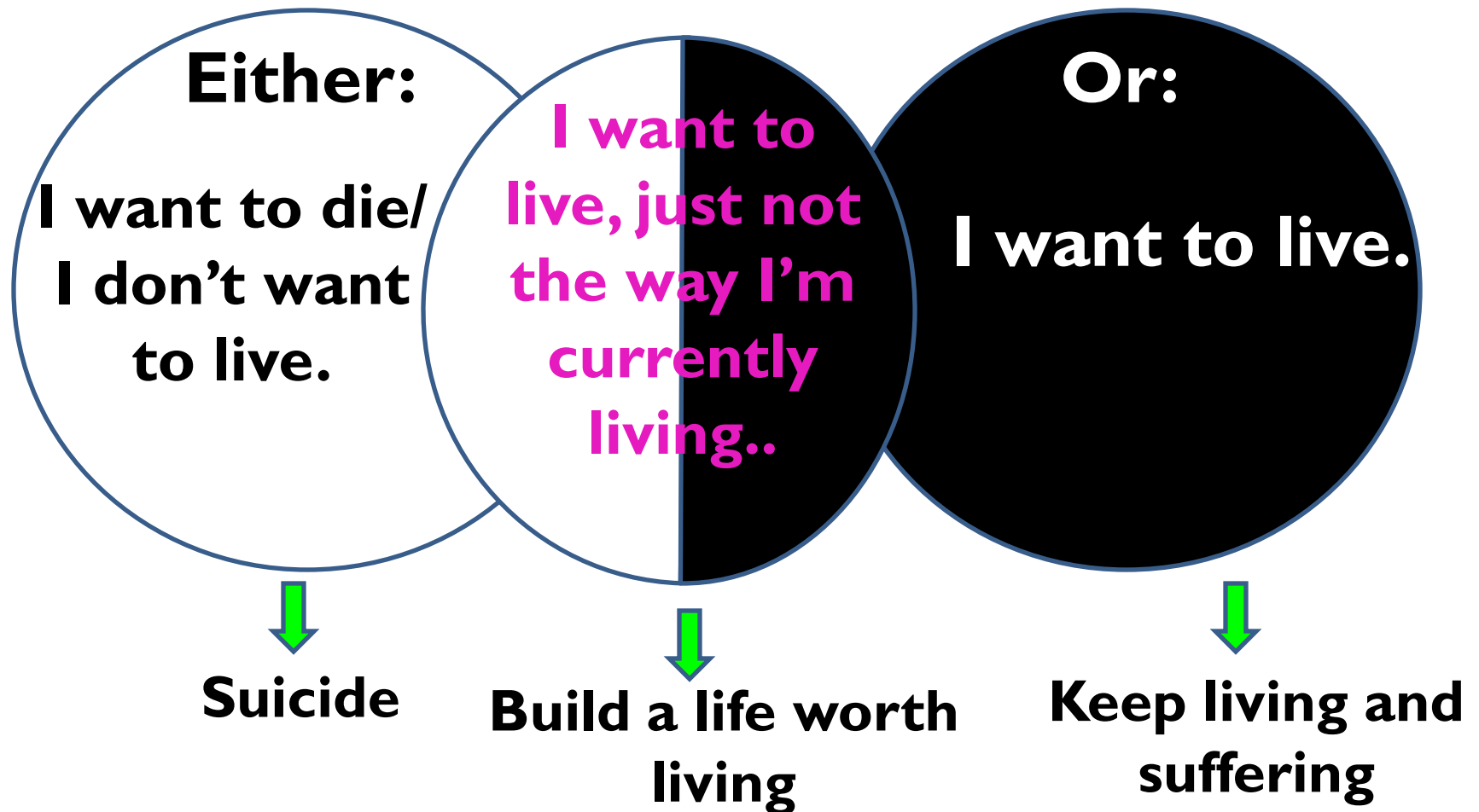
# The Dialectics of DBT®: Dialectical Synthesis



# The Dialectics of DBT<sup>®</sup>: Dialectical Synthesis



# The Dialectics of DBT<sup>®</sup>: Dialectical Synthesis



# Dialectical Examples

I am doing the best I can.



I need to do better.

I hate him/her.



I love him/her.

Others need to change for  
me to feel better.



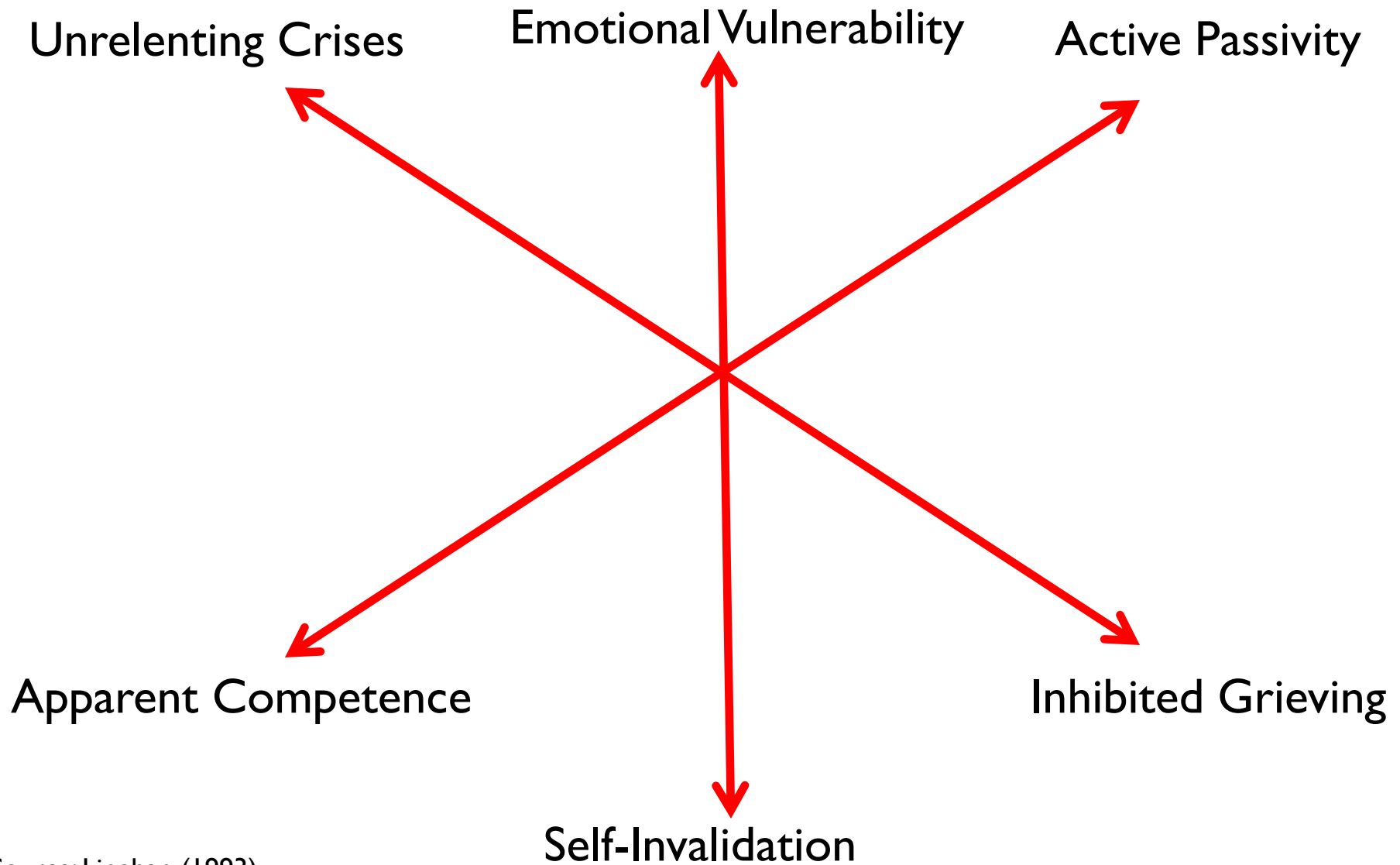
I need to change for  
me to feel better.

This pain is unbearable.



I can tolerate this pain.

# The Dialectics of DBT<sup>®</sup>: Patient Dialectics



# Family Dialectical Dilemmas: Adolescent DBT<sup>®</sup> and Beyond

Normalizing  
pathological  
behaviors

vs.

Pathologizing  
normative  
behaviors



Forcing autonomy vs. Fostering dependence



Excessive Leniency vs. Authoritarian Control



# The Dialectics of DBT<sup>®</sup>: Therapist Dialectics

Unwavering  
Centeredness

Change Orientation

Benevolent  
Demanding

Nurturing

Compassionate Flexibility

Acceptance Orientation

