

USING
PSYCHOLOGICAL
PRINCIPLES TO PLOT
YOUR CHARACTERS

JB
Writes

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Psych
WRITE
400 LEVEL
COURSE

GOALS

- A number of concepts for plotting your character
- Character map

QUESTION: ARE YOU...

A CHARACTER-DRIVEN OR A PLOT-DRIVEN AUTHOR?

CONFLICT

THE PLOT OF YOUR STORY.

- External
 - Society
 - Nature
 - Other people
- Internal



Action Plot

THEME

Emotion Plot

TRANSFORMATION

OUR CHARACTERS NEED TO END UP IN A DIFFERENT PLACE
AT THE END VERSUS WHERE THEY STARTED OFF

Who you character is now and the
change they're undergoing should
DRIVE Action

FUNCTIONING

HOW IS YOUR CHARACTER DOING IN THE MAJOR AREAS OF LIFE?

- Work
- Social
- Family
- Leisure
- Self-care

Functioning=person/environment fit, so psychosocial context is important here.

Culture

Environment (geographical, institutional)

Race

Gender

Disability/Illness

Mental Illness

INSIGHT

HOW MUCH DOES YOUR CHARACTER GET HOW HE/SHE IS DOING (i.e., one's own symptoms, thoughts, functioning, helpful/maladaptive thoughts & behaviors)?

Totally clueless

Gets it completely

JUDGEMENT

HOW ON-POINT ARE YOUR CHARACTER'S DECISIONS IN TERMS OF HELPING THEM MEET THEIR GOALS AND/OR MEET SOCIETY'S EXPECTATIONS?

Terrible

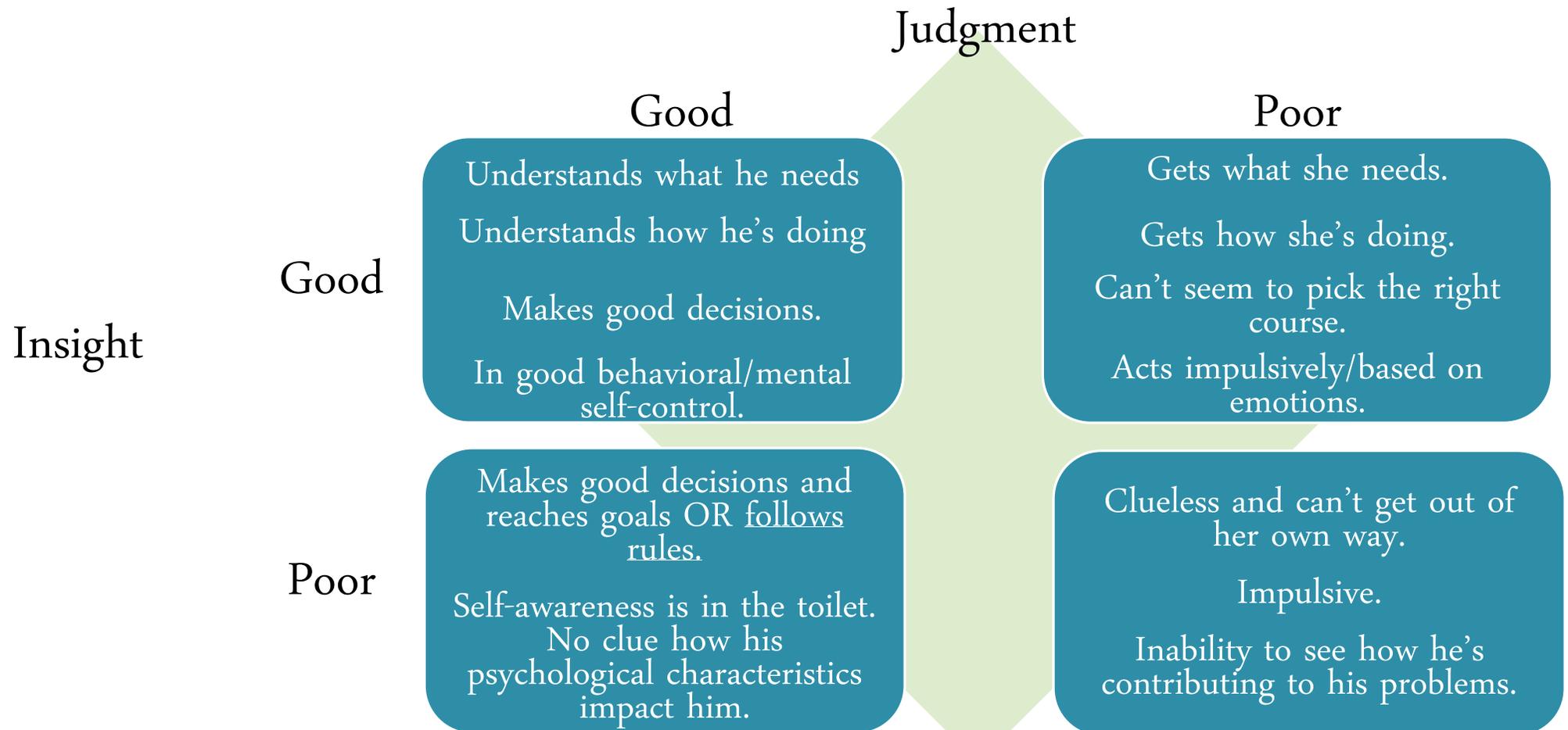
Not Bad

Meh

Okay

Great

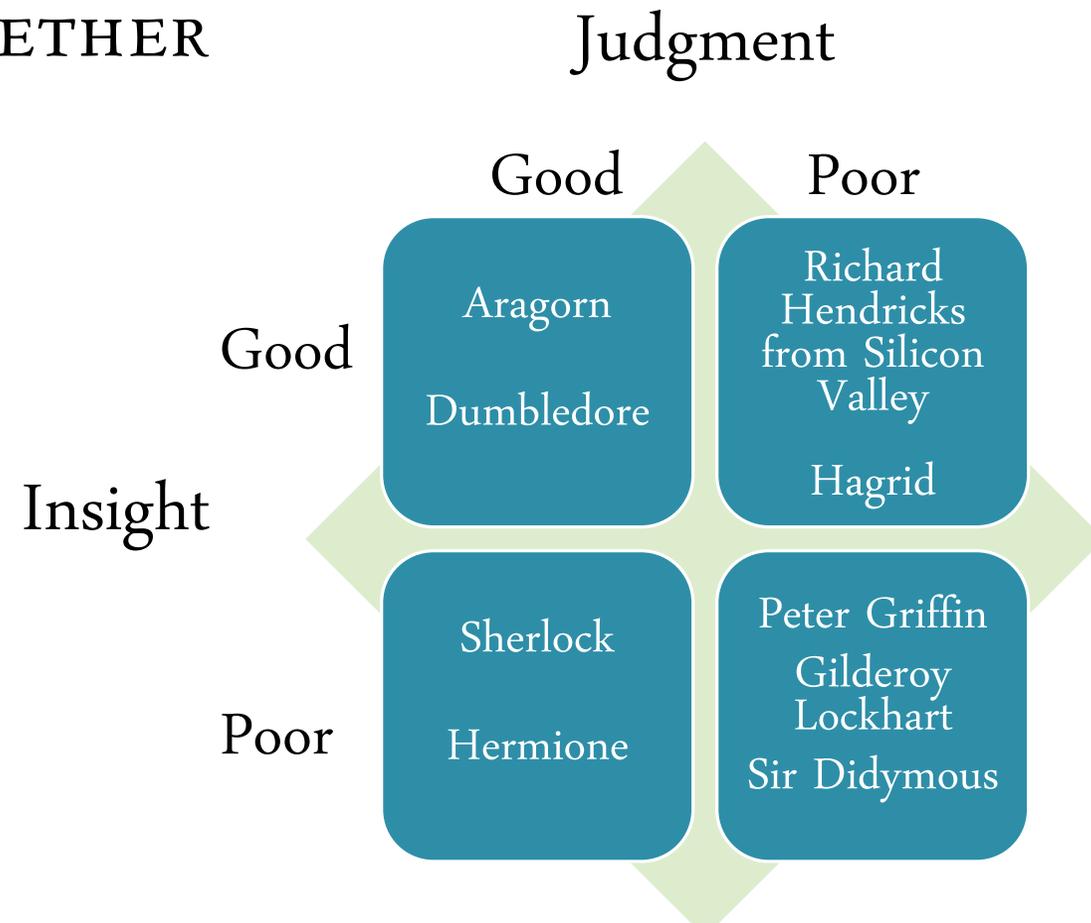
INSIGHT & JUDGMENT



INSIGHT & JUDGMENT

THESE TWO REALLY GO TOGETHER

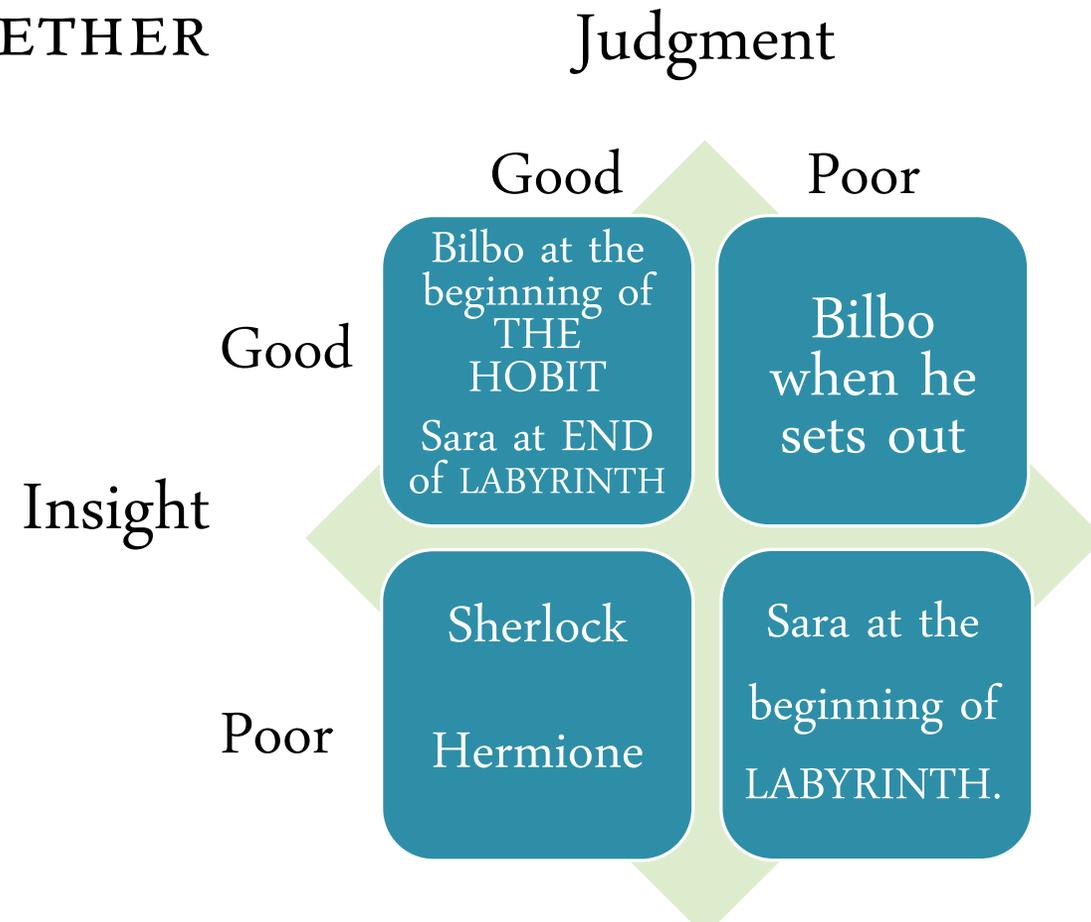
Context matters



INSIGHT & JUDGMENT

THESE TWO REALLY GO TOGETHER

& these things change
(sometimes that's good
and even necessary for
good fiction)



EMPATHY

HOW WELL DOES YOUR CHARACTER GET OTHERS AND FEEL FOR THEM?

- PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

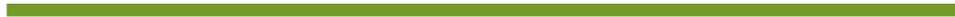
- ABILITY TO SHARE IN THE EMOTIONS OF OTHERS

MOTIVATION

HOW LIKELY IS IT YOUR CHARACTER WILL DO SOMETHING?

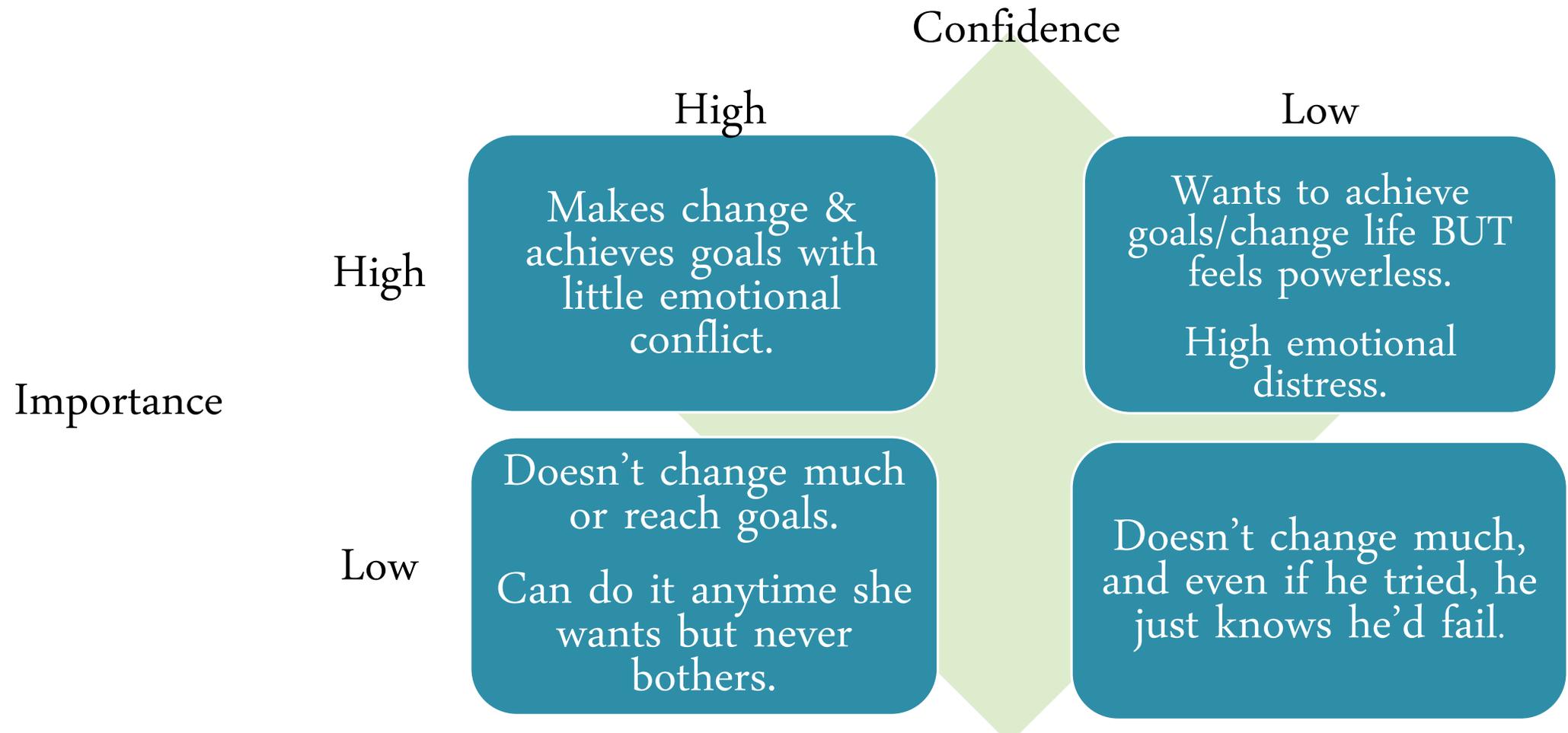
- Two facets
 - Importance
 - Confidence

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MOTIVATION



MOTIVATION

Confidence in ability to reach goal

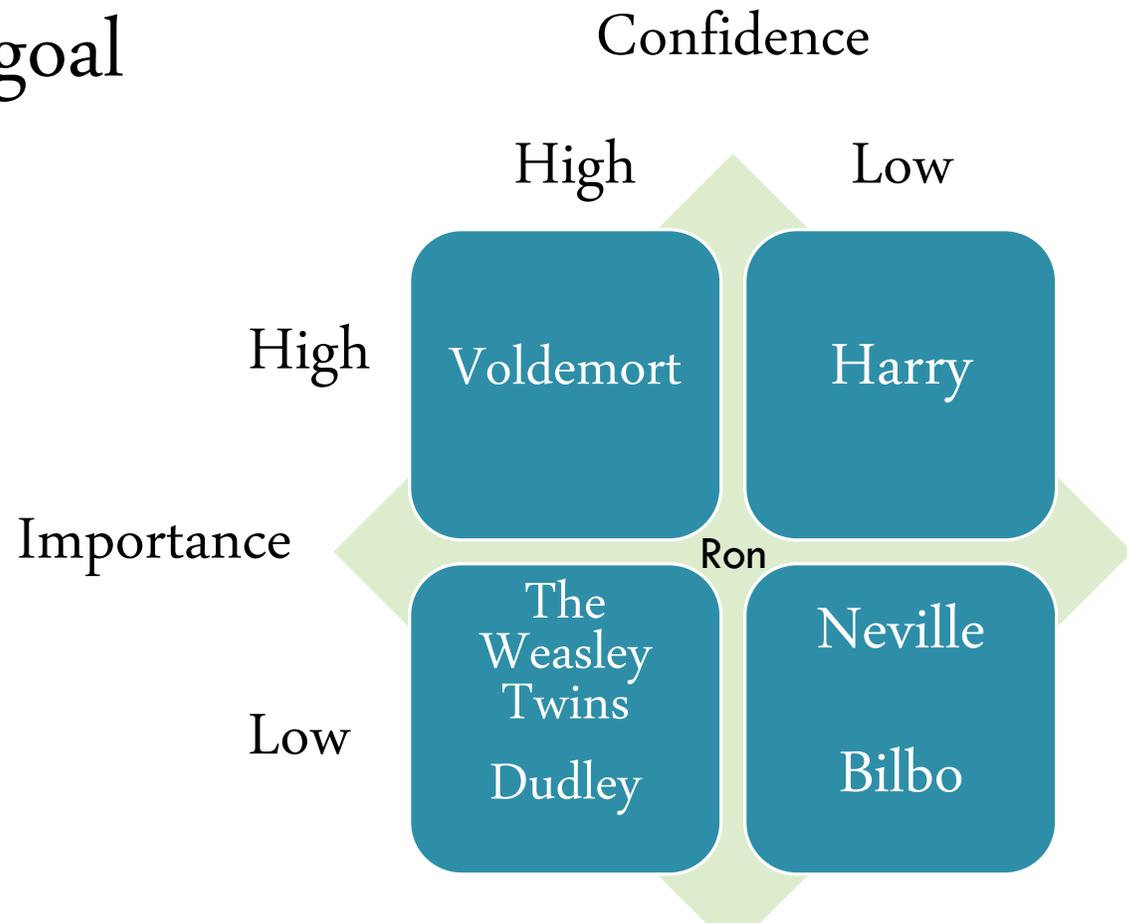
can be high, but

INSIGHT can be poor.

Sir Didymous

Mr. Magoo

Dory



AMBIVALENCE

THE INHERENTLY ILLOGICAL STATE OF WANTING MORE THAN ONE INCOMPATIBLE THING AT THE SAME TIME, A STATE OF TENSION.

Approach-Approach

I want to keep smoking AND be healthy.

Hermione wants to take TWO classes at the same time.

Avoid-Avoid

Harry doesn't want the humiliation of going to the dance alone OR the humiliation of being rejected.

Draco doesn't want to kill Dumbledore, but he doesn't want Voldemort to kill him.

Approach-Avoid

(The worst b/c there are pros and cons to both choices)

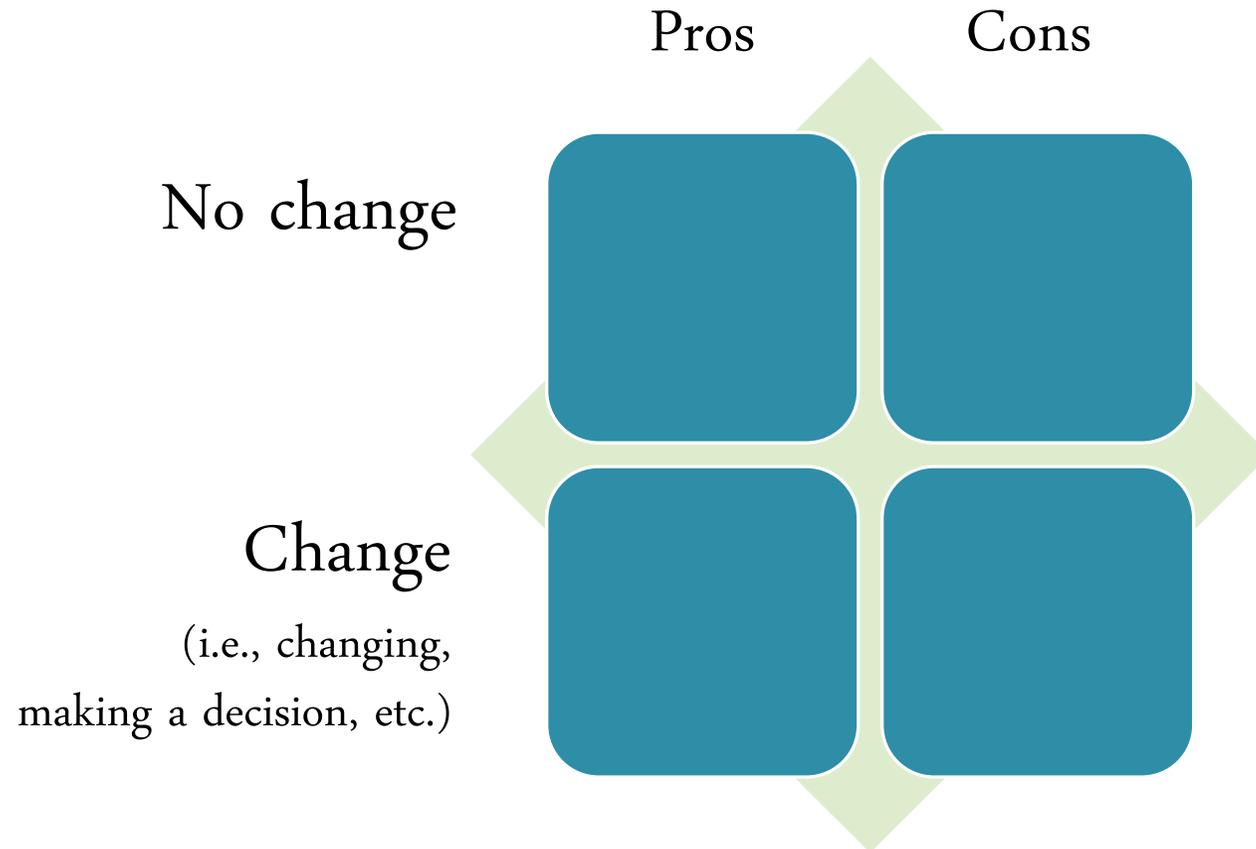
Ron & Harry WANT dates for the dance but don't want humiliation of being rejected.

Harry doesn't want to die, but he wants to save his friends.

DECISIONAL BALANCE

This is literally the internal tension your character is struggling to resolve.

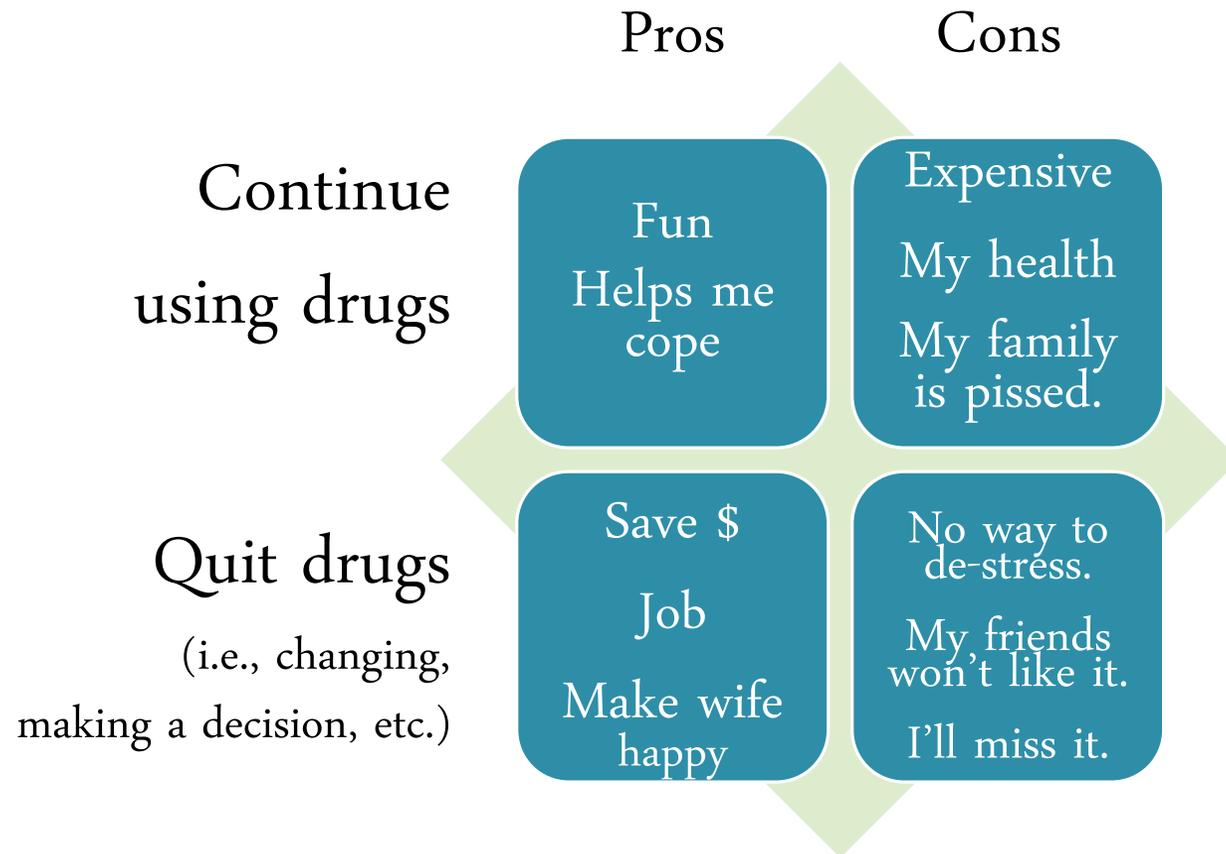
The tension from competing drives/needs/goals.



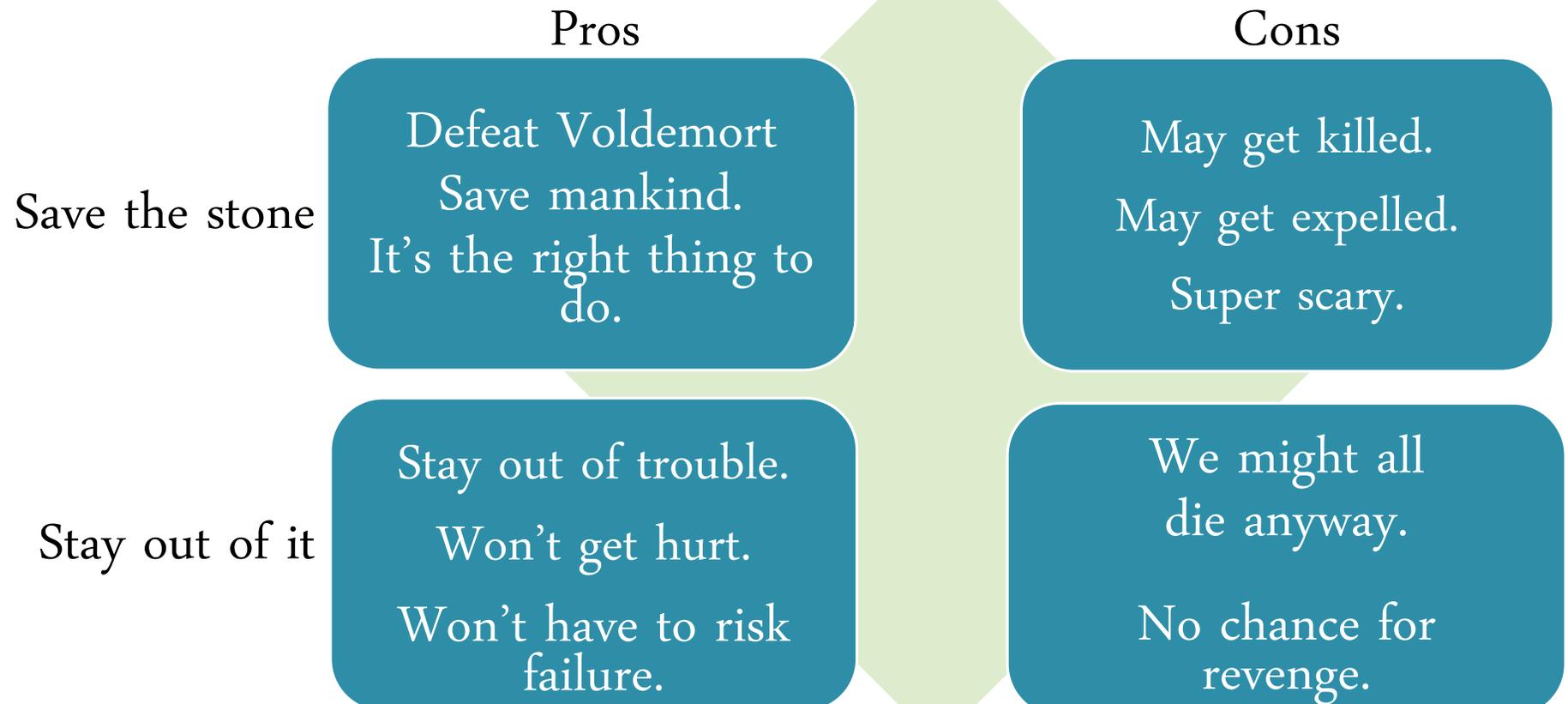
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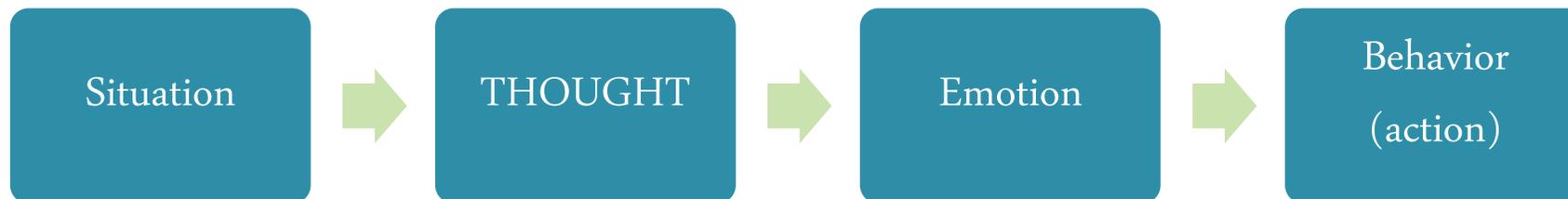


DECISIONAL BALANCE



CBT MODEL

HOW SITUATIONS CAUSE THOUGHTS WHICH CAUSE EMOTIONS THAT LEAD TO BEHAVIOR.



DISTORTIONS

BELIEFS AREN'T ALWAYS TRUE OR CONSISTENT WITH ONE-ANOTHER.

All-or-nothing thinking

If she breaks a rule, she's a bad person.

One C means I'm a failure.

Shoulds

I should please everyone.

I shouldn't be proud to be a Slytherin.

Catastrophizing

I'm totally going to fail out of Hogwarts.

Being stuck at home with the baby is the worst thing EVER.

TWO KINDS OF THOUGHTS

FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS

Assumed to be true

Stem from early
childhood experience

Stem from cultural influence

Global, broad

If-then statements, rules, shoulds

About self, world, others, future

Influence In The Moment
Thoughts

IN THE MOMENT THOUGHTS

MAY be influenced by
Cognitive Distortions

Influenced BY situation

Influenced BY
foundational beliefs

CHARACTER MAP

Blank with cues

SS

Darcy

THANK YOU!

For Materials: <http://bit.ly/RWAtalk>

For Discount: FictionFest2017

www.jessicabaylisswrites.com