

Attachment and Detachment

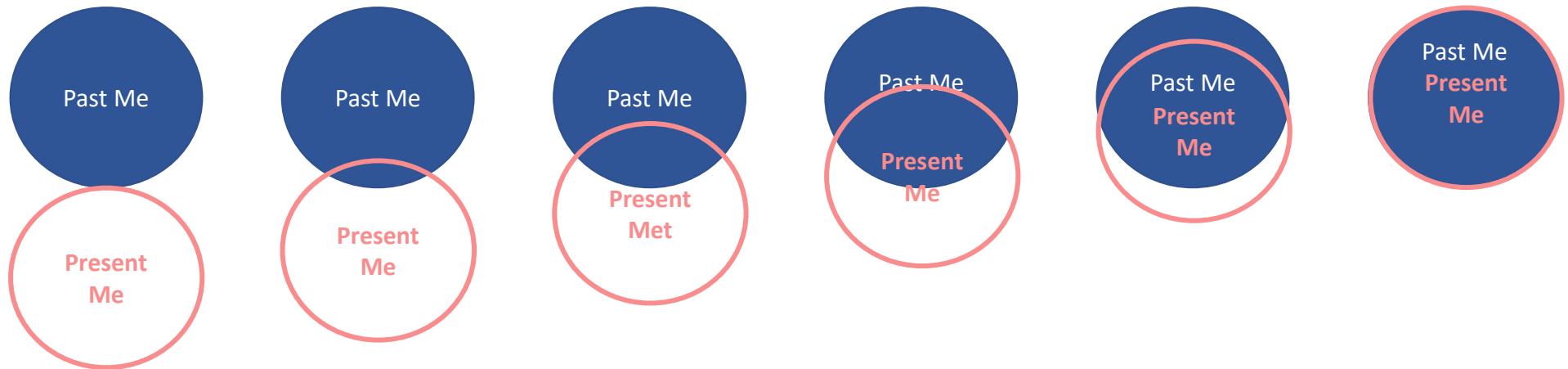
Unlocking the Joy of being Wrong

In order to transcend our close mindedness, and engage in the re-think. We need to detach – because it is the attachment to our own viewpoints, ideas, and perspectives as being ‘the truth’ that hold us back from evolving our wisdom.

There are two kinds of detachment we will explore in this session.

- **Detaching your present from your past**
- **Detaching your opinion from your identity**

The first step is to ask yourself, how much similarity is there between who you are right now, and your former self. It can be illustrated visually thus:



Which set of circles best describes how you see yourself?

In the moment, separating your past self from your current self can be unsettling, even if the shifts are positive. This is how the evolving identity works but we don't often pause and reflect on this process. When you first consider this question – it may leave you feeling a bit derailed and disconnected. However, over time, rethinking who you are appears to become a mentally healthy process, and this hinges on the ability to see a coherent story of getting from your past to your present version of self. Studies show that the ability to detach from past selves, lowered depression.

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The second step is to separate your opinions from your identity. Most of us are accustomed to identifying and defining ourselves in terms of our beliefs, ideas and ideologies. This however can become a hindrance when it prevents us from re-thinking or changing our minds as the world changes and knowledge evolves. Our inner story can become so sacred that we become hostile at even a thought of being wrong. The dictator in the mind, leaps into action to silence any counter arguments, squash evidence to the contrary, and shut the door firmly on learning and evolving.

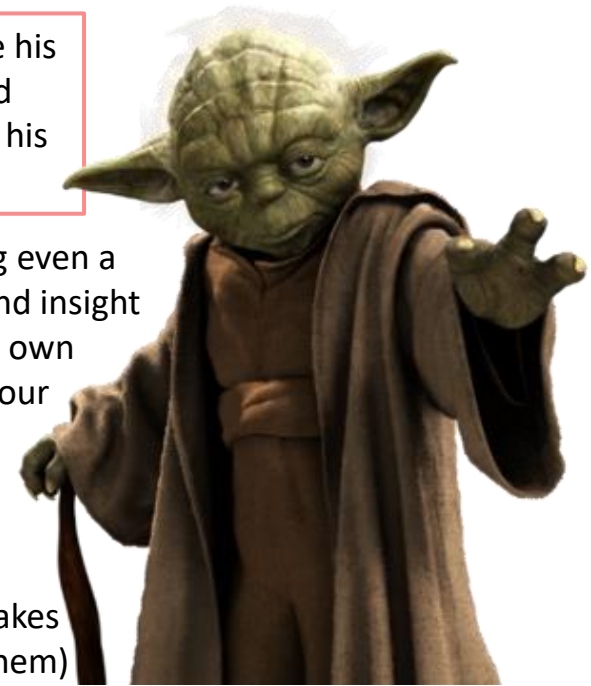
The shift is to move from seeing who you are as the sum total of what you believe, to who you are being about what you value. In order to do this You need to apply the Yoda Effect.

The **"Yoda Effect"**. Remember in Star Wars, when the young Luke Skywalker had tried to raise his star ship out of the swamp numerous times and failed every time? He looked at Yoda and said something to the effect of "Well, I'll try one more time". Yoda whacked him on the head with his cane and said, "There is no try, only do".

In this instance its about 'unlearning what you've learned'. Research suggests that identifying even a single reason as to why we might be wrong can be enough to curb overconfidence. The second insight is to realise that so often poking fun at others is due to insecurity and the need to bolster our own ego and identity, where-as if we are will and able to poke fun at ourselves, this also assists in our comfort in being wrong. Laughing at ourselves, reminds us that even if we take our decisions seriously, we don't have to take ourselves too seriously. Comedians and great story tellers often garner laughs at their own expense.

That said being wrong, and embracing a path of mistakes made is a painful process – what makes it easier however, is when we remember that all mistakes (when we are open to learn from them) are essential for progress.

Futurists, forecasters and scientists are run by a strange paradox. They are comfortable being wrong essentially because they seek to be correct, however there is a time horizon involved. They all are determined to reach the correct answer in the long run. And this means being open to stumbling, backtracking, re-routing and downright rejecting things in the short run. They consciously shun rose tinted glasses in favour of a sturdy mirror.



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Its one thing to admit to ourselves that we are wrong. It's more of a challenge to confess that to others. So, even if we manage to overthrow the inner dictator – we will probably fear outer ridicule. However, contrary to popular belief, psychology tells us that an admission of being wrong doesn't make us look less competent. It is a display of honesty and demonstrates a willingness to learn.

Upon finding out we might be wrong, the standard defence is “I'm entitled to my own opinion” – and yes you are. That said when we express out loud, there is a responsibility to ground our utterances in logic and facts. Share our reasoning and change our minds in the face of stronger or different evidence.

The 'Learning Something New' Timeline



- Oops I made a mistake
- I should think about my mistake
- Now I can learn from my mistake
- Wow I knew less than I thought