

# Ambivalence, Righting Reflex, & Evocative Strategies

Session 4



***ENHANCED PROFESSIONAL  
LEARNING SERIES***



Mountain Plains ATTC (HHS Region 8)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



# Week 4 Agenda



Review Learning Activity



Ambivalence vs. Resistance

Sustain &  
Change Talk



Righting Reflex

What is it?  
How can we manage it?



Evocative Strategies



Discuss Session 5 Learning Activity



Let's talk about last week's Learning Activity!

# Ambivalence

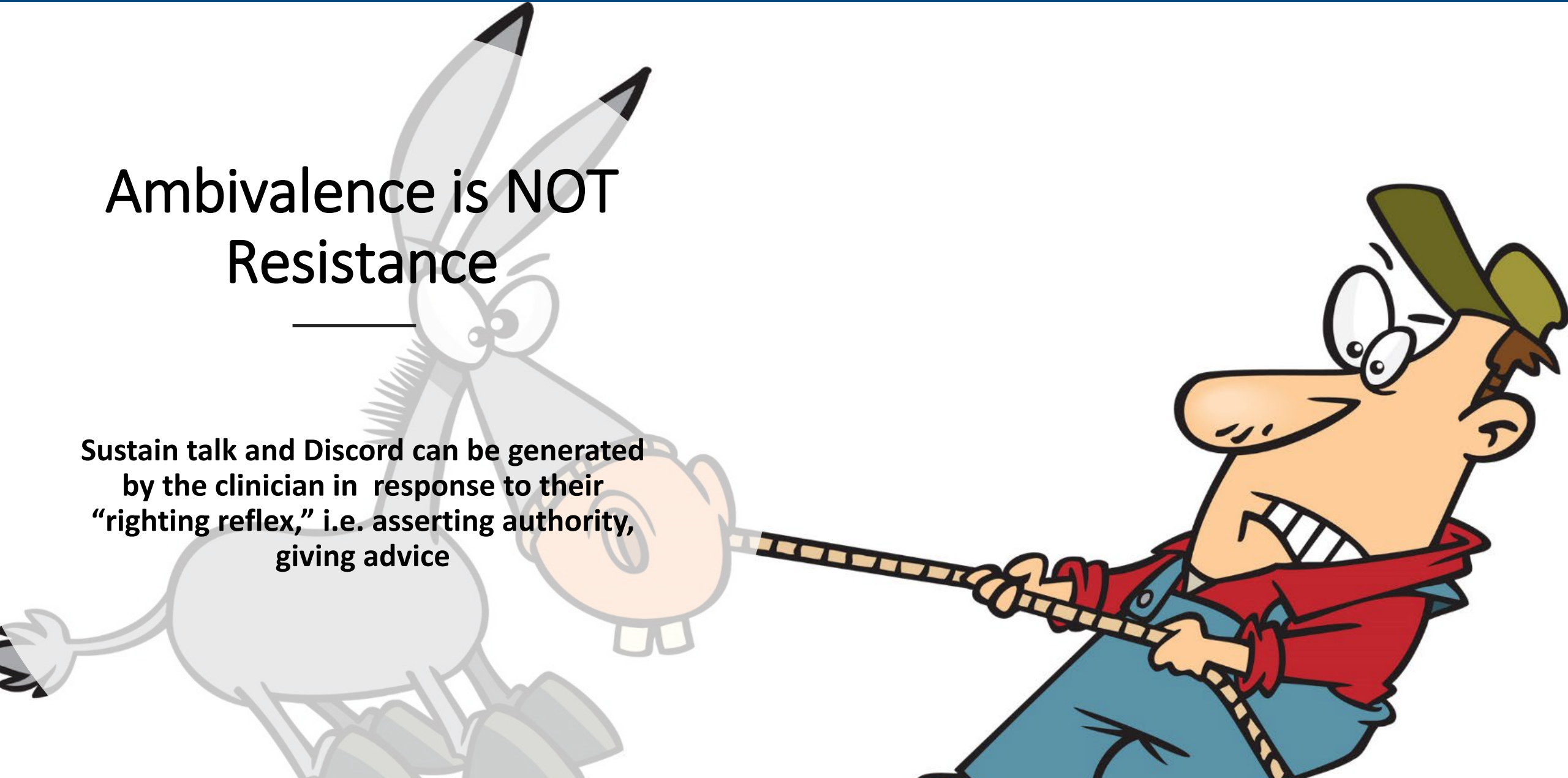
- Hesitancy about change is human nature and people present with a wide range of readiness for change.
- They want it, and they don't.
- Ambivalence doesn't have to be logical



**MI was created to explore and resolve ambivalence and to increase motivation for change.**

# Ambivalence is NOT Resistance

Sustain talk and Discord can be generated  
by the clinician in response to their  
“righting reflex,” i.e. asserting authority,  
giving advice





## Sustain Talk & Discord

**Sustain Talk** - about the target behavior

"I really don't want to stop smoking."

**Discord** - about the relationship

"You don't understand how hard it is for me".

Get off my  
back!



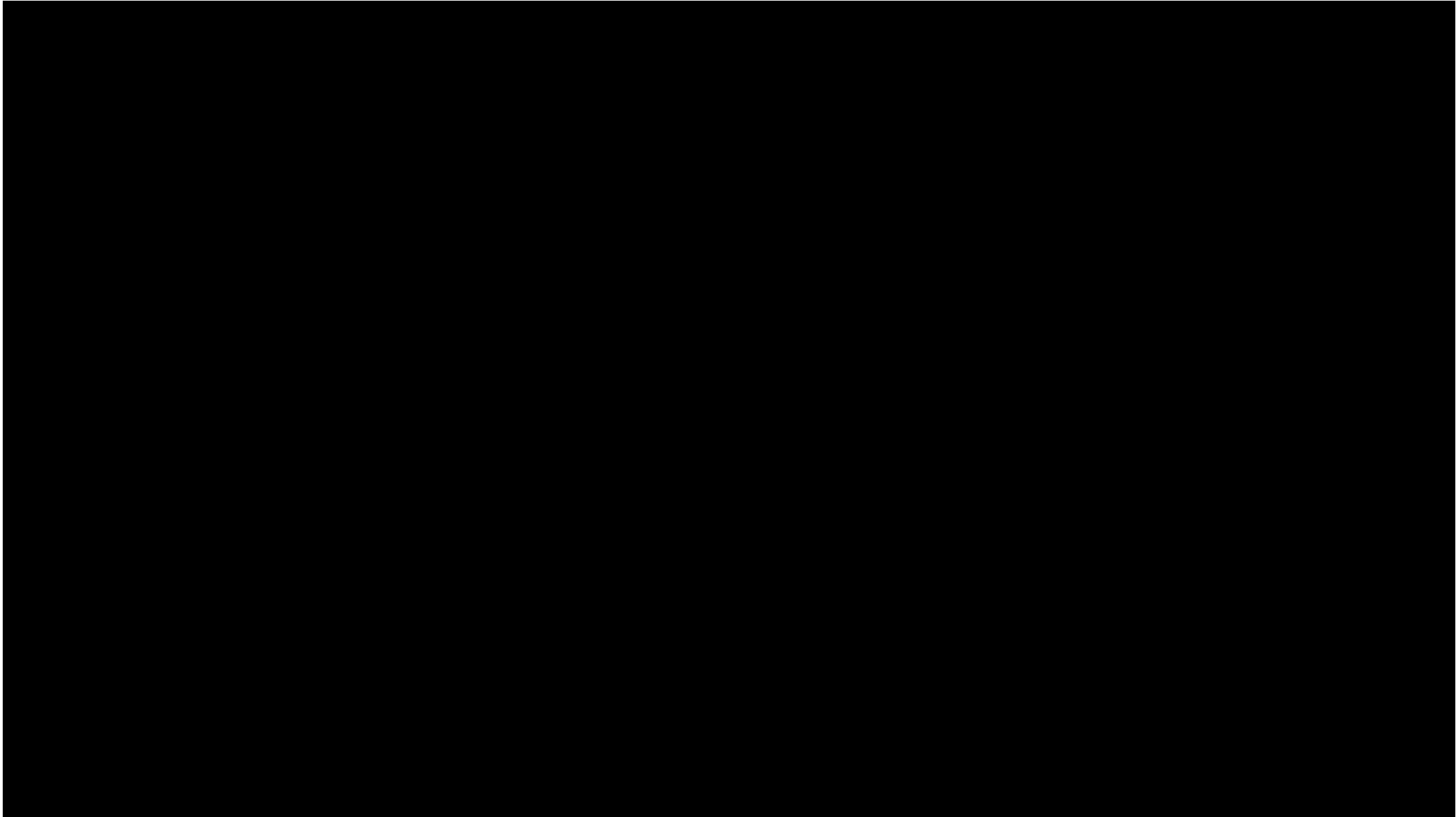
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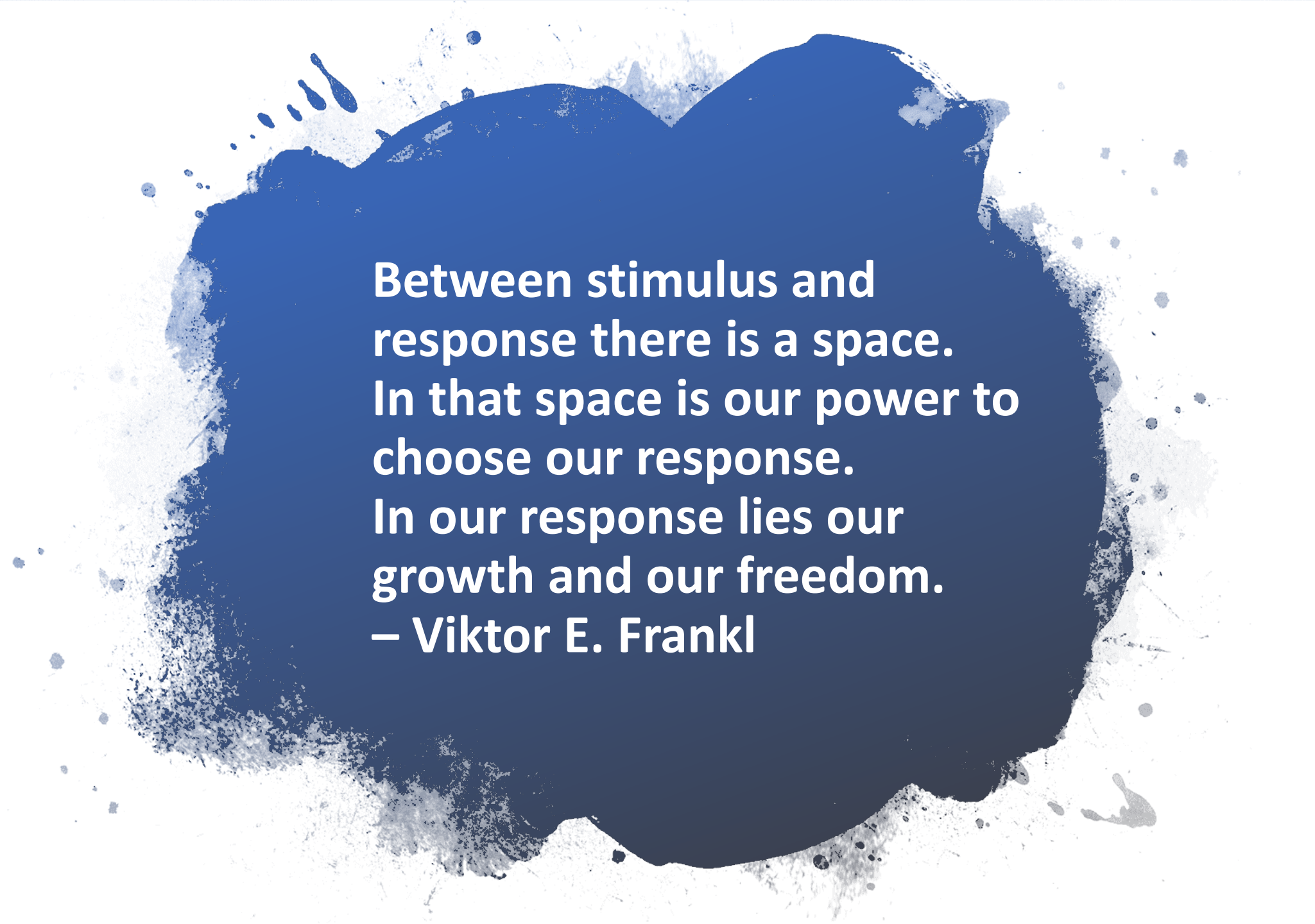
Why would I  
trust you?





# Righting Reflex





**Between stimulus and  
response there is a space.  
In that space is our power to  
choose our response.  
In our response lies our  
growth and our freedom.  
– Viktor E. Frankl**



# Listening for Change Talk

- **Desire:** I would like to...
- **Ability:** I might be able to...
- **Reason:** It will make me feel better...
- **Need:** I know it could get worse...



# Strategies for evoking change talk

- Asking evocative questions
- Exploring the decisional balance
- Good things/Not so good things
- Elaboration
- Querying extremes
- Looking back/looking forward
- Exploring goals and values
- Using the  
Importance/Confidence/Readiness  
Rulers
- Coming Alongside

## Importance/Confidence/Readiness Rulers

- How Important is it...?
- How Confident are you...?
- How Ready are you...?

*"On a scale of 1-10, 1 being not at all and 10 being very much"*



*You are you at an 8, why not a 6 (lower)?  
What would it take to get to 9 (higher)?*

# Session 5 Learning Activity

- Pick one or more of these 4 ways to explore ambivalence with a client:
  - Importance Ruler
  - Readiness Ruler
  - Confidence Ruler
- Have a conversation with someone about their behavioral change goal.
- Be prepared to discuss your experience 1) how the person responded and 2) how it was for you.

Remember can start or use a journal to document your course experiences!

