



# MENTAL SKILLS FOR COACHES



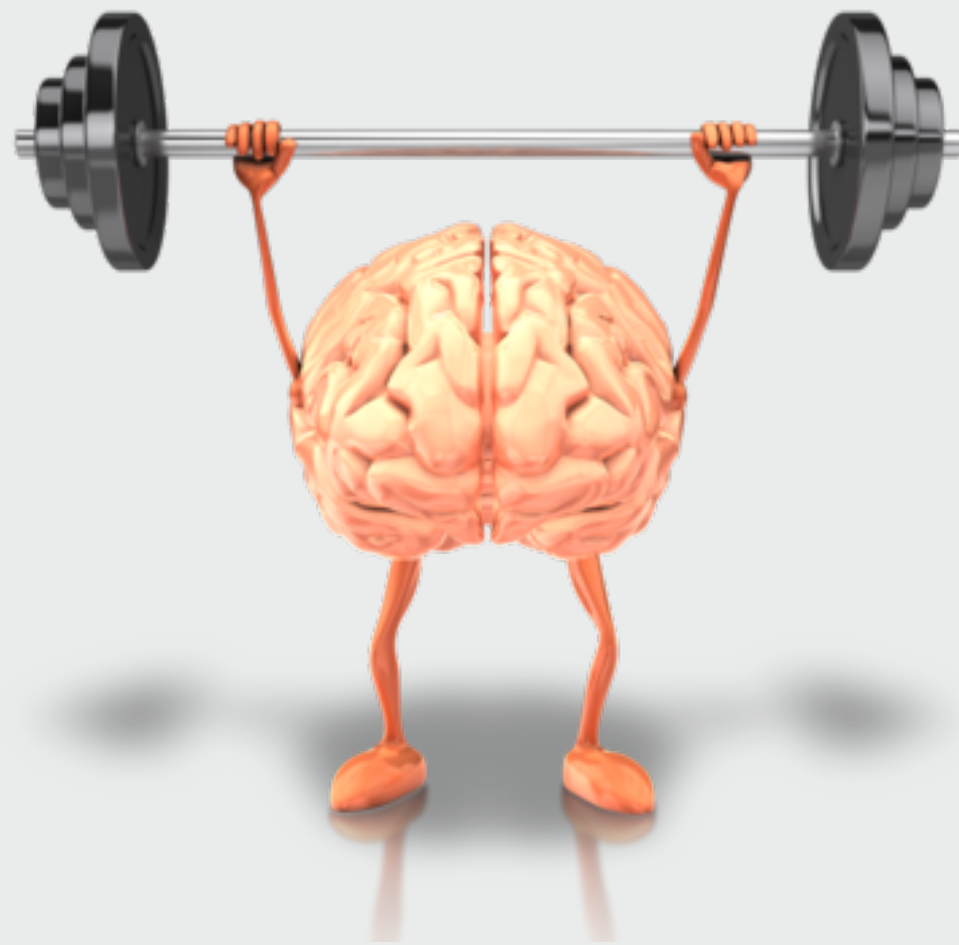
**SWIM  
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## Mental Fitness

Refers to an individual's ability to optimally regulate *thoughts, feelings, and behaviours* and act in a purposeful and consistent manner while coping with the many demands placed on them.



Mental  
Performance





Performance Phases



## WHEN MIGHT COACHES NEED TO USE MENTAL FITNESS?





Coaches often face stressors and are asked to deal with difficult situations:

- **Organizational stressors** (e.g., managerial conflict, lack of financial assistance, role conflict)
- **Competitive stressors** (e.g., managing athlete needs, professionalism, selection issues)
- **Personal stressors** (e.g., sacrificing personal time)

Sports coaches are performers in their own right!



## WHAT ARE MENTAL SKILLS?



Mental skills - psychological abilities that facilitate performance and personal development:

- Motivation
- Self-Confidence (and/or Courage)
- Attentional Control
- Arousal Regulation
- Emotion Regulation
- Resilience
- Mindfulness



Mental tools - techniques or procedures that performers engage in to develop physical and mental skills:

- Goal Setting
- Imagery
- Self-Talk
- Arousal Reduction and Induction Strategies
- Emotion Regulation Strategies
- Mindfulness-Based Training
- Routines





What are GOALS and why are they important?



A **goal** is a target of objective that people strive to attain:

- Goals help direct attention to the task at hand
- Goals mobilize your efforts
- Goals prolong your persistence
- Goals foster the development of new learning strategies

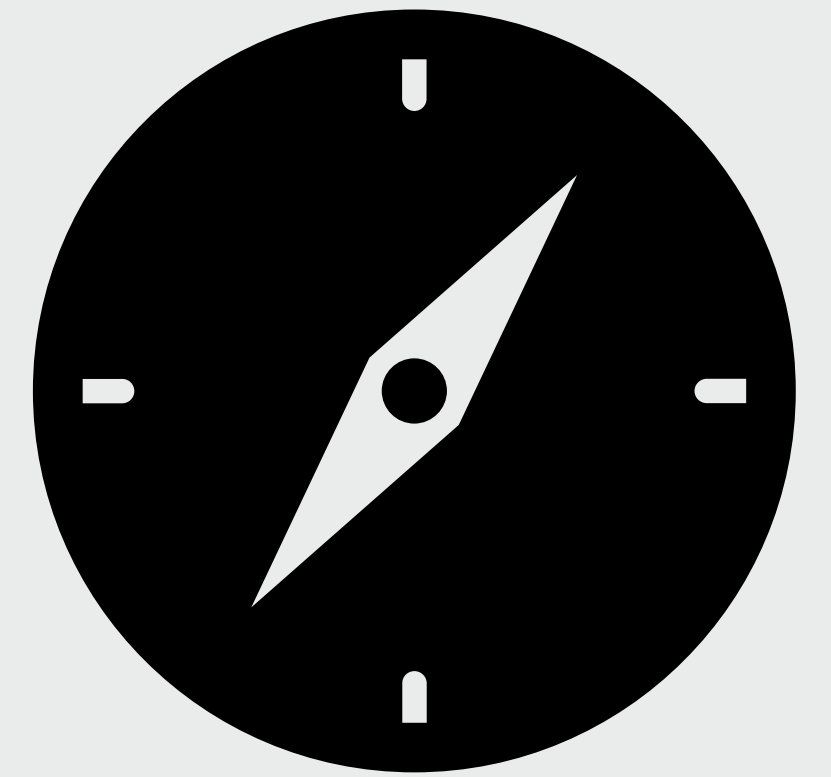


**Goal setting** is the process of identifying something you want to accomplish and establishing action steps to achieve it.



**Values** are personal statements about what we consider important in our lives:

- Creates a greater sense of purpose
- Provides direction that informs short- and long-term goals
- Helps to manage stress by focusing on what's important
- Boost motivation and confidence

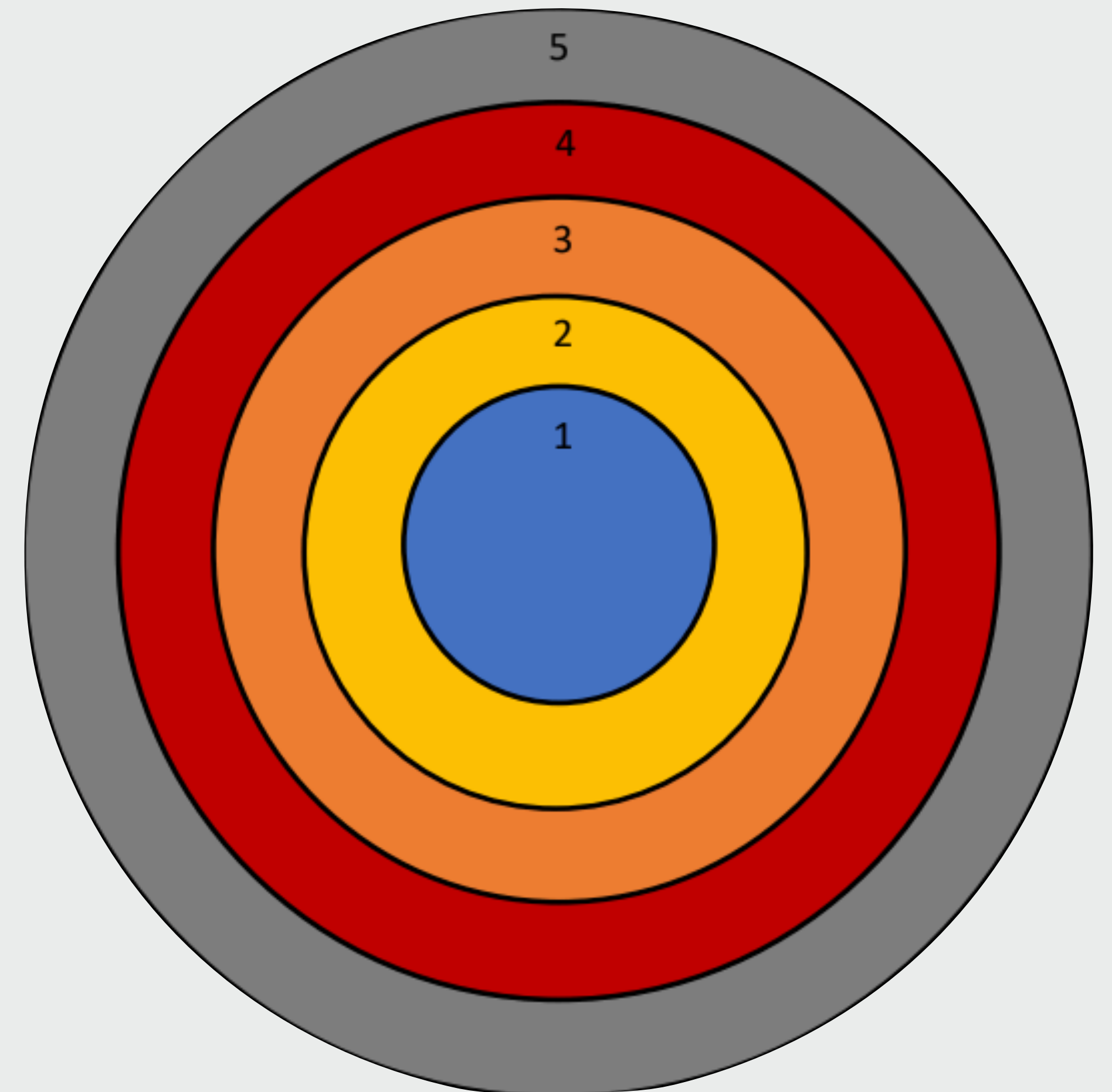


## Clarifying Values Activity



## Focus Circle - The Training of Being Present

1. **Blue focus:** Focus on the task and game plan with contact to mission and values.
2. **Yellow focus:** Focus on distractions.
3. **Orange focus:** Evaluation of performance; comparison between expected performance and actual performance.
4. **Red focus:** Results and consequences of results.
5. **Grey focus:** Things outside of here-and-now-performance setting.



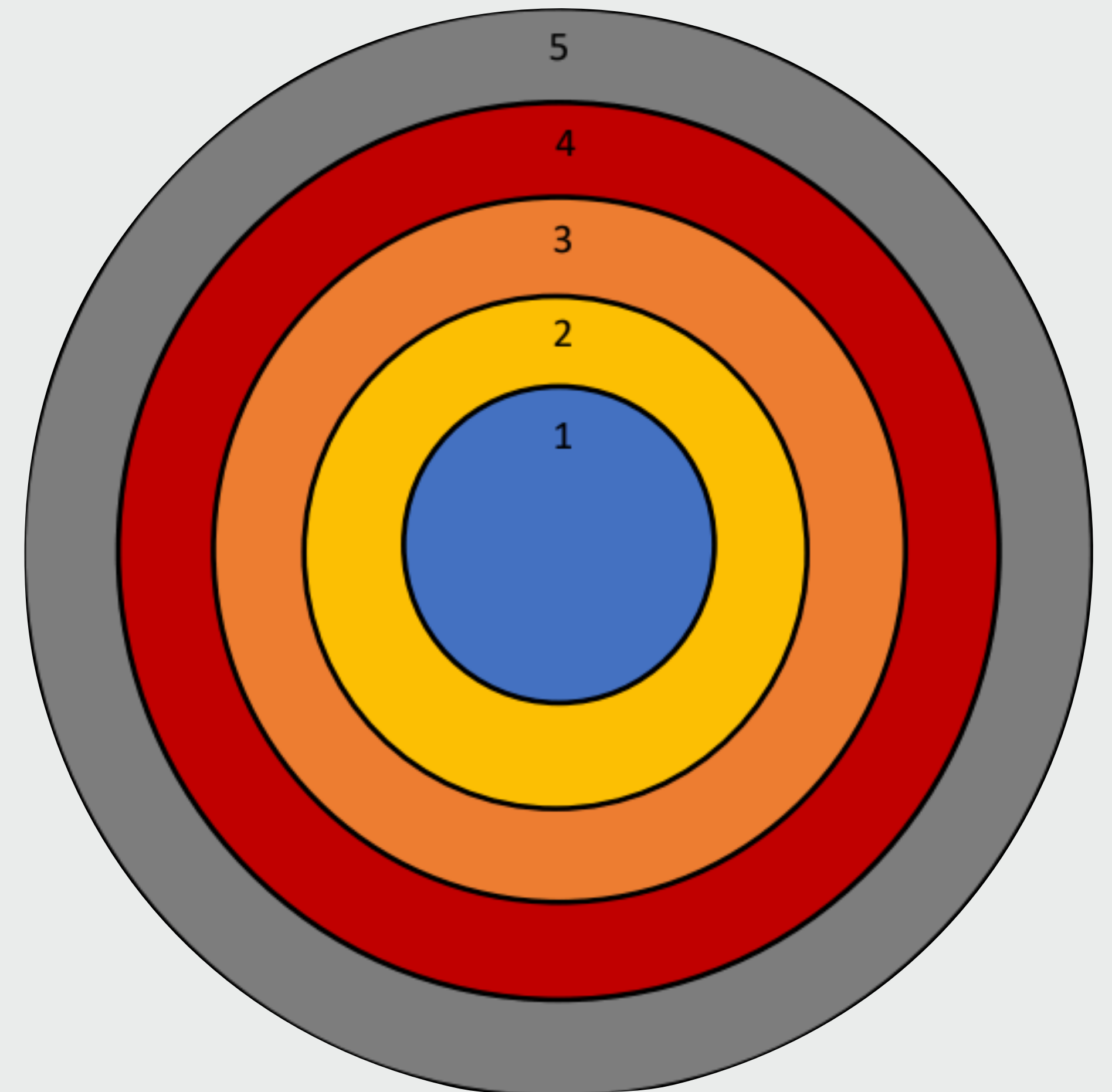


## Focus Circle - The Training of Being Present

**Register** – what thoughts and feelings have shown up?

**Release** – let go of these thoughts and feelings.

**Refocus** – bring your focus back to blue (focus on the task and game plan with contact to your values).

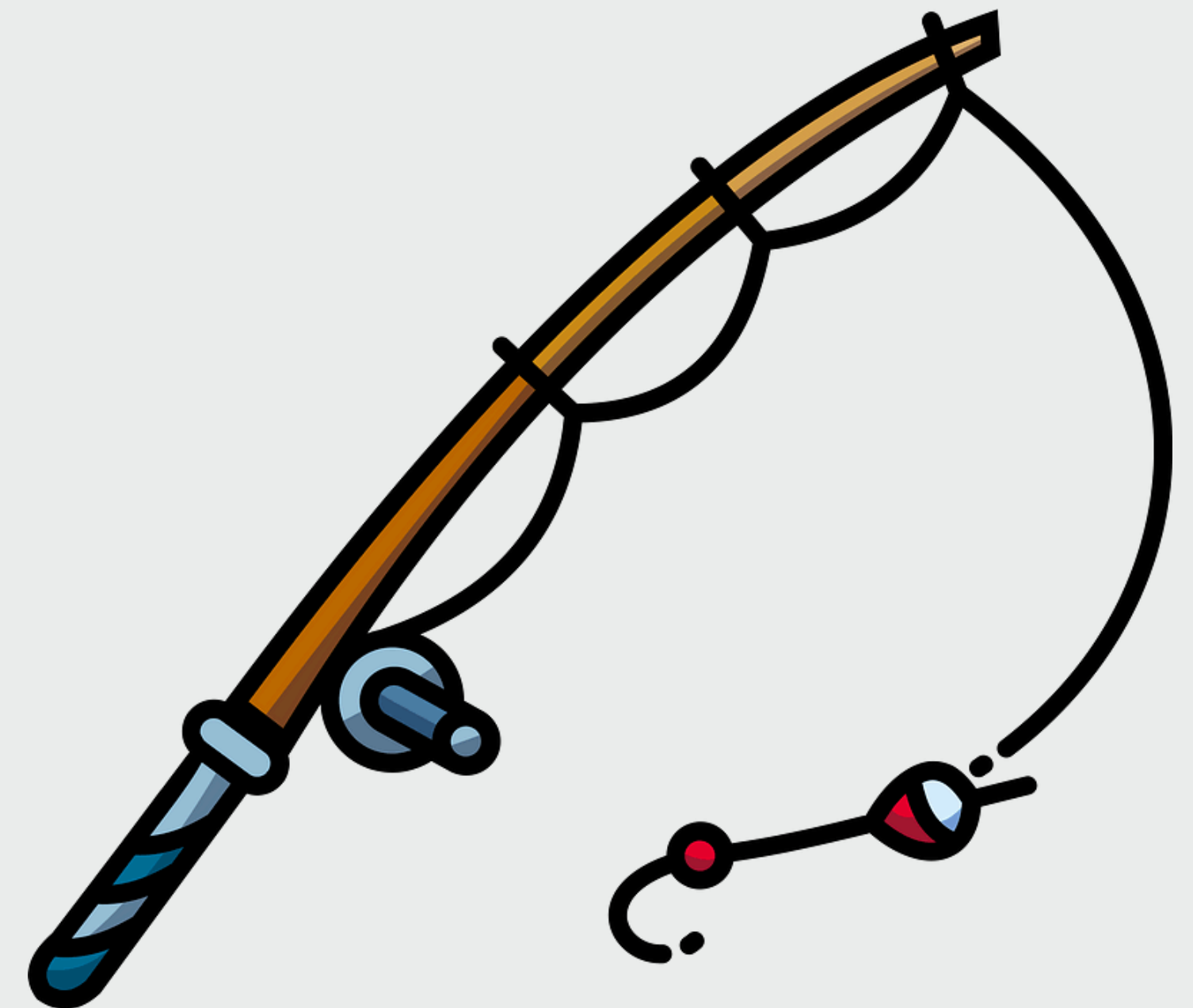


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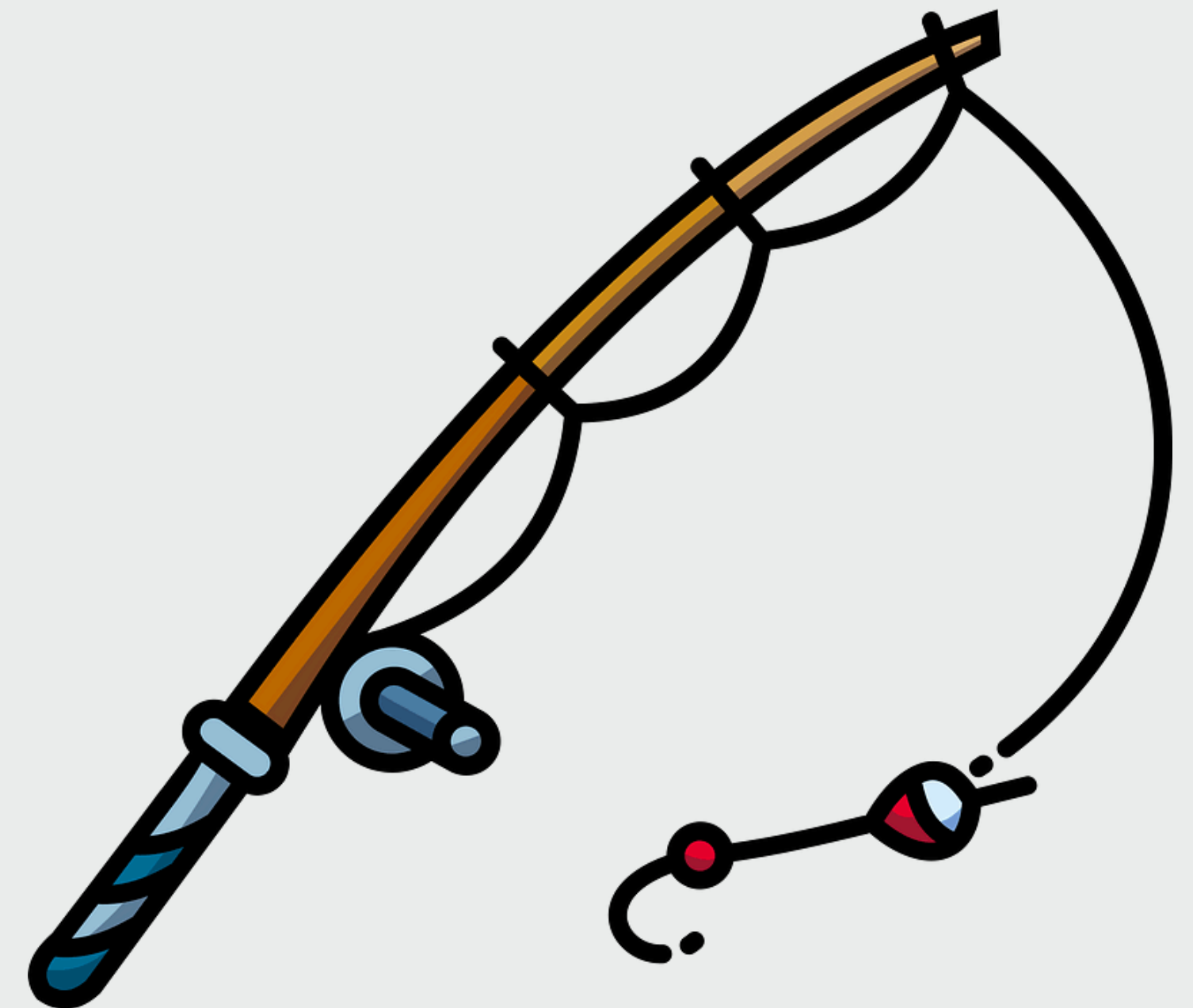


## Focus Circle - The Training of Being Present

**Register** – what thoughts and feelings have shown up?

**Release** – let go of these thoughts and feelings ... by using your senses to get present (e.g., like the STOP activity) or by categorizing and naming your focus as blue, yellow, orange, red, or grey. The minute you start to name your thoughts, you create a distance to them.

**Refocus** – bring your focus back to blue (focus on the task and game plan with contact to your values).



## Unhooking - The Training of Being Present

### Release ...

- \* Notice it ... (non-judgementally)
- \* Name it ... (with humour and/or a metaphor)
- \* Neutralize it ... (create a visual where you can let this thought go)

# References

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