

Connecting the Dots Project – Version 8

I have long been fascinated with the notion of significant people / events in our lives, how they come to be, whether we choose them or they are chosen for us, how we measure their effect / influence, what their cumulative effect is, whether the order that they appear in our lives is significant, etc.

With that idea in mind, I drew a series of mind maps to express some thoughts around this which appear in the following diagrams. The content is copyright the author as noted unless otherwise indicated.

I invite people who may have thoughts on these diagrams, whether comments, criticisms or additions, to email me at info@harrytucker.com and I will give them consideration for future releases. I may consider a wiki as well if the traffic is significant.

My hope is that it won't get too dry / academic – let me know if you believe that I have violated that intention. The model is meant to be deep but light, offering insight without overloading the reader with the plethora of knowledge that exists within this space.

Many thanks for your interest!

Create a great day!

Harry

About the Author

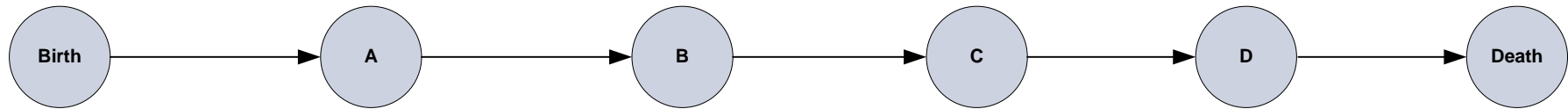
Harry Tucker is a measurable outcome-focused provider of business strategy, investment assistance, project management, large-scale enterprise architecture, vulnerability assessment and risk mitigation guidance to Wall Street and Fortune 25 companies for over 25 years.

He also specializes in the area of predictive analytics, co-founding an award-winning software company in New York that specialized in human capital optimization; capturing, expressing and predicting human behavior and productivity mathematically. The company IPO'd after conclusion of a complex M&A deal.

The Simple Life

Variant 1

Reviewing one's history, each dot is a significant person / event in your Life and often seems perfectly orchestrated.



Variant 2

A random series of events with birth and death being the only certainty. Some dots are destined to be experienced in various orders with some dots being skipped, other dots being repeated and some dots representing forks in Life from which multiple Paths can be chosen.

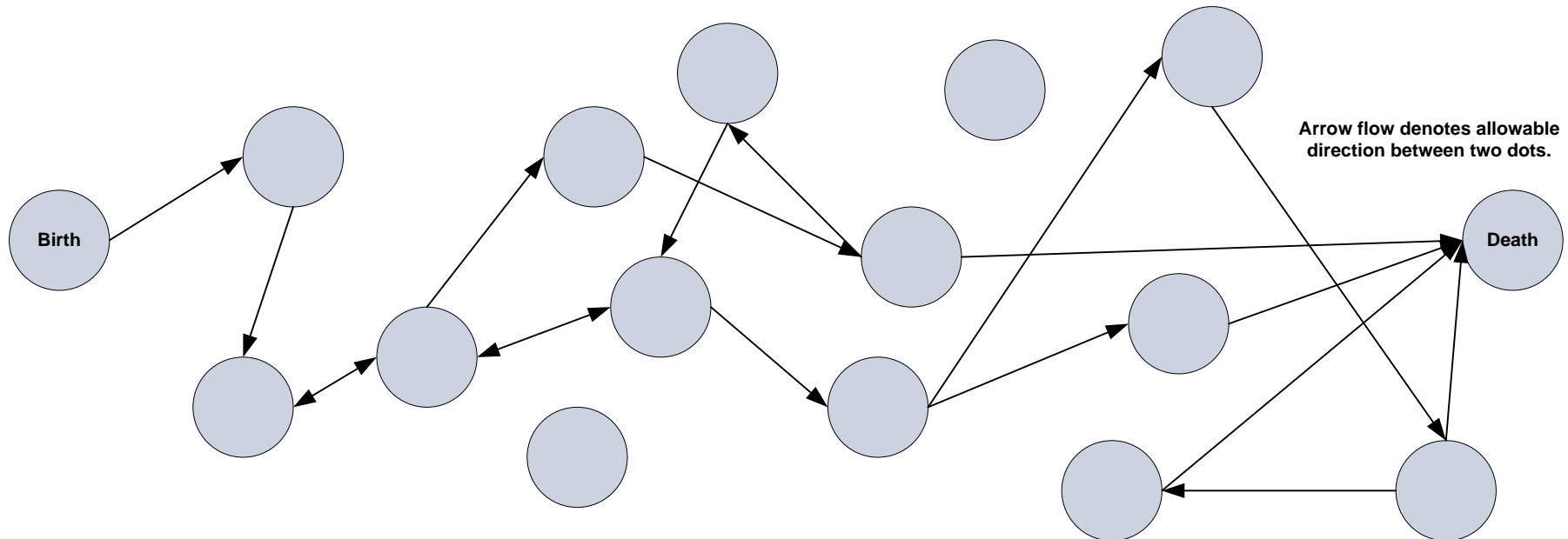


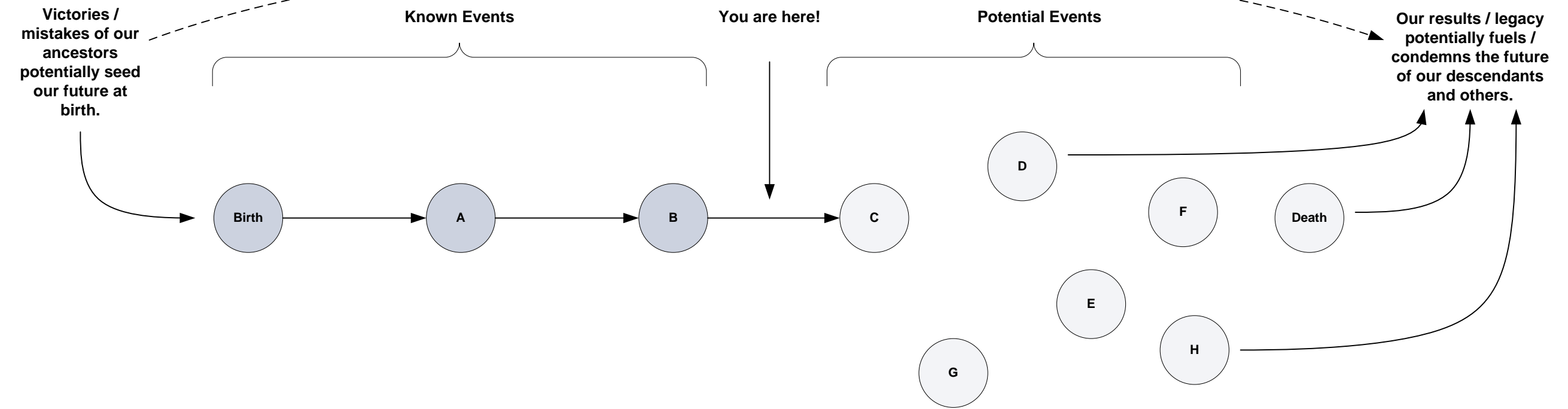
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**In reality, it is a bit of both
(a quasi-determinant model).**

Seed does not guarantee final result but definitely influences



Order of dots based upon

Potential dots are available to be selected in any order (and some may be omitted / repeated), based on:

1. Personal choices (choosing desirable / avoiding undesirable)
2. Time required to pass / fail events.
3. Change in priorities
4. Choices of others
5. External events
6. Ability to select relevant dots and filter out irrelevant / dangerous dots via discernment.

Dot selection driven by:

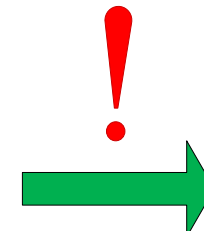
1. Random vs. orchestrated events
2. Instinct vs. knowledge-based process
3. Impulsive reaction vs. planned response

Dot selection (with exception of forced events) may be constrained by:

1. Ethical choices
2. Moral choices
3. Legal choices
4. Resource availability (time, energy, money, knowledge, deadlines, etc.)

Importance of Awareness:

Most people are not aware of the importance of maximizing impact from good choices while minimizing impact from bad choices, thereby allowing Life to “happen” to them instead of working harder to maximize the chance of “creating” a better Life.

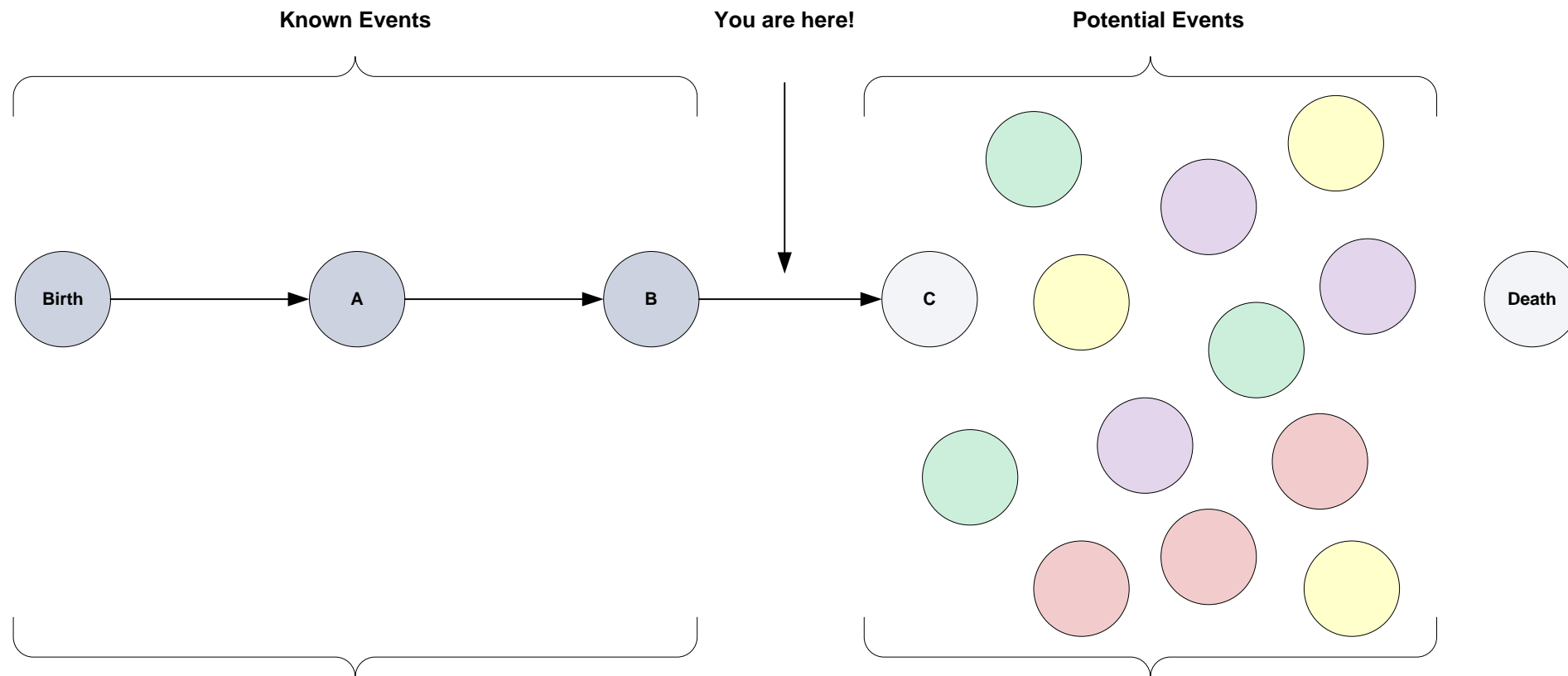


Dot selection include those that:

- May / should be accepted
- Must be accepted
- May / should be avoided
- Must be avoided
- Cannot be selected at certain times
- Cannot be avoided at certain times (or at all)
- Have impact that must be leveraged as much as possible
- Have impact that must be mitigated as much as possible

Awareness of choice, impact, result and response matters.

**For those of faith:
What about God's influence?**



Selection of dots based upon

- Events for you to grow yourself to your potential.
- Events for you to grow others to their potential.
- Events for you to grow yourself AND others to your respective potentials.
- Landmines that don't serve any valid purpose but may hurt / delay you and / or others.

May be pleasurable or painful, the type of which may not be realized until after experienced (i.e. not predictable until experienced).

You choose some, others are chosen for you.

Sometimes the type of dot becomes apparent / known well after the dot occurs (or never becomes known).

There is free will to choose some dots (and even how the dot is executed) while other dots and how they must be executed are forced upon us. The intent is that we ultimately must complete the dots meant for our development and the development of others.

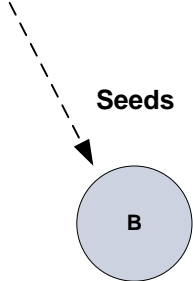
Some dots are order dependent while others are not but the correct ones must be experienced before one's Life journey is complete.

Our inability to know or understand that even bad dots serve a greater purpose may cause us to fall into anger, sadness or despair when the "why" of an event is not understood, even though it is playing into a larger purpose.

Moving From One Dot To Another

Arrive with base level of 7 gifts (tools to find answers):

- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel
- Fortitude
- Knowledge
- Piety
- Respect (fear) of a Greater Authority



To get from B to C, you must:

- Seek answers to 4 questions:
- Where should I go?
 - What should I do?
 - What should I say?
 - To whom?

Adhering to 4 virtues:

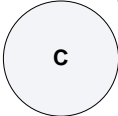
- Prudence
- Justice
- Fortitude
- Temperance

Avoiding 7 key sins:

- Pride (excessive)
- Covetousness
- Lust
- Anger
- Gluttony
- Envy
- Sloth

Honoring attributes of:

- Charity
- Service
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Compassion
- Goodness
- Humility
- Gentleness
- Kindness
- Modesty
- Honesty



Feeds

Graduate with new level of 7 gifts (answers that strengthen tools):

- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel
- Fortitude
- Knowledge
- Piety
- Respect (fear) of a Greater Authority

Sometimes, through failure to execute properly
OR
an unanticipated event / interaction
OR
a willful choice based on change of priorities or goals, the desire / need to “graduate” to Dot C is removed.

HOWEVER,
new knowledge and other gifts have still been acquired prior to moving on to the dot that replaces dot C.

Momentum / inertia / speed of current Life may determine when lesson from current dot finally sets in (“a speeding train doesn’t stop on a dime”).

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The Detailed Process of Graduating to the Next Dot

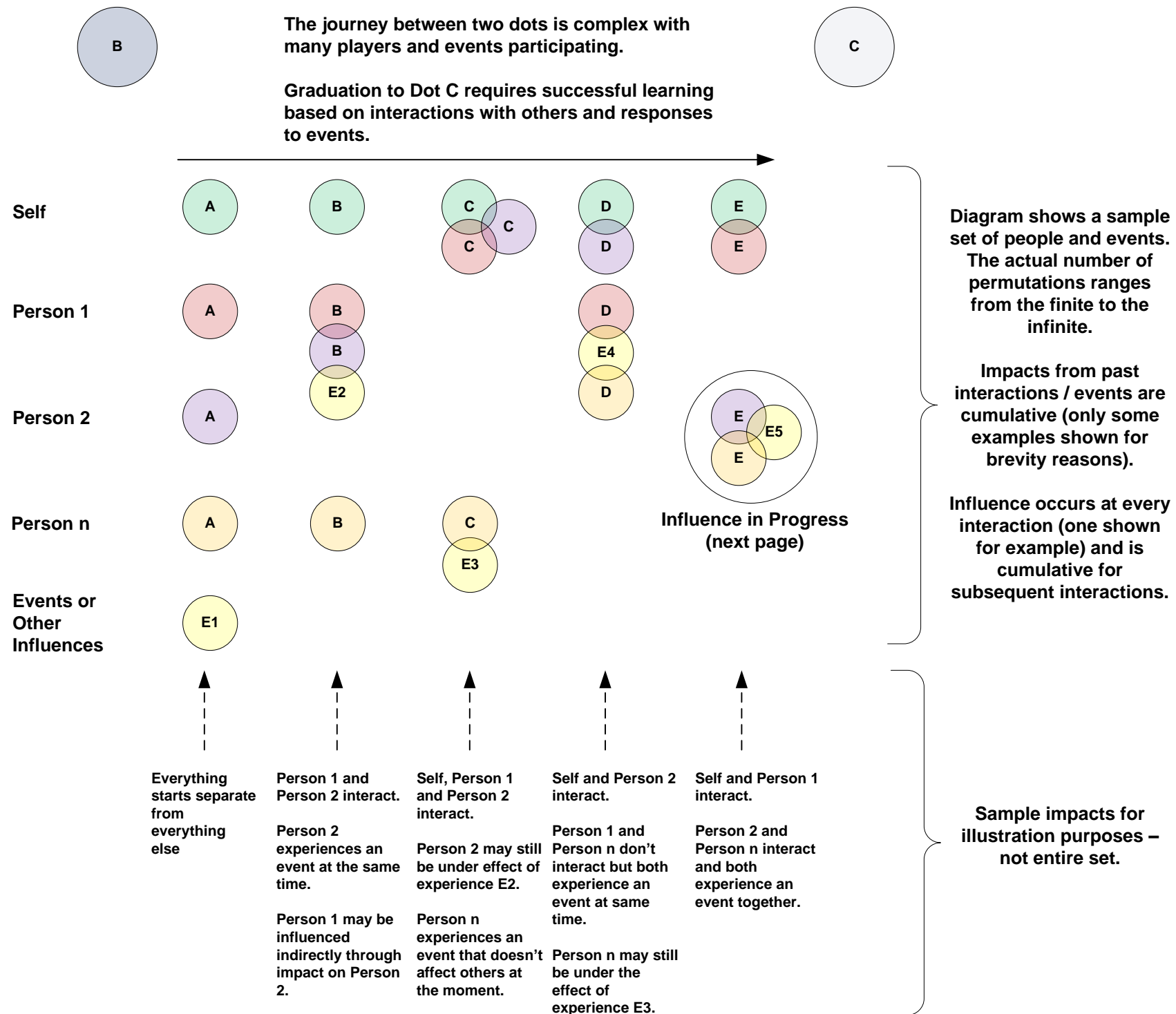


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Characteristics of Influence (The Gallagher Effect)



Contributes to cumulative Life influence

Intensity / frequency / context / origin of influence determines imprint (permanence) level of influence.



Determines effect of influence

Influence is not only on our own personal "influence gauges" but on the gauges of others as well.

By the same token, the events of others are influencing our gauges.

Influencer (person or event)

A trend of generally positive results should make a negative influence easier to overcome.

A trend of generally negative results will make a positive influence more difficult to absorb / accept.

It generally takes a trend of multiple good or bad influences over time to reverse one's current state (pain / pleasure) to its opposite state.

There are always exceptions, depending upon context, intensity and frequency of influences.

← bidirectional influence →

Influenced

Exchange can be:

- Complementary
- Conflicting
- Motivating
- Demotivating

Result depends on:

- Ability / Support
- Capability / Support
- Desire / Resolve
- Motivation
- Context
- Content and relevance (past dot influence)
- Who defines exchange terms

Some good intentions may produce poor / painful results for either side.

Some painful choices may be necessary to produce good / positive results including choices that involve service / sacrifice for the greater good.

Some influence / results (good or bad) may be misinterpreted as their opposite state.

Sometimes the outcome on the influenced may not be obvious or known at all.

Can these cross-purpose results be predicted?

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When a Dot Seems Difficult / Painful To Reach

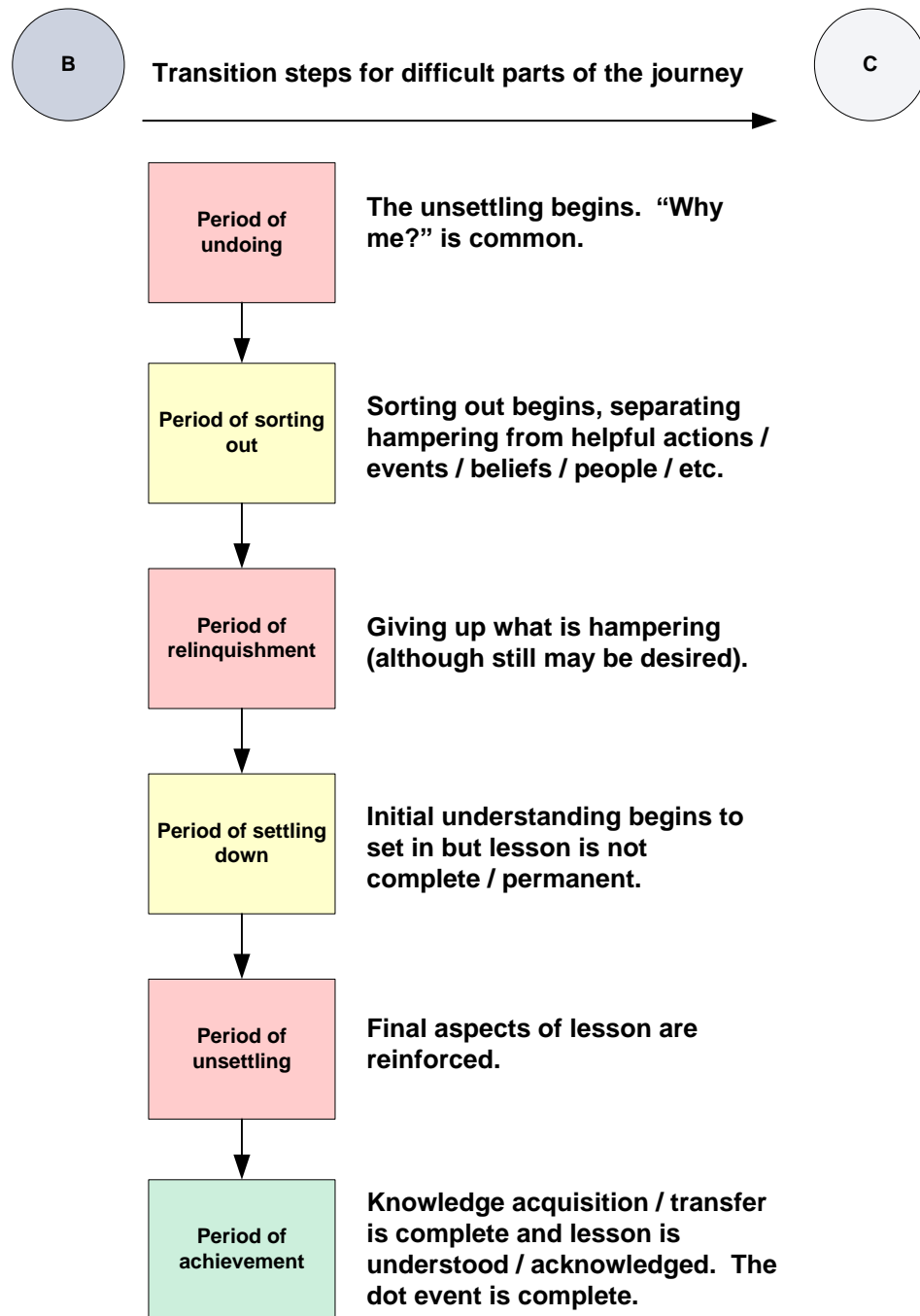


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Content from A Course in Miracles
(Manual for Teachers)

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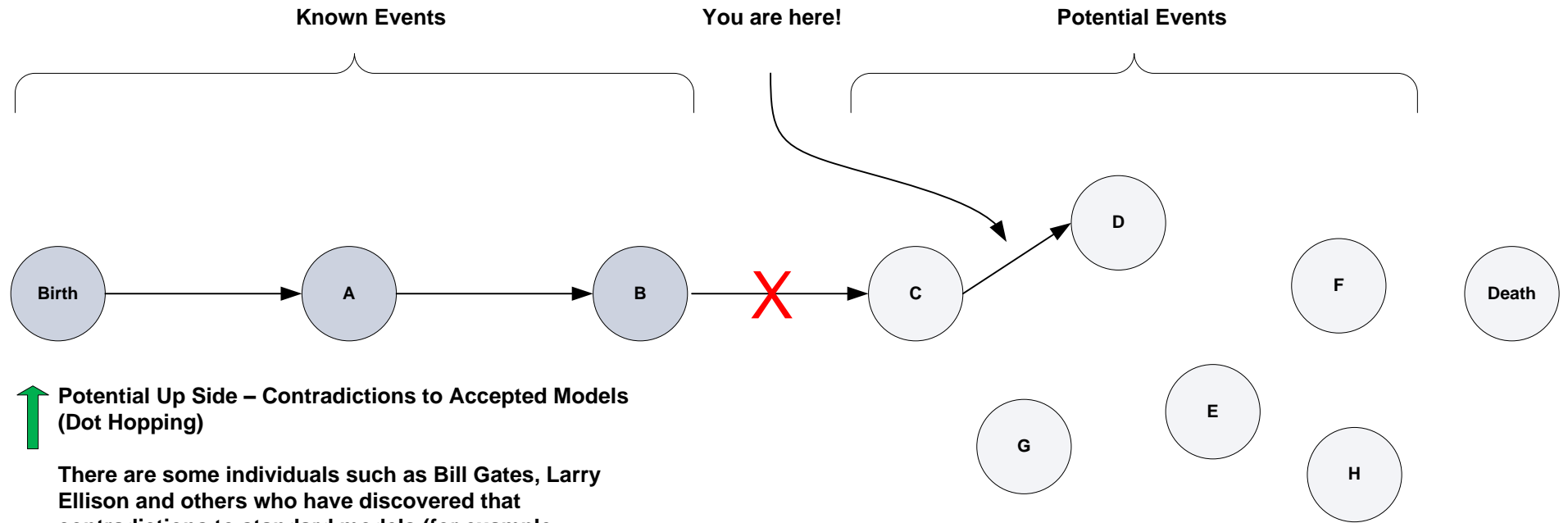
Other Models To Consider
(Click on reference for details):

Kübler-Ross - Stages of Grief

Lewin - Stages of Change

Kotter - 8 Step Change Model

Skipping a Dot (or attempting to)



↑ Potential Up Side – Contradictions to Accepted Models (Dot Hopping)

There are some individuals such as Bill Gates, Larry Ellison and others who have discovered that contradictions to standard models (for example, automatically obtaining a university degree after high school) actually create positive results that may not have been produced had they followed standard models as recommended by others.

For this reason, behavior that is in contradiction to standard models are not a guarantee of failure providing that the correct human attributes, intentions, execution, external events and other context are in alignment for success.

The risk is higher in such scenarios although the reward and potential impact may be higher also if executed properly and the correct set of external influences and events are present.

This also goes to show that how others define the “dots that matter” may not be an accurate understanding of the reality for a specific person’s Life and context although one must be careful when deviating from models that work in most situations.

↓ Potential Down Side

If you skip process B-C, the necessary information to prepare you to experience C-D (by graduating from point C) is missing, thereby:

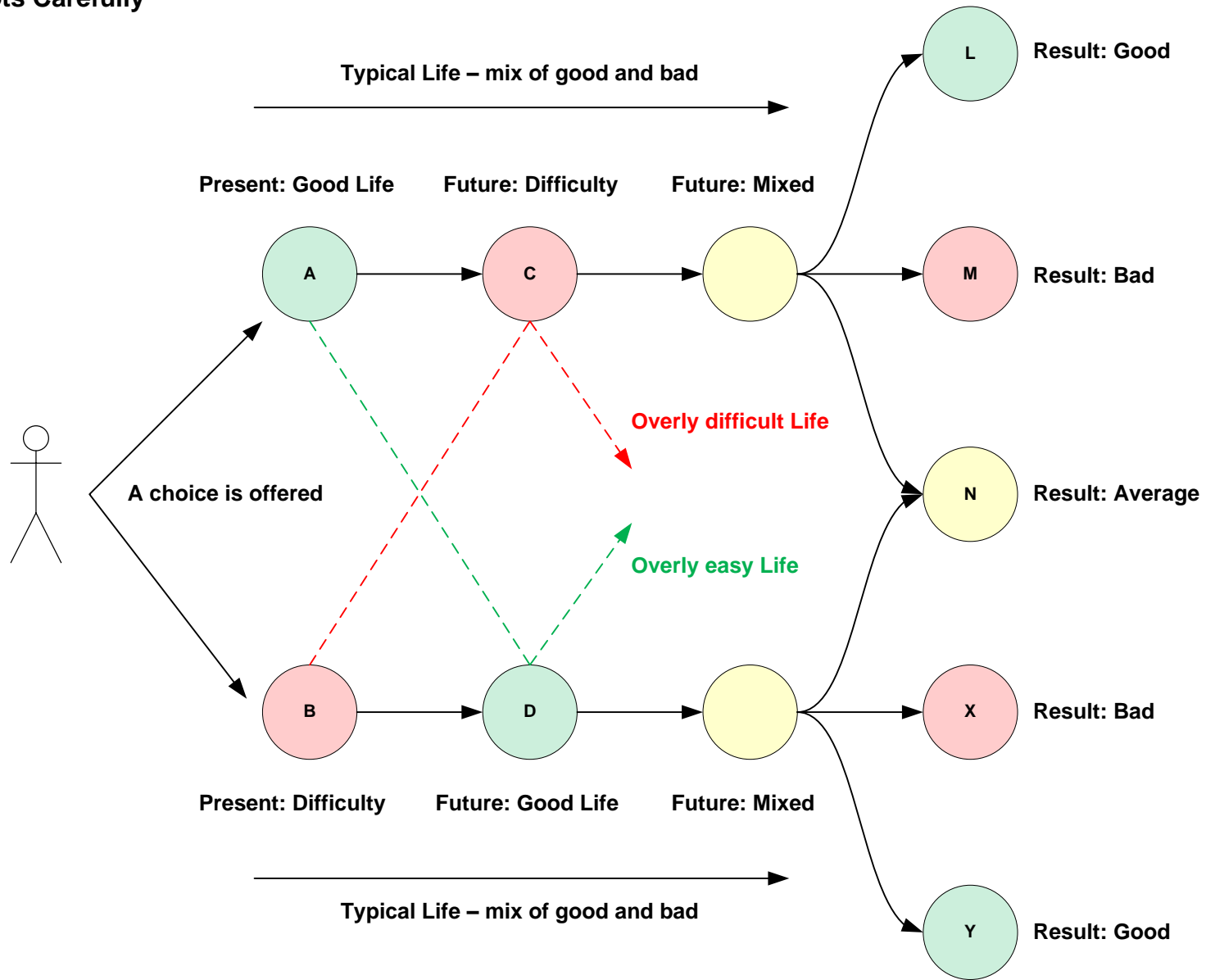
- Creating excessive time / energy spent on point C-D since one must acquire what should have been acquired earlier (B-C) plus what is required for the current event (C-D).
- Possibly expending more time / energy than the sum of the skipped experiences plus the time that would have ordinarily been spent moving from point C to D (Ex: If B-C requires a week and C-D requires a week, skipping may require more than 2 weeks to graduate from point D).
- Potentially creating failure at point D, causing return to previously skipped experience (in this example, B-C) or in worst case, an even earlier experience (for example, A-B). If A-B is a lesson in patience and B-C is skipped (which means I didn’t really understand the lesson from A-B), then failure in C-D forces relearning of A-B, not just revisit of skipped experience B-C. This explains why some people get “stuck” in Life repeating the same experience.
- One may not know how many dots were skipped so potential damage created / energy required to correct are unknown.

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The Paradox of Pain Avoidance

Choosing Dots Carefully



The Intriguing Nature of Choice - The Pain Avoidance Paradox (or Personal Growth Paradox):

If one were living in dot A, would / should they opt to stay on their current Path, not realizing that dot C (a more difficult Life) is before them?

If one were living in dot B, would / should they opt to replace it with dot A because it is easier now, not realizing that it may produce dot C (difficult moments) later while staying on the current path produces dot D (an easier Life)?

Would pain avoidance choices of dot A to dot D *more likely* lead to dot N (an average Life), or dots M / X (a bad result) because the pain avoidance model also produced a Life of diminished learning / growth / opportunity?

Would pain acceptance choices of dot B to dot C *more likely* lead to dot N (an average Life), or dots L / Y (a good result) because the pain acceptance model also produced a Life of increased learning / growth / opportunity?

What is the appropriate balance of pain acceptance (growth) and the "good Life" (recharge / harvest), where too much of the former exhausts a person and too much of the latter delays / prevents personal growth?

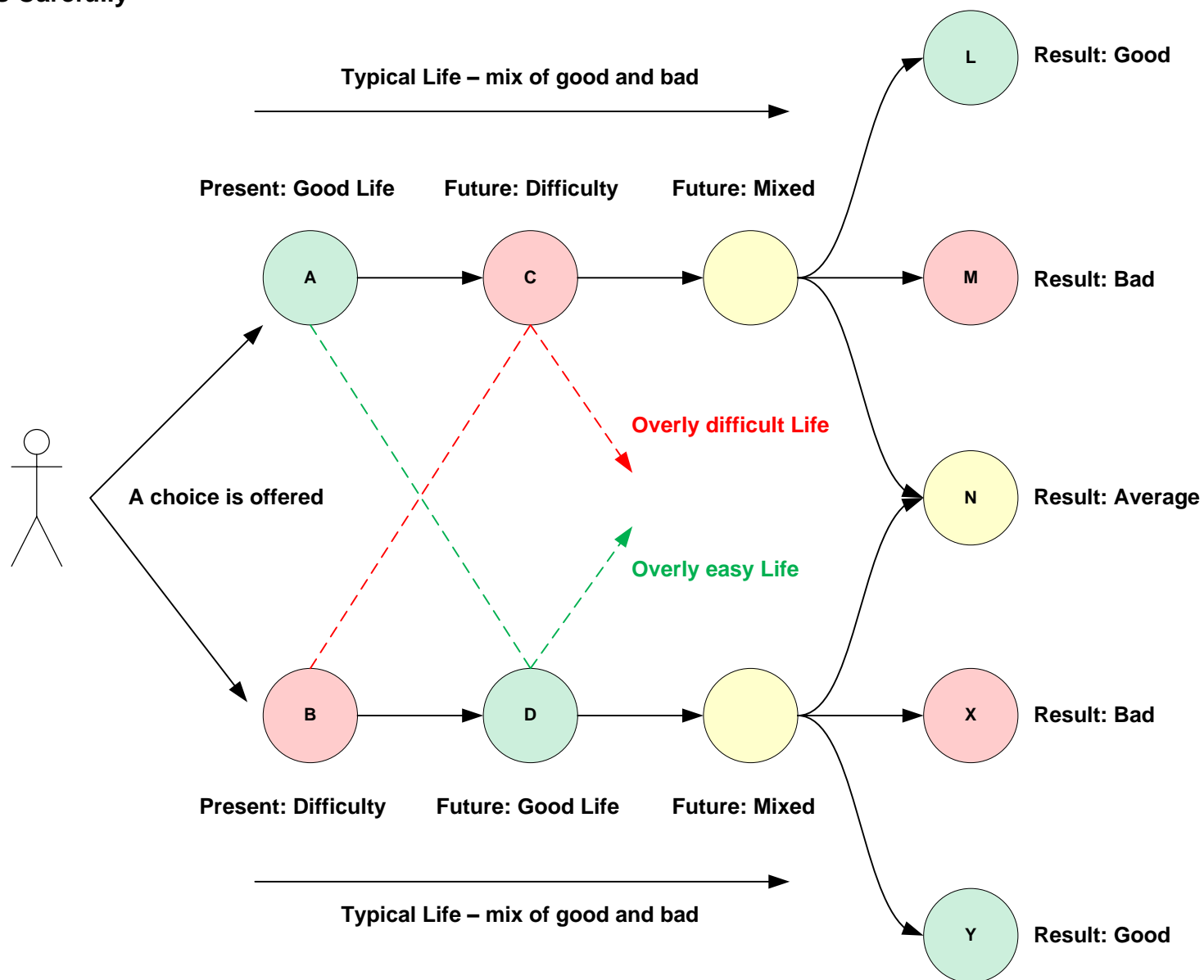
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The Paradox of Pain Avoidance

Choosing Dots Carefully



The Paradox: If we knew of pain in our present or future and could / would always opt out of it in favor of a perceived easier Life at present, would we automatically (potentially) condemn ourselves to a final result that is mediocre / painful while potentially missing Life moments of incredible opportunity, beauty or potential

.... accepting that the level of pain that one experiences can either grow someone or destroy them, depending on the frequency, intensity, duration and context of the event while excessive levels of “the easy Life” may negate the opportunity to be forced to acquire new skills / opportunities (with the exception of rare, super-self-motivated individuals).

Any lesson that might be derived from a negative experience is also heavily dependent upon a person’s willingness / openness to learn, the context and timing of the event and the person’s reserves in the areas of time, energy, money and other resources.

The paradox excludes those who, because of personal issues, intentionally choose self-sabotaging or painful events throughout their Life. Such people will likely not produce a positive result in their Life when they consistently choose self-damaging events / situations.

Morbid Super Paradox: Should we be grateful (or very grateful) for difficult periods in our Life if they are ultimately producing opportunities for a greater Life later no matter how difficult the periods are at present?

To what level should such gratitude apply, accepting that we may only *really* know about potentially positive results much later in our Life (or it will become known to others after we have left)? Are some levels of difficulty simply unacceptable, given price paid for reward received?

Why?

How do we know?

Will we ever know?

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**Personal Motivators
(50,000 ft level)**

Sometimes we are self-motivated, other times external events create a necessary motivation.

At different times, the individuals choose between “should” and “must” for specific context, thus varying the potential for success or failure if chosen poorly for the context.

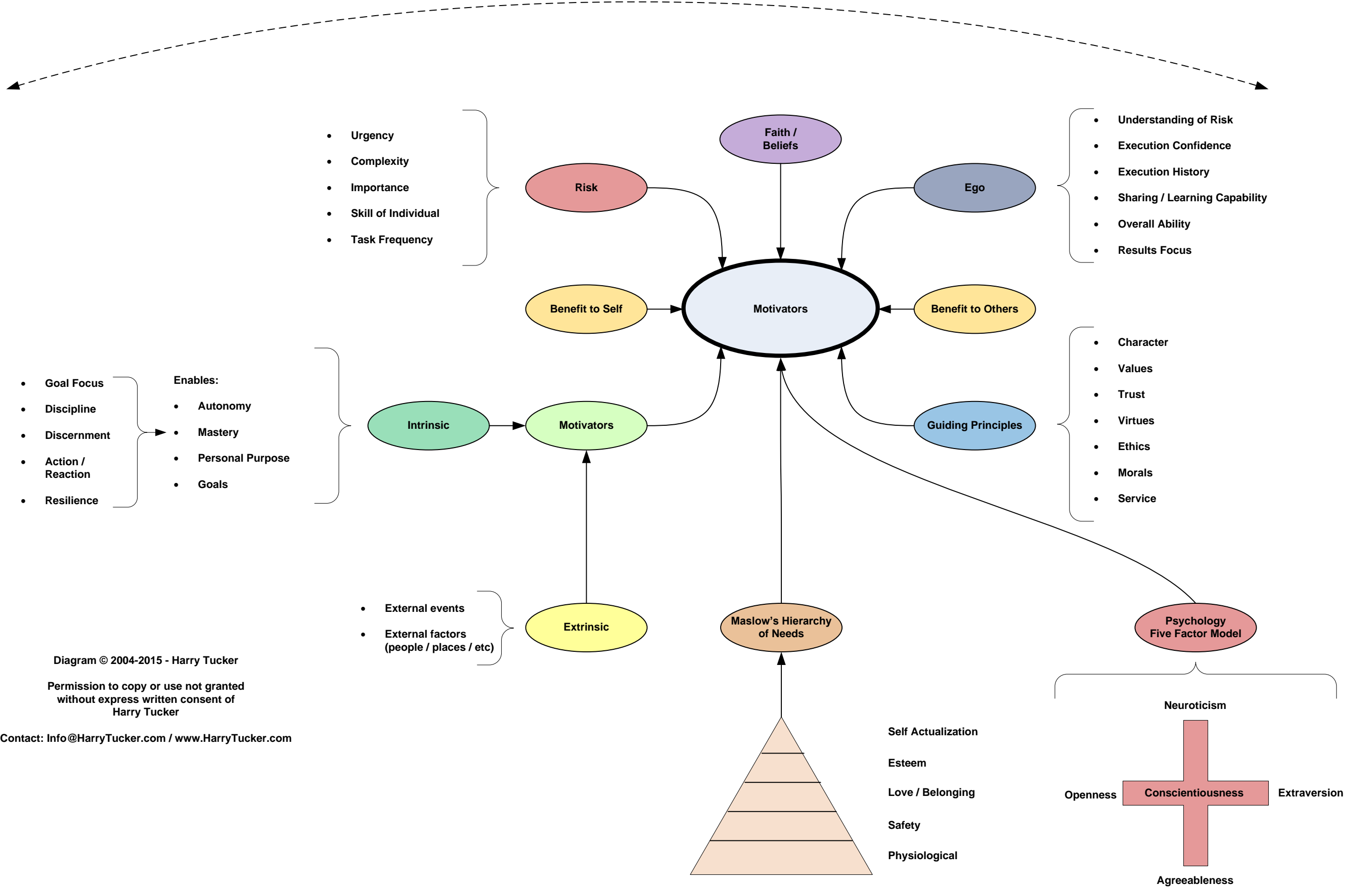


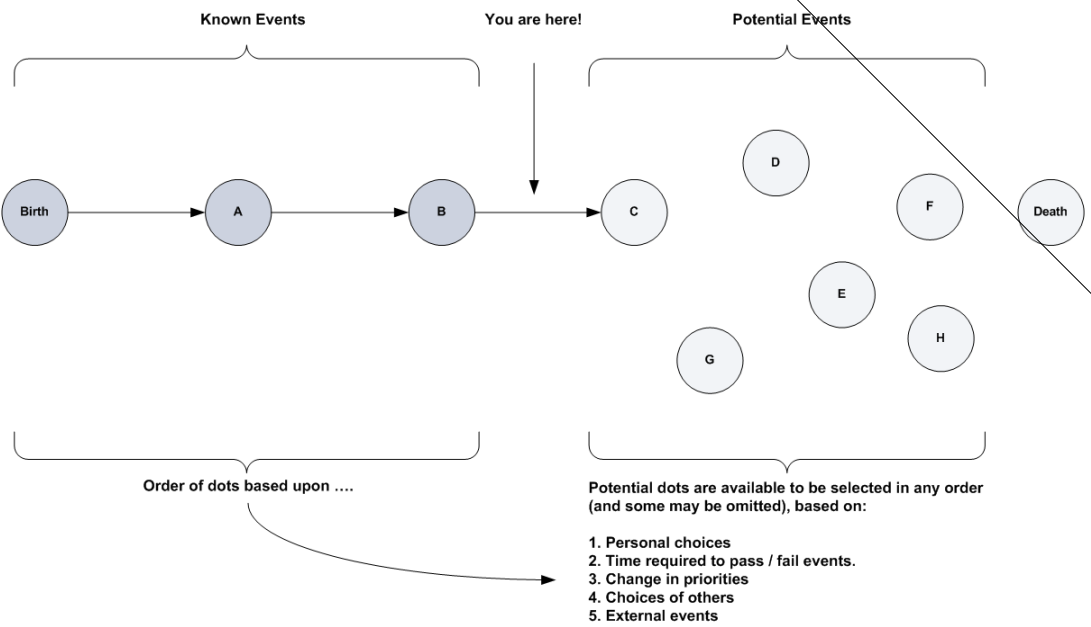
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The dot that is selected next can be predicted using models

Life – A Sequence of Dots

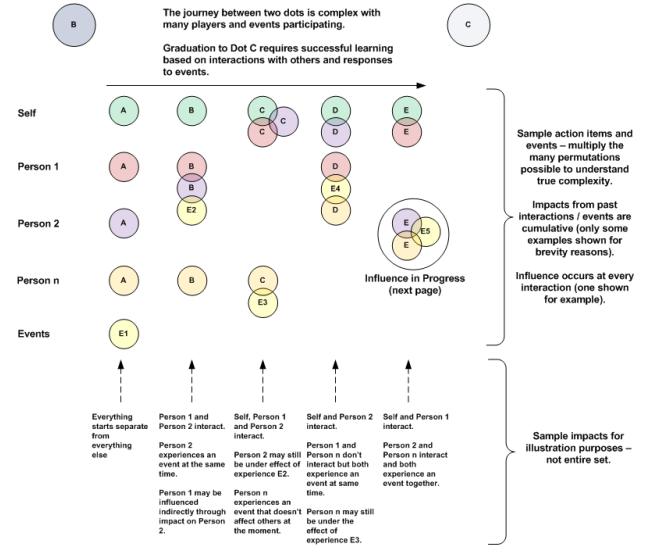


.... as can results of events / interactions but only SOME events or interaction introductions can be predicted (most cannot).

Since prediction of such events (and prediction of their future in general) is outside the ability / capability / interest of most people for a variety of valid / invalid reasons, the one thing that is within someone's control is how they respond to the events that take place between two dots and what actions they take in response to those events.

In other words, the future they create is commensurate more with the responses and actions taken and less in what happened to motivate the responses and actions.

The Detailed Process of Graduating to the Next Dot



This doesn't simplify Life but it does

simplify understanding of its complexity personally and professionally and may provide insight when warnings are present.

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Does a proactive Life lived on purpose, with greater discernment and a sense of proactivity regarding dot selection and with a more intelligent response to dots (whether selected by someone or selected for someone), assure someone of a better quality of Life overall?

Should we somehow be grateful for difficult dots, acknowledging that our greatest personal growth often occurs during those difficult times and that we often only see benefits long after the difficulty has passed.

Can someone be trained / taught / guided to live a more proactive Life using measurable outcome-focused models instead of “feel-good” approaches?

Does it matter?

Is it worth exploring?

Why?

How do we know?