

# Cultivate: Serenity



"God grant me the **SERENITY**  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
the **COURAGE** to change the things I can,  
and the **WISDOM** to know the difference"

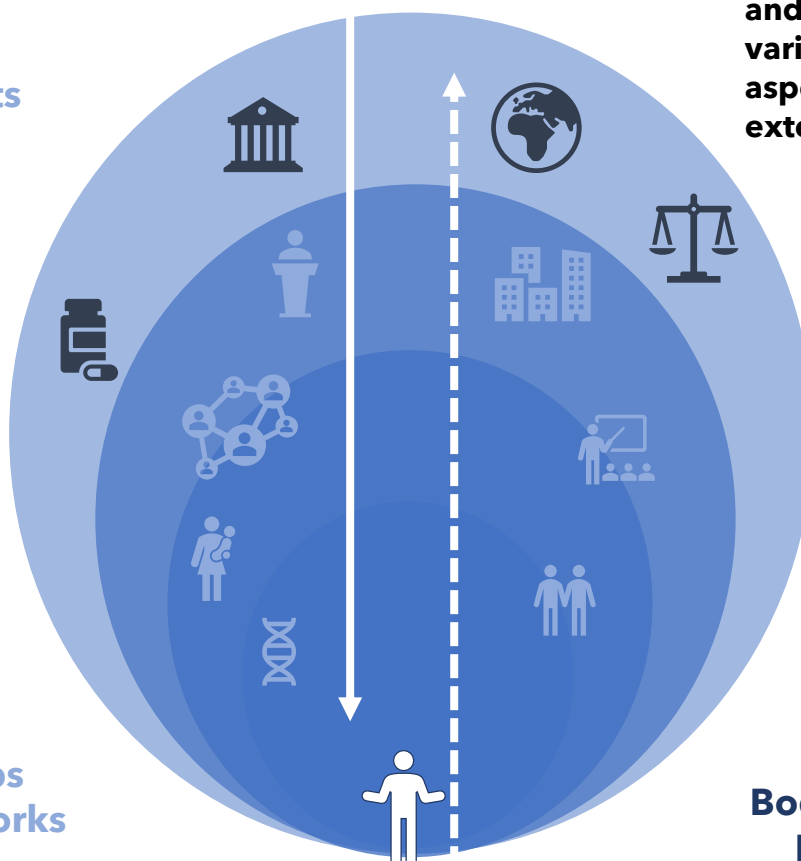
The serenity prayer, originally written by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr is a widely popular quote made famous in psychological therapy circles by Marsha Linehan and previously Alcoholics Anonymous.

## The sphere of influence

In any situation there will be a sliding scale of aspects which are within our influence and aspects which are outside our influence. Another way of understanding this is that we can influence and be influenced by the world around us at various levels. It is important to note that this influence is not set in stone and can change dependent on time and the situation (e.g. not being able to reach the cookie jar on the counter age six, to being able to go out and buy your own cookies age 16).

## Spheres of influence

**EXTERNAL**  
World events  
Spirituality  
Money  
The law  
Politics  
Power  
Location  
Culture  
Race  
Ability  
Gender  
Sexuality  
Education  
Work  
Family  
Relationships  
Social networks  
Inheritance



**Our internal worlds are influenced by and influence various aspects of our external world**

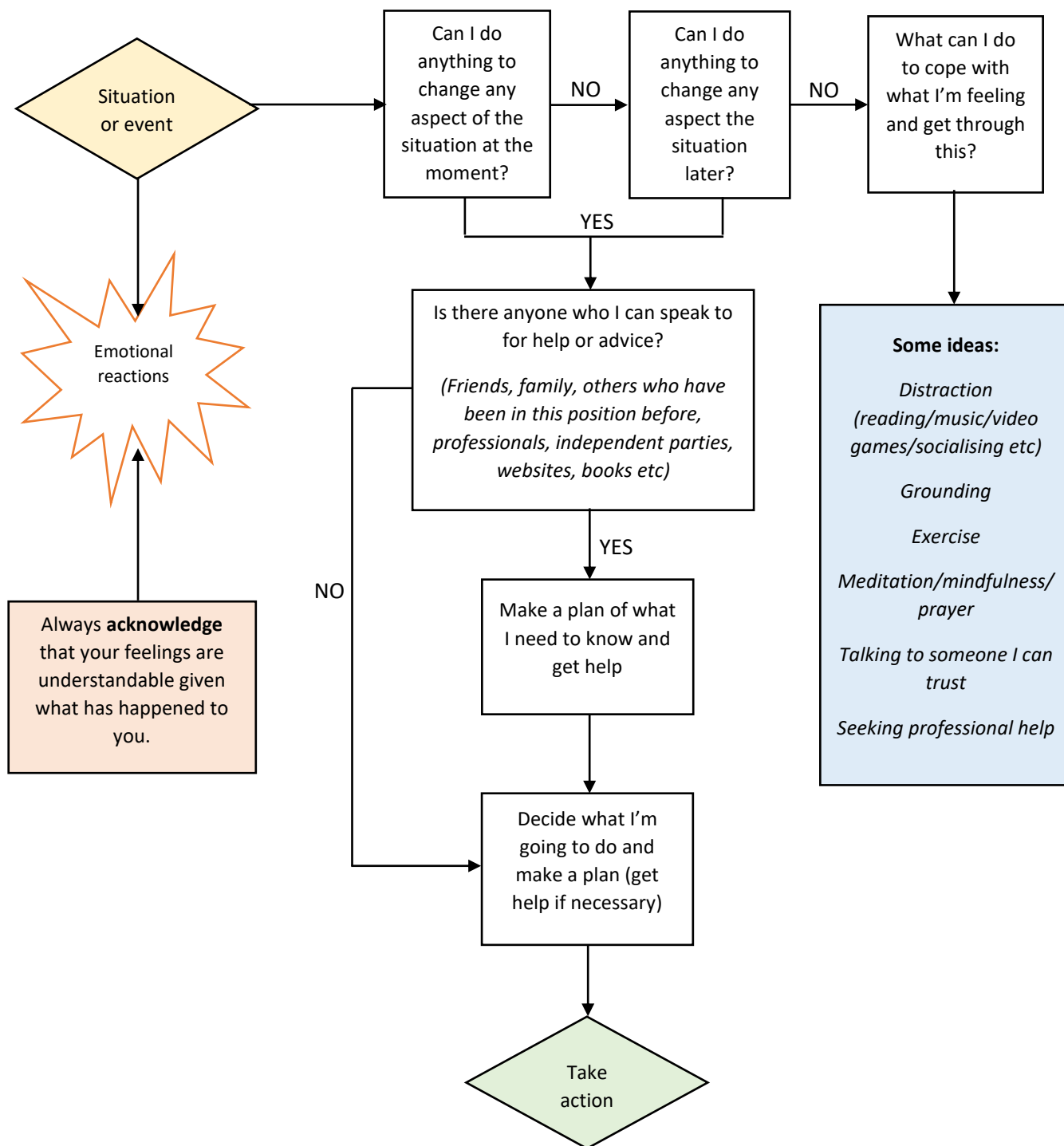
**Beliefs  
Choices  
Thoughts  
Reactions  
Emotions  
Bodily states  
INTERNAL**

## Serenity Prayer as a rule of thumb

The serenity prayer can be used as a rule of thumb to help us cope in difficult situations or with painful emotions. The flow chart on the next page allows you to ask yourself questions which can help guide you in choosing kinder, more skilful and effective ways to respond to situations that arise.

**Always remember:** Your feelings in response to any difficult situation are understandable given what has happened to you. This decision tree is not about dismissing those feelings, but acknowledging them and at the same time allowing you to make choices to move you closer to where you want to be.

## Decision tree for Serenity Prayer rule of thumb



### Notes