

Executive Functions: Teaching the Skills to Get Things Done

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Objectives

- What are **executive functioning skills** and how are they needed for daily activities?
- How do our individual, unique **strengths** help us manage day-to-day executive function challenges?
- What are some **strategies** for planning, prioritization, time management, self-regulation, and getting things done.



TIME CHECK

What are Executive Functions?



The single greatest executive functioning challenge...



Can't pay attention

Scatterbrained

Procrastinator

Think before you speak!

Sound familiar?

Forgetful

Always late

Irresponsible

Never finishes anything

Definition

*“The executive functions are a set of processes that all have to do with **managing oneself** and **one’s resources** in order to **achieve a goal**.”*

(Cooper-Kahn & Dietzel, 2008.)

Executive Functions are the skills it takes to **get things done.**

Mental Skills

- Planning
- Organization
- Time management
- Task initiation
- Sustained Attention
- Goal-directed persistence
- Working memory
- Metacognition

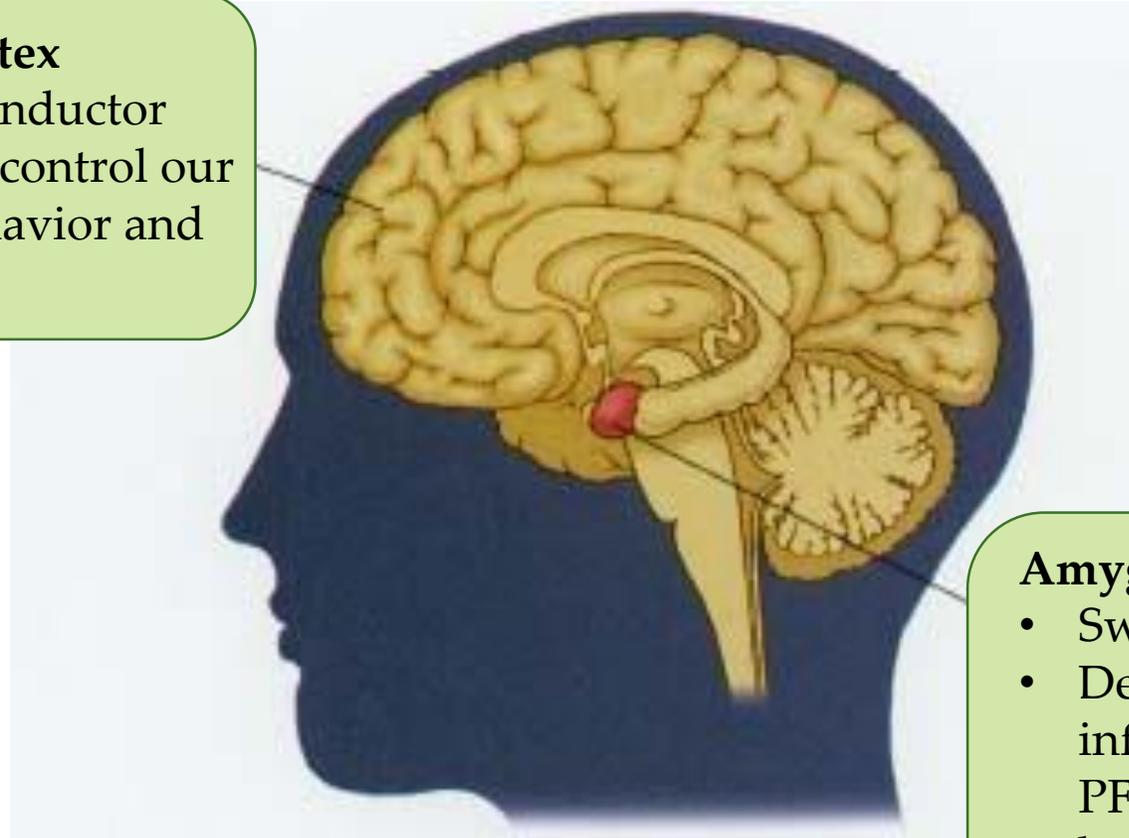
Emotional Skills

- Impulse control
- Emotional control
- Flexibility

The Amazing Brain

Pre-Frontal Cortex

- Orchestra Conductor
- Allows us to control our thinking, behavior and emotions



Amygdala

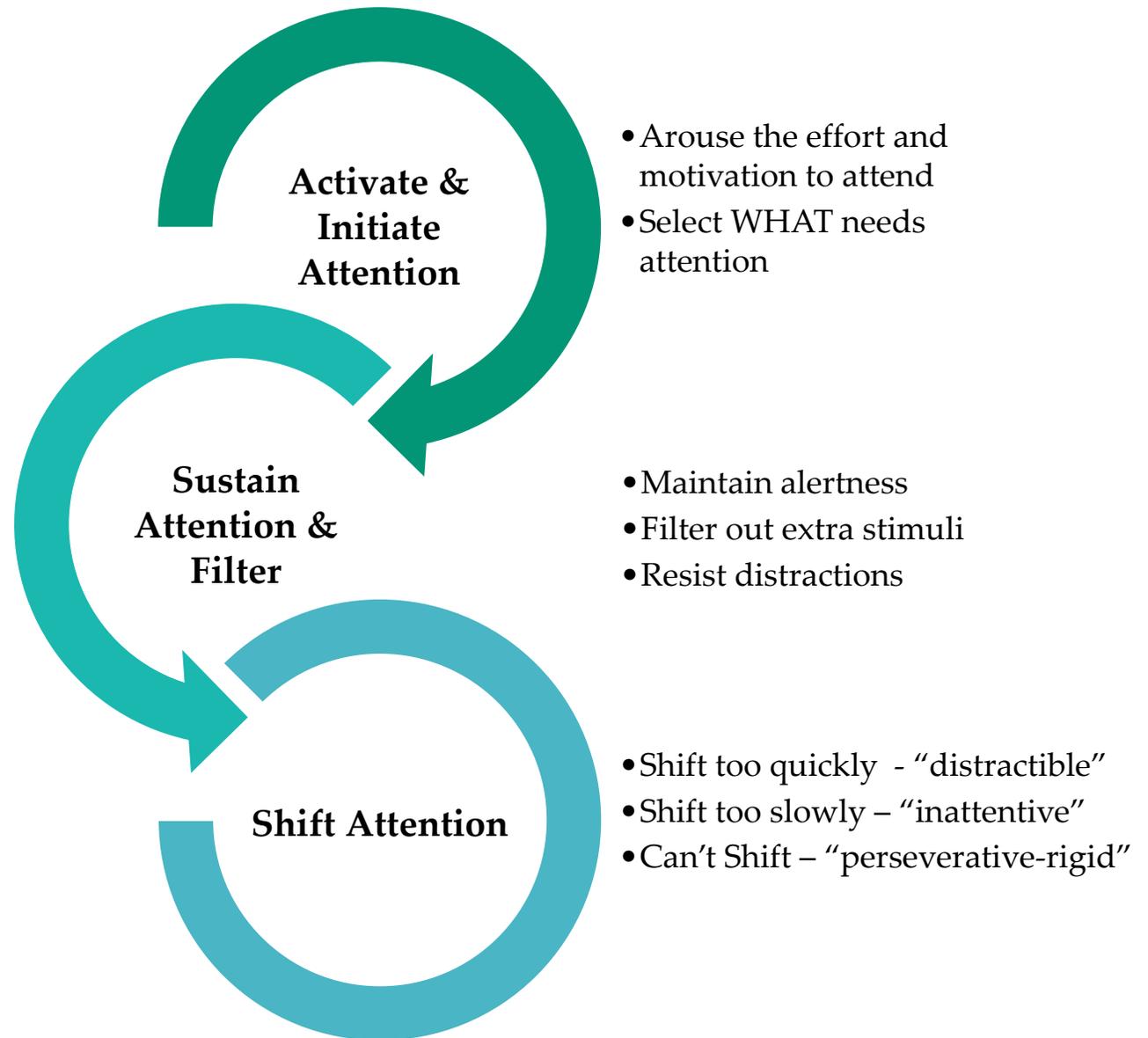
- Switching Station
- Determines if incoming information will go to PFC or lower reactive brain for “fight/flight/freeze”

Emotional Control Skills

Self-Regulation is a balance between
behavioral and **cognitive**
INHIBITION and INITIATION



Focus & Attention Skills



Organization Skills

Materials

Clothes,
household or
work items

Homework
materials

Tracking
paperwork

Ideas

Verbalizing
thoughts

Brainstorming

Problem
Solving

Schedule

Calendar
checking

Breaking down
and completing
tasks

Using a
planner

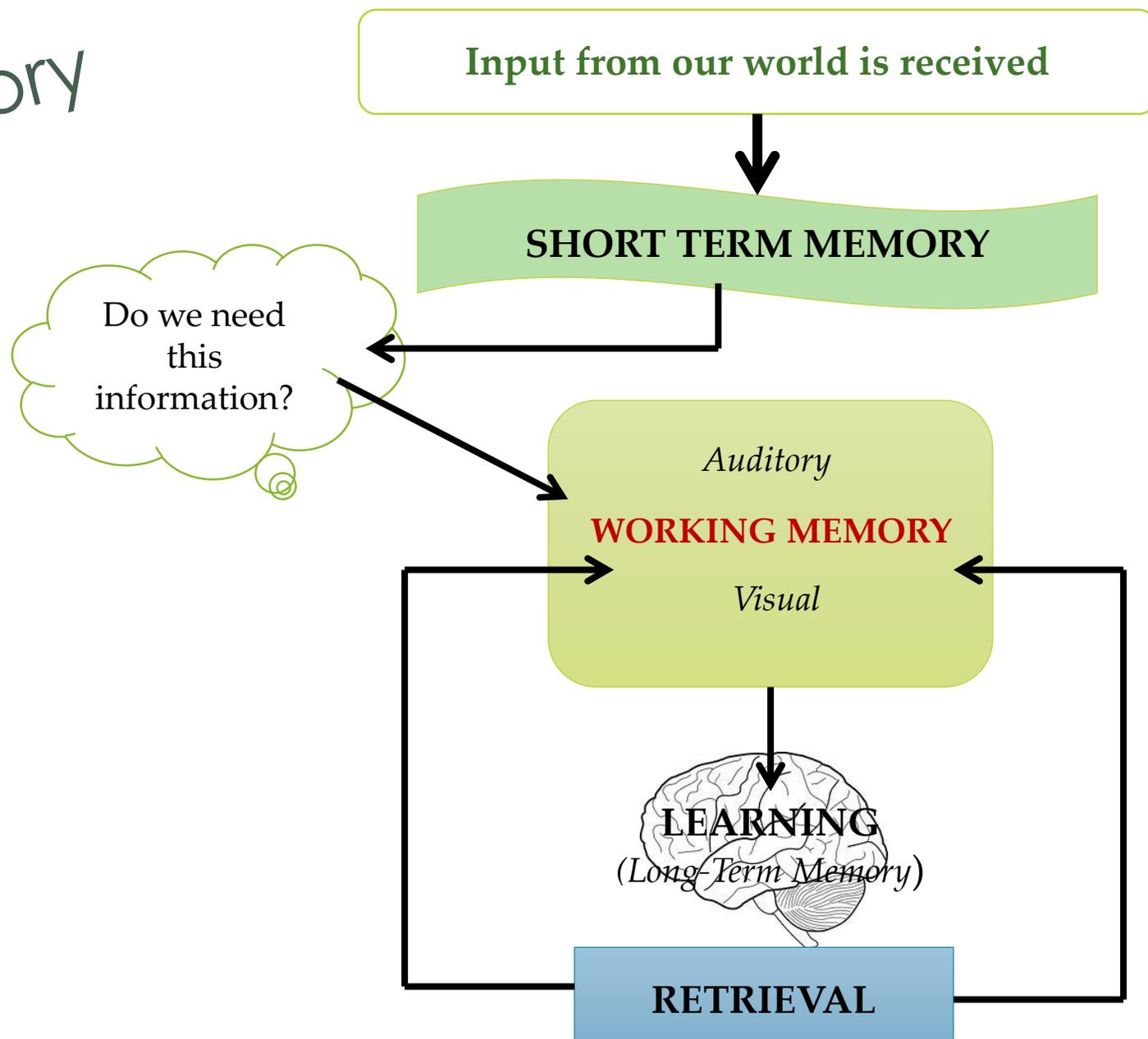
Time

Feel the
passing of
time

Prioritizing

Underatanding
time as a
volume

Memory

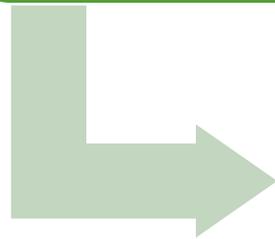


Planning Skills

**Begin
with
the
END!**

End
Result

- Visualize the end product



Steps

- Which **steps** are required to get to create the end product, in what **sequence**, and in how much **time**?



Prep

- What resources needed to carry out steps?

Executive Functions in Daily Life





TIME CHECK

**Tools for
Focus
and
Attention**



A Model from Sports

- **Cook's Model of Concentration:** a four-step routine that promotes systematic and thorough concentration
- Minimizes extraneous mental interference
- Helps athletes focus their concentration to improve performance

Focusing with Funnel Vision[©]



See it

NOTICE EVERYTHING in your funnel: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and all sensations.

Think it

THINK ABOUT the **ONE THING** that is important and requires your focus. Think of the strategies or steps to help you do it.

Feel it

FEEL what it is like to be successful doing this one important thing you are focused on.

Hold it

HOLD on to your picture of the end. Find a way to keep it in your mind so you can remember what you are doing.

**Do
it!**

DO this **ONE THING. DO IT NOW.**
Keep doing it until it is finished.



TIME CHECK

Tools for Planning



Plan backwards

“Reverse Planning” or “Backward Design”

- Start with the end in mind.
 - What will it look like when I’m finished? Picture/draw it!
- Break down steps and estimate time.
 - What steps do I need to take to reach my end picture?
 - In what order do I need to take the steps?
 - How long will each step take?
- Prepare to take action.
 - Who or what do I need to complete the steps?

Planning

Get Ready, Do, Done!

3. GET READY What and who do I need to do the task?	2. DO What steps do I need to take to be done? How long will each step take?	1.DONE Do a "Future Sketch." What will it look like when I am DONE?
	Steps: Time:	
4. Prepare your space. Gather needed materials and supplies. Consult with people who may help.	5. Set up "Working Clock." Start steps and adjust time if needed. Finish all the steps.	6. Know when to STOP. Close out the task: ALL DONE Review: What worked? Worked didn't work?

Plan Backwards

3. GET READY What and who do I need to do the task?	2. DO What steps do I need to take to be done? How long will each step take?	1. DONE Do a "Future Sketch." What will it look like when I am DONE?
<p>✓ <u>all ingredients</u> ✓</p> <p>✓ measuring</p> <p>✓ cup & spoons</p> <p>✓ knife</p> <p>rolling pin</p> <p>cookie sheet</p> <p>oven</p> <p>bag / Bowl</p>	<p>Steps: Time:</p> <p>get ingredients</p> <p>measure</p> <p>mix it up</p> <p>roll dough flat</p> <p>cut the treats</p> <p>Bake</p> <p>Put in zip lock</p>	 <p>yum</p>
<p>✓ <u>DOG!</u> 4.</p> <p>Prepare your space. Gather needed materials and supplies. Consult with people who may help.</p>	<p>5.</p> <p>Set up "Working Clock." Start steps and adjust time if needed. Finish all the steps.</p>	<p>6.</p> <p>Know when to STOP. Close out the task: ALL DONE Review: What worked? Worked didn't work?</p>

WORK FORWARDS

Foresight, Rehearsal, Self-Talk

- **Practice imagining the future**
 - What the setting looks like
 - What I look like in that setting
 - How I move through a task in that setting
 - Predict emotional state in the future setting



Foresight, Rehearsal, Self-Talk

• Make Concrete

- Use photos of setting, items, and student
- Draw movements needed in setting



Foresight, Rehearsal, Self-Talk

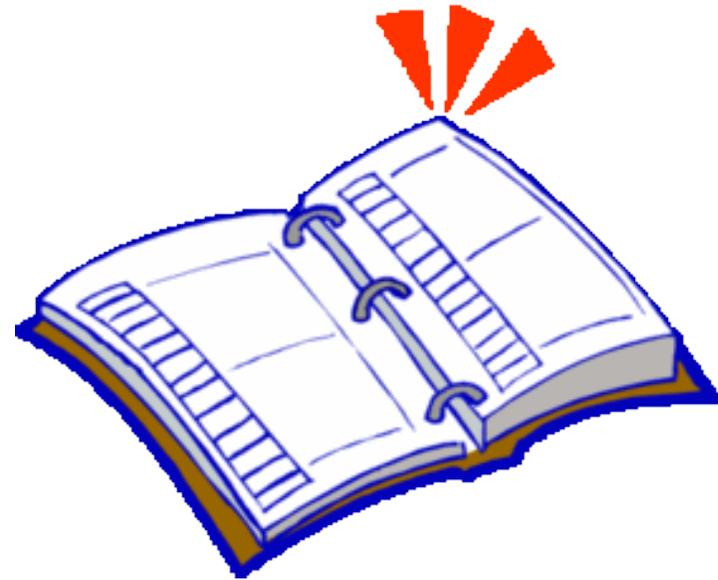
- **Make Concrete**

- Use photos or visuals for steps in a task



Using Planners

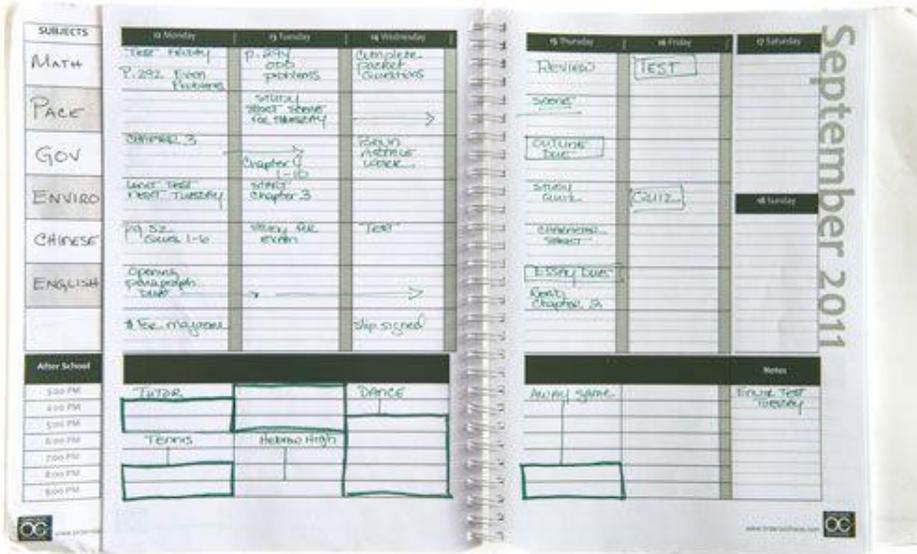
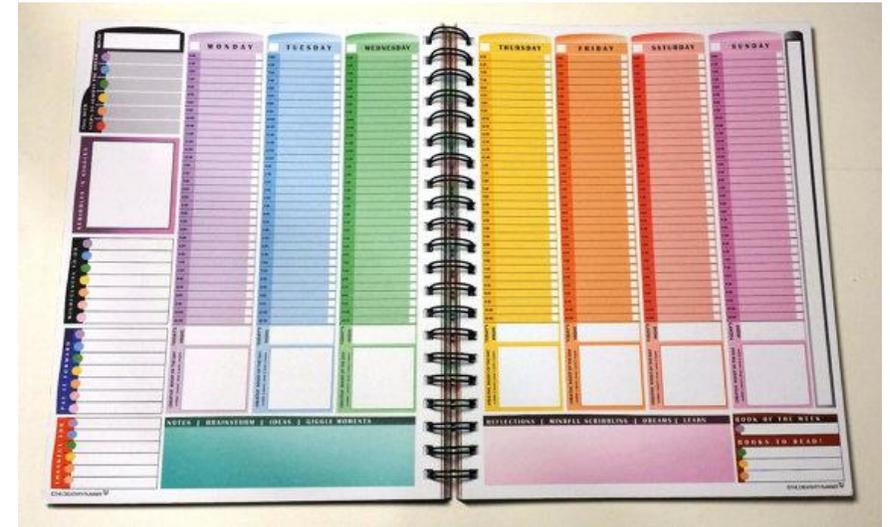
- What works BEST for YOU?
 - Size?
 - Purpose?
 - Electronic or hard copy?



The Creativity Planner

The PURPLE O!

www.etsy.com/shop/ThePurpleO



The Academic Planner: A Tool for Time Management

Order out of Chaos

www.orderoochaos.com



The Passion Planner

www.passionplanner.com

Free printable pages!!



TIME CHECK

Tools for Time Management



Clocks and Timers

- Use to help develop accuracy in estimation.
- Use for “time experiments.” No stress or pressure!
- Avoid digital clocks/timers if accurate time estimation is difficult; instead use ones that show time as a quantity or volume (analog clocks, egg timers, Time-Timers, etc.)

“Working Clock”

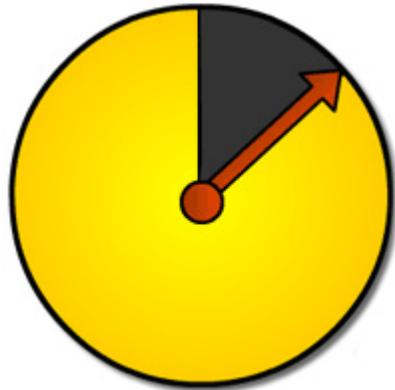
- Glass front (for dry erase)
- metal frame (for magnets)
- IKEA “PUGG” clock \$12.99



Timers



online-stopwatch.com



www.timetimer.com

www.watchminder3.com



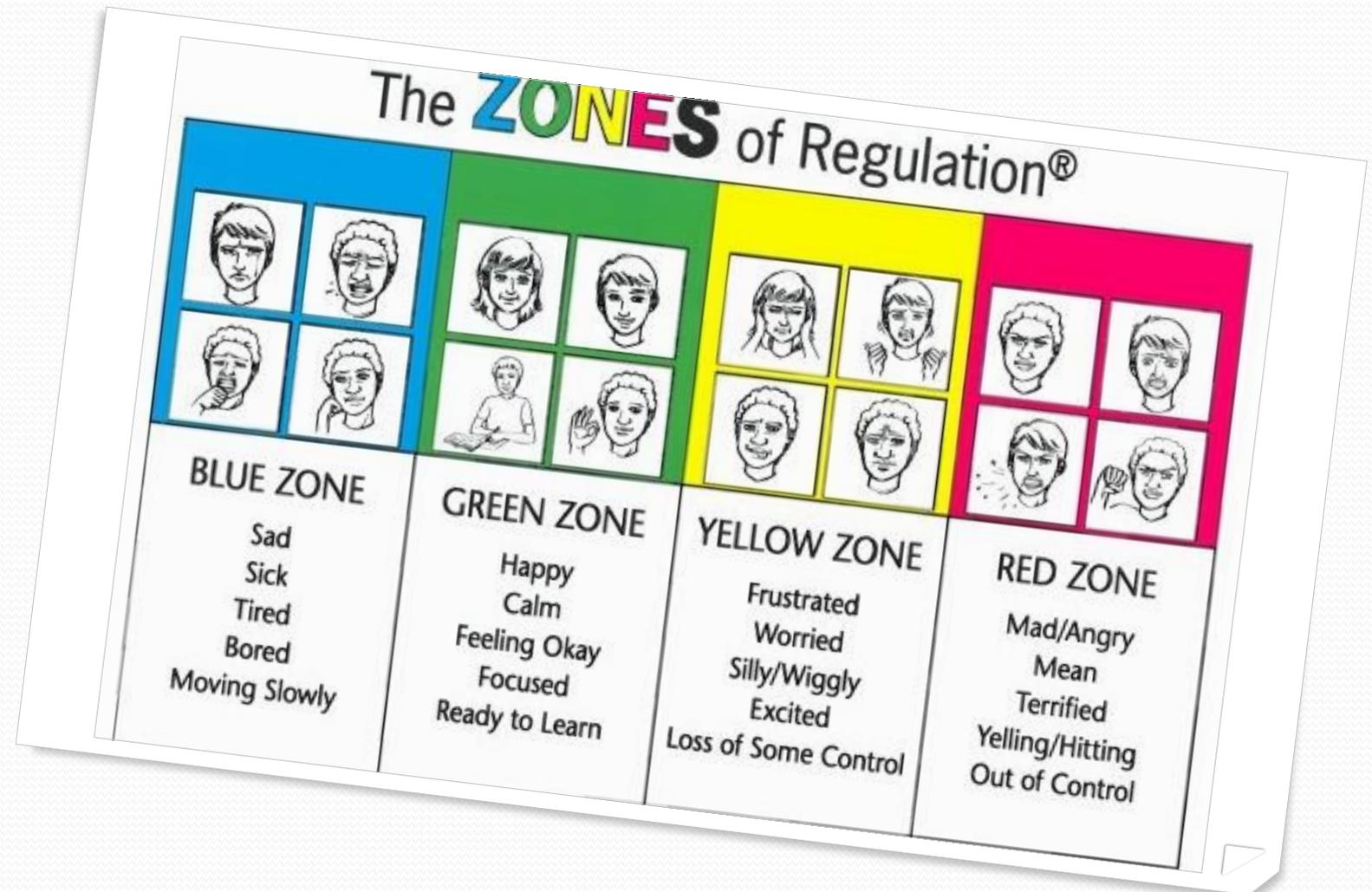


TIME CHECK

Tools for Self-Regulation



The Zones of Regulation



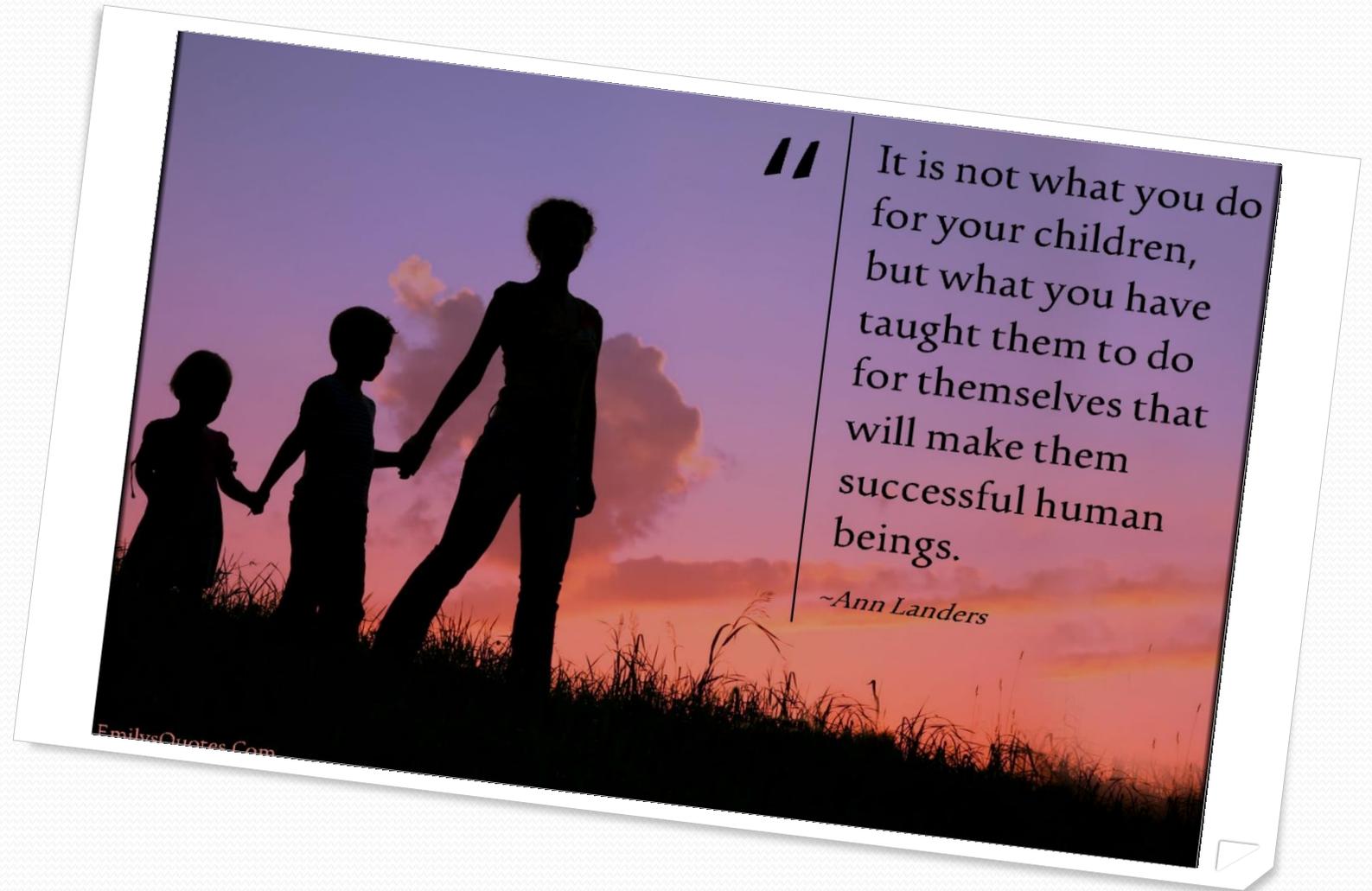


TIME CHECK

Q & A



Final thoughts...



“ It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings.

~Ann Landers

EmilysQuotes.Com

Resources for Executive Functions

- The CEO of Self: An Executive Functioning Workbook (2014) by Jan Johnston-Tyler MA
- FLIPP the Switch: Strengthen Executive Function Skills (2015) by Sheri Wilkins and Carol Burmeister
- Learning Outside the Lines. (2000) by Johathan Mooney and David Cole
- The Organized Student: Teaching Children the Skills for Success in School And Beyond. (2005) by Donna Goldberg
- The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success: How to Use Your Brain's Executive Skills to Keep Up, Stay Calm, and Get Organized at Work and at Home (2016) by Peg Dawson EdD and Richard Guare PhD

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