

Improving Work-Life Satisfaction

Mikel “Micky” Holcomb

Physics Department, WVU

Mother of 2 kids (Age 5 and 7)

Funded by NSF, DOE, ACS



(Based on materials from a partnership between AWIS & the Elsevier Foundation)

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ADVANCE



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ADVANCE



“Ground Rules” & Housekeeping

- Respect each other
- Silence and put away cellphones
- Maintain confidentiality

“Absorb what is useful, reject what is useless, add what is specifically your own”

Bruce Lee

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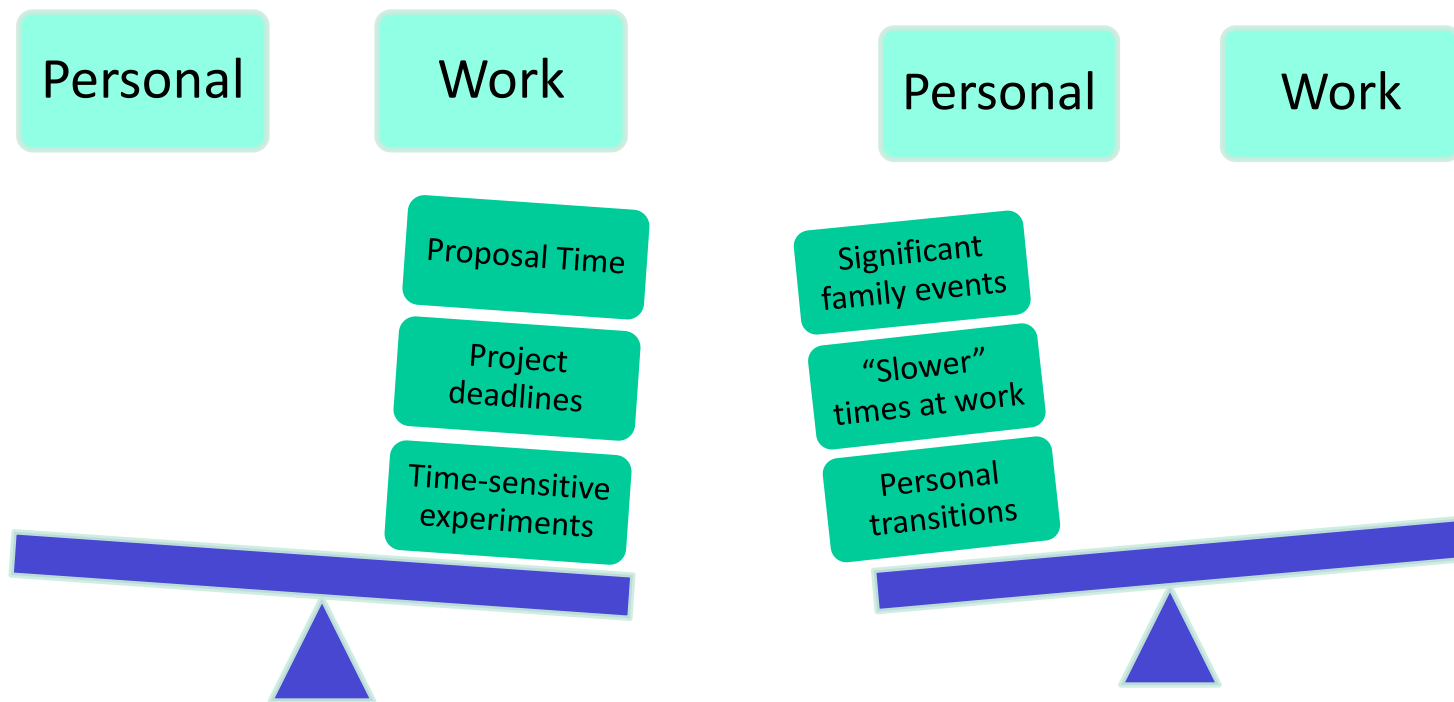
**“What makes
work-life
satisfaction so
challenging?”**

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Work-Life balance goals will fluctuate throughout your life, throughout the year and sometimes throughout the day!



When both hit simultaneously, need coping strategies!

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Defining Satisfaction

It is different for every person.

- Varies over time
- Not just about women
- Not just about children/parents
- Finding time for life outside of work (rafting)
- Tension between demands (teaching vs research)
- Making choices that match your values and priorities (ex. You value teaching, but not rewarded for it OR opposite)

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Work-Life Satisfaction

begins with awareness:

Your situation and the systems
in which you live and work

Resources available to you

Your strengths and weaknesses

Your values/priorities

Your current level of work-life
satisfaction and
your work-life challenges

What is
satisfaction to
you?

Not always easy to
identify the answer

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EXERCISE:

80th Birthday Tribute

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Participant Debrief

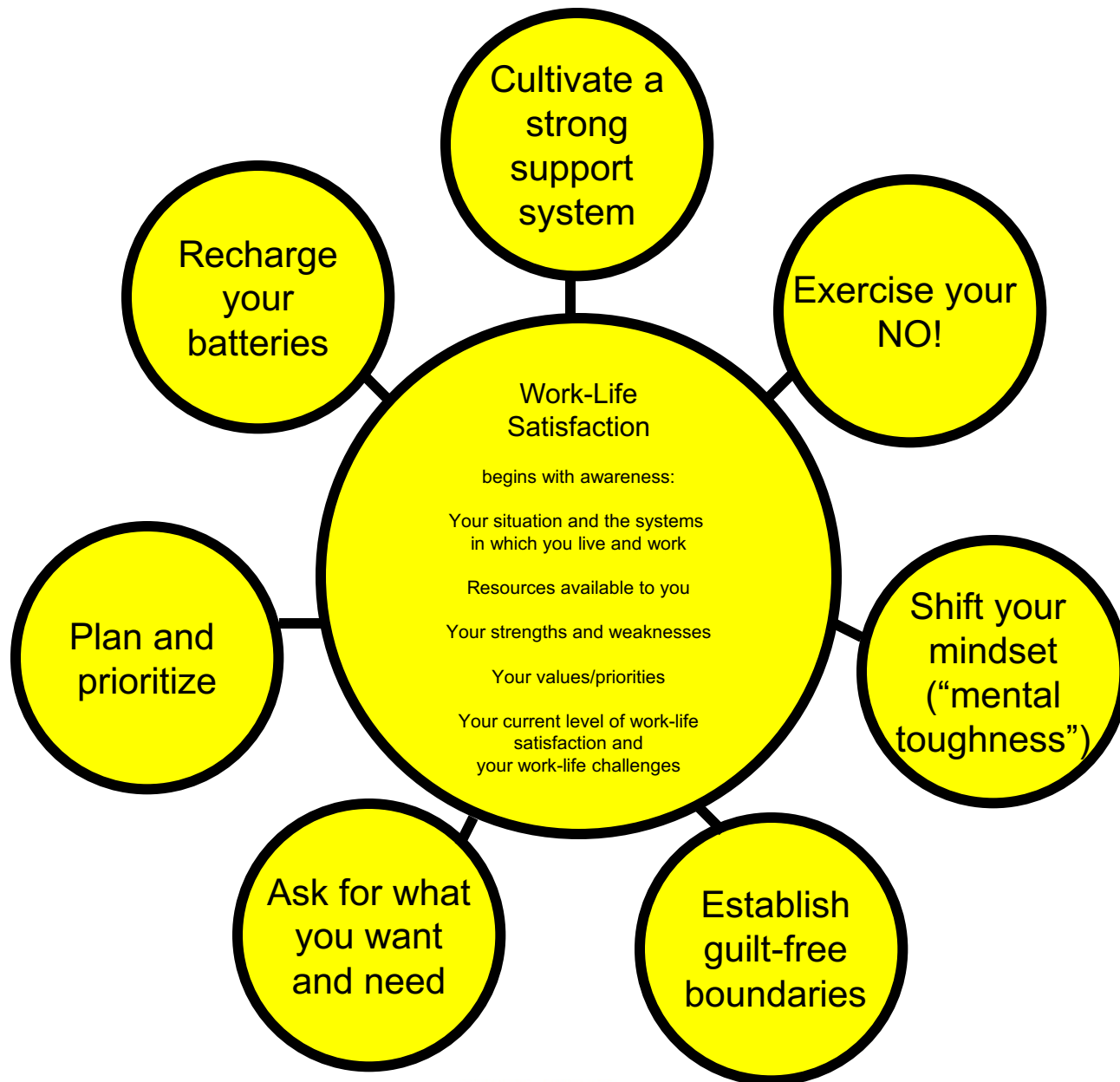
What are the values and priorities that are most meaningful to you, as evidenced by your toast?



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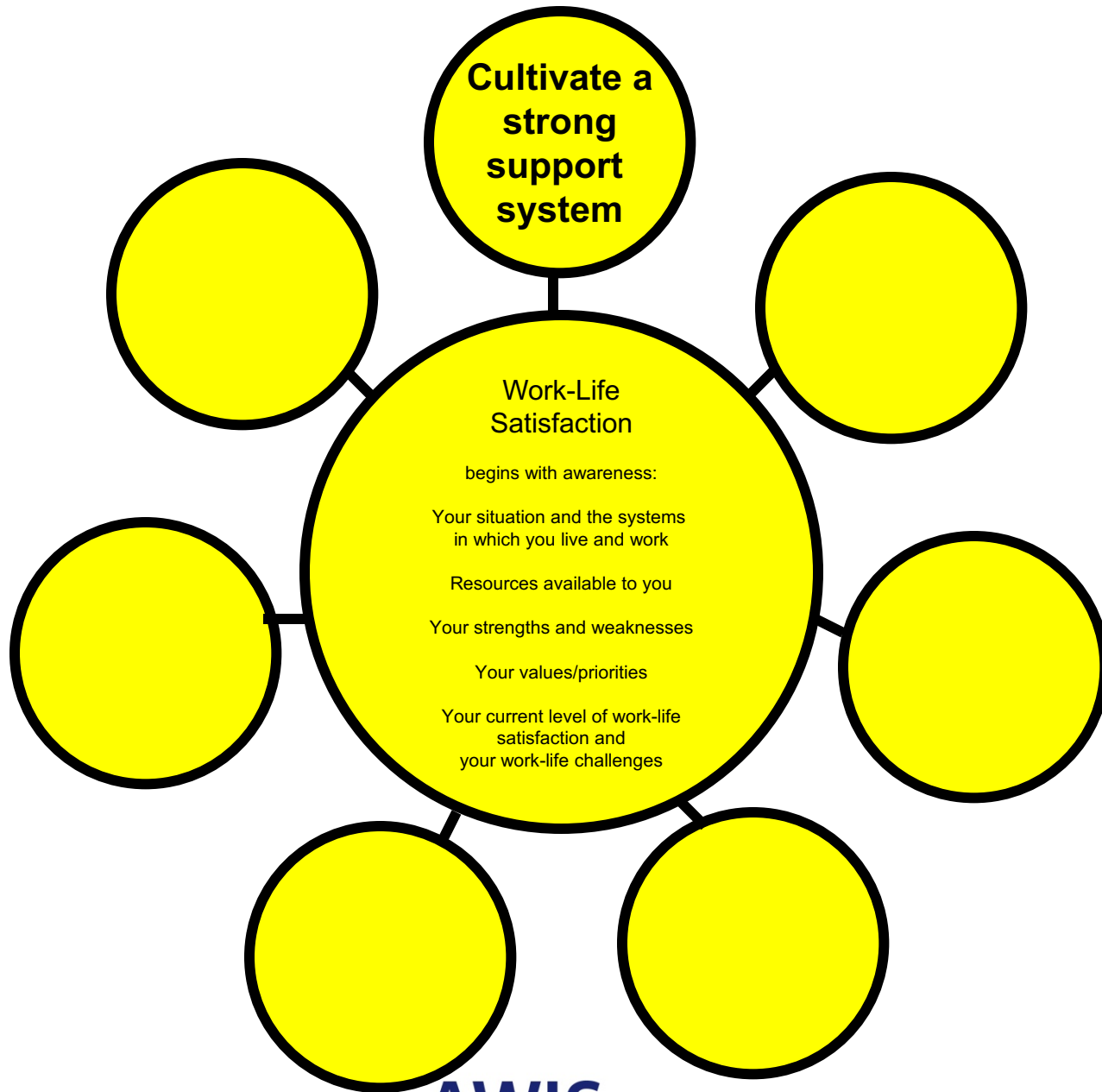
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Who do you ask for advice?

Topics might include:

Classes

Research

Career Planning

Service

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Most People Don't Ask for Help from Enough People!

- **Friends and Family**
- **Online Resources**
- **Housecleaning or Neighborhood Teenagers**
- **Self Analysis**
- **Networking**
- **Mentoring**
- **Peers**



Who are two people you could add to your support system?

What are important qualities in a mentor?



What are important qualities in a mentor?



What are important qualities in a mentee?

The Role of a Mentee

- Seek advice, not a supervisor who directs actions.
- **Synthesize lessons** learned from many mentors – become your own person.
- **Come prepared** (what do you want, strengths, weaknesses)

Example: Public Speaking

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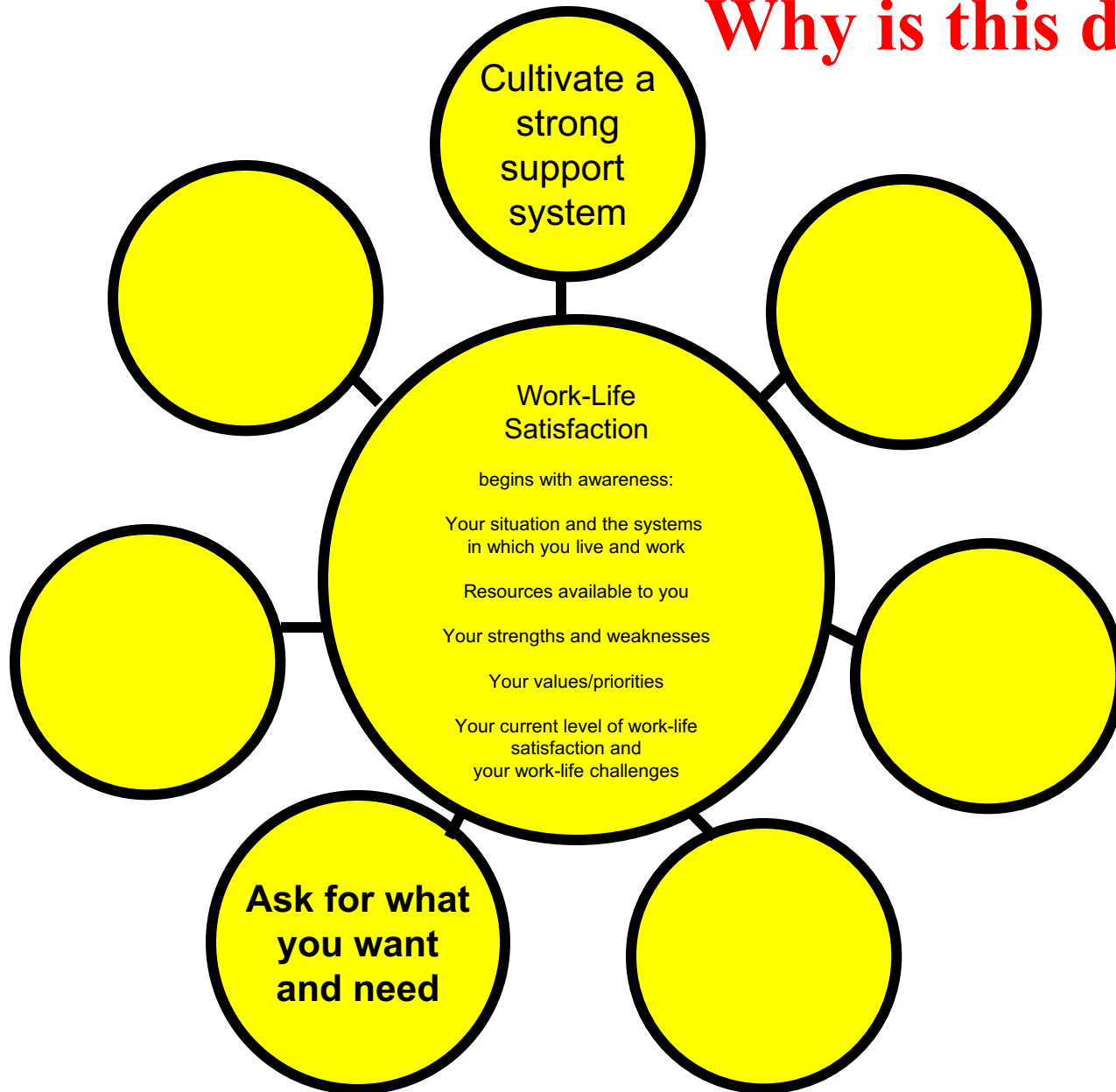
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How do you ask someone to mentor you?

What's the worst they
can say?



Why is this difficult?



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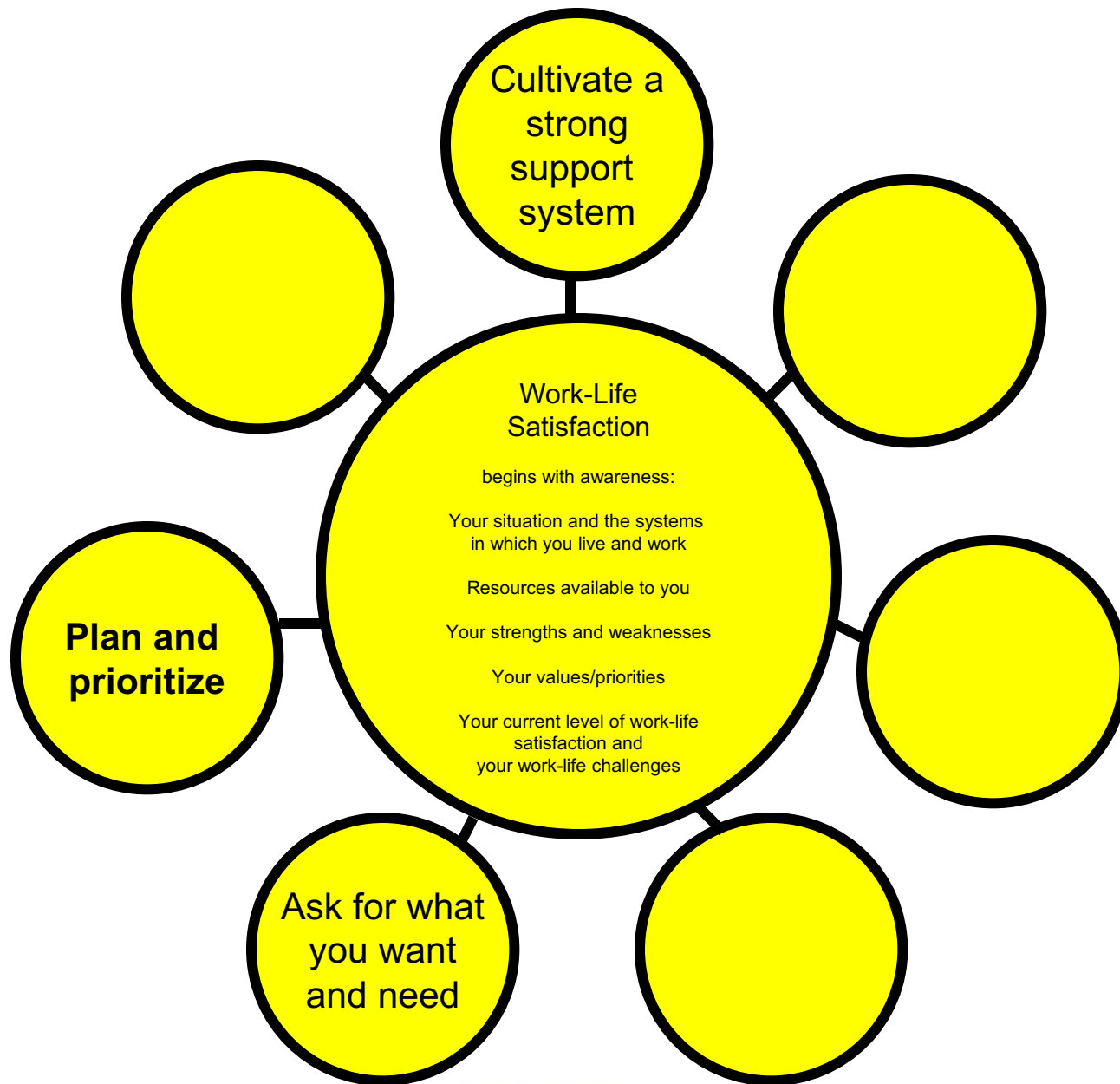
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What You Need: Discussion/Activity

- Has anyone asked for something they need recently? Wish you had?
- Framing is important: If you provide me with this resource, I can
 - These are the great things I will do with that resource
 - How does it benefit the organization: relate mission, strategic plan of university, college, department
 - Deliverables?

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Priorities/Values



Holding our deeply held values and priorities in our consciousness provides a “compass” for making important decisions.

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Your Weekly Planning Meeting

Remember
the goal isn't
PERFECTION

Weekly, review,
reflect,
celebrate
successes and
plan for the
coming week

Determine
what ***must*** be
done each
week and each
day

Should align
with personal
and
professional
priorities and
goals

Choose your
actions based
on your plan

Leave time
open for
unexpected
“urgent and
important”
issues

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Make a Schedule

Does it align with how you are ranked?

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday
<10:30	Proposals	Papers	Papers	Papers	Proposals
10:30-1:00	Class & Prep	Proposals	Class & Prep	Proposals	Class & Prep
1 - 2	Lunch and Email				
2 - 4	Discussions with Research Students and Collaborators				
4 - 5	Meeting	Misc.	Office Hours	Colloquium	Misc.
5 +	Email & Miscellaneous				

The more specific your tasks can be, the better!

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5 Questions to Ask When You Are Considering Saying Yes:

1. Must this be

DONE?

(Who says?)

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5 Questions to Ask When You Are Considering Saying Yes:

2. Must this be done BY ME?

(If not me, then who?)

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Only if it applies to all three

My Interests

My Skills

X

X

Delegate

YES!

Delegate

Delegate

X

X

My Reward

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5 Questions to Ask When You Are Considering Saying Yes:

3. Must this be
done *RIGHT*
NOW?

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5 Questions to Ask When You Are
Considering Saying Yes:

4. Must this be
done THIS WAY?

(Why?)

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5 Questions to Ask When You Are Considering Saying Yes:

5. If I say yes to this, what am I saying no to?

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Say **NO** by saying **YES**:

“Here’s what I can do...”

from Judy Feld, AWIS coach

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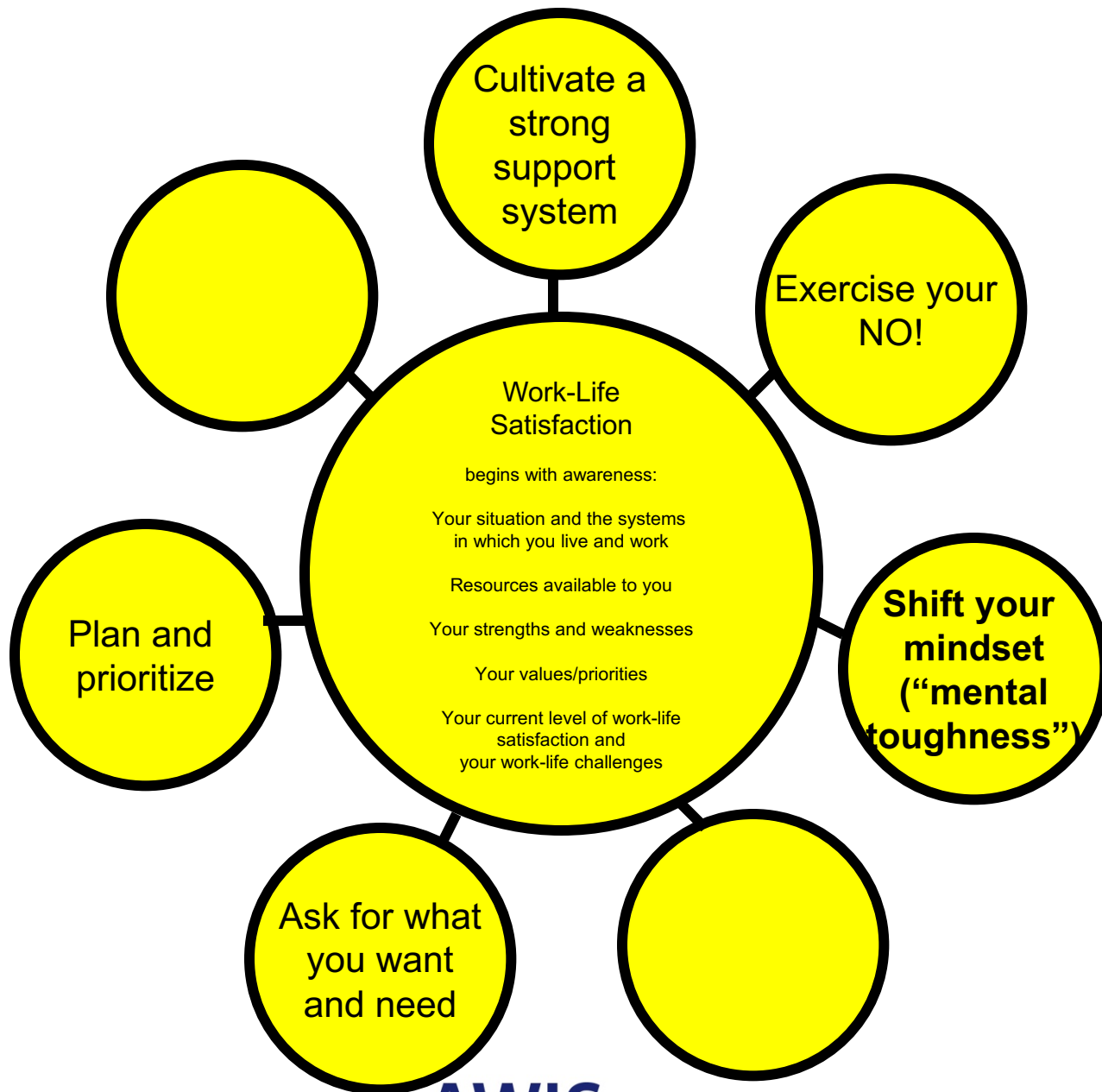
Exercise your “No” Discussion/Activity

- Think of something you have been asked to do recently (*ex: chair a committee, organize a meeting*) and ask yourself these 5 Questions (use handout)

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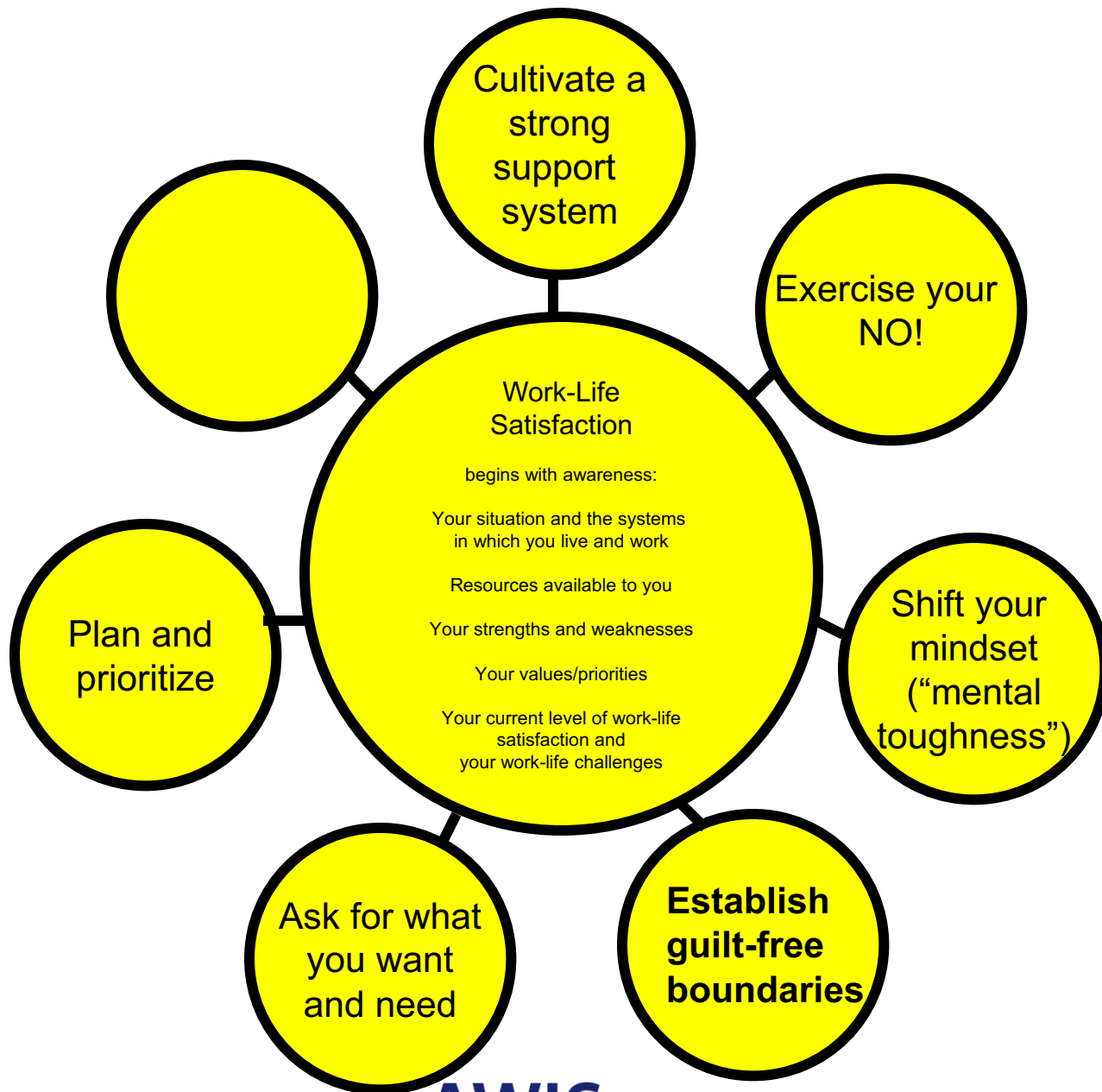
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Mindset Shift: Discussion/Activity

- What is something that you find stressful or complicated? (e.g., public speaking, writing)
- Discuss ways to shift your mindset. (e.g., practice, find more opportunities to do it)
- Form a group of like-minded peers with which to practice

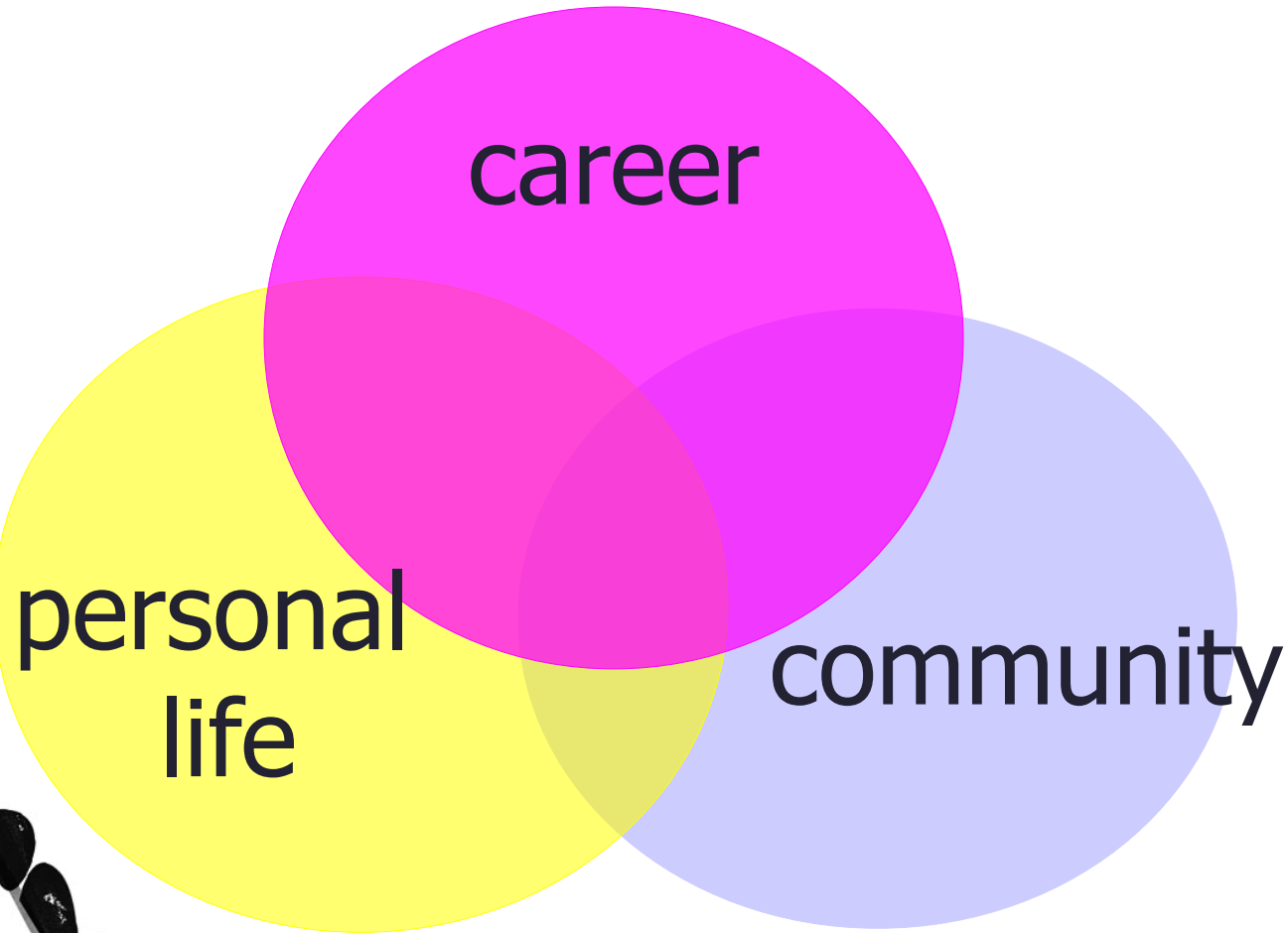


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Life Balance and Career in Context



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Guilt-free Boundaries: Discussion

- Phone example
- Email example:
 - How often do you check your email?
 - How often do you need to check your email?
 - Boundary: If critical can call

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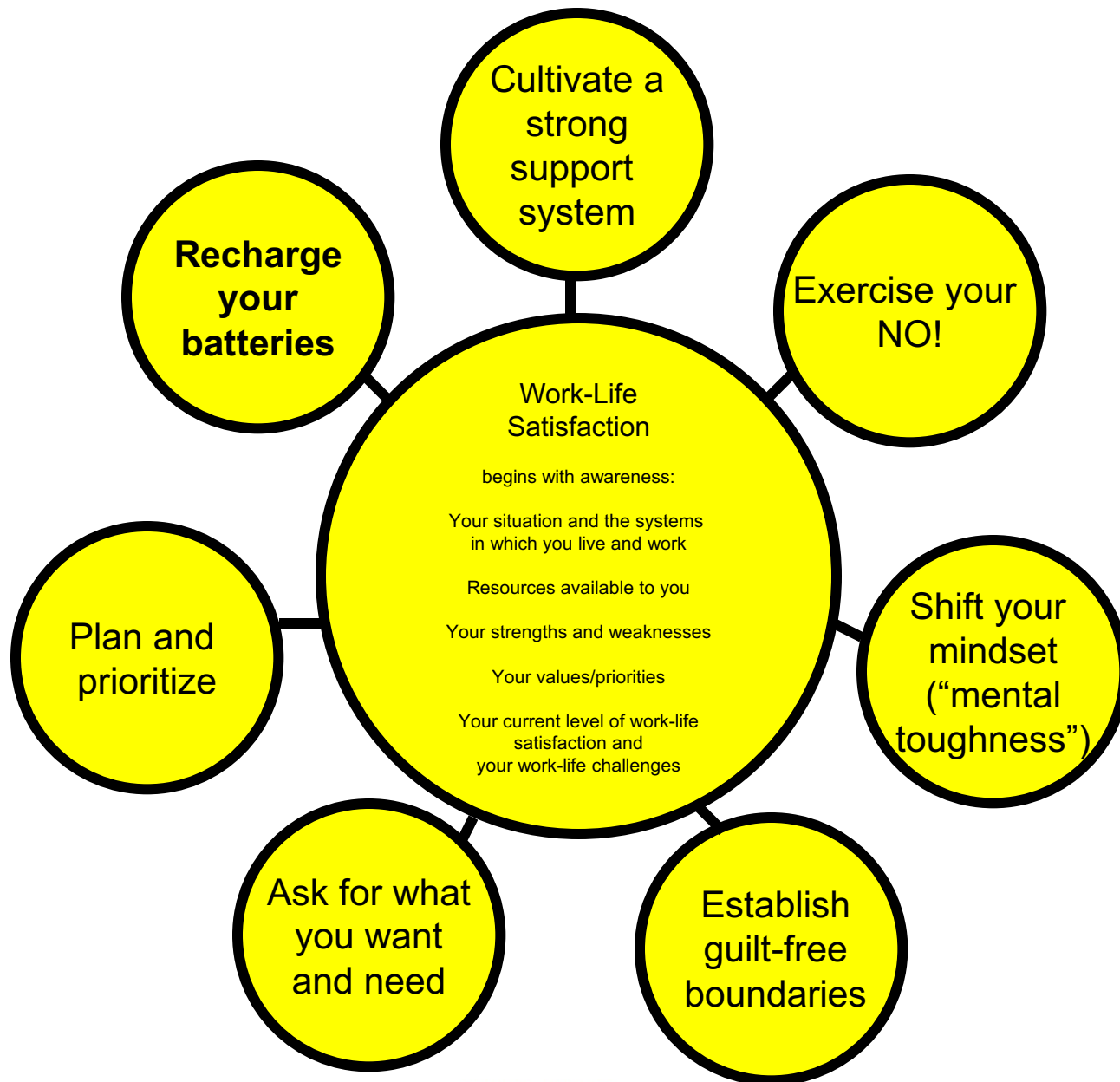
Guilt-free Boundaries: Discussion

- Vacations
- Work travel
- Double dipping vs. separation

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How do
you
recharge
your
batteries?



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Pick a few strategies to try and experiment to find out what helps you the most!



Use your experimental skills to build a happier life!

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Comments??

The world
became a
more
beautiful
place



SLRD-TV

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