



# BUDDHISM & SCIENCE:

WHERE THEY MEET, WHERE THEY DON'T,  
AND WHY IT MATTERS TO YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

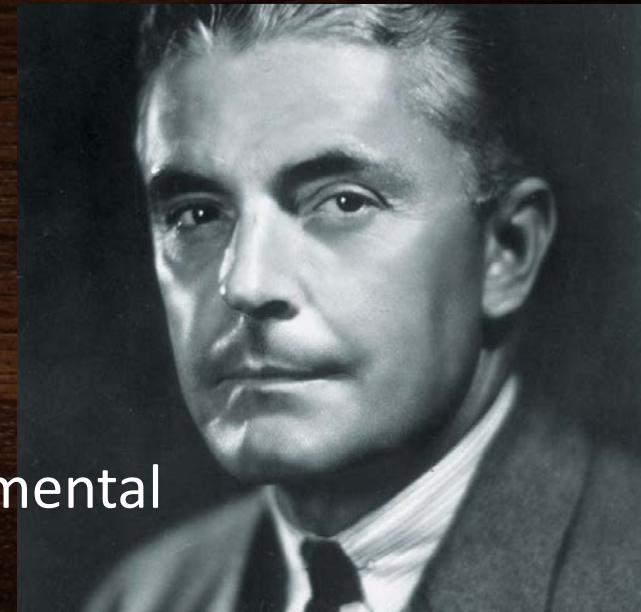
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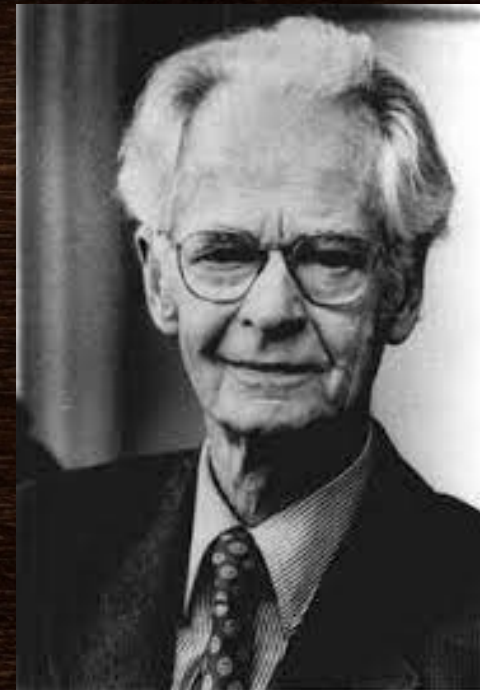


# The Story So Far: Behaviourism

**John Watson:** “Psychology must “never use the terms consciousness, mental states, mind, content, introspectively verifiable, imagery, and the like.”



**B.F. Skinner:** “After substituting brain for mind, we can then move on to substituting person for brain.. what is felt or introspectively observed is not an important part of the physiology...”





## The Story So Far: Types Of Phenomena

1. Extremely Hidden – belief based on testimony of valid source.
2. Hidden – must rely on reason and logic.
3. Manifest/Evident – can rely on perception.



# The Story So Far:

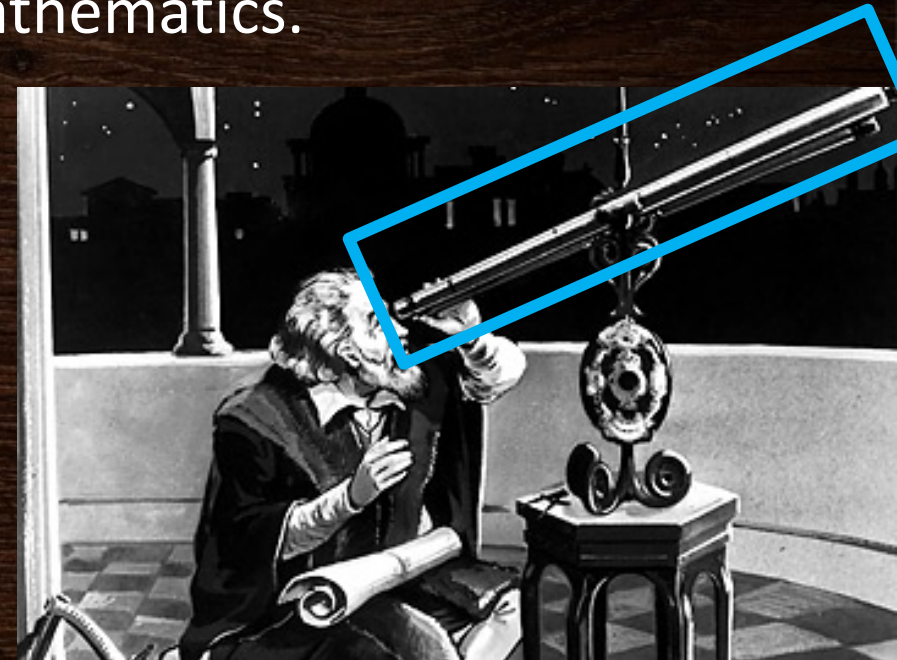
## Types Of Phenomena

1. Extremely Hidden – belief based on testimony of valid source.
  - *Causes of suffering, karma, rebirth.*
2. Hidden – must rely on reason and logic.
  - *Study, reading analysing and come to own conclusion.*
3. Manifest/Evident – can rely on perception.
  - *Perception achieved through technology and hypothesis testing.*



# The Story So Far: Types Of Phenomena

1. Extremely Hidden – belief based on testimony of valid source.
  - *Bible based* Ptolemaic system of solar system.
2. Hidden – must rely on reason and logic.
  - Copernicus and heliocentric model based on mathematics.
3. Manifest/Evident – can rely on perception.
  - Galileo making observation through technology.





# The Story So Far:

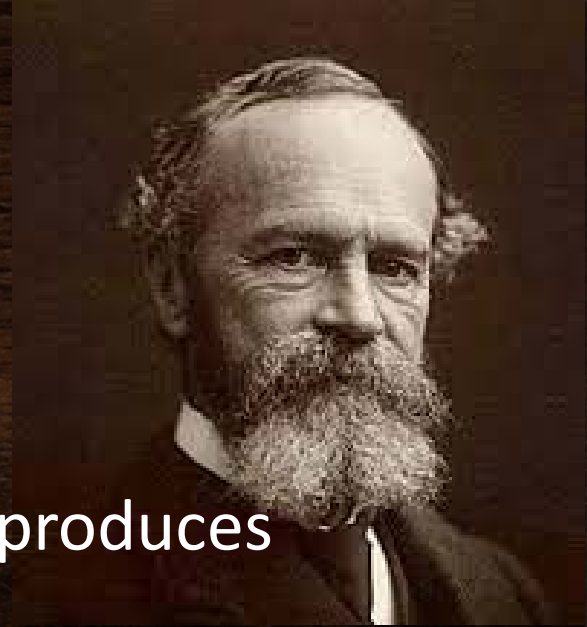
## Types Of Phenomena

1. Extremely Hidden – belief based on testimony of valid source.
  - *Consciousness and mental disorders arise from the brain.*
2. Hidden – must rely on reason and logic.
  - *Pharmacological solutions – provide no solid evidence.*
3. Manifest/Evident – can rely on perception.
  - *No scientific technology available to test the above assumptions.*
  - *BIGGER PROBLEM – no real interest in testing them.*
  - *Field of psychology and neuroscience mostly operating on untested belief.*





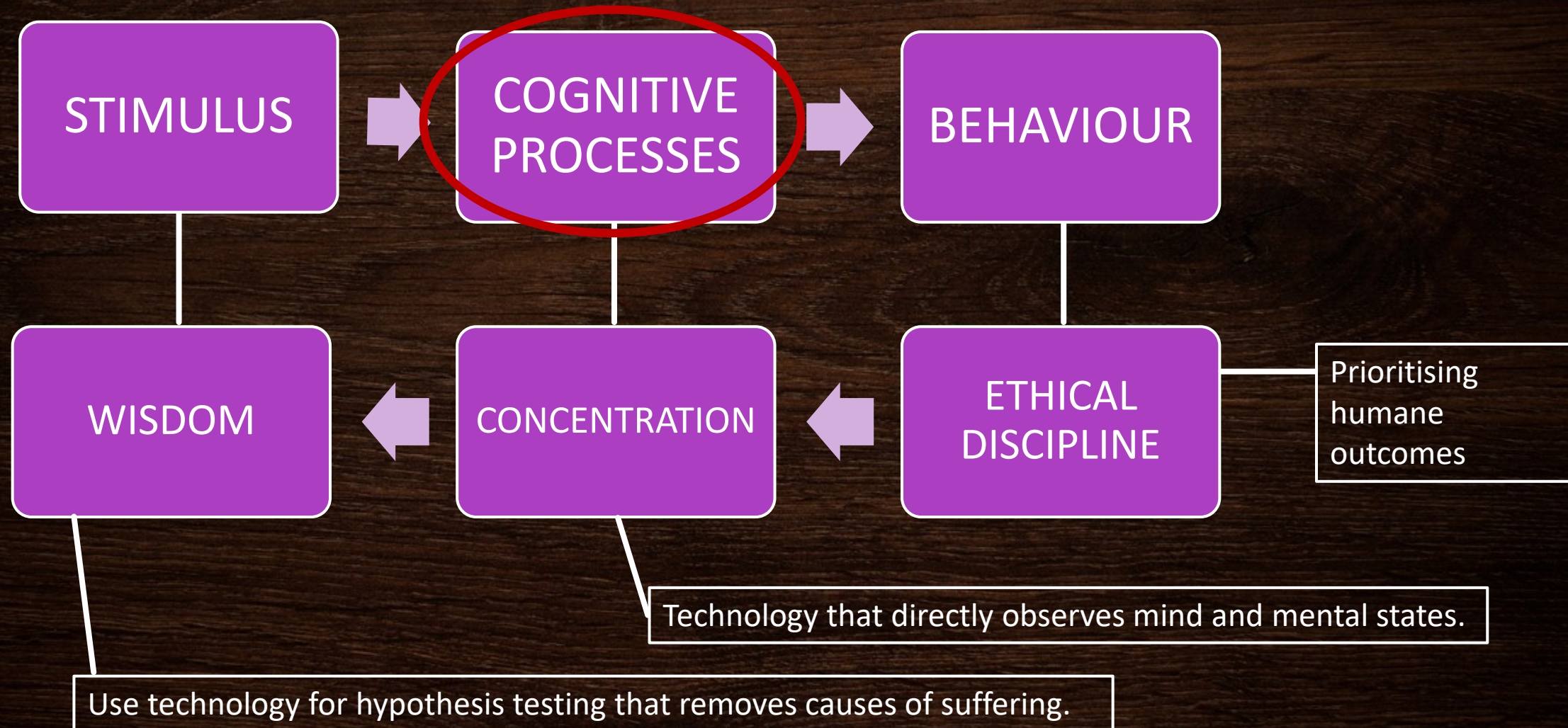
## The Story So Far: 3 Hypotheses Of James



1. The brain produces thoughts the way an electric current produces light.
2. *The brain enables, or permits, mental events, as the trigger of a crossbow releases an arrow by removing the obstacle that holds the string.*
3. *The brain transmits thoughts, as a prism transmits light, refracting it into a spectrum of colours.*

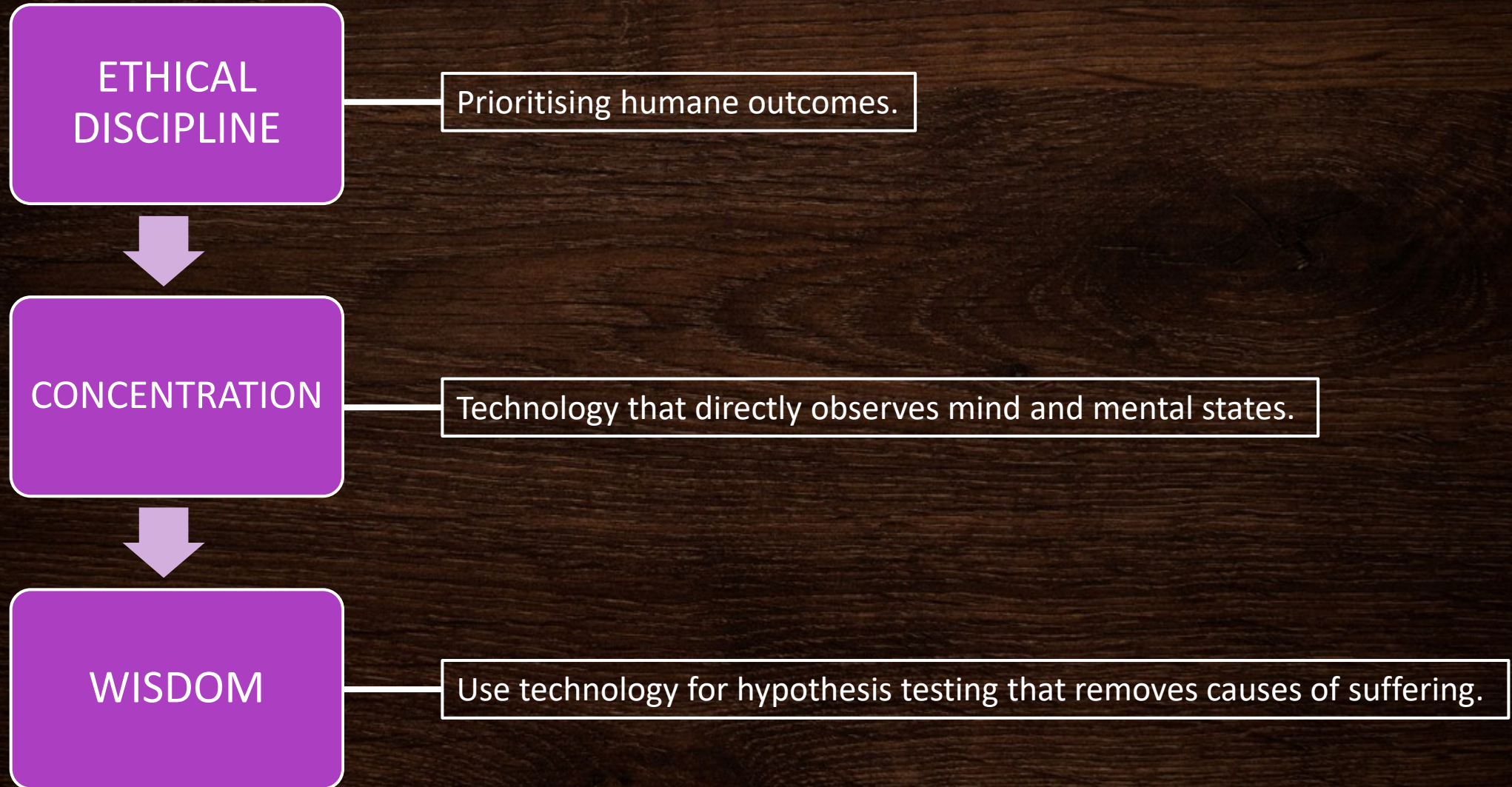


# The Story So Far: Mental Health





# Still To Come: Mental Health





# Science & Buddhism

## Ethical Discipline

1. Pratimoksha (individual liberation) - Arhat.
  1. Not kill.
  2. Not steal.
  3. Not lie.
  4. No sexual misconduct.
  5. No intoxicants.
2. Bodhisattva (Mind of enlightenment) – Buddha.
3. Tantric (secret mantra) - [so-called] quick path to state of Buddha.



# Science & Buddhism

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# Science & Buddhism

## Ethical Discipline

Genuine Happiness (Eudaimonia):

Happiness derived from what we bring to the world.

Hedonic Happiness (resource driven):

Happiness derived from what we get from the world.



# Science & Buddhism

## Ethical Discipline

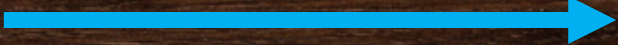
### Genuine Happiness (Eudaimonia):

Happiness derived from what we bring to the world.

- Kindness.
- Compassion.
- Insight.
- Focus/controlled attention/natural state.

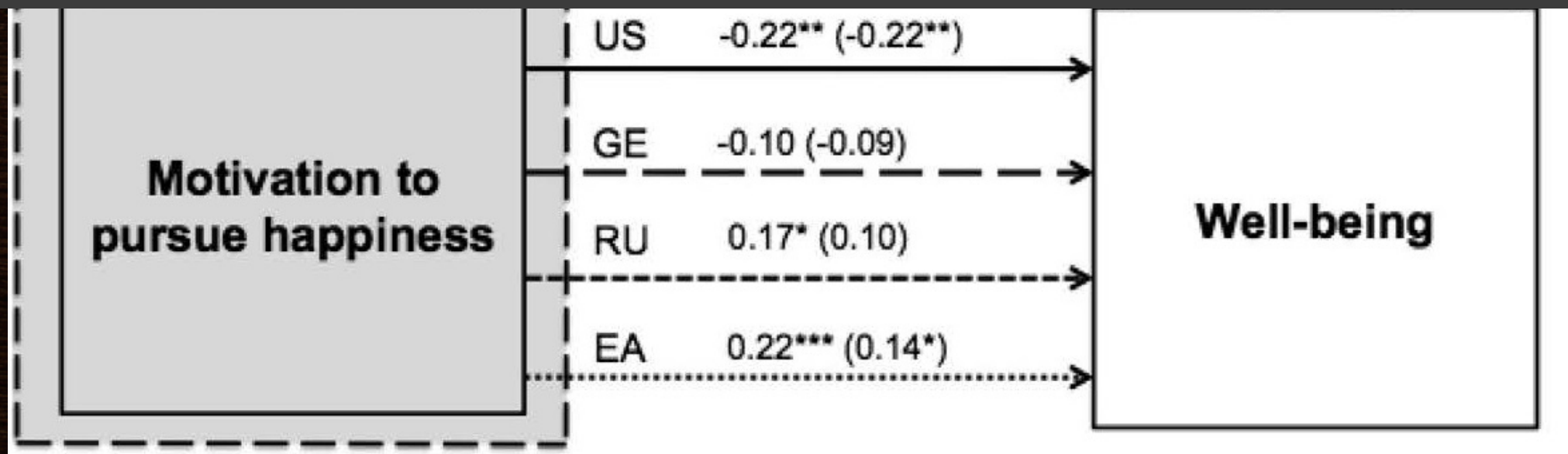


# Genuine Happiness: Evidence Based

Motivation to pursue happiness  Wellbeing

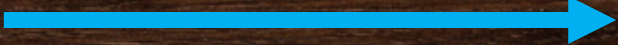
USA	-0.22*
Germany	-0.10
Russia	0.17*
East Asia	0.22**







# Genuine Happiness: Evidence Based

Motivation to pursue happiness  Wellbeing

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# Science & Buddhism: No Technology Exists In A Vacuum.

Consider the value of:

- a tree.
- a tuna.
- a person.



# Science & Buddhism: No Technology Exists In A Vacuum.

Consider the value of:

- a tree.
  - Roof trusses or floorboards?
- a tuna.
  - Sushi or canned?
- a person.
  - Labor or attention?



# No Technology Exists In A Vacuum. Value Of A Tree

## **Abstraction:**

Roof trusses.

## **Extraction:**

trees cut down.

## **Depletion:**

Less forest and habitat.

## **Pollution:**

Carbon not sequestered by tree and emitted in its extraction.



# No Technology Exists In A Vacuum: Value Of A Person

## **Abstraction:**

seconds of attention scrolling and being exposed to ads.

## **Extraction:**

an algorithm that makes engagement most likely.

## **Depletion:**

Social connection, productivity etc.

## **Pollution:**

Mental health, polarisation, bullying etc. etc.



# Science & Buddhism: Contemplative Technology

## **Types of happiness – Eudaimonic and Hedonic:**

A testable hypothesis using powers of logic and subjective experience.

## **Guidelines For Ethical Application of Technology:**

To what degree can I put the hedonic resources to the service of eudaimonia?

## **Contemplative Technology:**

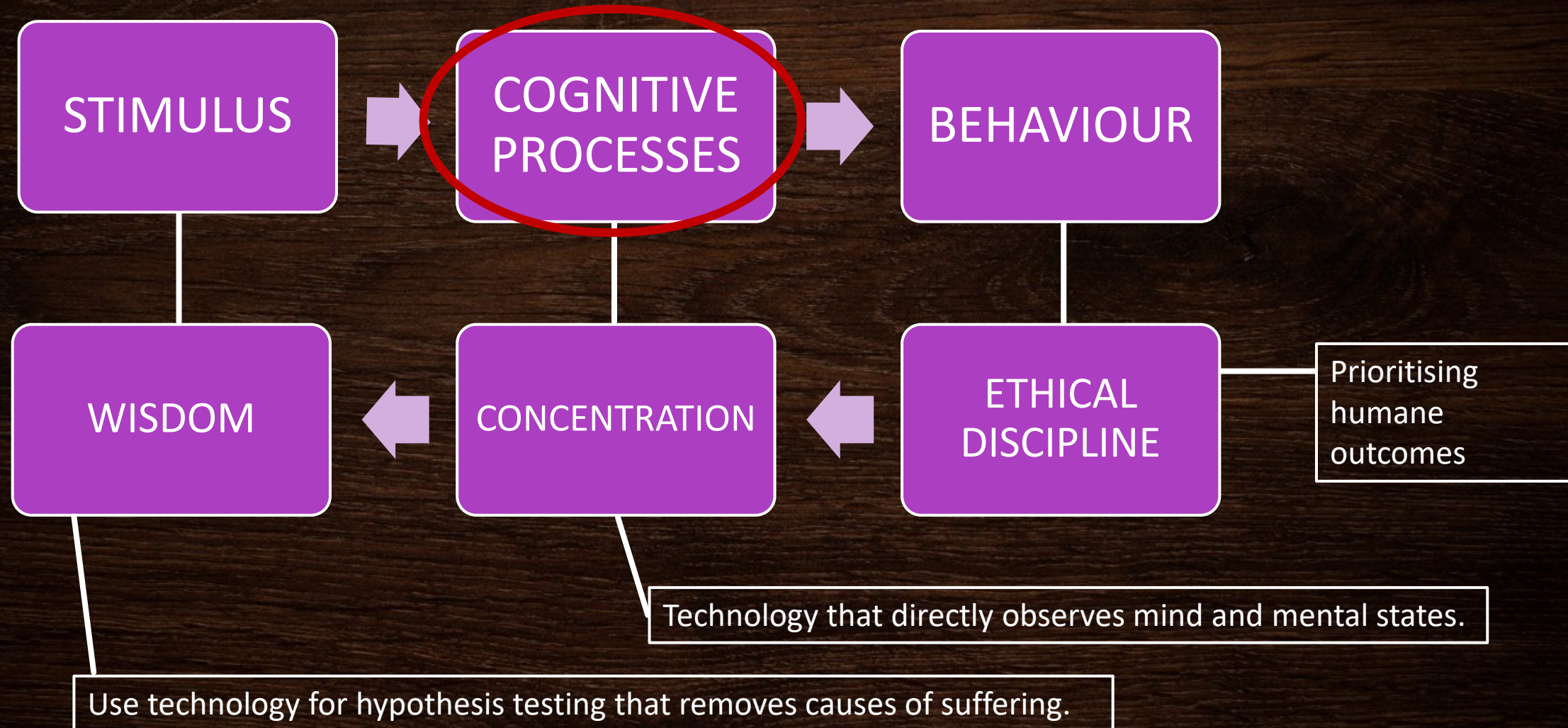
Attention training technology to support the ethical discipline of prioritising humane outcomes of eudaimonia.



- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaofyuCXZ\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaofyuCXZ_0)



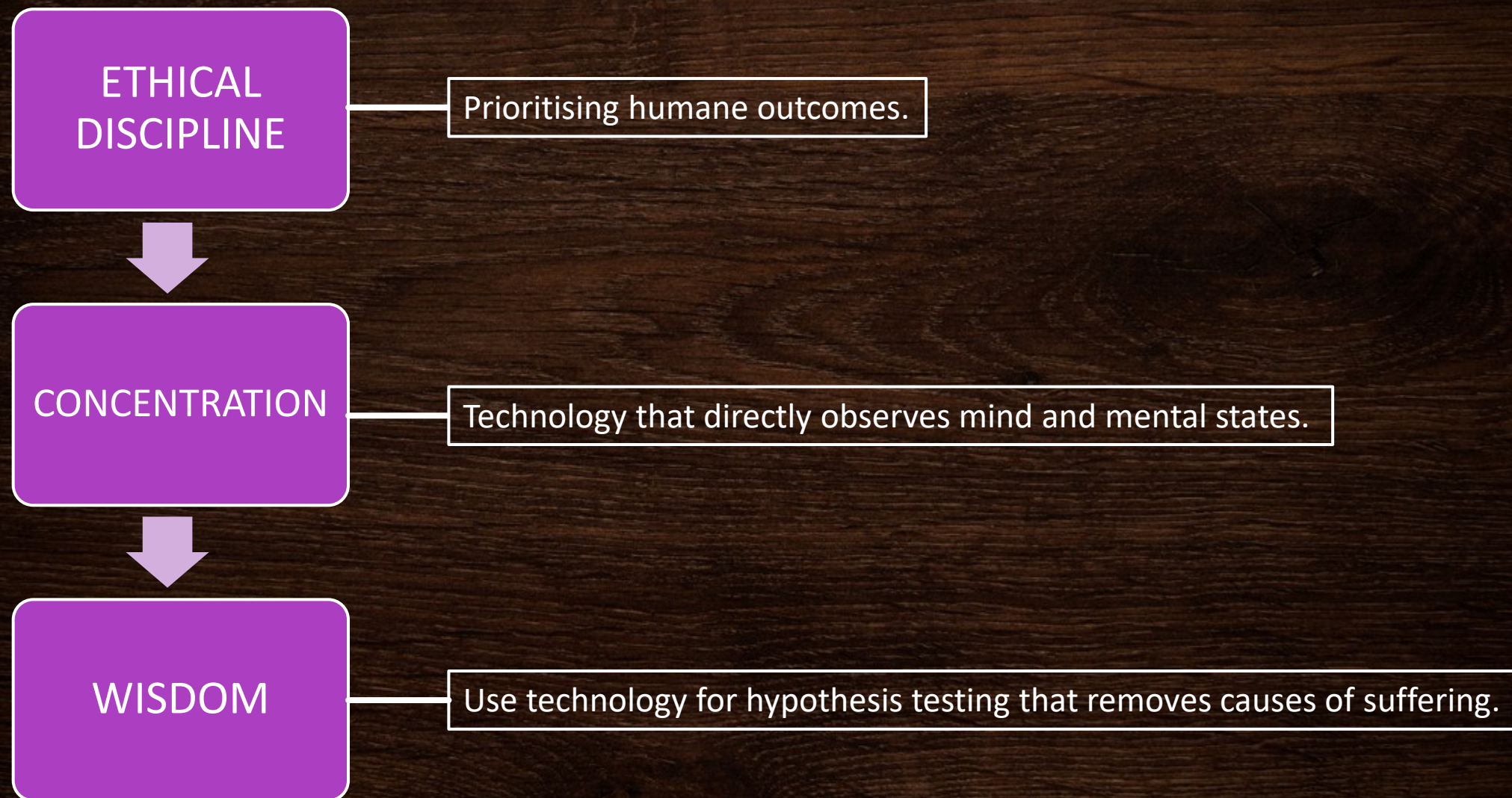
# The Story So Far: Mental Health







# Still To Come: Mental Health





RED

BLUE

YELLOW

PURPLE

YELLOW

BLUE

GREEN

RED

BLUE

PURPLE

GREEN

RED

YELLOW

BLUE

RED

GREEN

PURPLE

YELLOW

RED

BLUE

GREEN

RED

BLUE

PURPLE

ORANGE

BLUE

RED

GREEN

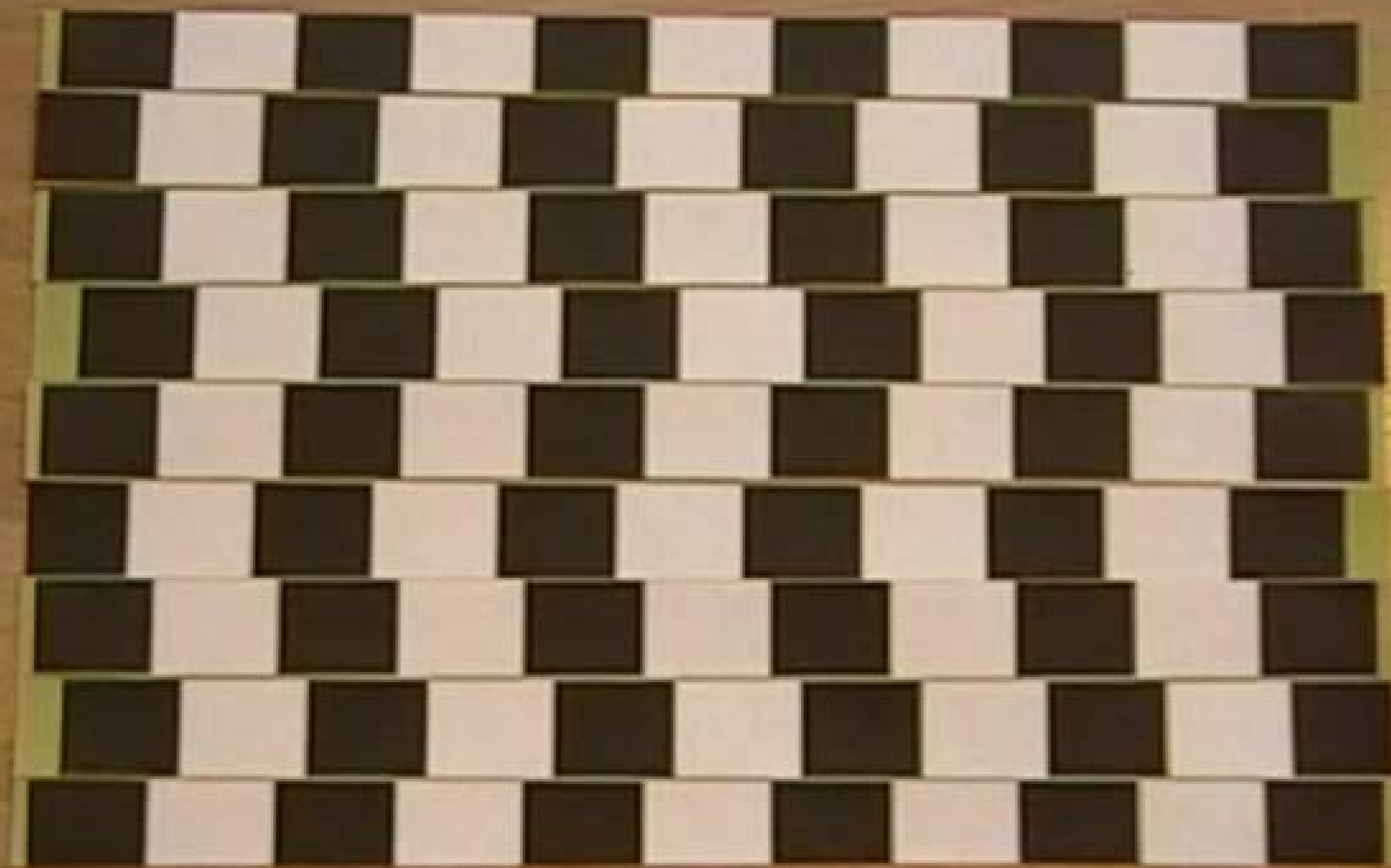
GREEN

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