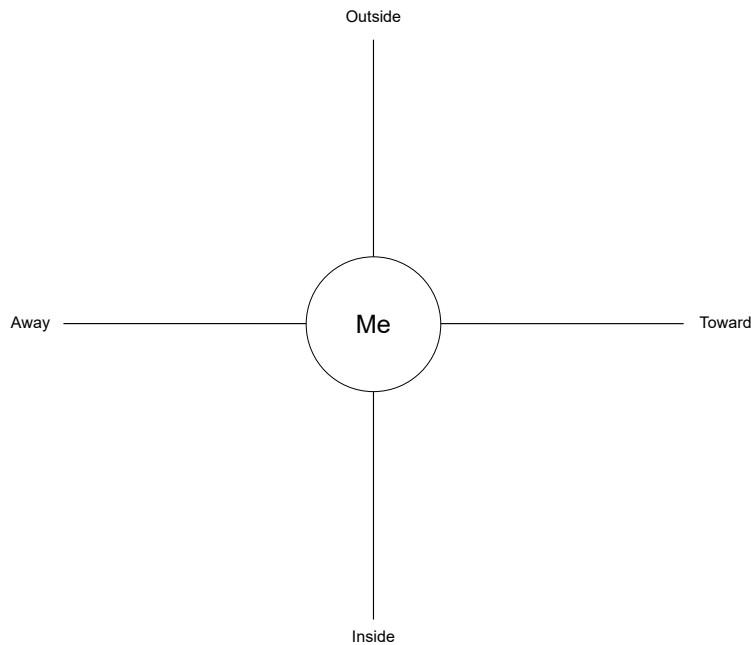


## The Matrix Diagram

The Matrix diagram, developed by Kevin Polk (2011), is a simple and effective tool to divide and help sort your behavior in life situations to be more aware of whether your actions are helpful or unhelpful in living your values at work, home, or in other important areas of life. The following describes the different parts of the Matrix to ensure we're on the same page using the same words to talk about things.



### The Situation

Everything you do takes place in context. In other words, what circumstances form a particular situation for you to act in? Time is one aspect. Did the situation occur in the near or distant past? Is the situation taking place right now? Will the situation happen in the near or distant future? These three questions help you choose a time to map out a specific situation you are acting in.

Bits of information coming in through your senses, sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, are other aspects that make up the situation. As you look at the picture of the Matrix diagram, what do you notice about the page's color, the text's size, and so on? By having the situation in your sights now, you can map out all the actions you do within it.

### Outside

What are you doing in the world outside of you? The outside world comprises things you do with your body that others would notice if they were present. In other words, what would a video show you doing with your arms, legs, and mouth if you were being recorded? Maybe it shows you walking your dog, eating dinner, or reading a book.

## **Inside**

Thinking and feeling are also involved in what you do in the world outside of you. Thinking and feeling happen in the world inside you where you're the only observer. What thinking means is generating thoughts, images, or memories in your head. Feeling means having feelings, emotions, or sensations in your body. Saying thoughts and feelings is the code for all these things you do.

## **Location Line**

Before moving on, look at the vertical line connecting your outside and inside worlds. This is the location line. It maps out the things you do that happen in the world outside of you, and the things you do that happen inside you.

## **Purpose Line**

The horizontal line is called the purpose line. All the things you do outside and inside you have some purpose to achieve some outcome, whether you're aware or unaware of that purpose.

In the training, you'll explore ten areas of life to help you identify what you want to do and how in life. These areas are family, intimate relationships, parenting, friends, education, work, recreation, spirituality, community, and health (Hayes et al., 1999, 2012). However, there may be more areas. You may also divide life differently. For training purposes, we'll use these ten areas to explore living guided by your values.

The purpose line maps out what you do to move "Away" from pain and what you do to move "Toward" valued living. Toward actions involve having pleasant or wanted thoughts and feelings you approach in living life. Maybe you're thinking about interacting enjoyably, a value, with family. A physical move might be watching a movie with them, a goal. Feeling enjoyment and having a sense of satisfaction can keep these actions going. You'll learn more about values and goals later in the training.

Away actions involve experiencing unpleasant or unwanted thoughts and feelings that you try to avoid in living life. For example, you think, I'm broken and feel sadness. A physical move might be drinking alcohol. Feeling better and experiencing a sense of relief can keep these actions going. In the next phase of the training, you'll learn more about your away moves.

Being busy doing more toward actions can result in less time for those away moves. Working hard at trying to stay away from pain can put valued living on the shelf.

You can now divide painful life situations into different parts using the location and purpose lines. Everything above the purpose line involves your actions in the world outside you. Everything below it involves your actions in the world inside you. Everything to the right of the location line involves the actions you take, inside and outside, to move toward valued living. Everything to the left of the location line involves the actions you take, inside and outside, to move away from pain. In any life situation, you now have four parts to sort your actions into after you notice the differences and similarities between the parts.

## **Me**

At this point, turn your attention to the center of the Matrix diagram. Who can notice your situation and everything you're doing? If you said, Me, that's right. Me is at the center of the Matrix because you're at the center of the point of view.

When looking at a situation from this position, it's as if you were a sportscaster calling a major football game on the radio. Two radio stations are broadcasting the game. However, station two symbolizes Me noticing.

On station one, the sportscaster calls the game from behind each quarterback. What does the game sound like to you? You would probably hear the sportscaster running around, breathing heavily, yelling, maybe even swearing sometimes, and trying to avoid being tackled during the whole game.

On station two, the sportscaster sits high up in the stands where sportscasters usually sit and call the game. From this point of view, the sportscaster can see all the players on the field and tell you what's going on in the game.

Now, which sportscaster gives you a narrow view of the game? Which radio station do you choose to listen to, and why?

Me noticing is the station two sportscaster observing the game and giving the play-by-play commentary.

That said, just calling the game can get boring. At some point, you may choose to step out of the sportscaster booth and get involved in the game. Maybe you want to sit in different seats closer to the field and get involved from there. What does the game feel like as you get closer to the field? Maybe there's anger or excitement. What do you do? You may yell at the opposing team or cheer on your team. You may even run down onto the field and play the game of what you're thinking and feeling, and you don't have to. You can return to the sportscaster's booth and watch the game from there.

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