

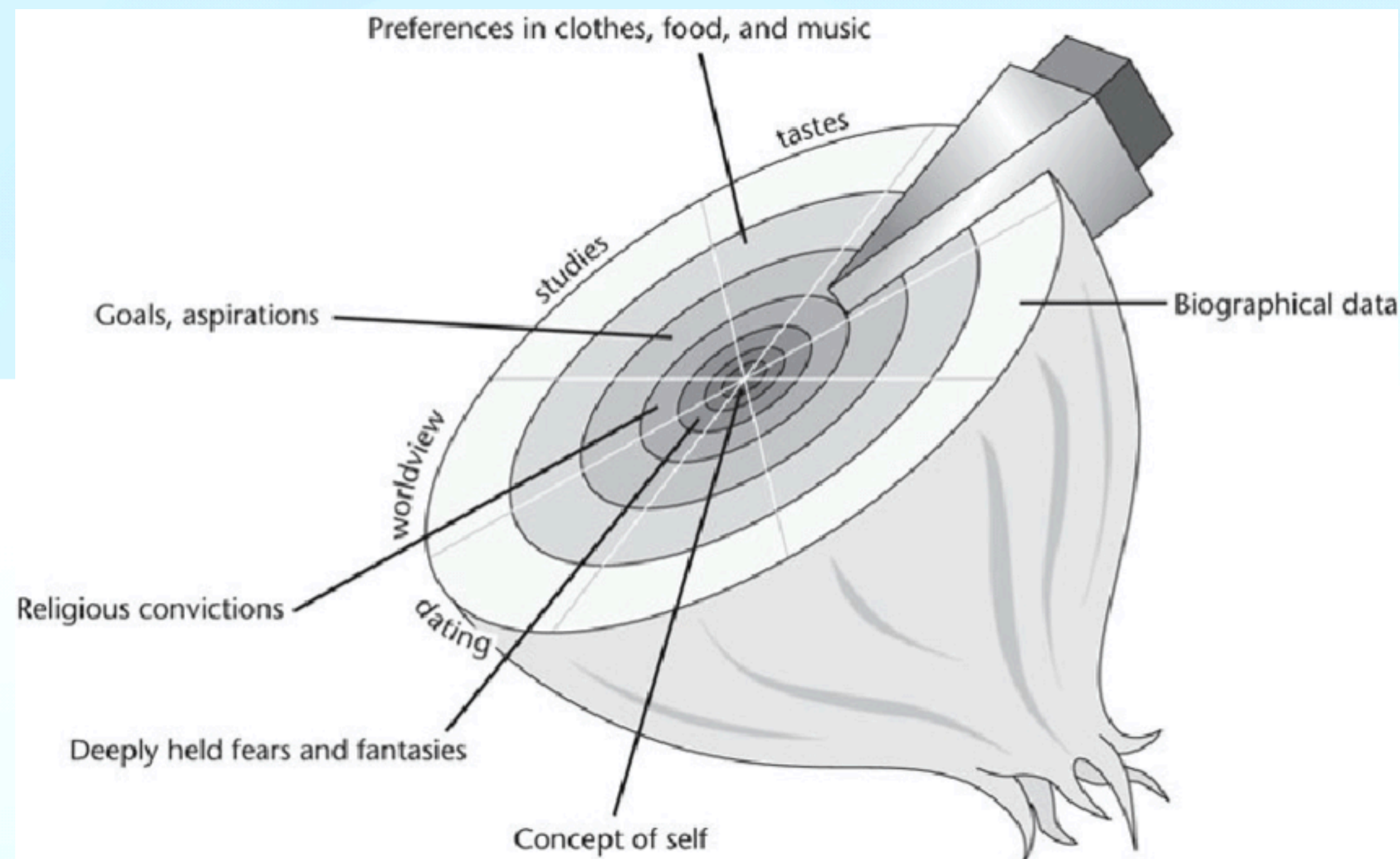
Week4: Social Penetration Theory + Uncertainty Reduction Theory

***COMM 2100 Introduction to Comm Theory
SI Session***

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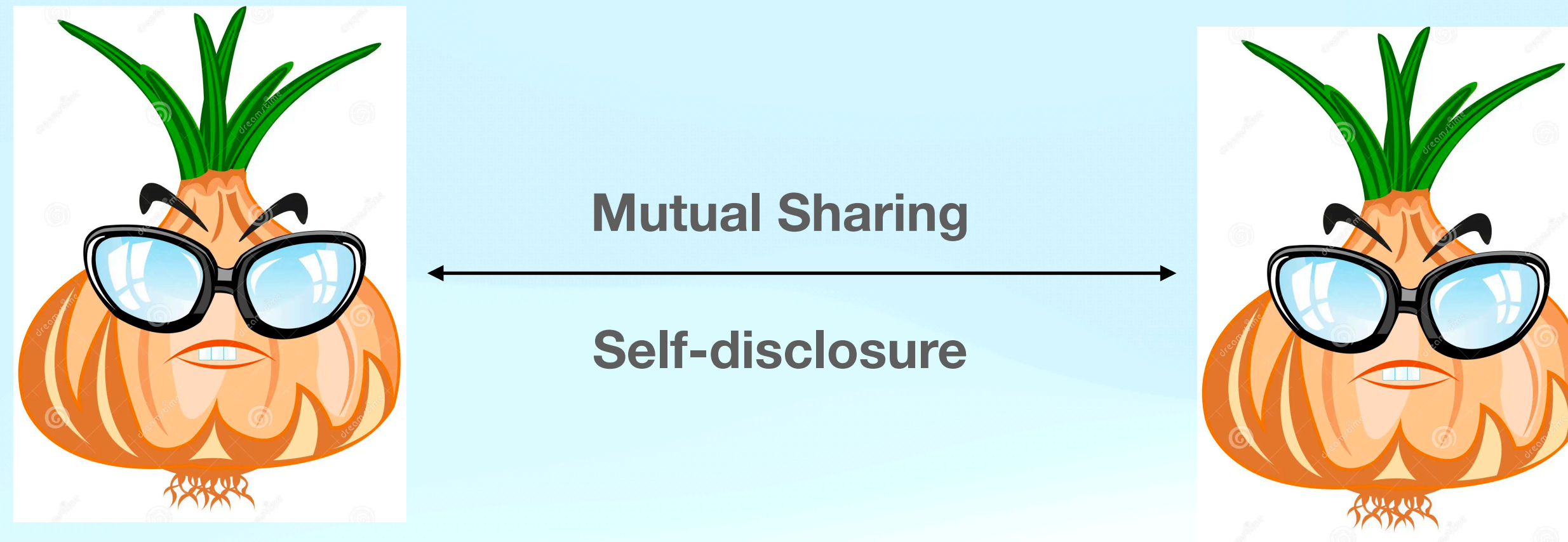
Social Penetration

The process of developing deeper intimacy with another person through mutual self-disclosure and other forms of vulnerability.



- Personality structure: “Onion-like layers of beliefs and feelings about self, others, and the world; deeper layers are more vulnerable, protected, and central to self-image.” (p. 96)
- Everyone has different onions. What’s at the core of your onion? How would you label eight regions of interest in your life?

Reciprocity Norms: self-disclosure is the train, but the destination is deepening relationships



- **Depth:** the degree of intimacy
- **Breadth:** the range of areas in an individual's life over which disclosure takes place.

So Closeness?

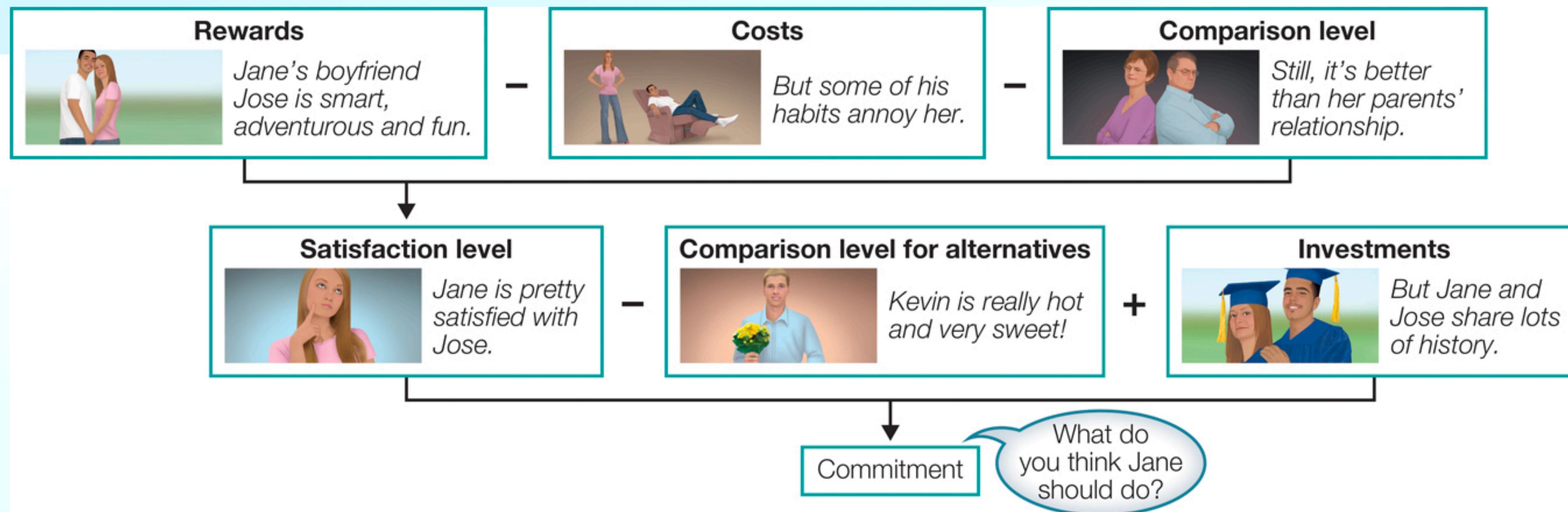
Depends on the basis of rewards and cost



- **Social exchange:** Relationship behavior and status regulated by both parties' evaluations of perceived rewards and costs of interaction with each other.
- **Minimax principle of human behavior:** People seek to maximize their benefits and minimize their costs.

The Comparison Level (CL) & The Comparison Level of Alternative (CLalt)

- CL: the threshold to gauge relationship satisfaction.
- CLalt: the best outcome available in other relationship. be used to gauge relational stability



Exercise:

- Jane is thinking about whether or not to continue dating with Jose.

CL & CLalt

Relationship Outcome	$>CL_{alt}$	$<CL_{alt}$
$>CL$	Happy & Stay	Happy & Leave
$<CL$	Unhappy & Stay	Unhappy & Leave

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Uncertainty reduction: Increased knowledge of what kind of person another is, which provides an improved forecast of how a future interaction will turn out.

- What do you want to know your partner?
- What causes you the most amount of uncertainty for not being able to explain a partner (current tense) or not being able to predict (future tense)?
 - URT aims to predict and explain.

Strategies to reduce uncertainty

- Seek information (passive, active, interactive, extractive)
- Choosing plan complexity
- Hedging
- Hierarchy hypothesis
- What strategies did you use to reduce the uncertainty when you first went to university as a fresh(wo)man?

Axiom

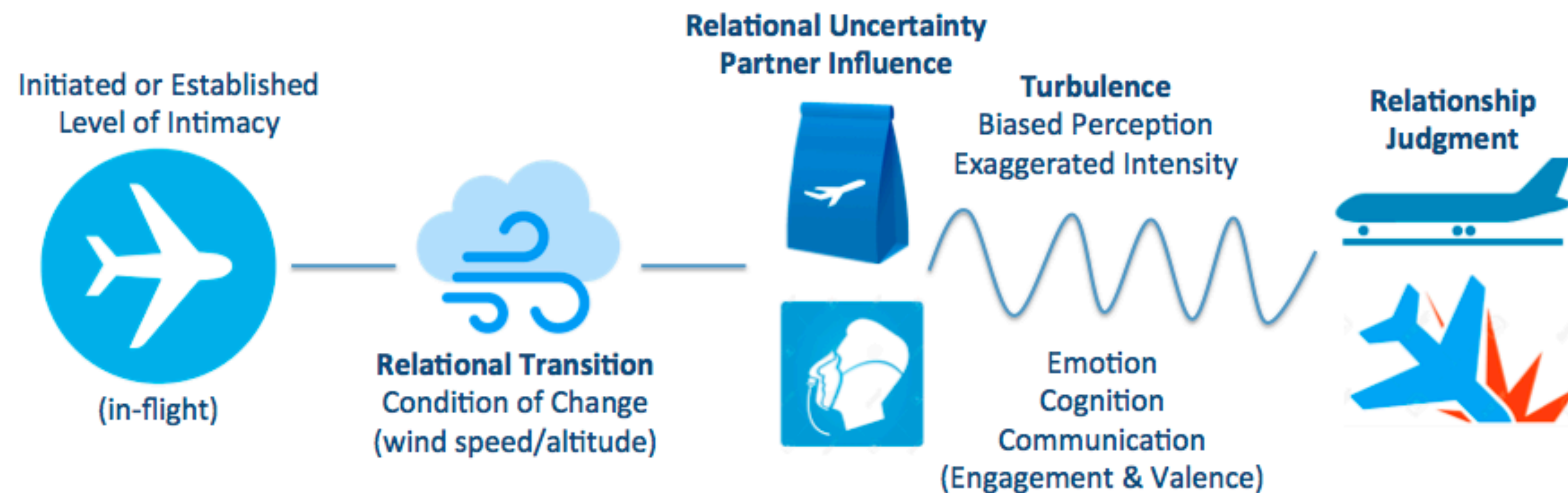
8 Axioms and 28 theorems

	Verbal	Nonverbal	Info seeking	Disclosure	Reciprocity	Similarity	Liking
Verbal		+	-	+	-	+	+
Nonverbal	+		-	+	-	+	+
Info seeking	-	-		-	+	-	-
Disclosure	+	+	-		-	+	+
Reciprocity	-	-	+	-		-	-
Similarity	+	+	-	+	-		+
Liking	+	+	-	+	-	-	

- + means they are positively related to each other.
- - means that they are negatively related to each other.
- *Example: Axiom 1 is that increased verbal communication comes with decreased anxiety, and axiom 3 is that decreased uncertainty level means decreased information seeking behaviors - verbal communication is negatively related to information seeking.*
- Is it too complex? “Big hat, small rabbit.”

Relational turbulence theory: how uncertainty affects people in ongoing relationships

RELATIONAL TURBULENCE THEORY



- Relational uncertainty: “Doubts about our own thoughts, or the future of the relationship.” (p. 114)
- Partner interference: “occurs when a relational partner hinders goals, plans, and activities.” (p. 114)
- Relational turbulence: “Negative emotions arising from perceived problems in a close relationship.” (p. 114)

Thank you!
See you next week!