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5 Dialectical Tensions Principles © 2025-09-09

Orange Belt Question: What are the five Dialectical Tensions Principles?

Orange Belt Succinct Answer:

1. Dialectical tensions are the internal and external tugs and pulls we feel trying to maintain homeostasis (comfort) between opposite truths on all levels of TRIPS.
2. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 are common Dialectical Tensions
3. Due to dialectical tensions our goals (a.k.a. interests) and plans constantly change.
4. A group is formed when one or more people share one or more dialectical tensions.
5. Use “And” to list pertinent dialectical tensions.

Why These Principles Are Important:

- Knowing these principles helps me give myself and others grace amidst life’s complexity and constantly changing goals and plans.
- [Free Video 4 0:07-1:16](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity: Confessions of a Recovering Jerk, p. 34 \(Last Paragraph\)](#)

Explanations of the Orange Belt Succinct Answer:

- [Muddling Along or Unity, pp. 28-31 \(Dialectical Tension Theory\)](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity, pp. 32-33 \(# of Groups is Factorial\)](#)
- [Free Video 10, 4:10-6:53 \(Regarding “And”\)](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity, pp. 84-86 \(Regarding “And”\)](#)
- “There is no ideal end-state toward which a relationship progresses; instead, dialectical tensions always exist, and relationships are crafted within and through them. Hence, the goal is not stability or even little change; rather, the goal is understanding and working flexibly and effectively within a fluid, changing web of human tensions and responses. (pp. 28-29)” - Johnson, S. D. & Long, L. M. (2002). “Being a part and being apart:” Dialectics and group communication. In L. R. Frey (Ed.), *New directions in group communication* (pp. 25-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.



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Illustrations of the Principles:

- Group dynamics . . . imagine many people suspended in lawn chairs with some (not all) strings tied to everyone else's chairs. Everyone is tugging on strings to adjust them, while trying not to tip themselves or anyone else. Woohoo!
- [Free Video 4, 1:16-2:53 \(Hot vs Cold\)](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity, pp. 28-29 \(Hot vs Cold\)](#)
- [Free Video 4, 2:53-3:56 \(Lawn Chair Sphere of Strings\)](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity, pp. 29-33 \(Lawn Chair Sphere of Strings\)](#)
- [Free Video 4, 3:56-4:59 \(Thermostat Tango\)](#)
- [Free Video 4, 5:00-7:10 \(# of Groups String Theory Pics\)](#)