

Standing Your Ground: Why Philosophy Matters for Clinicians

**Or Functional
Contextualism for
the Overworked.**



How I come to stand here.

“Relational frames aren’t things.”

A really bad ACT therapist.

I don’t understand what
I don’t understand.

World view hypotheses?

Huh?



Starting out

- The only stupid question is the one not asked.
- I am here to be of service to you, if that's not happening, please let me know
- I assume that we will treat each other with compassion.
- We will observe confidentiality for information shared in this training.

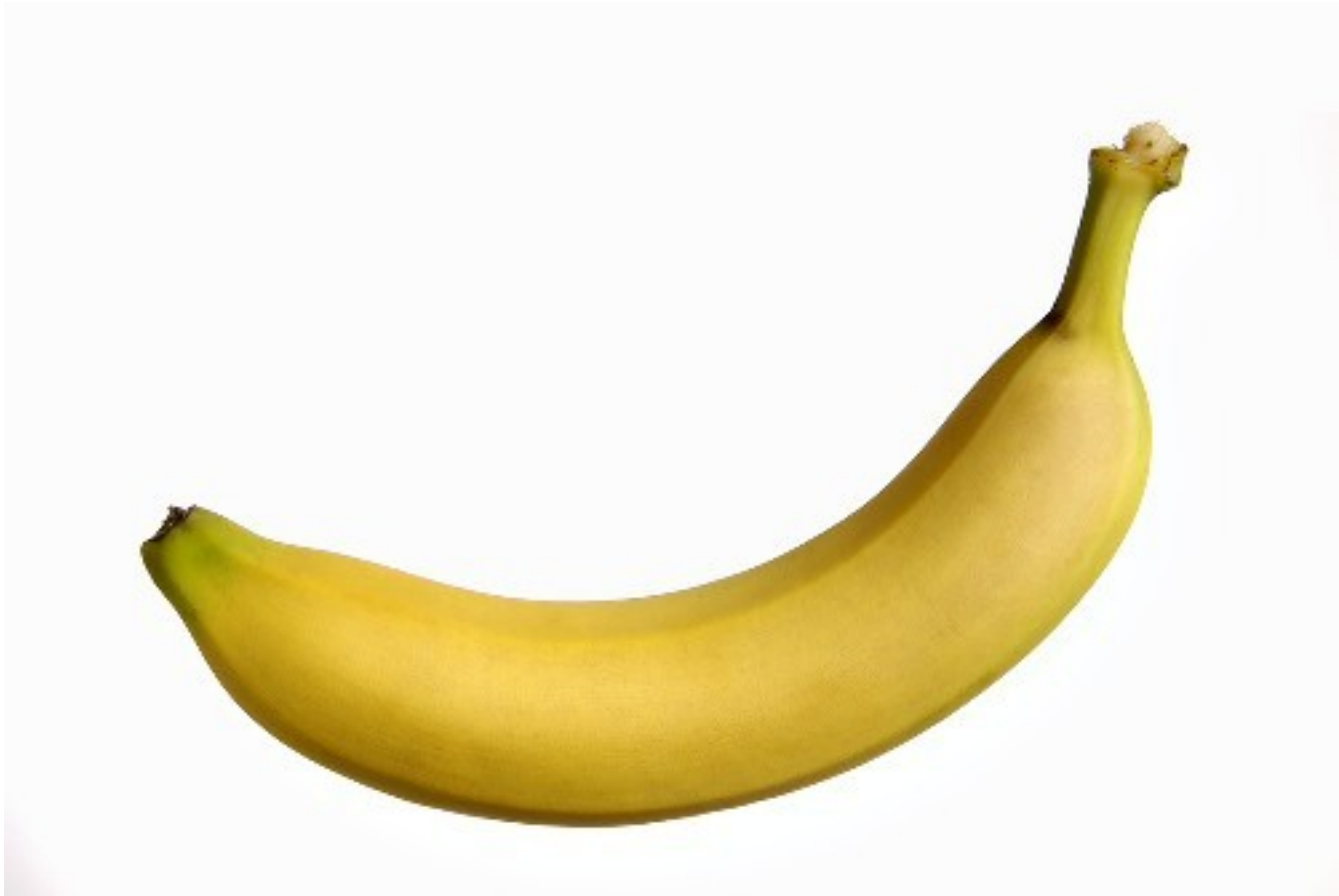
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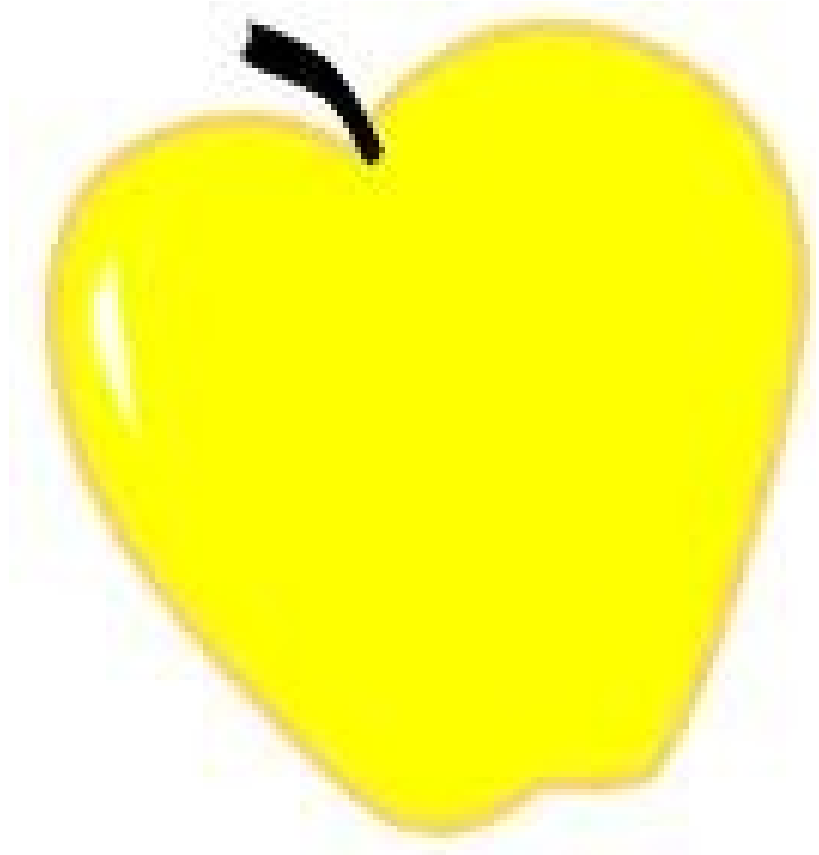
- This training is for you. I'm happy to modify it to fit your learning needs.
- Don't believe anything I say.
- Use the material, fight with it, wrestle,
- This is ONE way of looking at clinical work, it is not THE way.

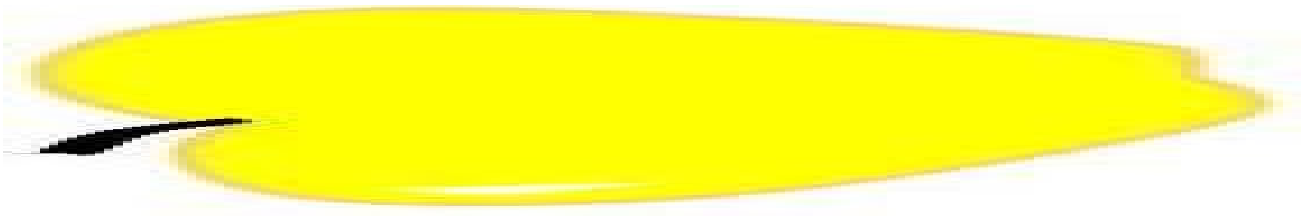
How language works against us.

A tourist from Apple world.











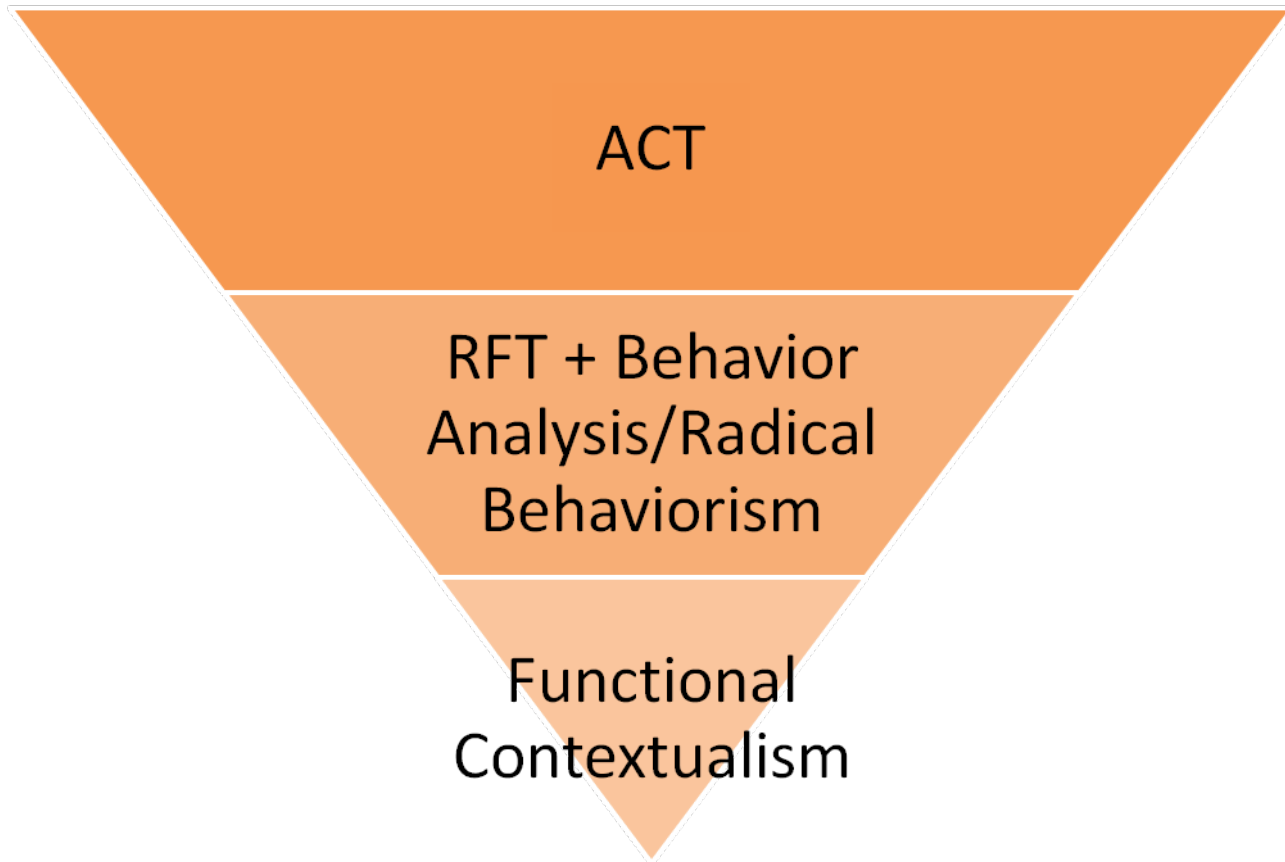


Starting assumptions

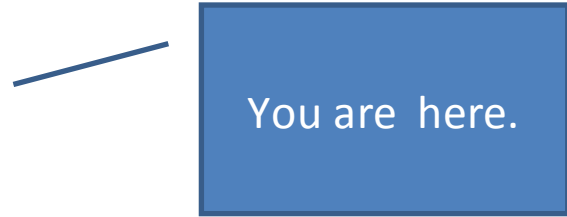
- We assume that the fact that all Steve's and Kelly's books for clinicians include at least a chapter on Functional Contextualism is important.
- We assume you have had the experience of doing ACT and having this happen:



“Milk, milk, milk...”



A- ontological stance



You are here.

What does ontological mean?

Related to or based upon being or existence

The nature of how things are

“carving nature at it’s joints”

There is a true reality

An a-ontological stance (hamburger world) is:

- Confusing
Again, the nature of most languages demands a world of things and place.
- Airy Fairy
Mechanistic/ontological world views seem "grounded" and "solid" and "real."
- Fuzzy/Imprecise
Due to the ontological nature of many human languages, we can speak of an a-ontological world only as what it is not.

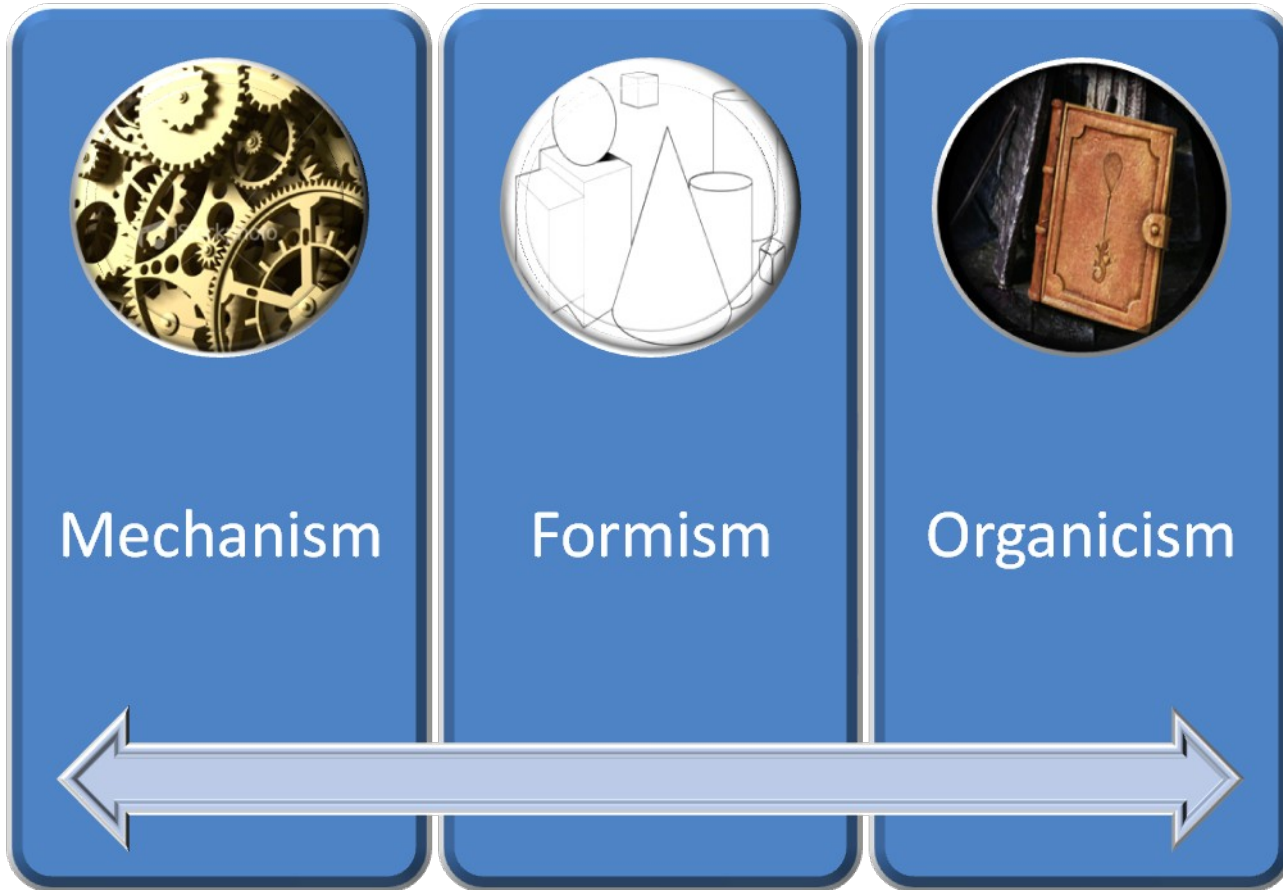
Get Grounded

- Hayes and Hayes. (1988) Finding the philosophical core: A review of Stephen C. Pepper's world hypotheses: a study in evidence.
- Steve's book report on Pepper

Four world views:

Mechanism, Formism, Organicism,
and Functional Contextualism

The world of things



Functional Contextualism



The act in context



Huh?

Basic Assumptions of FC

90% ripped off from Dermot's wonderful post on ACBS site, all additions and errors are Joanne's.

Truth

- “truth” is relative (Values cannot be evaluated)
- a-ontological –NO THINGS**
- Statements are true to the extent they allow the scientist (therapist) to work successfully , (In service of values)
- Truth is tied to practical consequences,(committed action) not to ontological assumptions (being a narcissist, having an attachment disorder.)

Goal of science/therapy

prediction-and-influence over the
phenomena of interest (the
client's behavior in their lives)

Phenomena of interest

- Act of the whole organism in context.
- The context of any event ultimately includes the entire universe and extends through all of time.
- The whole is primary; the parts we *construct* are secondary (There is no actual A, B, or C. Behavior and context, stimulus/response depend on where you're looking).

CLOSE YOUR EYE



Availability for inclusion

Events which may participate in our statements (no unobserved hypotheticals) See Kelly's paper.

- Directly observable
- Observable by behaving organism/client
- Observable by scientist/ therapist
- In principle observable

Scientist/therapist in scientific/behavior analysis

- Scientists/therapists are necessarily a part of the whole (We'll be talking a lot about this.)
- Any distinction between the scientist/therapist and the context (client) is only for the sake of successful working

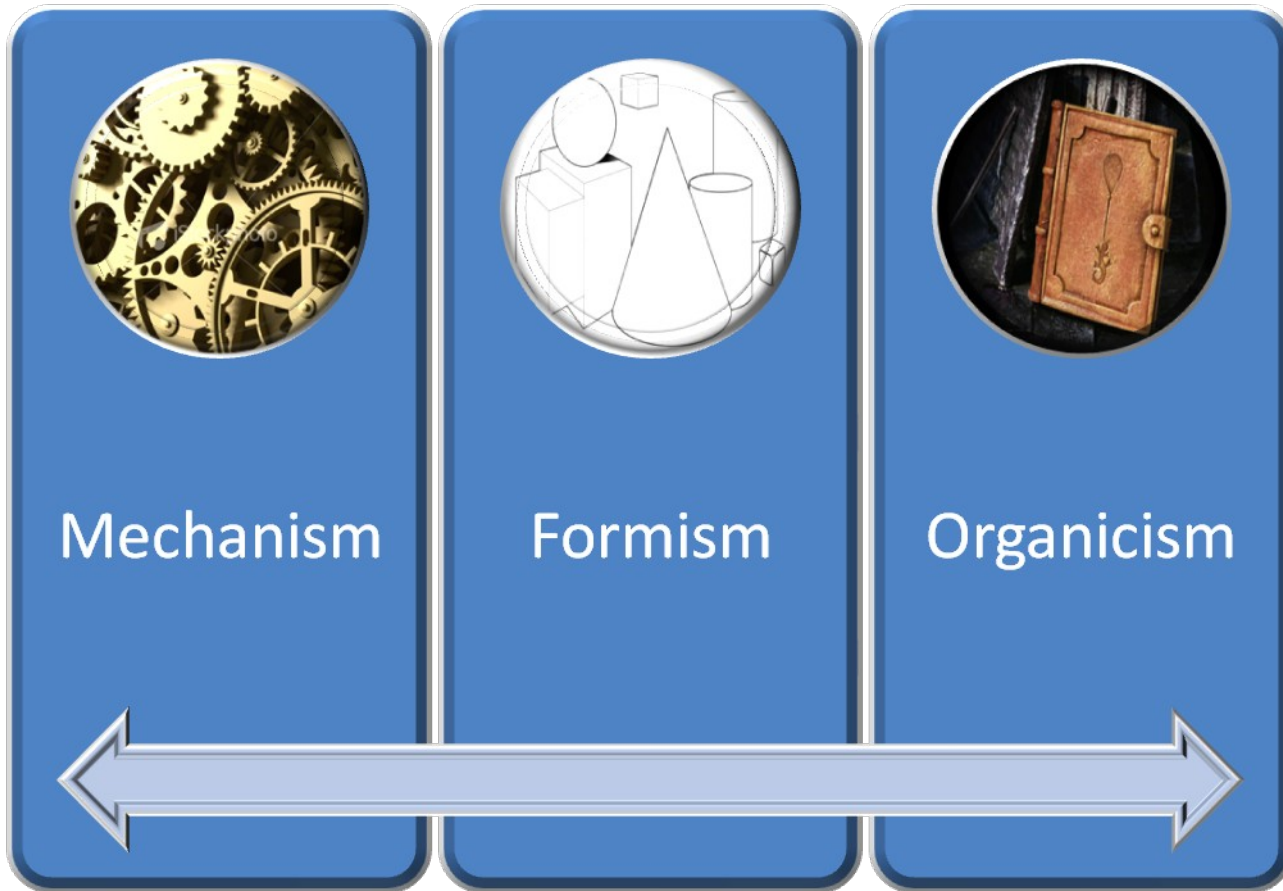
Ontological

- Some forms of behaviorism.
- Psychodynamicism
- Medical Model
- CBT
- ACT
 - Using the hexaflex as a checklist
- DBT
 - Mechanized Chaining
 - Manualized Treatment
 - Death by worksheet

A-ontological

- DBT
 - Skills as shaping (Sandra Georgescu)
 - Dialectic as walking
- FAP
 - Functional analysis of the only behavior we have direct access to
- ACT
 - Behavior analysis
 - RFT (Relational frames aren't things.)
 - The hexaflex as five toes

The world of things



Mechanism

- The root metaphor is a machine
 - Made up of discrete parts that exist on their own
 - Driven by a source of energy

Example: Id, ego, superego, neuroscience, schemas, atoms

Truth criterion: Correspondence, “this account describes how this really works.”

Formism

- Root metaphor is similarity/categories
- Individuals examples of a category
 - Example: DSM, “He is a narcissist because he fits the diagnostic criteria for narcissism.

Truth criterion: Correspondence, “this names something real.”

Organicism

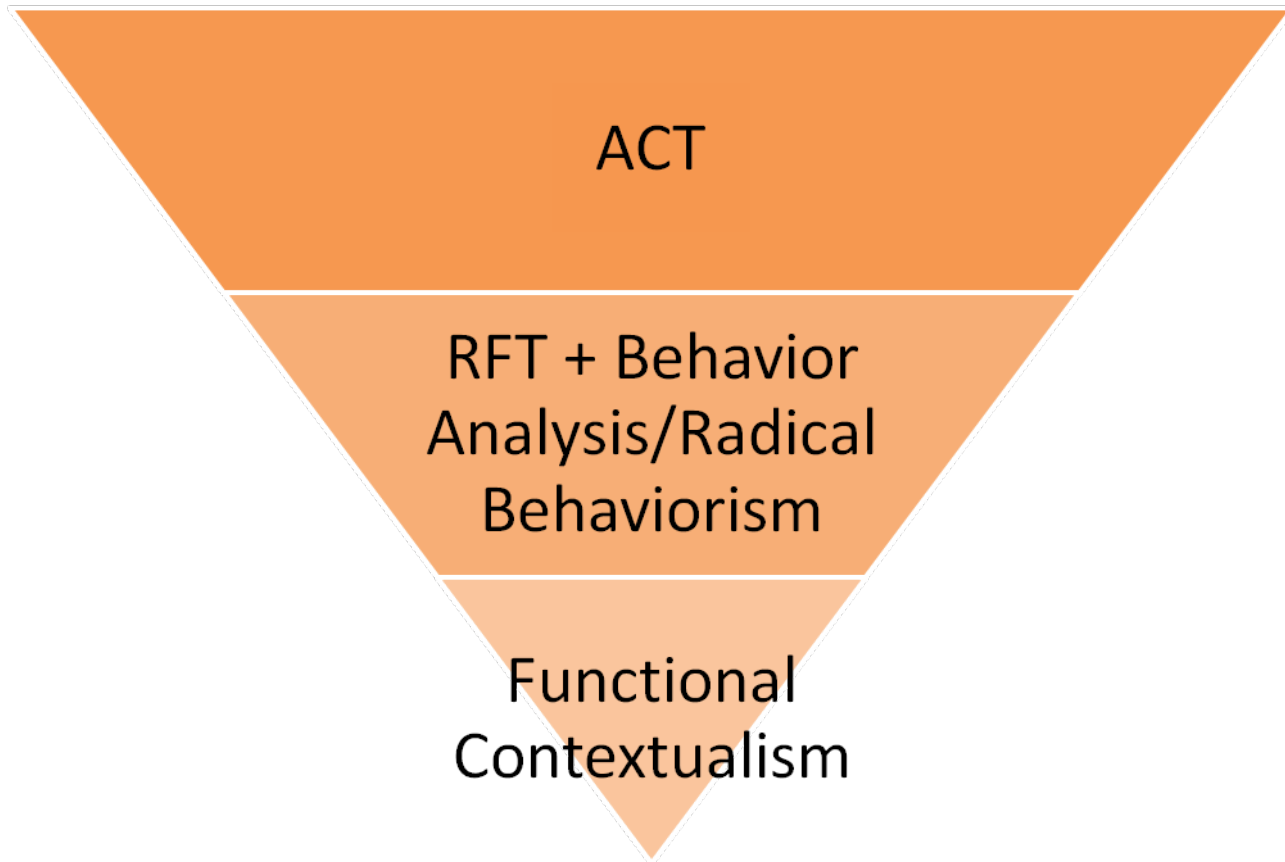
- Root metaphor is the process of organic development
- Example: Stage theories
- Truth criterion: coherence. The story makes sense. The account is coherent. (Reason giving?)

The world of no things

Functional
Contextualism

Functional Contextualism

- Root metaphor is the ongoing act in context.
- The past and future exist in the present
- Events similar in function may be dissimilar in topography
- Truth criterion: Successful working.



A- ontological stance

You are still here.
(Hopefully.)

How to tell when you've lost your ground.

- Doing ACT to--not with.
- Needing to find answers
- Thinking in nouns, not verbs, anxiety vs. having feelings of anxiety
- Getting frustrated, name calling , (DSM, “client is fused”)
- Therapeutic reason giving (“because client is fused...)
- KW: Math problems not sunsets
- Stopping points
- Being an expert /having the answer
- The seduction of naming
- Very little present moment focus
- Almost no experiential work in session
- Refuting or arguing with stories/symptoms/thoughts

More ways to know that you've lost your ground

- Standing not surfing.
- Evaluation
- Rigid adherence to the metaphors/tools
 - Pulling out the finger traps when you feel trapped
- Being right, not curious
- Knowing what you're doing
- Telling the client what they're doing wrong
- Telling yourself what you're doing wrong
- ACT as a technology
- PAIN IS THE PROBLEM

Some ways to know that you're standing your ground

- No stopping points
- Description
- The freedom of "I don't know,"
- Fluid unpredictable openings of behavioral repertoire
- Laughing
- Surfing
- Not being tired after sessions
- Not obsessing about your clients
- Amazing acts of courage, for both your clients and yourself
- PAIN IS NOT THE PROBLEM. Actually, there are no problems.
- Feeling your heart open
- Being surprised
- Often being wrong about your predictions, at least at first
- Affection, amusement and compassion for your clients and yourself.

What gets in the way?

- Confusion: This stuff is freaking weird and conceptual articles are hard to understand. *The pendulum of the mind oscillates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong. -CG Jung*
- Translation errors: Simple=simplistic. It's just like: Buddhism, Gestalt, fill in the blank. A thin yellow apple.
- Overwhelm: Trying to read and understand everything on the list or website. Start with the stuff you can apply and then go deeper. Remember it takes time.
- Shame: Comparing ourselves to Steve or Kelly or.. .
- Inadequate reinforcement: See above, this takes ridiculous amounts of time and practice and it's REALLY hard. If all else fails, hire a grad student.

This week's homework

- Read Hayes on Pepper, Kelly's paper on unobserved hypotheticals

They should be in the email I sent you and you can download them from my website:
www.joannesteinwachslcsw.com/training

- Watch for your “thinging” and the “thinging” of others.