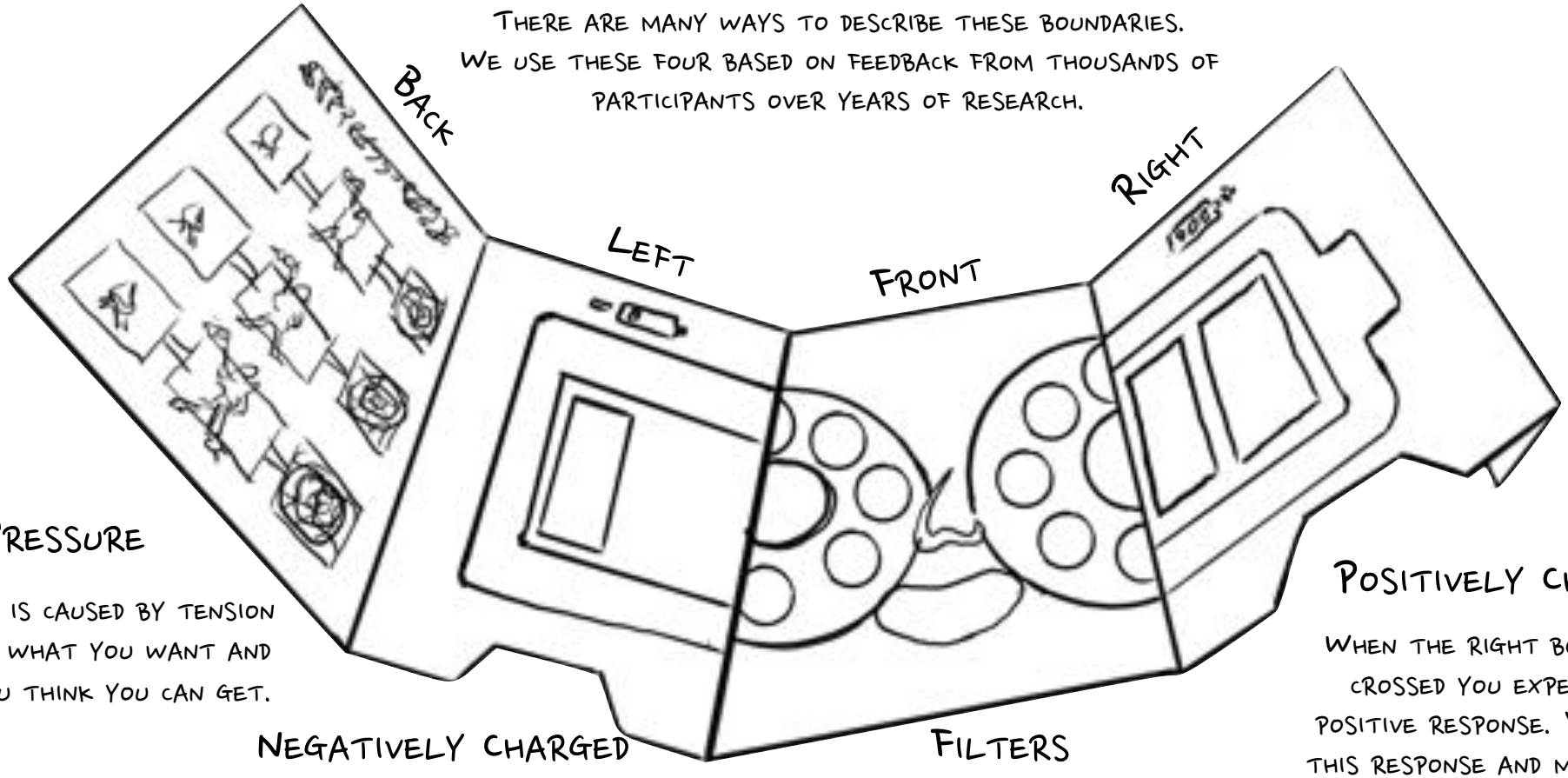
The Inside of the Box Represents Your Inner Thinking

Each of The Four Sides Represents a Boundary to Your Thinking

There are many ways to describe these boundaries. We use these four based on feedback from thousands of participants over years of research.



Pressure

Pressure is caused by tension between what you want and what you think you can get.

Negatively Charged

When the left boundary is crossed you experience a negative response. You avoid or minimize these if you can.

Filters

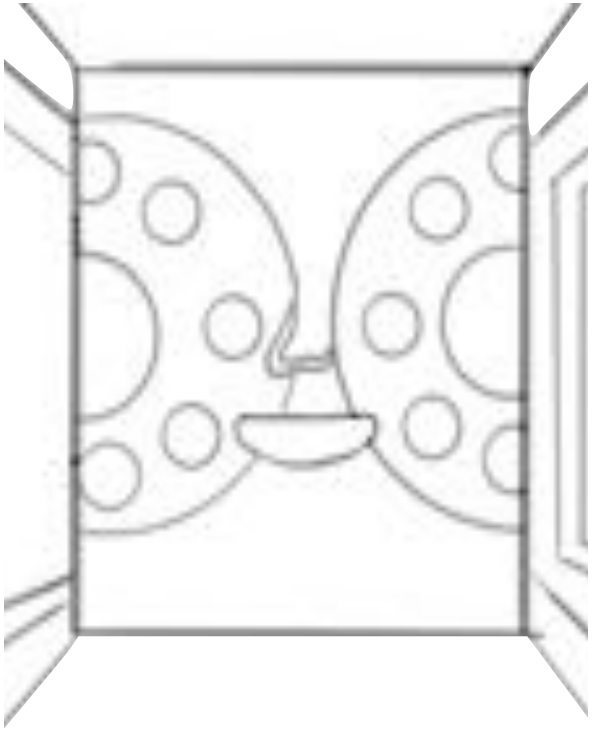
Filters are like lenses which help you make sense of the world.

Positively Charged

When the right boundary is crossed you experience a positive response. You prefer this response and make choices to maximize these.

The Front = Filters

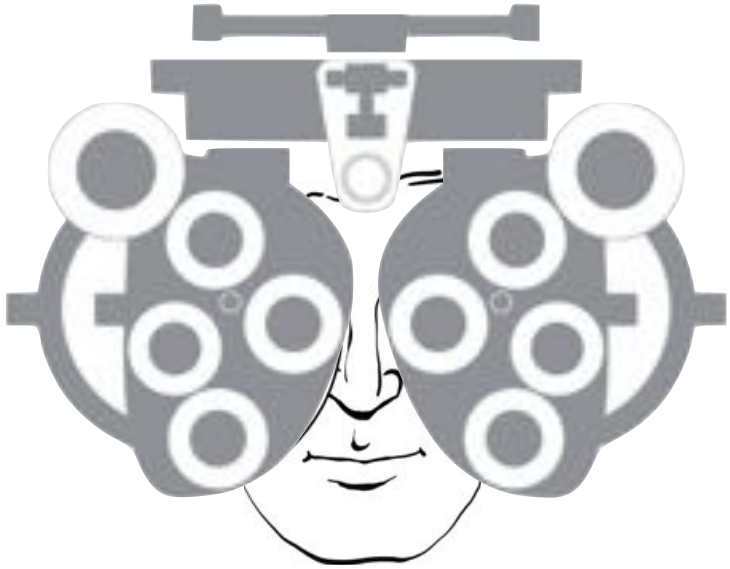
The front of the box represents filters I use to make sense of the world around me



Some things make it through filters, and other things don't

Like going to an eye doctor...

...different combinations of filters improve clarity



Once you find a configuration that works, you standardize them into a pair of glasses and use them until they no longer improve your vision enough.

Throughout your life, you may have to get many pairs of glasses, and the same is true for your filters. At different stages in your life you look through different filters to understand what is happening around you clearly.

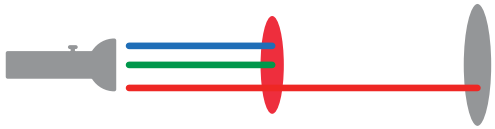
There are Many Kinds of Filters

Filters Focus and Differentiate

There are many examples of filters in daily life. The filters of your box serve similar purposes.

Color Filter

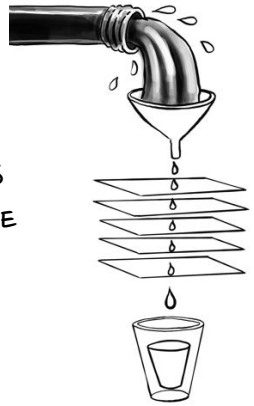
Some colors can get through, others can't



I can only understand languages I have learned

Water Filter

Multiple layers combine to remove impurities



I am unable to take in all stimuli so I focus my attention on the vital few

Telescope

Enables seeing far away things

I can think into the future

Microscope

Enables seeing very small things

I can focus on the details

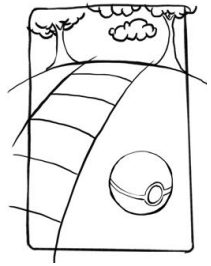
Headphones

Fills head with sound

I hear things that no one else does

Augmented Reality (e.g. Pokemon Go)

Overlays a virtual world onto your own world



I see things that others don't

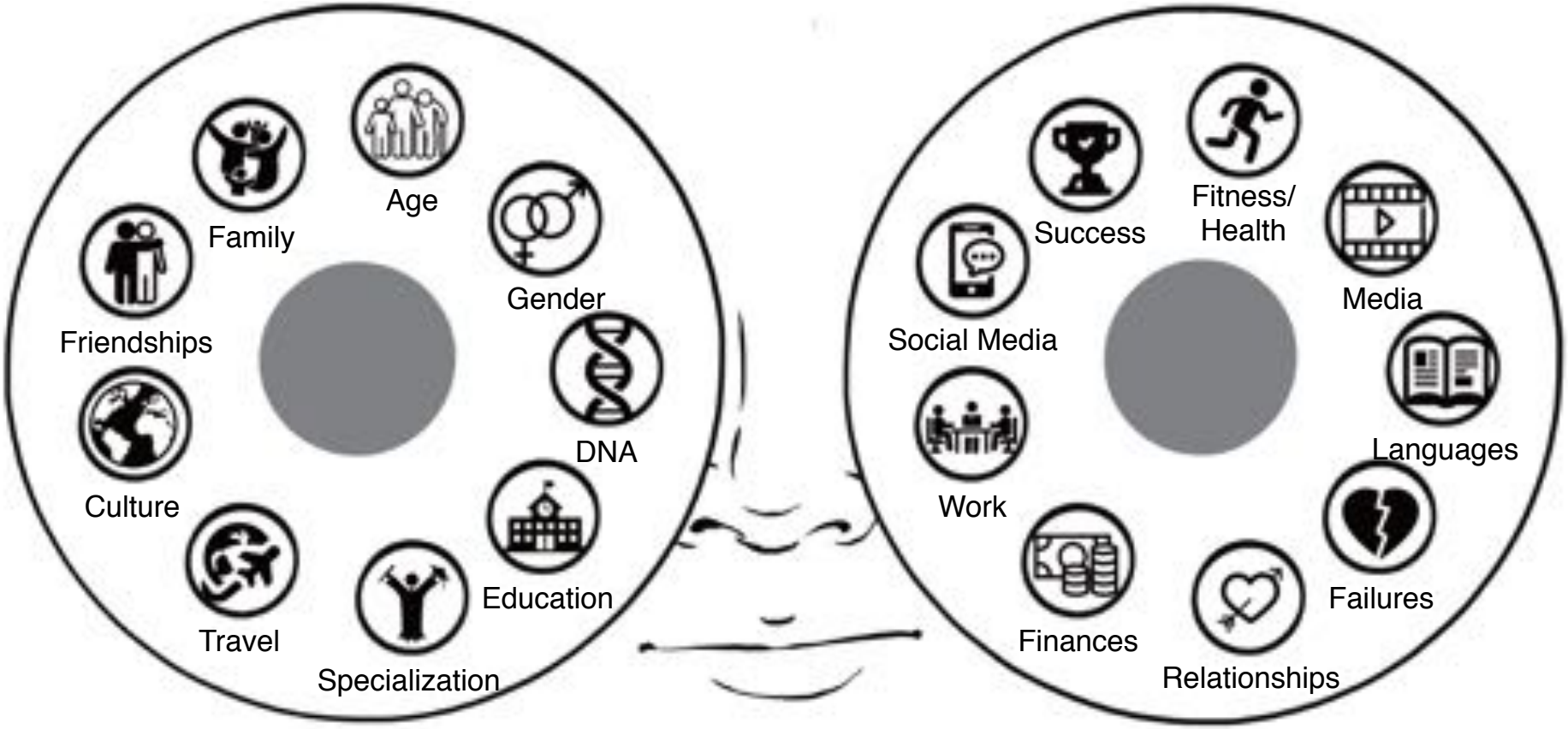
Your filters help you make meaning of life events

You create Filters Through Experience

Throughout your life you find patterns and create associations that help you to understand and interact with the world successfully.

We Select Filters Based on Context

You have more filters than you can use at any one time.
You adjust the filters until you see clearly.



Filters Help You Make Sense

Filters differentiate messages from noise

There is too many possible stimuli for your brain to make sense of. Filters allow some stimuli through while keeping others out.

Everything you experience is filtered

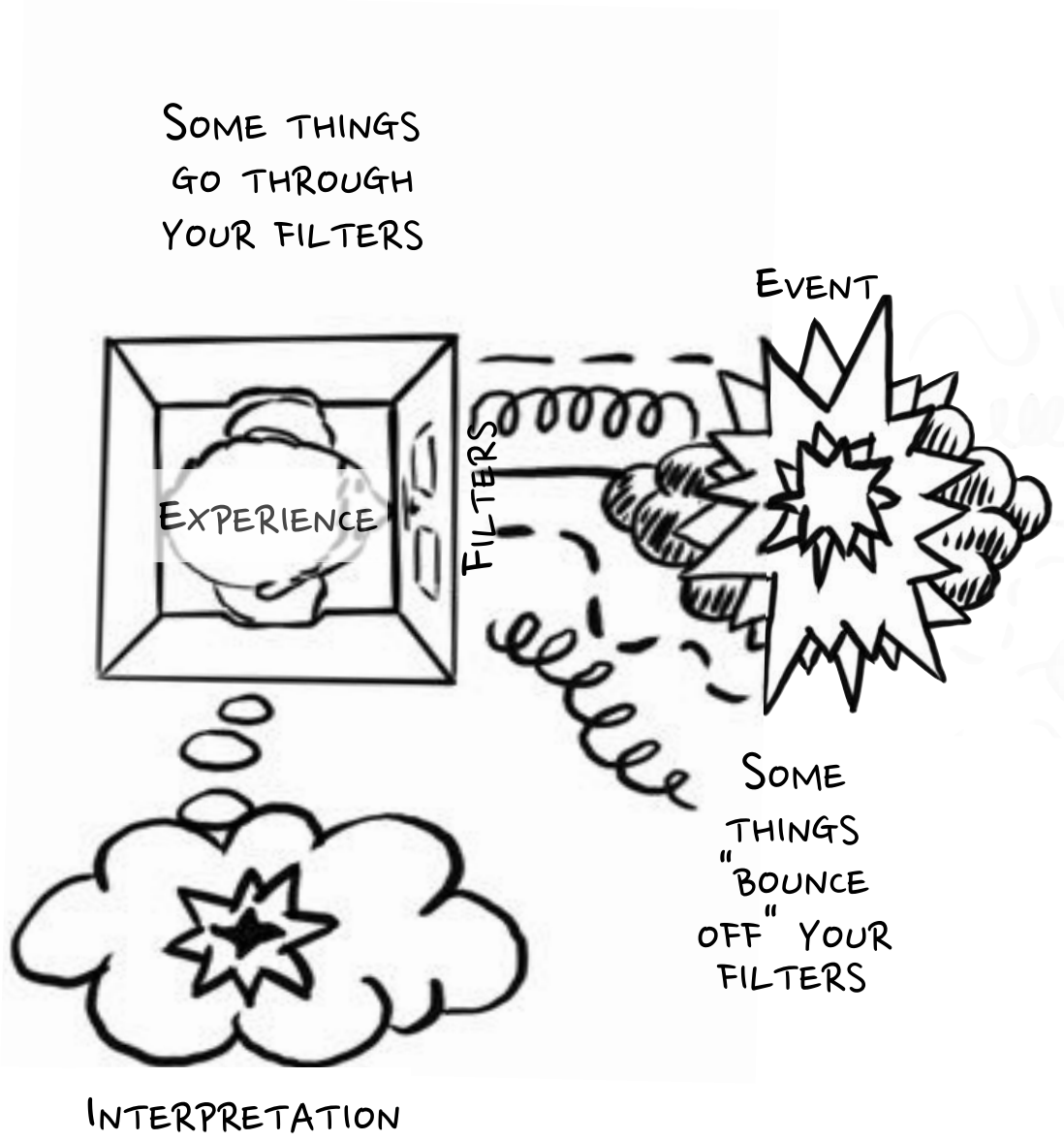
You might think that you are experiencing the world "as is," but in actuality, your experience are limited and unique.

Filters help interpret messages

You interpret messages as you receive them through your filters. These interpretations become the basis for your experience.

Adjusting your filters provides new interpretations

You adjust your filters when you draw on different past experiences or points of view to interpret events. An example of this is how you might adjust when talking to an eight year old child. By tapping into your younger filters you can have more empathy and create a more accurate interpretation.



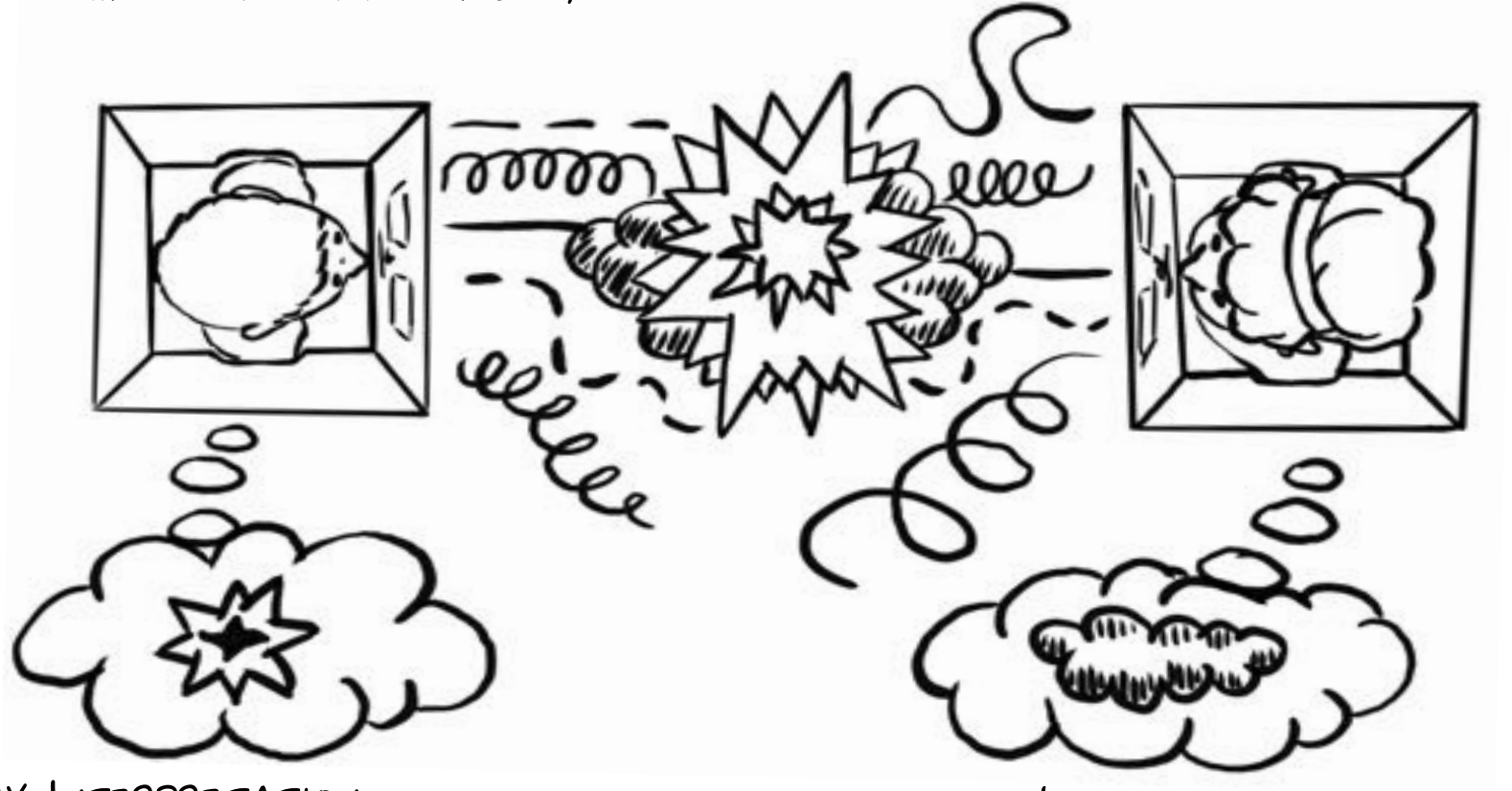
Different Filters = Different Experiences

Different perspectives observe different stimuli

different stimuli are available from different vantage points (e.g. sitting in the front row or back row of a theater will impact how you experience a show)

Different people have different filters

different people have different filters, so different stimuli will make it through their respective filters



My Interpretation

Other's Interpretation

You might think you are sharing the same experience, but your interpretations may in fact be very different

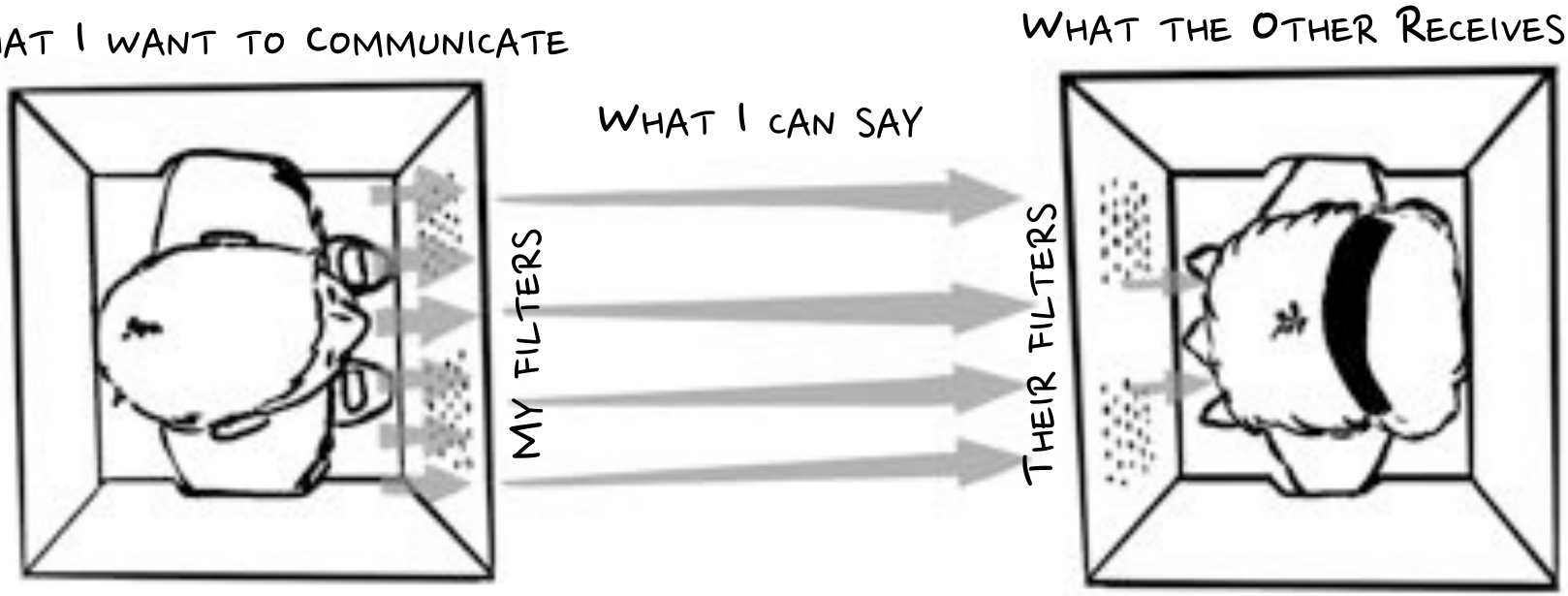
Filters Work Both Ways

Your filters impact what you are able to communicate out of your box

You start with a communication intent. With that intent, you have many choices in how to deliver the message.

Your entire message might not make it through the other person's filters

While you think you have communicated your ideas in their entirety, the message received by the other person may be very different from what you intended.



Language, culture, experience, and other filters impact what choices you have for your communication

You can improve my communication by adjusting your filters to better match other's filters

Filters Limit Your Thinking

You can't open filters you don't have

If you don't speak a language, you will have a difficult time understanding a conversation in that language. If you work in a one department of an organization, you may be unable to understand what is happening in other parts of the company.

To compensate for this, you use empathy. But while you can imagine things from another person's situation, you will never be able to really know how they are interpreting things, how their filters color their interpretation.

You overuse filters that serve you well

If you only have a hammer, everything will look like a nail.

You do a something similar with how you interpret the world around us. You simplify things to a point where they "make sense," to you and then stick to that viewpoint, often in the face of evidence to the contrary.

In extreme cases this shows up as racism or prejudice, but in everyday life it might just be a missed opportunity or a pattern of behavior that you can't seem to break.

Your filters are so good at making sense of your world that you forget that they are incomplete and fallible

Your survival and success is grounded in your ability to make sense of the world. Just being alive is evidence that your filters are working for you. Your continued survival is one reason why it is difficult to question the validity of your point of view, and why you may argue for the validity of your filters rather than be open to other people's perspectives.

You are unaware that you are filtering

A turtle was sunning himself on a rock on a lake, thinking about taking a swim. She saw a fish swimming by and asked, "Excuse me friend, how's the water?" The fish replied, "What's water?"

The fish is swimming in a world of water and has no comparison with other environments. The water just "is."

Your filters are similar. You interpret the world the way you do because you swim in your own world of language, culture, experience and education. You are often surrounded by people who see things similarly so your interpretation seems natural.