



The Weave

provided by Dr. Trung Ngo

INTRODUCTION

The Weave is a visual tool to assess if your environment is giving you what you need to positively adapt to chronic pain. Your capacity to adapt is increased if your environment provides you with following “resilience factors”:

- 1 A sense that your experiences are **validated**.
- 2 **Supportive relationships** with significant others, peers, mentors, family and community members.
- 3 A personal and collective **identity** that fuels feelings of satisfaction, pride and purpose.
- 4 A sense that you have **power and control** over your life.
- 5 A sense that you have **equality** in how you are treated and in the opportunities you have to participate and make meaningful contributions to your community.
- 6 Having **access to material resources** such as food, clothing, shelter, a calm/safe environment, financial resources, medical services and opportunities for education/training/employment.
- 7 A sense of **meaning** in your life.
- 8 Having predictable **structure** that includes daily routines, regular events (eg. sporting leagues, weekly meetings with friends, etc.) and culture-based practices (eg. specific ways of worship).

The more of these resilience factors you are getting from your surroundings, the better chance you have of successfully dealing with pain. Different people and institutions in your life can provide you with some of the above resilience factors...but they can also prevent you from accessing other factors.

The process of the Weave involves: 1) determining the resources in your life that can provide you with these resilience factors; 2) determine if these resources are overall positive or negative; 3) explore different ways in which these resources can be changed or used more effectively.

Before beginning this process, find an ANCHOR and ask them to help you do the Weave and support you as you're making changes to your life. An anchor is a person(s) that consistently makes you feel safe and supported and whose opinion you trust. If you don't have a person like this in your life, then use something that is meaningful and comforting to you. This could be a pet, a place, the memory of someone in your past, a movie, a song, a hero of yours (real or fictional), God, etc. Touch base with your anchor regularly throughout this process.



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Write your name in the center of a sheet of paper.
- 2 Around your name, write down the following resources:
 - a. People you have significant relationships with
 - b. Institutions that support parts of your identity (eg. occupational institutions, cultural institutions, lifestyle institutions, etc.)
 - c. People, places or institutions that give you access to material resources that are significant to you (eg. work gives you money, yoga classes give you a place for exercise and meditation, etc.)
 - d. Places you spend significant amounts of time such as home, school, work, a gym, etc.
 - e. Activities that you regularly engage in such as sports, hobbies, habits (such as smoking or snacking)
 - f. Personal attributes that you identify with (eg. being kind, being strong willed, being unique, etc.)
 - g. Sometimes, pain can provide you with inspiration, a sense of meaning, or a way of connecting with others. In this case, pain should also be included in your Weave

Note that some resources will fit under multiple categories.
- 3 Looking at each of these resources in your life, determine if it is more supportive or stressful for you.
 - a. Draw a **blue line** between the center (you) and a resource to indicate that it provides you with a resilience factor. This line can be small (dashed), medium or large, depending on how much you feel it supports you.
 - b. Draw a **red line** between the center and a resource if you feel that it prevents you from accessing a resilience factor. This arrow can be small (dashed), medium or large, depending on how much stress it causes you.

Note that some resources can be both supportive AND stressful.
- 4 Looking at all of the resources together, determine if any of them interact.
 - a. Do some resources make it easier to access other resources?
 - b. Do some resources prevent you from accessing other resources? (eg. taking care of an elderly parent gives you purpose but it interferes with you pursuing a certain career which provides you with an identity)
 - c. Do some resources cancel each other out or mutually support each other?

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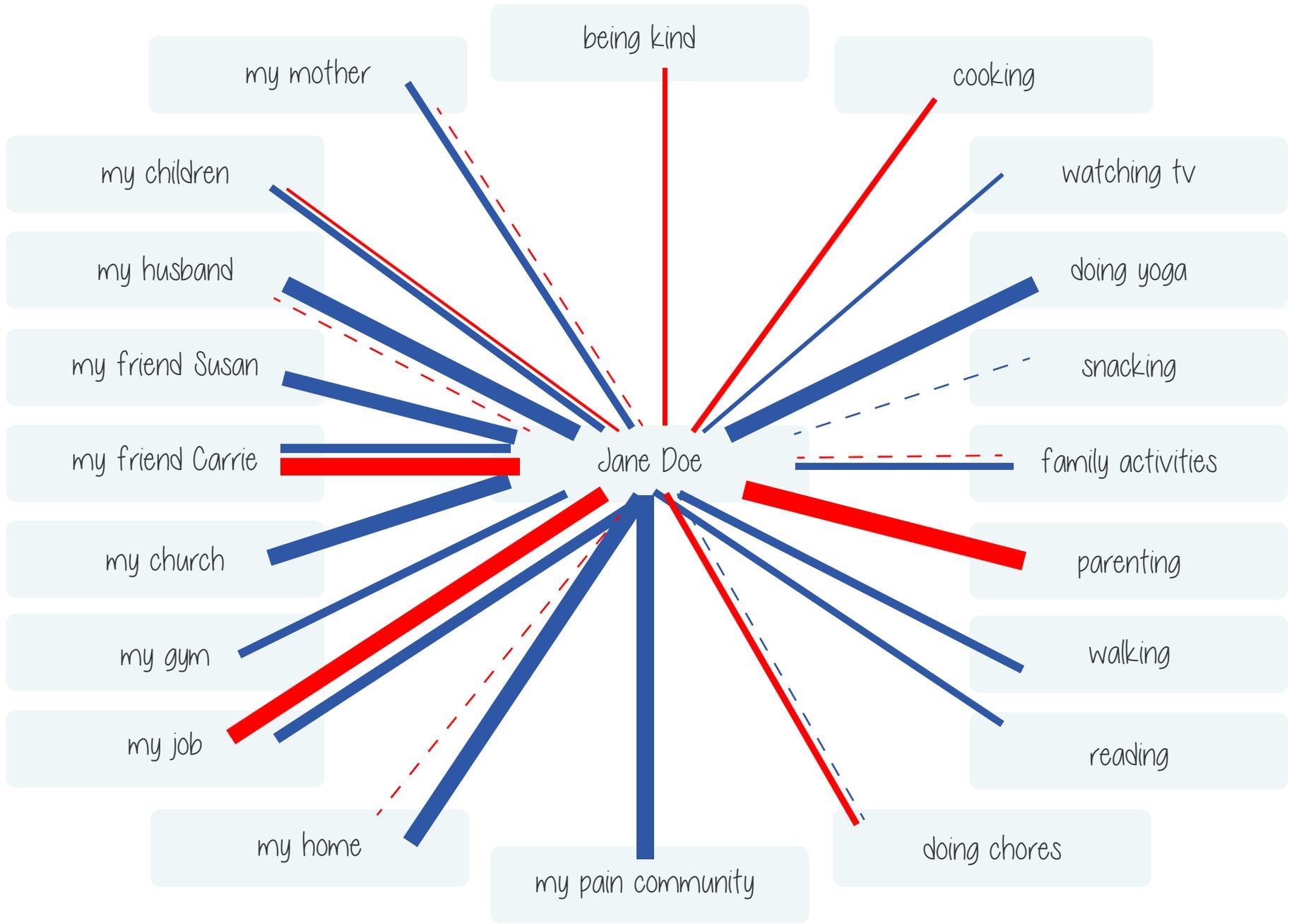
Think about how you can change the way you use your resources so that they provide you with more resilience factors overall.

- a. If a resource is more stressful than supportive, can you modify how you interact with it? Is there another resource that can give you the same resilience factor?
- b. What are the barriers to you disconnecting from a more stressful resource or connecting to a more supportive one?
- c. Do your resources provide you with a good variety of resilience factors?
- d. Are there other resources in your life that you are not accessing right now but that can improve your resilience? Is there an advocate that can help you get access to these resources?

Remember that you are not judging any resource in the Weave, you are simply and honestly assessing how it affects you (ie. just because your relationship with a person is more stressful than supportive doesn't mean that you are saying they are a bad person). Also know that your Weave will change throughout your life, so some resources may increase your resilience at one time but decrease it at another time.



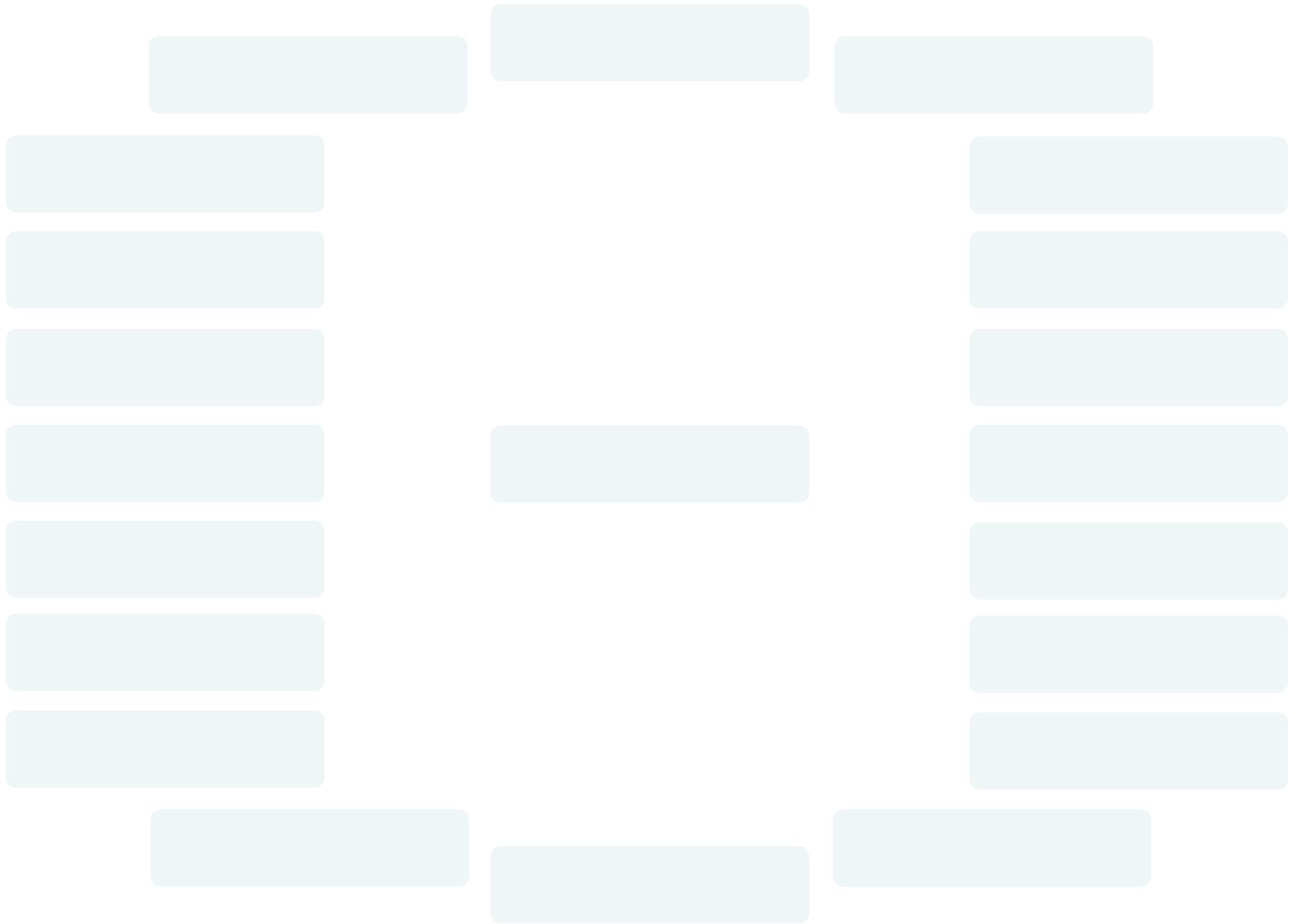
Weave Example



Very supportive
Supportive
Somewhat supportive

Very stressful
Stressful
Somewhat stressful

Your Weave



Very supportive
Supportive
Somewhat supportive

Very stressful
Stressful
Somewhat stressful