

# HEALTH COMMUNICATION: 4 BIOLOGICAL REALITIES YOU SHOULDN'T IGNORE



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BSS

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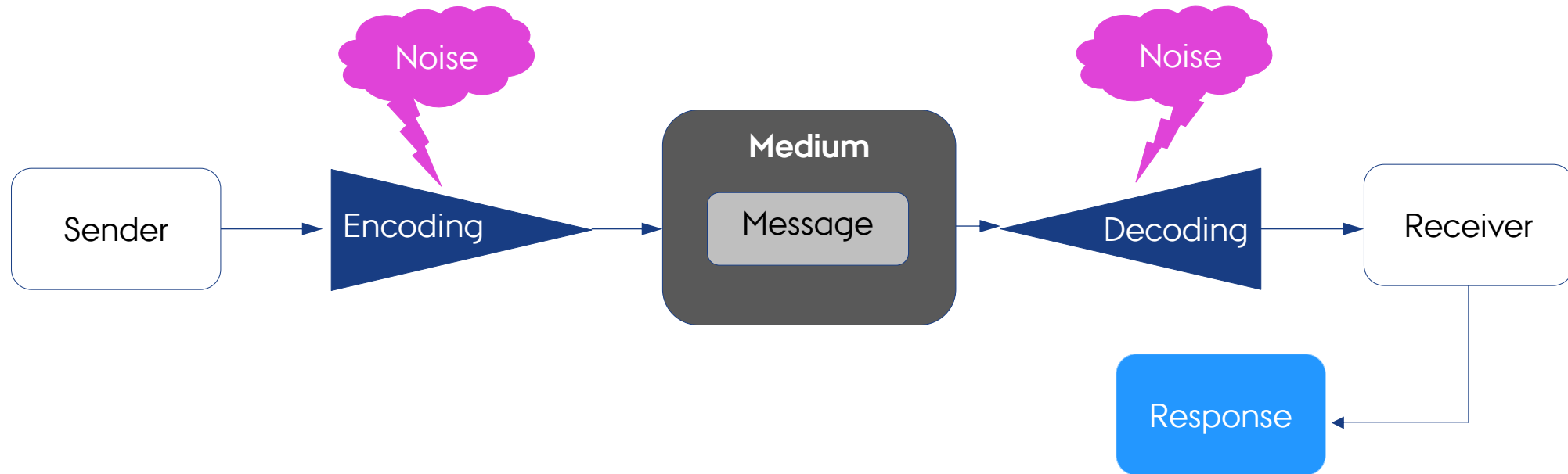


“The death of one man is a tragedy,  
the death of millions is a statistic.”

- Joseph Stalin



# COMMUNICATION PROCESS



# **BIOLOGICAL REALITY #1: YOUR BRAIN'S MAIN PURPOSE ISN'T THINKING**



# WHY DO WE HAVE A BRAIN?

Main purpose → metabolic & energy regulation

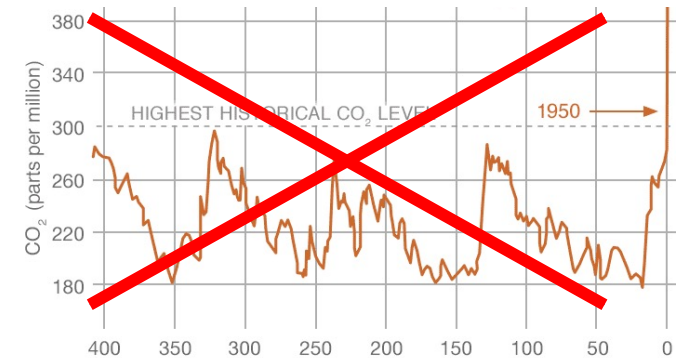


# BIOLOGICAL REALITIES #2-3:

## ATTENTION IS SCARCE & EMOTION IS DATA

## System 1 Experiential Processing

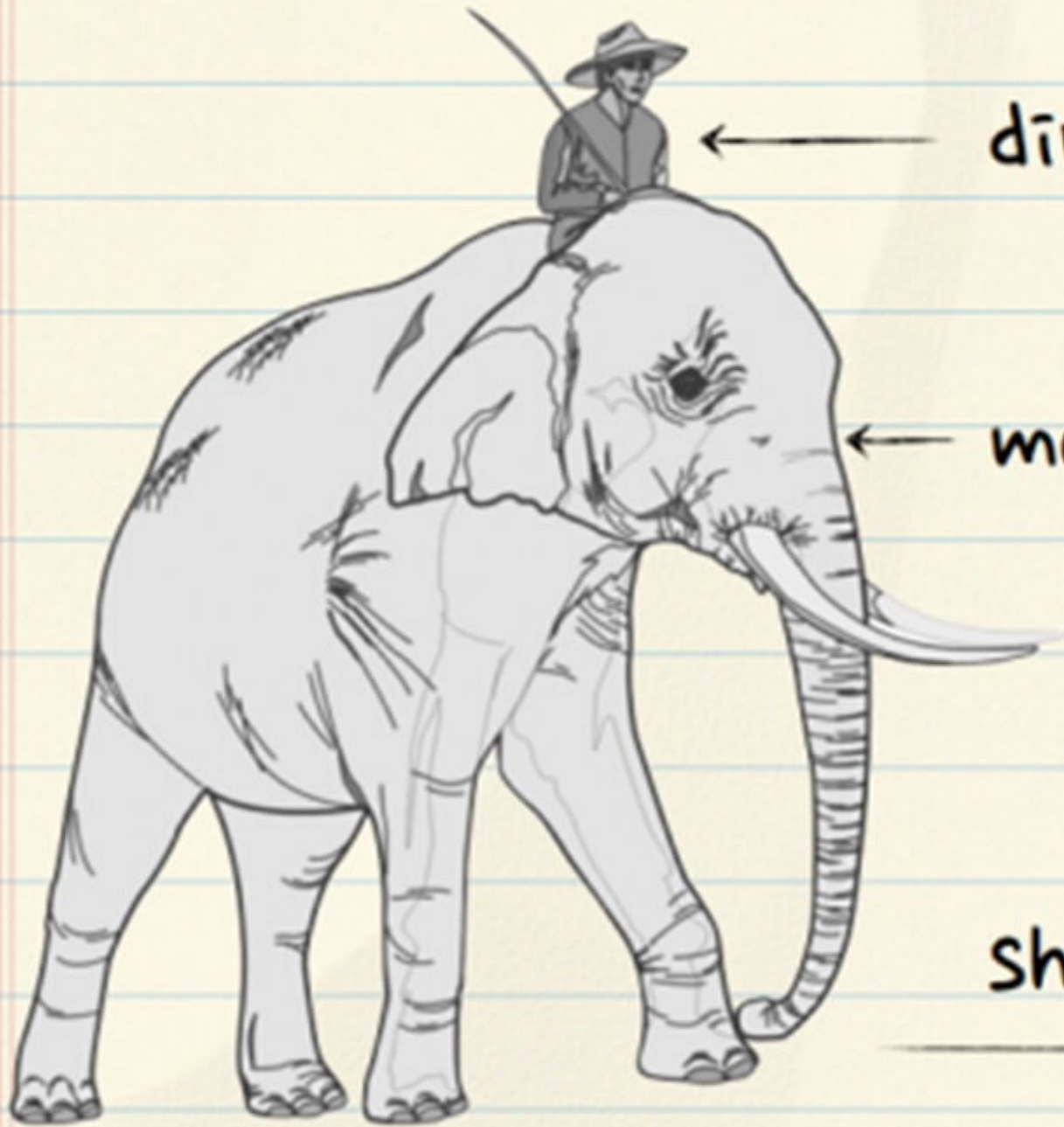
- Fast
- Automatic
- Emotional
- Impulses & drives
- Beliefs, habits



## System 2 Analytical Processing

- Slow, effortful
- Logical
- Reflection
- Planning
- Problem-solving

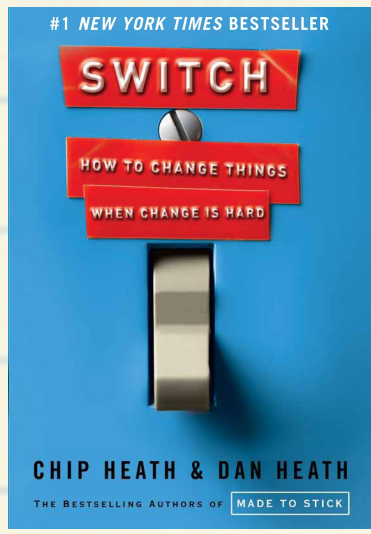




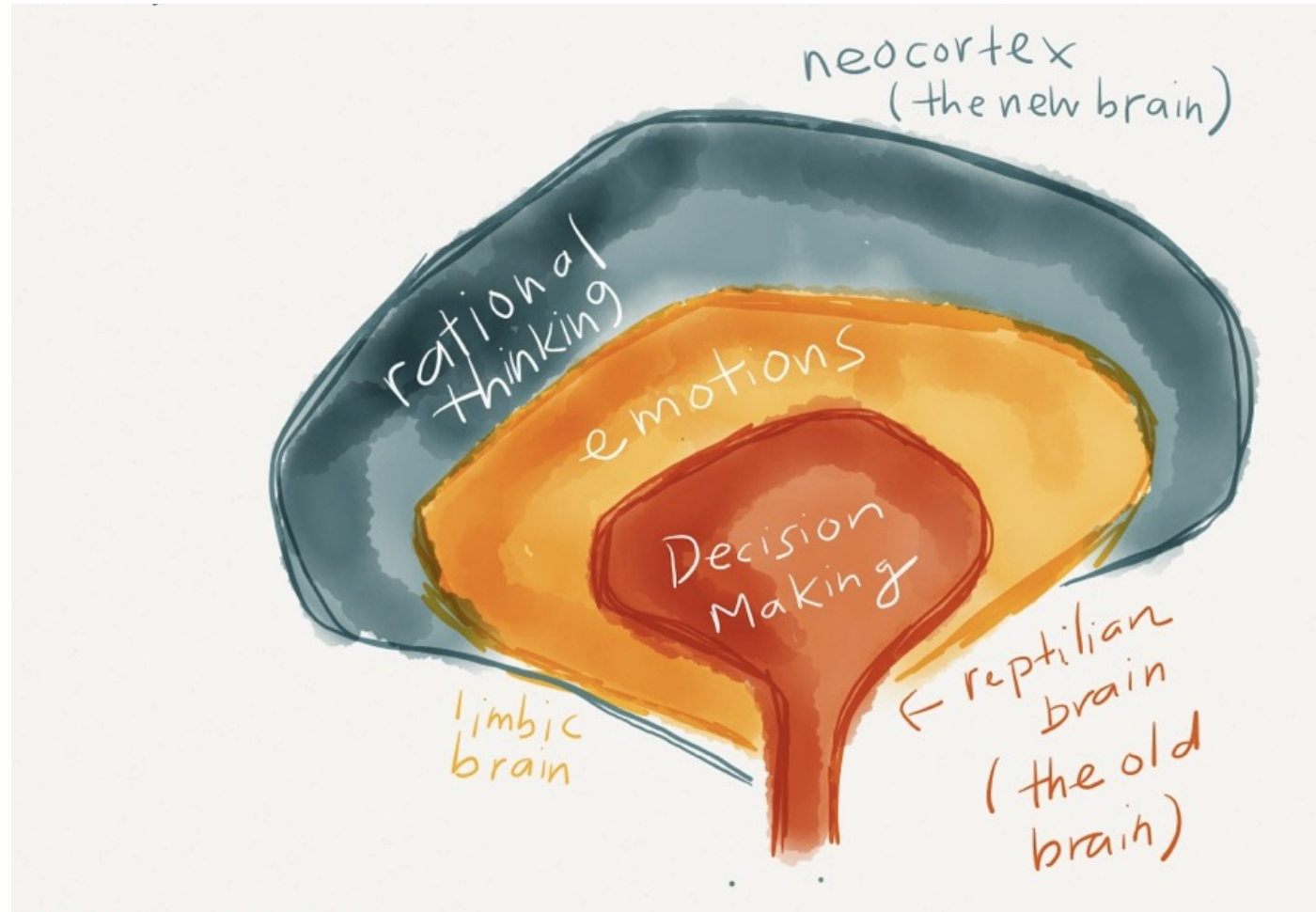
← direct The Rider

← motivate The Elephant

→ shape The Path



# TRIUNE BRAIN AS METAPHOR (NOT BIOLOGICAL REALITY)



” “Meaning isn’t an evaluation in any kind of deliberate propositional sense, it's an action plan. And you can change those action plans.”

—Lisa Feldman Barrett

# BIOLOGICAL REALITY #4: WIRED FOR STORY



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“The problem of how to make all of this wisdom understandable, transmissible, persuasive, enforceable – in a word, of how to make it stick – was faced and a solution found.

Storytelling is the solution – storytelling is something brains do, naturally and implicitly.

It should be no surprise that it pervades the entire fabric of human societies and cultures.”

- Antonio Damasio, Neuroscientist

*Self Comes to Mind, Constructing the Unconscious Brain*



# WHAT IS A STORY?

“A detailed, character-based narration of a character’s struggles to overcome obstacles and reach an important goal.”



Haven (2007)

# THE STRUCTURE, NOT THE CONTENT



- ✓ Identifiable Character
- ✓ Plot (temporal dimension, goal)
- ✓ Setting

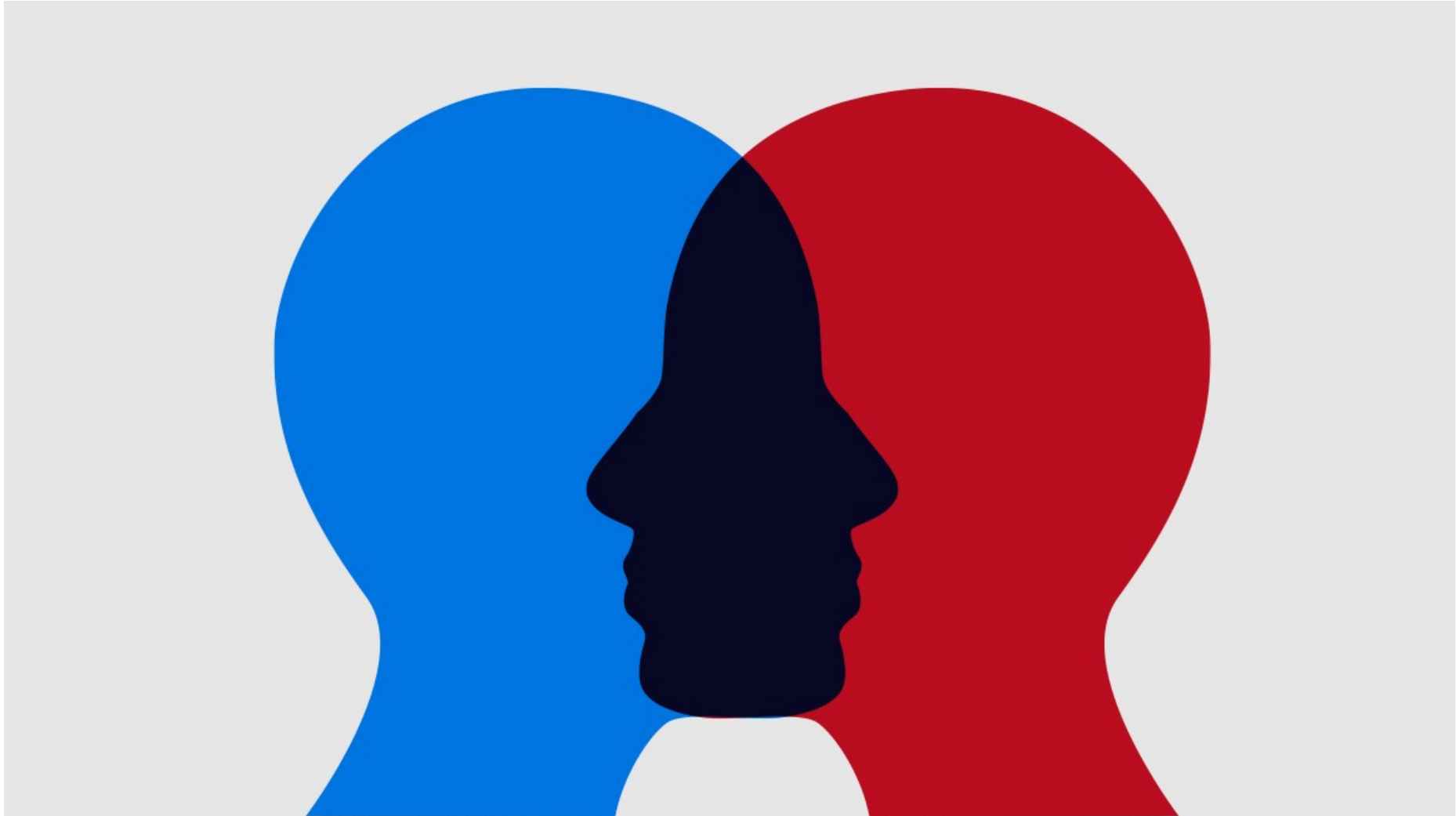
# HOMO NARRANS

## The Narrative Paradigm (Fisher, 1987)

- Coherence: deals with internal consistency of story's characters & context
- Fidelity: relates to external consistency and fit with listener's values.



# NARRATIVE TRANSPORTATION & IDENTIFICATION



(Green & Brock, 2000; van Laer, 2014)

The 'traveler' in narrative transportation can return **changed by the journey**

(Gerrig, 1993)

so that it becomes a

**“transformational experience”**

(Phillips and McQuarrie 2010)

whose effects are

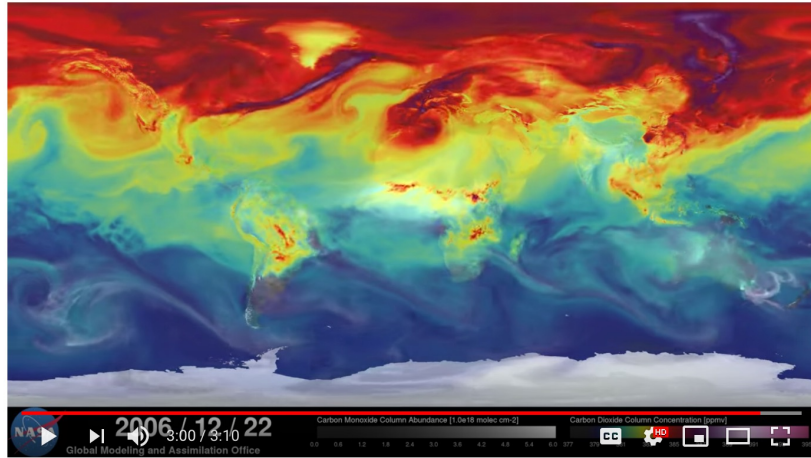
**strong and long-lasting**

(Green, Garst, and Brock 2004;

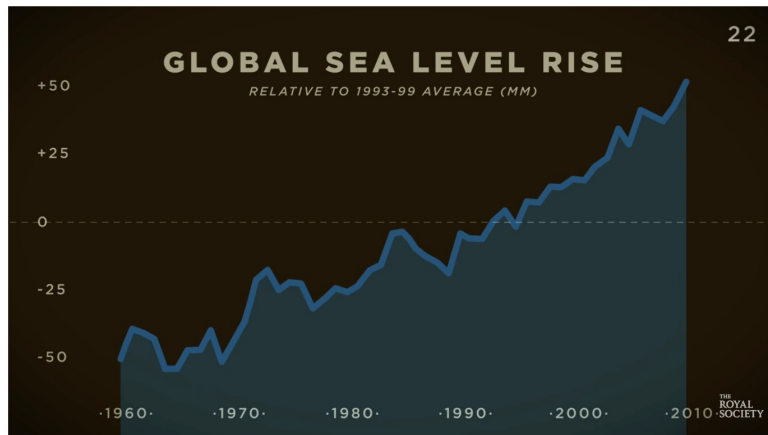
Green et al. 2008).



# FACTUAL NARRATIVES



NASA | A Year in the Life of Earth's CO2



An introduction to climate change in 60 seconds

163,992 views

609 likes 63 comments SHARE SAVE ...

# STORIES



Leigh-Kathryn Bonner: Beekeeper

3,026 views

57 likes 12 comments SHARE SAVE ...

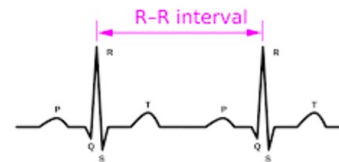
# FINDINGS (MORRIS ET AL. 2019)

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Story condition nearly 2x as likely to...

- Engage in pro-environmental behavior
- Donated ca. 28% more to CC charity
- The effects lasted (6 weeks post-study)

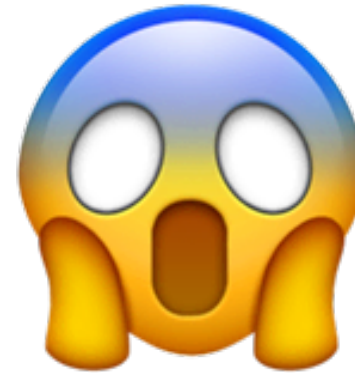
NS (+ negative end valence) → donation behavior through emotional arousal



# FINDINGS (MORRIS ET AL. 2019)

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Participants treated with informational narratives performed *fewer* pro-environmental behaviors than those in the control group.





# QUESTIONS?





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