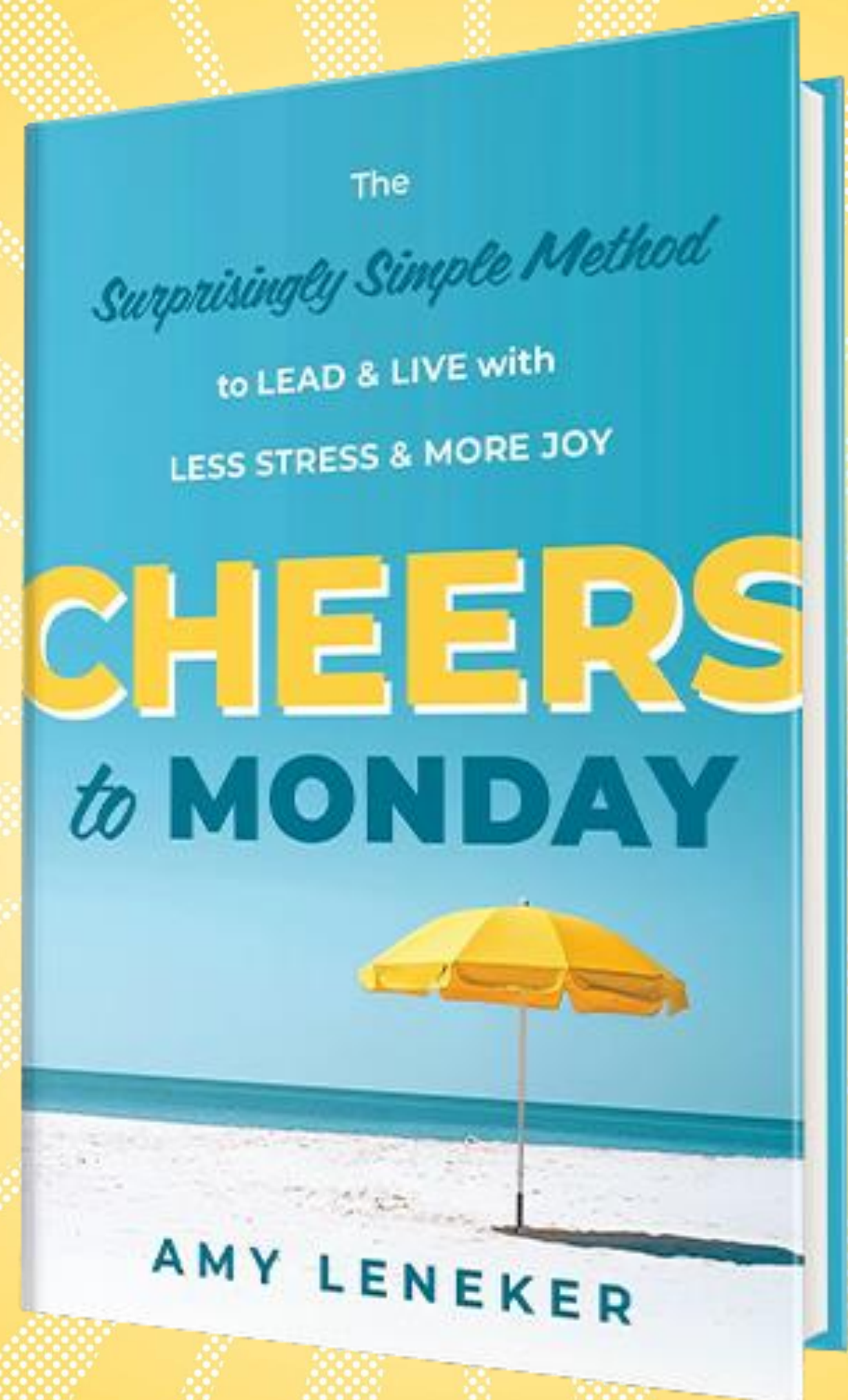




This slide deck is being shared as a follow up resource.

It is ok to use the deck to enhance your learning.

It is not ok to use the slide deck for any other purpose, including trainings or events.



The

Surprisingly Simple Method

to LEAD & LIVE with
LESS STRESS & MORE JOY

CHEERS

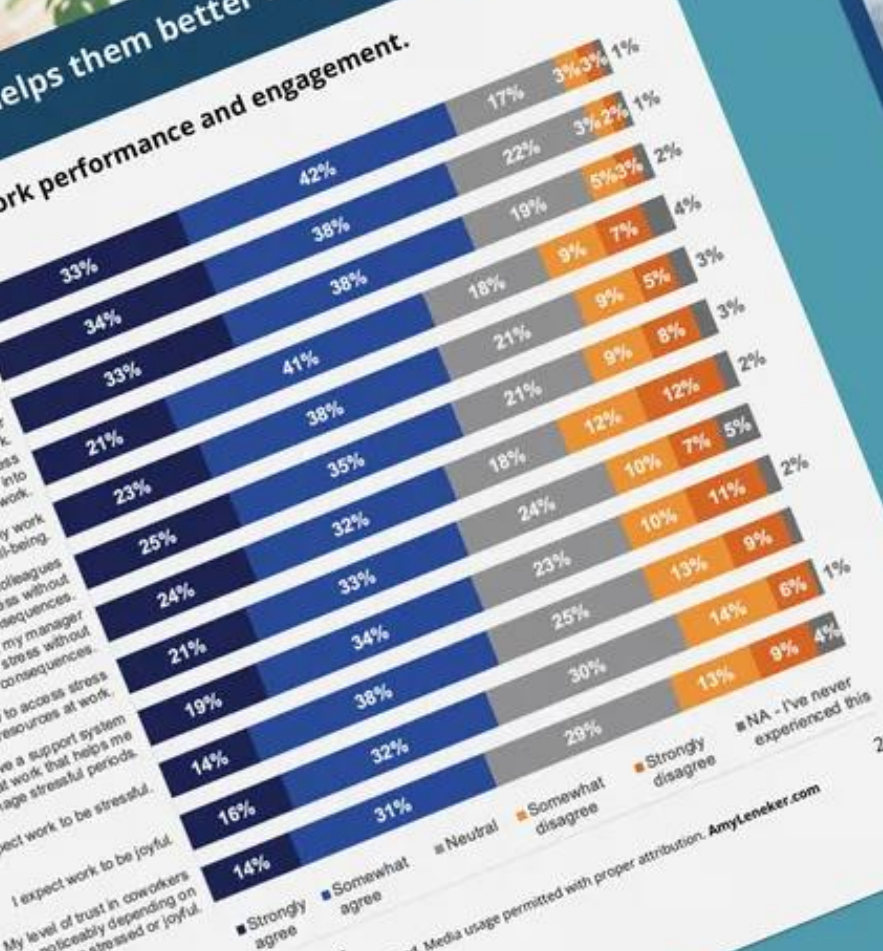
to **MONDAY**



AMY LENEKER



helps them better cope with stress.



The state of Stress & Joy at Work®

Amy Leneker
THE CENTER FOR JOYFUL WORK

2026

The Center for Joyful Work and the National Center of Stress and Joy at Work® National Survey provide practical, actionable insights into the state of stress and joy at work today. For decades, workplace culture has normalized stress and dismissed joy at work as frivolous. The data in this study show that stress is true for American workers.

The findings in this study point to a hard truth—and a hopeful one: stress is systematically undermining success, and joy is part of the solution.

Why Studying Stress and Joy Matters Now More Than Ever
Stress isn't just a performance problem today; it's a leadership problem for tomorrow.

Stress is reshaping careers and leaving leadership pipelines at risk. Large numbers of working Americans are opting out of leadership altogether due to stress.

State of Stress & Joy at Work | 2026
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METHODOLOGY

This National Research Study included 750 participants weighted to the 2020 U.S. Census for age, gender, geography, and ethnicity.

The participants were ages 18 to 65 at the time of fielding. The study's margin of error is +/- 3.58%. Any findings labeled as significant are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

All participants in the study were employed part-time or full-time for a true "Snapshot of Working America," which is ideal for the workforce-focused analysis of the study. The research study was conducted online from December 23, 2025, to January 12, 2026.



3 Nearly half (44%) report avoiding a promotion because they did not want additional stress.

Promotions are a primary mechanism for developing leaders. When stress deters advancement, organizations lose momentum in leadership development and succession planning. High performers may remain in roles that underutilize their capabilities, while leadership roles become harder to fill with prepared candidates.

4 Nearly half (45%) say work stress has caused them to lower their career goals.

This is an early warning signal for leadership supply. Over time, fewer employees pursue stretch roles, cross-functional experiences, or leadership pathways. The leadership pipeline narrows not only because people leave, but because those who stay have lowered career aspirations.

5 A majority (61%) report staying in a job longer than they wanted because stress made it hard to make a change.

Chronic stress reduces perceived mobility by draining the energy required to search, interview, and transition to a new position. This creates a stagnation within organizations: people remain in roles that no longer fit, engagement declines, and growth and development slows.

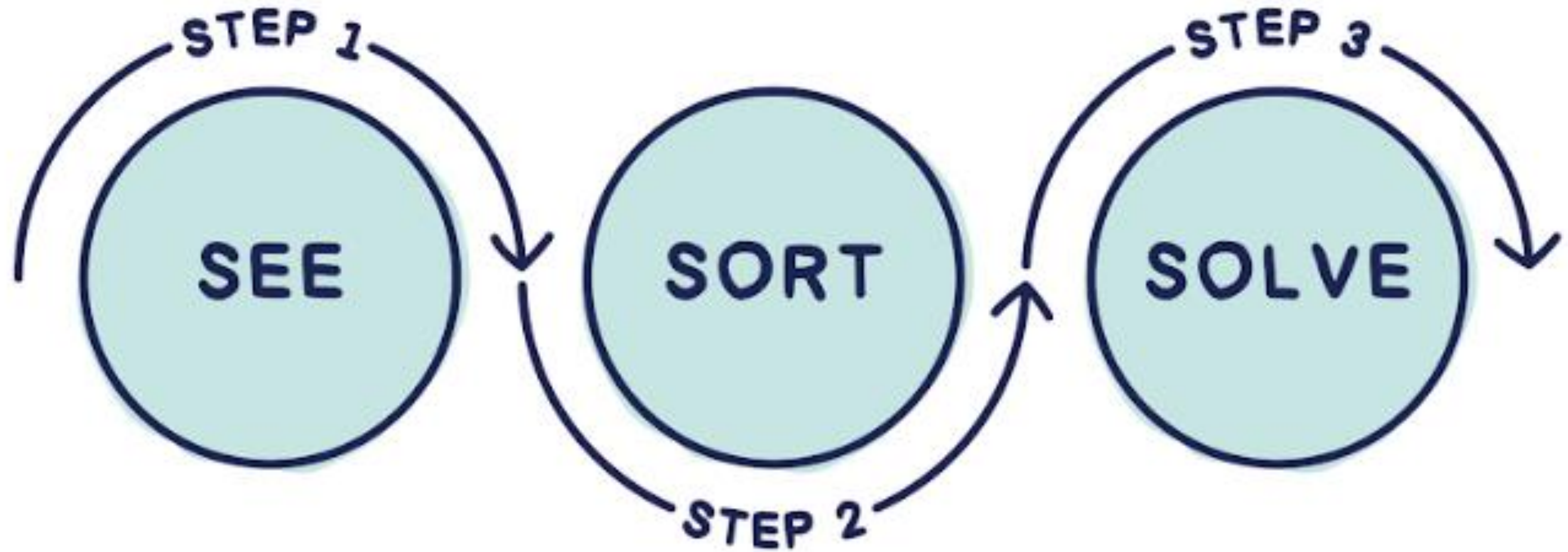




Stress is undermining success;

JOY

is part of the solution.



Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)



STRESS RULER

HOW CHALLENGING HAS YOUR STRESS BEEN?

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

NOT AT ALL
CHALLENGING

A LITTLE
CHALLENGING

SOMEWHAT
CHALLENGING

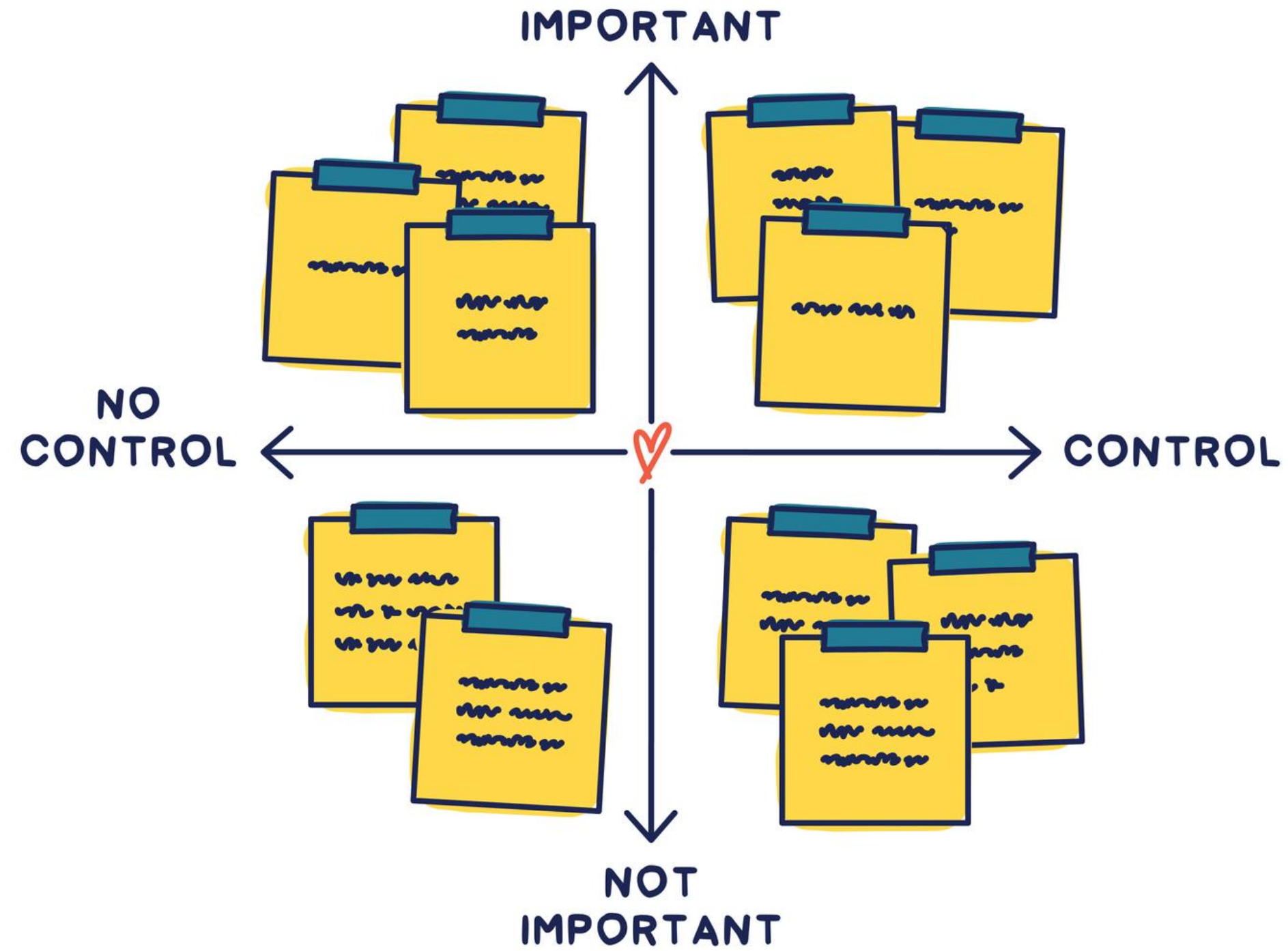
VERY
CHALLENGING

EXTREMELY
CHALLENGING

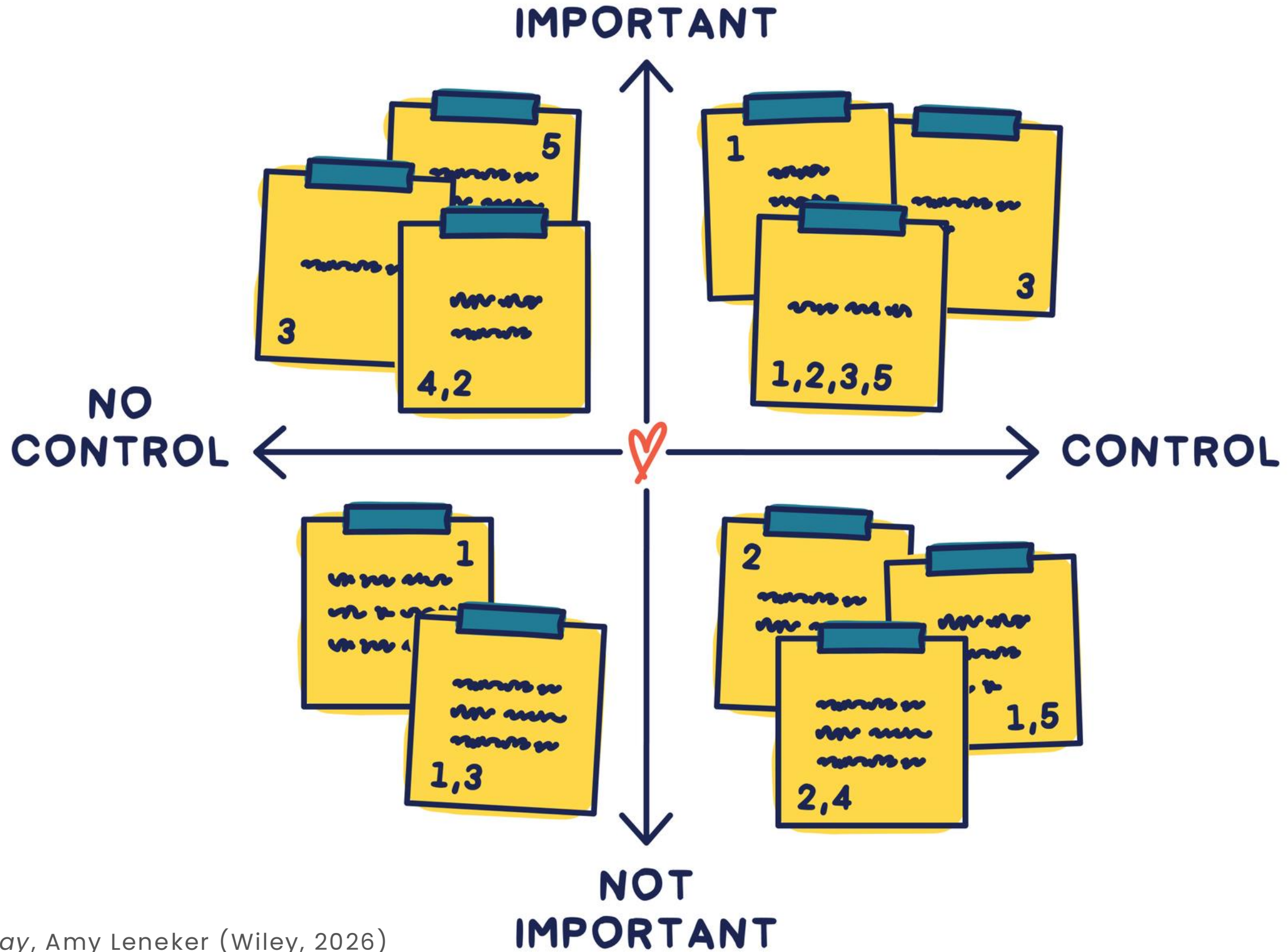
Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)



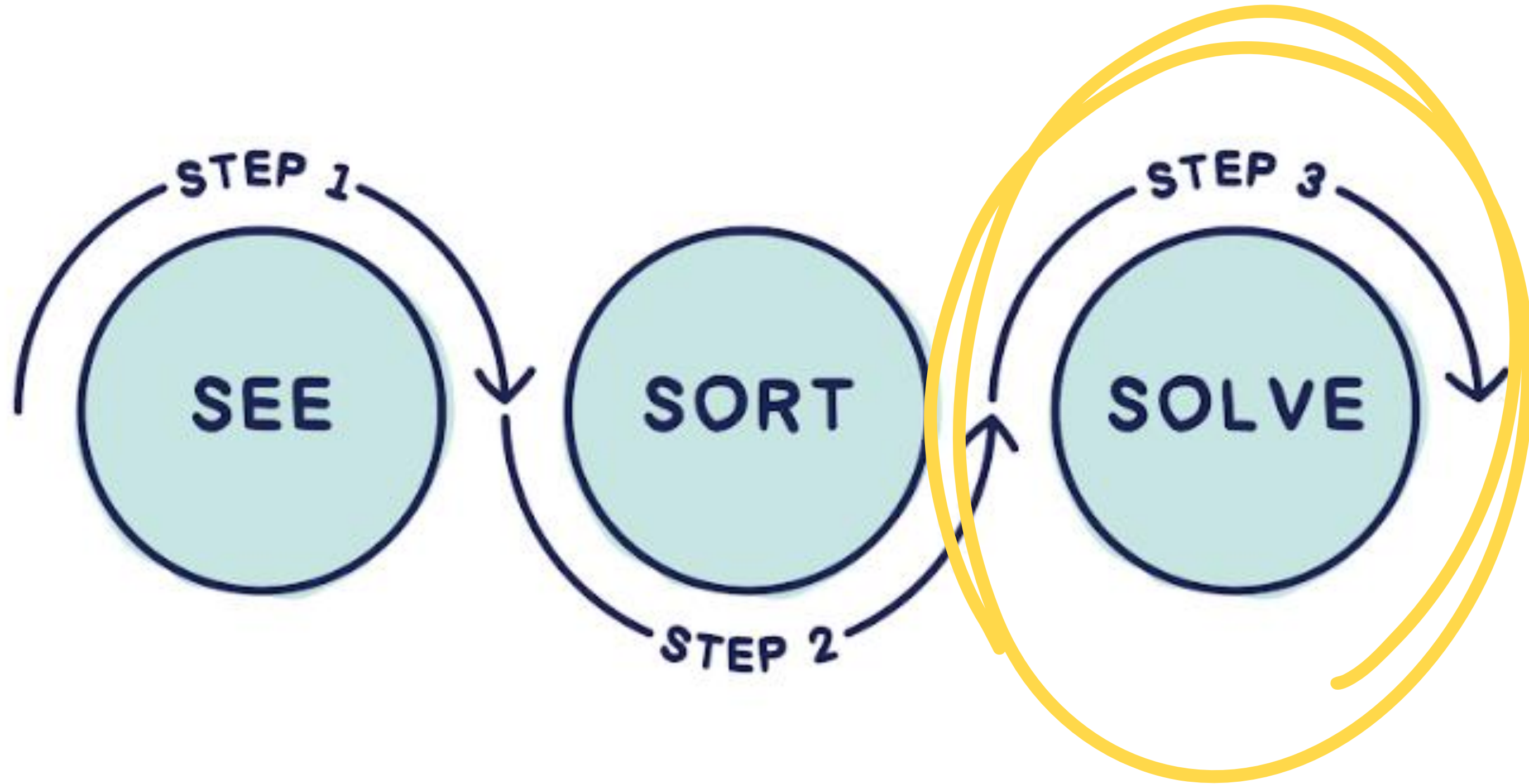
THE UN-STRESSING METHOD™



Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)



Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)



Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)

Workplace Situations That Prevent Joy Once a Week or More

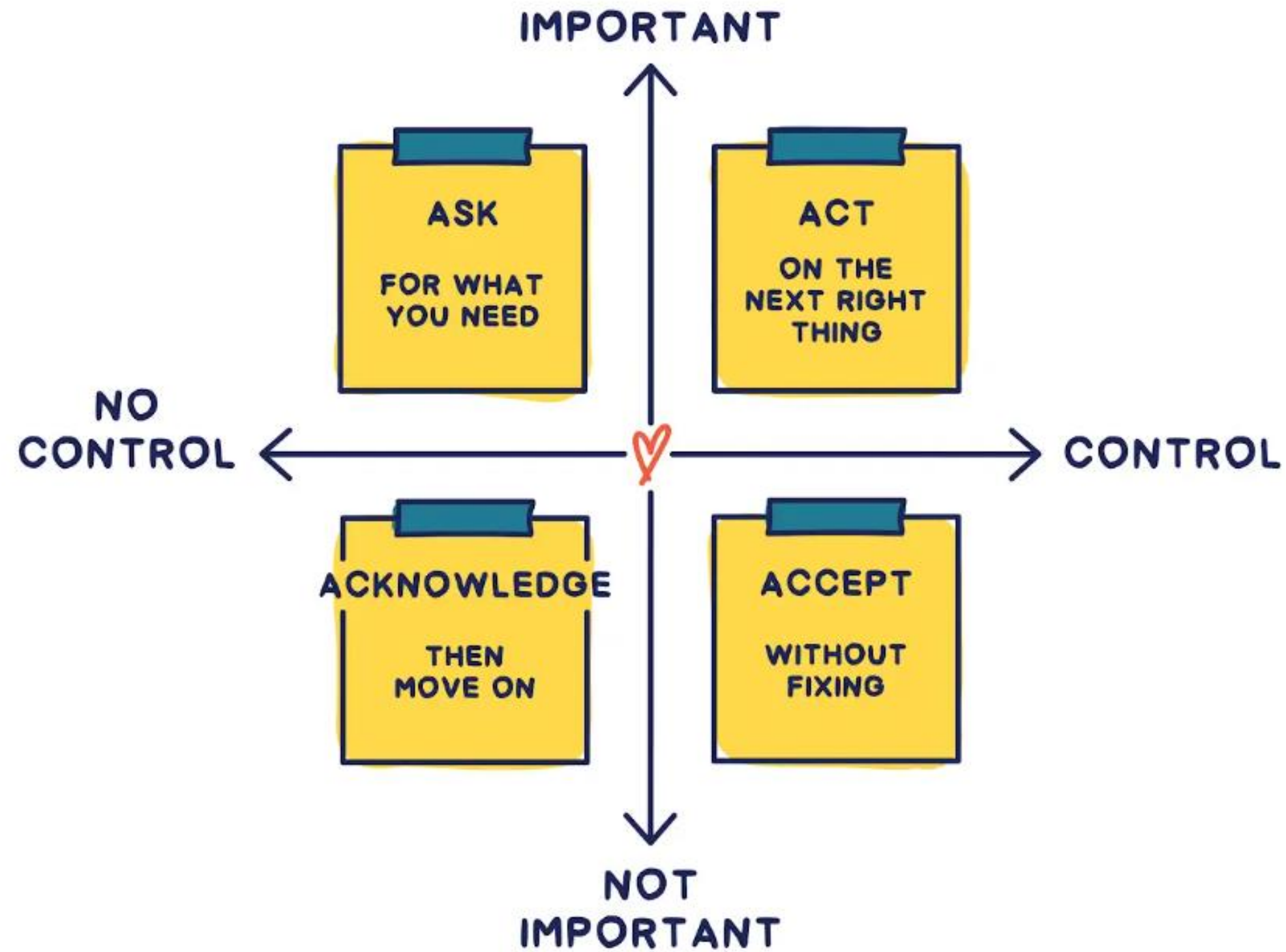


Source: *The State of Stress and Joy at Work*, Amy Leneker, 2026.



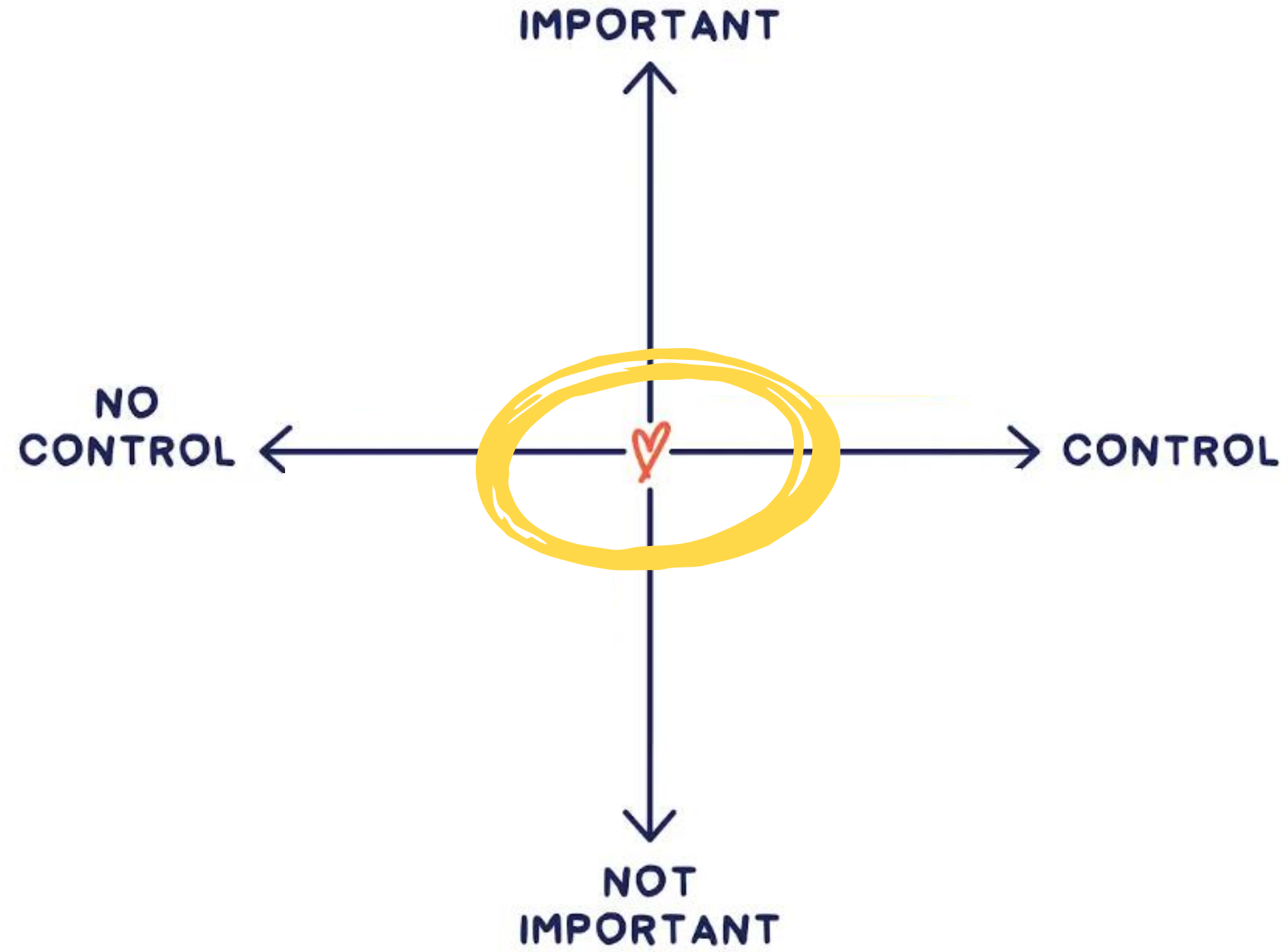
**75% of Working Americans:
Joy helps me cope with
work stress**

THE UN-STRESSING METHOD™



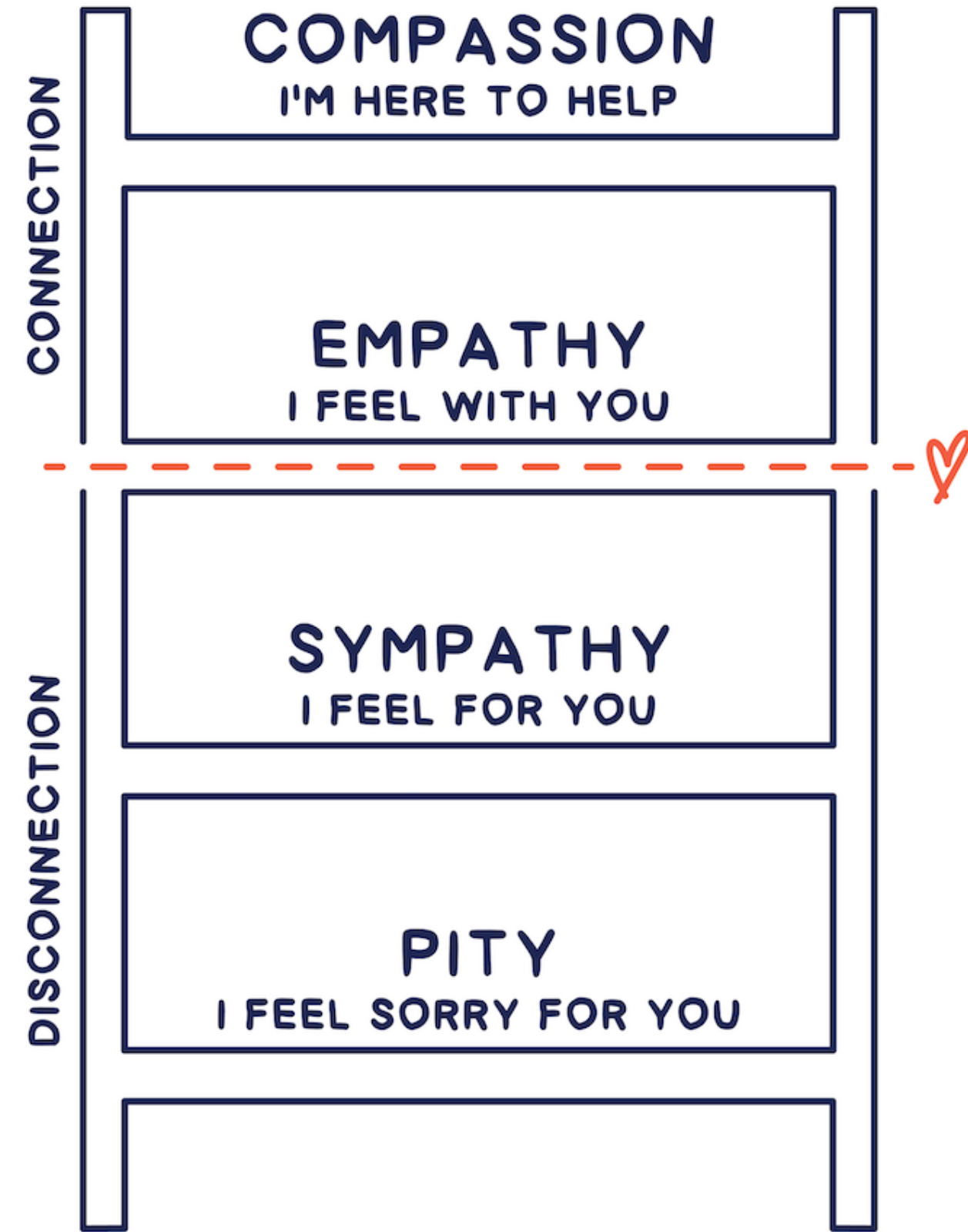
Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)

THE UN-STRESSING METHOD™



Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)

Ladder of Connection



Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)

Research from Harvard Business Review, [Rasmus Hougaard](#), [Jacqueline Carter](#) and [Marissa Afton](#), Dec. 2021



Stress thrives in isolation.
Relief comes through connection.

Source: *Cheers to Monday*, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)

Amy Leneker

Amy@AmyLeneker.com

(360) 529-0290

