

# Effective Delegation

**Hello!**

**I'm Spencer Norman.**

**VP Engineering**

**Privy (an Attentive company)**

# When delegation fails

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**Delegation**  
**is not**  

---

**a silver bullet**

# Effective Delegation

# What we're going to cover

**What delegation is and is not**

What context is essential

How much autonomy to provide

How to think about accountability

How to decide what to delegate

How to decide who should take on a project

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**How to decide who should take on a project**

# What is delegation?

Delegation is:

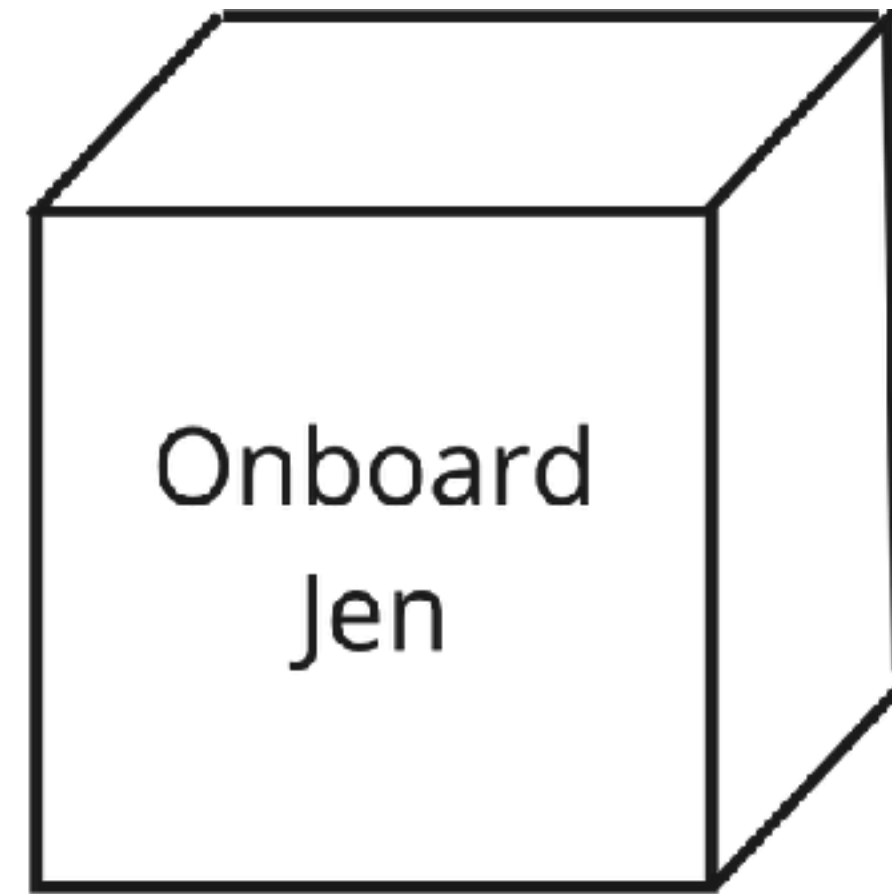
**designating responsibility to  
someone else**

Delegation is:

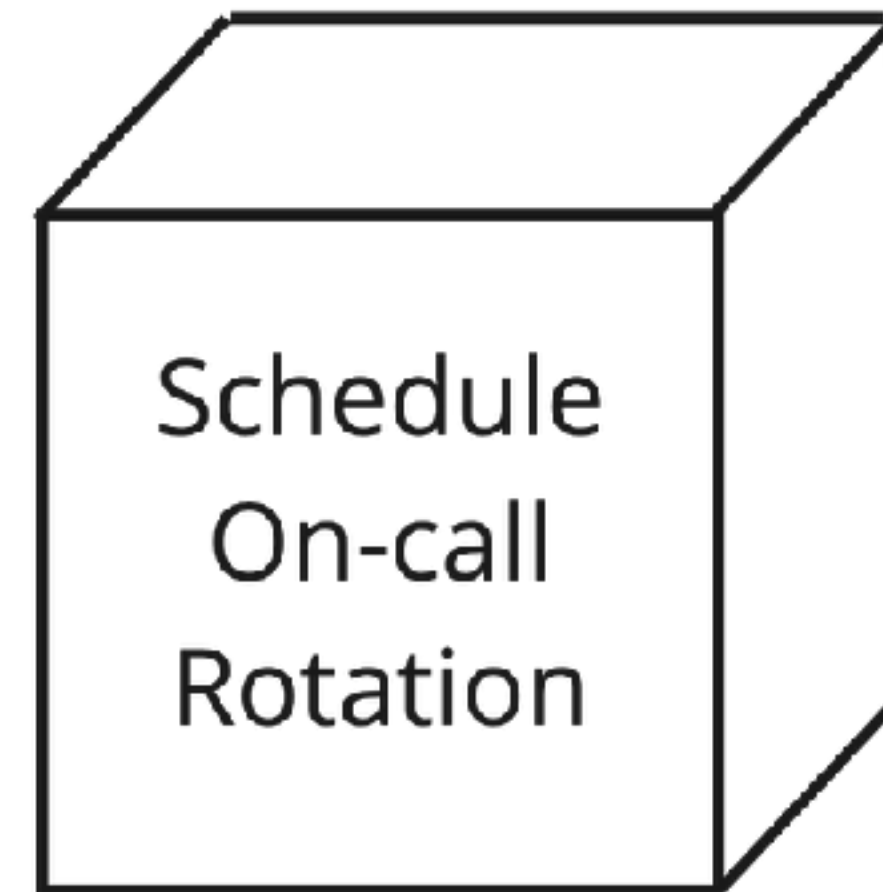
**trusting someone to make  
decisions on your behalf**

Delegation is:

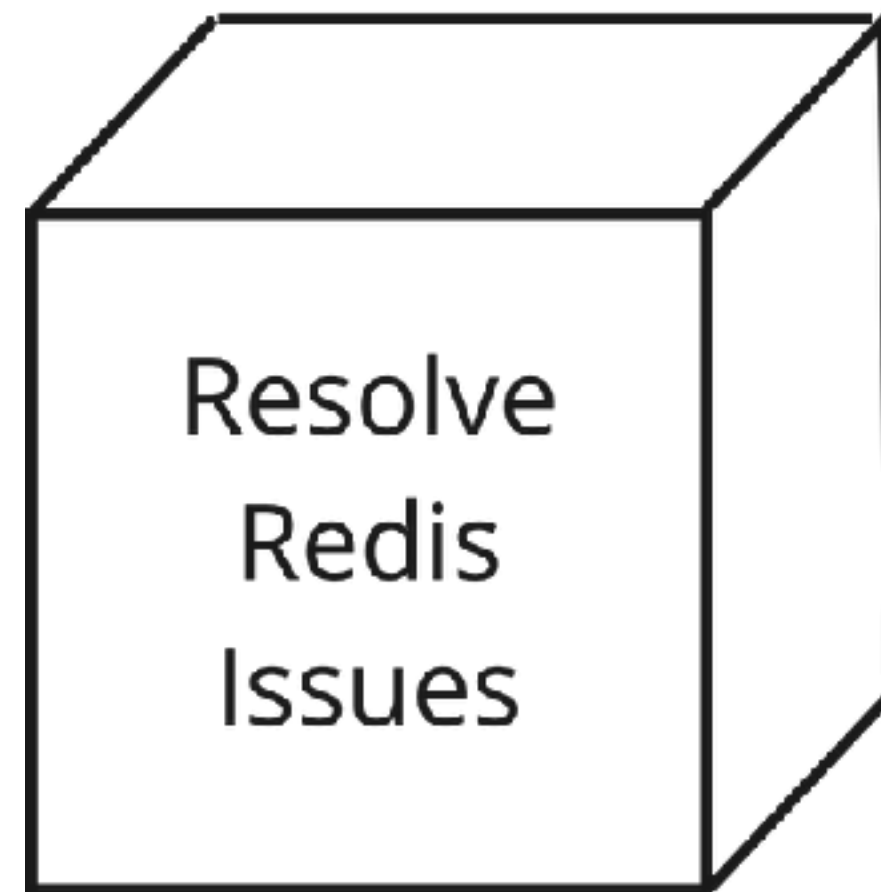
**lending authority or agency to  
make decisions**

A 3D wireframe box with text on its front face.

Onboard  
Jen

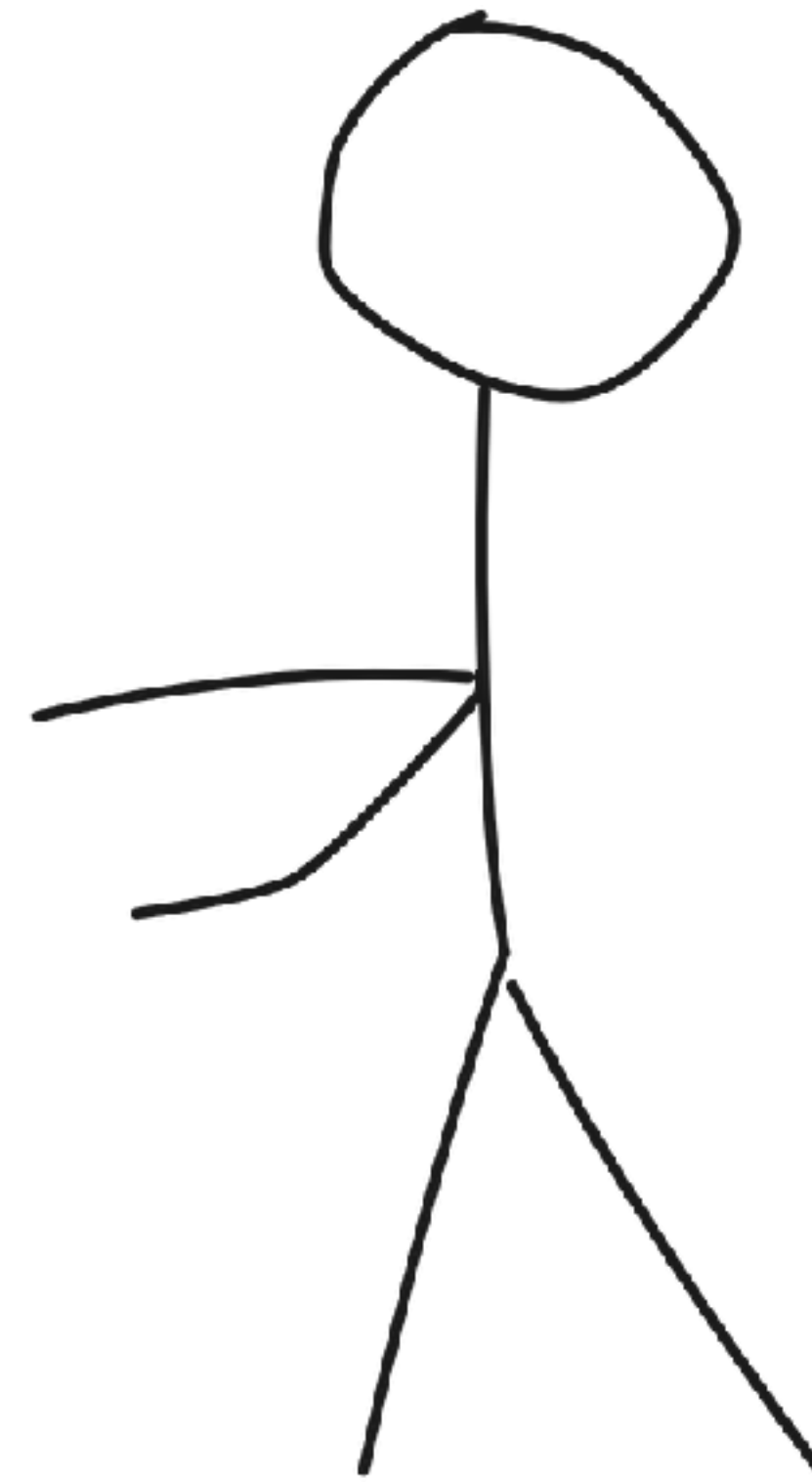
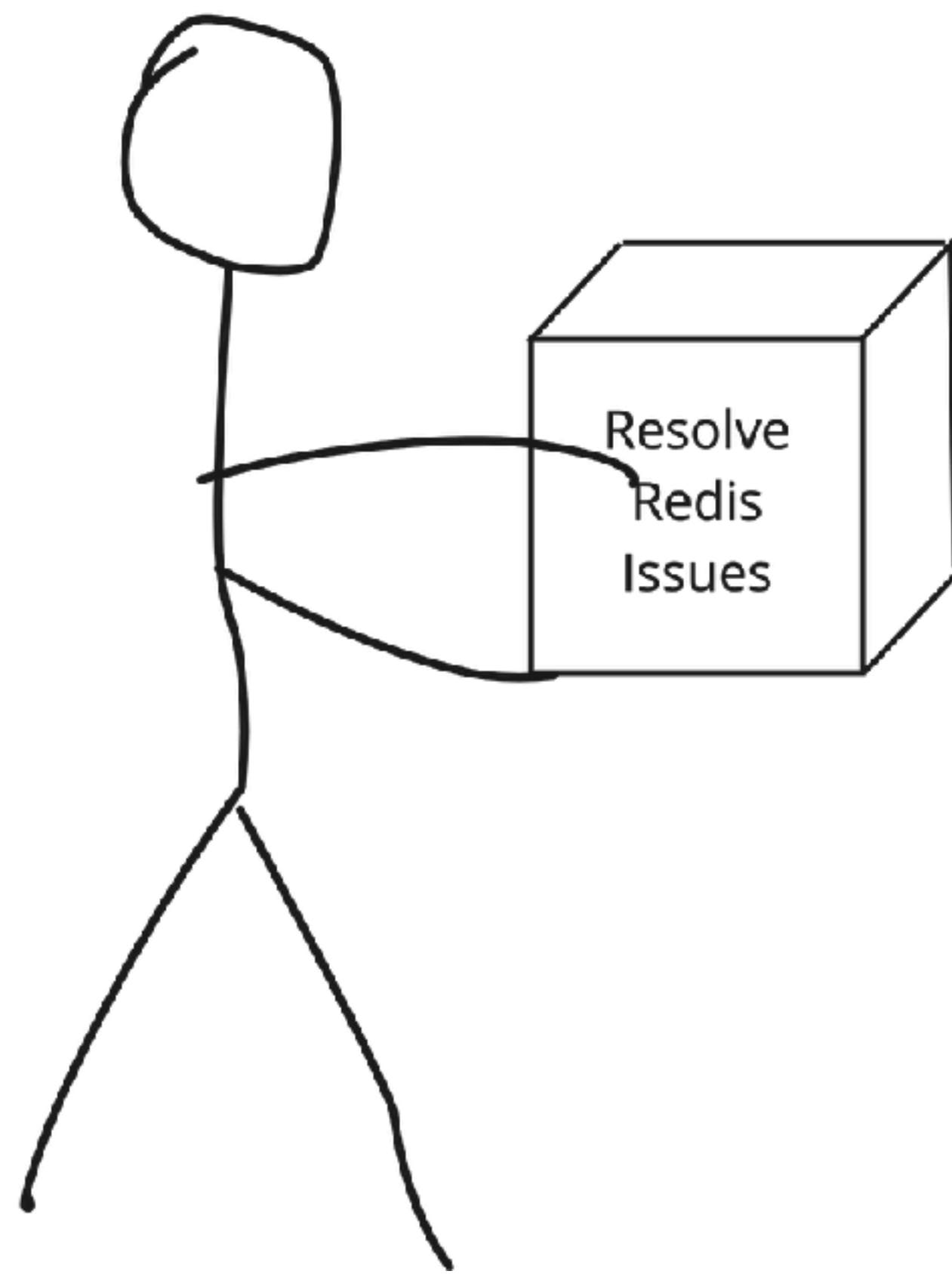
A 3D wireframe box with text on its front face.

Schedule  
On-call  
Rotation

A 3D wireframe box with text on its front face.

Resolve  
Redis  
Issues



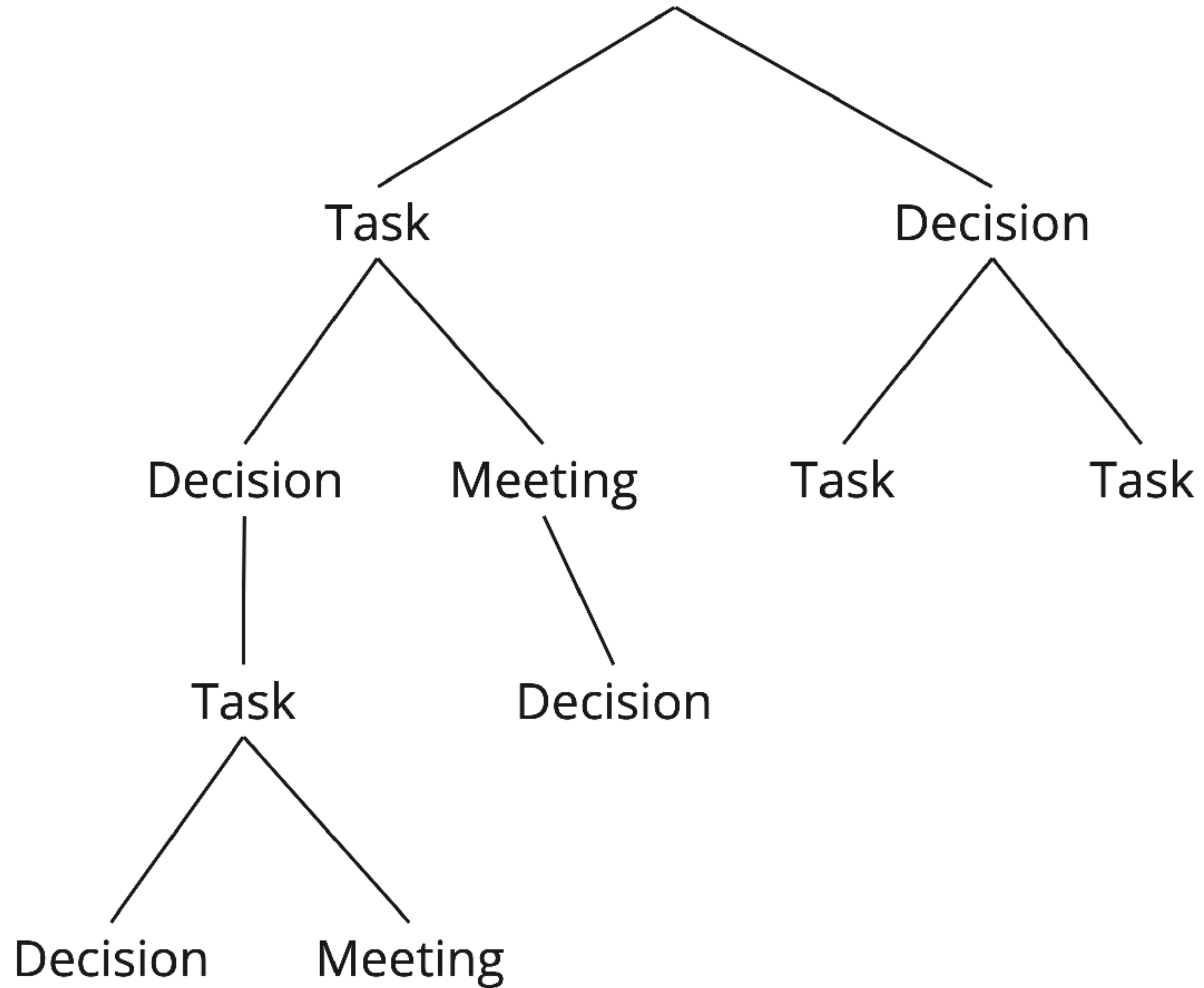


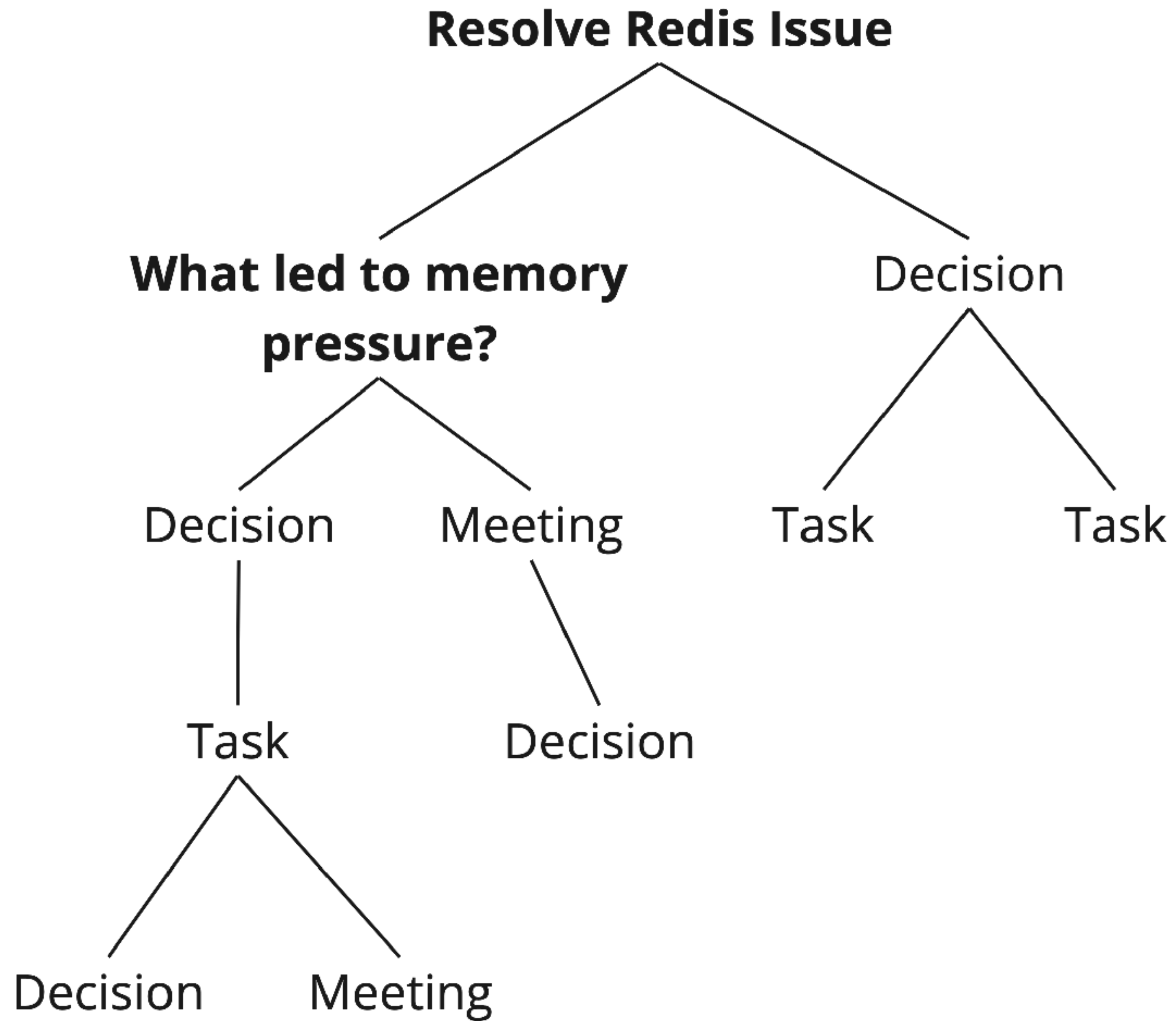
Delegation is:

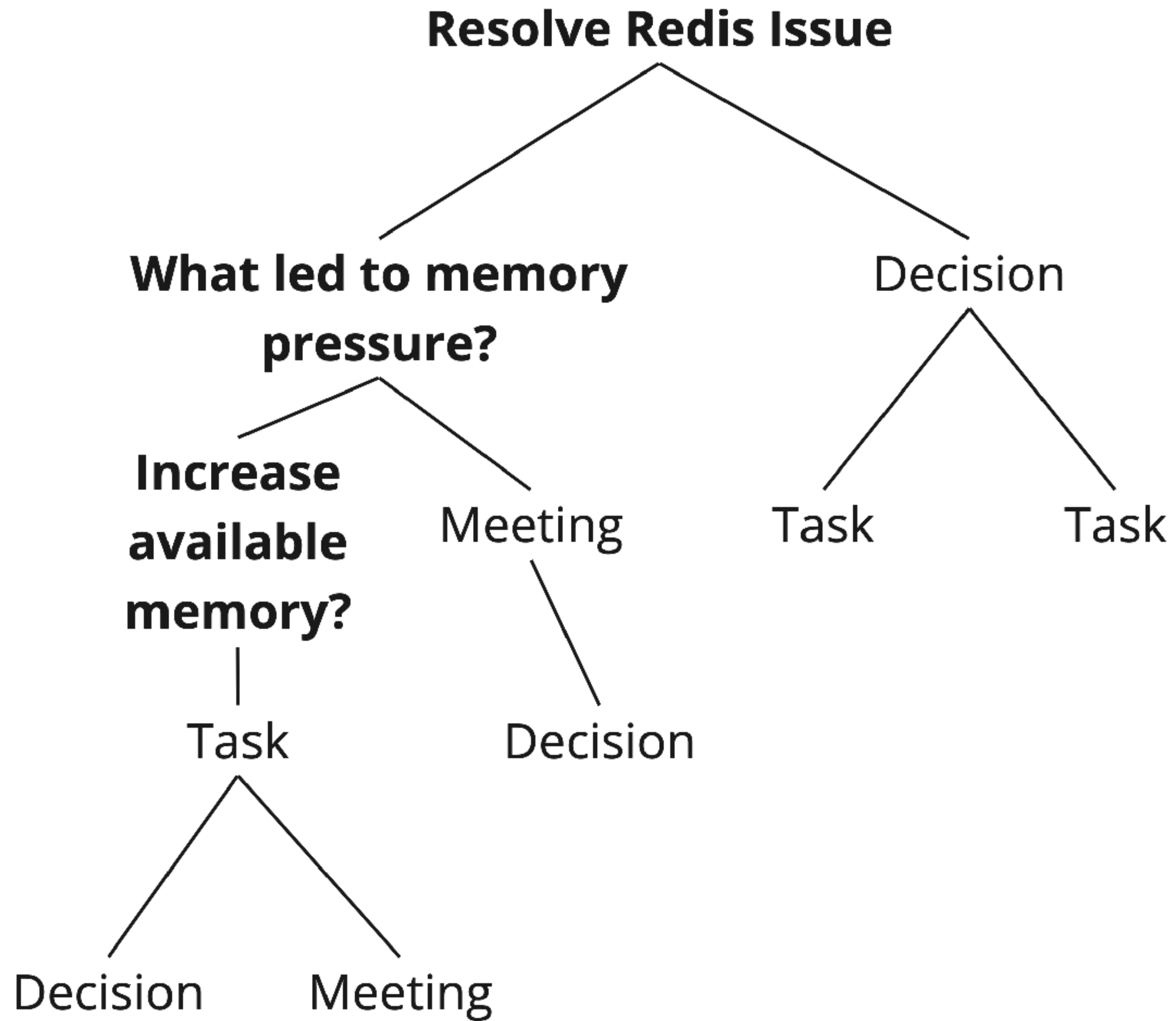
**lending responsibility and agency  
for a bucket of decisions.**

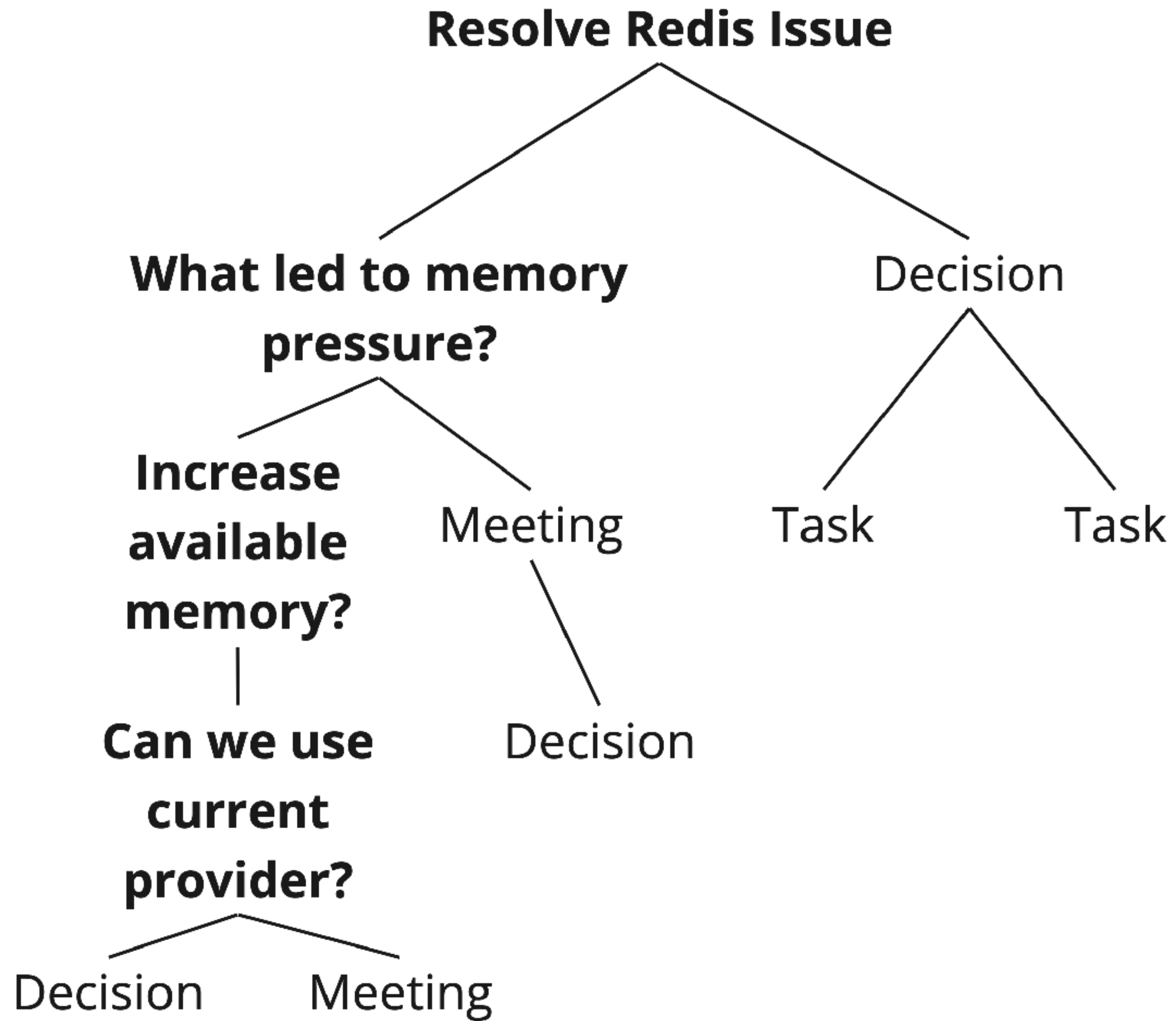


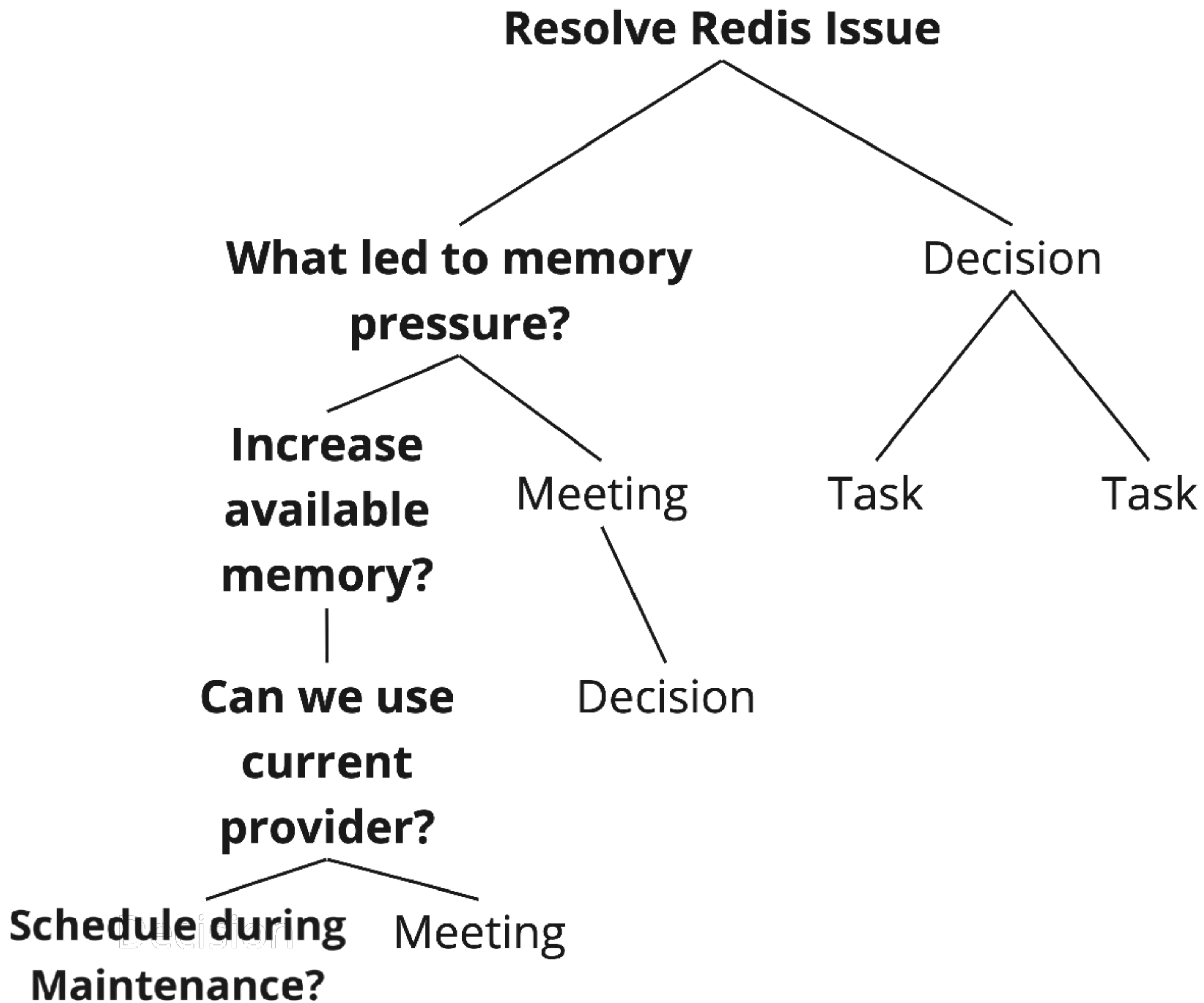
# Resolve Redis Issue













**“Delegating” a task without  
delegating any of the  
decision making is just  
micromanagement**



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**Micro  
Management**



**Be here**



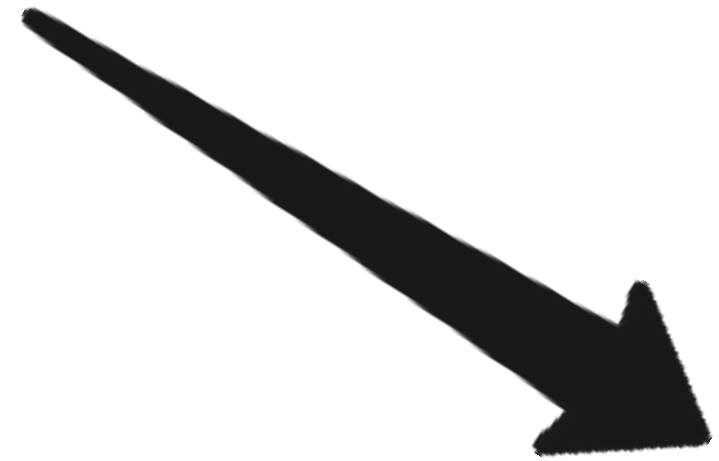
**Abdication  
of Responsibility**



# Providing Context and Autonomy







# Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
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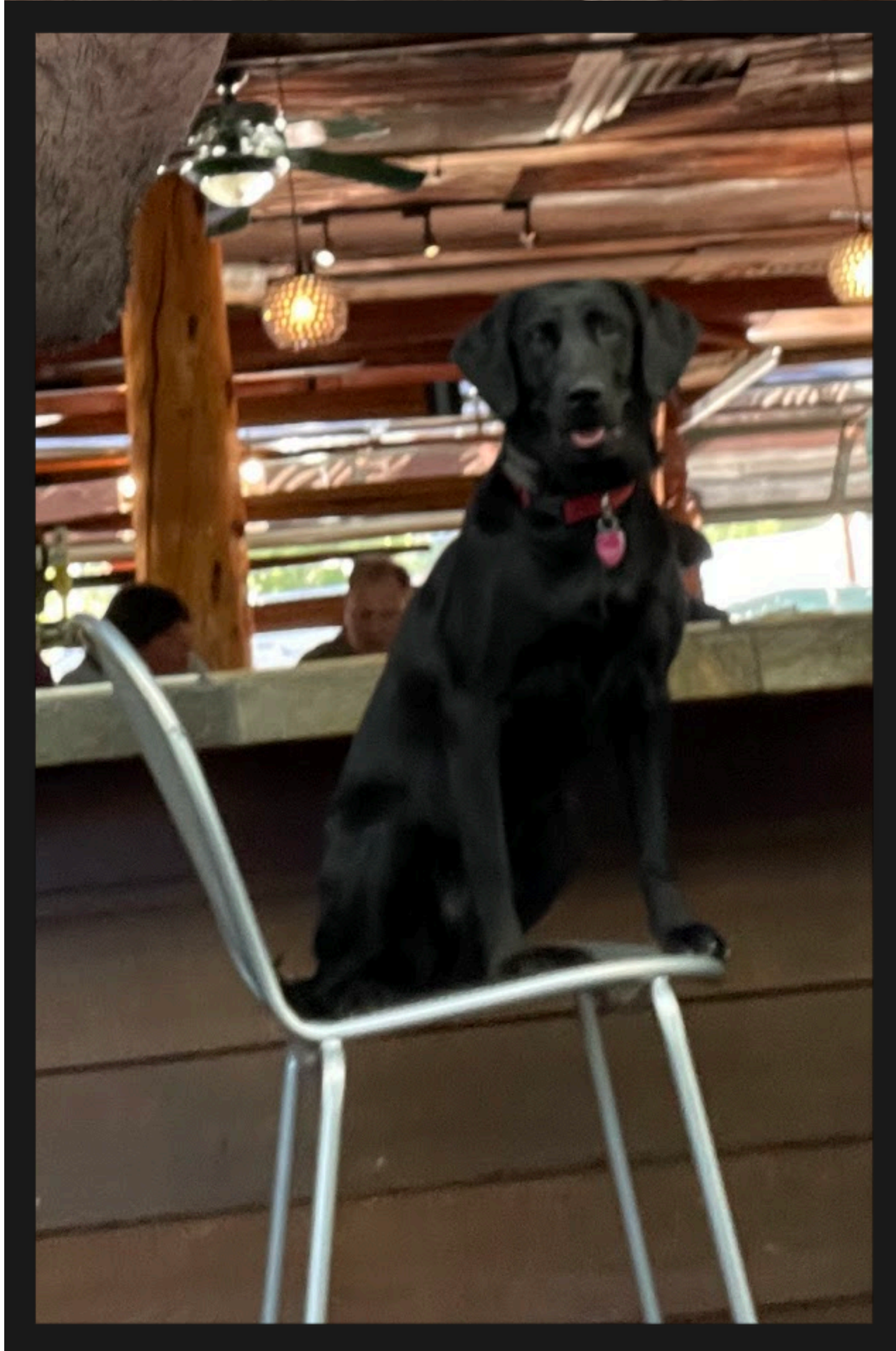




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**Delegation does not absolve  
responsibility**



# Consulted

Pre-decision  
Slow  
Blocking  
Mentoring

VS

# Informed

Post-decision  
Fast  
Unblocking  
Coaching



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**Find that path to being okay  
with being accountable,  
without being in control.**

**- Kellan Elliott-McCrea**

**Context is important**



# What are the goals?



# What are the goals?



# Timeline and Scope

**What are the important drivers for the timeline?**

Is the scope or the timeline more important?

Are there other resources available if necessary?

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# Assumption and Risk

**What assumptions exist around this project?**

Are there any known risks?

What does success look like?

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# Stakeholders and Peers

**Who will have a voice in this project's decisions?**

Where might interference come from?

Who should they have a coffee chat or peer 1:1 with?

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# Types of ~~delegation~~ fun



**Type 1 Fun:**

**Fun the entire time.**

**Fun to tell your friends  
about.**

**Classic good time.**







**Type 2 Fun:**

**Not fun in the moment.**

**Fond memories.**

**The best stories.**





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**Not fun in the moment.**

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**Type 3 Fun:**

**Not fun.**

**Swear to never do  
anything like that again.**

**Usually ends with  
rescue or heroic act.**



# Types of ~~fun~~ delegation

# Delegation Types

**Type 1: Better for someone else**

Type 2: Good growth opportunities

Type 3: Work you should do yourself

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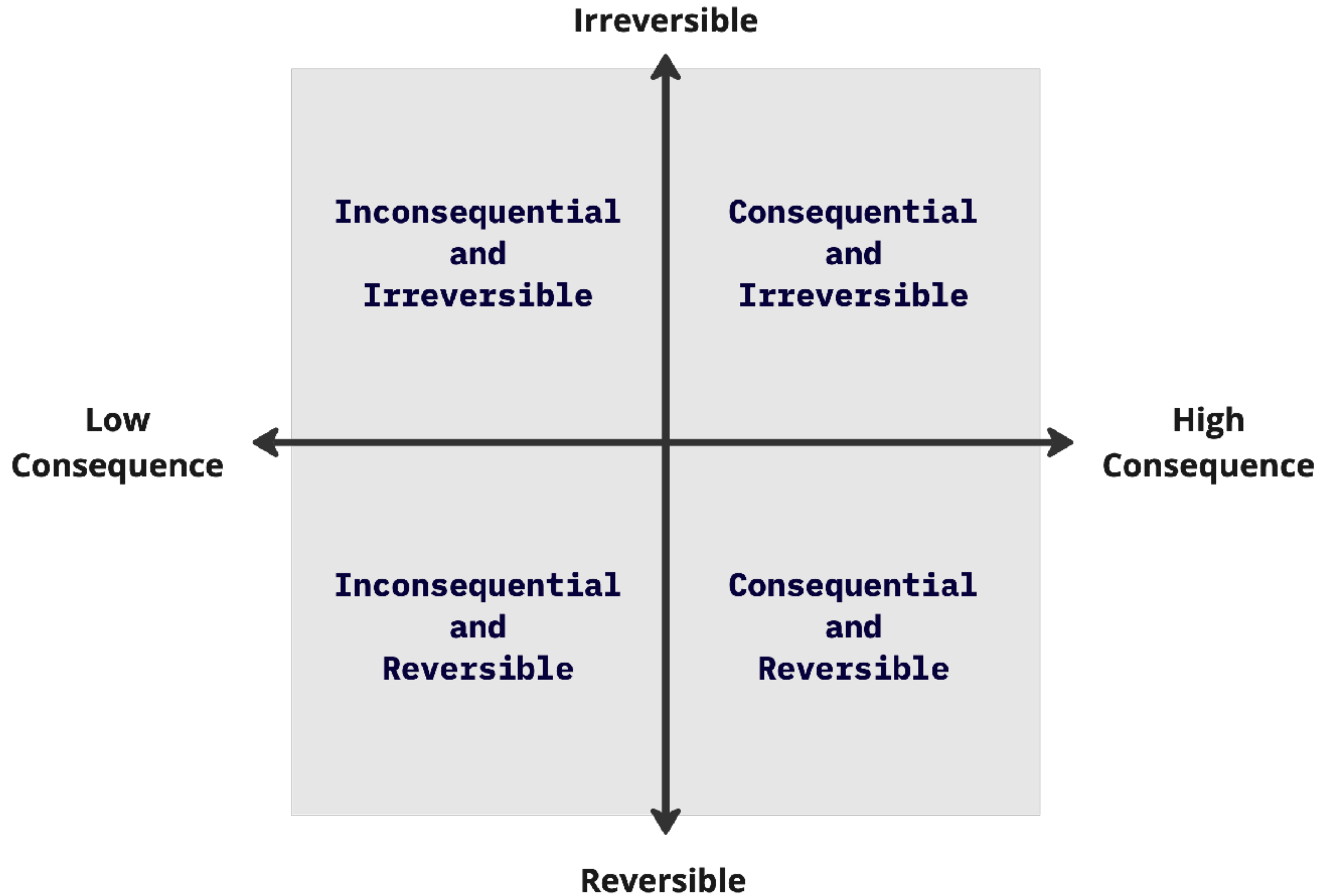
Type 1: Better for someone else

Type 2: Good growth opportunities

**Type 3: Work you should do yourself**

# Decision Matrix







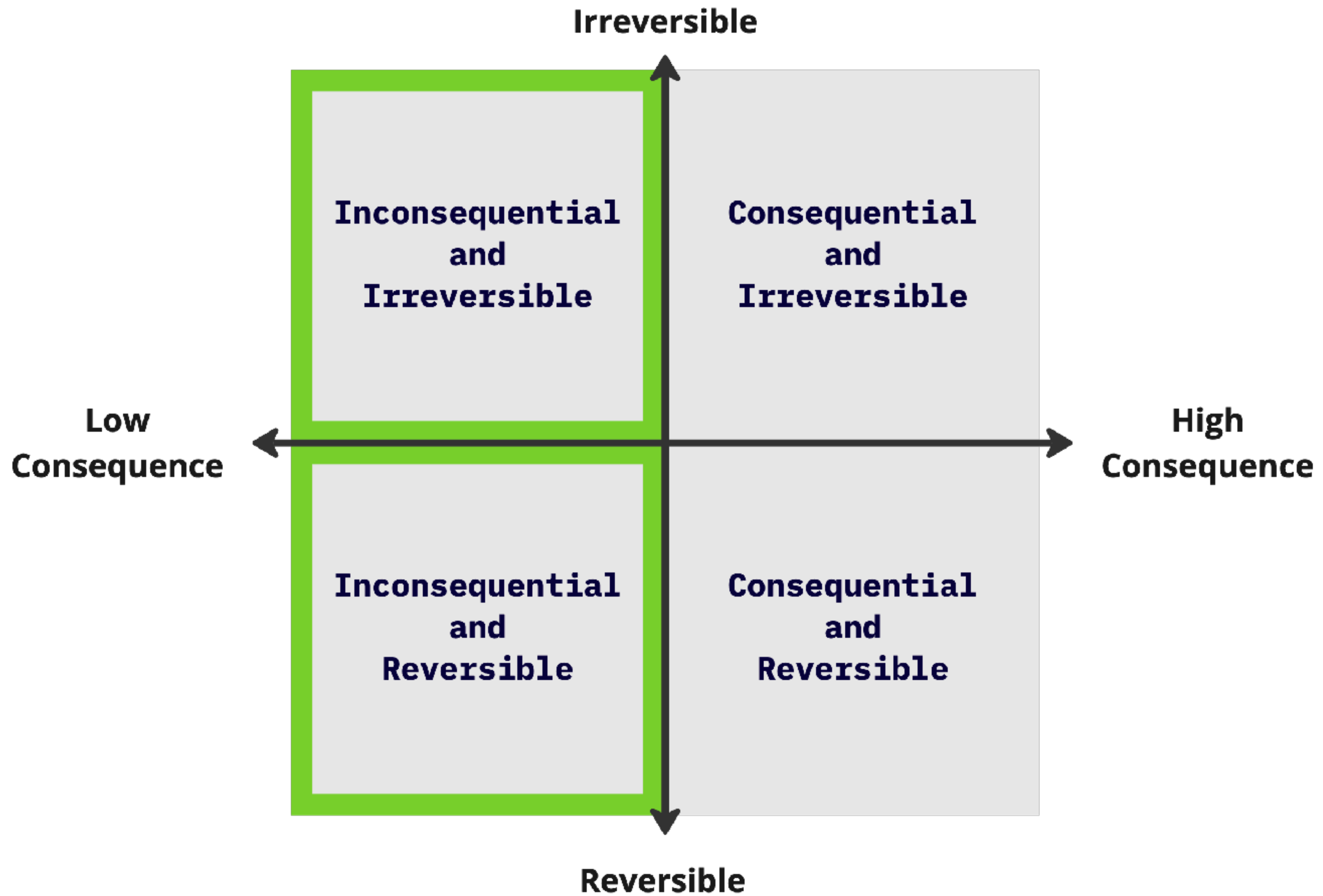


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# One-way and two-way doors

The reversibility of a decision has  
technical and non-technical factors

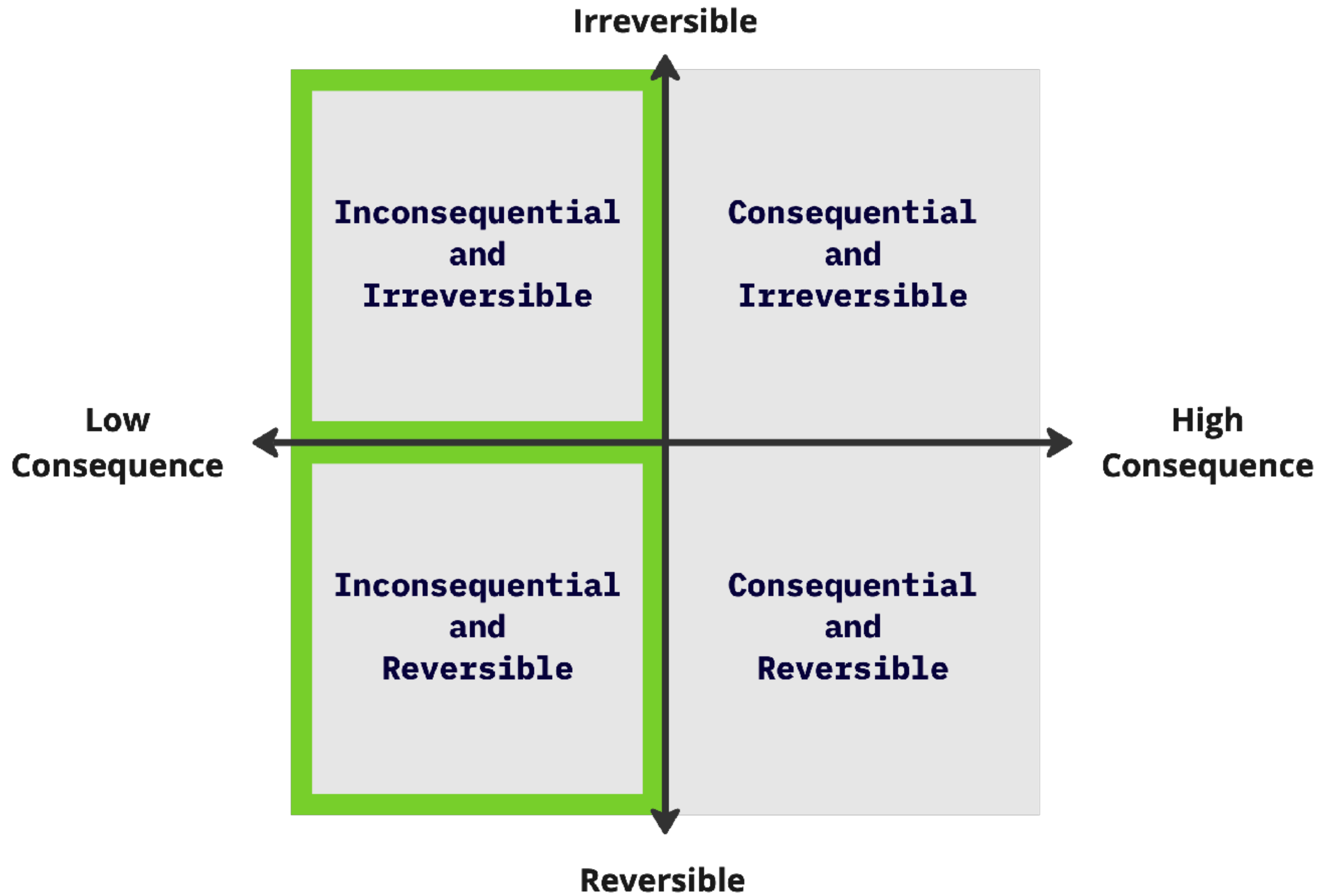


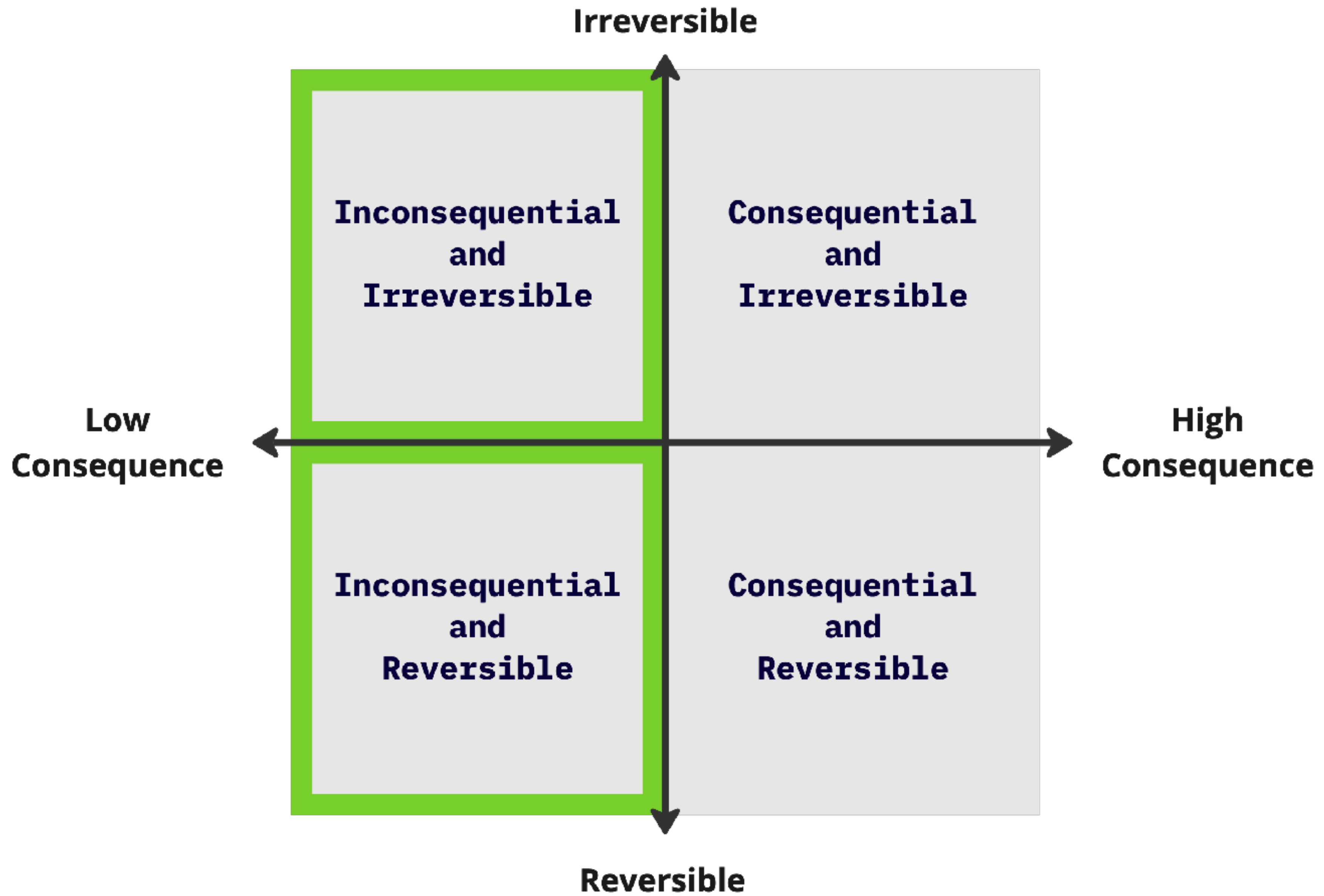


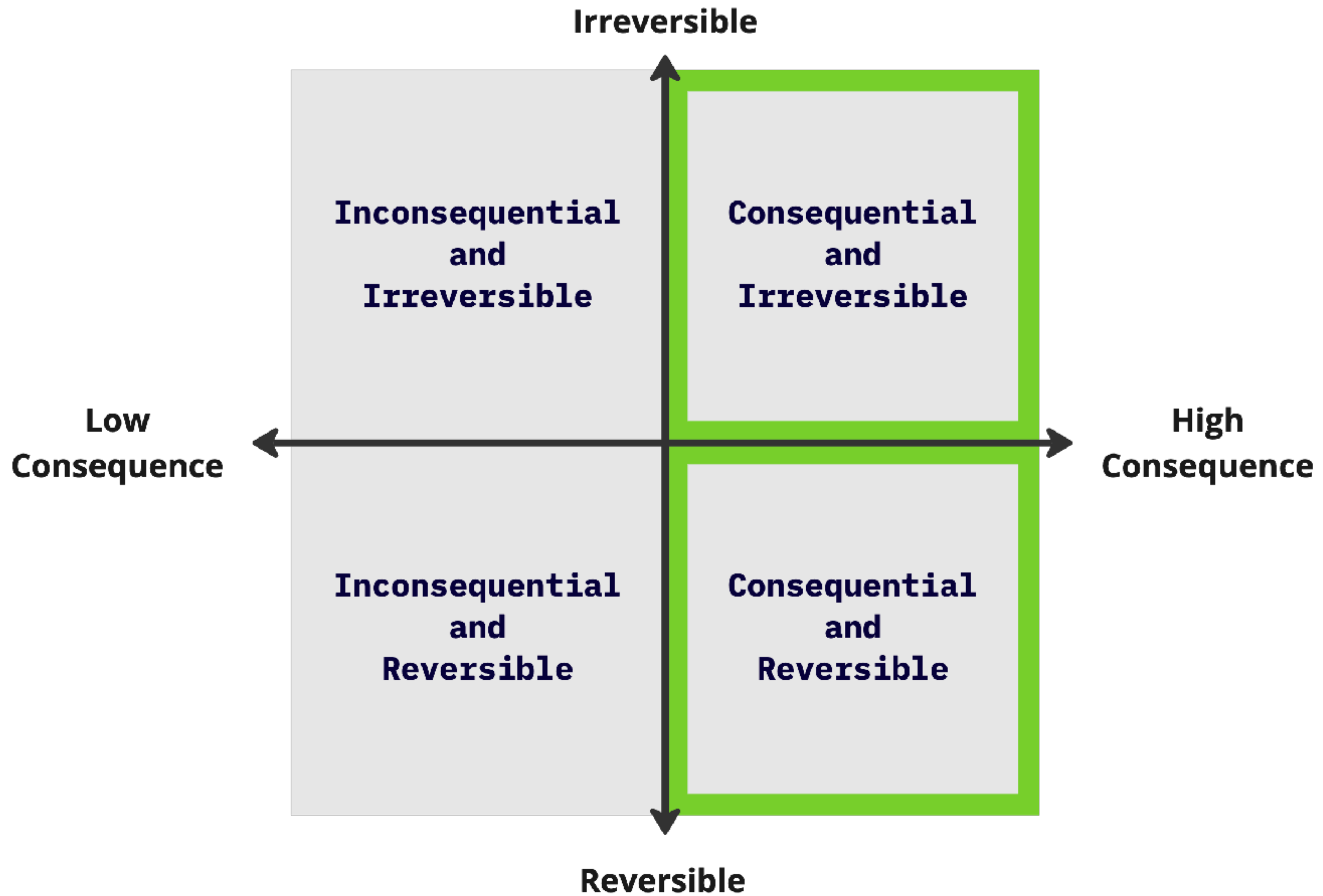


**Inconsequential decisions  
are the perfect training  
ground to develop judgment.**

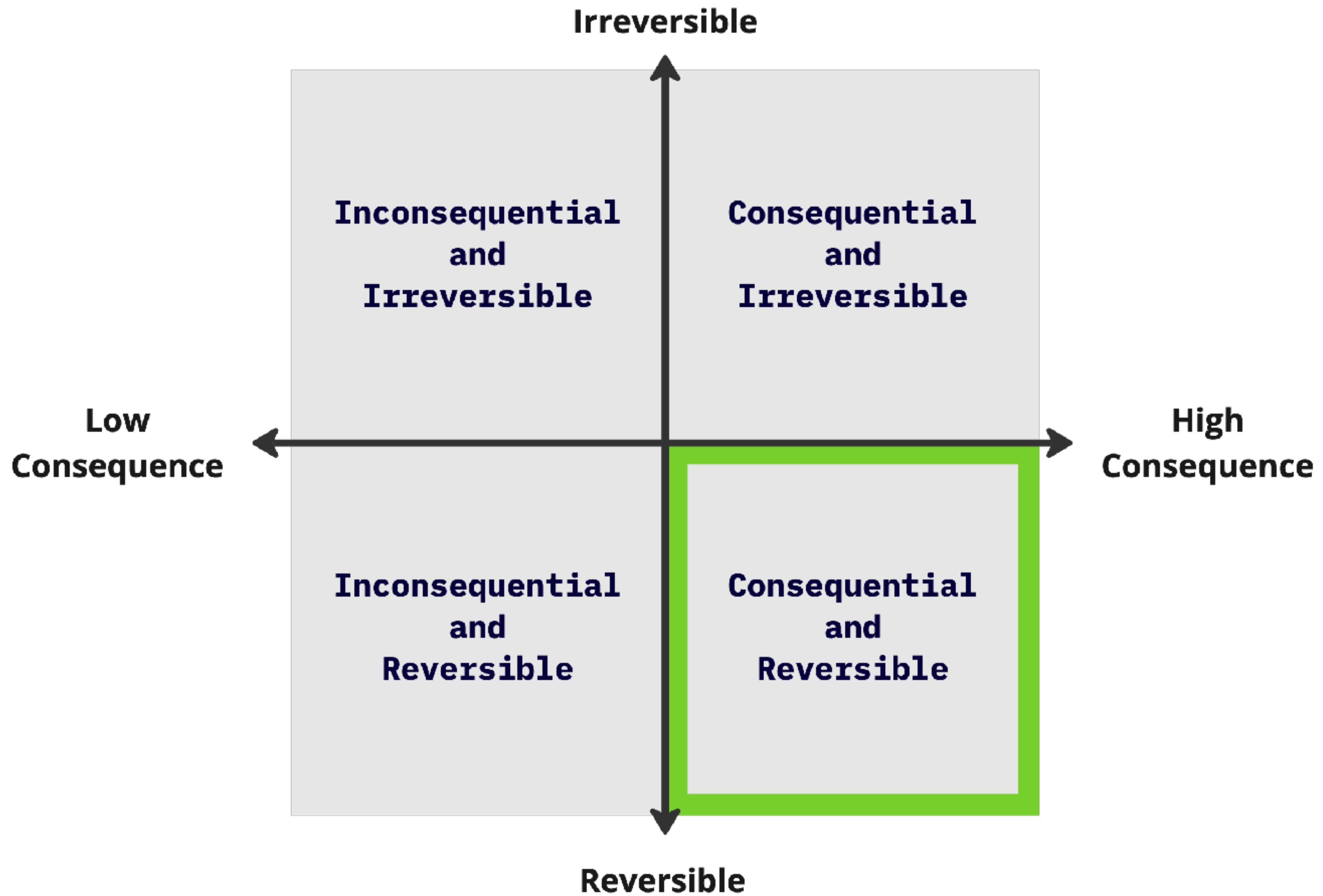
**- Shane Parrish**

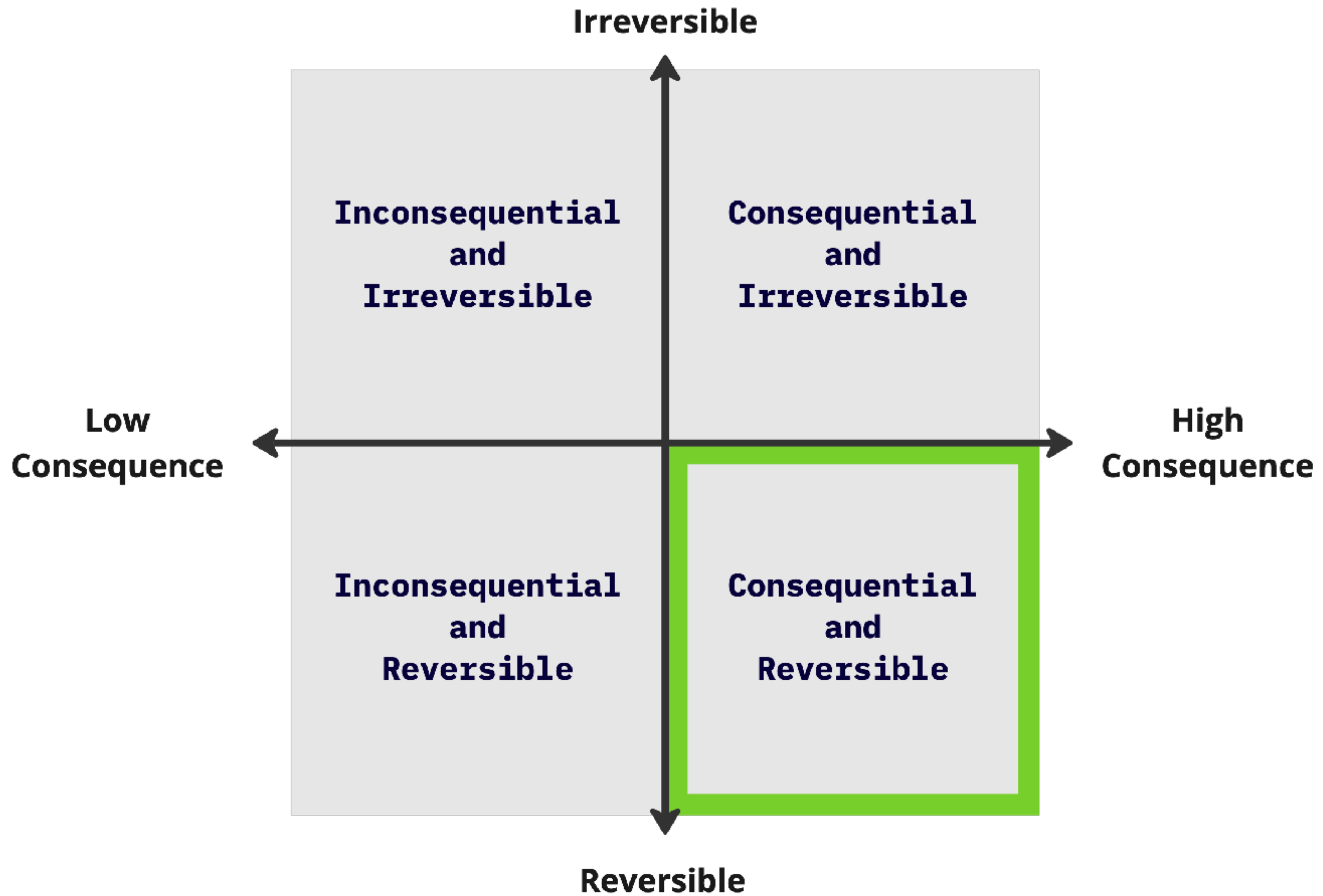


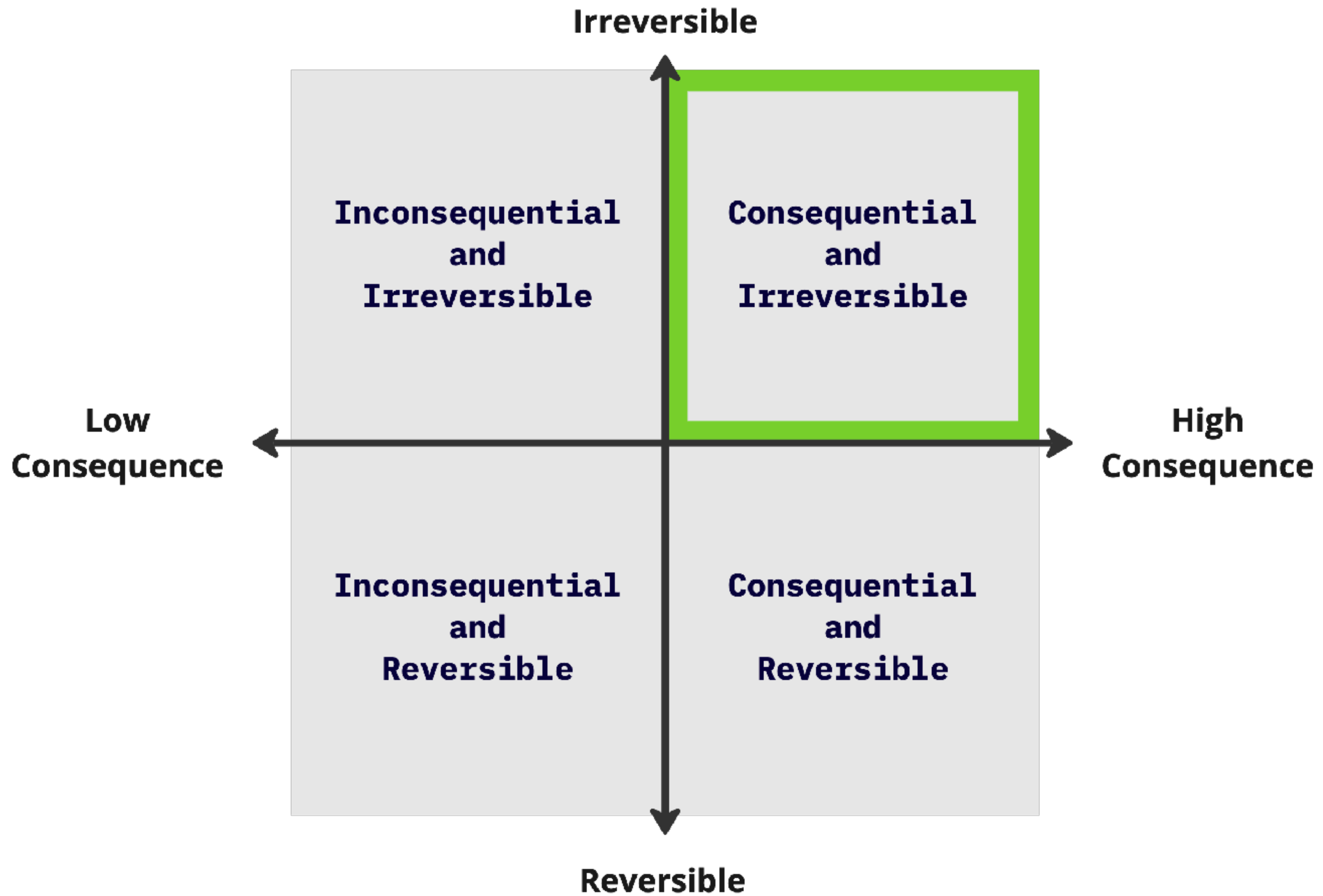


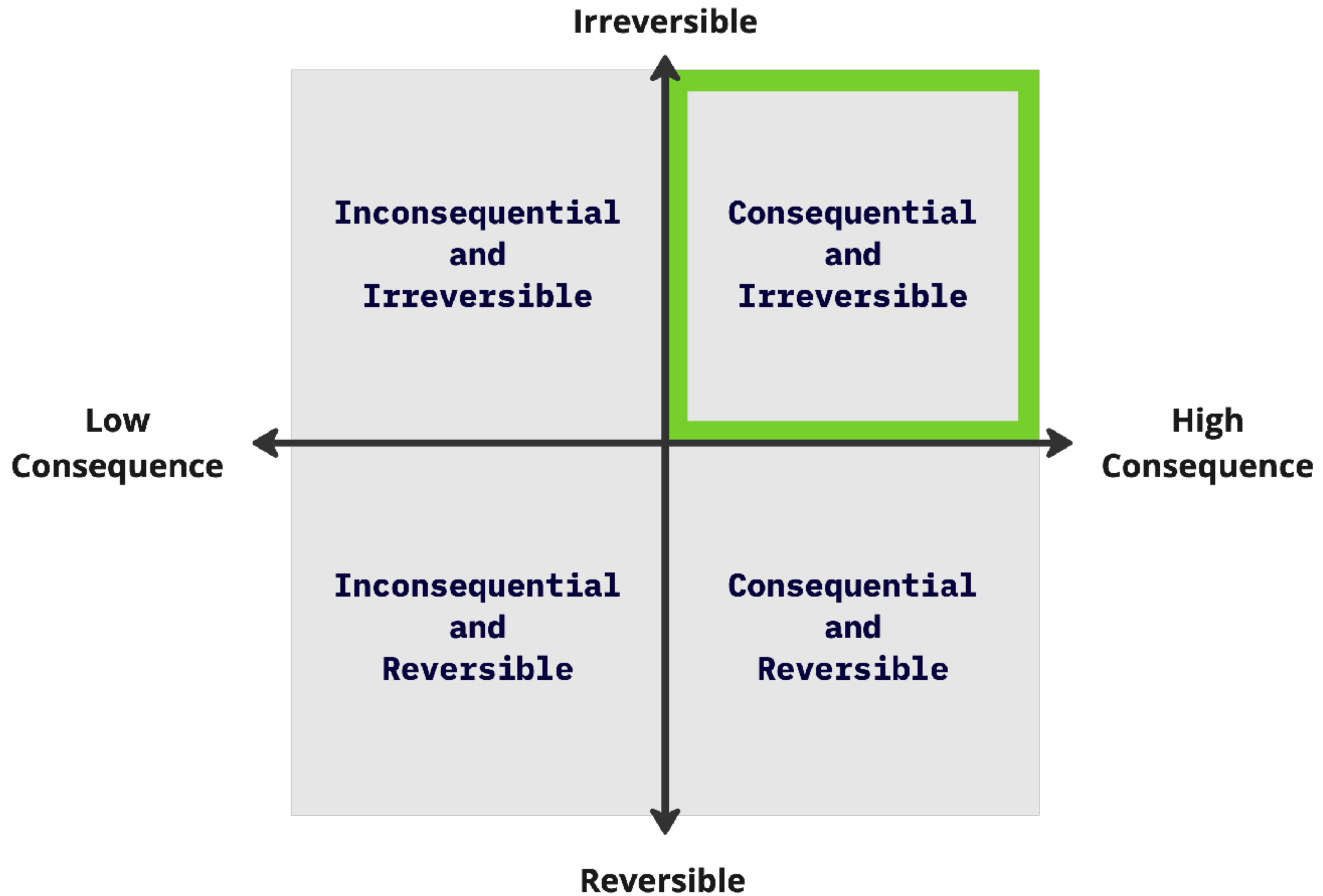




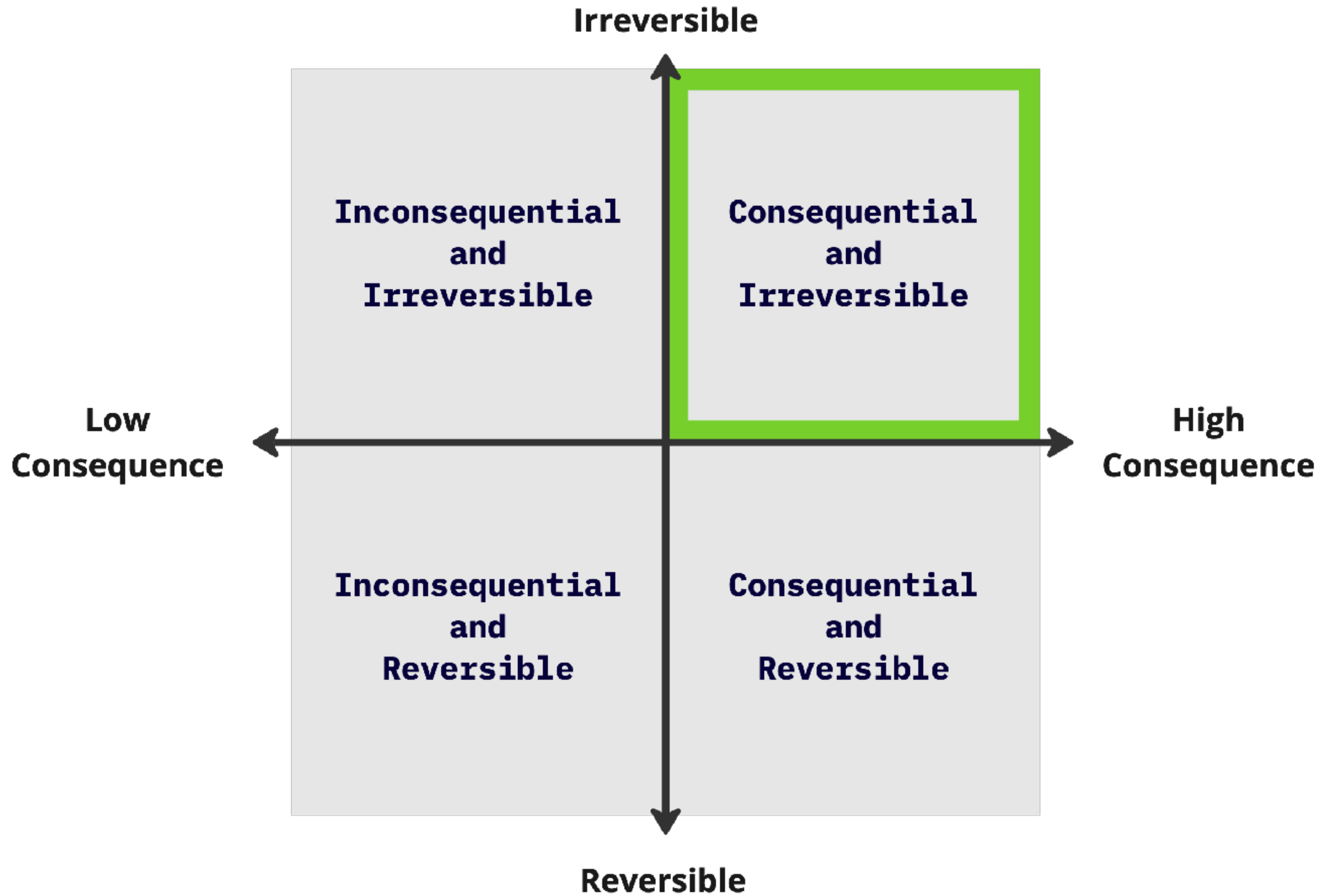




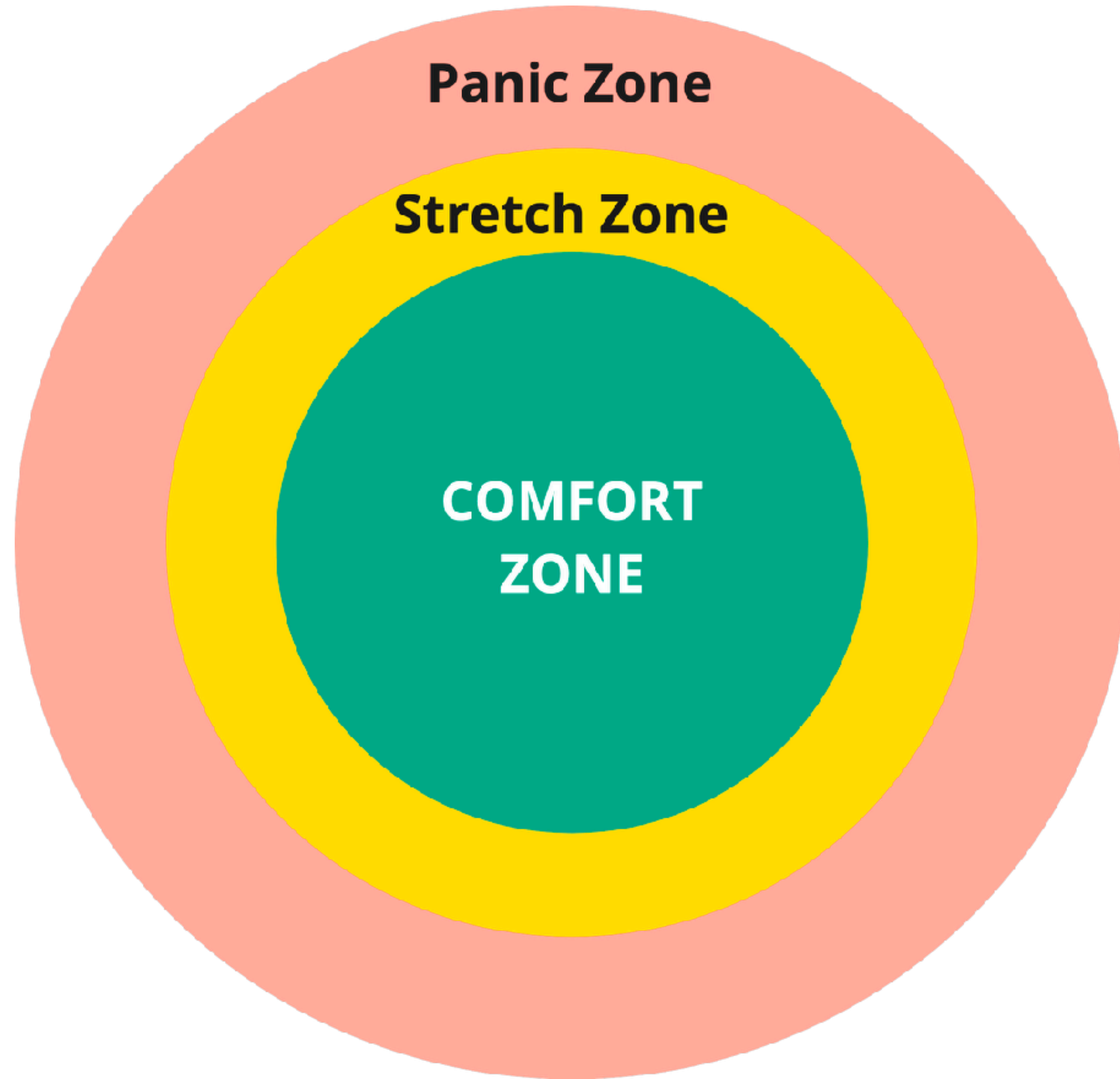








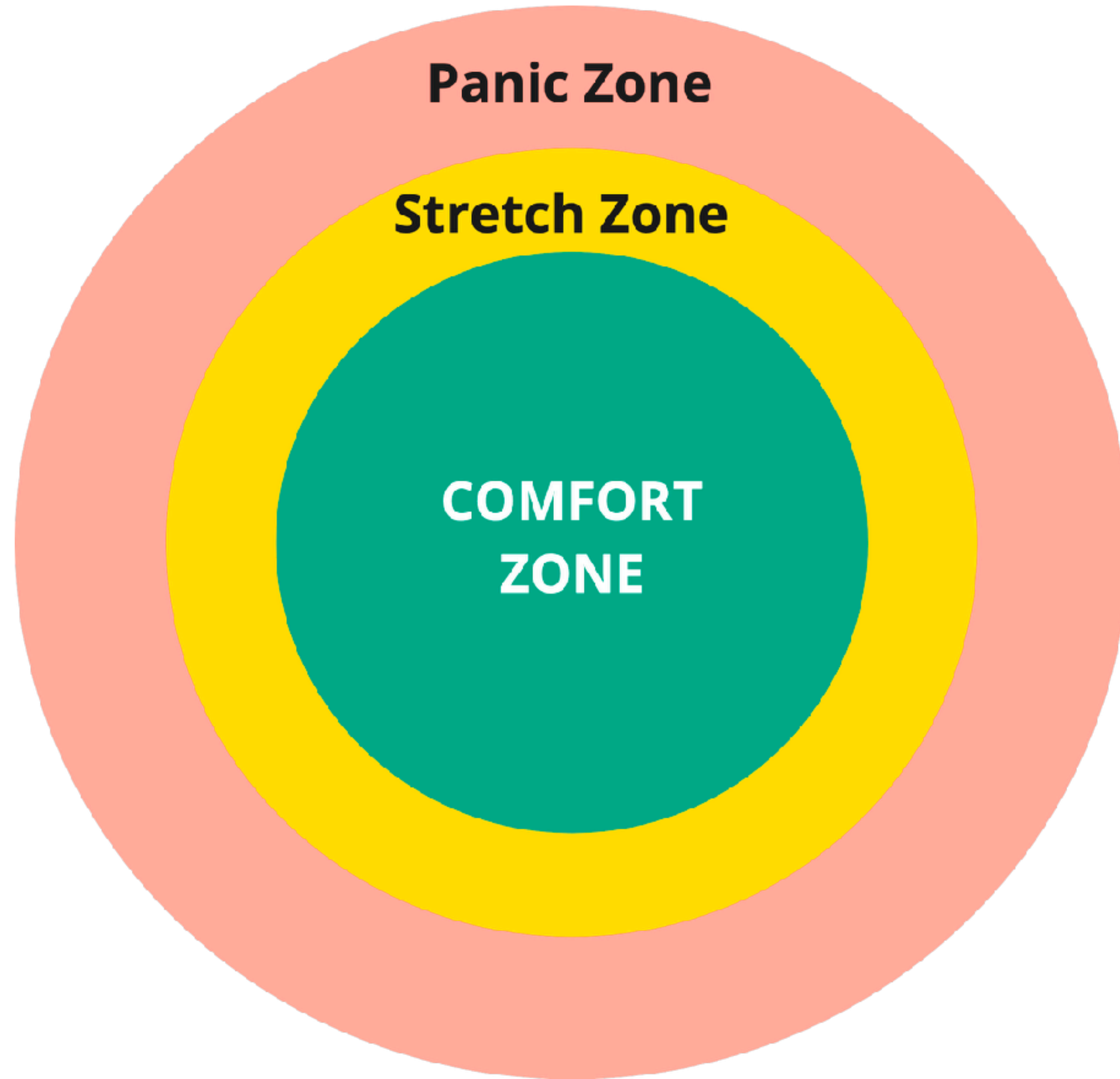
# The Comfort-Stretch-Panic Model



**Panic Zone**

**Stretch Zone**

**COMFORT  
ZONE**



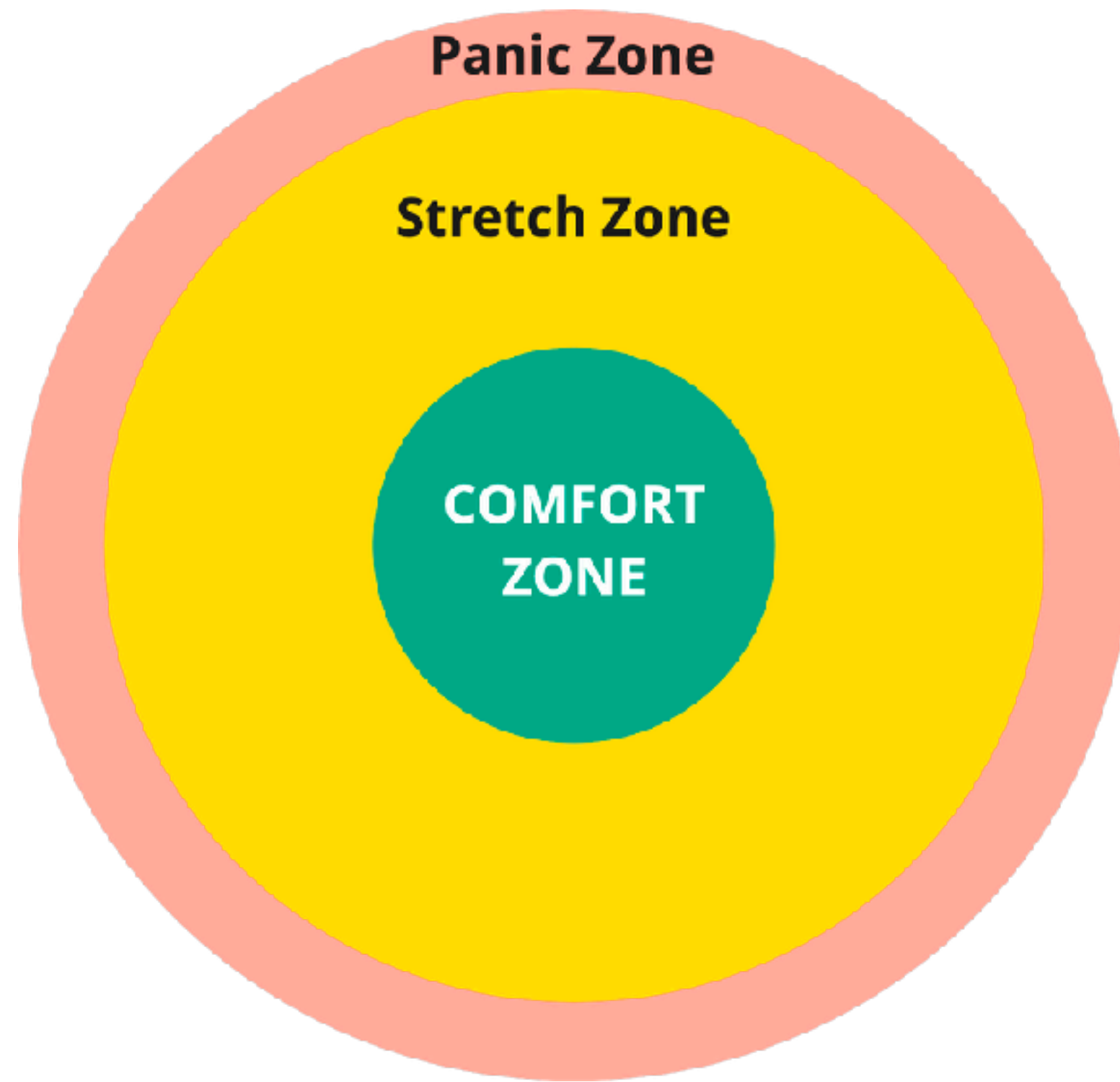
**Panic Zone**

**Stretch Zone**

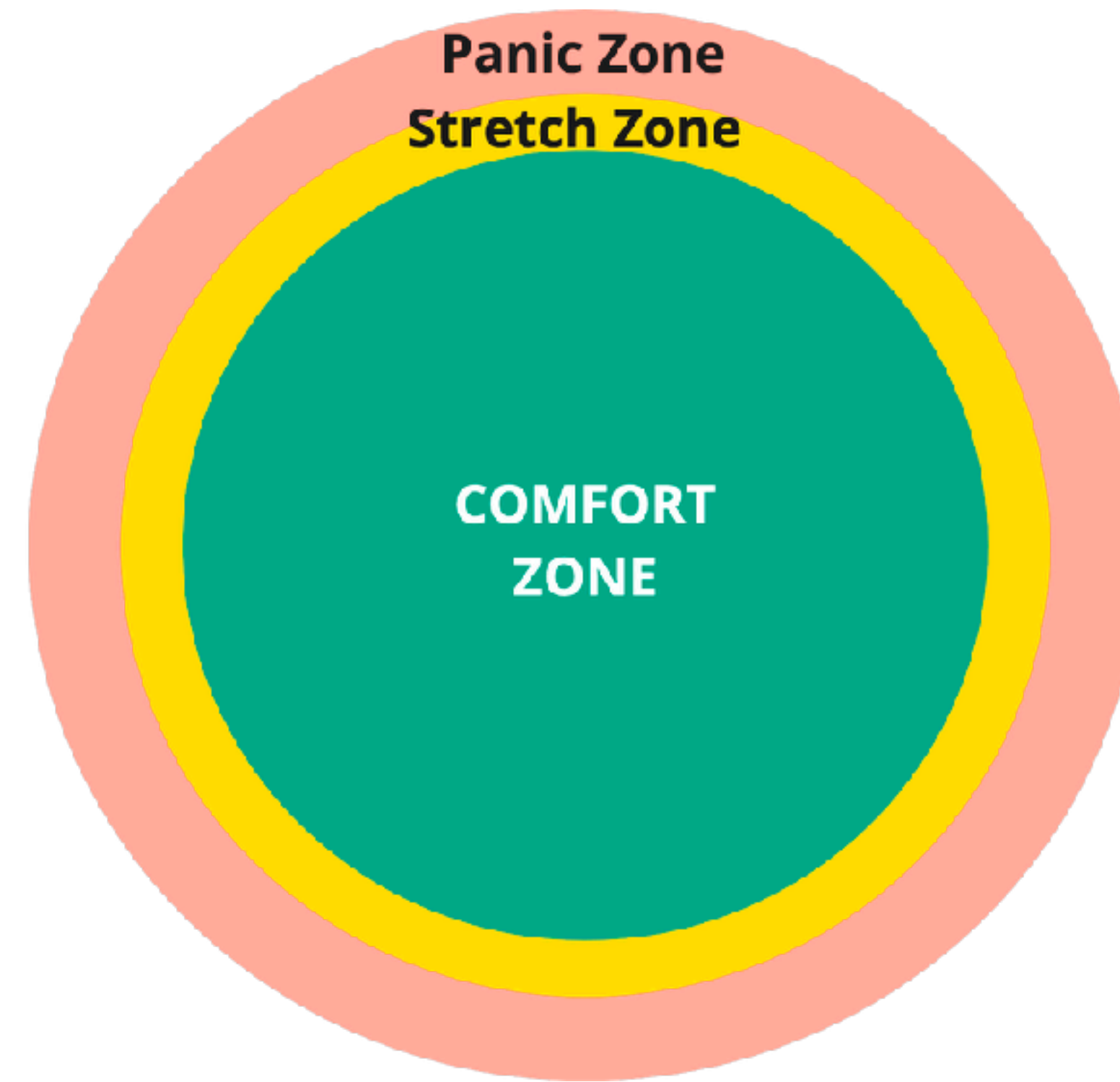
**COMFORT  
ZONE**



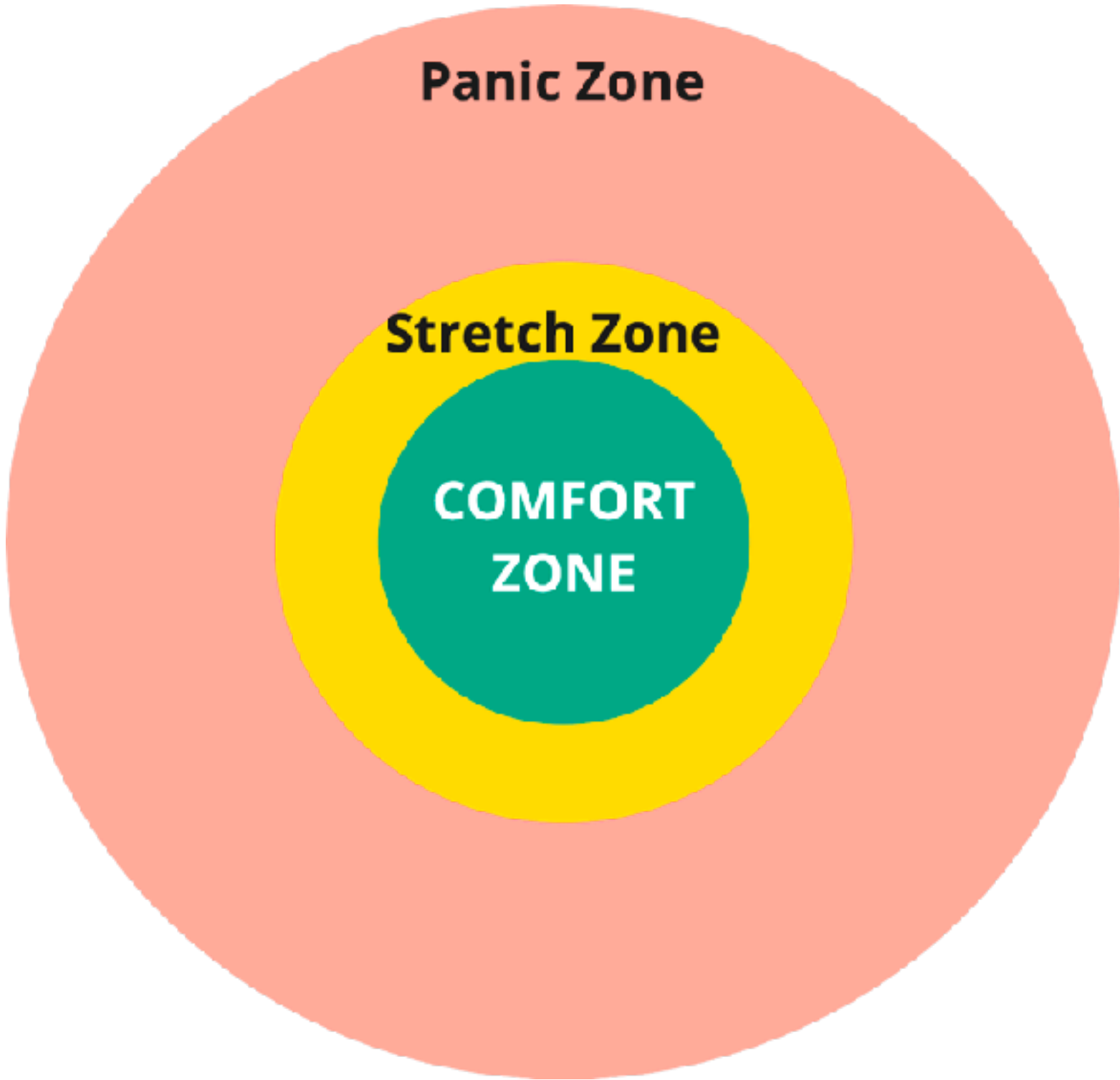
## New Junior Engineer



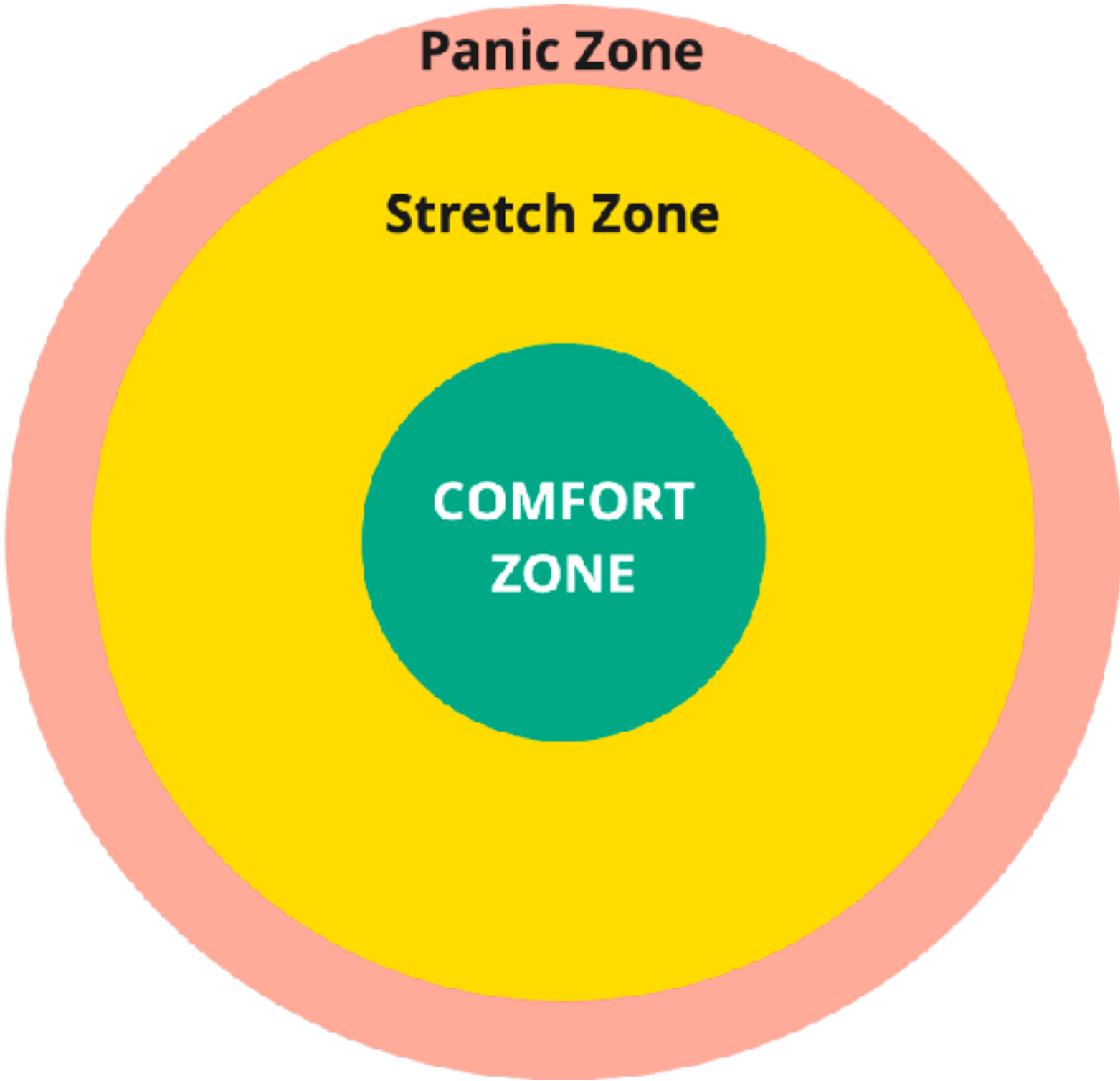
## Tenured Senior Engineer



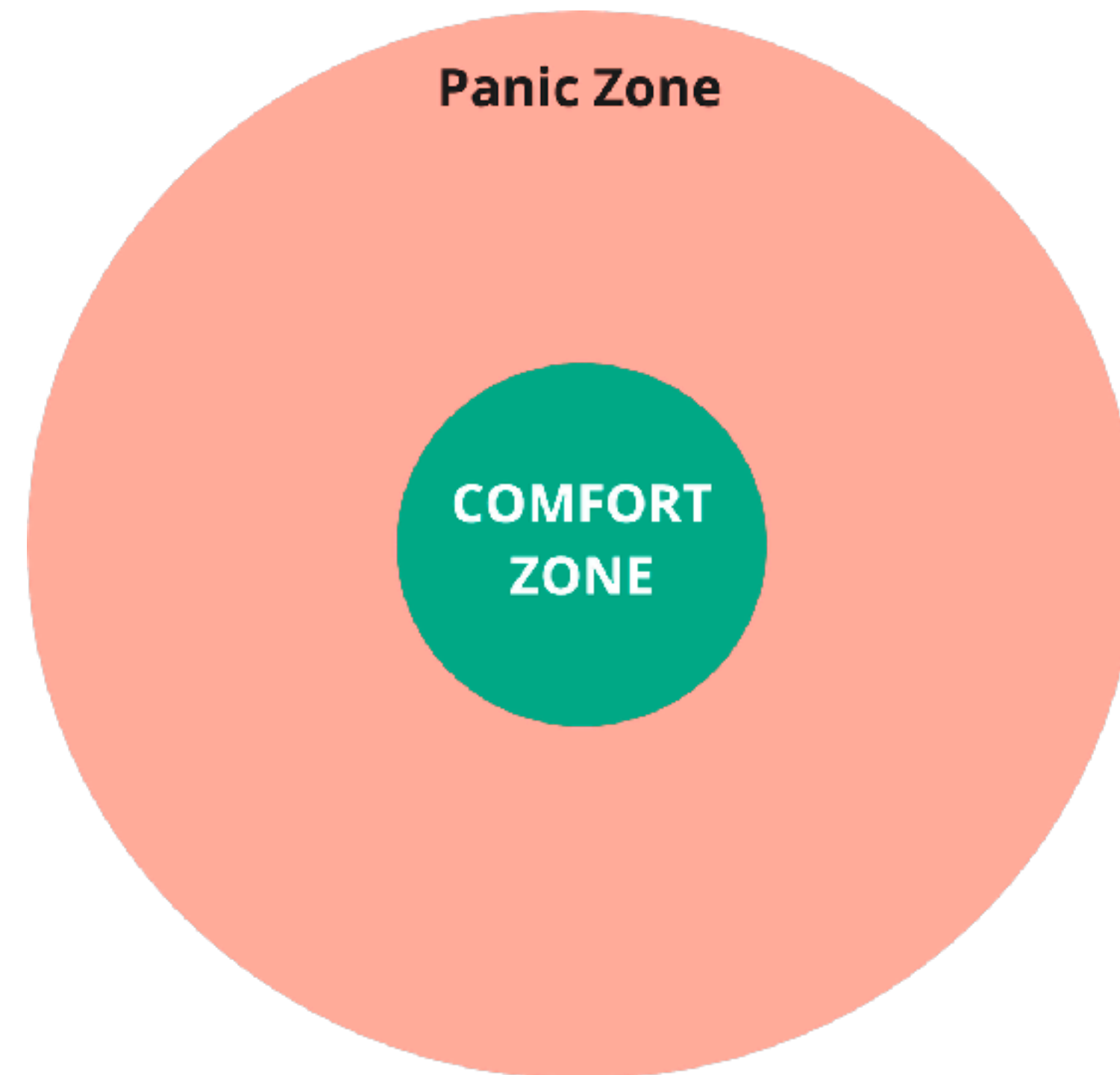
**Low Psychological Safety**



**High Psychological Safety**



# No Psychological Safety



**Psychological safety is  
a dependency  
of effective delegation**




**Who you delegate  
important work to  
matters**

**Delegation has a direct  
impact on your team's  
career opportunities**

**You can draw a direct line  
between who you give  
opportunities to and the  
career trajectories of  
your team**


**Who gets to do the  
important work on your  
team?**





**Women (and nonbinary folks)  
are over-mentored, but under-  
sponsored.**

**- Lara Hogan**



**What members of  
underrepresented groups in tech  
often need most is opportunity and  
visibility, not advice.**

**- Lara Hogan**

# Lend your privilege



**It's far more powerful to lend  
your privilege to those who  
lack your privilege.**

**- Anjuan Simmons**



**Delegation is sponsorship**

# Takeaways

**Learn how to lead, without being in control**

Delegate low consequence opportunities

Delegation should include checkpoints

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# Thank you!



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