Parents, grandparents, and faith

Drake University, September 2025

first half of life
order

great suffering,
great love
(travel, education)
disorder

second half of life
reorder

first half of life

stage 1: simplicity

stage 2: complexity

great suffering,
great love
(travel, education)

stage 3: perplexity

second half of life

stage 4: harmony/
solidarity

William Blake - innocence, experience, higher experience

Soren Kierkegaard - aesthetic, ethical, religious

William Perry - dualism (a,b), multiplicity (a,b), relativism (a,b), commitment (a,b,c)

Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, Jill Tarule - silence/received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, constructed knowledge

James Fowler - primal, mythical-literal, synthetic-conventional, individual-reflective, conjunctive, universalizing

Nicola Slee - paralysis, awakenings, relationality/ Apophatic faithing

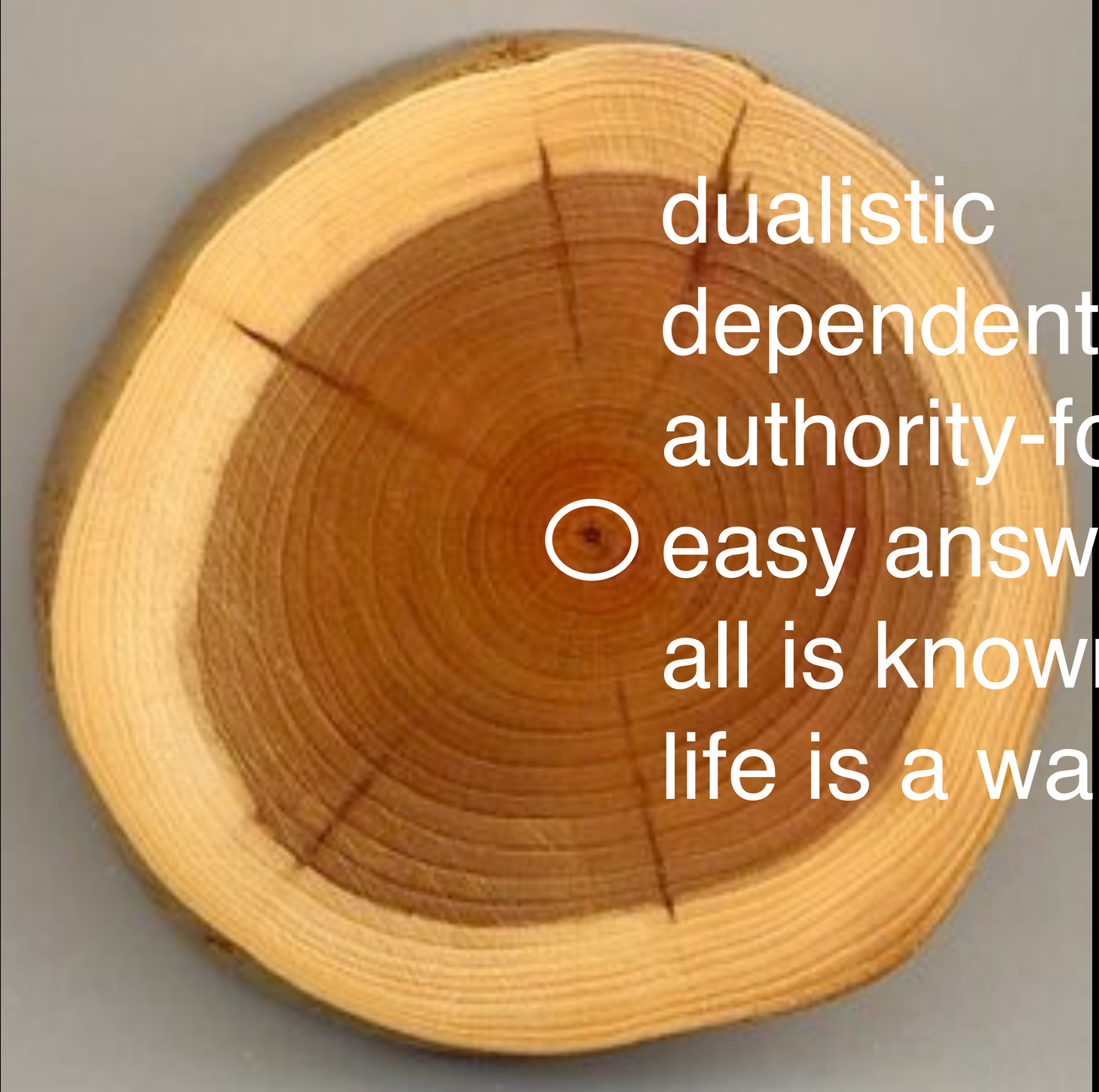
James Kohlberg - blind egoism, instrumental egoism, social relations, social systems, contractual, mutual respect

Ken Blanchard - enthusiastic beginner, disillusioned learner, capable but cautious performer, self-reliant achiever

Paul Ricouer - precritical/first naivete, critical, postcritical/second naivete

Graves/Beck/Wilber - archaic-instinctive, animist/tribal, ego-centric-exploitive, absolutist -obedience authoritarian, scientific strategic, relativistic-personalistic - communitarian; systemic-integral, holistic,

Richard Rohr - first half of life, second half of life/ order, disorder, reorder

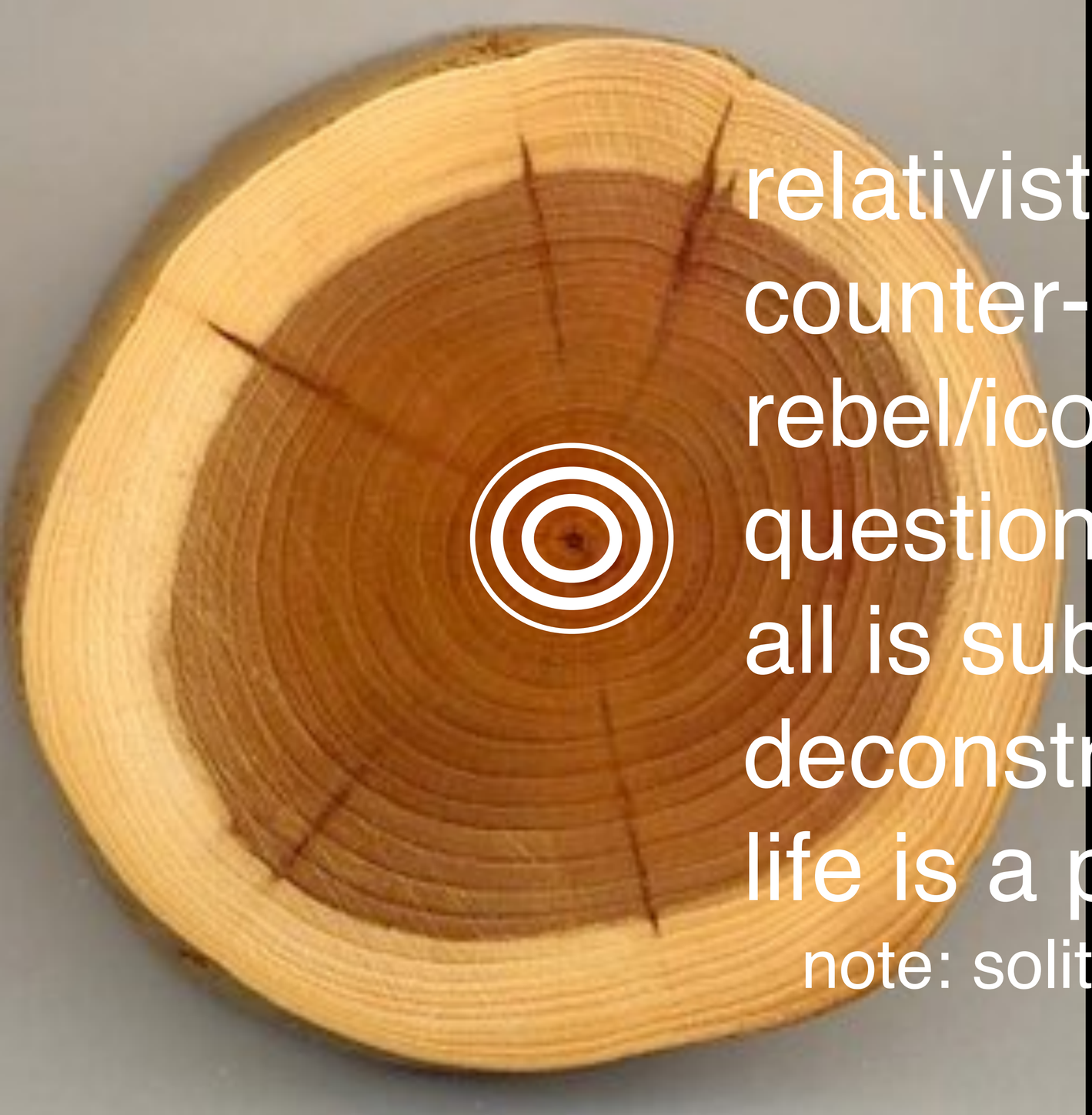


1. simplicity:

- dualistic
- dependent
- authority-focused
- easy answers
- all is known or knowable
- life is a war

2. complexity:

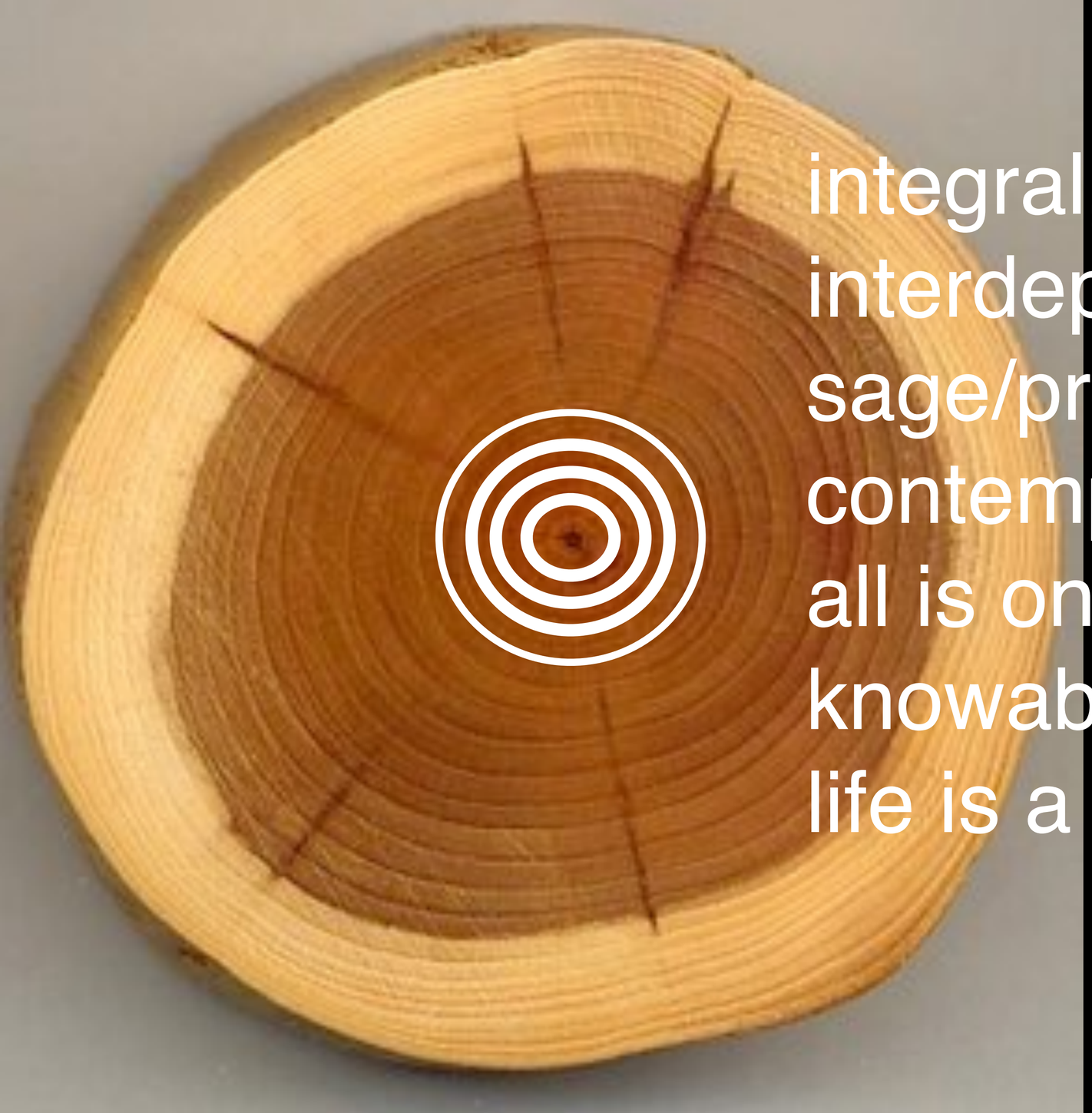
pragmatic
increasingly independent
coach-focused
steps & techniques
all is done or doable
life is a set of games



3. perplexity:

relativistic, skeptical
counter-dependent
rebel/iconoclast-focused
questions, suspicion
all is subjective &
deconstructible
life is a protest & quest

note: solitude, contemplation, spiritual direction



4. harmony/solidarity:

integral, non-dual

interdependent

sage/prophet/mystic focused

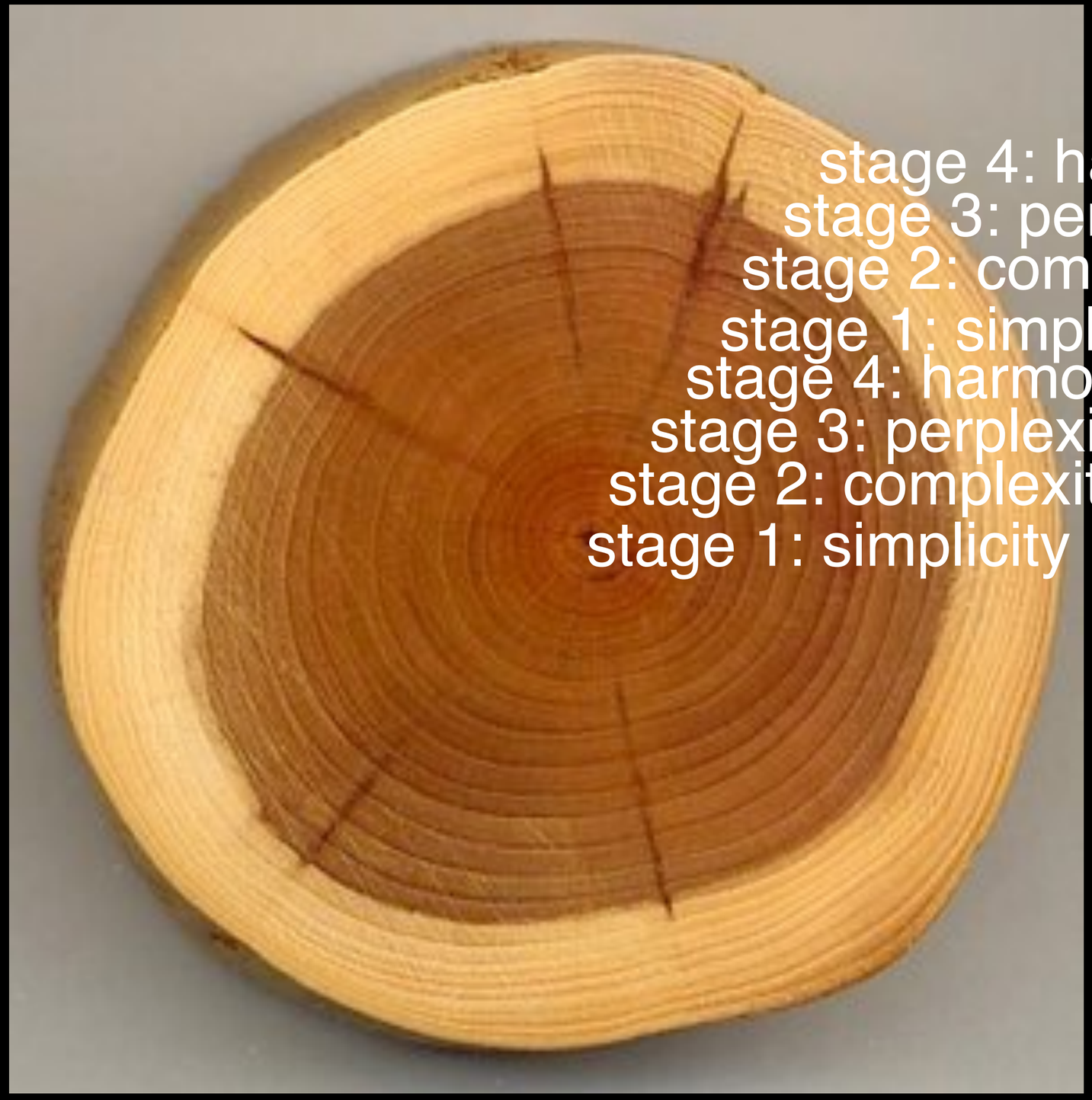
contemplative engagement

all is one & connected,

knowable and unknowable

life is a gift & love is the point

stage 4: harmony/solidarity
stage 3: perplexity
stage 2: complexity
stage 1: simplicity



stage 4: harmony/solidarity
stage 3: perplexity
stage 2: complexity
stage 1: simplicity
stage 4: harmony/solidarity
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Richard Rohr - first half of life, second half of life

1. faith expressing itself through correct beliefs (or behavior or belonging)

2. faith expressing itself through knowledge and action

3. faith expressing itself through questioning, doubt, challenging status quo.

4. faith expressing itself through love.

1. faith that loves correctness

2. faith that loves success, effectiveness

3. faith that loves honesty, truth, justice

4. faith that loves every thing and everyone

1. faith that loves correctness

2. faith that loves success, effectiveness

3. faith that loves honesty, truth, justice

4. faith that loves every thing and everyone

in every stage, what matters most is the love.

The only thing that matters is faith expressing itself in love. Galatians 5:6

1. How can I help my kids/grandkids distinguish between the healthy form of Christian faith I seek to follow and other forms that seem harsh, unloving, and harmful?

2. How can I share my own spiritual experiences (joyful and difficult) with my children, and why is this important?

3. How can I teach my children/ grandchildren that Christian faith is a path, a way of life, not simply a set of beliefs?

Apology.

What I did.

How I think this affected you.

How I became the kind of person who did this.

What brought me to change.

Explain restitution and plan for change.

Request a response.

4. How do I start conversations about matters of faith, the heart, and meaning?

5. How can I create a sense of family identity that includes spiritual vitality?

NEEDED:

Faith communities that can practice harmony/solidarity ...

- welcoming people where they are

- creating space to learn the lessons of each stage

- opening space to grow - even beyond “the story” of our current society

- providing models/mentors in this journey

a never-ending journey

The spiritual journey could be seen as a constant purification of motive until I can finally say, “I have no other reason to do anything except love of God and love of neighbor. And I don’t even need people to know this.” When I can say this I have total and full freedom. I can no longer be bought off! Finally I realize that my life is not about me. It’s about Love.

Fr. Richard Rohr, Adapted from Francis: Subverting the Honor/Shame System (CD, MP3 download)

Faith, Doubt, and the Student Experience:

Drake University, September 2025