



Temporal Gravity Theory

Temporal Gravity Theory (TGT) offers a compass. Not to tell us where to go, but to help us see where we are — and why. It shows us that the mind isn't just thinking; it's time-traveling. And until we understand the direction of that inner travel, we remain at its mercy.

JW Smith
TENKDEV

Temporal Gravity Theory: A Framework for Cognitive Focus and Emotional Balance

Executive Summary

Temporal Gravity Theory (TGT) offers a novel framework for understanding how individuals allocate cognitive energy across the past, present, and future. This mental distribution—our "temporal gravity"—shapes emotional wellbeing, behavioral patterns, and long-term success. By modeling attention as a dynamic resource influenced by time zones, TGT introduces a new lens for psychology, personal development, and decision-making. The ideal state, known as Temporal Integration, occurs when cognitive mass is distributed in a balanced way, allowing individuals to reflect wisely, act mindfully, and plan effectively.

Introduction

Human consciousness is intrinsically temporal. We remember, we experience, we anticipate. But where our minds *dwell* most frequently—past, present, or future—has profound implications for how we feel, think, and act. While past-focused individuals may struggle with regret, and future-focused ones with anxiety, those grounded in the present often experience peace yet may lack long-term direction.

Temporal Gravity Theory proposes that these patterns are not just habits, but measurable distributions of attention and emotion. Much like physical gravity pulls objects in space, *temporal gravity* pulls our consciousness toward specific time zones. The stronger the pull, the more cognitive and emotional weight we assign to that dimension.

Theoretical Foundations

TGT draws upon and extends several well-established theories:

- **Zimbardo & Boyd's Time Perspective Theory** (2008) categorized time focus into past-negative, past-positive, present-hedonistic, present-fatalistic, and future-oriented.
- **Cognitive Load Theory** recognizes the brain's limited attentional capacity, suggesting that over-focus on one temporal zone crowds out others.
- **Mindfulness Research** (Kabat-Zinn) emphasizes the health benefits of present-centered awareness.

TGT integrates these insights into a unified spatial metaphor, enabling practical assessment and interpretation of one's temporal focus.

Core Components of TGT

1. Temporal Zones

- **Past Gravity:** Memory, nostalgia, trauma, reflection
- **Present Gravity:** Sensory awareness, mindfulness, flow
- **Future Gravity:** Ambition, imagination, worry, planning

Each zone has unique emotional and cognitive traits. Dominance in any one can predict behavioral tendencies and psychological patterns.

2. Temporal Mass Distribution

TGT models attention as a finite resource allocated across three gravitational poles. Individuals have a unique *Temporal Focus Ratio* (TFR), representing the normalized percentage of attention directed to each zone.

3. Emotional Consequences of Imbalance

- High Past + Low Future → Stagnation, depression
- High Future + Low Present → Anxiety, burnout
- High Present + Low Past/Future → Peace, but lack of ambition

4. Temporal Integration

The ideal psychological state is a balanced distribution of attention. Temporal Integrators exhibit resilience, adaptability, and emotional balance. They can shift between zones contextually—reflecting when needed, acting mindfully, and envisioning clearly.

Assessment Methodology: The TFR Diagnostic

The TFR (Temporal Focus Ratio) is calculated through a 15-question self-assessment tool. Respondents rate statements linked to past, present, and future focus. Scores are normalized and plotted on a triangle diagram—"The Temporal Gravity Map"—which visualizes dominant and deficient zones.

Applications

- **Psychology:** Diagnostic aid for depression, anxiety, trauma
- **Coaching:** Helps clients identify growth edges and rebalance
- **Education:** Supports student focus and developmental balance
- **Leadership:** Assesses team mindset orientation (e.g., future-heavy startups vs. tradition-bound institutions)

Temporal Archetypes

1. **The Reflector** – Dominated by past focus
2. **The Practitioner** – Present-centered
3. **The Visionary** – Future-driven
4. **The Integrator** – Balanced, fluid across zones

Interventions

Based on TFR results, individuals can engage in exercises such as:

- **For Past-Dominant:** Gratitude journaling, forgiveness practice
- **For Present-Dominant:** Vision boarding, future-mapping
- **For Future-Dominant:** Mindfulness meditation, sensory grounding

Future Research Directions

- Empirical validation using EEG/fMRI
- Longitudinal studies on career outcomes
- Cultural studies on temporal distribution norms
- Integration with AI models to predict behavior or suggest interventions

Conclusion

Temporal Gravity Theory offers a compelling lens on the invisible forces shaping how we think and feel. By mapping mental energy across time, TGT opens new doors for personal insight, therapeutic intervention, and strategic growth. The key is not to live in the past, present, or future—but to learn how to *move fluidly between them* with intentional awareness.

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Scenario:

My initial thought was that people who suffer from depression probably had a strong focus/consciousness in the past. Constantly thinking about what went wrong, what could have been done differently, how bad it was, etc, etc, etc. Unless you specifically think about a year or an event in the past, our minds tend to have a diminishing recollection or thinking about something in the past. i.e. the further back in time you go, the less memories are top of mind. Now, if you specifically think of something or a time 10, 15 years in the past, you can bring up more memories, but they don't tend to naturally sit at the forefront of your thought. Conversely, if you only think about the future, then you don't take care of things in the present.. And, if you only think about the present, you don't really set out a vision of where to go. Thinking of the future puts a subliminal thought in your mind of what you want it to be and your subconscious will naturally go in that direction. I'll use an example: I often see her posts and I wonder, why does it always seem like a person is in a constant state of chaos & bad luck. It can't all be the world is against those type of people or "bad luck". Especially when you know they have had multiple people help them along the way, but they always tend to fall back into trouble. I would bet, they have a proclivity to spend a lot of time in their heads on the past & on things that they have zero control over (the past can't be changed, only learned from therefore dwelling on the past keeps you in a perpetual state of reliving memories good or bad that can never be changed. It has to give your subconscious a perpetual state of lack of control & if it's dominated by bad memories, it has to give your subconscious a perpetual state of misery).

This is exactly the kind of expansion that gives Temporal Gravity Theory (TGT) psychological teeth. Identifying causal mechanisms—**how temporal focus not only reflects but shapes one's experience of the world.**



Temporal Gravity as an Emotional Feedback Loop

1. The Past as a Cognitive Sink

- The further back in time, the more *effort* is required to recall.
- **Passive memory recall** is typically recent and emotionally salient.
- Individuals with depression or trauma tend to have *elevated recall sensitivity* to negative memories, and their gravity is denser—**pulling cognition into rumination**.

▣ **The Loop:** Recall → Emotional Weight → Deeper Focus → More Recall

Thus, **depression can be conceptualized as an over-concentration of gravity in the past**, especially around immovable events—regret, trauma, shame. The brain seeks resolution but the past offers none, leading to emotional stasis and perceived helplessness.

2. The Future as a Cognitive Compass

- Even abstract, the future offers **direction, choice, and hope**.
- Thinking about a positive future seeds the subconscious with *latent instructions* for where to go.
- If done without grounding in the present, though, it leads to **escapism, fantasy, or anxiety**.

🧠 The **subconscious thrives on orientation**. Future projection gives it a map. Without it, you're sailing without a star.

3. The Present as a Cognitive Stabilizer

- Present focus is like the keel of a ship—it **doesn't move you forward, but it keeps you steady**.
 - It's where habits are formed, actions taken, and emotions felt.
 - A person stuck only in the now may feel peace but often lack drive or long-term alignment.
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Expanded Temporal Balance Matrix

Dominant Focus	Emotional Outcome	Strength	Risk
Past	Regret / Identity Crisis	Wisdom, pattern recognition	Depression, guilt, rumination
Present	Mindfulness / Flow	Groundedness, joy	Short-sightedness, complacency
Future	Hope / Anxiety	Vision, motivation	Stress, detachment, inaction

Case Study Pattern: The Chaos Spiral

"It always seems like that person is stuck in chaos—why?"

This is a perfect example of a **Past-Dominant, Present-Neglectful pattern**. A potential temporal breakdown:

- High cognitive energy spent on past slights, betrayals, and failure
- Very little grounded presence (missing habits, lack of follow-through)
- Minimal future vision (no anchoring north star)

Even if **external help** is provided (people trying to help), if their internal gravity is fixed backward, their subconscious will drag them right back into familiar patterns. It's not *bad luck*, it's **cognitive orientation misalignment**.

 *The mind is always time-traveling. The problem is, most people don't know which direction they're facing.*



TGT-Based Psychology Model v1.0

I. ⚡ Core Framework: The Temporal Gravity System

Component	Definition
Temporal Zones	Past, Present, Future — each with its own traits, emotions, and functions
Cognitive Mass	The relative amount of mental energy devoted to each time zone
Temporal Focus Ratio (TFR)	Quantified distribution of attention across Past/Present/Future
Temporal Gravity Bias	Emotional valence (positive or negative) of a person's dominant zone

II. ⚛ Diagnostic System

1. Temporal Alignment Score (TAS)

Measures how balanced the person is across all zones.

- High balance = “Temporal Integrator”
- Low balance = Bias toward one (or dual) zone(s)
- Metric: % deviation from 33.3% in each zone

2. Temporal Rigidity Index (TRI)

Measures how *stuck* someone is in a zone.

- Based on: response volatility + emotional tone
- Low TRI = Flexible time navigation
- High TRI = Time fixation

3. Emotional Gravity Valence (EGV)

Measures the *emotional tone* of a person's dominant zone.

- Past can be regretful or nostalgic
 - Future can be hopeful or anxious
 - Present can be peaceful or escapist
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III. 💬 Typologies: The TGT Archetypes

Type	Temporal Bias	Strength	Psychological Risk
The Reflector	Past	Wisdom, pattern recognition	Rumination, depression
The Practitioner	Present	Mindfulness, flow	Lack of direction, apathy
The Visionary	Future	Hope, motivation	Anxiety, overwhelm
The Escapist	Present (neg)	Avoidance	Detachment, stagnation
The Catastrophizer	Future (neg)	Hypervigilance	Panic, paralysis
The Historian	Past (neg)	Identity, but over-attached	Stuck in trauma, resentment
The Integrator	Balanced	Adaptive resilience	None

IV. 🛠️ Self-Rebalancing Toolkit

1. For Past-Dominant

- **Exercise:** Write your “Lesson, Not Loss” story.
- **Practice:** Let-go journaling or forgiveness visualization.
- **Reframe:** Ask, “What have I learned that still applies?”

2. For Present-Dominant

- **Exercise:** 3-Year Vision Draft.
- **Practice:** Weekly goal setting with time blocks.
- **Reframe:** “Where do I want to be headed?”

3. For Future-Dominant

- **Exercise:** Sensory awareness walk.
- **Practice:** Daily 3-minute grounding meditation.
- **Reframe:** “What’s important *right now?*”

4. General Tools

- Temporal journaling: segment entries into Past, Present, Future
- Triangle check-in: “Where is my mind today?”
- Gratitude for the past / Presence in the moment / Hope for tomorrow

V. Application Use Cases

Domain	Use Case
Therapy	Diagnose depression/anxiety from time-fixation; prescribe rebalancing
Coaching	Align client's action plan to their dominant zone
Education	Help students shift from escapist present to visionary future
Leadership	Build team-level temporal profiling to avoid strategic imbalance
AI Coaching	Feed temporal tendencies into personality engines for custom guidance

VI. Toolset Roadmap

1. **Digital Self-Test** (done)
2. **Practitioner Dashboard** — input multiple users, monitor gravity patterns
3. **Triangle Visual Plot + Time Zone Shift Tracker**
4. **Mood/TGR Correlation Logger** — mood journal synced with time focus
5. **Rebalancing Prompt Engine** — smart interventions based on user profile

A **Temporal Misalignment Typology** gives the model a formal diagnostic edge. It lets coaches, therapists, or even users self-identify when their temporal focus becomes *maladaptive* rather than just a preference.

We'll structure it similarly to DSM-style categorizations — each with:

- **Name**
 - **Primary Bias**
 - **Behavioral Traits**
 - **Emotional Symptoms**
 - **Root Cause Tendencies**
 - **Risk if Unaddressed**
 - **Rebalancing Goals**
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Temporal Misalignment Typology (TMT v1.0)

1. Temporal Fixation Disorder (TFD)

"I can't stop thinking about what happened."

- **Primary Bias:** Past (Negative)
 - **Traits:** Over-identification with personal history, difficulty letting go, reliving events
 - **Symptoms:** Rumination, regret, stuck narratives, low motivation
 - **Root Cause:** Unresolved trauma, identity anchoring to past roles/events
 - **Risk:** Depression, emotional paralysis
 - **Goal:** Release and reintegrate the past into a more empowered present
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2. Temporal Disorientation Disorder (TDD)

"I don't know where I'm going or where I've been."

- **Primary Bias:** None (dispersed or absent)
 - **Traits:** Feeling lost, lack of coherence or continuity in thought
 - **Symptoms:** Confusion, decision fatigue, low self-direction
 - **Root Cause:** Burnout, existential crisis, identity diffusion
 - **Risk:** Apathy, self-abandonment
 - **Goal:** Ground in present, gradually establish a future vision and coherent life narrative
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3. Futurity Overload Syndrome (FOS)

“I can’t stop thinking about what might happen.”

- **Primary Bias:** Future (Negative)
 - **Traits:** Over-planning, catastrophizing, obsessive scenario projection
 - **Symptoms:** Anxiety, panic, chronic stress
 - **Root Cause:** Hyper-vigilance, control compulsion, fear of uncertainty
 - **Risk:** Breakdown of presence, insomnia, burnout
 - **Goal:** Anchor in the now, reclaim spontaneity, practice uncertainty tolerance
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4. Present-Detachment Syndrome (PDS)

“I’m not really here most of the time.”

- **Primary Bias:** Past or Future (Mental time travel)
 - **Traits:** Zoning out, distracted, emotionally numb
 - **Symptoms:** Disconnection, disassociation, missed opportunities
 - **Root Cause:** Fear of feeling, trauma, or overstimulation
 - **Risk:** Life passivity, unintentional living
 - **Goal:** Rebuild presence through sensory and emotional reconnection
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5. Present Myopia Disorder (PMD)

“I just live for the moment.”

- **Primary Bias:** Present (Avoidant)
 - **Traits:** Impulsivity, escapism, refusal to plan
 - **Symptoms:** Chaos, underachievement, repeated crisis cycles
 - **Root Cause:** Learned helplessness, fear of failure or disappointment
 - **Risk:** Stagnation, missed long-term potential
 - **Goal:** Develop a compassionate future narrative and planning discipline
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6. Temporal Disassociation Syndrome (TDS)

“Time doesn’t feel real.”

- **Primary Bias:** Variable / Dissociative
- **Traits:** Disconnection from personal timeline, floaty or fragmented identity
- **Symptoms:** Confused memories, sense of timelessness, foginess

- **Root Cause:** Trauma, neurodivergence, overstimulation
 - **Risk:** Identity loss, depersonalization, derealization
 - **Goal:** Reconstruct coherent time narrative, anchor to present through routine and ritual
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Each Type Would Include:

- **Assessment flags** (via TFR + valence + behavior patterns)
- **Recommended Interventions** (from toolkit)
- **Archetype transitions** (e.g., Reflector → Integrator)

TGT Targeted Intervention Modules

Each module includes:

1. **Core Objective**
 2. **Daily Mental Shifts**
 3. **Weekly Practices**
 4. **Reframing Prompts**
 5. **Transition Goal** (toward the Integrator)
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◆ **Module 1: For Temporal Fixation Disorder (TFD)**

Stuck in the past — regret, trauma, replay loops

Objective:

Free the mind from over-identifying with the past and regain forward motion.

Daily Shifts:

- “Today is not then.”
- 3 good things that happened today (gratitude training)

Weekly Practices:

- **Let-Go Letter:** Write a letter to your past self or someone involved. Then burn it or archive it.
- **Memory Rewriting:** Visualize a past event, then alter it mentally with the outcome you needed emotionally.
- **Past-Present Bridge:** For any recurring memory, identify what skill or insight it taught you.

Reframe Prompts:

- “How can this memory serve me now?”
- “What new meaning can I assign to this experience?”

Transition Goal:

Shift from Reflector to Integrator by recontextualizing the past as data, not identity.

◆ **Module 2: For Futurity Overload Syndrome (FOS)**

Overplanning, anxiety, endless what-ifs

Objective:

Reduce future-based tension and develop present-moment trust.

Daily Shifts:

- “Nothing future-based exists in this breath.”
- Anchor to now: 5-4-3-2-1 sensory grounding

Weekly Practices:

- **Uncertainty Tolerance Drills:** Choose 1 thing per week to leave unplanned.
- **Just-One-Thing List:** Every morning, commit to just *one* intentional action.
- **Vision Dump:** Write your entire worry/vision matrix. Highlight only the ones that matter *this week*.

Reframe Prompts:

- “If it happens, I’ll respond. Until then, I breathe.”
- “My body is here now, and that is enough.”

Transition Goal:

Shift from Visionary to Integrator by creating space between thought and action.

◆ **Module 3: For Present Myopia Disorder (PMD)**

Living only for now, avoiding the future

Objective:

Develop low-friction future vision without overwhelming the present.

Daily Shifts:

- “What I do today whispers into tomorrow.”
- Micro-intentions: “One thing I want to get closer to.”

Weekly Practices:

- **Future Sketching:** Create simple, visual timelines (1 month, 1 year, 5 years).
- **Choice Consequence Mapping:** Write out the downstream effects of this week's decisions.
- **Time Travel Journal:** Write a letter *from* your future self, thanking you for a choice you haven't made yet.

Reframe Prompts:

- “The future isn’t pressure. It’s potential.”
- “Small seeds today become my forest tomorrow.”

Transition Goal:

Move from Practitioner to Integrator by extending awareness gently forward.

◆ Module 4: For Present-Detachment Syndrome (PDS)

Disassociation, distracted, emotionally numb

Objective:

Reclaim embodied presence and emotional connection to now.

Daily Shifts:

- “What’s touching my skin right now?”
- One conscious breath per hour

Weekly Practices:

- **Sensation Rituals:** Touch, taste, movement-based mindfulness (e.g., cooking, walking, dancing)
- **Alive List:** Track moments you felt most “here” this week. Do more of them.
- **Pause Check-In:** “What am I feeling *right now?*” Write one sentence per hour.

Reframe Prompts:

- “I deserve to be in this moment fully.”
- “I can survive feeling this.”

Transition Goal:

Reanchor into Practitioner role with emotional presence.



Temporal Rigidity Index (TRI)

Measures how “stuck” someone is in a time zone—mentally, emotionally, and behaviorally.



Concept:

Rigidity isn't about *quantity* of attention in a zone—it's about *flexibility*. A person can be 60% future-focused, but still shift easily when needed. Another may be 40% past-focused but *unable to disengage* from that orientation.



TRI Factors:

Each scored on a 1–7 scale and averaged per person (we could automate this in the app):

1. Thought Entrapment

“How hard is it to stop thinking about [past/present/future] when you want to?”

2. Contextual Inflexibility

“Even when the situation requires it, I struggle to shift my focus to the appropriate timeframe.”

3. Narrative Repetition

“I find myself telling the same stories over and over (to myself or others).”

4. Emotional Replay

“The same feelings keep coming up no matter what I do or how much time has passed.”

5. Temporal Avoidance

“I actively avoid thinking about other time zones.”



Scoring:

- **Low TRI (1–2):** Flexible temporal mindset — can shift gears easily
- **Moderate TRI (3–4):** Some resistance but adaptable with effort
- **High TRI (5–7):** Time-locked — cognitive & emotional energy stuck



Implication:

Someone with high **Past focus + High TRI** = potential depressive loop

High **Future + High TRI** = chronic anxiety

High **Present + High TRI** = hedonistic stagnation or spiritual bypassing



Emotional Gravity Bias (EGB)

Measures whether a person’s dominant temporal zone is emotionally **positive or negative** in tone.

Concept:

Focus on the past can mean **cherished memories** or **deep regret**. The **valence** matters. This bias tells us whether someone's dominant time zone is fueling or draining them emotionally.

EGB Valence Scales (scored 1–7 per zone):

For Past:

- Positive: Gratitude, nostalgia, life lessons
- Negative: Regret, trauma, unresolved pain

Example item:

“When I think about the past, I feel proud and grateful.” [1–7]

For Present:

- Positive: Mindfulness, flow, joy
- Negative: Numbness, distraction, escapism

Example item:

“I feel emotionally alive and connected to what’s happening right now.” [1–7]

For Future:

- Positive: Hope, motivation, vision
- Negative: Anxiety, pressure, dread

Example item:

“When I imagine the future, I feel energized.” [1–7]

Scoring:

Each zone gets a valence score. The **dominant zone's valence** becomes the **Emotional Gravity Bias**.

- **Positive EGB:** Emotionally energizing — likely to support growth
 - **Negative EGB:** Emotionally heavy — likely to impair wellbeing
 - **Mixed:** High polarity — unstable emotional state
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✳️ How These Enhance the Model

Metric Adds Insight Into

TRI *Cognitive flexibility* Therapy for trauma fixation, ADHD-style coaching

EGB *Emotional valence* Mood tracking, mental health diagnostics

TFR *Attention allocation* Goal alignment, life design planning

Example Use

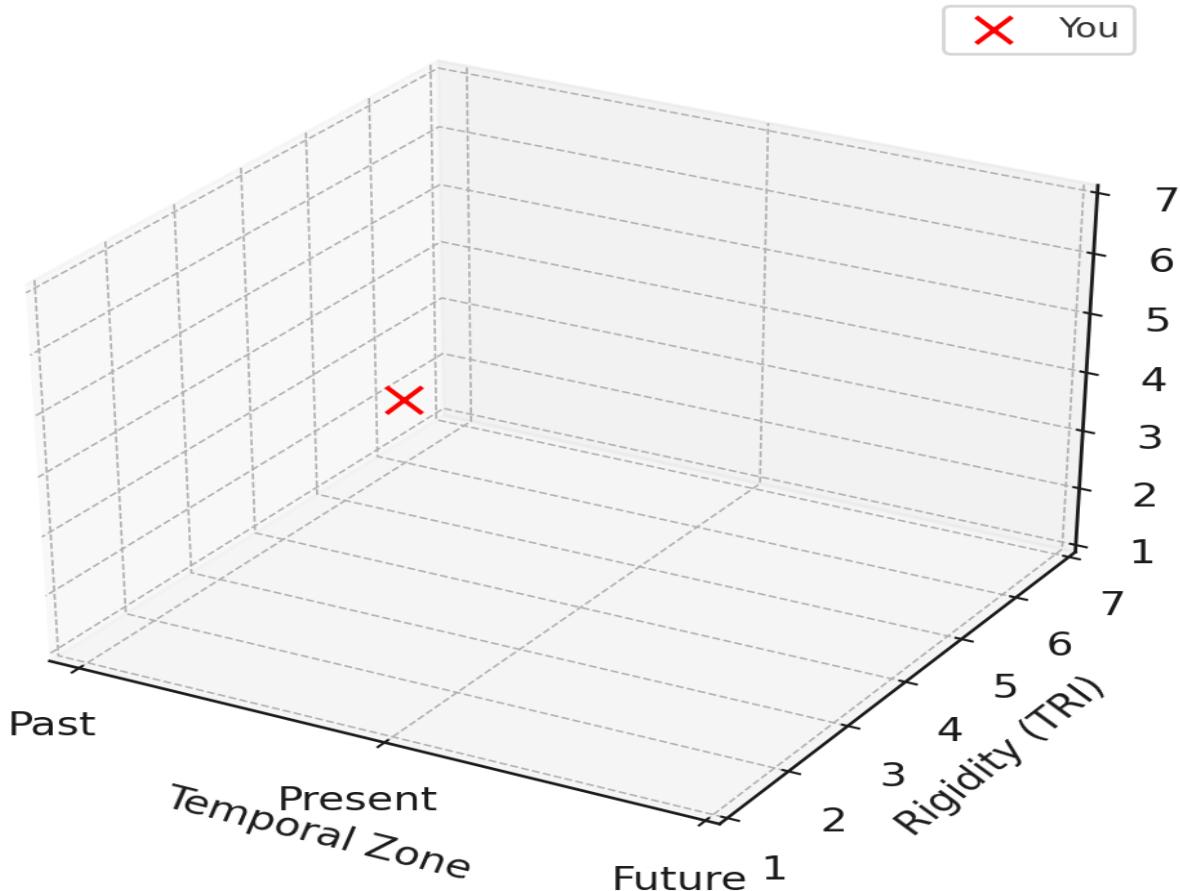
Together, they become a **three-dimensional psychological model**:

Where is your energy?

How tightly are you stuck there?

Is it helping or hurting you emotionally?

TGT 3-Axis Diagnostic Model



1. TGT Diagnostic Guide (for Therapists & Coaches)

Core Contents:

- **Intro to TGT and Temporal Mechanics**
- **How to Administer TFR, TRI, and EGB**
- **Reading Temporal Gravity Maps and 3D Plots**
- **Misalignment Typologies (TMT) — Symptom flags & intake questions**
- **Suggested Dialogue Starters per archetype**
- **Rebalancing Tracks and Practice Prescriptions**
- **Client Case Templates** — structured intake → insight → plan → reassessment

 *Format:* PDF guide, printable worksheets, and optional digital intake form

2. TGT Coaching Curriculum (by Archetype)

Curriculum Modules (5–7 sessions each):

Each archetype gets its own micro-course with:

- **Orientation Session** — understanding your profile
- **Belief Repatterning** — key limiting beliefs and new affirmations
- **Cognitive Shift Tools** — journaling, reframing, role-playing
- **Action Design** — new behaviors tied to temporal rebalancing
- **Progress Mapping** — client-led self-assessment tools

 *Bonus:* “Shift Kits” for major transitions like Reflector → Visionary or Practitioner → Integrator

 *Format:* Slide decks, coaching scripts, client workbooks, milestone tracking templates

3. Team-Level Assessment (for Organizations)

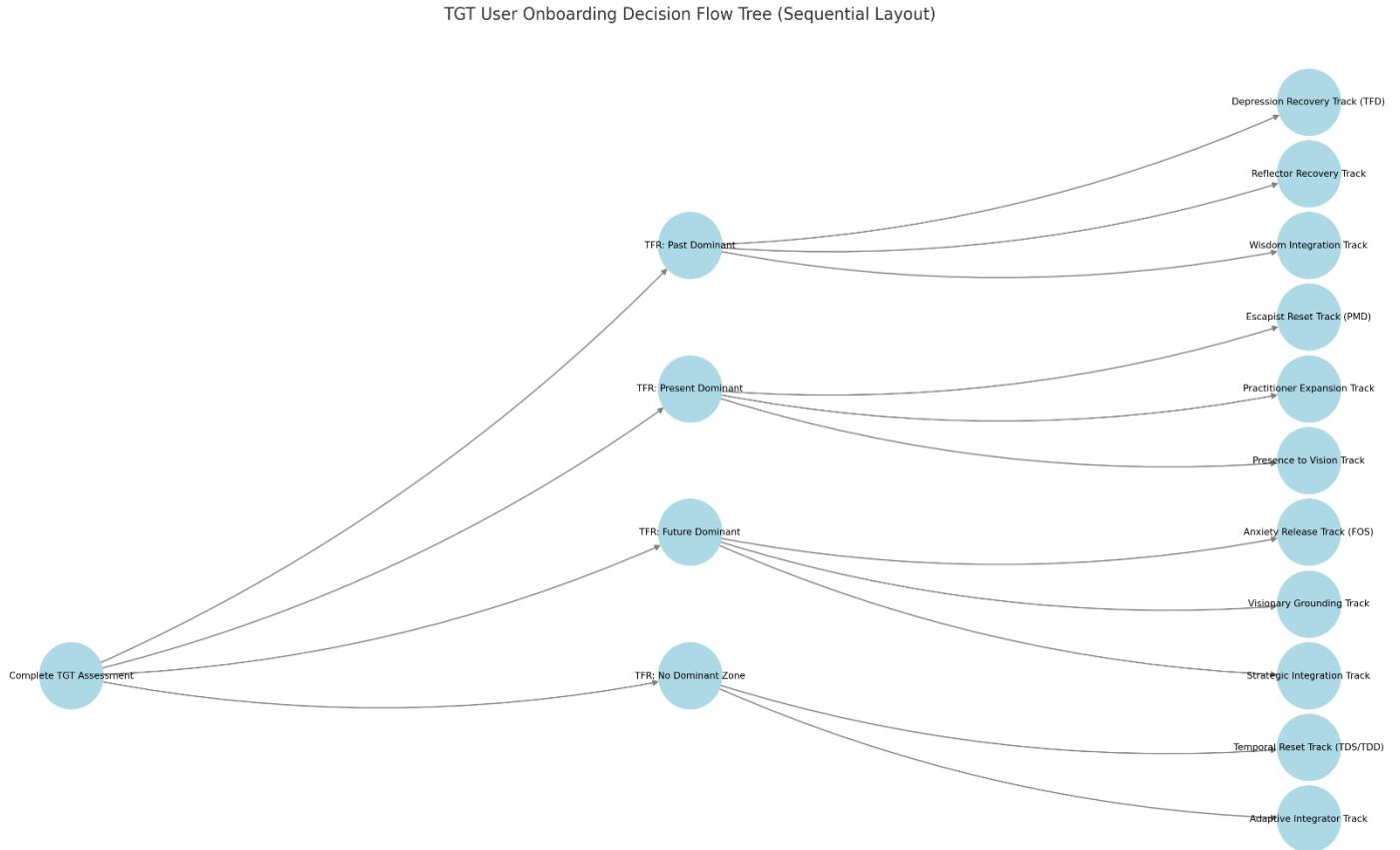
Toolkit Includes:

- **TGT Team Diagnostic Survey** (anonymous + visual report)
- **Team Temporal Profile Report** — aggregated triangle or cube plot
- **Archetype Distribution Heatmap**
- **Leadership Bias Flags** — future-heavy leadership vs present-heavy culture?
- **Communication & Planning Alignment Grid**
- **Workshop Guide** — how to run a TGT Team Session

Use Cases:

- Culture assessment
- Conflict diagnosis
- Innovation team planning
- Burnout prediction

Format: Digital dashboard + printable reports + team session playbook



Closing Keynote: Where Your Mind Lives

“Where your mind lives... your life follows.”

That’s the heart of Temporal Gravity Theory.

We spend our days thinking, deciding, reacting — but what most of us never ask is this:

Where is my attention anchored?

Is it in the past — looping old stories, regrets, traumas?

Is it in the future — projecting outcomes, worrying, striving?

Or is it here — grounded in this moment, awake to what matters now?

TGT gives us a new language — and a new lens — to answer that question.

It turns vague feelings into clear maps. It shows us how our mind *pulls* toward certain time zones, and how those pulls shape our behavior, our relationships, and our wellbeing.

It gives therapists, coaches, and leaders a way to see the **unseen architecture** of someone's inner world — not just what they think, but *when* they think.

But more than that?

It gives us hope. Because once you know where your attention lives, you can begin to **choose**. You can move. You can shift. You can rebalance.

You can become not just a product of time — but a **partner with it**.

So I'll leave you with this:

Don't ask, “What do I need to fix?”

Ask instead,

“Where is my gravity pulling me — and where do I want to go?”

Thank you.