Unit 5
Competitive Stress

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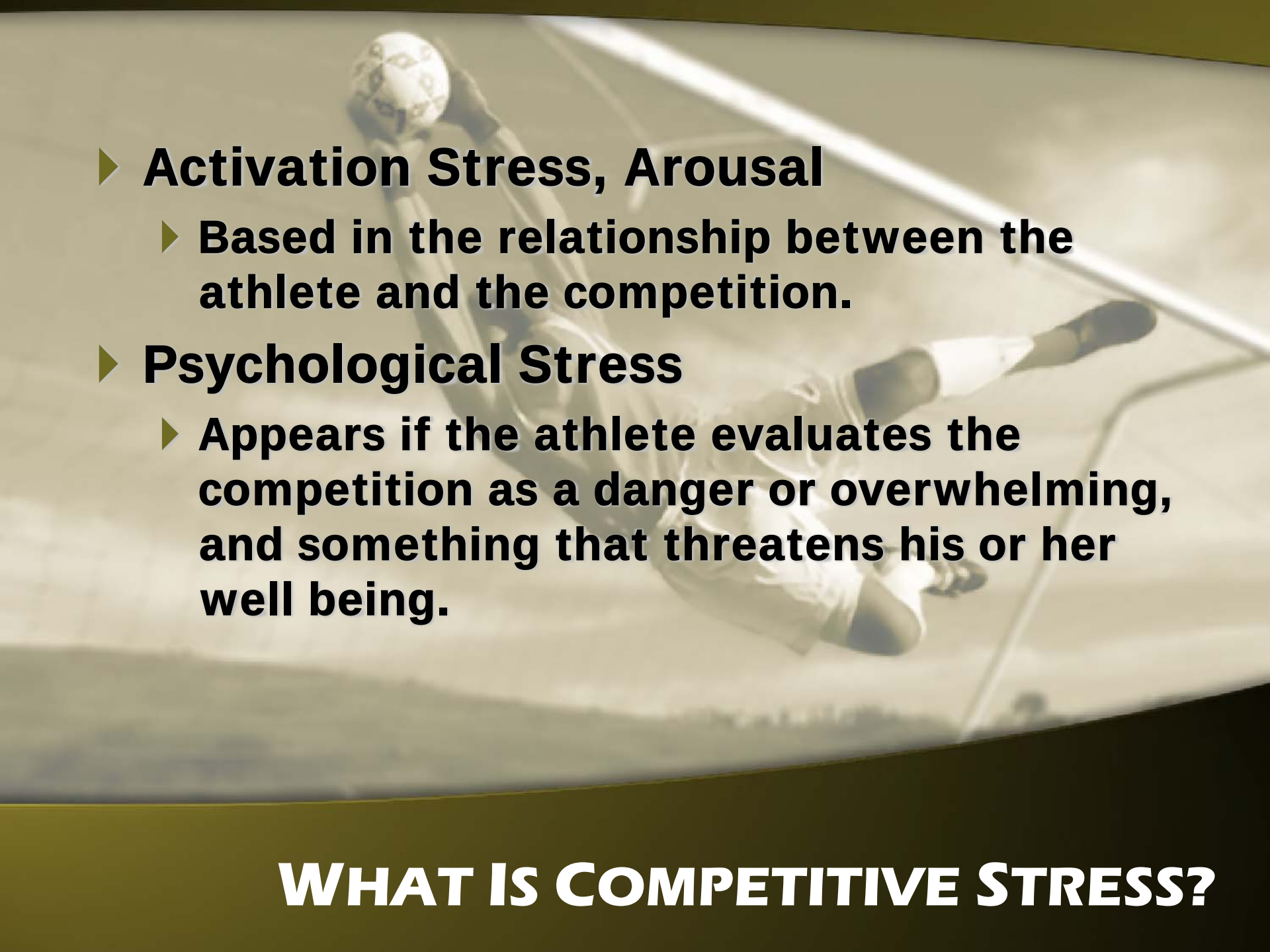
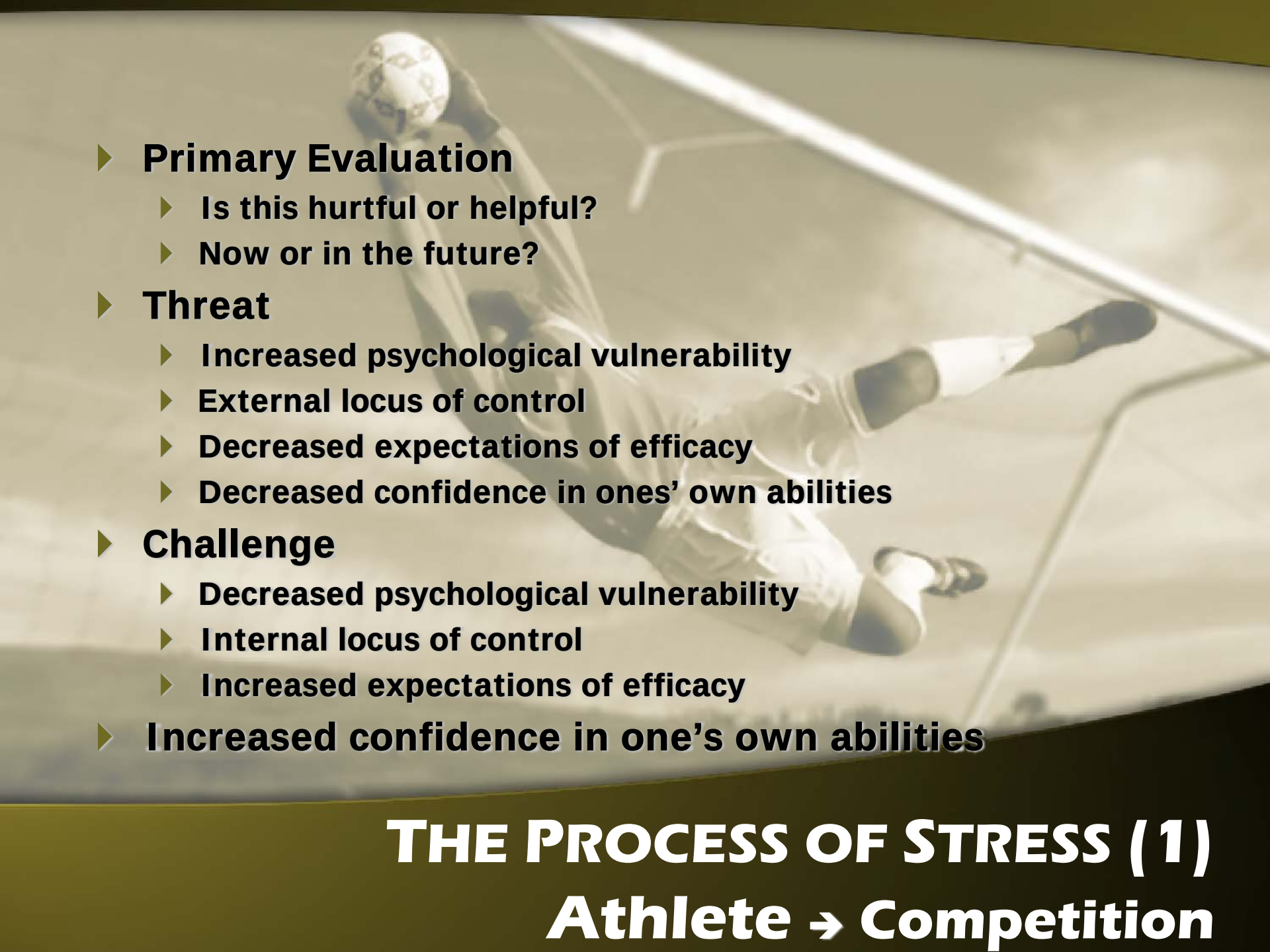


- **Activation Stress, Arousal**
  - **Based in the relationship between the athlete and the competition.**
- **Psychological Stress**
  - **Appears if the athlete evaluates the competition as a danger or overwhelming, and something that threatens his or her well being.**

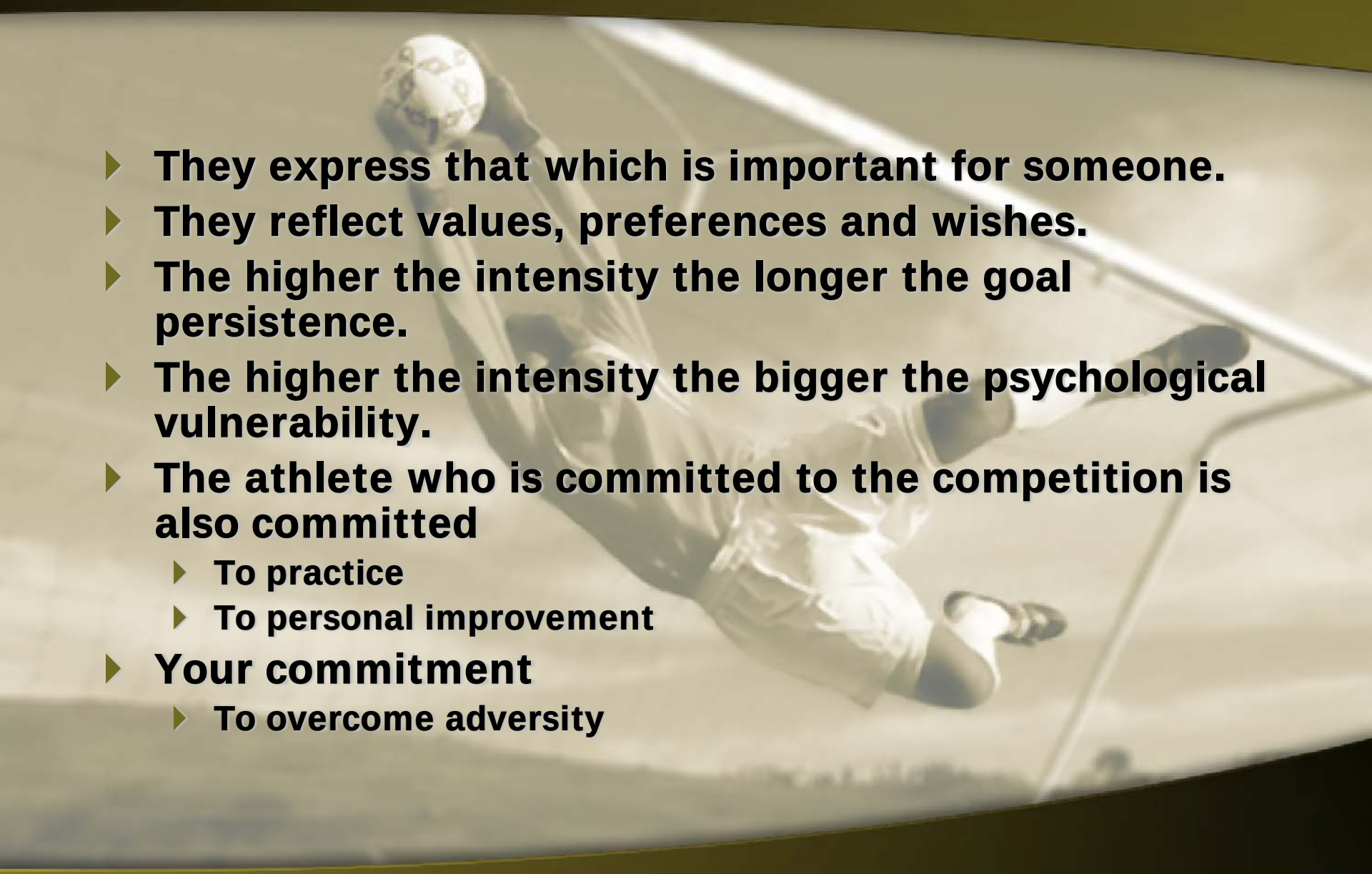
What Is Competitive Stress?



- **Primary Evaluation**
  - **Is this hurtful or helpful?**
  - **Now or in the future?**
- **Threat**
  - **Increased psychological vulnerability**
  - **External locus of control**
  - **Decreased expectations of efficacy**
  - **Decreased confidence in ones' own abilities**
- **Challenge**
  - **Decreased psychological vulnerability**
  - **Internal locus of control**
  - **Increased expectations of efficacy**
- **Increased confidence in one's own abilities**

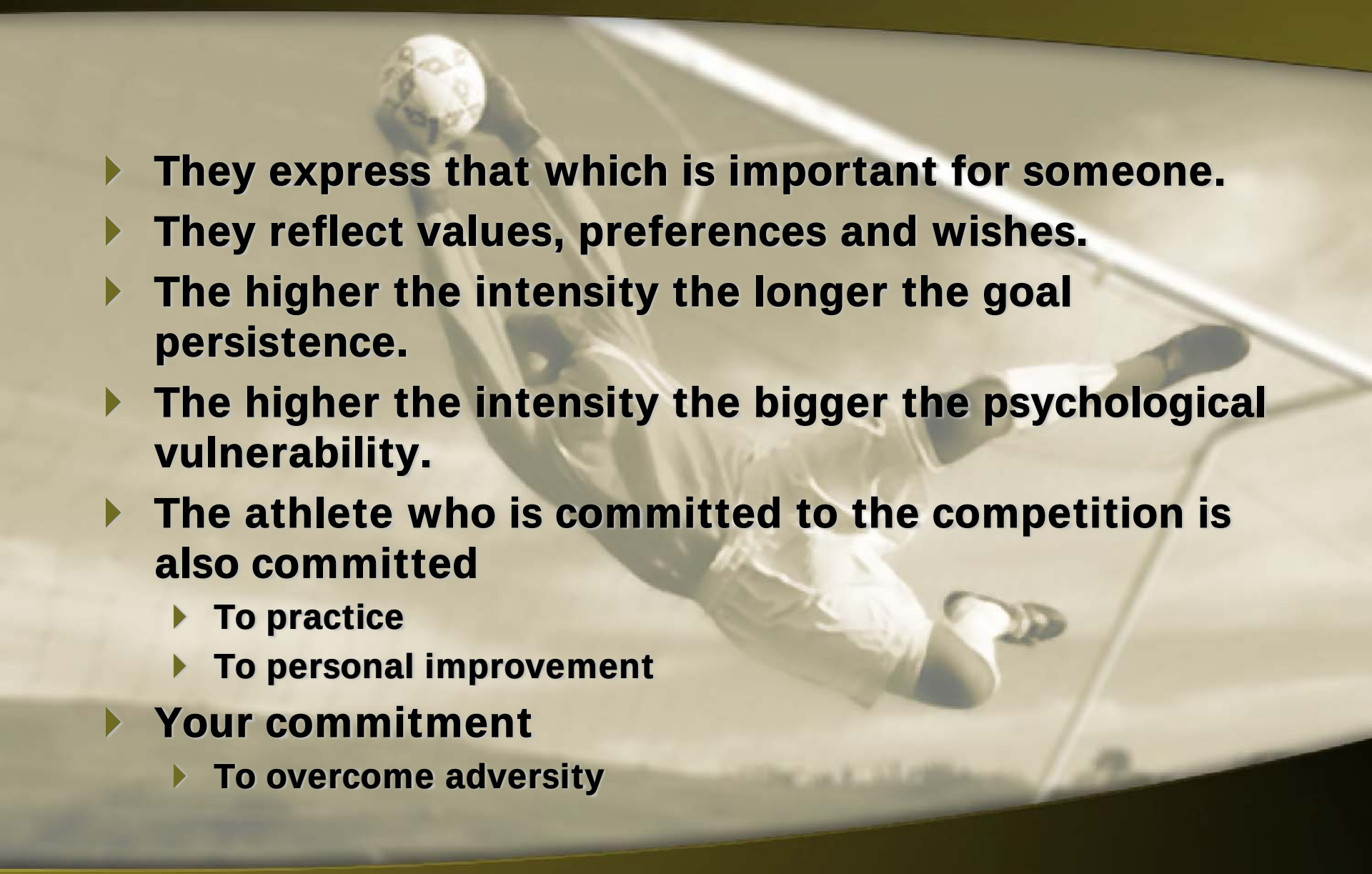
The Process of Stress (1)

Athlete → Competition



- They express that which is important for someone.
- They reflect values, preferences and wishes.
- The higher the intensity the longer the goal persistence.
- The higher the intensity the bigger the psychological vulnerability.
- The athlete who is committed to the competition is also committed
  - To practice
  - To personal improvement
- Your commitment
  - To overcome adversity

The Process of Stress (2)
Athlete → Competition



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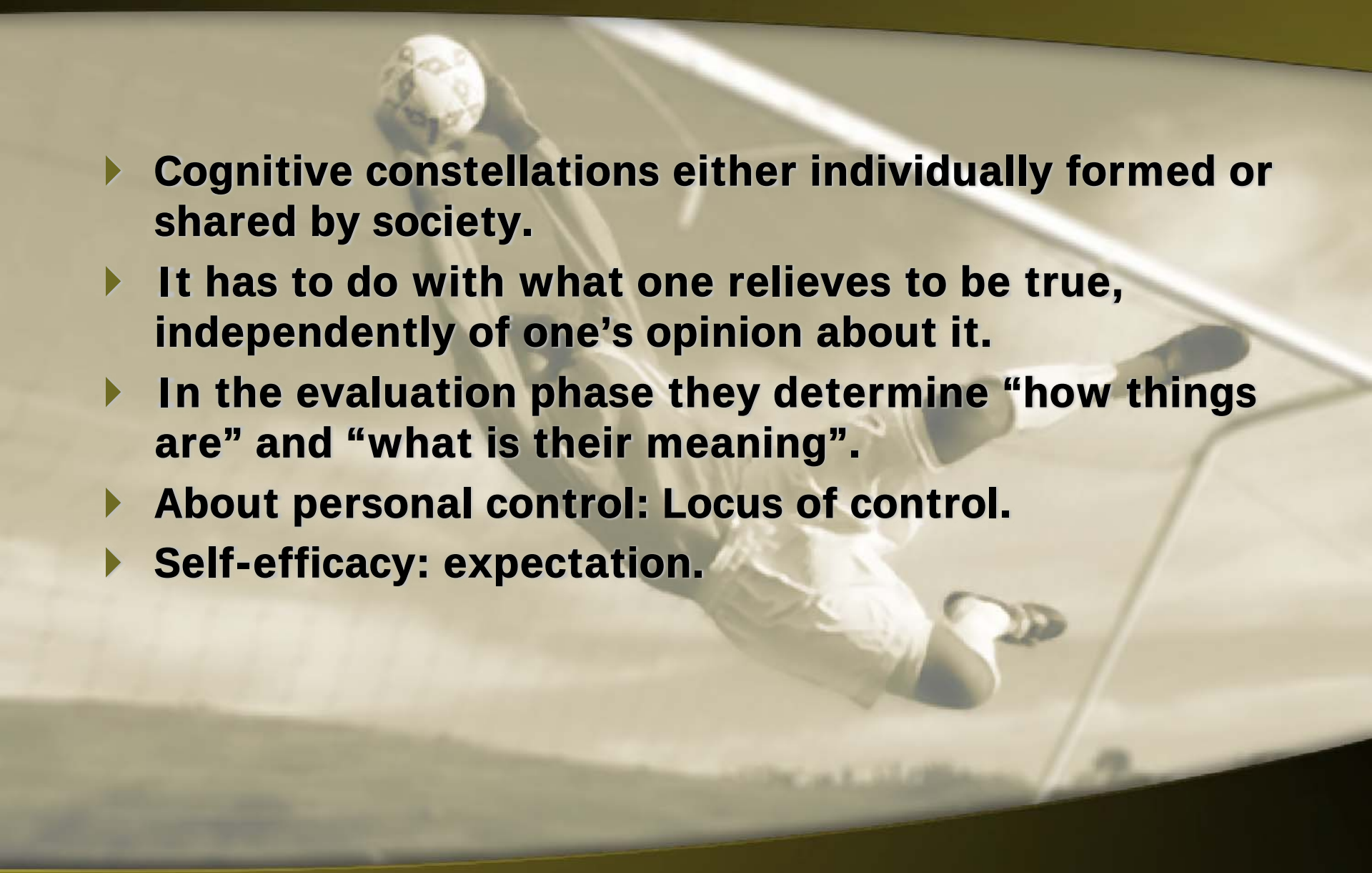
Personal Factors
Commitment



- Cognitive constellations either individually formed or shared by society.
- It has to do with what one relieves to be true, independently of one's opinion about it.
- In the evaluation phase they determine "how things are" and "what is their meaning".
- About personal control: Locus of control.
- Self-efficacy: expectation.

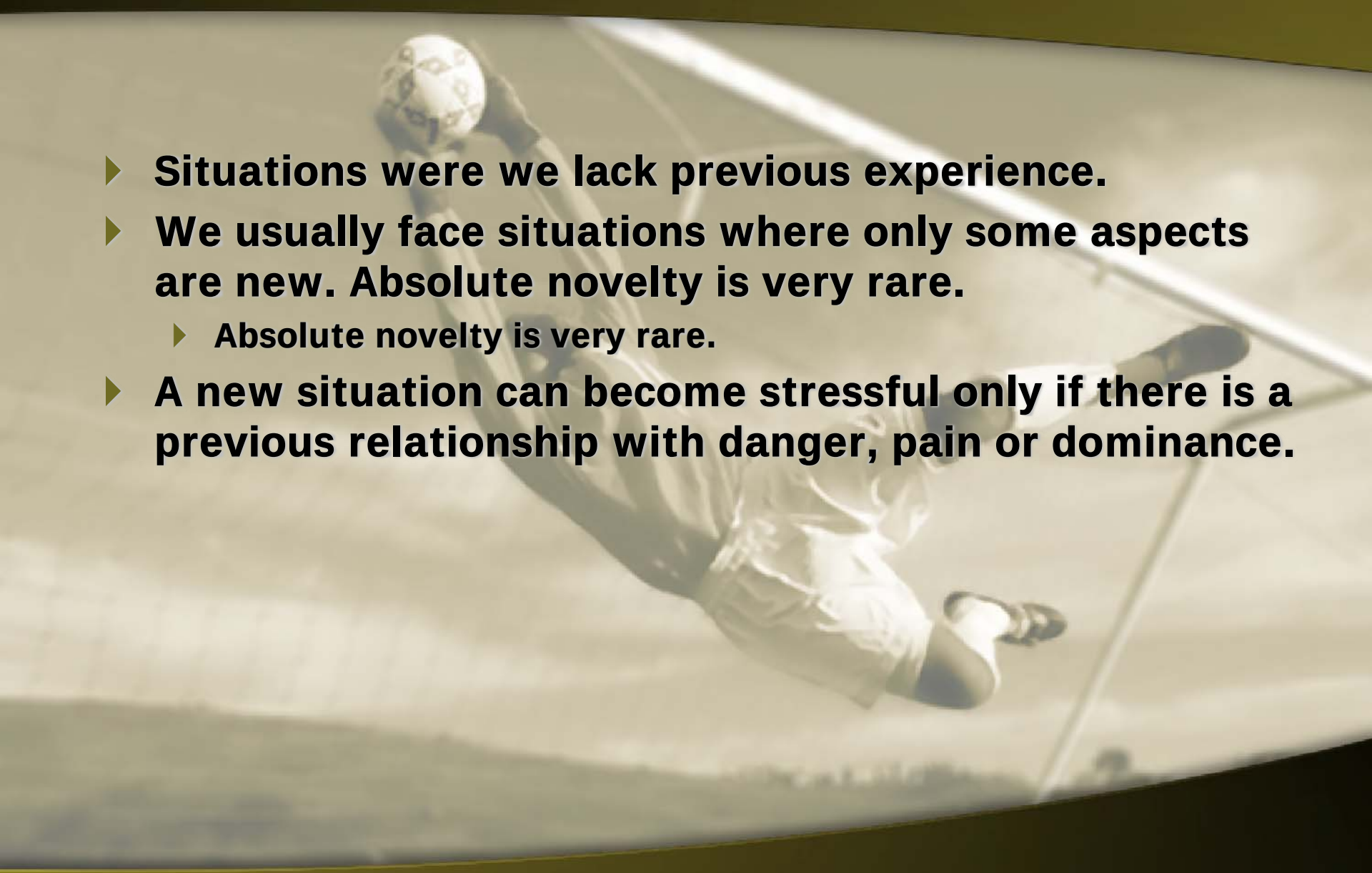
Personal Factors
Beliefs

- **Internal**
  - **Belief that events are contingent on our behavior.**
    - **If I put the effort in, I will improve.**
- **External**
  - **Belief that events are NOT contingent on our behavior.**
    - **They were lucky and they beat us.**

Locus Of Control

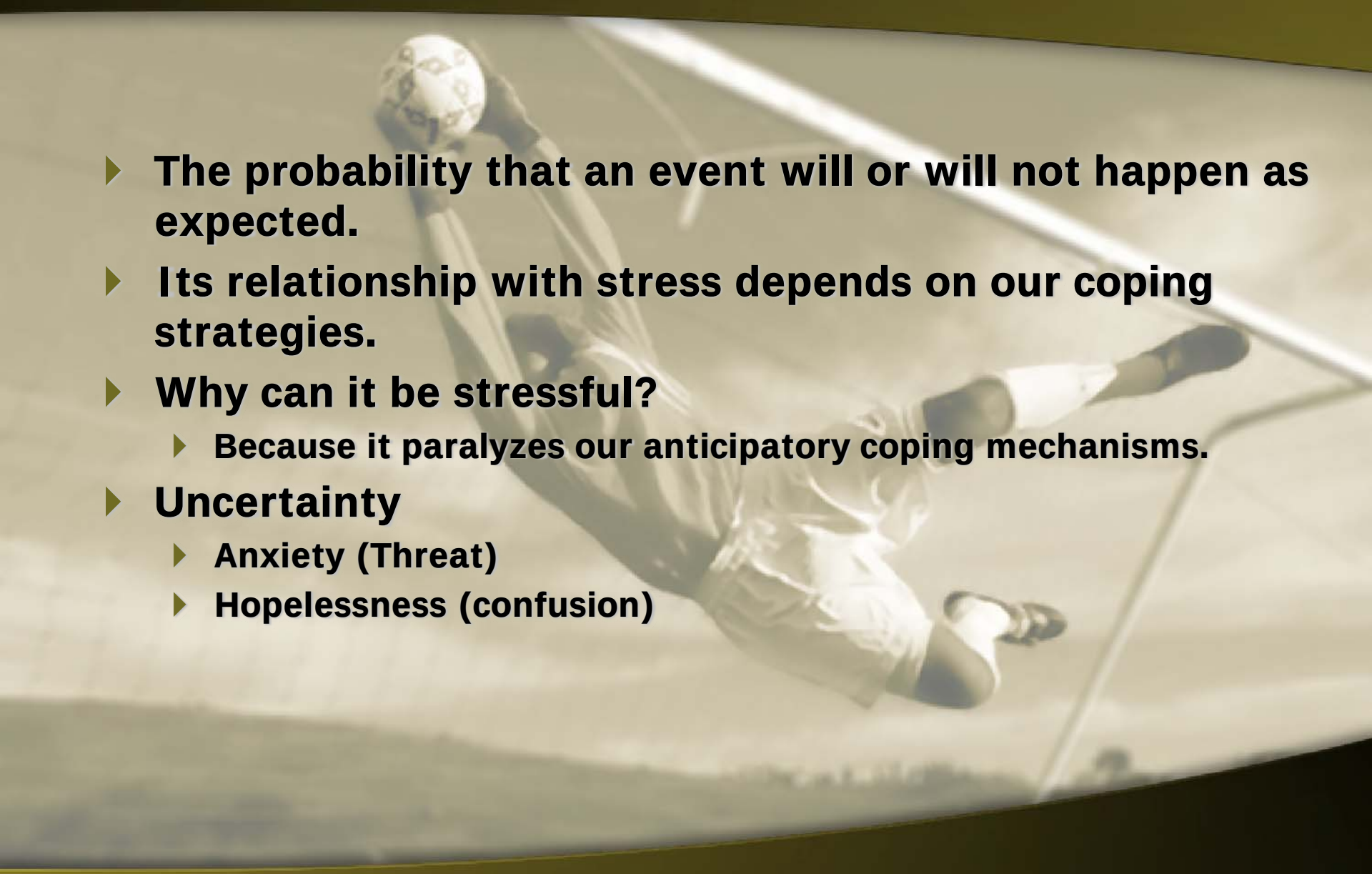
Self-Efficacy

- Expectations of efficacy or success
  - The belief that one can successfully carry out a behavior to achieve a certain outcome.
- Outcome Efficacy
  - The belief that a certain behavior will result in a specific outcome.
- The perception of lack of efficacy tends to go with anticipatory fear. If we increase the perceived efficacy, fear decreases.
- When our expectations of success increase and our resources seem. adequate, the situation becomes controllable.



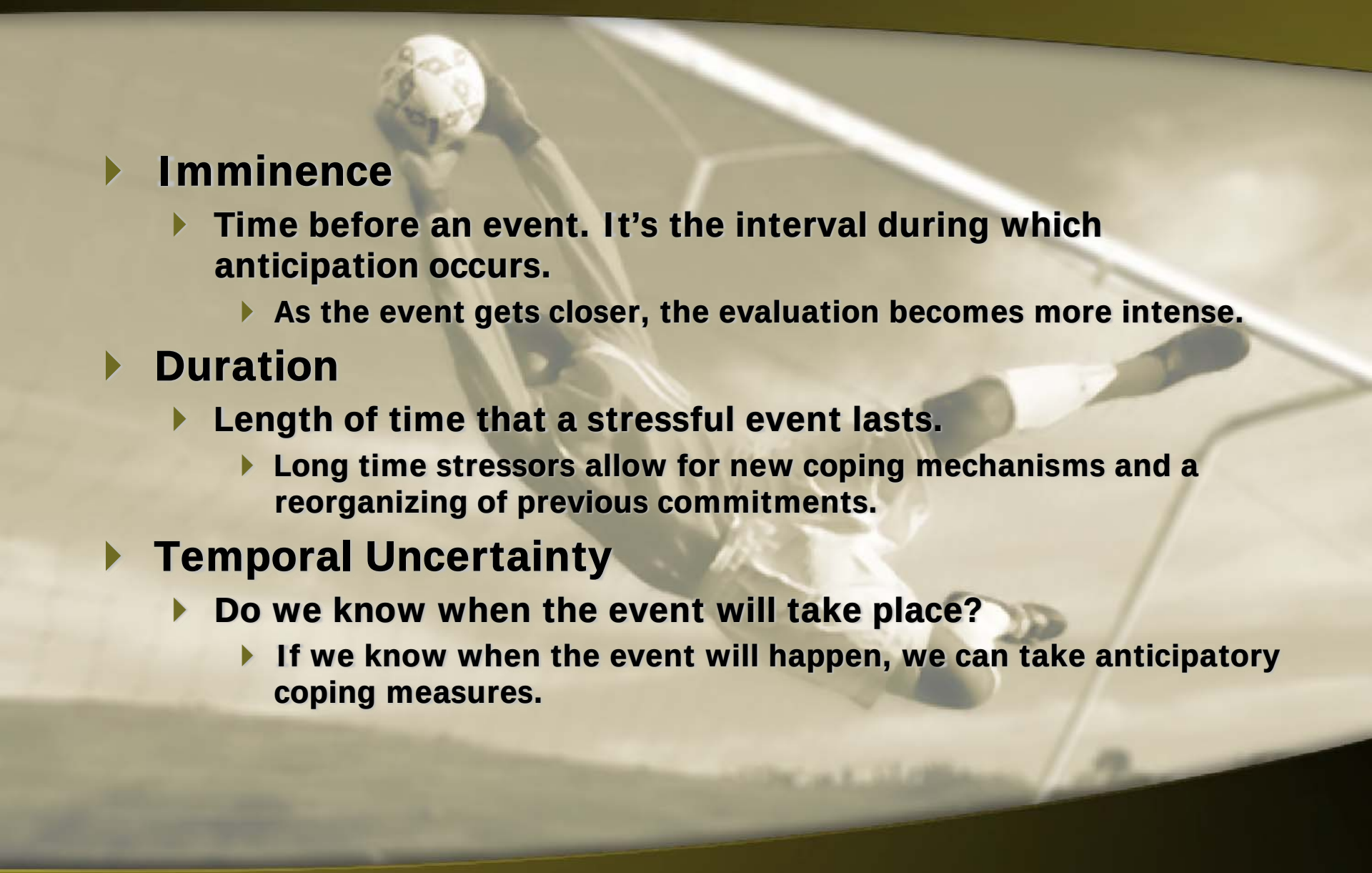
- Situations were we lack previous experience.
- We usually face situations where only some aspects are new. Absolute novelty is very rare.
  - Absolute novelty is very rare.
- A new situation can become stressful only if there is a previous relationship with danger, pain or dominance.

Situational Factors
Novelty



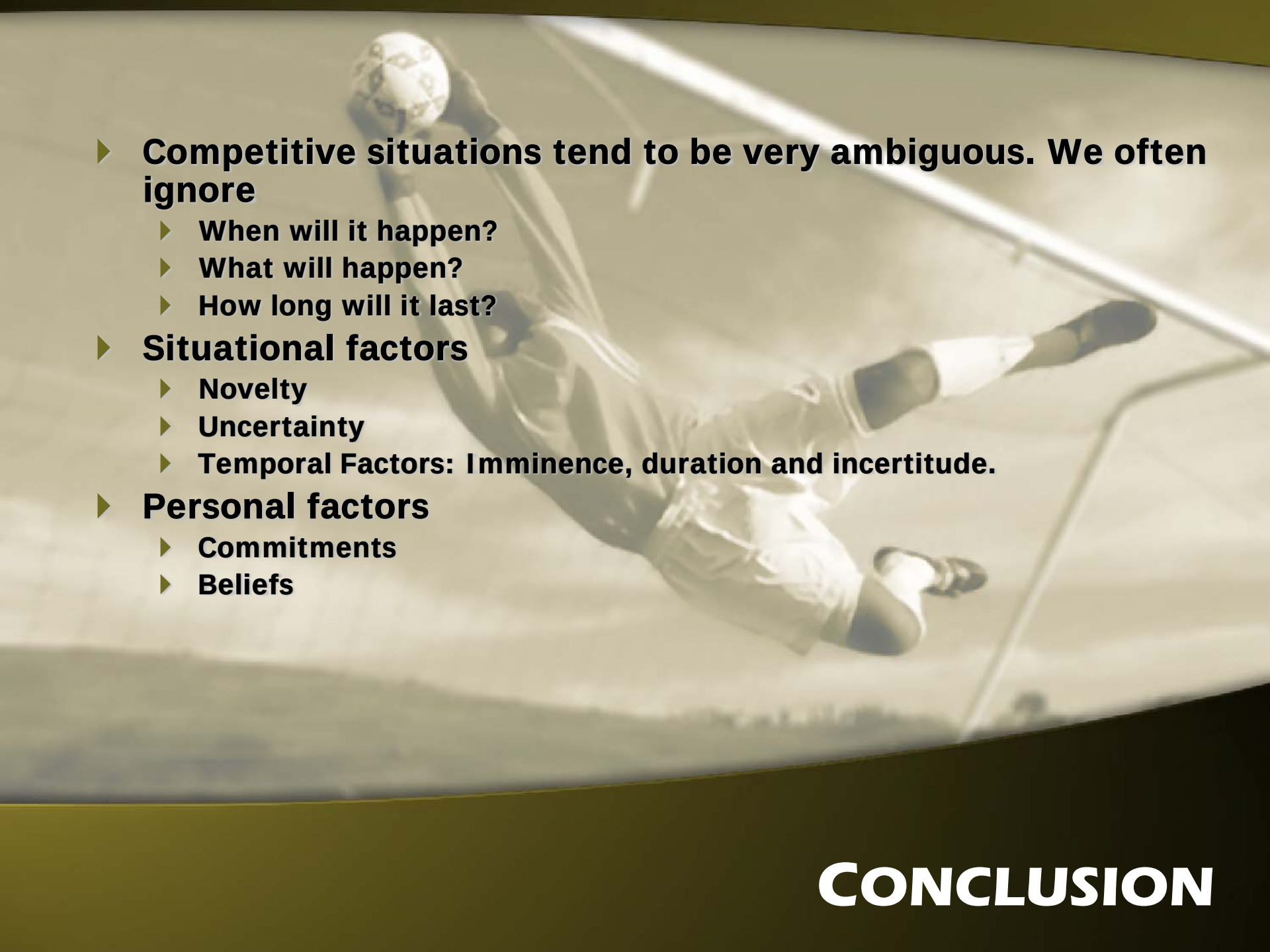
- The probability that an event will or will not happen as expected.
- Its relationship with stress depends on our coping strategies.
- Why can it be stressful?
  - Because it paralyzes our anticipatory coping mechanisms.
- Uncertainty
  - Anxiety (Threat)
  - Hopelessness (confusion)

Situational Factors
Uncertainty



- **Imminence**
  - Time before an event. It's the interval during which anticipation occurs.
    - As the event gets closer, the evaluation becomes more intense.
- **Duration**
  - Length of time that a stressful event lasts.
    - Long time stressors allow for new coping mechanisms and a reorganizing of previous commitments.
- **Temporal Uncertainty**
  - Do we know when the event will take place?
    - If we know when the event will happen, we can take anticipatory coping measures.

Situational Factors
Temporal factors



- Competitive situations tend to be very ambiguous. We often ignore
  - When will it happen?
  - What will happen?
  - How long will it last?
- Situational factors
  - Novelty
  - Uncertainty
  - Temporal Factors: Imminence, duration and incertitude.
- Personal factors
  - Commitments
  - Beliefs

Conclusion